

The **BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™**

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

February 2025



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This month’s cover features the lighthouse at Snaefellsnes Peninsula, Western Iceland.

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

BBS is a faith-based ministry dependent on the gifts of God’s people.

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A Note From the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

Later this year, we will record our 400th episode of *Transformed by Grace*. Sometimes people ask how the show is produced. There are a lot of steps by many different people with many different talents to create one episode (1 Cor. 12:14-20).

It begins with the study of God's Word. It takes me one to one-and-a-half workdays to compose the message for an episode. Many ask where my jokes come from. Some have wondered if there is an Area 51-type location at BBS containing a secret filing cabinet or a large, glowing book of jokes. But no, actually, I find and collect them from much less curious places: books, websites, and from those who share their jokes with me.

Videographers come to our BBS building in Germantown one day a month to record the episodes. They set up the cameras, lighting, and sound. The room where I record is Pastor C. R. Stam's memorial library. We typically record four episodes at a time. It takes about 45 minutes to record one episode, and then I change my shirt and record the next one.

After the session is done, the recordings are sent to the video editor. He coordinates the two camera angles into a single video and edits out my mistakes and start-overs. Our mailroom staff finds picture possibilities, and then I choose the pictures from the options and direct what text to put on them. Our graphic designer then combines the pictures with the text and sends them to the video editor, who inserts the pictures into the episodes.

Next, the video editor sends me the edited videos for review. A video is usually 1-3 minutes too long, and I choose what to cut out so that the length is 28:30, the exact time required for a 30-minute show. I also direct what verses to put in the lower-third-of-screen graphic to help with the teaching and understanding of the Word. Thus modified, the recordings go back to the video editor, who finalizes the videos, prepares them for television, and sends them to our media representatives.

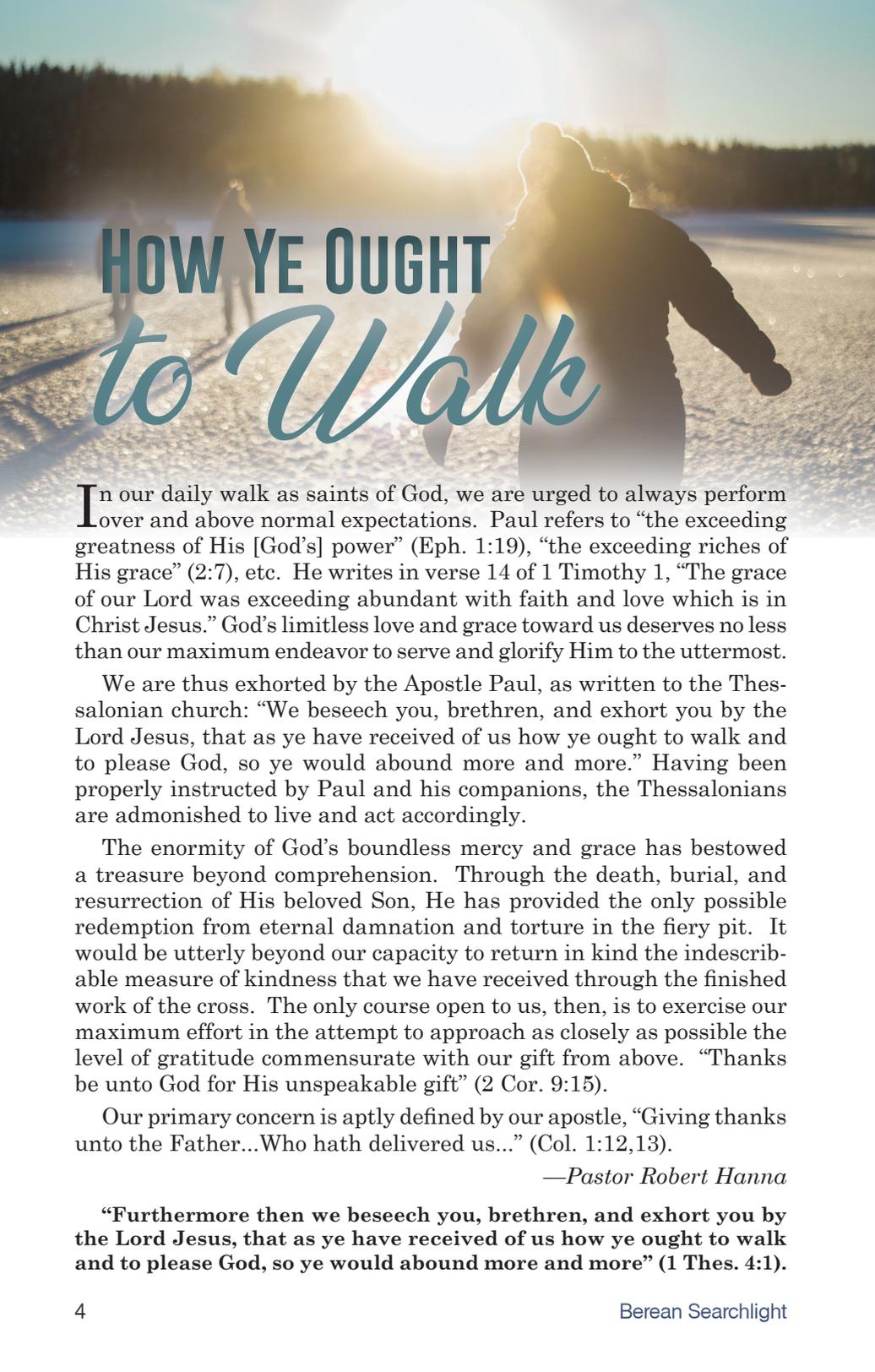
Our media reps then create closed captioning for the episodes and send them to *Christian Television Network* and *The Walk* for broadcast. They also post it to YouTube and put it on our streaming television channel on Roku and Apple TV. As you can see, it's very much a team effort. And you who pray for and give to this ministry are also part of the team, and we are grateful to you as we labor together to get the truth of Paul's gospel out to others.

Grace and Peace,

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.



HOW YE OUGHT to Walk

In our daily walk as saints of God, we are urged to always perform *lover* and above normal expectations. Paul refers to “the exceeding greatness of His [God’s] power” (Eph. 1:19), “the exceeding riches of His grace” (2:7), etc. He writes in verse 14 of 1 Timothy 1, “The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” God’s limitless love and grace toward us deserves no less than our maximum endeavor to serve and glorify Him to the uttermost.

We are thus exhorted by the Apostle Paul, as written to the Thessalonian church: “We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.” Having been properly instructed by Paul and his companions, the Thessalonians are admonished to live and act accordingly.

The enormity of God’s boundless mercy and grace has bestowed a treasure beyond comprehension. Through the death, burial, and resurrection of His beloved Son, He has provided the only possible redemption from eternal damnation and torture in the fiery pit. It would be utterly beyond our capacity to return in kind the indescribable measure of kindness that we have received through the finished work of the cross. The only course open to us, then, is to exercise our maximum effort in the attempt to approach as closely as possible the level of gratitude commensurate with our gift from above. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

Our primary concern is aptly defined by our apostle, “Giving thanks unto the Father...Who hath delivered us...” (Col. 1:12,13).

—*Pastor Robert Hanna*

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more” (1 Thes. 4:1).

“MEAT” IN THE MIDDLE



*(Taken from episode #355
of Transformed by Grace)*

PASTOR KEVIN SADLER
Berean Bible Society President

The teaching of 1 Corinthians 8 deals with meat sacrificed to idols, but the broader application is that of our guidelines and actions regarding issues where there is liberty in the Christian life. This important chapter teaches us about our foremost responsibility to show love to others.

TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT

“Now as touching things offered unto idols...” (1 Cor. 8:1).

In Paul’s day, there were two places to buy meat: the market and the local pagan temples. Animals were sacrificed at these temples and their meat was offered to their gods and idols on pagan altars. Some of this meat was burned completely in honor of the god, and some was sold at the temple, where one could even sit and eat it (v. 10).

There was disagreement in the Corinthian church as to whether it was permissible to buy and eat meat from the pagan temple. There was also the issue of being served meat purchased at

the temple as guests in someone else’s home. Some believers were against ever eating meat offered to idols and others did not have any problem with it.

One group of believers in Corinth said, “Don’t eat it! It’s unclean and wrong!” The other group said, “Looks good to me, and it tastes good too!” This might seem like a fight over steak or roast beef, but there was more to it; it was a doctrinal issue. The “unclean-and-wrong” believers thought that any animal offered to a pagan deity bore the taint of wicked idolatry. The “looks-good-and-tastes-good” believers did so knowing that pagan deities were not real, so the meat couldn’t be polluted, and these believers ate it with a clear conscience.

How about you? If you lived back then, would you have eaten meat that had been offered to an idol? Some of you might say yes; others might say no way. What Paul shows in this chapter is that neither answer is wrong, and the apostle’s greater interest was

that the Church show love and grace, one to another, and not cause a brother or sister in Christ to stumble.

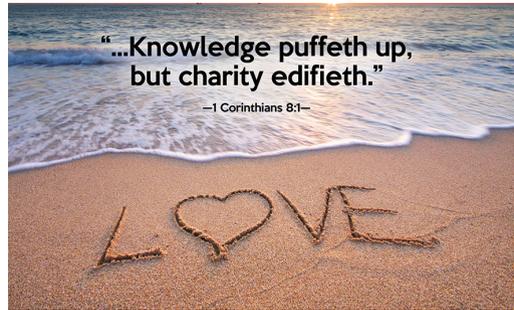
KNOWLEDGE WITH LOVE

“Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of Him” (1 Cor. 8:1-3).

In verse 1, Paul wrote, “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge.” The “knowledge” Paul referred to was knowledge about this subject. “Things offered unto idols” was not a subject about which the Corinthians were ignorant, and they each had their opinions and convictions (v. 7).

The Corinthians also had knowledge of their liberty in Christ. Previously, in 1 Corinthians (6:12), Paul had written of this liberty, that “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient,” or profitable. God has granted the Church great liberty in Christ, but that liberty can be misused. As Galatians 5:13 reminds us, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” Paul did not want the knowledge of their liberty to lead the Corinthians to become proud rather than loving toward others. As Paul noted in verse 1 of our text, “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.”

Knowledge is important in the Christian life. We need to know God’s Word (Psa. 119:125; Rom. 4:3), but mere intellectual knowledge that stands alone is incomplete. Knowledge without love produces pride because it can delude one into a sense of superiority. The words “puffeth up” mean to inflate, blow up, to cause to swell up with pride.



Knowledge without love can be a weapon that destroys and tears others down. One can be strong and mature in knowledge but weak and immature in love, or vice versa. To have knowledge without love or to have love without knowledge are both problems. Knowledge with love, knowing the Word and applying it to one’s life, is the call for the believer.

Paul’s point in this chapter is that it’s one thing to have knowledge of one’s liberty in Christ and to practice it, but knowledge by itself is not a sufficient guide in this matter of meat offered to idols because love is needed in consideration of the convictions and walk of fellow believers.

Paul added, “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” If we think we

have mastered the Scriptures or any subject in it, we can count on the fact that they have not. A mature believer is one who recognizes how little he or she does know. And the more we know, the humbler it can make us, because we know that we do not know completely and that there is always more to know, to grow in, and to understand in the depths of the wisdom of God's Word.

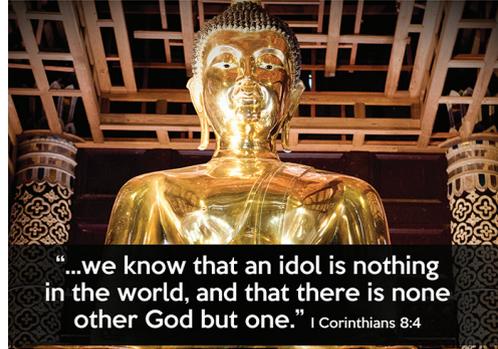
The Apostle Paul tells us that, if one supposes that he knows anything of divine matters without love, he has not yet known and understood as he ought to know. We must subject what we know in God's Word to love. Knowledge with love opens true understanding.

God knows them that love Him, Paul wrote in verse 3. Our relationship with God is about both knowledge and love. And the person who knows God and loves Him has true knowledge of Him. Likewise, in turn, if we are to treat believers with an edifying love, it stems from knowing God and loving Him and then loving others with the love of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ONE TRUE GOD

"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one

Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. 8:4-6).



Concerning the eating of foods that were offered in sacrifice to idols, Paul wrote, "we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." An idol is not real and alive. Since there is one God, then anything else that is called a god is not one. Idols are not competing gods. The stone, precious metal, or wood are real, but they are just a representation of a god that is a myth and the figment of man's imagination. These fake gods exist only in the minds of their worshippers and not in reality (Isa. 37:19; Jer. 16:20). For example, if meat was offered to Zeus, there was and is no Zeus. Idols are nothing, and the meats offered to them therefore mean nothing and are entirely inconsequential.

There is not a god in or behind any idol; however, there are satanic, spiritual forces at work in idolatry (1 Cor. 10:20). The idols themselves are nothing, but the danger with idolatry lies in the demons working behind the scenes to deceive and to keep people from faith in the one, true, living God.

GOD

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him.” 1 Corinthians 8:6

While there is only one God, Paul wrote there are many “that are called gods” (1 Cor. 8:5). Some of these gods were presumed to live in heaven, and others here on earth. The world then and the world today worship and serve these many fabricated, mythological “gods...and lords.”

“But to us,” Paul contrasted, “there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ.” While the world has its polytheism, we are monotheistic. While “there be gods many, and lords many,” we know that there is *one true God* and *one true Lord*. “An idol is nothing” (v. 4), but the one true God is everything, and by Him, the Almighty Creator, everything in creation was made.

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

“Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse” (1 Cor. 8:7-8).

Some in the Corinthian church felt free to eat the meat that

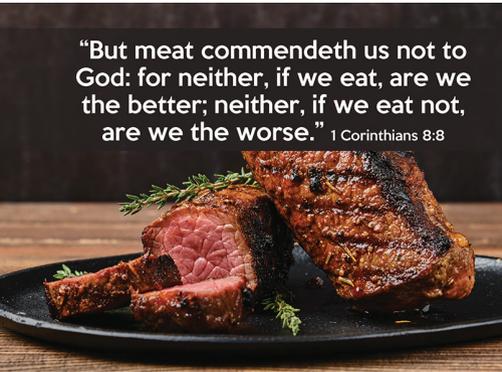
was offered to idols based on their liberty in Christ and their knowledge that idols are nothing. However, others did not have that knowledge and understanding of liberty and the nothingness of idols. They were conscious of the idol. For them, to eat the meat would be done with the thought that it had been sacrificed to the idols, which grated and upset their conscience. It was not just regular meat like any other meat for these believers.

Paul explained that “their conscience being weak is defiled.” Their conscience was weak, not because their conscience didn’t work, but because it overworked, and they put stipulations on themselves that were not necessary. Their conscience was still operating with the knowledge that there was something to idol worship that contaminated the meat and made eating it to be wrong. Thus, their weak conscience was defiled, and a defiled conscience is one that has been disregarded and transgressed, resulting in guilt and shame.

Paul added, “But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we

the worse.” In other words, you aren’t more spiritual if you know idols are nothing and you know you have the personal freedom to eat meat sacrificed to idols, and you do it. But also, you are not less spiritual for abstaining from eating meat sacrificed to idols. One didn’t gain or lose anything by eating the idol meat, and one didn’t gain or lose anything by refusing it.

“But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.” 1 Corinthians 8:8



What we do or do not choose to eat, does not make us more or less pleasing to God. Food is spiritually neutral. Those who enjoyed their liberty in Christ and ate meat sacrificed to idols did not make God more pleased with them. Those who abstained from it, thinking it unclean, did not make God less pleased with them. Before God, we are no better or worse if we partake or abstain from eating certain foods.

As the writer of Hebrews put it, “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein” (Heb. 13:9).

LOVE LIMITS LIBERTY

“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hath knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor. 8:9-13).

Under grace, it is not wrong for a believer to eat pork. With the change in dispensations, Paul tells the Church, “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4). However, eating pork was wrong under the law of Moses, which prohibited it. Today, a believer is at perfect liberty to partake of



pork chops, pulled pork, barbecued ribs, ham, pork roast, and best of all, *bacon*.

However, suppose a Jewish person gets saved under grace

and comes out of Judaism. He or she might still struggle with this liberty and might feel that it is still wrong to eat pork. It may take time to understand and come to live in the full enjoyment of the liberty that is in Christ, *or* the person may never eat pork.

A believer could possibly hinder the spiritual growth of one like this by flaunting the liberty today under grace and purposely eating pork in front of them. That's the sort of thing Paul is teaching about here.

Paul goes on to show that while there is nothing to gain with God by eating meat sacrificed to idols, there might be much to lose. There was nothing wrong with eating the meat offered to idols, and there was also nothing wrong with refusing to eat the meat offered to idols. However, a believer does wrong if he understands his liberty but, by practicing it, causes someone whose conscience is against it to stumble in his or her faith.

The practice of one's liberty under grace can trip others up in life, and God does not want members of His church to cause other believers to stumble in their walk due to insensitive actions. Instead, in love, we are called to edify and build each other up (1 Cor. 8:1).

Those "which hast knowledge" (v. 10) that idols and the meat sacrificed to them were nothing were eating the meat hot off the altars and sitting at the temple to eat it. They saw idolatry for what it was. They did not participate in the pagan practices of the

temple, but in their liberty and faith, they could associate with pagan people and eat a juicy steak at the temple with a completely clear conscience. And this was not wrong.

Where this became a problem, however, was "if any man see thee...sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols...?" These brethren had not yet come to a place where they could say, "This is just meat, and it tastes good!" In their minds, it was still connected to the false worship of false gods, and it violated their conscience to eat it.

The trouble with a brother with a weak conscience seeing another Christian dining at a pagan temple, Paul says, was that the brother might be "emboldened" to join in and eat meat offered to idols and be encouraged to do what his conscience condemned. The believer who has a firm grasp on his liberty but does not use that



liberty with care and love may give the weaker believer the boldness to run the red light of their conscience. And this was wrong.

The knowledge of one's liberty was not to be the only factor that determined whether one ate idol meat or not. Love for a brother in Christ was an additional and significant factor to consider. Thus, love limits our liberty. In love, we are to always consider what effect our actions might have on others in the church.

the Lord. Paul further stated in verse 12 that causing a brother to stumble is more than just an offense against him; it is an offense against Christ and a sin against Him.

In light of these things, Paul concluded by putting himself in the place of the person who might cause another brother to stumble.



Paul asked, “And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” The word “perish” means to destroy another’s well-being and peace or render useless. This is not speaking of the loss of one’s salvation, but rather the ruination or destruction of the working of God in one’s life. Our actions can impede the spiritual progress of other believer’s or even cause them to slip back into a lifestyle they had left when they got saved.

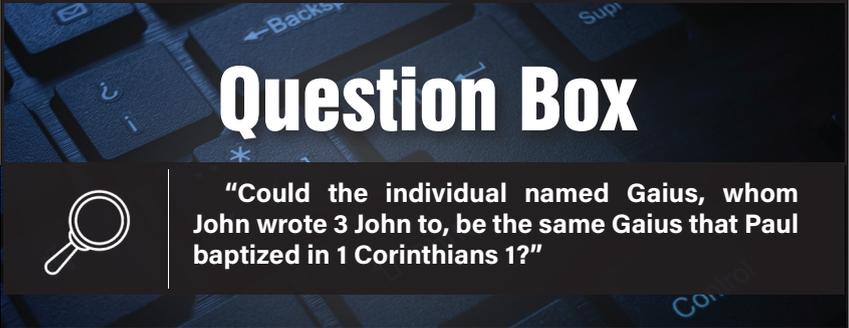
Paul shows how far he would go, out of love, for the sake of not harming someone’s spiritual growth. And he said that if eating meat would harm a brother’s spiritual life, he would never eat meat again as long as the world stands! He would choose to abstain from eating meat forever if doing so would set a fellow believer back in his walk. In this matter of meat offered to idols, the spiritual well-being of other believers was the most important thing to Paul.

Paul reaches for the heart when he adds, “for whom Christ died.” That is how we are to view our brothers and sisters in Christ, as those who are deeply loved by Christ, for whom He shed His precious blood. And if Christ loved that brother enough to die for him, then we are to show him love by not putting any stumbling block in his way and not doing anything that might hinder his walk with

Although the subject of meats offered to idols is not a problem for most believers today, the principles that the Holy Spirit gives us in this section are valuable for this entire age. There are many things in our current world today which, while not expressly forbidden in God’s Word, might still cause believers with a weak conscience to be offended.

Our culture in the United States strongly promotes our personal rights. However, we need to remember that there is something more important than exercising our rights in the liberty we have under grace, and that is the work of God in the life of other believers.

Our actions in the Christian life are never to be based solely on what we know to be permissible for ourselves. Out of love, we also need to take the important, additional step of carefully considering how our actions will affect others in the Church, and then do what is best for them, not us. 



Question Box



"Could the individual named Gaius, whom John wrote 3 John to, be the same Gaius that Paul baptized in 1 Corinthians 1?"

While this question on the surface might seem of little consequence, in reality, there are those who have used such situations to suggest that the Apostle Paul and the 12 Apostles had the same audience, which is not the case (cf. Rom. 11:13; Gal. 1:16; 2:7-9).

Furthermore, it does not seem likely that the Gaius that John mentioned in 3 John was the same Gaius that Paul baptized since John suggests in verse 4 that his Gaius was one of his "children," meaning he was led to the Lord by John. We would expect that the Gaius Paul baptized (1 Cor. 1:14) would have been led to the Lord by Paul when he visited Corinth.

Gaius was one of the more popular names of the time. In fact, Paul likely worked with at least two different men named Gaius. One from Macedonia (Greece cf. Acts 19:29) and another from Derbe, which is in Asia Minor—modern-day Turkey (cf. Acts 20:4).

Interestingly, Paul wrote Romans while being hosted by a Gaius (cf. Rom. 16:23), and this almost certainly was the Gaius of Corinth, for in the same verse that he mentions Gaius, he also sends greetings to the Romans from another man named Erastus, who, according to 2 Timothy 4:20, lived in Corinth.

Another detail that suggests that Paul wrote Romans from Corinth is in Romans 15:26, where he said he had a contribution from those in Macedonia and Achaia (regions very close to Corinth) to take to Jerusalem.

—*Pastor Don Hofsfeld*



ONE GOD

PASTOR PAUL **SADLER**
Former BBS President

“There is...One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6).

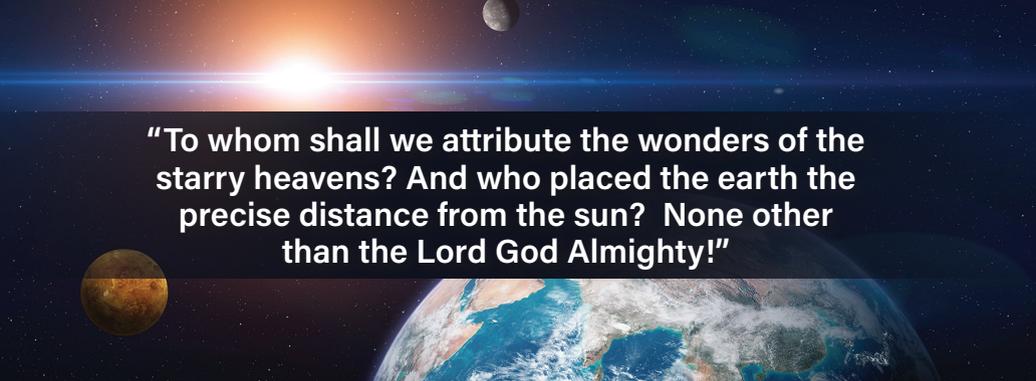
The seventh unity of the Spirit confirms that the Apostle Paul believed that there is only *one God*. Many, of course, have difficulty reconciling this with the fact that God is also a Trinity. Someone once said concerning the Trinity: “If you try to explain it you will lose your mind; if you deny it you will lose your soul.” There are many things in this life that I fail to fully understand, but that doesn’t mean they are not so.

The Bible emphatically teaches us that there is one God who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even though this goes far beyond our comprehension we nevertheless accept it by faith, because this is the plain teaching of the Word of God. It is helpful to remember that God has stamped His creation with countless trinities, each of which bear testimony that the concept of the Trinity does not go beyond reason. Scientists, for example, inform us that the universe is made up of basically three components: space, time, and matter. But how many universes do we have—ONE! Water can be transformed into a solid (ice), a vapor, or into a liquid. Three forms but still water! When God created man in the beginning He created him a trinity—body, soul and spirit. One of the facets then of being created in the image of God is that we, too, are a trichotomy.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

“One God and Father of all...” (Eph. 4:6).

There are some who incorrectly assume that God is the Father of the whole human race. A case in point are those in the religious community who frequently use the phrase, “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” Needless to say, this teaching is a subtle attack upon the truth. Nowhere in the Scriptures is God referred to



"To whom shall we attribute the wonders of the starry heavens? And who placed the earth the precise distance from the sun? None other than the Lord God Almighty!"

as the heavenly Father of the unbeliever. As a matter of fact, the words of our Lord to the unbelieving religious leaders of His day are worthy of our attention here:

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:42-44).

This stinging rebuke indicates that these ungodly leaders refused to receive the Lord. Consequently, they were intolerant of the notion that they were of *their father* the devil. The Master went on to add, "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Contrary to popular belief, God is not the Father of those who spurn His love and cast doubt upon the counsel of His will. Unbelievers do have a father, but he is said to be the devil! And rightfully so, for they have followed Satan in his rebellion against God. The Apostle Paul concurs, stating that those who are dead in trespasses and sins walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2).

Bringing our thoughts back to Ephesians 4:6, when the apostle makes a reference to God being the *Father of all*, dispensationally he has a specific group in mind. The revelation that there is only *one God* and Father is a well-established fact throughout Holy Scripture. What is often overlooked, however, is that a further revelation was given to Paul, in that God had *predetermined* before the foundation of the world to bring into existence a new entity known as the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:4,5). This has now been manifested through Paul's gospel where we also learn the members of His Body have received a *heavenly inheritance*. Yes, God is the Father of believing Israel. However, the *all* of Ephesians 4:6 is to be *limited* to the believers of this age in which we are living.

When a father is handed his newborn son, a new relationship is created that can never be broken. Whether in life or death, the lad will always be the son of his father. Similarly, upon regeneration we are born from above into the family of God. So, it can be appropriately said that God is our Father and we have become His sons. Normally a father is a role model who provides for the future of his children. The same is true in the spiritual realm; we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, which springs from our relationship with the Father.

A PAULINE VIEW OF GOD

“...Who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6).

The *transcendence* and *immanence* of God are rich theological terms that describe two precious truths concerning our heavenly Father. The transcendence of God simply means that God transcends or is far *above* and *beyond* His creation. He is sovereign, eternal, being infinite in holiness, righteousness, wisdom, and knowledge. God’s *supremacy* is clearly seen in Daniel 4:35 where the prophet states:

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?”

Peering into the heavens through a powerful telescope only serves to show how insignificant man is in relation to the universe around him. Astronomers could only shake their heads in amazement when they discovered that there are other galaxies beyond the Milky Way. To whom shall we attribute the wonders of the starry heavens? And who placed the

earth the precise distance from the sun? None other than the Lord God Almighty! Personally, I take great comfort in the sovereignty of God, that He is in control of all things.

The immanence of God teaches us that God is *actively* involved in the lives of His own. Paul makes this explicitly clear in the above passage when he says that God is working “through all,” that is, *through* each member of the Body of Christ. Obviously, the Apostle Paul did not hold to a *deistic* view of God. Deism denies that God exercises a constant providential control over His creation and that He never answers the prayers of His children.



The epistles of St. Paul abound with references as to how God is actively involved in both the spiritual and physical aspects of our lives. God is well-pleased when He acts in response to our prayers, as it is according to His will, of course. Being blessed with all spiritual blessings does not negate His willingness to supply for our physical needs as well.



Who could fail to see that God also *intervened* in the case of Epaphroditus. “...*He was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him...*” (Phil. 2:27). It is strongly implied that the Philippians, and Paul himself, prayed for this dear brother that God would raise him up, and indeed he did—in connection with their prayers. And note: God healed Epaphroditus

for Paul’s sake too, “...lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” It should be added here that the recovery of Epaphroditus was not due to the natural healing process that is programmed into the body. Rather it was a direct result of GOD’S MERCY upon him and Paul. Had God not *intervened* Epaphroditus undoubtedly would have died.

We should be careful to add that many times the response we receive back from heaven in answer to our prayers is “My grace is sufficient for thee...” In this event we are able to take comfort in the truth that, “...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

We are to understand that sometimes God has a *higher purpose* in mind for not healing our loved one or Christian friend. It is not necessarily a lack of faith on the petitioner’s part. Possibly, the affliction is allowed as a test or perhaps to draw the individual into a closer walk with the Lord. Sometimes it’s to bring a family closer together, or even more importantly, that God’s strength might be made perfect in our weakness. Whatever the case may be, may God receive all the honor and glory that is due His name (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Shall we bind the hands of God today to say that He will never heal the sick or supply our needs in answer to our prayers? Paul’s revelation and experience unite to declare otherwise. Our heavenly Father is a loving Father who wants us to bring all of our cares before Him. Such is the case with any father. He is interested in every detail of our lives, including those seemingly incidental things. 



STARS *to* MAN

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isa. 40:26).

Mankind is told in this passage to look up and to direct our eyes toward the heavens to contemplate the stars because they teach us something: “behold Who hath created these things.” The number, order, glory, and harmony of the heavenly bodies demonstrate the infinite greatness and wisdom of the incomparable Creator.

“That bringeth out their host by number” has a military meaning, that God marches out the army of stars upon the plane of heaven as a general leads out his army upon the field of battle. The number of the stars surpasses man’s powers of computation, and God leads them all forth as a vast army under a mighty Leader. They are arrayed for *us* to see. The stars “declare the glory of God” (Psa. 19:1), and are evidence of “His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. 1:20), and are meant to lead us to give God praise (Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11).

God knows His stars. Though they are innumerable, yet in His perfect wisdom He knows each one *individually*. He has given them their own unique attributes, and He fully knows each star in all its individual characteristics. From that knowledge and because they belong to Him, the Creator has given each star a unique name “He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might.” I don’t know about you, but I have trouble remembering people’s names from one day to the next, but our omniscient God knows the names of trillions upon trillions of stars (Job 38:31-32). And it is solely God’s unassisted power that conducts and sustains them all, “for that He is strong in power; not one faileth.”

If you ever wonder if God cares about you personally, then look up at a clear night sky and remember that He knows the name and every detail of each star in the universe. Then remember that He knows your name and everything about you, every single detail of your life. You are of more worth and value to Him than all the stars put together. We know that because Jesus Christ, this Almighty God Who created the stars, died for you personally.

—Pastor Kevin Sadler





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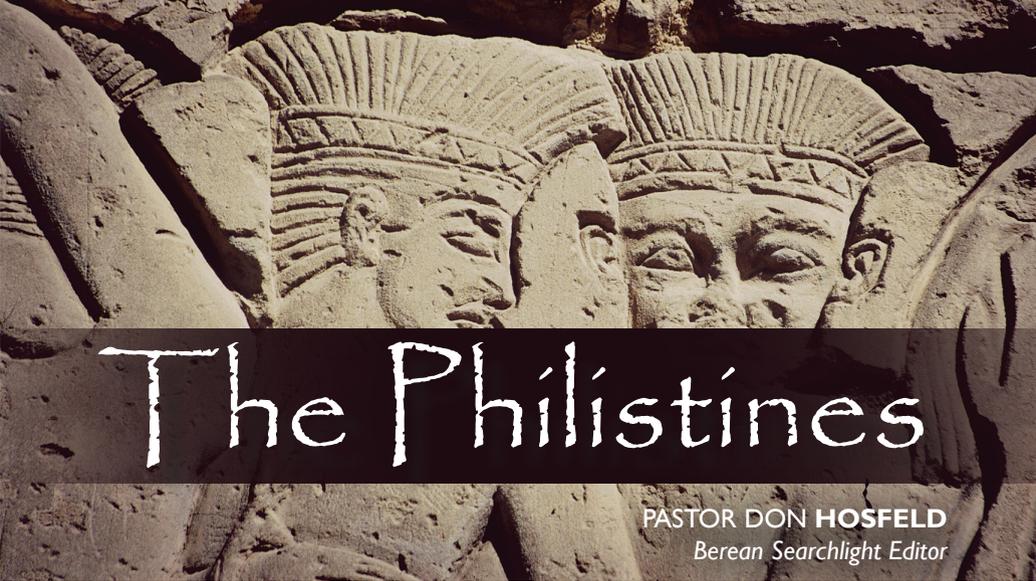
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The Philistines

PASTOR DON HOSFELD
Berean Searchlight Editor

Mention *the Philistines*, and many will likely (and rightly) connect them to the Bible and their many conflicts with the nation of Israel. And even though the Bible is not the only place we hear of or learn about these ancient people, it is our best resource for understanding this group, who, for over six hundred years, was Israel's greatest enemy.

Even today, the name Philistine creates havoc for Israel. The similarity in names has led many to believe that modern-day Palestinians are descendants of the Philistines. This, in turn, has caused many to conclude that Palestinians are victims of oppression and have the rightful claim to the land known as Israel or, by some, Palestine.

But who were the Philistines? Where did they come from? Were they descended from Abraham and/or Lot like other groups in the area that Israel often fought (i.e., Midianites, Moabites, Ammonites, etc.)? Do the Palestinians descend from the Philistines? In what

ways did the Philistines significantly impact Israel? Are there any practical lessons that we can learn from them today? Many questions can and should be asked regarding the Philistines, because no other nation or people group has played such a significant role in the direction and history of Israel—not even Egypt!

THE PHILISTINES AND THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Most are quite familiar with the famous one-on-one battle between David and the Philistine, Goliath (cf. 1 Sam. 17:23; 21:9-10), which brought David to national prominence and even a place in King Saul's court and also made him an officer in the military (18:2,5). This event with the Philistine was enough on its own to forever alter the course of the history of Israel and, dare I say, the world—for the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world would be known as *The Son of David* (Matt. 21:9; 22:42).

In his stand against this “uncircumcised Philistine,” David

became a type of Christ in that he stood in his nation's place and took *upon himself* the reproach for the nation (1 Sam. 17:42-44; Psa. 22:6 cf. Rom. 15:3; Psa. 69:9). And secondly, he stood *alone* to "taketh *away* the reproach from Israel" (1 Sam. 17:26 cf. Isa. 12:1; 51:7-12; 54:4-5; Zeph. 2; Rom. 10:11).

What started simply as a young man's willingness to stand for God against the Philistines when no one else in the army of Israel would, catapulted David into God's champion, but also the people's champion: "*And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*" (1 Sam. 18:7).

The many battles with the Philistines didn't merely help raise David to the throne; they were the main reason there was a throne to begin with. Israel's demand for a king was largely predicated on their fears of the Philistines.

In 1 Samuel 7, we find that "the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines" (v. 7). As a result, Samuel called upon God, and as he was making an offering to the Lord "the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited [defeated, crushed] them; and

they were smitten before Israel" (v. 10). Chapter 7 concludes with the Philistines subdued and all the captured cities returned to Israel (vv. 13-14).

Though subdued, the Philistines were not gone. They remained in control of their five cities, known as the Pentapolis—Ashdod, Gaza, Askelon, Gath, and Ekron (cf. 1 Sam. 6:17)—located along the southwestern portion of Israel, near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (cf. Zeph. 2:5).

Chapter 8 begins by telling us that Samuel had become old. Thus, with him no longer able to "judge" (defend, rule, deliver) Israel, and knowing that the Philistines were still very near, the people requested a king (1 Sam. 8:1,5). Instead of realizing the battle was the Lord's and that *He* was their true judge and deliverer, the people called for a king. And the newly anointed King Saul's *first* assignment from God was "to be captain over My people Israel, that he may save My people out of the hand of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 9:16).

While it was no surprise that Israel would request a king (cf. Deut. 17:14; 28:36), their reasons for doing so were most certainly not right, or else God would not have seen it as a rejection of Him (1 Sam. 8:7). Here again, we see the Philistines greatly impact the course of Israel's future. Their

"Israel's demand for a king was largely predicated on their fears of the Philistines."



presence and fierce ways caused fear in the hearts of Israel, and instead of trusting in God, they wanted a man to rule over them and deliver them. Of course, God had a plan—a plan for a future King—the King of Kings. God would turn Israel’s failure into His victory. Israel would indeed have a Man to deliver them and one day rule and reign over them—the *Man Christ Jesus!*

ORIGINS

The Philistines, however, do not first appear in the days of Samuel. Even before Delilah betrayed Samson for money and turned him over to the Gentile Philistines—much like Christ was betrayed “into the hands of men” by one He trusted (cf. Matt. 17:22; 20:18-19)—the Philistines appear in both the Biblical and secular records.

The earliest mention of the Philistines in the Bible comes from Abraham’s life in Genesis 20 and 21. Abraham told the Philistine King, Abimelech, that Sarah was his sister and not his wife, causing God to intervene. Isaac would have a similar encounter with another King Abimelech (most likely the son or grandson of the one Abraham encountered cf. Gen 26). Something often overlooked is the fact that Abraham and Isaac had friendly relations with the Philistines.

In fact, Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines “many days” (Gen. 21:34) and was blessed by God. Isaac, too, was blessed by God in the sight of the Philistines. However, one of the timeless lessons from these Philistines and their encounters with

Abraham and Isaac is that God was nearby, and rather than coming to Him, they determined to keep their distance. Eventually, the Philistines allowed fear and jealousy to turn them away from God (Gen. 26:14). In this regard, there are many *Philistines* today!

Though beyond the scope of this writing, it is worth mentioning that there is evidence to suggest that the Philistines of Abraham and Isaac’s time were different from those of the Judges’ period. In his article on the Philistines, author Christopher Eames points out that “in the Septuagint record...there are two entirely different names used to describe the Philistines. One is Φυλιστιειμ (Philistiim); the other, ἀλλόφυλοι (allophiloi). Interestingly, [the] use of the term Philistiim is found exclusively in the books from Genesis through Joshua. From Judges through the rest of the Hebrew Bible, the term allophiloi is used—a word meaning *foreigners or strangers!*”

Eames concludes that “here, then, we already see understanding of a clear distinction between two groups of ‘Philistine’ people. One from the start of the Bible through to Joshua—and then a dramatic change beginning with the Judges period, fitting with the very time in which archaeology reveals a new Mediterranean migration into the land.”¹

The word Philistine comes to us from the Egyptian word *Pelaset*—the Hebrew word for them is *Peleshet*. The earliest archaeological records of the Philistines are found in Egyptian inscriptions. They were part of a group of nine distinct peoples from the Aegean

“Eventually, the Philistines allowed fear and jealousy to turn them away from God (Gen. 26:14). In this regard, there are many *Philistines* today!”



area (Greece) known as the *Sea Peoples*. Around 1200 BC (period of the Judges), they wreaked havoc up and down the Mediterranean Coast, attacking the areas known today as Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey. According to Egyptian records, they were eventually defeated and forced to settle in the present-day land of Gaza.

An inability to expand further south would explain why the Philistines so often attempted to move east to the land of Israel, leading to many conflicts and the need for God to raise “Judges” like Shamgar, “which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel” (Judg. 3:31).

The Egyptian description of the *Peleset* as coming from the areas around Greece matches what the Bible tells us about their origins. According to the eighth-century BC prophet Amos, the Philistines were from *Caphtor* (Amos 9:7). Around 100 years later, Jeremiah said, “For the Lord will spoil the Philistines, The remnant of the country of *Caphtor*” (Jer. 47:4).

Egyptian records help as they make it clear that Caphtor (*Keftui* in Egyptian) is the island of Crete, describing it as “in the midst of the Great Green (Mediterranean Sea).” Following the etymology,

Caphtor in Greek is *Kriti*, and in English, it becomes *Crete*. The fact that the Philistines in the land of Israel or Canaan came from the Greek lands around Crete is of no minor significance. In truth, it has had a significant effect on world politics for the last 2000 years and is at the heart of the current issue and land disputes between Israel and the Palestinians.

THE PHILISTINES AND PALESTINE

It would be a massive understatement to say that there have been recent disputes between the nation of Israel and the Palestinians. These disputes are certainly not new, but the dynamics have changed over the years in some respects. Besides the Palestinians refusing to acknowledge the right of Israel to exist, they also claim that the land currently known as Israel should be called Palestine and belongs to them. Is it true that the land we call Israel today was called Palestine prior? Yes, indeed it was. And for a very long time.

However, anyone who does not recognize that the land was called Israel *long before* it was *ever* called Palestine is simply failing to recognize what the Bible and archeology have already proven. According to Warren Reinsch of

the *Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology*, “The Merneptah Stele (or Israel Stele) is an engraved stone slab which describes Pharaoh Merneptah’s military victories in 1207 b.c.e. The stele itself is dated to the year 1205 b.c.e.... It contains the earliest undisputed extra-biblical reference to Israel to date.”²



Thus, in 1207 BC, the Israelites were an organized people and an established power, not some nomadic group, as many who deny the Bible have suggested. So, how did the land of Israel become known as Palestine? Well, we can thank Roman antisemitism and the Jewish revolts of the 2nd century, not to mention the Greek heritage of Israel’s greatest enemy—the Philistines!

The English word Palestine comes from the Latin word *Pa-laestina*, which the Romans borrowed from the Greek word *Palaistine*. The name Palestine was first mentioned in the 5th century BC by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who referred to a region known as “Palaistine” located between Phoenicia and Egypt in his work, *The Histories*.

One can easily picture a Greek historian referring to a region inhabited by individuals of Greek

descent with a name derived from their own language: Palestine. Does this suggest that the land was called Palestine by anyone else? Of course not. What it does suggest is a not-so-surprising bias of a Greek writer to project the influence of Greece to lands beyond.

It wasn’t until the 2nd century AD that Roman Emperor Hadrian, seeking to add insult to injury after quelling a Jewish revolt, renamed the territory Palestine, drawing on the name of Israel’s historical adversaries, the Philistines. Though there was no assertion that those who lived there were actual descendants of the Philistines, the name was merely used to insult Jews.

From the 2nd century until 1948, the land would be called Palestine by non-Jews and Jews alike. During this time leading up to 1948, all residents of the land were called Palestinians, even the Jews. *The Jerusalem Post*, founded in 1932 by a Jew, was initially named *The Palestinian Post*. Two years after Israel was reformed in 1948, the name was changed. During WWII, in 1942, separate companies of both Jews and Arabs from the land were formed and called The Palestinian Regiment.³

Jews stopped referring to themselves as Palestinians around 1948 and almost certainly no later than 1950. It was not until around 1960 that the Palestinian Arabs dropped the extra designation and called themselves merely Palestinians.

Do these facts suggest that the rightful name today is Palestine? No. On the contrary, they clearly

point to the fact that today's Palestinians are merely one group of the whole, which was made up of both Jews and Arabs. Furthermore, the facts demonstrate that Palestinians (Palestinian Arabs) were never a separate group of people who ruled the land. On the other hand, it is clear that long before the name Palestine was forced upon the Jews, the land was called Israel and was made up of a Jewish state.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PHILISTINES

So, if the Palestinians are not descended from the Philistines, then what happened to the Philistines? The Philistines were certainly a fierce and technologically advanced group. In fact, along with the Hittites, the Philistines were one of the first to advance from Bronze Age weaponry to Iron, which provided them with a distinct advantage (cf. 1 Sam. 13:19-22).



At the time of the Exodus (1446 BC), the Philistines were so fierce and formidable that God deliberately led the people out of Egypt and in a direction to avoid them: “Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war,

and they return to Egypt” (Ex. 13:17). But their time would come to an end, and the prophet Jeremiah foretold their destruction:

“The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines....Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.

“At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, and at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands;

“Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor” (Jer. 47:1-4).

The Philistines were indeed destroyed by a nation from the north sweeping in like an “overflowing flood” and stampeded by horses and chariots. First came the Assyrians, under rulers such as Tiglath-Pileser III and Sennacherib, who exerted military pressure on the region, leading to the subjugation and destruction of several Philistine cities. Later, the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar II, completed the destruction during their campaigns in the area, which also found Jerusalem and all the land of Judah destroyed and the people exiled.

However, there is at least one huge distinction between Israel and the Philistines—the people

of Israel would live on and return to the land just as God said they would. After 70 years in exile, Cyrus the Great fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah and Isaiah and let the people return to the land of Israel and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-2 cf. Isa. 44:28; Jer. 29:10).

The Philistines were Israel's chief enemy beginning around 1200 BC. Though King David largely diminished them, they remained in the land and continued to fight against Israel and Judah until 604 BC. From them, we can see a people who were often allowed to see God's power on display, but instead of choosing to know God, they opted to fight Him and His people.

In one such example, found in 1 Samuel, chapters 5 and 6, after the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites, they placed it in the temple of their god Dagon in Ashdod.

The next morning, the statue of Dagon fell face down before the Ark. They set the statue back up, but the following morning, it fell again, this time with its head and hands broken off.

This and other events from the Philistines are a testament that "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Prov. 21:30). And "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" (Isa. 45:9).

"As for God, His way is perfect: the Word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him" (Psa. 18:30). 

1. Christopher Earnes, "Are 'Philistines' During Abraham's Time Evidence Against Bible Historicity?" Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology, February 24, 2023.
2. Warren Reinth "Merneptah Stele: Proving Israel's 3,200-Year Existence," Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology, October 26, 2018.
3. "Palestinian Regiment," https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Palestine_Regiment, January 2, 2025.

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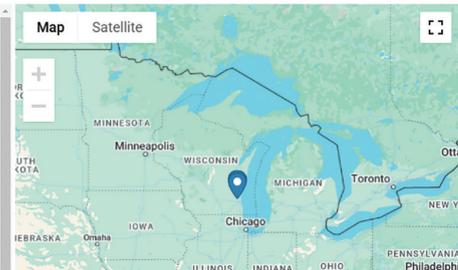
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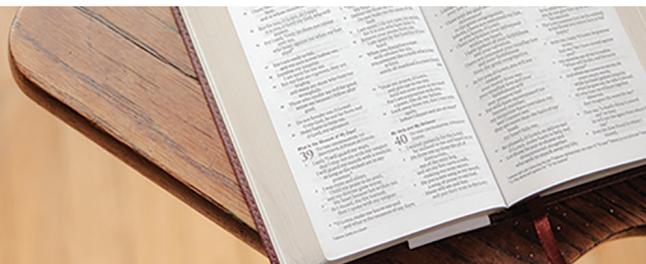
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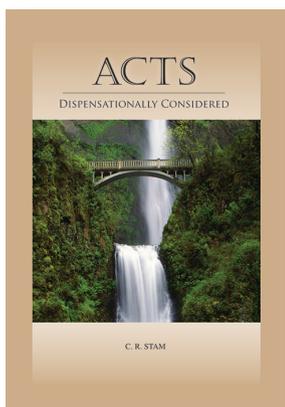




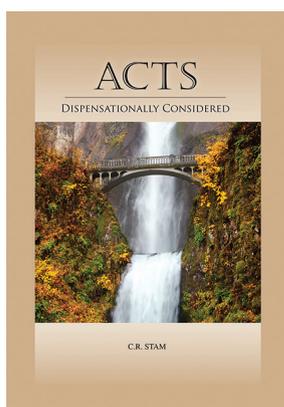
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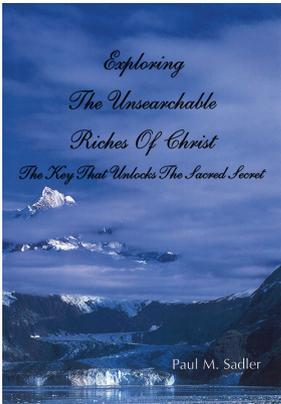
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The purpose of this book is to establish the reader in God's message for the Church, the Body of Christ, during this present age of Grace.

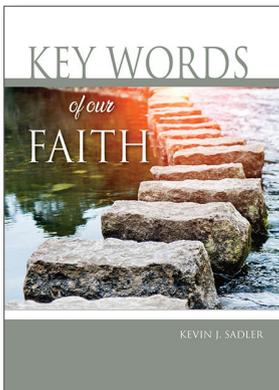


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Pastor Kevin J. Sadler
President, 2016-Current



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News & Announcements



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Discounts On BBS Material: Did you know that *Berean Bible Society* offers a 25% discount to churches, pastors, ministries, and *Berean Bible Institute* students on all regularly priced books and booklets written by BBS authors? These are excellent resources for study, and combined with the discount, the small booklets make great handouts for visitors. You can email or call us for more information.

Northern Wisconsin Bible Conference: If you would like to start the new year with a Bible conference, then come and join BBS President Pastor Kevin Sadler and others at *Lena Community Bible Church*, February 15-16, in Lena, Wisconsin. For more information, you can contact the church at 262.689.6890 or communitybiblechurch.lena@gmail.com. You can also find them online at <https://communitybiblelena.weebly.com/> or on Facebook.

Pastoral Search: *Grace Gospel Church* of Ada, Ohio, is seeking pastoral candidates and speakers to fill the pulpit. They are located at 321 N Gilbert St, Ada, OH 45810, and do have housing accommodations available for candidates/speakers, and their families. Please contact Chairman of the Board of Deacons, Matt Dyer at 419.634.2554 or tpdyer@gmail.com. Please visit <https://adagracegospelchurch.org/> to learn more about the church.

Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!

Florida Special Meetings, February 2, 2025, Nokomis, FL

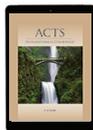
Northern Wisconsin Grace Conference, February 15-16, 2025, Lena, WI

West Valley Grace Fellowship Conference, March 22-23, Sun City West, AZ

Media Price List

E-BOOKS FROM BBS

(E-Books are digital files to read on your devices, not printed books.)



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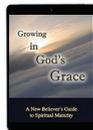
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KEVIN J. SADLER

"Transformed by Grace" is a Bible study video broadcast with Pastor Kevin Sadler. Each DVD contains one 28-minute episode.

Single Episode3.00

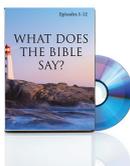
Series Set.....Contact for Price



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"A leader must have a servant's heart.
And if he has a servant's heart,
he will act like a servant and
react like a servant
when he is treated like a servant."

—Wayne Mack—



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Sunday 9:00 am ET:

- The WALK Television Network

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



TBG Network 24/7 streaming channel on Roku and Apple TV
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