

The

# Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

December 2003



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## From the Editor to You:

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Dear Friends in Christ,

While Pastor Sadler is busy this month with other ministry, it's my privilege to greet you for him in the name of the Lord Jesus, and share with you a word about the busy holiday season in which we find ourselves.

It is often said that Christmas is a time of *giving*. As I read through Pastor Stam's memoirs, I was reminded of how selflessly he *gave himself* to the proclamation of God's Word rightly divided, and how all of our lives are the richer for it.

That got me to thinking. In over 40 years of receiving Christmas presents, I can count on one hand the number of presents I actually *remember*. But I vividly remember *the people who gave themselves* to me over the years, and not just in December.

When Pastor Stam hired me in 1975, he gave me more than just an opportunity to work in the service of the Lord. He gave *himself* to me as a friend and mentor, hour after hour, many of those hours coming after our workday hours at BBS were through.

A few years later, Brother Bernie Mack and the church board of *Faith Bible Church* in Steger, Illinois, gave me more than just the opportunity to pastor their church. They and their faithful congregation *gave themselves* to me, and to the Lord, and after nearly 25 years they *continue* to give of themselves on a regular basis.

Since we are made in God's image, I'm wondering if God doesn't feel the same way I do about gifts and giving. Of course, unlike me, He never forgets any of the material gifts that He receives, for He knows that every dollar given to His work is money that people could spend on themselves and their personal needs. But who can doubt that the givers who warm His heart most are people like the Macedonians, whom Paul says gave financially "beyond their power," but who "first gave *their own selves* to the Lord" (II Cor. 8:1-5).

Each December we receive many year-end financial contributions for the Lord's work here at BBS. But the gift that He will cherish most from you this season is *you*. After all, *you* are the one gift that no one else on earth can give Him! If it's truly the thought that counts, the gift of *you* shows that you put a lot of thought into your giving. So be sure to give the most important Person in your life what He really wants this Christmas!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ricky Kurth  
*Executive Administrator*

# Time to Face the New Year

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

As the old year ends and the new year begins, I'm reminded that our month *January* is named after *Janus*, the mythical Roman god of gates and doorways. Janus had two faces which looked in opposite directions, just as January looks *back* on the old year and *forward* to the new. Hypocritical people are often called "Janus-faced" or *two-faced*. Abraham Lincoln, not known for his good looks, was once called Janus-faced. He responded, "If I had two faces, do you think I'd wear this one?"

We can avoid being Janus-faced *spiritually* by putting off the old man and putting on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24). But many Christians find this difficult. Some feel they could more easily muster up the spiritual fortitude to live a consistent Christian life if they could just speak to the Lord "face to face" on a daily basis, as did Moses (Ex. 33:11). This blessing is of course not available to us during this dispensation—or is it?

When Paul told the Corinthians that one day they too would see the Lord "face to face" (I Cor. 13:12), he spoke not of the day when they would see His face in heaven, but of a face-to-face relationship with the Lord that they actually lived to see and enjoy. You see, as Paul wrote these words the Bible was not yet complete. Consequently, men were able to see God only as "through a glass, darkly." The crude glass of ancient days gave men an unclear view of what was on the other side.

It reminds me of how before the launch of satellite telescopes, Earth-based telescopes labored under the limitation of having to peer at the stars through the earth's atmosphere, which distorted man's view of the heavens. One scientist likened it to bird-watching from the bottom of a lake! But the launch and perfecting of the Hubble telescope gave science a crystal clear image of Creation.

In much the same way, the addition of Paul's last epistles completed the Word of God (Col. 1:25), and launched our understanding into the heavens (Eph. 1:3). Now as we look into the pages of God's completed revelation, we are able to see God Himself "face to face."

Paul used yet another metaphor to drive this point home. Looking into the unfinished Word of God was also like looking into the crude mirrors of those days. Mirrors in Paul's day gave imperfect reflections, and so while everyone else knew exactly what Paul looked like, Paul himself knew what he looked like only "in part" (I Cor. 13:12). Similarly, with the Bible incomplete, men had an unclear view of the image of God. But once the Word of God was complete, Paul predicted: "then shall I know even as also I am known," i.e., then he would know God as clearly as men knew *him*.

Thus there is no excuse for us to be two-faced Christians. As we peer daily into the pages of the written Word of God, we can see God "face to face," and can sculpt our lives into His image:

**"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).**



# Studies in the Book of Revelation

## Revelation 1:18-3:22

By Paul M. Sadler

**F**or the last few weeks I've been reading the Journals of Lewis and Clark. I must say it's a remarkable account of heroism. In 1803 President Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to explore the Pacific Northwest, shortly after the Louisiana Purchase from the French. It took them approximately a year to acquire the necessary supplies and put together the forty-member expedition. Each member of the team was the best of the best in his particular field, and for good reason.

On May 14, 1804, the expedition left St. Louis, traveling northward through South Dakota into west central North Dakota where they spent the winter. This was the farthest west that any white man had ever journeyed. On April 3rd the following spring, Lewis and Clark led the expedition westward into Montana, uncertain of what they would face as they resumed their journey into the great *unknown!*

The fear of the unknown can be unsettling. We believe this is especially true of the unbeliever who senses the world is on the eve of destruction, but doesn't realize the seriousness of his unsaved

condition. Since these things are spiritually discerned, we bear the responsibility to warn men everywhere to flee the wrath to come. Paul himself reasoned with Felix regarding righteousness, temperance and the judgment to come (Acts 24:25).

The love of God sent His dear Son to the Cross that we might enjoy a knowledge of sins forgiven and deliverance from the day of His vengeance. But if the salvation which is in Christ Jesus is rejected, God will pour out the fierceness of His wrath upon the unbeliever. Before we can effectively warn men, we must first be equipped with a better understanding of *things to come* ourselves. This is why it is essential to proclaim the whole counsel of God, which includes the Book of Revelation. Of course, we must always do so in light of Paul's gospel, where we are instructed to rightly divide the Word of truth.

### **THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

Although men speak of the end of the world in terms of a nuclear holocaust or a worldwide plague, the fact of the matter is, God will have the final word in the affairs

of His creation, as clearly foretold in the Apocalypse. He is sovereign! Consequently, “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?” (Dan. 4:35).

“The cost of testifying for Christ at that day will be extremely high.”

But some question, if God is in control then why does He allow evil to seemingly prevail in the world? Brethren, today God is not charging men with their sins; rather, He is giving them an opportunity to believe the gospel. That’s grace! This does not mean He has forgotten their unrighteous ways. Mark these words and mark them well, the unbeliever who *rejects* the gospel is storing up the wrath of God against himself. A record of his sins is being kept “against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5 cf. II Cor. 5:19).

**“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death.”**  
—Rev. 1:18

When the Lord gave Peter the keys of the kingdom, He essentially gave the apostle the *authority* to act on His behalf regarding matters of the kingdom. This, however, did not include the power over death and hades, which belongs to Christ alone. Even though the

tribulation saints will be marked for death by the Anti-Christ, they need not fear death, for Christ has power over it. He is the resurrection and the life! This will be especially consoling in the coming day of the Lord, seeing that martyrdom will reach proportions never before seen. As we know, the Holocaust during World War II was mainly confined to Europe, but the one that lies ahead will be global in its scope (Rev. 6:7-11). The cost of testifying for Christ at that day will be extremely high.

### THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA

**“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (Rev. 2:1).**

John is instructed to write to the angel of the church at Ephesus. It is obvious from the context that he wasn’t writing to a heavenly angelic being. The term “angel” is the Greek word *aggelos* or messenger. In fact, it is sometimes translated “messenger” in the Scriptures. For example, the Lord said: “For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Matt. 11:10). John the Baptist was God’s *messenger* [*aggelos*] who was sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

So John is writing to the messenger or pastor of the local assembly located at Ephesus. Although this letter contains specific instructions for this particular assembly,

the scope of it is much broader. We believe the letters to the seven churches in Asia were meant to be encyclical. This is confirmed by the repeated reference to “the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2:7). In other words, these letters will be distributed among all the kingdom assemblies for instruction, similar to Paul’s epistles today. Just as we turn to Paul’s revelation for the commands of Christ for the Church, the tribulation saints will turn to the Hebrew epistles for their marching orders, with special emphasis on these seven letters.

As we have seen, the Church, the Body of Christ is not the subject of chapters two and three of the Book of Revelation. While this runs contrary to Church tradition it is nevertheless the true testimony of Scripture. Both the terminology and phraseology throughout these chapters are completely foreign to Paul’s Gentile epistles. However, they are frequently found in the Prophetic Writings. The following comparison demonstrates our point:

When the 12 Apostles queried the Lord concerning the end of the world, the Master delivered what has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse. A casual reading of the discourse reveals that *the gospel of the kingdom* will be preached in the coming tribulation (Matt. 24:14). Under this gospel it will be necessary to call Israel to repentance at the beginning of the tribulation since she has a covenant relationship with God. Like in the days of John the Baptist, she will have to perform works that are worthy of repentance. For example:

**“And the people asked him [John the Baptist], saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat [food], let him do likewise.... And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:10,11,14).**

Once this covenant relationship is reestablished it will be

1. The tree of life (Gen. 3:22)
2. Synagogue (Mark 1:23)
3. Balaam and Balak (Num. 23:1 cf. 31:16)
4. He that overcometh (I John 5:4,5)
5. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 11:15)
6. Him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God (Luke 12:8)

1. The tree of life (Rev. 2:7)
2. Synagogue (Rev. 2:9)
3. Balaam and Balac (Rev. 2:14)
4. He that overcometh (Rev. 2:26)
5. He that hath an ear, let him hear (Rev. 2:29)
6. I will confess His name... before His angels (Rev. 3:5)

necessary for each Israelite to place his *faith* in the Messiah and willingly submit to the rite of water baptism as an expression of his faith. This helps us to understand a statement the Son of Man makes to each of the seven churches in Asia. He says *seven* times, “I know thy works” (Rev. 2:2). That is, thy works of circumcision, repentance, and water baptism. In that day, faith will express itself through works of repentance and water baptism. As James says, “faith without works is dead.” Unlike the gospel of the grace of God, the kingdom gospel is based upon a performance system.

In addition, the Lord commends many of these kingdom saints for their faithful service and good works after their conversion. “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first” (Rev. 2:19). Not only does the Lord acknowledge their initial works of repentance, but also their good works that followed after. While we *should* exercise good works as members of the Body of Christ, under the kingdom gospel fruit bearing was an evidence of salvation. Hence, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15-20).

Another reason we are not the subject of these seven letters centers around the *hope* of these believers. If John was writing to the members of the Body of Christ, as many teach, then the Rapture would have to be post-tribulation, for the hope he holds out to his readers is the *Second Coming of Christ*. For those who rightly

divide the Word of truth this is unthinkable!

On more than one occasion, the Son of Man challenges these tribulation saints to “watch” and “hold fast,” endure to the end until He comes. Those who fail to do so He warns: “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Matt. 24:36-44 cf. Rev. 3:3; 19:11,12).

### THE DOOR OF OUR HEART

**“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).**

If there is one verse in the arsenal of the evangelists that is the capstone of his gospel presentation this would be the passage. “Dear sinner friend, if you will simply open the door of your heart and receive the Lord Jesus by faith, He will come in and save you from your sins and give you the free gift of eternal life.”



Christian artists have also sought to capture this moment by portraying the lowly Savior standing at a door, which represents the door of the sinner’s heart. If you look closely there is no latch on the Lord’s side of the door; therefore, it must be opened by the sinner from his side so the Lord can



enter. This sounds positively romantic, but this passage has absolutely nothing to do with salvation in the administration of Grace. In fact, the same can be said in the coming day of the Lord.

We must remember that the Son of Man is not presented as the Savior in the Book of Revelation, but the Judge of all the earth. James, speaking of this same period states: “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door” (James 5:9). We must also bear in mind that when John writes to the seven churches in Asia he is addressing *believers*—both the faithful and the unfaithful. If we “plug in” the parable of the wedding feast that the Lord delivered during His earthly ministry, it will help us to place Revelation 3:20 in its proper context.

**“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat [food], and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore**

**ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not” (Luke 12:35-40).**

Essentially, the Son of Man will sit in judgment when He returns to the earth in power and glory. When He knocks at the door upon His return, those kingdom believers who are faithfully watching and waiting will open immediately and be ushered into the blessings of the kingdom. They will have the honor of dining with Him at the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9,10).



But those who follow in the footsteps of the Laodiceans are in danger of suffering great loss. The Laodiceans were neither cold nor hot; they were lukewarm due to *apostasy* (Rev. 3:14-18). Clearly, the riches of this world were more important to them than the things of the Lord. Thus the Lord desired that they be either cold or hot. A hot drink is only satisfying if it's steaming hot. In like manner, a cold drink is only refreshing if it's kept cold. However, a hot or cold drink that has turned lukewarm is undesirable.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...” (Rev. 3:19,20). Those who are unfaithful at that day will do well to heed this warning,

otherwise the Son of Man will spew them out of His mouth. Those who fail to repent will enter into the kingdom, but will be shut out from all the blessings the Lord will bestow upon the faithful, including the marriage feast of the Lamb.

### A DOOR IN HEAVEN

**“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne” (Rev. 4:1,2).**

According to the traditional view, as the Laodicean age of the Church closes an opened door appears in heaven. Upon the command to “Come up hither” the Church, the Body of Christ is said to be caught up to glory, commonly known as the Rapture. Once again, we must remind the reader that the events recorded in the Book of Revelation are entirely *futuristic*. Therefore, the Apostle John is describing what will transpire *after* the Rapture.

Four times in the record, *heaven* is said to be opened in the coming tribulation. Interestingly, with each occurrence a significant event takes place (Rev. 4:1; 11:19; 15:5; 19:11). Here in chapter four John

is instructed to come up hither to receive a special revelation. This is John the beloved, one of the twelve apostles of the kingdom. He was not a member of the Body of Christ, nor does he represent the Church. John was caught away in the Spirit to the throne room of God for a very specific purpose.

As the apostle observes the throne of God in heaven, the seven spirits before the throne, the four living creatures, the 24 elders and the Lamb of God, one thing is clear, the day of God’s vengeance has come! The sevenfold sealed book which is about to be opened by the Lamb contains the judgments of God. We are to understand that the cataclysmic events which follow will come from the hand of God, as He pours out His wrath upon this evil world system. This will be fully understood by the world at the very beginning of the tribulation.

**“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:15-17).**

*To Be Continued!*



“Christ’s birth occurred in an unlikely place, at an unlikely time, in order that unlikely man might have life abundantly. When God gave us Christ, He gave us all gifts in one.”

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During World War II, universalism became popular enough in the Grace Movement for Pastor Stam to respond to it in June of 1943 with this article, the next in our series on *grace*.  
—Ed.

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## What is Grace?

### (Grace—Part III)

By Cornelius R. Stam

To the guilty far and wide God is offering “*the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*” (Eph. 1:7).

*What a wonderful message to proclaim! What a privilege to be able to tell sinners that “God was in Christ [at Calvary], reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation”* (II Cor. 5:19). How glorious to whisper into the ears of the condemned that they may be “*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!*” (Rom. 3:24).

Do you believe these facts and rejoice in them?

This message was fully proclaimed by Paul, the apostle of grace, but was practically lost again for many centuries. Legalism, ritualism and superstition almost wholly obscured the wonderful message of salvation by grace, through faith alone. Thank God, it is being recovered again today. As the days grow darker the light of His Word shines brighter and men of God all over the world are rising to proclaim once more the mystery revealed to Paul—God’s purpose of grace for a lost, ruined world. Once

again this blessed truth is commanding widespread attention.

Those who proclaim the gospel of the grace of God in its fulness may, of course, expect to have dealings with Satan, for *Satan hates grace*. He is bitterly opposed to the recovery of the mystery. See how relentlessly he opposed and persecuted the one to whom God first revealed it! But if Paul could “*suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds*” (II Tim. 2:9)—if he could willingly lay down his very life for the proclamation of this glorious message, surely we too should be willing to partake of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (II Tim. 1:8).

It must not be supposed, however, that Satan always opposes the truth in the same way. If he cannot succeed as a roaring lion he will appear as an angel of light. He will suggest that surely a God of love would not condemn even Christ rejectors forever. Indeed, he will contend that sinners are not entirely responsible, for does not Ephesians 1:11 tell us that God “*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will?*” Therefore, it is argued, He will save them all.

A humble but balanced believer once said to me, “If Satan can’t

keep you from accepting the message of grace, he'll try to push you clear through!"

This is exactly what he is doing today. As the grace movement grows all over the world, Satan would supplant God's gracious *offer* of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:20), with the unscriptural teaching of *universal* reconciliation—the delusion that *all*, without exception, will be saved. "This," he says, "is grace—wonderful grace."

*But universal reconciliation would most assuredly NOT be grace.* Indeed, it is Satan's attempt to overthrow the whole doctrine of salvation by grace. This is done, not by denying the Scriptures, but by perverting them.

### THE NATURE OF GRACE

There are two significant phrases in Ephesians 2 which shed clear light upon the character, the nature, of grace. They are found in Verses 2 and 3, which speak of the unsaved as "children of *disobedience*" and "children of *wrath*."

Meditate for a moment on these phrases: "*children of DISOBEDIENCE*"—"children of *WRATH*."

It is against this dark, black background that we read further,

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,**

**"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (*by grace ye are saved*),**

**"And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

**"That in the ages to come He might show *the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 2:4-7).**

According to these plain Scriptures grace is God's mercy and kindness to the *undeserving*.

### THE SIN QUESTION

We can hardly appreciate the meaning of grace unless we recognize the *guilt* of man and the *wrath* of God upon sin.

Because Ephesians 1:11 states that God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" it is supposed by some that there may be some excuse of the sinner. This verse and others like it are frequently used to relieve man of his responsibility before God.

The Universal Reconciliationists use this as a basis for their arguments that all will be saved. They argue that man is simply *manipulated* by God, though they are careful to avoid stating it so plainly. The free will of man is called a "phantom" since everything, even sin, is the outworking of God's will. Sin, they say, was brought in by God so that we might know the joy of salvation. And, it is argued, since sin had its origin with God it is only just that He should save all men from it.

But if this is true, then—*God is the only sinner in the universe!* Then all the vile, horrible sins that blot the pages of history and the more monstrous ones which even base historians could not record for very shame—all these outrages have been acts of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

Furthermore, why should He charge *me* with sin when all the cruelty and injustice, all the adultery and unfaithfulness, all the envy and murder came not from my heart, but from *His*? How unjust

to condemn *me* when all these things are the products of *His* will and I have no will in the matter!



Such conclusions are most shocking to the spiritual mind. Who could *trust* in such a God?—a God who actually conceives and produces the vilest sins in His creatures so that they may learn to praise Him for delivering them from them!

We are well aware that Universalist literature does not state the matter so plainly but let no Universalist deny that this is the inevitable conclusion, if not the obvious interpretation of their teachings.

Thank God, not all who accept Universal Reconciliation do so intelligently, but we warn sincere believers lest they fall for this perversion of the Scriptures and so dishonor God. It is an old heresy which Satan has revived in an attempt to shift the blame of sin from the creature to the Creator. It is Modernism in another cloak. It is called grace, but it is surely not the grace of God as taught in the Bible, for grace is *God's mercy and kindness to the guilty—the blameworthy*.

### **MAN RESPONSIBLE**

Who would have thought that a wonderful teaching that everyone will be saved could make God the only sinner in the universe?

Yet that is the inescapable conclusion at which a sincere Universalist must arrive. Such heresies come from trying to subject divine revelation to human reason.

It is argued that if God works all things after the counsel of His own will it must necessarily follow that man does not have a free will of His own. But that is placing reason above revelation. They forget that, as someone has said, “The opposite of one truth is not necessarily an *untruth*. It may be *another truth*.”

To the contention that the term “free will of man” is not found in the Bible, we reply that neither is the term “sovereign will of God” found in the Bible, but *both doctrines are clearly taught there*, and it is the part of faith to bow before that blessed Book. Reason with men *out of the Scriptures* as Paul did (Acts 17:2), but do not try to reduce the Scriptures to human reason or you will rob your message of all its vitality.

How can we reconcile, in our little minds, the humanity of Christ with His deity, or the human and divine in the Bible, or the fact that God is three Persons yet indivisibly One, or the constant change in creation with its fixed changelessness? We cannot *explain* or perhaps even *understand* these paradoxes, yet they are facts, and strangely, these opposites are like the negative and positive currents in electricity. They make the Book throb with life and power. But try to explain one or the other of these opposites away and the Book is no longer the living and powerful Word of God.

Of course we believe Ephesians 1:11. *God is working all things*

after the counsel of His own will. But to use this verse to deny the free will of man would be as unscriptural as to use Mark 3:35 to deny the sovereign will of God. There the Lord Himself said, “For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”

If man is not *free* to exercise his will, obviously he cannot be charged with disobedience, for even in his sin he is obeying *God's* will. If the maker of a machine presses a button and sets it in operation, that machine, having no will of its own, obeys its maker's will. The shuttles which fly backward obey him as well as the shuttles which fly forward. If the machine fails him that is *his* fault. It cannot *disobey* him for it has no will of its own.



If this is man's position, what does God mean by “children of *disobedience*,” and what reason would He have to be *angry* with man? Why should the unsaved be called “children of *wrath*?”

But man *has* a free will. He *is* responsible. He *has* been disobedient. Lest any should deny this God gave the law “*that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*” (Rom. 3:19).

Ephesians 1:11 should be read in connection with Psalms 76:10,

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” Man's will is *free* but God's will is *sovereign*. In the final analysis His will is done. Even a wise employer will use the blunders and wrongs of his employees to advantage. Will not God?

### CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE AND CHILDREN OF WRATH

There is an important fact here which has generally been overlooked. The word *children* implies parents. Even when it is not used concerning blood relatives it still implies parents.

Those who speak of God bringing sin and death into the world should remember that Romans 5:12 says that “*by ONE MAN sin entered into the world and death by sin.*” Now, Paul prays that believers might have the spiritual perception to appreciate and appropriate their oneness with Christ. That fact, though blessedly true, is not easy for us in our present condition to grasp. But there is one truth which should be very easy for us to grasp—our oneness, as human beings, with Adam. As a human being I am as much a part of Adam as my finger is of my body. I am branch of Adam. I came from him. I was in him. When he sinned *I* sinned. When he fell, *I* fell. I have not just sinned in the last few years. I have not just recently become guilty. I sinned in Adam. I am part of Adam. I was *born guilty* (not unfortunate, but *guilty*). My sinful nature is not an accident, something that recently came into being—it is the nature of Adam.

Thank God, it is a wonderful fact that “I am crucified with Christ.” I have been baptized into His death and resurrection. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature” (II Cor. 5:17). But “*the flesh*” is part of Adam and has the sentence of death upon it.

Some years ago, speaking of a poor drunkard, a friend said to me, “But how can you blame him? Just look at his parents,” “Yes,” I said, “But you should have known *their* parents!” Of course, I was merely trying to point out the fact that it all goes back to *one man*. But that does not relieve man of his responsibility and guilt; it *establishes* and *emphasizes* it. If in Christ I am a new creation, a member of His flesh and of His bones (Eph. 5:30), then it is even more apparent that in myself I am a member of Adam, of his flesh and of his bones. My sin and guilt dates back to Adam.

## BABES AND GROWN-UPS

But there is another remarkable fact which we ought to notice—a fact which does not appear on the surface of these verses in Ephesians 2. The word for children in Verse 2 is different from that used in Verse 3. The word for children in Verse 3 is “*teknon*” which means simply “born one.” We have no word for it in the English, but the Scotch have a word—it is “*bairn*.” Now God says in Verse 3 that we were by nature the “*bairns of wrath*.” But the word in Verse 2 is “*huios*” which means a “grown son.” This immediately suggests *understanding* and *responsibility*. Note that this word is used in reference to man’s *disobedience*. Where human disobedience is concerned

men are called “grown sons.” God will leave us no excuse. He says “You knew what you were doing.” “You were disobedient.” “You are responsible.”

Have you ever noticed the construction of Romans 5:12? “*By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so,*”—So what? We would expect it to go on “And so death passed upon all men by one man’s sin.” But it ends quite differently: “And so death passed upon all men *for that [because] all have sinned.*” After telling us that by one man sin entered into the world, he places the guilt directly upon the children as well as the parent because *all* have sinned! Do you see it? They all sinned *in him*. They all sinned *out of him*. Collectively and individually all are *sinner*s. There is no escape! We regret that some Universal Reconciliationists have tampered with this verse to make it fit their theories.

Is it not a fact that when it comes to disobedience, we are grown sons? We knew what we were doing. God emphasizes this fact, for we must see our guilt before He can reveal His grace.

Romans 5:12 reminds us that in all essential particulars the fall of Adam has been re-enacted in every human life. We show that we are from Adam because we are all individual Adams. Just as in Adam’s case there was the violation of the known will of God. This violation wrought to separate us from God. Then came the vain attempt at self-justification! This is why Ephesians 2:2 calls unbelievers “grown sons of disobedience.”

*To Be Continued!*



# The Spirit Within

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

(From a message given October 9th, at the *Fall Conference* of the *Berean Bible Fellowship* in Evansville, Indiana)

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (I Cor. 6:19).**

It is the teaching of this verse of Scripture that the physical body of each individual believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the temple of Almighty God, who dwells within us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Just think for a moment of the *magnitude* of this doctrine! The God who declares, “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool” (Acts 7:49) *dwells in you*. This God of *unimaginable greatness*, this God of *infinite proportions* resides within the confines of your finite being.

And He dwells in *every* believer *regardless of conduct*! It is significant that God picked *the carnal Corinthians* to receive the clearest declaration of the indwelling of His Spirit. Thus we know that the indwelling Spirit is not a reward for good behavior, but rather a blessing of which we should always try to walk worthy (I Cor. 6:20).

Note that Paul does not say that your body is the *tabernacle* of the Spirit, for the tabernacle was only the *temporary* dwelling place of God. Rather he affirms that your body is the *temple* of the Spirit, signifying God’s intent to dwell in you *permanently*.

Some would object that our text refers not to the *personal* indwelling of each individual saint, but rather to the *corporate* indwelling of the Body of Christ as a whole. However, the context here, both before and after, deals with *our individual physical bodies* (I Cor. 6:15-18; 7:1-4). That being said, it *is* true that the Spirit *also* indwells the Body as a whole. I Corinthians 3:16 says:

**“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”**

Here the context is *the Body of Christ in general*. Paul says that “ye are the temple of God,” and the previous “ye” in this passage refers to *the Corinthians collectively* (v. 9). This corporate indwelling is more clearly set forth in Ephesians 2:21:

**“In whom [Christ] ye also are *builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*”**

God dwells in us corporately as well as individually to impress upon us that *no* believer is an island unto himself, and that *every* believer is part of a larger building in which the Spirit also dwells. This larger



building is “*the church which is His Body*” (Eph. 1:22,23) and manifests itself in *the local church*. Paul told Timothy that the purpose of his letter to him was...

**“...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God...” (I Tim. 3:15).**

Here Paul speaks about Timothy’s behavior in the local church, which he calls “*the house of God.*” Thus we know that the Spirit of God indwells each local church in a collective sense. This is interesting, since the first Bible reference to “*the house of God*” is found in Genesis 28, where Jacob dreamed and saw...

**“...a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (v. 12).**

When he realized that these angels were ascending and descending to receive orders from God and then carry them out, Jacob concluded that that location was *the command post of God on earth*, and he exclaimed, “this is none other but *the house of God*” (v. 17). Today, however, God’s bidding is not done on earth by angels but by *members of the Body*, and *the local church* is God’s command post. We gather together in the house of God to hear God’s Word taught, thereby *receiving* orders from Him, and then we leave to *carry those orders out*.



Speaking of this collective dwelling place of God, Paul says:

**“...all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21).**

Paul states clearly that the corporate dwelling place of God is *growing*, and a glance at the Greek text tells us how. The Greek word for “*fitly framed together*” is *sunarmologeō*, a compound word meaning “*with joint speech.*” Thus Paul is saying that the Body of Christ “*groweth*” only when we all say the same thing—and not just *anything*. The Body grows only when our speech joins with what *Paul* said. It grows *numerically* only when the pure gospel of the grace of God is preached, and we “*grow up into Him*” (Eph. 4:15) only when Pauline doctrine is taught.

But we mustn’t leave I Corinthians 3:16 without commenting on the following verse:

**“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (v. 17).**

Here we see that it is possible to *defile* the corporate dwelling place of God. If it be asked how, we need only look to see how the Corinthians defiled it. I Corinthians 1:10 says,

**“Now I beseech you...that ye all speak the same thing, and...that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind...”**

The Corinthians were *not* practicing *sunarmologeō*. They were *not* all saying what Paul said. Some were saying what Apollos, Cephas and Christ said (v. 11,12). And while the kingdom gospel taught by these leaders was *edifying* in its day, it is *defiling* when applied to the Body of Christ. And so it is today. The “health and wealth” message that is taught by so many these days was *edifying* when it was part of God’s kingdom message for Israel, but it is positively *defiling* when applied to the Body of Christ today.

God vows to “*destroy*” men who defile the temple in this way (I Cor. 3:17). But *when*? Certainly not in *this* life, else fire and brimstone would fall regularly on non-Pauline pastors. No, the context here is *the Judgment Seat of Christ*. It is *then* that the “*fire*” of God’s Word rightly divided will “*try every man’s work of what sort it is*” (v. 13). Pauline builders will see their work “*abide*” (v. 14), but of the non-Pauline builder we read that God will destroy “the things done in his body” (II Cor. 5:10).

But it is also possible to defile the *individual* temple of God. The context back in I Corinthians 6 teaches clearly that *sin* defiles the temple of our individual body, and particularly the sin of *fornication*. Verse 13 says:

**“Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.”**

It would seem that some of the Corinthians were saying that just as it is unnatural to suppress the body’s appetite for food, it is also unnatural to suppress the body’s appetite for fornication! Paul agrees of course that the body is for meats and meats are for the body, but strongly disagrees with the conclusion that the body is for fornication and fornication is for the body, adding:

**“And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power” (v. 14).**

Some of the Corinthians no longer believed in the resurrection (15:12-19). This led them to conclude that it didn’t matter what a believer does with his body, for it will someday die and be buried. Paul insists that it *does* matter what we do with our physical body, for God honors the temple wherein He dwells, and plans to raise it from the dead. No wonder he thunders:

**“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid” (6:15).**

We are members of Christ. When we commit fornication, we involve *Christ* in fornication. We deplore the crime of rape, when a

man forces himself upon a woman; but when we commit fornication, we force a harlot upon the Lord.

Years ago Hollywood made a movie that suggested the Lord Jesus had an adulterous affair with Mary Magdalene. The Christian public was outraged, and rightly so. But I wonder how many of those who cried out in protest were themselves guilty of involving Him in fornication through their own illicit affairs.

On Calvary, God the Father laid all of our sins on the Lord Jesus Christ, and He bore them in His own body on the tree. When He left the cross, the Lord had every right to expect He would never again have to come in contact with sin. But then He saves us, and indwells us, and we dare to involve Him in our sin!

**“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh.**

**“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (I Cor. 6:16,17).**

Television unites with movies, contemporary novels and all other aspects of modern society to suggest that fornication is merely a physical thing, but *God says it isn't!* God says here in these verses that it is something *deeply spiritual*. Thus it is absolutely essential that we heed Paul's advice:

**“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (I Cor. 6:18).**

Drunkenness and drug abuse are sins that *appear* to be sins against a man's own body, but this verse affirms that in this respect, fornication is in a class by itself. Thus Paul here warns us to do as Joseph did and “*flee*” fornication (Gen. 39:12). It is our only defense. God equips all of



his creatures to defend themselves in different ways. The bear has sharp teeth and claws, the porcupine has his quills, the turtle his shell, the skunk has—well, you know what the skunk has! But the rabbit's only defense is to *flee*. No one blames him for this. No one thinks, “Why doesn't that rabbit stand and fight?” God has not equipped him for this. Neither has God equipped you to resist fornication, and there is no shame in fleeing that which God has not designed us to resist.

My young son Jesse weighs 49 pounds and is taking karate lessons. When I warn him to run from a stranger, he boasts, “Dad, I'll just *kick him!*” You might laugh, but I cringe at the thought! Likewise when we think we can resist fornication, Satan laughs, but God cringes.

Paul goes on:

**“...ye are not your own” (I Cor. 6:19).**

A soldier is called a “G.I.” because he is *Government Issued*. He is *not his own*, and *neither are you!* You are living in a *borrowed* body, and responsible people always feel *more* responsible with things that

are borrowed (II Ki. 6:5). Sadly, many Christians are no better than Israel of old:

**“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s [corn] crib; but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider” (Isa. 1:3).**

People talk about being “dumb as an ox,” but *even an ox knows his owner!* It is the American dream to be your own boss, but spiritually speaking *you are not your own boss*. They say that the lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client, but the Christian who thinks he is his own boss spiritually has a fool for a master.

**“...ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:20).**

The Lord *bought* you with His own blood. The only question is: *is He getting His money’s worth?*

As we close this article, if these pages are being read by one who has defiled the temple of his body, the Spirit within you is able to perform an extremely practical function of which you should be aware:

**“But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11).**

Paul speaks here not of the resurrection of your *dead* body, but of your *“mortal”* body. It is *to the Christian* that Paul says, “to be carnally minded is *death*” (Rom. 8:6). It is *to the Christian* that he says, “if ye live after the flesh, *ye shall die*” (Rom. 8:13). The believer today cannot lose his salvation, but if he continues to deny his Owner, there is a *virtual death* he can enter into, a comatose Christian state in which all of his spiritual vital signs are flat-lined. He does not need to be *re-saved* but only *awakened*. And so it is *to the Christian* that Paul says:

**“Awake thou that *sleepest*, and arise *from the dead*...” (Eph. 5:14).**

Even if sin has led to the spiritual death of your Christian experience, the Spirit within can raise you up to spiritual life and vitality. Paul’s argument is clear. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,” then surely that Spirit, which was able to raise Christ up *from the sins of the world*, will have no trouble raising you from your comparatively puny sins. How? Ephesians 5:14 says to those who are thus awakened from sin, “*Christ shall give thee light.*” Equipped with *the light of God’s Word rightly divided*, the Spirit can return even the most backslidden Christian to robust spiritual health.

And then may God help all of us to always live lives that make our bodies hospitable temples for the Royal Guest within us. 

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Pastor Kurth writes an article in his church bulletin that can be e-mailed to you weekly. To sign up, just visit *Faith Bible Church’s* website at: [www.bygracethrufaith.org](http://www.bygracethrufaith.org), and click on the “Church Bulletin” link.

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# The Right Tools

By Pastor Jeff Seekins

*Secretary of BBS Board of Directors*



Pastor  
Jeff Seekins

There was no electricity on site as I framed my first home. We were able to precut most boards at another location, but others were cut on site with a chainsaw. That provided a few rough edges! How simple it would have been to have some of today's battery powered tools! There's no substitute for having the right tool for the job!



In times of laziness or haste I've driven nails with rocks and gripped bolts with pliers. Sometimes the job was sufficiently done, but sometimes the nails were bent and the bolts ruined!

A glance will tell whether the nail is driven or bent. A touch will tell whether the boards are together or apart. But in the spiritual realm, success or failure isn't so easily detected! The impact of teaching may not be evident for years!

How often have we expected Sunday school teachers to drive home grace truths with lessons that mix grace and law. How can we expect our students to solidly grip dispensational concepts with material that really doesn't contain any? Should they be expected to discern the dichotomy between the sermon and the Sunday school lesson?


Recognizing this need, a year ago the *Berean Bible Society Board* gathered a committee to look into the possibility of producing a Sunday school curriculum that would put the right tools in the hands of teachers to drive home grace truths and give students the opportunity to grip dispensational concepts.

After evaluating what was available, the committee determined there was a need to develop a totally new curriculum with a continuity of teaching from lesson to lesson and year to year. It was determined that the Jr. age (grades 4-6) was the place to begin teaching strong dispensational truths, and a scope and sequence was developed for that age group. A vision for quality in doctrine, evangelism, story line and appearance was solidified, and by the end of the second meeting, it was realized that a few sample lessons were needed to share that vision with the BBS Board. By mid-summer, three lessons that blended an exciting story line with solid dispensational teaching were ready. Age-appropriate visuals, object lessons, take home papers and teacher's tips completed the package presented to the Board. The committee had exceeded the Board's expectations! The vision for what could and should be done was evident in the finished product. It was time to realize the committee's vision and take the project to the next level!

The Lord provided some funds to begin and Pastor Mike Keshan, BBS Board member, is currently working with writers, editors and helpers to get the project into our churches as soon as possible.

That's not to say we'll hastily drive nails with rocks in preparing the curriculum! The quality envisioned will take time, and we're just beginning.

So let me challenge you that this is everyone's project! Every Grace believer, every Grace church, every parent and grandparent needs to own this project! This curriculum is aimed at training the next generation in the wonderful gospel of the grace of God! The Scriptures tell us that Timothy's spiritual journey began as a child as he was impacted by the teaching of the Word of God he received from his mother and grandmother (II Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15). That teaching established a pattern for the man of God he was to become (v. 16-17). The Timothy(s) in our generation, in our homes and churches, need to grip such instruction. Their teachers need the best tools to drive the truth home.

Pray with us as we endeavor to provide those tools to build the Body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man! 



Pastor Mike and  
Debbie Keshan

## Question Box

*“You say that it is only in the writings of Paul that we find the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the Church. Doesn't Revelation also contribute to our knowledge of the Church?”*

Most Bible teachers say that the Body of Christ is the subject of Revelation 2 and 3, but John himself declares that the book is a *“prophecy”* (1:3), while the church of today is an unpropheesied *“mystery”* (Col. 1:24-27). The popular view sees the letters to the seven churches as descriptive of the history of the Church over the past 2,000 years, and contends that we are now living in the last days, described in the last letter, the letter to the Laodiceans (Rev. 3:14-22). But if this be so, then the Rapture could not have been an imminent hope for Martin Luther and countless others who lived before us. This is a problem since Paul himself thought he would live to see the Rapture, using the pronoun *“we”* when he spoke of *“we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord”* (I Thes. 4:15). Obviously Paul didn't believe that seven ages of Church history had to unfold before the Rapture could come! Thus Revelation 2 and 3 speak of *the kingdom church* in the Tribulation, not *“the church which is His Body”* (Eph. 1:22,23). —Pastor Kurth

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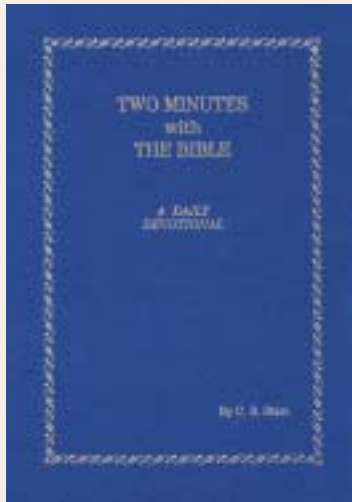
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**From the Internet:**

"I really enjoy your website. What exactly does 'rightly dividing' mean? Thanks!"

**From Virginia:**

"This was my first time ever seeing your magazine and it had an answer to one of my burning questions: Has the gift of tongues (and sign gifts) ceased? The article on Paul and his willful disobedience to God also blessed my heart. My 'supersaint' image of Paul had me learning from his teachings and overlooking his mistakes."

**From New Zealand:**

"A well-known New Zealand preacher, the late Barry Smith, wrote a book which I bought entitled, 'Unlocking the Ultimate Secret.' In it he tells how he was given a copy of 'Things That Differ' by an 82 year old woman and it changed his whole perception of Scripture. His books are generally a mixture of everything, but understanding right division helped him, although clearly he didn't understand all of it."

**From Florida:**

"I have done many 'mainstream' correspondence Bible study courses, and I've earned around 60 certificates, but until now I've never been aware of the hidden mysteries that Paul preaches and teaches." (Ever learning, and *finally* able to come unto a knowledge of the truth! Ed.)

**From Oregon:**

"I signed up for the little booklet, 'The Berean Searchlight,' a long while ago, and I want to thank you so much for sending them. They are such good reading, in that it makes clear some scriptures I would otherwise struggle with....I have some family members that would love to get the Two Minutes With the Bible e-mailings."

**From England:**

"Thank you for replying to my e-mail concerning salvation; it's good to know the truth of God's grace and this has been an encouragement to me. I was saved through faith in Christ. However, as a young believer, I was bogged down and confused by many issues (baptism, losing salvation, works or faith, etc.). As a result I lost my belief. My elder brother recently lent me two books on dispensationalism (*Things That Differ* and *Understanding the Bible*) which I have read cover to cover. This has been a real blessing to me and has brought the reality of God's grace back into focus. I cannot stress enough my thanks to God for the opportunity to study His Word, rightly divided."

**From Minnesota:**

"We came to understand the Mystery some years back and have enjoyed all the answers to questions that fell into place once we saw Paul as our Apostle. The books offered through your organization have been God-sent; without them I do not see how our understanding of Paul and the Mystery would ever be what it is today. Finding where the dispensation of Grace really had its beginning answered so many questions."

**From Oklahoma:**

"Your magazine and books are a wonder! Thank you!"

**From the Philippines:**

"I would like you to know that I and my husband are so thankful that you send us copies of the *Searchlight* for it gives us more knowledge each time we read about the Word of God being rightly divided. We are so blessed every time we read them. Please don't stop sending them." (We promise to keep sending the *Searchlight*, as long as the Lord provides. Ed.)

### **From the Internet:**

“Just wanted to tell you how much I enjoy your ‘Two Minutes with the Bible.’ I start my day with this and I just treasure and learn the Word. May God continue to richly bless you all.”

### **From Pennsylvania:**

“I would like to begin by thanking the *Berean Bible Society* and Sam and Ruth Castrova for providing the Bible study messages. My wife and I have been studying through the *Tape Lending Library* and have grown in the Word.” (Your editor this month benefited greatly from the *Tape Lending Library* as a teen. Ed.)

### **From Florida:**

“I have read several of Pastor Stam’s books and my understanding has greatly increased. I can now explain the true gospel of grace to others better than I could before. I would love to receive the *Searchlight*. Thanks in advance.”

### **From Oregon:**

“Thank you for the extra insight on the Preterist view, I will see this man this next Tuesday and ask him about these things...I think since we have been having our little chats, he seems to be running out of Scripture to back up this theory they have.... Thanks again for your help! By the way, we got our recent *Searchlight* in the mail a day or two ago, and in the beginning is a puzzle, titled, ‘Who Am I?’ I have racked my brain, I keep digging through the Bible, and just can’t figure it out!! It’s a great way to get people to read the Bible; that’s for sure!! I’ve got my mother, sister, and husband all ‘searching’ for the answer....Thanks again, and more puzzles please!”

### **From Indiana:**

“I want to thank you for sending me the information on grace churches in Indiana that I requested. Russell Miller answered and my wife and I attended *Things to Come Mission* with Pastor Joe Watkins and Pastor Phillip du Plessis today. We are both extremely pleased with the church and the preaching. We are so glad you make available this information for people like us because otherwise we wouldn’t know where to look.”

### **From Missouri:**

“I would like to receive three copies of the cassette tape, *Faith & Unbelief and Fear of God*. Both of these messages are on one cassette tape which I received several years ago, and they are excellent. I would like to give copies of this tape to our children.”

### **From Wisconsin:**

“I didn’t see an order form on your webpage listing the cost to receive the *Searchlight*. Could I order a year subscription? Please let me know! I really enjoyed reading the truth about speaking in tongues. I have been attending a Pentecostal Church over the past month and have really been wrestling with what they were telling me. Thank you again.” (There is no subscription fee, thanks to the help of faithful friends who are anxious to get the blessed message of grace out to others. Ed.)

### **From Washington:**

“I was thinking I may have to go through the Great Tribulation, but because you led me to those certain verses in Scripture, I feel more assured of my salvation. Thank you. I am studying the verses you sent and it has certainly helped.”

“These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

### What Did Peter Know?

By W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.

Executive Director, *Berean Bible Institute*

As opposition against Him by the religious leaders of Israel began to grow, many of the Lord Jesus' followers began to leave Him. Shortly after one showdown with the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were demanding that He show them a sign to authenticate His identity and authority, He asked His disciples an important question. *"Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"* He wanted to know (see Matt. 16:1-13). Their answer showed that there were various opinions about His identity among the Jewish people with some saying that He was *"John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets"* (Matt. 16:14). He followed up with another question, asking *"But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"* (Matt. 16:15-16).

Peter's answer reveals that he believed that Jesus was God incarnate and that He had come to fulfill God's promises to Israel given through His prophets of old. He was the promised Prophet (Deut. 18:18-19), the Deliverer of Israel who would regather the people and restore the Kingdom (Jer. 23:3-8; cf. Acts 1:6), the King who would bring lasting peace and prosperity to Israel (Ezek. 34:23-31), that in Him the glory of the Lord would be revealed (Isa. 40:1-5). Peter rightly believed that Jesus Christ

was the long-awaited Messiah who had the power to fulfill Israel's hope.

But Peter and the other disciples did not understand that the cross must come before those things would be accomplished (see Matt. 16:21-27 cf. Luke 24:44-48). It would not be until after Christ's death, burial and resurrection that Peter would be able to offer the Kingdom to Israel (Acts 2:14-42; 3:12-26). But, even knowing that Jesus Christ was indeed raised from the dead, the leaders of Israel refused to repent and turn to Him as the Savior of Israel. Finally, God temporarily set Israel aside in unbelief and ushered in the Dispensation of Grace that is now in force. Just as the keys to the Kingdom were given to Peter (Matt. 16:17-19), God committed to the Apostle Paul the doctrines of Grace that open the way into heaven for all who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior (see Gal. 1:11-12; 2:7-8; Eph. 3:1-9). God will one day fulfill all of His promises of a Kingdom on earth to Israel, His chosen earthly people, but not until He has taken His chosen heavenly people off the earth in the Rapture (I Thess. 4:13-18). O, what a glorious Savior He is who will fulfill all of His promises both to the Church which is His Body (Eph. 1:22-2:6) and redeemed Israel (Jer. 31:31-34). Praise His Holy name!!!

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# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**A BURDEN FOR OUR SPANISH-SPEAKING FRIENDS:** Our brother Pete Ochoa recently expressed an interest in seeing more of our literature translated into Spanish. Pete has volunteered to help sponsor our next printing of Spanish booklets. We are currently working on translating “*Saul the Sinner and Paul the Boaster*,” “*This is That, But What is This?*,” and “*That Blessed Hope*.” If you would like to help make more of our literature available in Spanish, just mark your gift with the notation “Spanish Translations.”

**A GRACE MILESTONE:** On Sunday February 8th, 2004, *Faith Bible Church* of Steger, Illinois will celebrate Pastor Ricky Kurth’s 25th anniversary with the church. If you live in the area or intend to be near Chicago that week, why not plan to attend the morning services and afternoon potluck dinner. For more information, you can contact Pastor Kurth here at BBS, or visit the church website at: [www.bygracethrufaith.org](http://www.bygracethrufaith.org).

**AS A FOLLOW-UP** to Pastor Joel Finck’s article in our October issue, “*Are the Twelve Apostles in the Body of Christ?*,” we would like to give you an opportunity to study the opposing view. We have a packet of articles by Pastor Stam and Pastor Don Elifson presenting the case that the Twelve *did* become members of the Body. There is no charge, but if you would like to help with the postage, two dollars should cover it.

**THE GRACE SINGLES CONFERENCE** is an excellent way to meet and get to know Grace believers from all over the country. If you know of a single Grace believer in your church who cannot go to this conference because of financial reasons, perhaps you would be in a position to help him or her. For more information about the conference, see our ad on Page 23.

**AS YOU PLAN NEXT SUMMER’S ITINERARY**, the dates for *Rocky Mountain Grace Camp* are June 28th - July 3rd, 2004 at *Long’s Peak Inn*, Estes Park, Colorado. The Family Hour Speaker will be Mike Keshan, pastor of *Kettle Moraine Bible Church* in West Bend, Wisconsin. For additional information, please contact: Pastor and Mrs. James Harley at: (920) 829-6021, or e-mail: [rockymountaingracecamp@juno.com](mailto:rockymountaingracecamp@juno.com).

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\*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was taken by Miguel Ortiz of Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico. The *Rincón Lighthouse* is located in Rincón on the western side of the island of Puerto Rico. It was built in 1921 and is operated by the U.S. Coast Guard. It’s known as a great spot for viewing humpback whales off the coast.

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