

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day. (Acts 17:11)
["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—liftedup@lockportalliance.org—with questions or comments.]

"Bearing thorns, speaking light"

I can hear our grandfather clock ticking, and I don't like it. Shelley, Frankie, and Eddy left an hour ago for Splash Lagoon in Erie, Pennsylvania. It's an indoor water park, and every winter they look forward to it with prolonged anticipation. Shelley might be at her desk working on the church website when, without provocation or warning, she'll let out a whooping, spine-tingling, blood-curdling "Splash Lagoon!" From the kitchen, Frankie reverberates with a lusty, triumphant "Splash Lagoon!" which is immediately echoed by the battle-cry "Splash Lagoon!" as it bursts forth from Eddy in the living room. Sometimes I swear that if it weren't for me there wouldn't be an ounce of sanity in this joint!

But amusement park and splash park rides have become a little too exhilarating for me. Don't tell anybody, but if you look closely you'll happen to notice that I'm not the daring young man on the flying trapeze any more. The Ferris wheel is my preferred ride. Then I always wander over to the merry-go-round where I admire those dashing stallions with their brightly painted bridles and their ever-confident bearing. I never ride, but I linger a long while as a mom and dad prop up their beaming 3-year-old, while their 5-year-old proudly proves that this year he's big enough to hang on all by himself, thank you.

As I watch, I always recall Caitlin, my first child. She's 21 now, but I have a picture of her when she was maybe four, flashing that sun-moon-and-seven-stars smile while atop a white Arabian charger with a yellow saddle. I missed much of her third, fourth, and fifth years as a divorce was in the offing. I just wasn't able to hang on.

I swear I could get sad anywhere. My failings can bring regret to an amusement park on the fourth of July, or cast a shadow over the prettiest picture I have ever seen, or sow thorns in the garden: *Cursed is the ground because of you; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you.* (1)

Shelley just called from Splash Lagoon. I could hear the frenzied lunacy in the background! I told her that I've been working on 'Be a Berean.'

"How's it coming?"

"I thought I knew where I was heading, but it got away from me. It started out with a light touch, but then it turned dark."

"That's not the way it goes. That's backwards. Go back to the beginning and remember to '*Let there be light,*' Franklyn."

"Light. You're right. Back to the beginning..."

The first three verses of the Bible contain the pattern of the entire Bible in germinal, gestational form:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (2)

As the Spirit hovered, brooding over what was to come, it was apparent *from the foundation of the world* (3) that there was only one way to overcome the darkness. God Himself would have to bear the curse of sin: *So twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head.* (4)

Jesus would have to be the scapegoat, to carry our sins away:

He will put both his hands on the head of the scapegoat, and he will confess over it all the sins and crimes of Israel. In this way Aaron will put the people's sins on the goat's head. Then he will send the goat away into the desert. (5)

On days 1, 2, and 3 of creation, God **formed** the earth by His word.

On days 4, 5, and 6 of creation, He **filled** the earth by His word.

If your life is formless, like mine was, let the Word of God shape it.

Or if your heart is empty, like mine was, let the Word of God fill it.

If it's dark wherever you turn, let His Word create light.

Jesus made the universe out of nothing. He made light out of darkness. Best of all, He makes good out of bad.

(6)

Turn to Him. You'll see.

Scripture cited: (1) Genesis 3:18; (2) Genesis 1:1-3; (3) 1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8; (4) Matthew 27:29; (5) Leviticus 16:8, 21; (6) Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —
"Approaching God: Lessons from the Inspired Prayers of Scripture" --Sunday at 9:45
"Jesus, the One and Only"--Sunday at 9:45
"Speak God's Word"--Sunday at 9:45