

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

April 2026



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This month’s cover features La Corbière Lighthouse on Jersey, Channel Islands.

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

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A Note from the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

The words, “Opening Day,” are music to my ears. Baseball is back. From a young age, I have always loved baseball. Growing up, I collected baseball cards and spent countless hours playing baseball in the backyard. I love everything about the sport; its history, its strategy, its pace, and its nostalgic feel.

My father fostered this love by taking me to many Milwaukee Brewers games when I was growing up. I still remember the first time I walked up a ramp and saw a Major League Baseball field at County Stadium in Milwaukee. And going to a neighborhood baseball field with my dad to hit fly balls to me was one of the greatest highlights of my childhood.

Baseball seems to be the sport of choice among the men who work and have worked at *Berean Bible Society*, and this has led to fun banter among the staff. Pastor Jim Tollar is a Chicago Cubs fan. Pastor Don Hosfeld is a St. Louis Cardinals fan. Pastor Ricky Kurth is a Chicago White Sox fan, but he also became a Brewers fan because of the many years he spent traveling to the Milwaukee area to work at BBS. Since that first game I went to in Milwaukee, I have remained a Brewers fan.

There are principles for the Christian life that can be found in the sport. Baseball highlights the importance of individuals having a position and role to play, doing it to the best of one’s ability, while working as a team toward a common goal. This mirrors the Church, the Body of Christ, wherein each member has a specific role with the goal of reaching lost souls and bringing glory to our Savior (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

The game of baseball allows for adjustments and refocusing and requires humility and patience, all of which are needed for the believer’s spiritual growth. Baseball has a sacrifice play in which a player selflessly gives up an opportunity for personal glory to advance runners for the good of the team. Selflessness and sacrifice are important components of the Christian life. However, the most exciting thing in baseball is to round third base and arrive safely at home plate. Through God’s grace, and because of the sacrifice of our Savior for our sins, we have the assurance that when this life ends, we will be safe at home.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Kevin J. Sadler



Pastor Kevin J. Sadler has been serving as president since 2016. He appears on *Transformed by Grace*, a daily television program that airs nationally. In addition, he is the editor of the *Berean Searchlight*, authors grace literature, and is a Bible conference speaker.



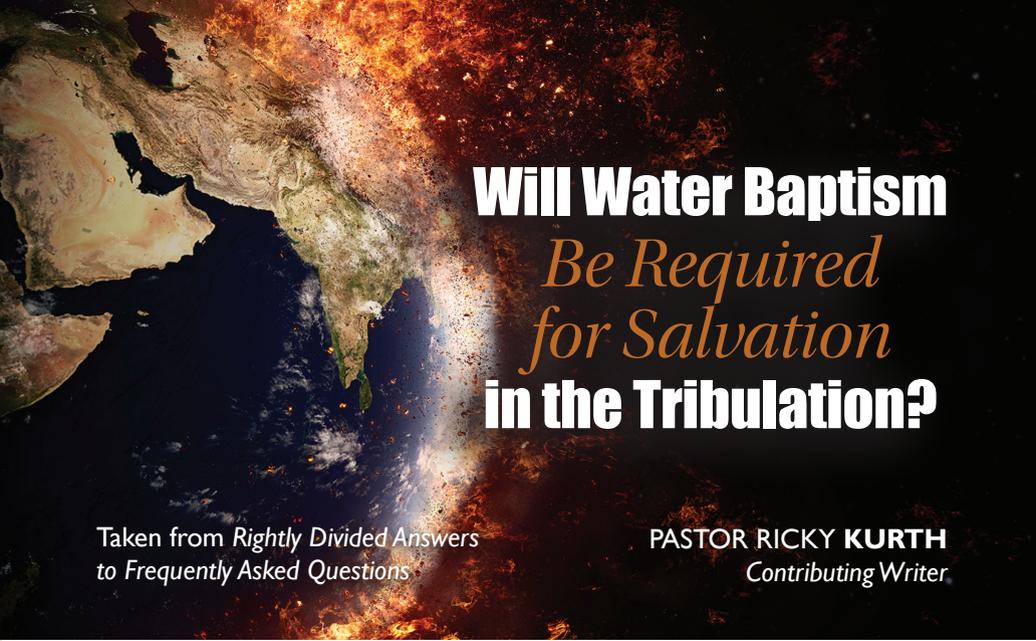
Two Important Gardens

The Bible teaches us about two important gardens with drastically different outcomes: the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8) and the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:1).

- In the Garden of Eden was the first Adam (1 Cor. 15:45). In the Garden of Gethsemane was the last Adam, Jesus Christ.
- In the Garden of Eden, Satan possessed the serpent. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Satan possessed a man, Judas (Luke 22:3).
- In the Garden of Eden, Adam took the fruit from Eve's hand (Gen. 3:6). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ took the cup from His Father's hand (John 18:11).
- In the Garden of Eden, Adam proudly chose his will over God's (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ humbly chose the Father's will (Matt. 26:39,42).
- In the Garden of Eden, Adam disobeyed God (Rom. 5:13). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ obeyed God (Phil. 2:8).
- In the Garden of Eden, God sought Adam (Gen. 3:8-9). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ sought God (Matt. 26:36).
- In the Garden of Eden, Adam's decision affected all who are related to him (Rom. 5:12-14). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ's decision affects all who are related to Him by faith (Rom. 5:15-19).
- In the Garden of Eden, Adam partook of a tree that led to death (Gen. 2:16-17). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ was arrested and willingly went to a tree that led to life (1 Pet. 2:24).
- In the Garden of Eden, Adam's rebellion brought sin, death, corruption, and suffering into the world (Rom. 5:12). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ's submission to the cross will bring deliverance and liberty from the curse to the world (Rom. 8:2,19,21).

After our Lord died on the cross, His body was placed in *"a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre"* (John 19:41). Through Christ's death and resurrection (in a garden), He has triumphed over sin and death, and over all that Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden brought to this world. Our Savior has *"abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"* (2 Tim. 1:10).

—*Pastor Kevin Sadler*



Will Water Baptism *Be Required for Salvation* in the Tribulation?

Taken from *Rightly Divided Answers
to Frequently Asked Questions*

PASTOR RICKY KURTH
Contributing Writer

There's an old saying that says that Christians should always get their theology from the Bible and *not* from Christian hymns. In our day and age, we need to add that it is likewise a bad idea to get your theology from Christian novels and films. I say this because most fictional works about the Tribulation portray Paul's gospel as the salvation message that will go forth in that day, and his gospel of salvation by grace through faith apart from water baptism is *not* the message that God will want preached in the Tribulation.

If you are wondering how I can be so sure of this, it is because Peter reminded his readers that "baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21), and he was writing to Jews who would have entered the Tribulation had the dispensation of the

mystery not interrupted God's prophetic program for Israel. This is the reason grace believers often refer to Peter's epistles as Tribulation epistles, along with the rest of the epistles from Hebrews through Jude. We believe and teach that Tribulation Jews will look to these epistles for information that is specific to them, the way members of the Body of Christ look to Paul's epistles for information that is specific to us in the present dispensation of grace.

AN OUTLINE FOR THE AGES

We see this reflected in the positioning that God has chosen to give the Hebrew epistles in the Bible. You see, the books of our New Testament do not appear in chronological order. That is, Matthew was not written first, then Mark, and so on.

These books, rather, appear in a *logical* order that reflects the flow of the ages. If this line of thinking is new to you, consider the following.

The Four Gospels come first in the New Testament because they chronicle our Lord's announcement to the people of Israel that their kingdom was "at hand" (Matt. 4:17). The Book of Acts comes after the four gospels because it records Peter's *offer* of that kingdom to the nation (Acts 3:19,20), and her *rejection* of that offer with the stoning of Stephen.

Acts then goes on to document the raising up of Paul, whom God used to introduce the mystery of the Body of Christ and the dispensation of grace. This is why the Book of Acts is followed in the Bible by Paul's epistles. The Pauline epistles provide the specific information that members of Christ's Body need to function in the dispensation of grace, so God made sure they appear in our Bibles right after the introduction of the age of grace in the Book of Acts.

But the Hebrew epistles come after Paul's epistles because they are written to *the people* who will come after us, the Jews in the Tribulation period. We know that the Epistle of Hebrews was written to Hebrews, of course, and James says that he too was writing to Jews (James 1:1).¹ And we know that these Hebrew epistles

were written to Jews *with the Tribulation in mind* because of the kinds of works that James says are required for salvation.

TRIBULATION SALVATION

James told his readers that faith alone couldn't "save" them (James 2:14), they had to *demonstrate* their faith by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked to be saved (James 2:14-17). That's because when the beast issues his mark in the Tribulation, and people are unable to buy food or clothing without it (Rev. 13:17), *many* of God's people will be hungry and naked. I believe God knew that when that day comes, people will be hesitant to share their provisions, so He made it part of the very plan of salvation that they *must* share their provisions to be saved.



This is how the Jews to whom James wrote demonstrated their faith back in his day (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32-37),² and it is what Jews will have to do *again* to be saved in the Tribulation.

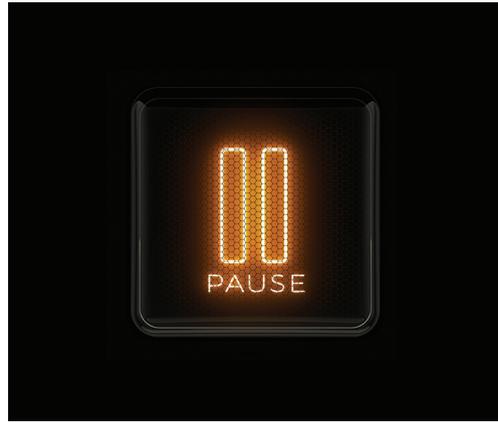
Gentiles who want to be saved in that day will also have to bless God's people in Israel with food and clothing (cf. Gen. 12:3), for the Lord made it clear that the determination of their eternal destiny will be based on whether or not they fed and clothed His brethren in Israel (Matt. 25:31-46).

So, it is clear that the Hebrew epistles were written with the Tribulation in mind. It is true, of course, that these epistles were *primarily* written to Jews who were alive at the time that those epistles were penned. But remember, those Jews would have entered the Tribulation had God not interrupted His prophetic program with the dispensation of the mystery. And so when Peter reminded his readers that "baptism doth also now save us," it is clear that the Jews to whom he wrote those words were saved by the work of water baptism (cf. Mark 1:4; 16:16; Acts 2:38), and it is just as clear that baptism will again be required for salvation when God's prophetic clock resumes ticking after the Rapture.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

Once the Tribulation begins, God will again begin to prepare the people of Israel to be the "kingdom of priests" that He means for them to be in the kingdom of heaven on earth that will follow (Ex. 19:6). This is why Peter told his readers,

"ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9). The Jews to whom he wrote were destined to be "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6; 5:10) in the kingdom, and *priests had to be baptized* (Ex. 29:1-4). But when the people of Israel rejected their kingdom by rejecting their King and His prophet Stephen, God put the kingdom program "on hold," so to speak, and ushered in the dispensation of the mystery.



But once the last trump sounds and the Rapture brings a close to the present divine interregnum, God will raise up a *new* generation of Jewish believers to be kings and priests in the kingdom. When that happens, they too will need to be baptized with water to initiate them into the priesthood in accordance with Exodus 29:1-4. And since God likes His priests to be saved, water baptism will also be required for salvation, just as it was in time past (Ezek. 36:25,26).



Grace believers are sometimes puzzled as to *why* God will revert to insisting on water baptism as a condition that must be met to be saved in the Tribulation. After all, as we have seen in our answers to previous questions, the cleansing of water baptism was just a *symbol* of the cleansing of men's *souls* by the blood of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:5). And as we have also seen, now that members of the Body of Christ already have the cleansing that His blood affords us, we stand in no further need of *the symbol* of that cleansing in water baptism. So why will God again require the symbol of that cleansing in the Tribulation? Why will He demand the "shadow" of something of which we now have the substance (Col. 2:12-17) when the Tribulation begins to unfold?

SYMBOLISM WITH SUBSTANCE

The answer is that in *our* program the substance of Christ *replaces* the symbols of Him that were found in Israel's religion, but in Israel's program God always required the symbol *with* the substance.

For instance, believers in time past were saved by the blood that Christ shed "for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:25), but they still had to offer the *symbol* of that blood by sacrificing animals. Similarly, God required all male Hebrews to be circumcised to be saved, but this was only an outward symbol of the *spiritual* circumcision that God also required of them to be saved (Jer. 4:4). In other words, they had to have the *substance* of heart circumcision along with the *symbol* of physical circumcision. In the same way, Tribulation Jews will have the substance of the cleansing of the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7), but they will be required to be washed with the symbol of that cleansing in water baptism to be saved (1 Pet. 3:21), just as in time past.

Tribulation believers will, however, finally understand *how* water baptism saves. A fuller quotation of the verse we referenced earlier from Peter's epistle reads,

"...baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

In the Tribulation, they will understand that *ultimately* they are saved "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," just as His resurrection saves us (Rom. 4:25). Water baptism will just be "the answer of a good conscience

toward God,” just as it was when Peter wrote those words to his Jewish readers.³ That is, if God says you have to be baptized to be saved, a good conscience answers by being baptized!

But the water of water baptism cannot wash away the filth of the sins committed by the flesh of men, as Peter is careful to explain. Baptism’s power to save will lie in what happens when God takes those who believe and are washed with water and washes them in the blood of Christ in response to their faith (Rev. 1:5).

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

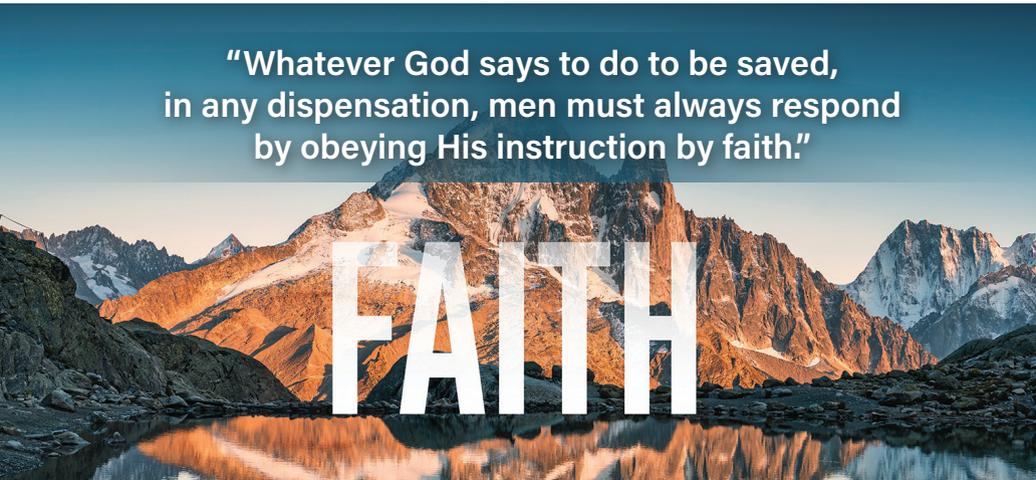
This is *always* how water baptism saved. It is what the Bible calls being “obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). The “faith” that the priests in Acts 6:7 were obedient to was the faith that Peter had preached a few chapters earlier at Pentecost, that of “repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). So when Acts 6:7 tells us

that these priests were obedient to the faith, that means they repented and were baptized.

Whatever God says to do to be saved, in any dispensation, men must always respond by obeying His instruction by faith. In time past, the obedience of faith always involved works like bringing an animal sacrifice to be accepted by God (Gen. 4:7). When the New Testament dawned, water baptism was added to what was required for the obedience of faith. That’s because men were still under the law, “shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed” to Paul (Gal. 3:23), the faith of salvation *without* works like water baptism.

Even at Pentecost, Peter called upon the “men of Judaea” and the “men of Israel” and “all the house of Israel” (Acts 2:14,22,36) to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (v. 38). In other words, he called upon *the one nation of Israel* to be obedient to the faith. But in speaking of the obedience of faith in the

**“Whatever God says to do to be saved,
in any dispensation, men must always respond
by obeying His instruction by faith.”**



FAITH

present dispensation of grace, the Apostle Paul wrote,

“...we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name” (Rom. 1:5).

Had the people of Israel been obedient to the faith as a nation, the kingdom gospel could have gone out to all nations for the obedience of faith. Someday it will, as Tribulation Jews carry the kingdom gospel to “all the world” (Matt. 24:14), giving all nations the opportunity to be obedient to the faith of “Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). But during the present dispensation of grace, Paul was given “grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations.” And his gospel of salvation by grace through faith without water baptism (1 Cor. 1:17) is the gospel that is required to be believed for the obedience of faith today.

So today, the answer of a good conscience responds to God by choosing *not* to be baptized to be saved. But after the Rapture brings an end to Paul’s apostleship among the Gentiles, water baptism will again be required for the obedience of faith in the Tribulation.

THE ASSURANCE OF OBEDIENCE

In submitting to water baptism, Tribulation believers will be able to have the same assurance of salvation that we have

when we trust Christ *without* water baptism. We see this expressed in yet another Tribulation epistle, where the writer says to his Hebrew readers:

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).

When a believer submitted to water baptism under God’s program for Israel, he could have “full assurance” that God would sprinkle his heart from an evil conscience in response to the faith he expressed in having his body washed with the pure water of baptism. This was the case in time past, as we see in Hebrews 10:22, and it will be the case again in the Tribulation, when the kingdom program resumes after the Rapture.



It has *always* been God’s desire *in every dispensation* that His people be able to rest in the assurance of sins forgiven, and He has always made this possible through the obedience of faith. Today, we can have “all riches of the full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2) by

understanding that salvation in this dispensation is by grace through faith without works (Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8,9; Titus 3:5). In time past, however, performing works like water baptism and feeding and clothing God's people brought this assurance (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:17-19). And so it will be again in the Tribulation.

Having said that, there have probably always been believers who *struggled* with their assurance even after performing the work that God required for salvation, just as there are believers today who struggle with their assurance at a time when salvation is by faith without works. But this doesn't change the fact that God has always made it possible for believers in every dispensation to enjoy the assurance of eternal security that He longs for them to have.

If you are not sure of *your* eternal destiny, I would encourage you to immerse yourself in a study of the Scriptures. Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17), the "*full assurance of faith*" (Heb. 10:22) in any dispensation can only come by hearing *more* of the Word of God, and allowing it to sink down into your soul. 

1. Here it helps to remember that James, Peter, and John, the authors of most of the books that follow Paul's epistles, *gave Paul their word* that they would confine their ministry to the circumcision (Gal. 2:9). They would have had to *break* their word to write epistles to Gentiles.
2. Ananias and Sapphira demonstrated their *lack* of saving faith when they refused to obey the Lord's command to "sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor" (Luke 18:22) "to inherit eternal life" (v. 18).
3. We know that Peter wrote to Jews, for it would have made no sense for him to tell his readers to have their "conversation honest among the Gentiles," if he were *writing* to Gentiles (1 Pet. 2:12).

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What Does Forever “with the Lord” Mean?



PASTOR DAVID HAVARD
BBS Board Member

When the Apostle Paul wrote about our state after the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, he said, “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Some people have asked if this statement means that the Body of Christ will return with the Lord at His Second Coming. Others have asked if it means that we will be with the Lord on earth during the Millennium.

Questions like these reveal a misunderstanding of what Paul meant when he said we would be “with the Lord.” While that phrase can refer to physical proximity, that is not its meaning here. And once we change how we understand it, we change how we answer questions about being “with Him” at the Second Coming or during the Millennium.

What Paul meant by “with the Lord” is not geographical proximity but relational union. We know this because Paul uses similar wording to speak of our relationship to Him and not physical proximity. In Colossians 3:3, he wrote that our life is “hid with Christ in God,” though Christ is in heaven and we are on earth. And in Ephesians 2:6, he wrote that we are seated together in Christ “in heavenly places” though we are physically here. In his letters, being “with Christ” or “in Christ” describes our shared life, identity, and destiny with Him, not our physical location.

Once we are raptured, we will never be separated from Christ again—we will never be outside His care, authority, or presence. We will always belong to Him *in the realm He places us*. Paul did not mean that wherever Jesus goes physically, the Body of Christ must accompany Him.

With this understanding of what it means to be forever “with the Lord,” we can more clearly answer the questions of whether the Body of Christ must return with Him at the Second Coming or needs to be with Him on earth during the Millennium. And the short answer to both questions is “No.”

But even if we did not understand what Paul meant by the term “with the Lord,” we should understand that the Body of Christ is not associated with the Second Coming because it deals 100% with Israel’s prophetic program on earth and has nothing to do with our heavenly mystery program. And when Revelation 19 describes Christ returning with armies of heaven, that is referring to angelic hosts, not the Body of Christ.

This same dispensational distinctive also shows that the Body of Christ will *not* inhabit the Millennium. The Millennium deals with Israel’s kingdom, Israel’s land, Israel’s covenants, Israel’s Messiah ruling from Jerusalem, and Israel’s resurrected saints reigning on earth. The Body of Christ has no covenant, no land promise, and no earthly kingdom role. Our realm is heavenly, and Paul never moves us out of it.

To be dispensationally consistent, we must understand that after the Rapture, the Body of Christ will be caught up to heaven and remain there. We do not return to earth with Christ or participate in Israel’s earthly kingdom because our sphere of blessing is *heavenly*, not earthly. There is nothing in Paul’s writings to indicate that we will have *anything* to do with this prophetic time. Instead, he consistently locates our destiny in the *heavenly places* (Eph 1:3; 2:6-7; Phil 3:20-21).

So, what does being forever “with the Lord” mean for us? It means that we will never be separated from Christ. We will always share His life, glory, and heavenly position. We will be in the realm where He is for us—the heavenly places. Our union with Him is eternal and unbreakable. Being with the Lord forever does not require following Him to earth, participating in Israel’s prophetic events, or being physically present in the Millennium. 



“FATHER, INTO THY HANDS *I Commend My Spirit*”

PASTOR KEVIN **SADLER**

BBS President

(From episode #297 of *Transformed by Grace*)



“JESUS...CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE”

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost” (Luke 23:46).

On the cross, the Lord “cried with a loud voice” when He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The work of redemption was complete. The penalty for sin was paid in full. The Greek words for “loud voice” are *meGas* and *phone*. These two Greek words together give us our English word *megaphone*. Like a megaphone, the Lord’s words, “It is finished,” were loud, clearly heard, and traveled for a distance, even throughout time and into eternity. “It is finished” was a cry of completion and ultimate victory.

The same combination of *meGas* and *phone* is used in Revelation to refer to the volume

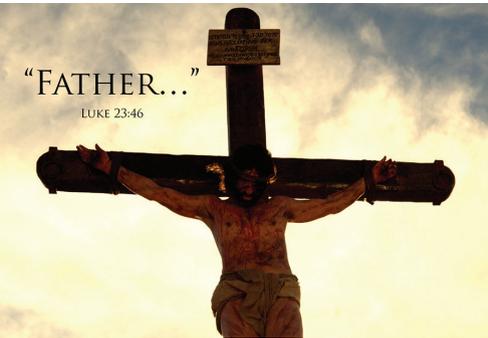
of praise from the thousands upon thousands of angels who worship the Lord around the throne in heaven (Rev. 5:11), “Saying with a *loud voice*, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (v. 12). For what Christ did for us in paying our sin debt in full, He is worthy to be worshipped with a loud voice of praise throughout eternity.

After His victory shout of “It is finished,” the Savior then said, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” Luke is the only writer to record the very last words of Christ before He died. These last words from the cross are words of peace, confidence, and love.

The Lord spoke seven times on the cross. Seven is the number of completeness and perfection in Scripture, and the cross was the perfect work of Christ

in paying for all our sins. Seven is also the number of rest in a finished work. In six days, God created all things, and it was finished. On the seventh day, He rested (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:11). Following the creation, God saw that “it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).

Just as the sixth day brought the work of creation to completion, so with the sixth utterance of the Lord, after six hours on the cross, the work of redemption was “finished.” Like the seventh day was the day of rest at creation, so the seventh saying of the Savior on the cross brought Him to the place of rest: the Father’s hands. And the work of the cross was “very good.”



“FATHER”

Christ’s seventh statement from the cross tells us about His death and how He died. Three times on the cross, Christ addressed the Father. His first word from the cross was, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Six hours later, His

fourth word was, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46). His seventh word was, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit” (Luke 23:46).

You see the separation from the Father when Christ addressed Him as “My God, My God,” and not “Father,” because the Father had turned away from His Son as He bore the sin of the world. However, after the work of redemption was complete, and Christ cried out, “It is finished,” there was no separation, and Christ addressed God as “Father” again. The sorrow brought on by the Father’s abandonment was over.

The Lord fulfilled many Scriptures throughout His life, and He did the same in His death. The Scriptures were on the Lord’s mind at the cross (Psa. 22:1; 69:21 cf. John 19:28).

With His final words before His death, the Lord addressed the Father, quoting Psalm 31:5, which is a Psalm of David: “Into Thine hand I commit My spirit.” In that Psalm, we see that David was in distress and suffering. Amid that suffering, he wrote that he was casting himself totally upon God, committing his spirit into God’s hands, and trusting fully in Him. Amid Christ’s suffering on the cross, like David, the Lord expressed His perfect trust in the Father, casting Himself totally upon the Father and committing His spirit into the Father’s hands.

“INTO THY HANDS”

Speaking of hands, in the Garden of Gethsemane the Lord told His disciples, “Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into **the hands of sinners**” (Matt. 26:45). After He rose again, the angels at the tomb reminded the women, “He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into **the hands of sinful men**, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:6-7). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter addressed His countrymen and stated, “ye have taken, and by **wicked hands** have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up” (Acts 2:23-24).

For around 12 hours or so, the Lord had been in the hands of sinful, wicked men. The hands of sinners took and bound Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. At His trials, wicked hands slapped His face. The hands of sinful men scourged Him and put a crown of thorns on His head. The hands of sinners nailed the Lord to a cross.

When the moment came for the Savior to die, all of that was behind Him. Wicked hands had done all they could do. The Lord then committed Himself to His Father’s kind and loving hands. Christ died confidently, knowing where He was going: into the Father’s hands.

For the believer in Christ, we also know where we are going. It surprises some when we express that confidence, but it’s based on our faith in God’s Word and resting on the firm foundation of God’s faithfulness. When we die and are absent from the body, we *know* we will enter the presence of the Lord in heaven (2 Cor. 5:8).

“Peter Marshall tells the story about a little boy he knew who was suffering from a terminal illness. At first he didn’t understand what was happening to him, but as the months passed, and he had to stay inside while his friends went out to play, the truth dawned on him....

“One day his mother was reading to him the stirring tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table...She read to him of the final glorious battle when so many gallant knights met their death.



“At length, she was finished and put the book down...Then he asked the question that had been playing upon his childish mind, the question his mother was dreading to answer.



‘Mother, what is it like to die?
Mother, does it hurt?’

“Quickly tears sprang to her eyes, so she excused herself to go into the kitchen to compose herself...She knew she must find a good answer. For a moment, she leaned against the kitchen cabinet, her knuckles pressed white against the surface, praying to the Lord for an answer.

“...‘Kenneth,’ she said as she returned to the next room, ‘Do you remember when you were little and you would play hard all day? When the evening came you would be so tired that when you came in, you would lie down on Mommy and Daddy’s bed and fall asleep.

“‘That was not your bed. That was not where you belonged.

“‘But you only stayed there a little while. In the morning, you were surprised to wake up and find yourself in your own bed.

“‘You were there because someone you loved had come and taken care of you. During the night while you were sleeping, your father came—with big strong arms—and carried you to your own room.

“‘Sweetheart, death is just like that. One night you are very tired and very sleepy. You fall asleep and the next morning you wake up to find yourself in another room—your own room where you belong—because the Lord Jesus has come and with His big arms, He has carried you from your home in this world to your home in heaven.’”¹

“I COMMEND”

“Commend” means to commit or entrust one’s protection, safety, and care to another. It connotes an act of depositing something valuable in a safe place or placing something with someone for protection. It’s like what you might do by putting valuables in a safe deposit box. The term conveys a secure sense of trust.

In Acts 14:23, we read that after Paul and Barnabas ordained elders, “they **commended** them to the Lord, on Whom they believed.” In Acts 20:32, Paul told the Ephesian elders, “And now, brethren, I **commend** you to God, and to the word of His grace....”

Paul entrusted these elders, along with their continued spiritual growth and ministry, to the safekeeping of the Lord and the word of His grace. These are the safest, most secure places to which Paul could possibly commend the spiritual well-being of believers.

The Father's hands are infinitely trustworthy, so when the Lord commended His spirit into the Father's hands, Christ was entrusting Himself and committing His spirit to the safest and most secure place of all.

"MY SPIRIT"

Christ committed His "spirit" into the Father's safekeeping. Scripture reveals that man is a tripartite being, "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thes. 5:23). Scottish preacher and scholar James Stalker (1848-1927) wrote the following: "What is the spirit? It is the finest, highest, sacredest part of our being...in the language of Scripture it is distinguished even from the soul as the most lofty and exquisite



part of the inner man. It is to the rest of our nature what the flower is to the plant or what the

pearl is to the shell. It is that within us which is specially allied to God and eternity."²

Death is the separation of the spirit from the body: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). The Lord's words from the cross affirm our continued existence and consciousness when the body is dead and the spirit separates from it. When our time on earth is over, our bodies die and go into the grave, but our spirit lives on in heaven.

The Lord told the believing thief on the cross, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). When the Lord died, His spirit separated from His body and went to paradise in the center of the earth, where He remained for three days. We know the Father did receive the Son's spirit into His hands, because, three days later, the Son's spirit was rejoined to His body in the tomb, and God raised Christ from the dead. And our Savior walked out of that tomb in power and glory.

For the believer in Christ, we know that when we pass from this life, our spirit will be entrusted into the Father's hands, and we will consciously enter God's presence in heaven. Then, one glorious day, our spirits will be rejoined with our bodies at the Rapture. If we die prior to the Rapture, we will follow our Savior's pattern: as Christ

died, we will die. As His body was buried, so our bodies will be buried (Rom. 6:3-5). As He rose from the dead, we will rise again (1 Cor. 6:14). As our Savior is alive forevermore (Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18), we will live forever.

“HE GAVE UP THE GHOST”

The Greek word translated, “gave up the ghost” means to breathe one’s last. After saying, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,” our Lord Jesus breathed out heavily and died. It’s important to note that Christ *did* die on the cross. He did not just swoon, faint, or lose consciousness. He actually died. His death was a real death.

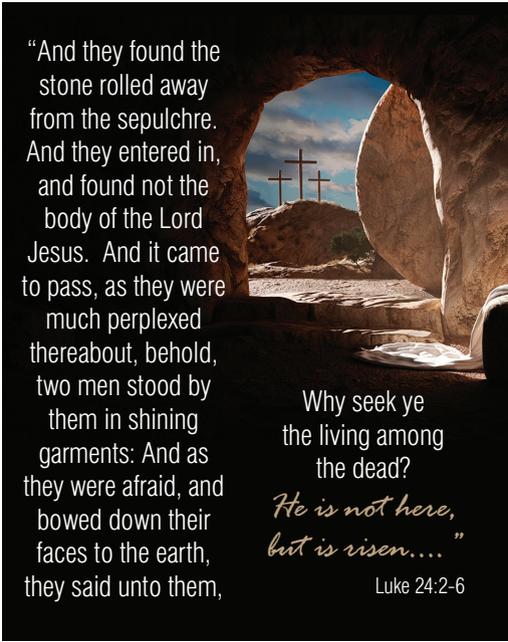
In John’s Gospel, we read how the Roman soldiers carefully checked to make sure that Christ had died: “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs” (John 19:33 cf. Mark 15:43-45). In addition, one of the soldiers pierced the Lord’s side with a spear, and blood and water came out, indicating that Christ’s blood had separated and His heart no longer functioned; He had unquestionably died. The Apostle John testified that he saw this with his own eyes (John 19:34-35).

Our Savior died for us (Rom. 5:8). He died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3).

In John 19:30, we read, “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and

gave up the ghost.” At the moment of Christ’s death, He “bowed His head.” The Lord’s head did not suddenly and helplessly drop to His chest; it did not flop forward. The Lord slowly and calmly lowered and bowed His head. He bowed His head in peace as He died and committed His spirit into the Father’s hands. Christ’s death was a graceful departure from the brutality of this world and His crucifixion.

Three days later,



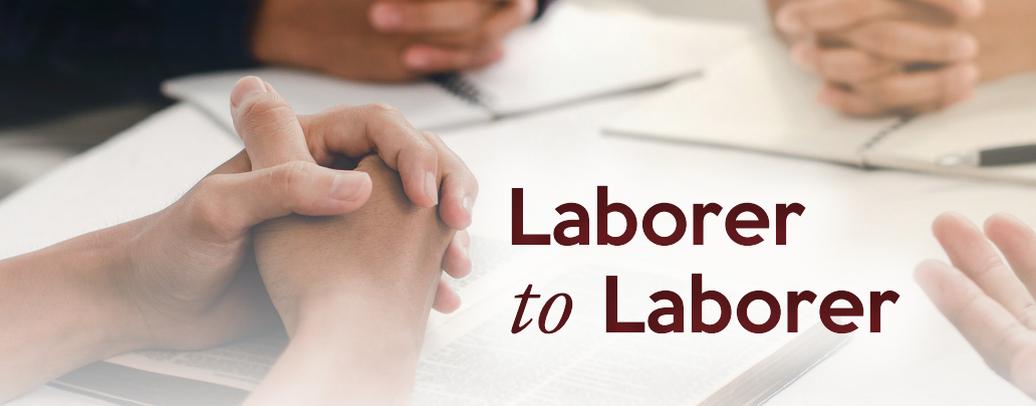
“And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them,

Why seek ye the living among the dead?
He is not here, but is risen....”

Luke 24:2-6

1. “Into Your Hands,” contributed by Tom Shepard, Sermon Central, November 28, 2017, <https://sermoncentral.com/sermons/into-your-hands-tom-shepard-sermon-on-easter-192718?page=4>.

2. James Stalker, “The Seventh Word from the Cross/The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ,” Bible Hub, Accessed March 3, 2026, https://biblehub.com/library/stalker/the_trial_and_death_of_jesus_christ/chapter_xx_the_seventh_word.htm. 



Laborer *to* Laborer

THERE'S A JOB TO DO!

As we eagerly await the returning of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church (1 Thes. 4:13-18), He has given each of us, as members of the Body of Christ, a job to do while we remain on the earth. Before continuing, however, it is important to realize that our salvation is NOT based on our works. We could never be “good enough” before a just and holy God. Ephesians 2:8,9 make it abundantly clear that salvation is not of works but by grace through faith. God only requires each person to simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross (Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). We should thank God every day for His gift of salvation.

Nevertheless, it's important to realize that God still has work for us to do. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul tells us that believers are “*created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*” This verse goes on to say, “*that we should walk in them.*” The word “should” is a very important word in this verse. We are not required to do good works, but it is God's desire for us to do good works and live according to the commands He's given for this dispensation.

Maybe you're wondering, what specific job has God given us to do? Paul's epistles are filled with commands from the Lord regarding our actions and relationships with others and are too numerous to mention in this short article (see Rom. 12:9-21; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:17-32). Underlying all these commands, however, is the fact that we are ambassadors for Christ with specific “marching orders” as found in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and Ephesians 3:8-10. As His ambassadors, we are given the responsibility and privilege to represent our Savior to a lost world. For this task, each believer will someday give an account to the Lord (Rom. 14:10-11; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Today, though, many in the Body of Christ incorrectly believe that our commission is found at the end of the Four Gospels (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-20; Lk. 24:46-49; Jn. 20:21-23) and in Acts 1:1-11. While it is true that the Lord was commissioning the 11 apostles with a job to do, He was commissioning them to proclaim the gospel of the coming kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 1:15). This commission was to start in Jerusalem and work its way outward to the world (Acts 1:8). This commission was not fulfilled.

We know from Scripture that Israel rejected Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit when they stoned Stephen (Acts 7:57-59), and because of this, Israel was set aside in unbelief and their commission was put “on hold” (Romans chapters 11-13).

With this delay in the prophetic program, God brought in the dispensation of grace, as revealed to the Apostle Paul (Eph. 3:1-12). With this new program, God is not dealing with nations. Instead, He is dealing with individuals, and He has given all believers a job to do. (Don't forget what Paul told the believers in Philippi, *“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do...”* [Phil. 4:9]). However, in all this, it is the love of Christ that's the motivation (2 Cor. 5:14), and as His ambassadors, we believers have been given by Him the *“ministry of reconciliation”* (v. 18). We are to tell the lost they can be reconciled to God the Father, through the merits of the shed blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Unbelievers need to hear the good news that *“...He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Cor. 5:21).

As ambassadors for Christ, we are also instructed to help believers see God's mystery program which *“fulfil[ed] the Word of God”* (Col. 1:24-26 cf. Rom. 16:25-26). All believers need to understand that the *“unsearchable riches of Christ”* and the *“fellowship of the mystery”* (Eph. 3:8-9) were hidden in the mind of God and cannot be found in the Old Testament or Gospels. Understanding the mystery program helps clear up much confusion that exists in the church today regarding salvation, the believer's walk, and even the prophetic end times.

The Bible is very clear that it is God's will for *“all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim. 2:4). Our heavenly Father wants all people to trust His Son for their salvation and to understand how He's working. Unfortunately, many pastors and leaders have ignored the mystery message—either because they do not see its distinction or they do not agree that God is doing something different, thereby mixing law and grace. As ambassadors for Christ in this *“present evil world”* (Gal. 1:4), there's an important job to do, and we should follow the correct job description to please our heavenly Father.

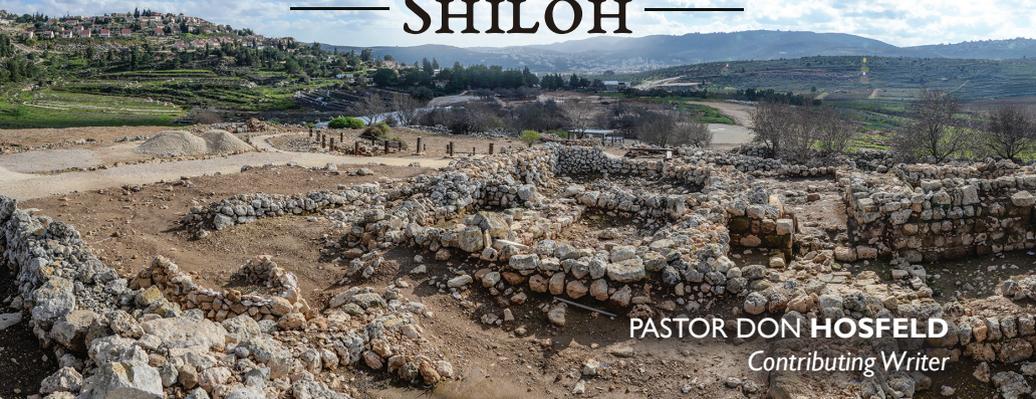
—Pastor Jim Tollar



Job description
Ambassadors for Christ

Archaeology and the Bible

— SHILOH —



PASTOR DON HOSFELD
Contributing Writer

For more than three centuries after Israel entered the land of Canaan, a quiet hilltop site in the central highlands served as the nation’s spiritual heart. Long before the splendor of Solomon’s Temple rose over Jerusalem, Shiloh was the place where God set His name and where Israel gathered to worship, sacrifice, and seek the Lord. Though often overshadowed by Jerusalem in biblical memory, Shiloh occupies a vital place in the story of Israel—and recent archaeological discoveries have brought this ancient site back into the light.

THE PLACE WHERE GOD SET HIS NAME

Our introduction to Shiloh comes in Joshua 18:1. After the conquest of the land, “the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there.” For generations, this sacred tent—built at Sinai, carried through the wilderness, and now resting in the promised land—became the center of Israel’s worship.

Moses foretold that God would choose a place for His name (Deut. 12:5,11), and for centuries that place was Shiloh. Here, the tribes presented offerings, kept the appointed feasts, and experienced the presence of the Lord dwelling in their midst. During the time of the Judges, Shiloh served as the nation’s spiritual anchor, even as Israel struggled with inconsistency and idolatry.

With the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant located there, Shiloh was not merely a geographical spot—it was a theological statement. It represented God’s faithfulness, His accessibility, and His desire to dwell among His people.

SCENES OF SCRIPTURE: HANNAH, SAMUEL, AND ELI

Shiloh comes to life most vividly in the story of Hannah, a woman whose grief and faith still resonate across the centuries. First Samuel 1 records her yearly visits to Shiloh, where she poured out her soul before the Lord, praying for a son. God answered her prayer, and Samuel was born—a child who would become a mighty prophet and the last judge of Israel.

As a young boy, Samuel ministered before Eli the priest in Shiloh. It was there that he first heard the voice of the Lord calling his name (1 Sam. 3:4-10).

Yet Shiloh also became a place of warning. The corruption of Eli's sons and the nation's spiritual decline led to catastrophe. When Israel presumptuously carried the Ark into battle against the Philistines, it was captured, and a messenger ran to Shiloh with the dreadful news. Eli fell backward, and "his neck brake, and he died" (1 Sam. 4:18). The Ark never returned to Shiloh again.

Jeremiah later pointed to Shiloh as a sobering reminder that God does not bless empty ritual. "Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh," the Lord warned, "and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer. 7:12). The devastation of Shiloh stood as a theological monument: privilege brings responsibility.

SHILOH REDISCOVERED



For centuries, its location faded from memory. But in 1838, American explorer Edward Robinson identified the ruins of ancient Shiloh at Khirbet Seilun, about 20 miles north of Jerusalem, laying the groundwork for modern investigation.

In recent seasons, Associates for Biblical Research (ABR) has produced the most consequential finds—evi-

dence that sharpens the picture of Shiloh's sacred area and points to the tabernacle's location. Excavations have exposed a monumental platform, dating back to the early Iron Age (around 1200-1000 BC), whose size, orientation, and associated cultic finds make it a prime candidate for the location where the tabernacle once stood.¹ Discoveries in and around this area include stone altar horns and a ceramic pomegranate, finds that comport with Israelite worship during Shiloh's biblical period.²

ELI'S GATE: A THRESHOLD OF WARNING

Remarkably, the gate of the city, the location where Eli learned of the Ark's capture, and where he fell backwards and died (1 Sam. 4), has likely been found.³ Eli's gate becomes more than a geographical marker—it is a theological threshold. Here, Israel's presumption was unmasked: ritual without repentance met judgment. Standing at the gate, we are reminded that access to God is never mechanical. Even at Shiloh, privilege demanded holiness.

LESSONS FOR US TODAY

Although we live in a different dispensation, and God's program for Israel under the law differs from His program for the Body of Christ today, the spiritual lessons of Shiloh remain relevant. Paul reminds us in this present age of grace:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16 cf. 2 Cor. 6:16).

What Shiloh was externally to Israel, the believer is internally today—a dwelling place of the living God. The warning spoken through Jeremiah also carries a timeless principle: ritual is no substitute for devotion. God desires worship that flows from transformed hearts.

Paul urges us, “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12:1). True worship today is not centered on a location, but on a life yielded to the One Who saved us by His grace. 

1. Voong, Lien. “New Discoveries in the Search for the Tabernacle: *Digging for Truth* Episode 247.” *Associates for Biblical Research*, Accessed 29 May 2025, <https://biblearchaeology.org/mediainfo/digging-for-truth/episodes/5231-new-discoveries-in-the-search-for-the-tabernacle-digging-for-truth-episode-247>.

2. Eames, Christopher. “*Altar Horns Uncovered at Shiloh*.” *Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology*, 4 Nov. 2019, <https://armstronginstitute.org/200-altar-horns-uncovered-at-shiloh>. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.

3. “New Findings at Shiloh Continue to Confirm Biblical Narrative, Archaeologist Says.” *ALL ISRAEL NEWS*, <https://allisraelnews.com/new-findings-at-shiloh-continue-to-confirm-biblical-narrative-archaeologist-says>. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.

Question Box



“Could you address the subject of fasting during the Church age?”

As the Gentile church at Antioch prepared to send Paul and Barnabas on their first apostolic journey, Luke records:

“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:3).

It is usually assumed that “fasting” belonged to the law. However, the writings of Moses are silent in regard to the matter. Thus, we are to understand that “fasting” falls within the parameters of a horizontal truth, and we believe there is liberty under grace to fast today. In fact, God is well pleased when we do, as long as it never becomes a legalistic practice (Col. 2:20-23).

Have you ever become so engrossed in a project that you deliberately abstained from eating? If so, you fasted! Spiritually speaking, the fast is merely time alone with the Lord, whether it is set aside to pray about a need or meditate upon the Word of God.

When the saints at Antioch were faced with an important decision, they fasted and prayed. While our time with the Lord and His Word is always beneficial, the fast itself doesn’t convey a special blessing or make us more spiritually minded (see also Acts 14:23; 27:33; 1 Cor. 7:5).

—*Pastor Paul Sadler*

*“To every thing there is a season,
and a time to every
purpose under the heaven.”*

—Ecclesiastes 3:1—



BBS

Letter

Excerpts



From Our Inbox:

(Responding to *Two Minutes with the Bible* “The Resurrected Body”) “AWESOME—Thank you for the Spirit-guided study/research required to bring us these marvelous truths about our future ‘redeemed’ body!”

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to *Berean Searchlight*) “I received my first issue this morning. It truly was a blessing. Thank you so much. God bless.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “One Unifying Baptism”) “Well done. Love your teaching, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture!”

From Pennsylvania:

“Please accept this offering. May it help in your work to spread God’s Word.”

From Our Mailbox:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*) “I enjoy your teaching and how you teach!”

From South Carolina:

“God bless you all for spreading the gospel to the world!”

From Our Mailbox:

(Responding to *Berean Searchlight*) “Just a note of thanks for your faithfulness in sending the *Berean Searchlight*.”

From Our Mailbox:

“Thank you for regularly sending the *Berean Searchlight*. Also, we are blessed to watch *Transformed by Grace*. We continue to pray for the upcoming Grace Study Bible.”

From the UK:

“I just wanted to say thanks for the magazines you’ve been sending me...they have edified my soul and caused me to think, so I just wanted to say thank you.”

From the Philippines:

(Responding to *Berean Searchlight*) “Good day, so thankful for your ministry. I have received two copies of the *Berean Searchlight* magazine of October and November 2025. And I’m so blessed to have them. I keep on learning the Word, rightly divided. I also share it with my fellow pastors here in Tacloban, Philippines. Thank you for your great work in the ministry of Christ.”

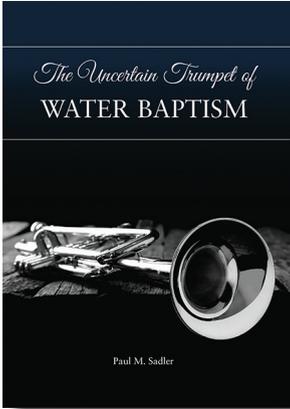
From Our Mailbox:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace*) “I found you guys years ago, and it seems like I learn something new most every time I listen to Pastor Kevin. So grateful for all you do.”

From Arizona:

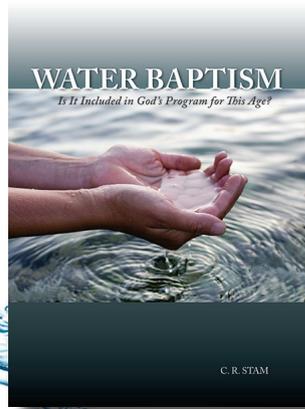
“Enclosed find a small donation for wherever needed. More than ever (I’m 92 now), I am so grateful for the *Searchlight*. Everything good comes from the hand of God!”

Studies on Water Baptism



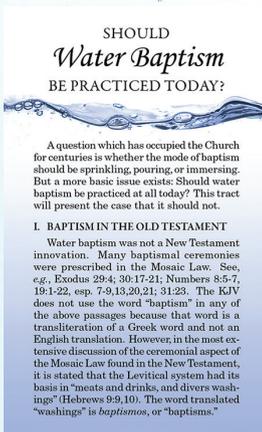
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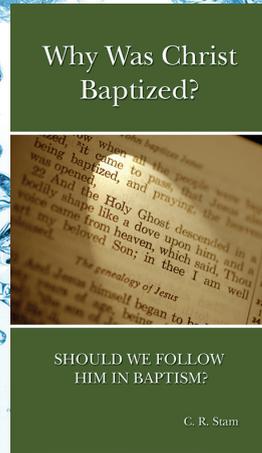
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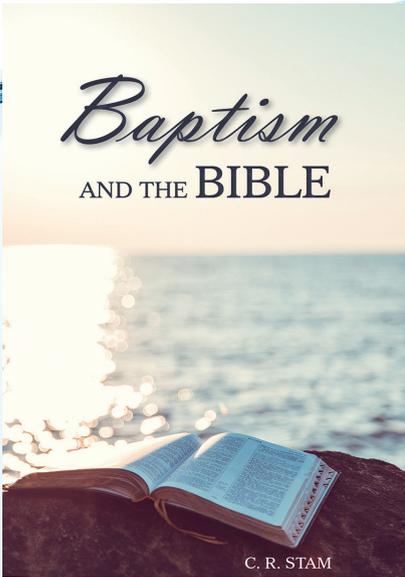
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News & Announcements



57th Annual BBF Conference: On June 21-25, the *Berean Bible Fellowship* will be holding its annual summer conference at *Community Bible Church* in Tipp City, Ohio. This year's theme is "Foundational Truths." The daily Bible Hour speaker is Pastor Andy Kern of *Falls Bible Church*, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, whose messages will be based on "Living in Awe of God." Pastor Kevin Sadler, Pastor Jim Tollar, various BBS Board members, and other grace pastors from around the country will be speaking at this five-day event. For more information or to download a brochure, please visit bbfnews.org.

Pastoral Epistles: *Pastoral Epistles*, by C. R. Stam, will be back in stock soon. Please watch our website or call BBS for its availability. This commentary covers 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, verse by verse. As with nearly all future works printed by BBS, this book is being reprinted in paperback.

BBS Staff: The current staff that serves the Lord at BBS are Pastor Kevin Sadler (President), Pastor Jim Tollar (Business Manager), Jessica Sadler (Graphic Designer), Christine Mulholland (Administrative Assistant), Jessica Emmons (Mailroom Manager), Vicki Sadler (Office Assistant), Katelyn Sadler (General Assistant), and Randy Wiskirchen (Consultant). Working remotely for BBS are Pastor David Havard (Ministry Correspondence Coordinator), Pastor Don Hosfeld (Social Media and Marketing Manager), Richard Church (Webmaster), and our proofreaders: Alan Neubauer, Deron Filip, Danette Bradford, Dan Dobler, and Valerie Hosfeld. Please pray for us!

Correction: We mistakenly listed Pastor Robert Hanna as the author of "Are You Gambling with Eternity?" on page 4 in last month's issue. Pastor Ricky Kurth is the author of this article. We apologize for this oversight.

Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!

Iowa Grace Bible Conference
May 16-17, Wall Lake, IA

BBF Summer Conference
June 21-25, Tipp City, OH



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COMMENTARIES

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Acts Volume 2 (C. R. Stam).....	26.00	Paul, His Apostleship and Message.....	11.00
Romans (C. R. Stam).....	20.00	Things That Differ	12.00
1 Corinthians (C. R. Stam).....	15.00	The Lord's Supper and the Bible.....	9.00
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Galatians (C. R. Stam).....	18.00	Two Minutes with the Bible (Devotional)	14.00
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Philippians (P. Sadler).....	15.00	Exploring the Unsearchable Riches of Christ. \$15.00	
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Peter (P. Sadler).....	15.00	Runaways, <i>Running from God</i>	10.00
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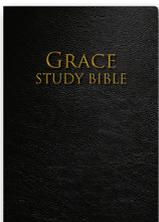
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