

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

August 2026



Feature Article

Adam’s Sin and Mine, *by Kevin Sadler*5

Articles

What Is a Mid-Acts Dispensationalist?, *by David Havard*.....13

What Does It Mean to Walk Circumspectly?, *by Kevin Sadler*.....15

A Better Bondage, *by Patrick Kilgo*17

Departments

Hope Beyond Hope.....4

Question Box.....12

Christian to Christian23

Amazing Creation25

This month’s cover features the Gellen Lighthouse on the Baltic Sea island of Hiddensee.

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,

In April, I had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines for an 11-day visit. My last visit to the Philippines was 20 years ago when I went with Joe Watkins and others to visit their Grace Bible schools. On this trip, I attended and spoke at the four-day Grace National Annual Conference (GNAC) of *Things to Come Mission (TCM) Philippines* in Lapu-Lapu City. In addition, I had the privilege and joy of speaking at local Grace churches in Ormoc City, Leyte province, and in Cebu City, Cebu province. I was called “the happy pastor,” and I learned on this trip that I very much enjoy Chicken Adobo.

It was so encouraging to personally see and hear the zeal of our Filipino brothers and sisters in Christ for the message of grace committed to the Apostle Paul. *TCM Philippines* has an impressive organizational structure for training leaders and workers and establishing local churches. This sizable, growing ministry includes more than 500 churches, four Bible school campuses, and twelve field Bible schools. The expected attendance for the GNAC was 400-500 people, but there were approximately 1,200 in attendance! It was the largest audience I have ever stood before to preach God’s Word.



At the GNAC, many came up to thank me for the ministries of BBS: our books, the *Berean Searchlight*, and *Transformed by Grace* videos. In front of the entire conference, the *TCM Philippines* Board of Trustees presented me with a plaque of appreciation for the *Berean Bible Society*, which reads in part, “Your investment in our mission has not only filled our libraries but has also strengthened the foundation of Grace believers throughout this nation and beyond.”

Throughout the trip, many people requested literature from BBS, and they were especially hopeful to one day receive a Grace Study Bible. The *TCM Philippines* leadership wants to get more of our materials into the hands of their pastors, leaders, teachers, students, graduates, and workers. We need your help! Our fund for this is called “Literature for Leaders.” Please consider donating to this fund so we can send shipments of our literature to those in the Philippines who are eager to receive it to aid their studies and service in the Lord.

Salamat (*Thank you* in Filipino),

Pastor Kevin J. Sadler, President



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.



Hope Beyond HOPE

“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be” (Rom. 4:18).

How big is your God? Man frequently limits his “gods.” Polytheists, with their abundant gods, indicate that one isn’t sufficient. But even Israel, whose God was the Lord frequently limited Him by fearing giants, making wrongful covenants, and murmuring. Today some professing “Christians” limit God in salvation through dependence on religious works and human understanding. Their manner of life is sometimes more by sight, feeling, or common sense than the eternal truth of God’s Word.

Abraham, the man of faith in Romans 4, had the audacity to believe in a God who promised big things. His wife laughed to herself at the promise because she knew better (Gen. 18:12). Humanly speaking, there was no hope, even for one child; and the promise of numerous children was ridiculous! But Abraham believed God based on the hope that was promised. From the human standpoint, he was hoping against hope. He was hoping where hope left off. He hoped beyond hope! But his faith was in the Almighty God Who can give hope where none exists, for He is the God Who makes the dead live and calls the non-existent into existence (Rom. 4:17). Abraham’s God was big enough to give hope when none existed, and Abraham didn’t doubt by unbelief. God could and did call forth a child from the dead reproductive systems of Abraham and Sarah.

Our salvation is truly hope beyond hope when all is considered. So if we can hope beyond hope for eternal life, we can do the same in our daily life and walk. Based on hope from God, we can live the adventure of hope beyond hope!

—Pastor Jeff Seekins



ADAM'S SIN

and Mine

PASTOR KEVIN J. **SADLER**
BBS President/Editor

*Taken from an upcoming series on Transformed by Grace
"The First Adam and the Last Adam"*

It is instructive to compare the first Adam in the Garden of Eden with the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

FIRST ADAM

1. Came from the earth
2. Returned to the earth
3. Made in the image of God
4. Yielded to temptation and sinned
5. Disobeyed God
6. Brought the curse
7. Hid his face from God
8. Cursed with thorns
9. Side was opened
10. Died because of a tree
11. Brought sin and death into the world
12. Brought separation from God
13. Brought condemnation
14. In Adam, all die

LAST ADAM

1. Came from heaven
2. Returned to heaven
3. Is “the image of the invisible God”
4. Overcame all temptation and never sinned
5. Obeyed God
6. Became a curse for us
7. God hid His face from Him at the Cross
8. Crowned with thorns
9. Side was pierced
10. Died on a tree
11. Delivers from sin and brings life
12. Brought reconciliation to God
13. Brought righteousness
14. In Christ, all are made alive

Our Need for the Last Adam

In Romans 5:12-21, the Apostle Paul teaches how mankind is arranged, is spiritually positioned under two headships: Adam and Jesus Christ. In this passage, we learn about the relationship of all humanity to Adam and the relationship of all redeemed humanity to Christ. There are two men, two actions, and two results. Paul contrasts

the actions of each—Adam’s one act of disobedience with Christ’s one redemptive act—along with their results, which are credited to all people according to who their head is.

Adam, as the first man, was the head of the human race, and he acted as a representative of all mankind. When Adam acted, he acted in our place. Thus, when Adam disobeyed God and ate of the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil, his sin and its ramifications were passed on to all of us, his descendants. The impact of his decision was far-reaching and is ongoing in that we are all born under the bondage of sin. The curse of the Fall affects us all and is why all people have a sinful nature and die physically.

What we need is a new, sinless Head over us. All of us are related to the first Adam, and being in Adam results in death, judgment, and condemnation. We need One Who can stand in our place and deliver us from Adam's sin and give us life.

The first Adam failed by disobeying God, resulting in death. We need an Adam who will obey God perfectly and pass righteousness and life on to all who are united to Him. This is what Jesus Christ came to do as "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45): to deliver all who are in the first man, Adam, that we might have life and hope.

Christ lived a perfect, sinless life, and He was "obedient unto...the death of the Cross"

old man"—our sinful, Adamic nature—"is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6). When we trust Christ as our personal Savior, that He died for our sins and rose again (1 Cor. 15:3-4), we have a new Head. At that moment, the Holy Spirit takes us out of Adam and places us into Christ, the Last Adam, and God's righteousness is imputed to our account (2 Cor. 5:21), and we are given the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

Sin Entered the World

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world..." (Rom. 5:12).

Paul wrote, "Wherefore, as by one man," and that man is Adam. This shows us that the account of Adam and Eve in your Bible is not an optional passage we may dismiss or doubt. Genesis Chapters 1-3 is historically and literally true. Adam and Eve were real people. And the Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, referred to these events in Genesis as unquestionable historical reality.

In this one verse—Romans 5:12—Paul answers some big questions in life, like why is sin universal, and why is death the experience of every person?

There is no way to explain the world apart from the Fall. It is impossible to understand the world as it is today apart from the reality of Adam's sin



(Phil. 2:8) and paid the price for all our sins. At the Cross, "our

and the curse that resulted from it.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam was clearly commanded by God,

“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17).

However, in rebellion against God’s command, Genesis 3:6 states,

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

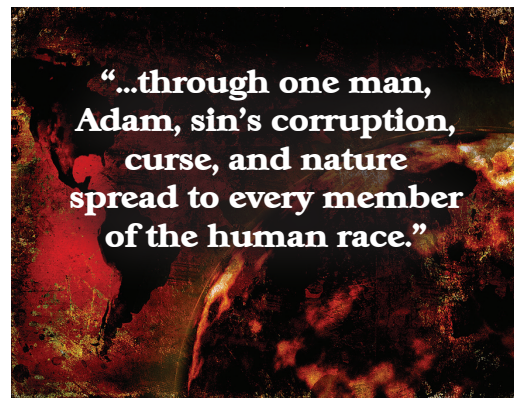
Adam is the one responsible for the fall of the human race, not Eve. Eve was deceived when she sinned, but “Adam was not deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14). Adam sinned knowingly, fully aware of what he was doing. He sinned willfully against God. He placed his will above God’s and disobeyed the direct command of God.

It was through Adam’s fatal choice that sin entered the world. It was not the sins of Adam’s lifetime, but his one, first, original sin that plunged the human race and all the world into sin.

The tragic effects of Adam’s sin extended far beyond himself throughout the corridors of time. Sin entered and spread like a deadly plague throughout his

progeny, the entire human race. This plague of sin has infected every one of us. It resulted in all of his descendants being born into sin and a fallen condition. As Psalm 51:5 states, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

By Adam’s sin and rebellion against God’s authority, his nature was corrupted. It resulted in a change in man’s nature from innocence to sinfulness, and Adam has passed down that fallen nature to all of his descendants. Because of this sinful nature, everyone has a propensity and inclination toward sin, rebellion, and self-will like Adam had. All of us commit sins because we are sinners by nature, the nature we inherited from Adam.



The use of the word “one” in “by ONE man” stresses the unity of Adam with all those who came after him. When sin entered the world through one man, Adam, sin’s corruption, curse, and nature spread to every member of the human race.



Death Entered by Sin

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin...” (Rom. 5:12).

We learn from Romans 5:12 that death is the consequence of Adam’s sin. Adam was not originally subject to death. The inauguration of death was the result of Adam’s sin. Sin and death are not two unrelated issues. They are connected. Sin and death reign together like a king and queen over a fallen world. Sin entered the world, and physical death is the result of sin. Death is the penalty and punishment of God for Adam’s sin (Gen. 3:17-19). Sin entered the world through the one act of one man, Adam, and sin’s consequence of death passed to all his descendants.

Adam was told very plainly by God that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would “surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Thus, as God said, when sin entered the world, death entered the world. Death refers to separation, and Adam immediately died spiritually and was separated from God when he

disobeyed Him; at the same time, Adam began to die physically.

We are born into a world of death, and we are each on our way to death. Our death ultimately is the result of the sin of Adam. His one act of disobedience as the head of the human race has resulted in physical death for all. When sin entered the world through Adam, death entered with it, and from that moment, death has reigned over all humanity. Romans 5:12 is foundational for understanding why the entire world is filled with sin, wickedness, pain, suffering, and death. It all goes back to Adam.

All Have Sinned in Adam

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

We have all individually committed acts of sin (Rom. 3:23). However, when Paul wrote, “for that all have sinned” in Romans 5:12, it does not refer to the personal sins we commit. In this verse, Paul looks back to the



“As sin entered the world through one man, God graciously also made salvation from sin available to the world through one Man: Jesus Christ.”

historical event of the entrance of sin and death into the world through Adam.

All three verbs in this verse are in the Greek past (aorist) tense: “entered...passed...have sinned.” What this means is that “all,” or the entire human race, is viewed by God as having sinned in the past in the one act of Adam’s first sin.

Romans 5:12 teaches us of the union of the human race with Adam. Adam is, as theologians say, the federal head of the human race, and when he sinned, all of humanity collectively sinned. Adam’s sin is the sin of all. Adam’s original sin is imputed to every individual, meaning that when Adam sinned, the guilt and consequences of that sin were passed on to the entire human race. His disobedience affected all who would come from him.

Death has “passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” *in Adam*. The death of our bodies is universal because of Adam. Death is the result of sin, and because we all sinned in Adam, we all face the consequence of physical death.

To some, it may seem unjust that the consequences of Adam’s sin should extend to the entire human race. It might cause one to wonder why all mankind should suffer the effects of sin and death because of a choice made by Adam long ago.

Adam was not acting solely as an individual though; he stood as the federal head of all who would come from him. That is, when he fell into sin, the whole human race fell with him. And if any one of us were in Adam’s place and God tested each human being individually, I believe the result would have been the same; we also would have sinned as Adam did. My father, Pastor Paul M. Sadler, used to say, “If we had been in the Garden of Eden, we would have been pushing Adam out of the way to get to the fruit first.”

Death in Adam or Life in Christ

Although some struggle with the idea that the actions of one man could affect the entire human race, this same principle is at the core of the gospel. As sin entered the world through one

man, God graciously also made *salvation* from sin available to the world through one Man: Jesus Christ.

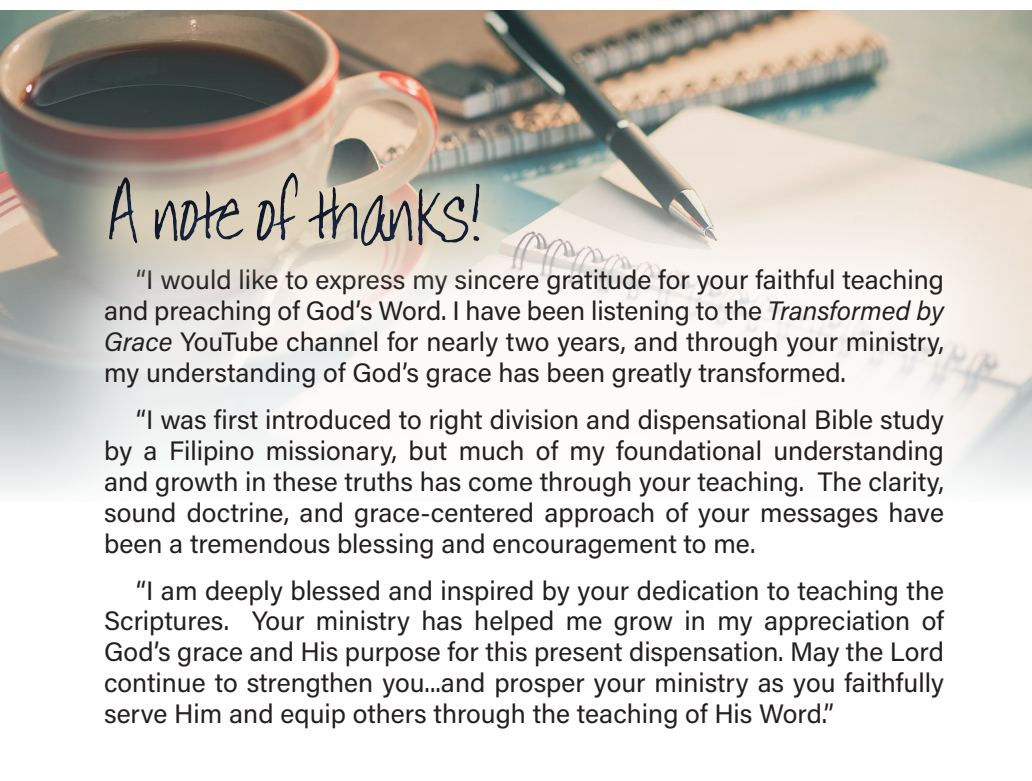
Adam acted as the singular representative of the whole human race, and so did Christ. "He died for all" (2 Cor. 5:15). As all were made sinners by the action of one man, Adam, all can be forgiven and made righteous by the action of another Man, the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, when we trust Him as our personal Savior.

As the Last Adam, Christ is the Head of all redeemed humanity, and His action affects others. Through His obedience in paying for all our sins at the Cross and triumphing over death in the resurrection, His righteousness and

eternal life are given to all who believe.

All humanity is either in Adam or in Christ, and each position carries its own eternal consequences. In Adam, we are sinners, resulting in death and condemnation. In Christ, believers are righteous, resulting in eternal life and justification. Or as Paul put it, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

The consequences of Christ's obedience extend as far as Adam's disobedience; salvation from sin is available to every person. To be in Christ, you simply need to trust that Christ died for your sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:3-4). *Have you believed the gospel?* 



A note of thanks!

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your faithful teaching and preaching of God's Word. I have been listening to the *Transformed by Grace* YouTube channel for nearly two years, and through your ministry, my understanding of God's grace has been greatly transformed.

"I was first introduced to right division and dispensational Bible study by a Filipino missionary, but much of my foundational understanding and growth in these truths has come through your teaching. The clarity, sound doctrine, and grace-centered approach of your messages have been a tremendous blessing and encouragement to me.

"I am deeply blessed and inspired by your dedication to teaching the Scriptures. Your ministry has helped me grow in my appreciation of God's grace and His purpose for this present dispensation. May the Lord continue to strengthen you...and prosper your ministry as you faithfully serve Him and equip others through the teaching of His Word."



Question Box



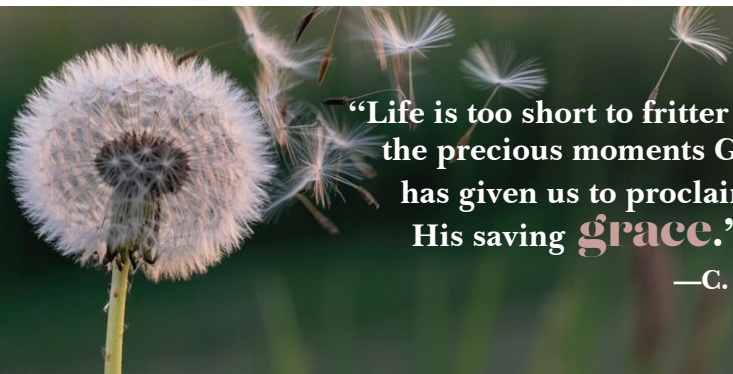
"Probably one of the biggest doctrines that I am confused about in the Bible is the doctrine of 'being baptized in the Spirit.' Is this for the Body of Christ?"

"Baptized **in the Spirit**" or "baptized **with the Spirit**" is misunderstood because of a failure to rightly divide the Word of God, separating God's prophetic program from the mystery program.

In God's prophetic program, at Pentecost, those believers were baptized "**with the Spirit**" (Acts 1:5; 2:4). They were filled with the Holy Spirit to miraculously speak in tongues and perform other signs and wonders as seen in early Acts (Acts 2:4; 4:30; 5:12). Also, it was the Lord Jesus Who sent the Spirit and baptized them with His power as promised in His earthly ministry (Luke 24:49; John 16:7).

Today, in the dispensation of grace, the believer is baptized "**by the Spirit**" into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). It's not the Lord Jesus Christ doing the baptizing, but the Holy Spirit Who is doing the baptizing. This takes place when one places their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Eph. 2:8-9). It's a one-time transaction, and once it takes place, the believer is sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). Paul also commands us to be "**filled with the Spirit**" (Eph. 5:18), which is an ongoing process. This is accomplished as we allow God's Word to "dwell in [us] richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16), and we obey Christ's commands for this dispensation, given through the pen of the Apostle Paul.

—Pastor Jim Tollar



"Life is too short to fritter away the precious moments God has given us to proclaim His saving **grace.**"

—C. R. Stam

What Is a Mid-Acts Dispensationalist?



PASTOR DAVID HAVARD

BBS Ministry Correspondence Coordinator

We are often asked what it means to be a “mid-Acts” dispensationalist. To answer that question, we first need to define what it means to be a “dispensationalist.”

A dispensationalist reads the Bible as showing God’s unfolding plan across time, with Israel and the Church having separate but complementary roles, and prophecy (especially end-times events) taken literally. This contrasts with covenant theology, which sees more continuity (the Church as the fulfillment of Israel).

While dispensationalists in general see a difference between God’s program for Israel and His program for the Church today, they differ from “mid-Acts” or “Pauline” dispensationalists in three basic areas:

1. The biggest difference between a classic dispensationalist and a mid-Acts dispensationalist is when they believe the Body of Christ started. In general, traditional dispensationalists believe that the Body of Christ started at Pentecost with Peter, as recorded in Acts 2. Mid-Acts dispensationalists believe that the Body of Christ began with the Apostle Paul (either at his calling in Acts 9 or with his first missionary journey in Acts 13) and is based on his unique apostleship and revelations.



2. While both traditional and mid-Acts dispensationalists say that the Book of Acts is a transitional book, showing the change from the age of law to the age of grace, only mid-Acts dispensationalists are consistent in their interpretation. Traditional dispensationalists contradict themselves because, on one

hand, they say that the Body of Christ started at Pentecost, but on the other hand say that those saved at Pentecost were added to the church which already existed, which was operating under the kingdom program for Israel. By contrast, mid-Acts dispensationalists say that the Body of Christ did not start until after the conversion of the Apostle Paul. This is consistent because it allows those who were saved at Pentecost—responding to a kingdom message—to be added to the kingdom church which already existed, and those saved after Paul to be placed into the separate Body of Christ.

3. Both of these differences (1 and 2) lead to the most practical distinction between traditional and mid-Acts dispensationalists—where the Church today should go in Scripture for its doctrine of faith and practice. Because traditional dispensationalists fail to maintain a proper distinction between the kingdom program and the Body of Christ, they mistakenly apply the teaching of the Gospels and the General Epistles as sources of the Church’s doctrine today. This leads to contradiction and conflict when what is said about salvation in the Gospels (e.g., “believe and do” in the kingdom context) is applied directly to the Church today alongside Paul’s clear teaching of “only believe” (grace through faith without works). We clearly see this contradiction when traditional dispensationalists use John 3:16 in evangelism—but then define “believe” using Paul’s gospel—they are mixing two different dispensational programs and two different contents of faith. Scriptural consistency requires that we derive our doctrine of faith and practice from Paul’s epistles, while recognizing that all Scripture is profitable and offers valuable application. 



A new feature on the BBS website is our **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)** section. This article is one of the answers to the questions addressed on that page. We encourage you to visit

bereanbiblesociety.org to explore the new FAQ section and discover the many additional resources for studying God’s Word, rightly divided.



What Does It Mean to Walk Circumspectly?

PASTOR KEVIN J. SADLER
BBS President/Editor

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise” (Eph. 5:15).

“See then” refers to the immediate context that believers should “walk as children of light” (v. 8) as a bright testimony for Christ before the unbelieving world so that they might receive the way of salvation. To walk as children of light, Paul emphasizes that believers should not live in darkness like the world (vv. 11-13), so that our testimony may shine even more brightly and, by contrast, expose the darkness of the world.

The light of our testimony for Christ may be vast or small. We may light up one neighborhood, one home, one family, or even just as visitors to one hospital room, or our light might have a greater outreach depending on our circumstances in life. The light of our testimony may also be long-lasting or short-lived. It may be limited in time by a short life or a short time after we are saved before our home-going, or then again we may have many years to be a light for Christ, and our light might even continue shining after our home-going by virtue of the legacy we leave.

Faithfulness to be a light to the world that needs the Lord, wherever we are and however long we are here, is what God is most concerned about. It is God’s will that those with His light within them radiate God’s “goodness and righteousness and truth” (v. 9) from the Holy Spirit.

In light of these things, Paul wrote, “See then that ye walk circumspectly.” The term “walk” portrays our way of life, which unfolds in a daily, step-by-step process. Most often, when we walk, we do so to get somewhere, to reach a destination. The Christian walk also pictures steady progress toward a definite goal. And the goal for our lives and our daily walk is Christ: to know Him and to be more like Him (Phil. 3:10-14).

When Paul says to “walk circumspectly,” the word “circumspectly” means exactly, accurately, diligently, and carefully. The first half of this word—the “circum” in circumspectly—means around. For example, the word “CIRCUMference” refers to the distance around something. The second



half of the word—the “spectly” in circumspectly—means to look. Think of the word “SPECTacles” which refers to eyeglasses through which one looks. Putting it together, “circumspectly” means to look around.

The idea is that of walking along a narrow path on the side

of a steep mountain. Because a careless step could lead to disaster, every step is taken carefully, accurately, and with undeviating attention to the path. “See then that ye walk circumspectly” is in the present imperative in the original Greek, which means that it is God’s will that we continually walk carefully and pay close attention to how we live.

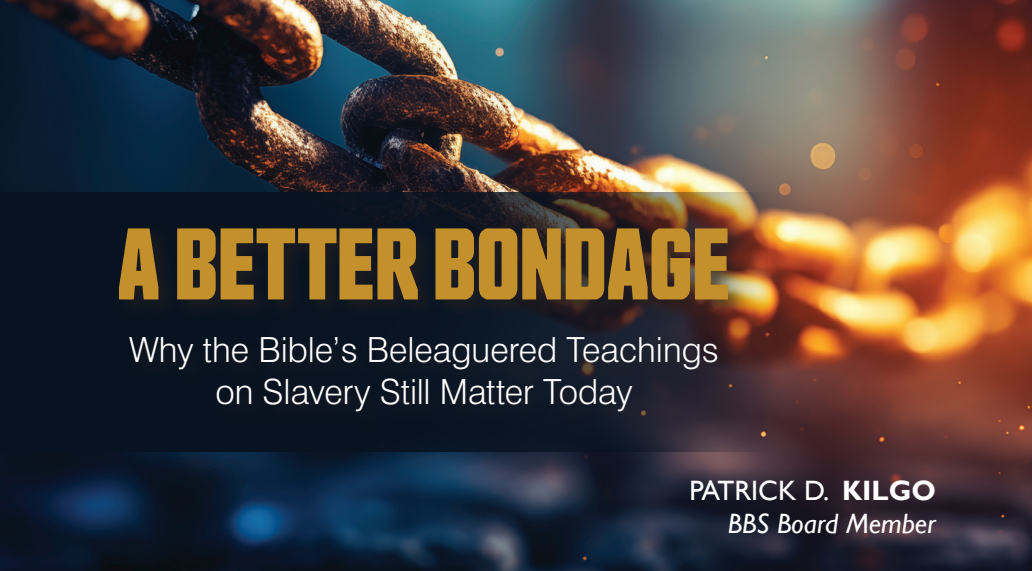
The believer’s daily walk in this world is one of resolve, honor, and courage. It is full of purpose and focus. We see that in this instruction to walk circumspectly. Walking circumspectly requires several things. First, to walk carefully as a consistent and faithful light before the world, we must rely on the Spirit and His strength by faith (Eph. 3:16), living by the truth of His Word, rightly divided.

To walk circumspectly is to live aware of the dangers around us that we need to navigate with care. The world, the flesh, and the devil are our continual enemies (Eph. 2:2-3). We must walk diligently so that our light does not grow dim through their influence and opposition.

To walk circumspectly further means being watchful for opportunities to honor Christ and make Him known. It means recognizing that God has placed us where we are for a purpose and that He desires to use us in the lives of those around us. As we walk carefully and attentively, we become more aware of the opportunities He provides each day to show His grace and let our light shine before others.

The believer’s walk is to be given careful consideration. It is to be the outgrowth of thought, purpose, and deliberate action. Life is made up of steps, events, and decisions. Walking circumspectly means keeping one’s spiritual eyes open to look around and consider the Lord and His will in each step we take, the situations we face, and the choices we make.

One who walks circumspectly surveys their circumstances and possible consequences before deciding, speaking, or acting. It is like the old saying, “Look before you leap,” which means to consider carefully the possible consequences before acting. Considering the consequences of our behavior in this passage is that believers are to “walk as children of light” before “the children of disobedience,” reproving the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:6-15). We do so in order that our careful, godly conduct might awaken them to their need for the Savior and lead them to the salvation He freely offers to all. 



A BETTER BONDAGE

Why the Bible's Beleaguered Teachings
on Slavery Still Matter Today

PATRICK D. KILGO

BBS Board Member

As a young man, I once had a conversation with an African-American gentleman on a long flight. He'd been a Christian as a youth but had left the faith—"because the Bible endorses slavery," he said. Since then, I've heard this accusation hurled at the Bible many times.

Indeed, Moses' Law has difficult passages about God's people "smiting" slaves (Ex. 21:20-21), buying "bondmen" (Lev. 25:44-46), forcefully marrying female war captives (Deut. 21:10-14), and even selling off their own daughters into servitude (Ex. 21:7-9). The New Testament also has its share of cringeworthy slavery passages. One of Jesus' parables mentions a servant being beaten for not doing his master's will (Luke 12:47-48). Paul even sent a runaway slave (Onesimus) back into bondage (Phile. 1:10-12)! Maybe we should all be repulsed by the Bible's teaching on slavery.

Not so fast, my Bible-believing friends. Far from being a stain on God's character, the Bible's teachings about slaves (as well as women, foreigners, the poor, and other oppressed groups) elevated their status like nothing else ever did.

SLAVERY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The KJV calls them "servants," but today we know them as slaves—those in bondage whose will is altogether consumed by another.

Old Testament slavery can be subdivided into two classes: Hebrew slaves and foreign slaves. To be clear, the Bible never endorses slavery of any kind, but it does regulate it. Some would say that regulating slavery is tantamount to endorsing it, but this doesn't hold up to logic. For instance, the American government regulates the tobacco industry but

doesn't endorse smoking. In the same way, God's law governed the treatment of servants while never validating the institution, because this kind of servitude addressed a larger societal concern of God's—poverty.



To escape poverty, Hebrews could **choose** to enter the service of wealthier Hebrews with protections in place to avoid exploitation. This servitude could last no more than six years (Ex. 21:2), and slaves were freed whenever the Year of Jubilee came (Lev. 25:10,39-41). A slave could be redeemed anytime by a family member (vv. 47-48). Slaves were to be treated with dignity (vv. 39-40), and after release, they were to be given generous provisions (Deut. 15:13-14). If a slave wished to stay with his master, he could choose perpetual servitude, an agreement publicly ratified before Israel's elders to avoid exploitation (Ex. 21:5-6). Countless Israelites escaped poverty while maintaining their dignity because of these provisions.

God's laws for foreign slaves, usually war captives, were revolutionary in their time. Israel regularly faced military challenges from surrounding nations, including the Canaanites. According to Deuteronomy 20:16, the Israelites were to leave none of the Canaanites alive when they took the Promised Land, so there was no opportunity to put Canaanite men, women, or children into servanthood (vv. 16-17). God's reason for this severe command was *"That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God"* (v. 18).

Outside of the Canaanites, the other people groups who engaged Israel militarily were almost always the aggressors; that is, Israel was typically on the defensive. How would you feel if, after being maliciously attacked, a defeated enemy lay captive before you? Most would want revenge.

The Israelites no doubt felt vengeful too, but God tightly regulated the treatment of women and children captives, allowing them to be placed into servitude but giving them very favorable terms. Those taken as servants were not only spared of poverty but were invited to participate in Israel's religious life if they submitted to the One True God (Ex. 12:44-49). If a master was responsible for killing or maiming a slave, he would be punished

or even lose claim to him (Ex. 21:20-21,26-27). Surprisingly, runaway slaves were not to be returned to their masters but rather were allowed to live unoppressed in their new location (Deut. 23:15-16).

In the eyes of modern critics, however, this unprecedented humanity is overshadowed by some tough verses concerning female foreign slaves and their children. Under the law, they were considered the property of the Hebrew owner forevermore (Lev. 25:44-46). However, when faced with starvation, perpetual servitude in a nation whose God demanded sustenance, care, and dignity for captives must have seemed better than the alternative!

Still, critics especially object to the treatment of foreign slave women as outlined in Deuteronomy 21:10-14:

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive,

“And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife;

“Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails;

“And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month:

and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

“And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.”

Using modern lenses, it might read as if the female captive is helpless to resist, a voiceless victim of her circumstances who's forced into a sexual relationship she doesn't want. But in the context of its time, this was a groundbreaking advancement. Remember, a primary aim of Moses' Law was to ensure that every female in Israel was under the headship protection of a male. In this passage, that provision is being extended to the female captive of enemy peoples! The woman was allowed to mourn her family losses, sheltered from immediate sexual exploitation, and ultimately taken in as a wife. She was saved from poverty and ostensibly given the same protective treatment afforded all Hebrew wives. Plus, she could never be sold as merchandise.

Though the woman's lack of autonomy might offend our modern sensibilities, I would challenge you to find a legal code or historical precedent written before the Law of Moses that treated enemy captives with anything near this level of justice and dignity. It took

the loving, compassionate God of the universe to encode this into His law before it ever happened; mankind never would have done it.

SLAVERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By the time of Paul's conversion, slavery had become a Roman institution. About 20% of the Roman populace—40% in Rome—were slaves. They mostly consisted of defeated peoples from Europe and the Mediterranean regions who were offered bondage as a means of escaping poverty, but without the safeguards of God's law. Though still not as reprehensible as later American slavery, Roman slaves had it rough; their median life expectancy was only 17 years.



As many as one in three Gentile converts to Christ were slaves. While likely representing the single largest demographic in Paul's churches, imagine their delight to hear that, in Christ, "there is neither bond nor free" and that they were "all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28). Paul and the leaders he

trained no doubt spent large amounts of time ministering to slaves in their congregations. What advice did Paul give to believing slaves? The answer may surprise you.

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it...let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God" (1 Cor. 7:20,21,24).

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:5-6).

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed" (1 Tim. 6:1).

"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:9-10).

Having the mindset of a freedom-loving American, I might have advised slaves to run away or revolt. Paul does the exact opposite. He tells them to double down in their efforts to be the best slaves they can be. And not just for show! They were to serve "with singleness of heart, fearing God." They

were to do it sincerely, “not with eyeservice.” And to do otherwise was to blaspheme the name and doctrine of God!

What strong words from the Apostle Paul, and what abundant fodder for modern critics, who, rather than trying to understand the deeper spiritual truths Paul was relaying, instead accuse him of all manner of malevolence. What spiritual truth is God trying to teach us by giving this advice to slaves? Both the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul give us the same answer.

CHRIST JESUS THE SLAVE

Peter and Paul butted heads over various aspects of the revelation of the mystery (Gal. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:15-16), but concerning the deeper truths reflected in Roman slavery, they were in lock-step unity. Consider Peter’s words:

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Pet. 2:18-20).

We see in Peter’s next words (v. 21) the reason why he encouraged such an intensified devotion towards one’s slavery: *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.”*

Paul also emphasizes Christ’s suffering as a slave and places the same burden of servanthood upon us.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who...made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:5-7).

CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO BE SLAVES

Many believers like the idea of following Jesus’ example until they learn it involves a cost—one’s freedom. Paul understood this well. Indeed, the two most frequent labels he used to describe himself were “servant” and “prisoner.” He, too, set aside

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who...made Himself of no reputation,
and took upon Him the form of a servant,
and was made in the likeness of men.”

—Philippians 2:5-7—



his freedom to become a slave for the gospel's sake:

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more” (1 Cor. 9:19).

Why does Paul do this? His answer is simple and direct.

“And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you” (1 Cor. 9:23 cf. 2 Cor. 4:5).



The paradox is this: to walk in freedom with Christ as a beacon to the world means allowing your own will to be altogether consumed by His—just like a slave. You belong to Him; He is your Master. You're to do His will, and in doing so you'll be the Lord's freeman (1 Cor. 7:22).

I've observed that “low-minded” servant-hearted believers, on average, win far more souls for Christ than those who make their own way in this world.

You could say that being a slave to Christ is the most important thing in your life. How important is it? Ask Paul and every other biblical letter writer what's the first thing they want you to know about them.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ....” —Romans 1:1

“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ....”

—James 1:1

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ....”

—2 Peter 1:1

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ....” —Jude 1:1

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ...unto His servant John.”

—Revelation 1:1

True freedom isn't found in personal autonomy. Christ calls us to become His slaves, and in that allegiance, we find the only One who can truly make us free. 



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Christian *to* Christian

My name is Billie Deford...and this is my testimony of how the Lord has worked in my life. I was born in Big Rock, Tennessee, in 1944. I was born at home because the nearest doctor was about 20 miles from us. The nearest hospital was about 25 miles, so since the doctor and hospital were so far away, there were midwives in our area. My mother was one of the four. They are the ones that delivered me.

When I was three days old...the doctor found my mother had cancer. He told her not to have any more children because she would not see them grow. She didn't listen. She had a son born in September 1945. She went home to be with the Lord in 1948. I was four years old and my brother was three.

After our mother went home to be with our Heavenly Father, our dad was not able to take care of my brother and me because he had heart trouble. So he put us in foster care in Tennessee. At that time, children could only stay in one home for two years, then they had to be moved to another foster home.

After our dad went home to be with the Lord in March of 1956, we had to be put back with our family or we would be put up for adoption. In the second foster home we were in, we lived just up the highway from a church; my brother and I had to walk to church.

On May 16, 1955, we were in Vacation Bible School, where I believed the gospel...It is as clear today as it was at that time. When we came out of church, we had to go down to the basement for our classes. I was crying when I came out. Our refreshments were set up outside, and the ladies that were out there saw I was

crying. My foster mother asked, “Are you okay?” I said, “Yes, I just trusted the Lord as my Savior.” All of them came up and hugged me at the same time.

I tell everyone if Jesus hadn’t done that for me, I don’t know where I would be today. It was for my sake He died on that Cross. If I hadn’t believed, I could be running the streets or in prison.

I can never repay Him for what He did on the Cross that day for me. I tell people what He did for me and what He will do for you. You may have troubles and feel no one cares—well, He does.

I know when I get to Heaven, I will get to see all of my loved ones again. I have my mom and dad, my husband, Billy (he went home in February 2020), my brother, half-sisters, half-brothers, grandparents, great-grandparents, foster parents, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews waiting for me.

When someone hears this and they say, “We feel sorry for you,” I tell them, “No, don’t feel sorry—be happy for me.” I tell them they are up there where none of them are in pain, and where there is only love.

—Mrs. Billie Deford



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or brandoncrowder95@gmail.com or

Berean Bible Society at 262-255-4750
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Amazing Creation

Eric Miller writes, “The 16-ounce honey bear in your pantry exists only because tens of thousands of bees flew some 112,000 miles in a relentless, unquestioned pursuit of nectar gathered from 4.5 million flowers.



“Every one of those foraging bees was female. By the time the life of each ended—they live all of 6 weeks during honey-making season—each bee flew about 500 miles in 20 days....

“As these bees were flying themselves to death, the production inside the hive continued with stupendous efficiency, in the following sequence:

(1) Bee brings nectar to hive... (2) Bee is greeted by a younger, homebody receiver bee, who relieves her of her load. (3) Receiver bee deposits nectar into a cell and proceeds to reduce its water content and raise its sugar level by fanning it with her wings and regurgitating it up to 200 times, killing microbes along the way. (4) More bees surround this cell and others nearby and fan them with their wings 25,000 times or so, thus turning nectar into honey. (5) When the honey is ripened, wax specialists arrive to cap off the cells.

“And that is how every single ounce of every single honey pot, bottle, or jar in the world—hundreds of thousands of them—is brought into being.

“Every gulp of raw honey is a distinct, unique, unadulterated medley of plant flavor: a sweet, condensed garden in your mouth,” writes Holley Bishop, an awed amateur beekeeper trying her level best with ordinary English to capture a miracle.”¹

“How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psa. 119:103).



1. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2006/09/shock-and-awe/>

BBS Letter Excerpts



From Our Inbox:

"I received my Grace Study Bible in April; it was a birthday gift from my husband. It was well worth the wait! I started reading it the day it arrived and haven't stopped reading it since. I have been doing the daily Bible reading schedule that I printed from your website, since January. Reading in my new Grace Study Bible has provided a deeper understanding of the Scriptures, and I feel as if I'm doing an in-depth study every time I read. Thank you for this wonderful Bible."

From Maine:

"I just want to thank you for this Bible. Its format encourages me to read more and to get more out of my reading. I sat down early one morning for quiet time, and it was almost two hours later when I noticed the time! I intend to take my new Bible to our next meeting so my friends can see it."

From a Prisoner in Virginia:

"I just now finished April's *Berean Searchlight*, and I am grateful to receive it. In regards to the feature article—*Will Water Baptism Be Required for Salvation in the Tribulation?*—that article answered the questions that I had concerning water baptism. Thank you for your clear teachings; I continue to learn more with each article I read. God bless you all!"

From Nigeria:

"It was incredibly encouraging to hear that the leadership at the *Berean Bible Society* is willing to send literature our way...Please extend my sincere appreciation to the brethren, especially to the BBS President, for his kindness and willingness to assist us. These materials will be a tremendous blessing to those of us who desire to study the Scriptures more deeply but have very limited access to sound Bible study resources."

From New Jersey:

"I received my Grace Study Bible. It is my most valuable possession. As a Grace believer in New Jersey, I now have not only the pure Word of God but an excellent study Bible with great notes that are doctrinally sound. Thank you and praise God!"

From Our Inbox:

"Pastor Paul Sadler's book, *The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter* is a blessing to me more each reading. It's one of the most Spirit-filled and informative teachings I have ever had."

From Montana:

"I'm enjoying studying my new BBS Bible. The design, layout, footnotes are so easy to follow. Very well done....What an amazing work. Thank you so much."

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to *Berean Searchlight*) "Sirs, thanks for the magazine. It's a blessing; please keep sending it to me."

From Missouri:

"Thanks so much for sending the Bible literature in such a timely manner."

From Georgia:

"I got my Grace Study Bible in the mail today. I have to say that it's fantastic, and it far surpassed my expectations. I wouldn't want it to drop on my head from a tall building, but other than its weight, I think it's really truly a magnificent accomplishment for the Society. Thanks so much for your leadership! I think this Bible is gonna make a big difference in people's lives."

From Washington:

"My wife and I would like to thank you for the *Transformed by Grace* program. They are such a blessing in our lives. May you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Looking forward to your new study Bible. Thank you."

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to *Two Minutes With the Bible* "How the Spirit Helps") "Another very good *Two Minutes*! Note the difference between what happened at Pentecost and what transpires today regarding the operation of the Spirit in the life of the believer...BIG DIFFERENCE!!"

From Missouri:

"Thank you. The Lord bless this ministry. I've been associated with BBS since the mid-80s. Pastor Stam's *Things That Differ* changed my spiritual life. So happy you have created a Grace Bible. Looking forward to getting started studying."

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* "I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life") "Well taught once again from Scripture being our authority! Awesome and trustworthy!"

From Wyoming:

"Guess what? We got the Bible today in the mail. What a wonderful surprise! It's big too! So much information in it, I'm sure! I'm in awe of it! Thank you all so much for your work on bringing this to fruition, all of you at *Berean Bible Society*...."

From Tennessee:

"Thank you all very very much for finding me the hardback book of the *Pastoral Epistles*. I now have all of the books from Acts through Revelation in hardcover. I also have some of the other hardcovers and paperbacks by Stam and the Sadlers. I treasure this section of my library as the most important in my library of three thousand plus books. My Lord bless all of you!"

From Georgia:

"This magazine has opened my eyes to the Bible. I was so confused all the time. Understanding the mystery of God made all the difference for me."

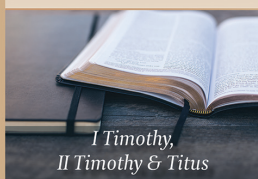


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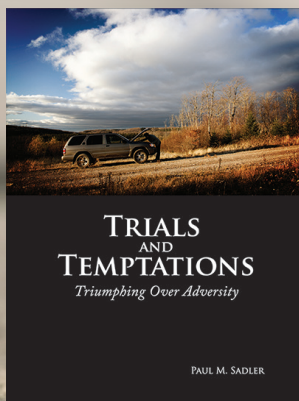
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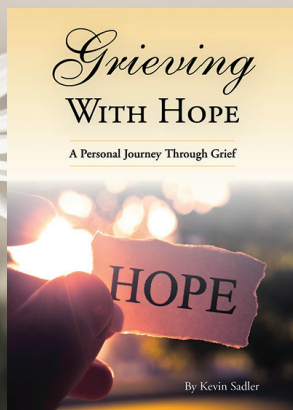


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News & Announcements



New Board Member: Pat Kilgo, with his wife, Michelle, and his family, served as missionaries with *Things to Come Mission* in Malaysia for more than 11 years. He is now living in Conyers, Georgia, and he team-teaches at *Age of Grace Bible Church* in Athens. We were delighted when Pat recently accepted the invitation to join the BBS Board of Directors. You can read an article by our newest board member on page 17 of this issue.

Ministry in Mississippi: On August 22-23, your editor, Pastor Kevin Sadler, along with others, will be speaking at the Mississippi Grace Conference in Tupelo, Mississippi. The theme is "Growing Up in Him—Speaking the Truth in Love." The conference's eleven sessions will be held at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, located at 1612 McClure Cove in Tupelo. For more information, please contact John Smith at 662-706-5757 or sjohn5358@gmail.com.

Zoom Bible Study: Pastor Barney Bornhoft of *Wall Lake Grace Church* in Wall Lake, Iowa, leads a Grace Bible study via Zoom every Wednesday at 7:00 pm, CT. The study lasts for about an hour. If you would like to join his study, just text him your name, cell number, and email address at 712-790-1831. Then every Wednesday, Pastor Bornhoft will send you a text message reminder along with an email invitation and a Zoom link to join.

Seeking Grace Fellowship: Robin and Julie Andersson are seeking fellowship with other mid-Acts, rightly dividing believers in northern Germany, southern Sweden or anywhere in Denmark. You can contact them at everywhichwaybutlose@protonmail.com. Keith and Miekie Jacobs are likewise looking for fellowship, but with Canadian Grace believers on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. They can be contacted at k.jacobs9@me.com.

Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!

Mississippi Grace Conference
August 22-23, Tupelo, MS

Grace and Truth Conference
September 18-19, Wittenburg, WI

TBG Regional Conference-Virginia
October 10-11, Roanoke, VA



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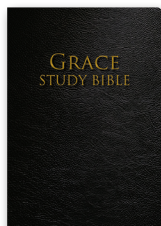
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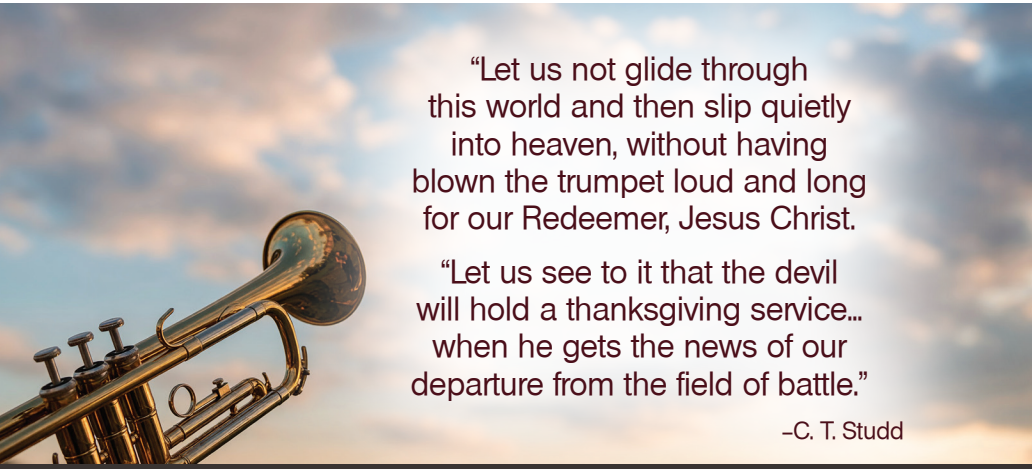
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