

Feature Article

The Broken Tablets, by Kevin Sadler			
Articles			
Paul's Religious Persuasion, by Ricky Kurth	13		
Faithful Stewards, by Kevin Sadler	19		
The Two Main Divisions of Scripture, by Gregg Bing	21		
Departments			
One of Christ's Works of Reconciliation	4		
Question Box	11		
Woman to Woman	25		
News and Announcements	30		

This month's cover features Cape Hatteras Lighthouse near Buxton, North Carolina.

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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Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the things I like most about working here at BBS is the opportunity it affords me to meet grace pastors and their congregations that are new to me.

So when Pastor Tim Lewis invited me to speak at his church in Georgia just one week before I was scheduled to speak at the BBF conference in Ohio, I remember thinking that accepting his invitation would involve an awful lot of traveling in an awfully short period of time.

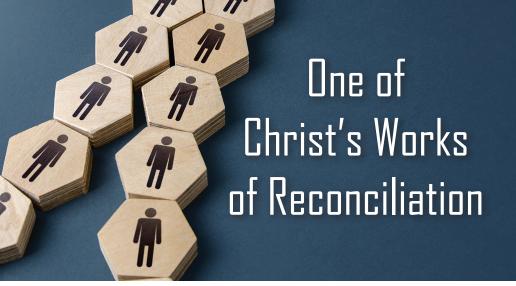
But what a joy it was to get to know Pastor Lewis and the warm-hearted saints of *Grace Bible Church* of Appling. And what a privilege it was to speak at the homecoming service that marked their 14th anniversary as a grace church. The message that Levi Bullock gave in the Adult Sunday School hour that morning told me all that I needed to know about this church's soundness in the faith, and the luncheon they put on afterward assured me that they know how grace pastors love to eat!

A picture on the wall of their fellowship hall showed their church building not long after a group of Methodists built it in the years after the Revolutionary War. When they told me that the founder of the Methodist movement once preached there, I remember thinking that John Wesley was doubtless a better preacher than I am, but that my hearers that day were more blessed than his, simply because the message I brought was on "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15)!

Four Sundays later found me making the acquaintance of Pastor Wayne Werline, of *New Hope Church* in Salem, Missouri. Pastor Werline had been a minister for most of his life, but then his life was revolutionized when he learned the grace message. So when the members of a Presbyterian church that lost its pastor asked him to be their guest speaker one Sunday, he introduced them to the distinctive truths of grace. To his surprise, they didn't introduce *him* to a coat of tar and feathers! Instead, they invited him back time after time, until they eventually embraced the message we know and love, and made him their pastor.

I brought people from my home church with me on these trips, and they all agreed that the brethren we met in these churches were as much a blessing to us as we hoped we were to them. And no matter where in the world you yourself are standing for Pauline distinctives, I trust it has blessed *you* to know there are pastors like Tim Lewis whom you've never met standing with you, and new assemblies like Pastor Werline's church popping up all the time. Let's meet each other often at the throne of grace as we lift these grace churches up in prayer.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Ricky Kurth



hrist Jesus reconciles lost sinners to a Holy God, solely through His work on the cross where He died our death, in our stead, for our sin.

But there is another work of reconciliation that Christ also does on the cross.

In Ephesians 2:14-16 we read, "For He [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain [two] one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

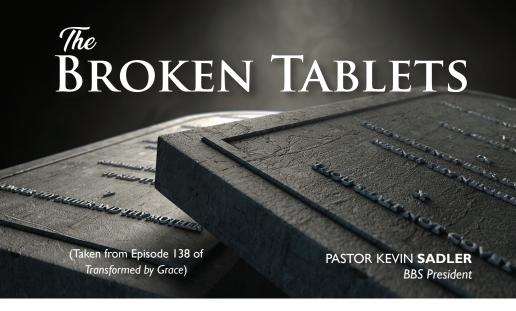
In ages past the Jew was forever separated from the Gentile by the LAW. The law had kept the Jew and Gentile apart. The Jews kept it and the Gentiles did not. A Jew had to keep his distance from the Gentile lest he be made unclean by the Gentile.

In order to reconcile the Jew and Gentile, Christ had to take away that which had long kept them separated. He took the law out of the way by nailing it to the cross. Only by nailing the law to the cross could the Jew be reconciled with the Gentile. Once Christ had taken away that which had divided, He could then form one body from the two.

The Church the Body of Christ is not made up of Jews. It is not made up of Gentiles either. It is a Body of Jews and Gentiles reconciled into one Body by the events of the cross.

The cross reconciles the lost to God when we put our faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4). But the work of the cross also made it possible to reconcile both the Jew and the Gentile into one single Body.

—Pastor Jim Zaebst



Suppose you are driving down the highway. You go around a curve and there in the median is a state policeman with his radar gun. What's typically your first reaction? Let off the gas and maybe step on the brake. Why? Because he is the law and you're immediately aware that you may be breaking the law, and you don't want to get caught. The police car is an instant judge on your life.

In the same way, the law of God makes us conscious of our sin and judges our sin. As Paul wrote in Romans 7:7, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Further, in 1 Timothy 1:8, Paul tells us, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." We are not under the law but under grace today (Rom. 6:14); however, there is a good use of the law under grace. The law gives us a knowledge of sin and demonstrates that we're all

sinners and have fallen short of God's righteous standard (Rom. 3:20,23). The lawful use of the law under grace is to produce the conviction of sin and an understanding of a person's need of God's grace through the finished work of the Savior.

In the account of the golden calf, we learn that, while Moses was up in the heights of Mount Sinai receiving the law, the instructions for Israel's worship, and the blueprints for the tabernacle, the people were down below creating their own form of worship and breaking the very law that Moses was receiving. Moses demonstrated their breaking of God's law in a very vivid and dramatic way, by casting down and physically breaking the stone tablets of the ten commandments.

Breaking the Commandments

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

"And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

"And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

"And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.



"And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.

"And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burntofferings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (Ex. 32:1-6).

Approximately forty days prior to all that, Moses had gone up on

Mount Sinai to receive the law (Ex. 24:18). Before he left, Moses had delegated authority to Aaron and Hur to lead in his absence (v. 14). After Moses had been away for over a month, the people became impatient. Giving up on his ever returning, the people turned to their temporary leader, Aaron, and demanded that he make them an idol. Instead of leading and restraining the people, Aaron went along with them.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that accounts like this in Israel's history are "ensamples" for us, the Body of Christ, "and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). Under grace, we are waiting for Someone as well (1 Thes. 1:10); we are waiting for Christ and His glorious return for us at the Rapture. While we wait, Aaron is a reminder to us of the danger of spiritual leaders going along with what the majority of the people and the popular culture want, instead of leading people according to what God desires.

The people in this account were mistaken in what they thought they needed. They thought they needed an idol, but what they really needed was to trust the Lord and wait on Him. While we wait for Christ to come for us, the Church needs strong leaders devoted to God's Word no matter the cost, because that is what people need the most.

The people told Aaron to come and make them gods "which shall go before us" (Ex. 32:1). They were not just requesting gods but gods to lead them. They were

ready to leave Mount Sinai, and not having Moses to guide them, they asked Aaron to make gods that might go before them and show them the way.

The Israelites wanted a visible, tangible object to follow. They imagined that a visible god formed by their own hands that they could see was better than the Lord, Jehovah God. So in their faithlessness, they exchanged the glory of the true and living God for the image of *a baby cow!*

Aaron acquiesced to the people's appetite for idolatry and told them to bring him the golden earrings in the ears of their wives. sons, and daughters (Ex. 32:2). Exodus 12:35 informs us that. as the Israelites left Egypt, the Egyptians lent them "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold," and so "they spoiled [plundered] the Egyptians" (v. 36). This is where they had acquired these golden earrings that Aaron requested. The people willingly brought their gold earrings to him and Aaron then melted them down. That gold was used by Aaron to fashion an idol cast in the shape of a calf.

After the golden calf was forged, it was hailed by the people as the gods which brought them up out of the land of Egypt (Ex. 32:4). Earlier on Mount Sinai, when the covenant of the law was established with Israel, the Lord said these words in His absolute authority as Israel's God: "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2). In Israel's impatience and unbelief,

they were attributing their deliverance from Egypt, not to the Lord, but to this golden cow that they made with their own hands.

After completion of the idol, Aaron built an altar before it and declared the next day "a feast to the LORD" (32:5). A feast to THE LORD! Aaron mixed the worship of the true and living God with the worship of a piece of metal. And the people loved it! This feast to the Lord was a combination of worshiping a golden calf and bringing offerings to it, as well as drinking, eating, and dancing. It was a mixture of everything they wanted.



Aaron led the people in breaking God's first three commandments: (1) they had put another god before Him (Ex. 20:3); (2) they had made a "graven image" (20:4-6); and (3) they had taken "the name of the LORD [their] God in vain" (20:7).

The Israelites rose up at the crack of dawn on the day of the feast. The anticipation of sin and false worship got them out of bed early. The Israelites offered burnt and peace offerings on the altar before the golden calf. Then

they ate and drank, "and rose up to play." The "play" is explained later in chapter 32, in verses 19 and 25, which describe their dancing and the people being naked.

A Memorable Object Lesson

"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

"And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

"And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

"And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

"And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it" (Ex. 32:15-20).

When Moses initially went up on Mount Sinai, the Lord had told him, "Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone...And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God" (Ex. 24:12-13). Moses obediently went up on the mountain, taking Joshua with him, to receive the tables of stone.

In Exodus 31:18 we learn that the Lord "gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Moses descended the mountain with these two tablets of the Ten Commandments. As he did, Joshua was confused and troubled by what he heard at the base of the mountain. He thought the camp below was under military attack because of the shouts he was hearing.

The Lord had already told Moses what was taking place in the camp (32:7-8), so Moses told Joshua that it was not the voice of them that shouted for mastery, and it was not the voice of them that cried from being overcome. In other words, those were not the



sounds of battle from those who were conquering or those who were being conquered. Moses told Joshua that he was hearing the sound of singing.

As Moses and Joshua drew near to the camp, Moses saw the

calf and the dancing. The combination of idolatry and immorality caused Moses' anger to wax hot. In righteous anger, Moses threw the two stone tablets down and shattered them. He broke the tablets of the law as a witness to what the people had already done. It symbolized how Israel, in her heart and by her actions, had broken the law and their covenant with Jehovah God.

Moses did not break the commandments when he cast the tablets down at the foot of the Mount; Israel had already broken them when they desired the golden calf and worshiped it. The breaking of those two stones, which were "the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God" (32:16), was a demonstration of the seriousness of Israel's sin.

Moses broke the tablets and then he proceeded to destroy the golden calf. First, he burned the calf. Second, he reduced it to powder. Third, he spread that





gold dust on the water of a brook coming out of the mount. And fourth, he made the people drink that water (Ex. 32:20; Deut. 9:21).

By drinking that water, Moses forced the children of Israel to identify with their terrible sin. And as one commentator put forth, "In this manner the thing they had worshiped would become a product of their own waste, the very epitome of worthlessness and impurity."

Leadership Accountability

"And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?

"And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

"And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (Ex. 32:21-24).

Moses called what the children of Israel had done "so great a sin" (v. 21). It was a great sin for a number of reasons. First, because of *who* committed it: God's chosen people. It was a great sin because God's chosen nation fashioned a golden calf and worshipped a false god.

Second, because of *where* they committed it: at Mount Sinai where God's presence was residing. His glory had been revealed in the mount, and it was here that Israel had entered into a covenant with Him. The people had witnessed the lightning, thunder,

and the quaking, smoking mount (Ex. 19:18; 24:17).

Third, because of *when* they committed it: not long after their deliverance from Egypt by the mercy and power of God. They had seen and experienced the miraculous plagues God brought against Egypt, the remarkable parting of the Red Sea, and God's provision of food and water as they traveled to Sinai.

Because Aaron had been placed in charge while Moses was gone, Moses held him responsible for what had taken place in the camp. Aaron tried to pass the blame on to the people rather than admitting his own complicity in this sin. Aaron's feeble attempt to exonerate himself included telling Moses that he knew what these people were like and that they had a propensity to do evil.

Then Aaron told Moses, "And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (32:24). Aaron explained that the golden calf had just popped out of the fire all by itself. Amazing! Aaron was shocked too! And I can imagine Moses saying, "You mean to tell me, Aaron, that you collected the people's gold, then you threw it in the fire, and a calf formed and walked out?"

However, in this chapter we read that Aaron "fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf" (v. 4). What Aaron told Moses was an out-and-out lie. If Aaron had stood against the people and taken a stand

for the Lord and done what was right, he wouldn't have needed to lie. Instead, in defending his actions, he added sin on top of sin.

Who Is on the Lord's Side?

"And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)

"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him" (Ex. 32:25-26).

Some of the people were still carrying on without moral restraint and with licentious behavior, which was a direct result of Aaron's lack of leadership. So Moses stood in the camp gate and called out, "Who is on the LORD's side?"

"Who is on the LORD's side?" was an opportunity for Israel to reaffirm their commitment to the Lord after their great sin. When Moses made this call for loyal followers of Jehovah, the tribe of Levi responded. They were on the Lord's side.



What about you? What is your answer this question by Moses? In this current culture that is

devoid of any moral restraint, will we determine to take our stand on the Lord's side? Have we made a settled decision to be on the Lord's side and follow what is good and right according to His Word? In the midst of so many teachings which mix truth with error and follow the traditions

of men, will we take our stand on God's Word, rightly divided? When the world has gone crazy, will we resolve to be on the Lord's side and follow Him by faith?

 Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus, 2022 Edition, https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/ html/ot/exodus/exodus.htm; quoting Eugene H. Merrill, Deuteronomy: New American Commentary (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 196)

Question Box

"If kingdom saints like James continued to teach the law after Paul was given the message of grace (Acts 21:20), does that mean they were under the curse of Galatians 1:8,9?"

"...Paul went...unto James; and all the elders....And...they...said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law" (Acts 21:18,20).

James had evidently been preaching the law all the time that Paul had been preaching grace, and he even seemed pleased with how many Jews had received it. But if you read that entire passage, you don't find Paul saying he was accursed. That's because of who it was that James preached the law to. He preached it to Jews, just like he said he would at the Jerusalem Council. In giving an account of that council, Paul wrote:

"James, Cephas, and John...gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. 2:9).

James preached the law to the Jews he agreed to minister to. But he also *quit* troubling *Gentiles* with the law, just like he said he would in Acts 15:19!

That's why you should take your pen and underline the words "unto you" in Galatians 1:8,9. A man is only accursed if he preaches the law to members of the Body of Christ like the Galatians who were not under the law (Rom. 6:15)! It was perfectly legitimate for James to teach the law to those leftover Jewish kingdom saints who were saved under the law before God raised up Paul to preach grace, for they were still under the law afterwards. But it is dispensationally illegitimate to teach the law to members of the Body of Christ.

—Pastor Kurth

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SPOTLIGHT

on Grace Churches

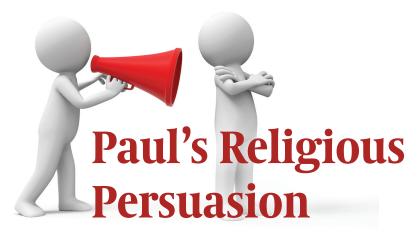
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(An article based on studies that will be reflected in our upcoming mid-Acts Grace Reference Bible.)

PASTOR RICKY **KURTH**Berean Searchlight Editor

Recently a couple of my friends were dressing up as an airplane propeller for a costume party, and they tried to persuade me to go too. I wasn't sure about this at first, but now I'm a big fan.

Speaking of persuading people of things, imagine how hard it would be to persuade *God* of something. Paul asked the Galatians.

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

When Paul asks, "do I now persuade men, or God?" the implied answer is that he now persuaded men to be saved (cf. Acts 26:28). But the word "now" there tells us he used to try to persuade God of some things. Before he got saved, he used to pray and try to convince God that Jesus of Nazareth couldn't be Israel's Christ. Then, after the Lord saved him and began to teach him the grace message, I think he tried to persuade

God of something else, something he discussed with the Romans when he wrote:

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself..." (Rom. 14:14).

If you know the context there, you know Paul was talking about how certain things we "eat" are not unclean (vv. 2,3,6,20-23). I imagine it took some pretty powerful persuading on the Lord's part to get Paul to believe that, for he believed certain things were unclean to eat, because his Bible said they were in Exodus 34:15 and Leviticus 11. He had to be persuaded otherwise! And I think that while God was persuading him, he was trying to persuade God the other way.

If you don't think that's something Paul would do after he was saved, I remind you that—that's what Peter did. When the Lord tried to persuade him to eat some unclean meats, he said.

"Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:14).

Peter stood toe to toe with the Lord Himself and said, "Your Word says those meats are unclean, and I'm not going to eat them!" And if you think a fisherman like Peter put up a fight when he heard God say He was laying the law of Moses aside in that area, just imagine what a Pharisee like Saul of Tarsus said! Pharisees were famous for their strict adherence to the law.

But in our text, Paul implies he wasn't trying to persuade God about the law *any more*. The Lord had obviously succeeded in persuading him that "we are not under the law, *but under grace*" (Rom. 6:15).

Take the Liberty of Grace

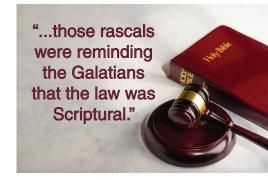
Of course, when Paul taught that liberating truth to the Galatians, they were easily persuaded of it because they were Gentiles, and had never been under the law. But there were some troublemaking legalizers who had persuaded the Galatians that they were under the law, prompting Paul to write them and say,

"This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you" (Gal. 5:8).

And he was talking about God. It was *God* who had called them into the *grace* of Christ (1:6). So it must have been *men* who persuaded them they were under the law. *Unsaved* men. Unsaved *Jewish* men, to be precise.

Saved Jewish men understood that Paul had been given a new

message of grace for Gentiles, and they acknowledged it at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. But *unsaved* Jewish men *refused* to acknowledge that God had made a dispensational change from the days when the Gentiles were required to keep the law to be saved, just as the Jews were.



So the Galatians had a choice. They could either go back to pleasing God by going back to recognizing the dispensational change He made from law to grace, or they could keep on pleasing those legalizing unsaved men. That's a choice that mirrored a choice Paul made. He too could have chosen to please those unsaved men by going back to the law.

Why would he consider doing that? Well, if you know Paul's history, you know that those unsaved Jews were *persecuting* him mercilessly, dogging his steps from town to town as he sought to proclaim God's grace to the Gentiles. All he would have had to do to get them to *stop* hounding him was *go back to the law* (Gal. 5:11). But he knew what he wrote in Galatians 1:10 was true. If he pleased those *men*, he couldn't be the servant of *Christ*.

But when Paul says, "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," that means he used to try to please men. Back when he was Saul of Tarsus, he knew the prophets well enough to know that Jesus of Nazareth matched their description of Israel's Messiah. But he also knew what happened to Jews who chose to please God by acknowledging it. The Apostle John tells us

"...that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22).

So whenever Paul's conscience would prick him about that, he would "kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5), and choose to please men—the unsaved men who ran the synagogue in those days.

But now that Paul was saved, he was not about to go back to pleasing men by going back under the law, like the Galatians had done, just to get those legalizing persecutors off his back.

Roll With the Changes

Unsaved religious men are *never* pleased with dispensational changes, and even saved men sometimes need to be persuaded of them. But you can't be the servant of Christ if you don't accept the change God made from law to grace. If you're still observing the law's sabbath to try to please God, you might *think* you're serving Christ, but you're not. If you're still keeping the law's diet regulations to try to please God, you might *think* you're serving Christ, but you're not—especially

if you're telling other people that *they* have to keep those laws.

I hear from many such men here at *Berean Bible Society*, men who insist we should be telling others to keep the law. They argue, "You're just trying to please *men* by telling them they don't have to keep the law! Men find it pleasing to hear that they can eat all the bacon they want, and that they don't have to tithe 10% of their income to the church, or observe the sabbath." Then they remind me that the law is *Scriptural*—and then they start *quoting* it!

And Paul had the same problem. The legalizers were accusing him of trying to please men by telling the Galatians they were not under law, and those rascals were reminding the Galatians that the law was Scriptural.

Do you know how Paul answered the argument that the law was Scriptural? The same way you should when you hear that argument—by pointing out that Paul wrote some new Scripture. That's what Paul did, as we see as we read on in our text:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Gal. 1:11).

If you don't see these words as saying that Paul wrote new Scripture, it's because most people are unaware the word "certify" means to put something in writing. That's how the Bible uses it in Ezra 5:10:

"We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write

the names of the men that were the chief of them."

That's how the dictionary defines the word as well. It *also* says that the noun form of the verb "certify" is *certificate*. If you achieve something, they give you a "Certificate of Achievement"



that says *in writing* that you achieved something. If you make a deposit in a bank, they give you a "certificate of deposit" that says *in writing* that you deposited money in their bank.

And with this epistle, Paul was giving the Galatians a certificate that said that his new message of grace was "not after man," as it says in verse 11. He had told them that in person when he was there with them in Galatia, but now he was putting it in writing—writing that was new Scripture!

Trust But Verify

But how were the Galatians supposed to *know* that this epistle was new Scripture? The same way the Corinthians knew it when Paul wrote *them* an epistle. He told them:

"If any man think himself to be a prophet...let him acknowledge that the things that I write

unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).

It was the job of the prophets in Corinth to identify which new writings were to be included in the Scriptures, and it was the job of the prophets in Galatia to do that as well. So when this epistle arrived in Galatia, the prophets pointed to it and said, "The Scriptures used to say we're under the law. Now they say we're under grace!"

But now, when you point to the epistle of Galatians to tell people that the Scriptures now say we're not under the law, make sure you do what Paul did in verse 11 and call them "brethren." He wanted to make sure the Galatians knew that despite their egregious departure from the truth, he still loved them as brethren. That's how you should share grace truth with others as well!

There's no question that Baptist believers who tell people they have to tithe are wrong, but they are still our brethren. They've just fallen from grace instead of *standing* in grace, like Paul told the saints in Rome to do when he wrote,

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:1,2).

Seventh Day Adventist believers who insist on keeping the sabbath and the diet laws are wrong, but they are still our brethren. They've just fallen from grace, instead of standing in grace, as

Paul told the Galatians to do later in this epistle:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

Our brethren in the Lord are sometimes wrong about these things, but they are still our brethren, and should always be treated as family.

But now, if you're not sure what verse 11 means when Paul says his gospel was "not after man," he explains what he means in verse 12:

"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12).

Paul begins this verse with the word "for" to continue his thought. His gospel was by revelation of the Lord, and not after man, *for* he hadn't received it of men, or been taught it of men.

"Do you know how Paul answered the argument that the law was Scriptural?"



There is actually a difference between receiving something and being taught it. Back when I was in high school, I was taught the theory of evolution. But I didn't receive it, for I was already saved, and I believed what the Bible says about the origin of man instead.

A World of Difference

That's also the difference in Scripture between having received something and having been taught it. Speaking of the people of Israel, God told Jeremiah.

"I taught them...yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction" (Jer. 32:33).

Those Jews should have received the things God taught them, but they didn't.

But Paul couldn't have received his message from man, for he says he wasn't taught it of men. He had been taught it by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The word "revelation" is the noun form of the verb *reveal*, as we see when Paul admonished the Corinthians,

"...every one of you...hath a revelation...but...if any thing be revealed to another..." (1 Cor. 14:26-30).

So when Paul says he received the grace message by the revelation of the Lord, that means the Lord revealed Himself to Paul and taught him the message of grace in person. You and I dream about sitting at the Lord's feet while He teaches us, but Paul was living the dream—and he got to live it for decades!

I know that when verse 11 says he was taught the grace message by "revelation" (singular) that it sounds like he's saying the Lord revealed Himself to Paul *once* and taught him the grace message once, and not for decades as I'm affirming. But we know that that's not how it went down, for 26 years *after* the Lord first revealed

Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, he told the Corinthians:

"...I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor. 12:1).

That means the Lord had been revealing Himself to Paul for 26 years, giving him an "abundance" of revelations (2 Cor. 12:7), and he expected to receive even more revelations in the years to come. Hey, it took *time* for Paul to learn the grace message, for all he knew was the law he learned from Gamaliel—just like it took some of you time to learn the grace message, for all you knew was the four gospels you learned from other pastors and churches.

Have the Patience of a Saint

Aren't you glad someone was patient with you as you learned it, as the Lord was patient with Paul when he was persuading him about the law? Shouldn't vou be patient with others as you share grace with people who were taught we're under the law?

I hope you do share it, by the way, for the Lord isn't revealing Himself personally to men any more, despite all the stories you hear to the contrary. He trusts that you and I will go about revealing Paul's gospel of grace. That's why He prompted Paul to write of himself and his fellow laborers:

"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thes. 2:4).

That was one of BBS founder Pastor C. R. Stam's favorite verses. When I worked for him as a young man, he had me typeset it, and he had the text made into a plaque that he hung on the wall at *Berean* Bible Society with this title: "Our Sacred Trust." We grace believers have been given a sacred trust to share the gospel of grace, and we dare not displease God by being unfaithful to it. Why not bow your head and make 1 Thessalonians 2:4 the prayer of your heart? You'll be eternally glad you did.

BEGINNING AUGUST 29TH TRANSFORMED BY GRACE **WILL AIR 5 DAYS A WEEK ON** CHRISTIAN TELEVISION NETWORK!

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"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:1-2).

Earlier in this letter Paul wrote, "God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). God is always faithful in His nature and actions (Deut. 7:9; Lam. 3:22-23).

The instructions in God's Word for us to be faithful is a call to be like Him, to be imitators of God (Eph. 5:1). Mankind, however, in the weakness of the flesh, is prone to wavering, being changeable, unstable, and disloyal. Therefore, faithfulness is a fruit that God works out through our lives as we walk in the Spirit.

Paul stated, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ." The Greek word translated "ministers" means a servant, but literally an under-rower. It refers to one who was an oarsman on a large, ancient galley ship. This brings to my mind the 1959 classic movie, *Ben-Hur*, and how Judah, the character played by Charlton Heston, was a galley slave and oarsman unjustly condemned to the flagship of the Roman Consul Quintus Arrius. Under-rowers were slaves under the authority of a man who coordinated their individual efforts to row and propel the ship forward.

An under-rower was a servant under authority, much as each believer is a servant under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, except that we *gladly* and *willingly* serve Christ, our Lord and Master. We are Christ's servants and, by His grace, He uses us to row and move the ship of His church and His cause forward in this world.

First Corinthians 4:1 teaches that believers are *both* servants and stewards, "stewards of the mysteries of God." In Luke 12:42, "the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise STEWARD, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?"

A steward is a servant who is the manager of a household. The Greek word translated as steward is *oikonomos* and is related to the Greek word for "dispensation," *oikonomia*, meaning the administration or management of a household. Sometimes in your Bible, the Greek word for dispensation is translated as "stewardship" (Luke 16:2-4).

A steward was in charge of the administration of his master's property. He devoted his time, talents, and energy to looking after his master's interests rather than his own. A steward supervised the master's property, fields, vineyards, clothing, finances, food, and the other servants. And he would dispense and give out things to the household as they were needed. He would also protect the assets and possessions of his master. All this shows that much responsibility was placed on a steward.

Likewise, to us, there is given much *spiritual* responsibility. As stewards of the mysteries of God, we are to dispense the revelation of the mystery to those of the "household of God" (Eph. 2:19). Paul wrote earlier in 1 Corinthians, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7). As stewards, we dispense; we give out the truth to others and faithfully make known the wisdom of God in a mystery.

Stewards in Paul's day were put in charge of the master's precious belongings, and likewise, we have been put in charge of a treasure: "the glorious gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4,7) and the riches of God's grace revealed to and through the Apostle Paul in the mystery. Stewards faithfully protected their master's treasure, and so we must keep and guard the truth of the mystery. As Paul challenged Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing [treasure] which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

In 1 Corinthians 4:1, Paul refers to the "mysteries of God," speaking of the previously unrevealed truths embodied in "the mystery," the body of truth revealed to Paul for this present dispensation of grace. In other words, we are to be standing for and making known the many facets of the mystery (Rom. 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-5,9; 5:32; 6:19; 1 Tim. 3:16).

Great responsibility was entrusted to a steward in Paul's day, and the most important quality of a good steward was *faithfulness*. This was "required in stewards." And, likewise, along with the great responsibility we have been given as stewards of God's truth, we are required to be faithful and trustworthy. We are called to be faithful to the Lord and His revelation of the mystery, unwavering and refusing to compromise the message, teaching it consistently without apology, standing for it, and rising up to defend and protect it.

The Two Main Divisions of Scripture

The state of the s

(An excerpt from Pastor Bing's book, Keys To the Word. To order it, email him at gbcfw@yahoo.com)

PASTOR GREGG **BING**Guest Writer

Most people believe that the two main divisions of the Bible are the Old and New Testaments. Actually, there are two main divisions of the Bible: prophecy and mystery. These two divisions are depicted in the chart on page 23.

PROPHECY

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

The apostle Peter makes reference here to the Scriptures of the Old Testament prophets. The subject of their writings was the salvation of God that was to be provided through Israel's Christ (Messiah). These prophets are said to have inquired and searched diligently, seeking to understand what the Scriptures, which they were given to write, testified about the Christ. The problem they faced is that the prophecies presented two very different views concerning the Christ: (1) the sufferings of the Christ and (2) the glories that would follow. The prophesied programs of God are depicted on the chart with a white background.

The Sufferings of Christ

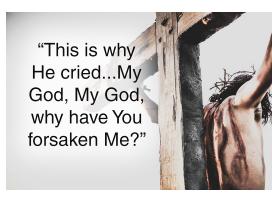
The sufferings of the Christ were prophesied in such passages as Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, both of which present vivid pictures of the crucifixion of the Christ. The sufferings of Christ began when He became a man and took upon Himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). They

September 2022 21

continued as He experienced the same trials and tribulations that any human being faces in life.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Christ's sufferings culminated when He died a cruel death on the cross of Calvary. He not only experienced the physical pain of such a death, but also the great humiliation that went with it. Yet, the greatest pain He faced on the cross came because of us, because of our sin. As He hung there on that cursed tree (Gal. 3:13), He bore the weight of the sins of the whole world in His body (1 Pet. 2:24).



He became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). What did this mean for Jesus? It meant that He had to go through the agony of separation from God, His Father. This is why He cried out in agony, with a loud voice, saying, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? (Matt. 27:46), words that were prophesied in Psalm 22:1.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, He met with His disciples and taught them, opening their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. And He said to them,

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:46).

When Peter preached to Israel in Acts 3, he spoke to them of their crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he stated that what they had done, in ignorance, was used of God to fulfill "those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer" (Acts 3:18).

The Glories to Follow

The Old Testament Scriptures speak of the glories of the Christ as well. The Christ is seen coming in power and great glory to execute judgment upon the earth and to deliver Israel from their enemies (Isa. 2; Zech. 14). The Christ is seen established as King over all the earth with Israel ruling and reigning with Him as a kingdom of priests (Psa. 2; 24; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 30:8-9; Ezek. 37:24-28).

These two different viewpoints of the Christ must have been confusing to those who lived in Old Testament times. When Jesus came, He was not what they expected in their Messiah. They weren't looking

for a lowly, suffering Messiah, but for a powerful Messiah who could and would bring deliverance for Israel. He became "a stone of stumbling and...a rock of offence" (Isa. 8:14; 1 Pet. 2:8), "the stone which the builders refused" (Psa. 118:22; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7), but, as a result, He became the "chief cornerstone" (Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:6).

In Peter's message to Israel in Acts 3, he made reference to the fact that the prophecies concerning the sufferings of the Christ had been fulfilled (v. 18). Based on this fact, he then could make the following offer to them:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

The Two Divisions of Scripture

Prophecy and Mystery

Law and the Prophets	Fulfilling of		Dispensation of Grace	the Law and the Prophets	
Matt. 11:13 I Pet. 1:10-11	- birth		Eph. 3:1-9 Col. 1:25-29		Luke 1:32 Rev. 19:6
PROPHECY death LAST- OF CHRIST	LAST	(Postponed) MYSTERY OF CHRIST	► DAYS	KINGDOM OF CHRIST	
"testified beforehand"	"sufferings of Christ"	Acts 2:16-18	"unsearchable riches"	Acts 2:19-21	"glory that should follow"
Gen. 3:15 Luke 24:27		2 13 28	Titus 2:11 II Tim. 2:15		Rev. 11:15 Pet. 1:11
Old Testament	Gospels	Acts	Grace	Tribulation	Kingdom

If Israel, as a nation, would repent of crucifying the Christ, and would turn back to the Lord, then "the times of refreshing" would come from the presence of the Lord and He would send Jesus Christ back to the earth to judge and to establish the long-promised kingdom to Israel. Peter spoke of these things as the "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." These events constitute what Peter calls in 1 Peter 1:11, "the glory that should follow."

At the time Peter made this offer, there were no other prospects known. Nothing was known about the church, the Body of Christ. At this time the church remained a mystery, or a secret, hidden in God (Eph. 3:1-9). The only things known at this time were those that

were spoken about by the prophets: "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." As far as Peter knew, the next events to occur were the "last days" that would result in Christ's return and kingdom. In fact, when Peter explained the meaning of the events that occurred at Pentecost, he stated, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). He then quoted Joel 2:28-32, which describes the last days.

The first portion of the Book of Acts was the beginning of the last days. When Israel again rejected their Christ by persecuting and killing the apostles, then the fulfillment of the last days, and the glories to follow, were postponed.

MYSTERY

The mystery is that body of truth that was kept a secret, or hidden, until God chose to reveal it to His servant, the apostle Paul. Today we are living in this unprophesied period, which Paul refers to as the dispensation of grace, a period in which God is dealing with the church, the Body of Christ. This mystery program is depicted on the chart with a shaded background. God has postponed His prophesied program for Israel until He completes His church. When the church is complete and has been caught up into glory, then God will resume His dealings with Israel.

The last days that were begun in the Book of Acts will be resumed. Israel will experience a time of great tribulation which will be brought to a close by the return of Christ back to the earth. He will come in power and great glory to judge, make war, and establish His kingdom upon the earth. Once again, these events constitute what Peter calls "the glory that should follow."

Many of the problems people have today in understanding the Bible are caused by confusing these two divisions of Scripture. Many want to take things that were and will be a part of God's prophesied program, which was directed to Israel, and apply them to God's unprophesied program, the mystery, which is directed to the church of this age. This only results in confusion. This is why Paul stressed,

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the Word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15).

If we truly desire to be workers who are approved of God and who do not need to be ashamed, we must rightly divide the Word of truth. We must make this key distinction between prophecy and mystery. We must see and understand that we live in a unique dispensation, with unique promises and requirements. Only then can we live a life that accords with God's purpose for us as members of His church today.



"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Prov. 13:3).

Have you experienced more stress than usual in the past two years? I have. Have outside tensions infiltrated your home? Have current events turned conversations into debates? More importantly, have you lost relationships and harmed your testimony for our Lord because of disagreements?

Some advocate vaccinations and boosters for everyone. Others want to choose not to vaccinate. Some prefer everyone to mask—everywhere. Others don't want to mask at all—anywhere. Some believe these precautions are for the good of the community; others fear a loss of freedom.

I came face to face with these divisive viewpoints when some of our relatives refused to be near us. I wanted to cry; I wanted to scream. I felt bad for myself, but my heart also ached for the rest of the family. Our close-knit, extended family had had a wedge driven into it. I did not have the wisdom to "keep my mouth" because I thought I was right; I needed to remember the fruit of the Spirit, especially love, joy, peace, patience, and gentleness.

Stressful times have a way of uncovering our weaknesses and exposing the worst in us. That stress comes in many forms besides health; it sneaks in with decisions about clothes, food, budgets, politics, and even vacation destinations. Yet, we are still to be kind and tenderhearted to one another, forgiving one another as God forgave us.

As women, we must rely on God's Word more than ever to keep peace in our homes during these troublesome times. Our families depend on us to set a calm atmosphere so we may walk worthy of our Lord and have fervent love among ourselves. Love will cover a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8).

More important than all of the stressors that come our way is the witness of our lives before those who need to know our Lord. I'm biting my tongue more now in order to have my speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6).

God's way is always best—whether we are relating to children, spouses, brothers or sisters—so that we may experience "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1). —Sheila Wilkinson

September 2022 25

BBS Letter Excerpts



From Louisiana:

"Just completed reading the book *Baptism and the Bible* by Cornelius R. Stam. Excellent read! Ends all confusion!"

From Florida:

"We have most of Pastor Sadler's books, and Pastor Stam's. My husband and I do a devotional each night together from them. We finished Pastor Sadler's *Revelation* commentary, and we're now in *Paul*, *His Apostleship and Message* by Pastor Stam. What a wonderful blessing it is to do something like that together."

From Georgia:

"What a blessing it was to have Brother Rick at our church this month. He brought a wonderful message...at *Grace Bible Church* in Thomson. It was a privilege to speak with him."

From Wisconsin:

"Thank you, thank you, thank you for *Transformed By Grace* and the *Berean Searchlight*. The best and *only* way the Word should be taught....Hope Kevin will be coming to Lancaster this fall." (He will! See page 30 for the details. –Ed.)

From Indiana:

"I recently purchased *Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*. I am very thankful for the many questions answered, for I have had many Scriptural concerns. It is a very informative writing."

From Mississippi:

"My husband and I watch your show every Sunday. You explain everything so clearly. I have learned so much."

From Facebook:

"I am thankful for this episode [of *Transformed by Grace*] and thanks for the lives that God used to create this ministry."

From Florida:

"I listen to Pastor Kevin. Praise God, what an awesome encourager. He shows the excitement on his countenance and the joy of learning God's Word. Thanks a million for letting me eat at the table with him."

From our Inbox:

"Do you still answer Biblical questions from new Christians as you once did before? It was so helpful to have an answer to set me straight on many Biblical issues. Thank you for all you do for Christ and in helping new Christians." (We're still here, helping as best we can! –Ed.)

From Arizona:

"Thank you for the two chapters on communion. You answered the questions I asked, and a couple I never thought of asking!"

From Pennsylvania:

"I really enjoy and learn from the television program. Pastor Sadler makes Bible truths so simple to understand."

From our Inbox:

"I am listening to your audio messages on Acts, and I am loving it!"

From Florida:

"Thanks so very much for this *Two Minutes* article ["A Case of Mistaken Identity"]. It spoke to me because I was one who glossed over it, thinking it was about Christ, but your explanation makes the verse clear."

From our Inbox:

"We...love to start our day with your *Two Minutes With the Bible*. It seems that we are not receiving it now until about 10-11 a.m. By that time we are doing things that need to get done, or on our way to appointments. Can you PLEASE go back to posting them early? We miss reading them. We usually read your messages first, then devotions, then our Bible study. We miss your inspirations." (We're sorry, but we went thru a few days of technical difficulties in July. Glad you missed us! –Ed.)

From Indiana:

"I'm writing because of the article 'Prayer Warriors.' I'm writing a book on prayer, and I enjoyed the article immensely. It has given me a greater insight and understanding to what I'm writing, and a greater sense of knowledge on the subject of prayer."

From Colorado:

"In this month's *Berean Searchlight*, Brother Kurth twice used the phrase 'mid-Acts grace' on his 'From the Editor to You' page. Could you please recommend for me a book or other literature you publish that explains in detail the meaning of that phrase?"

From our Inbox:

"I just wanted to thank you! 'The Grecian Formula' was absolutely stellar!"

From Facebook:

"I love this *Searchlight* message ["Sanctification by Grace"]. I watched Kevin deliver this message on TV and I'm excited to have it now to save and reread. Thank you."

From Missouri:

"Looking forward to this weekend in Salem, Missouri. First time for me to attend one of your conferences!" (We love first-timers! And old-timers. And all-timers! –Ed.)

From Wisconsin:

"I feel I must write and thank you for putting 'How God used the Lockdown' in the *Searchlight*. I've already given away about 15 copies of that article....I'll be attending your Bible conference in Tipp City."

From Arkansas:

"Thank you for the monthly Bible study material! It answers so many questions and concerns about Biblical truths."

From Florida:

"Each month I look forward to receiving my issue of the Searchlight. Thank you for your wonderful article 'A Reverse Rapture' that you wrote in this month's issue.... I was able to see Matthew 24:37-41 in a dispensational light. The Berean Bible Society has helped me tremendously to see the differences between Israel and the Body of Christ, for which I am so grateful. Your daily Two Minutes with the Bible begins each new day with my focus on God."

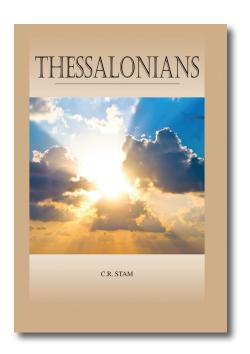
"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."

—2 Timothy 2:15

A LABOR DAY CHALLENGE

In addition to clearly setting forth the case for the pre-tribulational coming of the Lord, this volume makes it just as clear that God wants us to work while we watch and wait for Him (1 Thes. 4:11; 2 Thes. 3:10-12).





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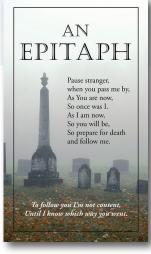
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Not Keen on Halloween?—Use it to get the gospel out! Children are easier to reach before the effect of this ungodly world hardens their hearts. This October 31, don't forget to minister to the ones that ring your doorbell!





AN EPITAPH

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Special Offers End September 30, 2022

News and Announcements

Wisconsin Conference: The solid grace believers in the Platteville area have invited BBS president Pastor Kevin Sadler back to their stomping grounds to help them hold forth the truth and stamp out error! Platteville is so far west that Iowans, Illinoisans, and even Minnesotans will find this venue hard to resist. So mark September 9,10 on your calendar, and be sure to let Mel Flogel know you're coming by ringing him up at 608-348-7574.

'Tis the Season to Deal With Folly! Amid all the foolishness that surrounds Halloween, your house can stand out as a strong beacon of light amid the flickering light emanating from your neighborhood's jack-o'-lanterns. Just order some of our Halloween-themed gospel tracts, and you'll find dealing with this annual event to be much more spiritually rewarding. We're promoting these tracts in September so you won't be disappointed if slow mail in October keeps them from arriving in time. But don't procrastinate; see page 29 without delay!

Georgia Bible Conference: Last year, Georgia resident Nathan Bullock was telling Pastor Kevin about all the grace believers that are scattered throughout the peach state, and together they came up with the idea of conducting a BBS regional conference in Gillsville. Nathan has been in touch with the saints in the *Gillsville Baptist Church*, and they were open to the idea of hosting the conference. So set September 17 aside from all your lesser-important autumn plans, and come hear pastors Kevin Sadler, Rob Nix, and Jeff Bertram rightly divide the Word. For more information, contact Nathan at bullocksrus@gmail.com or at 706-833-8893.

Let Go An Echo! September is Echo Month here at BBS, the month we look forward to hearing back from you after a year of sounding out God's Word. If you love to start your day with *Two Minutes With the Bible*, or end your week with *More Minutes*; if you comfort your heart after paying the bills at the end of the month with the *Searchlight*, or are finding how much you miss *Transformed By Grace* when your busy life gets in the way, why not let us know? The staff members who are involved in these ministries, and all our others, will feel positively refreshed if you'll just "leggo" an echo!

UPCOMING CONFERENCES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Western Wisconsin Conference, September 9-10, Platteville, WI BBS Regional Conference-Georgia, September 17, Gillsville, GA BBF Fall Conference, October 7-9, Beloit, WI

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