Berean Searchlight

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

January 2001



From the Editor to You:



Dearly Beloved,

I stopped by to pay Pastor Stam a visit the other day and found him doing well and rejoicing in the Lord. Up to a couple of years ago, the aging process had been kind to Brother Stam. But the years

have a way of taking their toll. As we sat there reminiscing, it brought to mind how much this godly man had endured in his untiring defense of Paul's gospel.

Having known Brother Stam for twenty-five years, and served as his understudy for ten of those years, I can personally attest he suffered immeasurably that we might come into a fuller knowledge of God's will. The attacks were both intense and vicious at times, but he never once wavered in his stand for the truth. Both friend and foe alike hold him in high esteem on this score. Pastor Stam was cut from the fiber of the pioneers of the faith, which enabled him, by the grace of God, to face one brutal assault after another as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

The words of President Theodore Roosevelt perhaps say it best for those who are willing to step onto the plain of the battlefield: "It is not the critic who counts, not the person who points out where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the devotions, and spends himself or herself in a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and at the worst, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his or her place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Of course, Pastor Stam would be the first to say that he was merely an instrument in the hand of God. "That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." While this is indeed true, God first needs a *willing* heart. This measure of devotion Brother Stam was more than happy to supply, and God used him mightily to lead the charge against the traditions of men, which make the Word of God of none effect. May we never lose sight of the fact that we are only *one* generation away from losing that which others sacrificed so greatly to recover for us.

Please remember Pastor Stam before the throne of grace as we wait together for the Commander in Chief to call us home at that day.

In Him, with thanks, Paul M. Sadler President

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

January 2001

From Our Mailbag 4
The Silent Preacher 6
The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter 7
Open Hearts, Open Doors, and Open Mouths 13
Question Box
The Pastor's Perils
BBS Gospel Tracts
New Booklet— The Supernatural Sign Gifts of the Acts Period 22
News and Announcements

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Composition and Layout: Kevin J. Sadler

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Questions, comments, book orders? You can reach us at:

Berean Bible Society N112 W17761 Mequon Road PO Box 756 Germantown, WI 53022

Internet: <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>

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From Our Mailbag Acts 14:27

GOD'S BLESSING ON BBS MINISTRIES

From New York:

"I've been receiving the Searchlight for nearly 30 years. Since the early 70's BBS has been (and continues to be for me) a beacon of light for rightly dividing the Word of truth. I have not always agreed on every issue written about, but 90 percent isn't bad for likeminded.... Keep up the good work and continue to give God the glory."

From Arkansas:

"Thank you for your *Berean Searchlight* publication. The articles are very helpful in our walk with the Lord."

From Singapore:

"Greetings from the *Grace Fellowship* in Singapore. We hope that all at BBS are well and busy serving our resurrected Lord. I would like to thank you for sending me the tapes and book on Revelation explained. I shall certainly use them to discuss end time teaching in my Bible Study groups. Grace believers are few and far between in Singapore, but the mainline denominations are growing very fast. Most denominations have been swept over by the Charismatic movement, including the Catholics, Anglicans (Episcopalians), the Methodists, etc. It is amazing how fast wrong teaching spreads, and people like Kenneth Hagin, John Wimber, Robert Schuller, etc. are big heroes here. Charismatic songs of praise are helping to pull in the crowds, and band players are much sought after to liven up the services. I find it very difficult to share Grace teaching with pastors in the various denominations, and they cling on to what they have been taught (mainly Covenant Theology), even when shown Bible passages that prove them wrong. The Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm are repeated over and over again in all situations and circumstances. Most people don't bother to rightly divide the Word and anything goes. Thank you for faithfully sending the Searchlight, which is the best monthly reading a believer can ask for."

From Wisconsin:

"Oh, how good it is to 'keep in touch!"
Thank you, so much, for all your help and answers to the questions that I've asked—they are appreciated more than words can say. Also how very thankful I am for being directed to the rightly dividing of the Scriptures."

From Connecticut:

"Please send me your autumn book special, *The Triumph of His Grace*. I want to send this to my brother-in-law who is a Messianic Jew, hoping it will open his eyes in regard to dispensational truths of the Bible and that the believers during the age of Grace won't go through the tribulation." (We've often said, those who teach that we are going through any part of the coming Tribulation do not fully understand the distinctive apostleship and message of St. Paul. Ed.)

From Nevada:

"I don't remember ever having written to you, but now I am taking the opportunity to do so. First, let me say, you are doing an excellent job of guiding the BBS and editing the *Berean Searchlight*. Your exhortation and doctrine is sound in that it's based upon the Pauline epistles and the Word, rightly divided...."

From Guatemala:

"I have been blessed receiving the *Berean Searchlight* for some years, and visited your web page today for the first time. By the way, the *Searchlight* looks much better issue after issue. May God bless you."

From Michigan:

"We have been very blessed here at *Bitely Community Church* by your ministry....We've shared the tapes from the conference with many people and even missionaries in several different parts of the world. And we had very good response come back from them about the blessings they received. Your messages were also certainly appreciated by many of the beloved here in our fellowship."

From Illinois:

"I'm so thankful for our school where our students can learn the grace message." (Lord willing, there will be another class graduating in May. Have you considered attending BBI? There's no time like the present to enroll for the next semester! Ed).

From Ontario, Canada:

"Please find the enclosed cheque for the materials that were sent to us. The job that you did is excellent."

From New York:

"Just a little note of appreciation for the wonderful insights you have shared with us. I always learn little gems of truth through your Berean Searchlight; especially your explanation of rightly dividing the Word that was in the article this month on 'What's for Supper'. That was excellent. I came out of a liberal Methodist Church and go to a Presbyterian Church that is not mainline since I don't have any Grace church around. At prayer time it is awkward to pray as I believe Paul taught us to. Should I pray quietly to myself? I praise the Lord for how He has used you people in sharing the truth. You have been a real blessing to me. My wife goes to the Methodist church. She won't leave. I pray for you always." (You may want to drop a note to Brother Kiszonas who wrote the above article. We're sure he would appreciate a few words of encouragement. You can find his address at the end of the article. Ed.)

From Iowa:

"Enclosed is \$.... for you to use in sending out the gospel of the grace of God. We pray that many will hear and come to know Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. We thank God for His blessing and that we have Christ Jesus for Lord and Savior. Redeemed by the cleansing power of His shed blood, shed to pay our sin debt for us."

From Pennsylvania:

"We can't thank you enough for coming to *First Grace Gospel Church*. We truly appreciate all the work you do to get the gospel out. We hope you can come again soon."

From Colorado:

"I want to thank you for the Search-light which I enjoy reading. It has been a blessing to us through the years and I have always enjoyed Brother Stam who was my teacher at the Milwaukee Bible Institute. I have also enjoyed your ministry through the Searchlight and in the churches where I have heard you speak. May the Lord continue to bless and use you for His glory and praise. Keep up the good work!"

From New York:

"My November offering is enclosed. The dispensational message, the gospel of the grace of God, is so plain and clear and wonderful when it is known."

From Illinois:

"Your Searchlight which you so faithfully send me is my best sleeping pill. I read it over and over again. I do not send you a monthly check but at the end of the year I send one check. This is the easy way for me. I sell and give these wonderful books to my friends. Thank you so much for your love and compassion you have for our beloved Lord and Savior." (Brother O'Hair used to say to his Board of Directors, "Brethren, it doesn't matter if the Lord sends gifts once a month or once a year, the important thing is that He sends them." Thanks so very much for remembering the Lord's work. Ed.)

From Oregon:

"A love gift for the ministry. I thank God for you all and your labors to preach the gospel of grace through faith in Jesus Christ for this dispensation. What a wonderful truth."

"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

THE SILENT PREACHER

I preach some weighty sermons, But utter not a word; And tell folks things worth hearing, Although I can't be heard.

Born of a love for mortals, I help those in distress To find the loving Lord Jesus Who gives the weary rest.

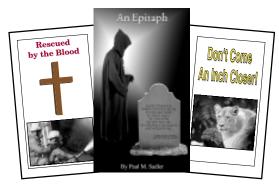
I go into the prisons
Where captives sadly mope.
And for eternal freedom,
I tell them how to hope.

Unto the sick I hasten
With a prescription sure;
Tell where the poor and needy
Great riches can secure.

'Tis strange but true; my message Doth comfort, bless, and cheer, Yet of the truths I herald Make sinners quake and fear.

Yes, many miles I travel— And sometimes I'm sent back; I go where you can't enter For I'm a gospel tract.

—Selected



*For a list of titles and prices of gospel tracts offered by the *Berean Bible Society*, please see page 20.

The Life and Letters of the Apostle Peter

I Peter 3:8-17

By Paul M. Sadler



"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

-I Pet. 3:8-9

The adversity that most believers face today is like a tempest in a teapot compared to what Peter's hearers were called upon to endure. Those of the dispersion were living in a very hostile environment. The Gentiles resented them because of who they were. On the other hand, their own countrymen hated them in view of the fact that they believed Christ was the Messiah of Israel. You might say these kingdom saints had two enemies to contend with. Consequently, Peter gives these saints some practical instruction as to how they might weather the storm.

Interestingly, as the apostle brings this section of his letter to a close with the term "finally," he has successfully completed a triad. It is generally accepted that the Hebrew Bible has three major divisions the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Under the supervision of the Holy Spirit, Peter has effectively quoted from each in the first three chapters of this letter.

The Law: "Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44 cf. I Pet. 1:16).

The Prophets: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again" (Isa. 53:7,9 cf. I Pet. 2:22,23).

The Writings: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (Psa. 34:12-16 cf. I Pet. 3:10-12).

But why does the apostle acknowledge this division? In addition to Peter's desire to closely align his writings with the prophetic program, he was confirming the *moral* government of God over His chosen people. They may have been under the rule of Rome, but there was a higher authority they were responsible to obey.

Hence, "be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Pet. 3:8). In spite of the fact that unfriendly forces were troubling these saints, there was to be unity, compassion, love, pity, and humility within the kingdom church. It was to be a place of refuge in the midst of terrifying times.

Thus Peter instructs his hearers to "be ye all of one mind." This injunction wasn't intended as much for those who were upholding the truth as it was for those among them teaching things contrary to sound kingdom doctrine. Those who had departed from the faith were the ones who were to realign themselves with the truth for the sake of unity. The *principle* then, as now, is: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

GODLY COUNSEL

One of the things that stands out in Peter's instructions (vs. 8-11) to his readers was the importance of working together. Not only would this enhance the spirit of unity, it also would give these saints more incentive to serve the Lord. God has given us abundant examples of the benefits of working together in creation. The following illustrates our point:

"Next fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. (Christians who share a common direction and a sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.)

"Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. (If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.) When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. (It pays to take turns doing hard jobs—with people at church or with geese flying south.) The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. Finally, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly, or until he is dead, and then they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their original group. (If people knew we would stand by them like that in church, they would push down the walls to get in.)."1

"'In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.'"

When I was a young boy, my grandmother used to say to me when I did something foolish, "You don't have the sense that God gave a goose." I have since learned that a goose has a good bit of sense after all! But Grandma's little sayings were always character builders. In like manner, Peter was attempting to shore up the character of these saints for what lay ahead.

These believers were to be compassionate toward one another even as God had shown compassion to them by saving them according to His mercy. It would naturally follow that they were to "love the brethren." By so doing they were fulfilling the commandment Christ gave to them that they were to "love one another" (John 15:17).

Love is a common thread in Peter's writings. In fact, it is woven throughout the Hebrew epistles. True love will always demonstrate itself by actions; otherwise it is merely a hollow word with little meaning. Christ Himself is the supreme example here; not only did He declare His love for these sheep, He voluntarily laid down His life for them (John 10:14-18 cf. 15:12-14). John says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).

Next, we see that these Jewish believers were to be "pitiful" or full of pity. This was in stark contrast to the Romans who were, for the most part, heartless. A few short years after this epistle was written, a general persecution arose at Rome. Historians of the period inform us that when Nero ordered the wholesale execution of Christians, he had some of them "wrapped in towel and smeared with pitch. They were then fastened to tall poles planted in the garden of his palace, and set on fire, while Nero, attended by his slaves and courtiers, reclined upon a balcony and watched the blazing of what he called his 'torches.' While such brutalities would have a tendency to harden the heart, the child of God was to remain tenderhearted in spite of these atrocities.

Peter also teaches his hearers about the importance of being courteous or *humble-minded* as indicated in the original language. These saints were not to think too highly of themselves, which might

have been the case with some due to their new standing. Their knowledge that Christ was the Messiah of Israel and the fact that they understood Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles could have easily puffed them up with *pride*.

As we know, the things written aforetime were written for their, as well as, our learning: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood..." (Prov. 6:16,17). This is an old Semitic expression that simply means the list is incomplete. But notice what's first on the list of sins that God hates most—PRIDE!!

Why? This particular sin caused the fall of Lucifer and later the fall of man. Usually the last person to grasp the destructive consequences of this sin is the one caught in its snare. Pride destroys lives, marriages, and ministries all in the name of "I am right!!!" God resists the proud and exalts the humble; therefore, Peter admonishes this little flock to humbly serve the Lord.

THE CHARTER OF THE KINGDOM

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (I Pet. 3:9).

One cannot help but see the correlation between the Beatitudes and Peter's writings. Our Lord taught His disciples during His earthly ministry, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also... Love your enemies, bless them that

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:38,39,44).

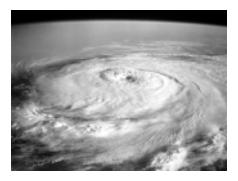
Peter, perhaps more than any other, could relate to these words, having failed to apply them to his own life. Consequently, his words here carry even greater weight. You will recall in the garden of Gethsemane that Peter unwittingly rendered "evil for evil." When the chief men and officers of the High Priest entered the garden they came with the *evil* intent to arrest our Lord. As they sought to apprehend Him, Peter drew his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, servant of the High Priest.

Earlier our Lord had instructed His disciples to watch and pray "lest ye enter into temptation." Nevertheless, Peter yielded to the *flesh* and sought to defend the Lord in his own strength. Humanly speaking, it may have seemed courageous on one hand, but on the other hand it was an act of disobedience to a direct command of the Master. We believe Peter never intended to cut off the ear of Malchus; it was clearly his intention to slay him. Apparently, the blow was defected by some unseen hand (probably angelic) so that only his ear was removed from his head. According to the biblical record, no man ever died in the presence of our Lord.

By permitting the ear of Malchus to be severed, it gave our Lord the opportunity to make a practical application of His commandment, that is, "do good to them that hate you." He, thus, touched the right ear of the High Priest's servant and healed him on the spot. It was a touching reminder of the *tender mercy* of the Lord, which should characterize all believers.

By way of application, it is not our place to seek retaliation when a believer wrongs us or speaks evil of us. If more sought to simply *commit* it to the Lord, we would not have so much dissension within the Church today. While, in the minds of some, the end justifies the means, they should remember that they will have to answer for their conduct at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10,11).

Notice that those who are the *heirs* of a blessing were to be a blessing to others (I Pet. 3:9). Of course, the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant was that one day Israel will inherit the Promised Land, become a great nation, and be a blessing to the nations of the world (Gen. 12:1-3).



THE EYE OF THE STORM

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew [avoid] evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (I Pet. 3:10-14).

Peter's hearers were to "love the brethren," "love their enemies," and

now "love life," no small task when we consider what they were about to face. Although the storms of life were swirling around these courageous saints, in the eye of the storm they found joy and peace. This can only be said of those in Christ. You see, they understood that God was sovereign and subsequently in control of all things. This believing remnant had an inner peace that they were *right* with God.

We can be relatively sure that Peter shared with them, in the gospel according to Matthew, what the Master had taught him: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but

rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Come what may, suffering, torture, even death itself, they had the confident expectation of being with Christ at His appearing (I John 3:2; 5:11-14).

Peter adds here that controlling the tongue

enriches life. An unbridled tongue is a sign of immaturity. In regard to this small member, James says, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect [mature] man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). Beloved, we should never offend anyone for the sake of offense; it should always be the truth that offends or convicts the hearer. If you were to read James chapter three in its entirety you would find that he is primarily addressing teachers. Since a teacher has such a wide range of influence with his words he is held up as an example. The struggle he faces to control his speech, we all face.

Allow me to illustrate how the tongue can be used to teach good things or to criticize others. There is a place for what we call constructive criticism when something is pointed out that one may have overlooked. But even this should be done in a gracious way with a Christ-like spirit. Of course, some seem to think that they have the gift of criticism. Their words cut like a knife for the purpose of tearing down rather than building up the saints. However, this is not one of the gifts of the Spirit. Instead, it is a manifestation of carnality, which has caused

untold sorrow among God's people.

The American Indians had a wise saying they used when the white man failed to honor his treaties: "He speaks with forked tongue." In short, he said one thing, but did another. Along these same lines, William Barclay shared these

insightful words years ago regarding the perils of a teacher:

"He must have every care that he is teaching the truth, and not his own opinions or even his own prejudices. It is fatally easy for a teacher to distort the truth and to teach not God's version, but his own. He must take great care that he does not contradict his teaching by his life. Thus he must never get into the position when his scholars and students cannot hear what he says for listening to what he is." Prudent counsel for us all!

In verses 10-12, Peter is quoting

from Psalms 34. We find it of interest, however, that he didn't quote

"...controlling

the tongue

enriches life.

An unbridled

tongue is a sign

of immaturity."

January 2001 11 the passage in its entirety. Instead, he *rightly divided* the Word of truth. Peter ended the quote accordingly, "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil...." But the Psalmist went on to declare, "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Psa. 34:16b).

You see, Peter understood that the Mystery given to the Apostle Paul *interrupted* the day of God's Judgment, when He will judge the evil deeds of men (II Pet. 3:3-10,15-18). Mark these words and mark them well, God is not slack concerning His promises. He always honors His Word, both to the saved and the unsaved. God will save those who believe and fulfill His promise to all evildoers "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [behavior] in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (I Pet. 3:15-17).

The extenuating circumstances these kingdom believers found themselves in gave them a unique opportunity to share their faith. Thus, Peter admonishes them to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." In other words, be *prepared* in advance!

This strongly implies that the study and interpretation of the Scriptures isn't to be left to a select group of leaders. Rather, it is the responsibility of *every* child of God to have a well-rounded knowledge of the counsel of His will.

Although the light of the Great Commission was growing dimmer, those of the dispersion were to continue to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom until its light was extinguished. These Hebrews were to testify of the "hope" that was in them, which in their case was the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom at the Second Coming of Christ (I Pet. 1:13; 2:12; II Pet. 1:11,16; 3:3-9). And they were to do so with a good conscience.

This was important in Peter's mind because he knew some of his hearers would be falsely accused of things they never did—it was symptomatic of the times. Even though the charges were often unfounded, these saints would at least have a clear conscience before God and men, which made their burden easier to bear. Thus, when they were vindicated, it was their accusers who were ashamed by the godly behavior of these saints.

To Be Continued!

Endnotes

- 1. *Illustrations Unlimited*, by James Hewett, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, Pages 125,126.
- 2. Foxe's Christian Martyrs of the World, by John Foxe, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, Page 38.
- 3. The Letters of James and Peter, by William Barclay, Philadelphia, Westminster, Page 81.



"The Cross of Christ reveals man's sin at its worst, but God's love at its best."

Open Hearts, Open Doors and Open Mouths

By Cornelius R. Stam

OPEN HEARTS

Paul was never satisfied with the conversion of the lost. As soon as they turned to Christ he began to teach them the glorious truths which the ascended Lord had revealed to him from heaven. Nor did he cease to pray that their hearts might be opened to receive these truths. Several of his prayers are recorded for us in his epistles. In the first chapter of Ephesians we find him praying:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

"The eyes of your understanding [Lit., "your heart"] being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe..." (Eph. 1:17-19).

Should not we, who know Christ as Savior and Lord, begin our Christian lives here? Should we not pray earnestly that God will indeed open "the eyes of our hearts," so that not only with the mind, but with the heart we may rejoice in "the hope of His calling" (See II Tim. 1:9), "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (See Eph. 5:25-27) and "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe" (See Eph. 1:19-21)?

OPEN DOORS

But seeing and rejoicing in these truths is only the beginning. If our lives have been enriched by "the knowledge of the mystery" how we should yearn to impart these riches to those about us!

Even while in prison at Rome, Paul proclaimed his God-given message to all with whom he came into contact, but he longed for still greater opportunity, requesting his fellow-saints to pray:

"...that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds" (Col. 4:3).

Is it not quite possible, even probable, that we who know the truth of the mystery often fail to witness to

"If our lives have been enriched by "the knowledge of the mystery" how we should yearn to impart these riches to those about us!"

"...that
utterance may
be given unto
me, that I
may open my
mouth boldly
to make
known the
mystery of
the gospel..."
(Eph. 6:19).

others about it because we have first of all failed to *pray* to God to open doors, to give us appropriate opportunities to witness to our friends?

In one sense such opportunities are constantly confronting us if we are but aware of them. In this sense God says to us, as to the Philadelphian church of the Revelation: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door" (Rev. 3:8); it is your unfaithfulness if you do not enter it; if you fail to take advantage of the opportunity.

OPEN MOUTHS

But we need even more than open doors, or opportunities to make the blessed message known. We need open mouths; we need boldness.

It is amazing that even the great Apostle Paul needed help in this too, for contrary to popular opinion, he was by nature timid and retiring. He reminds the Corinthians how he first appeared among them "in weakness, and in fear and in much trembling" (I Cor. 2:3). And these were not mere words written for effect, for Luke, his companion, relates how the fearful apostle needed special encouragement from the Lord during his Corinthian ministry:

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9,10).

It is not strange, then, to find the apostle asking the saints to pray....

"...for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

"For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19,20).

How our adversary, the devil, would close our mouths and keep us from proclaiming "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery!" How he would fill us with fear, or seek to convince us that it pleases God more if we are modest and retiring!

The fact is that where personal matters are concerned we *should* be meek, gladly bearing insult and abuse for Christ's sake. But where the proclamation of His truth is concerned we "ought to speak boldly" as the above passage indicates.

May God convict us of whatever keeps us from opening our mouths boldly to proclaim the mystery, whether is be indifference or fear. May it be our constant, earnest prayer "that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

If you are too busy for the things of God YOU ARE TOO BUSY

Remember "Busy" stands for: Being Under Satan's Yoke

Question Box

"Do we need angels for any reason in this dispensation of Grace?"

We learn from the Book of Hebrews that angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). While the apostle had the prophetic saints in mind here, there is a sense that we, too, are the heirs of salvation (Rom. 8:17). Therefore, it does appear that angels are the unseen custodians of the members of the Body of Christ, especially in regard to spiritual matters.

Since the silence of God characterizes this present dispensation, the role of angels has changed dramatically. Today their ministry is in accordance with the *heavenly* ministry of Christ, which explains their diminished outward manifestations in the affairs of men. However, in the spiritual realm just the opposite is true. Paul says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). If the angels of God are ministers to those who are heirs, and their primary activity today is in the spiritual realm, surely they are more than mere spectators.

Notice we are warring against "spiritual wickedness in high" or heavenly places. This is the *habitation* of angels. Thus, it is strongly implied that the angels of God are engaged at times in this conflict lest we be overcome with sorrow upon sorrow. Little wonder the apostle admonishes us to "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [strategies or tricks] of the devil." We also know that these ministering spirits will be present at the Rapture of the Church (I Thes. 4:13-18).

There are those who teach that if the elect angels carried on a ministry among us today it would be in conflict with the Holy Spirit who indwells us. However, God always works through the established channels of His creation. For example, *both* Peter and Paul were indwelt, and even filled with the Spirit, yet angels were sent by God to deliver one and encourage the other (Acts 12:1-11 cf. Acts 27:21-26). This substantiates that the role of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of angels often *complement* one another.

We know that the angels of God are always *observing* us. Although they were present when God created all things in heaven and earth, they were unaware the Lord had a "secret purpose" in mind that we now know to be the Mystery. Consequently, Paul states, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10,11).

The "principalities" and "powers" here are angelic realms of authority. It is a solemn thought that we are the instructors of angels. Think of it, they are learning about the *grace of God* by observing all that we say and do. Surely it behooves us to live a godly life in view of the Judgment Seat to come!

—Pastor Sadler

Our good friend John Willson is a frequent contributor to the pages of the *Berean Searchlight*. Longer than anyone can remember, he has served as one of the Bible Correspondence Instructors for the *Prison Mission Association*. Brother John is going to share some practical warnings with us, which are sound words for every member of the Body of Christ.

—Ed.

The Pastor's Perils

By John Willson

God has given an important, responsible position to every Bibleteaching pastor. According to Ephesians 4:11-12, the gift of pastor (pastor teacher) is one of those given "...for the perfecting of the saints, for the working of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ...." Because of this, it is evident that Satan will seek to hinder or destroy a successful ministry any way he can.

There are many areas where Satan can set a snare or pitfall for a pastor. We list some of the more obvious ones using the alliterative "P": Popularity, Prestige, Pay, and Passion.

POPULARITY

Popularity is usually gained by pleasing man, and that is natural for most of us. But the desire to please can lead a pastor to avoid preaching anything that may offend, even though it may be sound doctrine. It is convenient for him to avoid controversial issues, especially if he knows that the congregation may not accept his teaching. Paul anticipated this in writing to Timothy. He admonished, "…reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2).

Paul set the example as he reproved the Galatian believers for their departure from the gospel of grace (Gal. 1:6-9). In verse 10 of the same passage, Paul says "...do I seek to please men, or God? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

As we continue through the book, we find many more rebukes to the Galatians, albeit given with love and longsuffering. Paul was so stern with them, it seemed he had become their enemy (Gal. 4:16), yet in every chapter he was only defending the doctrines of grace that were committed to him by the Lord Jesus. Paul, then, is an example of one who did not seek popularity as a "manpleaser" (Eph. 6:6).

PRESTIGE

When a person is given a position of leadership, the respect and encouragement of others often leads to adoration and praise. We tend to give undue honor and adulation, bestowing flattering titles such as "reverend" or "doctor," making it more difficult for a pastor to realize that he is called to be merely a minister or servant. The more gifted a pastor is with speaking ability, writing ability, or organizational ability, the more he should be lifted up with prayer, lest he be lifted up with

pride. Paul emphasized that he and Apollos were but ministers (servants) by whom the Corinthians believed (I Cor. 3:5). Then in verse 7 he added, "So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

All the men of God throughout Scripture have shown meekness and humility in leading God's people. Note Numbers 12:3: "Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." As we read through the books Moses wrote, we find him giving God the glory, as did all the prophets in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus, though He was God the Son, said "...learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29). In writing to a pastor, Paul said "...follow after...meekness..." (I Tim. 6:11). To Titus (3:2) he writes that we should be "...gentle, showing all meekness to all men." As a pastor or minister considers such verses as these, he will resist the temptation toward pride or a superior attitude. If he has success in his ministry, he will humbly admit it was all God's working and God's grace.

PAY

The Bible teaches that a pastor is generally supported by the congregation he serves (I Cor. 9:14). Yet, in our day, we see large congregations giving such large salaries, plus benefits, that the pastor is often being paid more than the average member of his congregation. Most pastors have families to support, homes they are buying, and many bills, so they fear losing the large salary. When a pastor becomes dependent upon a generous salary, the Word is no longer preached with true freedom. The danger is that a pastor becomes greatly tempted to avoid offending anyone by "preaching the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), or standing for the truths that he knows. When Paul wrote to young pastor Timothy in I Timothy 6:10 about the love of money being a root of all evil, he was not only warning believers in general, but he was also warning Timothy. He didn't want the love of money to cause Timothy to become the servant of men, rather than a servant of Christ (Gal. 1:10).

It would not be wise for any pastor to be completely dependent on support given by a church. Having a trade or profession or being able to "work with his hands" (I Thes. 4:11) would be a great asset toward independence in his preaching. He would be able to "reprove and exhort with sound doctrine" knowing that he could always "...provide for his own..." (I Tim. 5:8), even if he had to look for another place of service. Paul's solution to this was that he made the gospel free of charge and did not ask for money. Instead he often worked as a tentmaker to supply his needs and the needs of others. Concerning the love of money, he advised Timothy, "...O man of God, flee these things..." (I Tim. 6:11).

PASSION

Although passion can have many meanings, we are referring to the kind that leads to *temptation* to commit sexual immorality. How many

times have we heard about an evangelical pastor getting involved with his church secretary or some other woman in the church? Many pastors have left their wives and children, yielding to their own sinful lusts or to a direct temptation from Satan. The result is not only a disaster for his family and the church, but also a dishonor to his Lord.

Paul's advice to Timothy was to "Flee youthful lusts, follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace..." (II Tim. 2:22). Temptations to immorality are always there, and the pastor as well as all of us must be strong in the Lord, "...putting on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-11).

Pastors must be aware of these pitfalls and learn how to avoid them. Those he serves should always pray for him, that these things will not hinder or destroy his ministry. Help him in his work, encourage him, let him know you are praying for him, and remember to thank him from time to time.

God's Will, God's Grace, God's Message In the Light of Prayer

Do you know of 3 people that you can pray for? Can you think of 50 who need to be prayed for? How about 93? If you sat down and made a list of all the people that you know, most (if not all) of you could come up with at least 93, right?

Everyone NEEDS prayer, and every believer NEEDS to be in prayer.

January has 31 days in it (as does March, May, July, August, October, and December). If you begin with praying for 3 people a day—i.e. 3 today, 3 others than you had the day before, and 3 more the next day etc.—at the end of a month of 31 days, you will have prayed for 93 different people. February has 28 days in it, so 3 different people each day equals 84 prayed for (unless February is a leap-year month, in which case it equals 87 people). April has 30 days in it (as does June, September, and November). So, 3 different people each day would equal 90 prayed for in a month of 30 days.

At the end of the year you will have prayed a total of 1,126 times!

If this kind of prayer were done by more of the believers of the Grace/Berean churches, GOD'S WILL would be more evident in our lives, GOD'S GRACE could be more visible by the way we love others, and GOD'S MESSAGE which is the gospel of the Mystery would be understood *and* accepted by more believers!!

Signed, A believer in prayer

Upcoming Bible Conferences and Camps

Winter Retreat

The *Grace Bible Church* is planning to hold their annual Bible Conference on January 19-21, 2001.

The assembly is located at: 111 N. Tamiami Trail, Nokomis, Florida 34293

For times of services, call or write Pastor Elvin C. Myers: Phone: (941) 496-8051; E-mail: <whitey64@juno.com>

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Phone: (303) 452-9148 E-mail: <j.harley@juno.com>

Family Camp

The *Celebrate Grace Camp* will be held July 8-13, 2001 at Rifle, Colorado.

For reservations and additional information, write, call, or e-mail Jerry & Judy Worthley:

627 Co. Rd. 3, Canon City, CO 81212 Phone: (719) 276-2469

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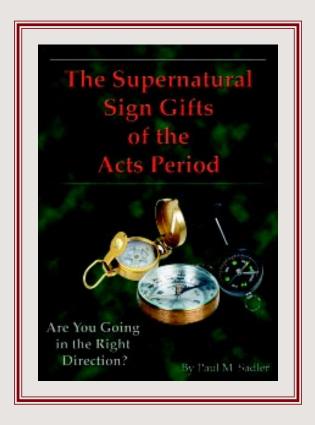
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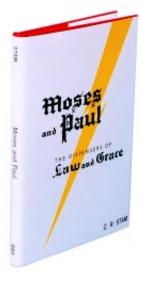
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esus Christ is the reason for everything that *Berean Bible Institute* does and stands for.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLARIFICATION: In our November editorial about the *Lady Elgin*, which sank in Lake Michigan off the coast of Evanston, Illinois, we stated that a student attending the *Garrett Bible Institute* single-handedly saved many lives that evening. When our dear Brother Ken Jarlsberg read the piece he seemed to recall from his days in the *Scandinavian Methodist Church* that the school went by the name of the *Garrett Biblical Institute*.

So he consulted a book that his mother had handed down to him entitled, "The Salt of the Earth"—"A History of Norwegian Danish Methodism in America." Sure enough he was right; his memory had served him correctly. Incidentally, *Garrett* was then the theological seminary of *Northwestern University* (it may still be!). Thanks, beloved, for calling this to our attention. It's good to know that our *Searchlight* readers are paying such close attention. Refreshing!!

GIFTS: At the request of our readers, it is now possible to give a donation to the *Berean Bible Society* via the Internet. We are pleased to announce that both *MasterCard* and *Visa* are being accepted for donations and orders on our website. Our address is: <www.bereanbiblesociety.org>.

CORRECTION: We inadvertently used the wrong zip code when we advertised Brother Kline's book in the November issue. S-o-o-o we are repeating the announcement with the correct zip in the event your letter was returned.

Several years ago our good friend Carl Kline wrote a book entitled, "The Acts Transition." Since so many find the transition period to be the whitewater rapids of Scripture, we always like to pass along works by other authors that will benefit our readers in their personal study of the subject. For those who are interested, copies of the "The Acts Transition" can be ordered directly from Brother Kline at: P.O. Box 376, Richland, PA 17087. The price of this work (paperback) is \$10.00 postpaid.

REMEMBER: If you have a question, request or you're simply placing an order it will only be necessary to use the following address:

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If you are sending us a *package* it will be necessary to use the street address: N112 W17761 Meguon Rd. Germantown, WI 53022.

*The picture of the lighthouse that appears on the front cover was sent to us by Thomas and Theresa Seiler of Wellfleet, Nebraska. This is one of the two *Twin Lights* lighthouses located on Thacher's Island in Rockport, Massachusetts.

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