

# The BBI BULLETIN

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Training for Ministry

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Rightly Dividing God's Word



Pastor Andy Kern, Dean of Academics

I recently came across the account of a tragic accident that occurred one Friday night in 1992. Joe Avila was driving drunk down the freeway behind seventeen-year-old Amy Wall, whom he then rear-ended, sending her car into a tree. She was killed and Joe was soon arrested. Racked by guilt and anger, he was suicidal in the days that followed. As he awaited trial in jail, a chaplain visited and Joe trusted Christ as his Savior. He learned about forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ. This changed his life and perspective. To save Amy's family from further grief in court proceedings, he changed his plea to guilty and received a prison sentence. While in prison, Christ's work in his heart resulted in him ministering to others until his release in 1999. After that he ministered in his local church.

A couple of years after his release, Joe had the opportunity to further experience forgiveness and reconciliation. He received a call informing him that Derek Wall, Amy's brother, wanted to meet with

him. In that meeting, Derek expressed the grief he experienced over Amy's death and his original desire that Joe be executed for his crime, but then Derek indicated the family was aware that Joe had been on a different path since. Joe was able to communicate how sorry he was and asked Derek to forgive him. Not long after that, Joe received news that Rick Wall, Amy's father, wanted to meet Joe. Rick forgave Joe and communicated that he approved of the steps Joe had taken in his life to help others. Later, at an event in which Rick and Derek participated, Rick approached Joe, gave him a hug, and said that he loved him.<sup>1</sup>

In this story, we see the power of forgiveness and reconciliation that a believer experiences vertically with God through Jesus Christ and how it changes one's heart and brings about forgiveness and reconciliation horizontally in relationship with others. Reconciliation means to be brought back into a right relationship with another, such as two enemies becoming friends. Our God is a God of reconciliation and has offered the world the opportunity to come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul, the Apostle of Grace to the Gentiles, was in many ways the Apostle of reconciliation. The Apostle knew what it was to have his sins forgiven and experience freedom from the guilt and pain of a life lived in the flesh, and he knew what it was

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# THE INSTITUTE UPDATE

## Sharing the Ministry of Berean Bible Institute

I praise the Lord for the opportunities I have as the President of *Berean Bible Institute* to share about what God is doing through our Institute. In August, I was the Bible teacher at the Family Camp of *Northern Grace Youth Camp* and had a wonderful time teaching the Scriptures and sharing about *BBI* with those in attendance. You may not be aware that *Northern Grace Youth Camp* provides scholarships for their counselors to take our *Certificate of Biblical Worldview* class to help better prepare them to meet the needs of their campers.

I was also honored to visit Valley Bible Church in Stephens City, Virginia, to speak in the adult Sunday School hour and preach the morning service. I praise the Lord for the encouragement I received and for the new friends I met as I shared what God is doing through *BBI*.

In October, I will be preaching at the 100th Year Celebration of Bethesda Church in Prior Lake, Minnesota. This church has been and continues to be a beacon of light for the gospel of God's grace, and I look forward to celebrating this wonderful milestone in their history.

I am currently putting together my spring schedule, so if you are interested in having me come to your church or conference to share what God is doing in and through *BBI*, please contact our office so I can include you on my schedule.

## Bedore Publications Reprint

We are currently preparing several of Dr. Ed Bedore's writings for reprint. Many of you have been blessed over the years by his books, and we look forward to having more available soon. The cost of reprinting these publications is approximately \$3,000. If you are interested in partnering with us on this project, please mark your gifts "Bedore Reprints" so we can designate the gifts appropriately for this important project.

## Pastor and Elder Leadership Luncheon

On November 7th, *Berean Bible Institute* will be hosting a Pastor and Elders Leadership Luncheon from 12:00-2:00 PM. We are honored to have Dr. Thomas Schwartz as our keynote speaker. Dr. Schwartz is currently serving as pastor of Collinsville Community Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is a Distance Studies Advisor at *Berean Bible Institute*.

## Legacy Support

In the coming months you will receive a brochure highlighting strategic ways you can support the ministry of *Berean Bible Institute* through long term legacy giving. *BBI* has partnered with the National Christian Foundation to provide a resource that our partners can use to support *Berean Bible Institute* and also strategically support other ministries through legacy giving. We hope that these tools will allow our partners to use "tax smart strategies" to support ministries well into the future.

## BBI Brazil Missions Conference

In August, our *Berean Bible Institute Brazil* extension held its second annual missions conference. Approximately 120 individuals participated in this three-day event. During the conference three *BBI Brazil* students were presented with their *Certificates of Dispensational Studies*.

We are rejoicing that God has allowed us to expand the ministry of *Berean Bible Institute* into Portuguese speaking countries. We are praying that one day we might have the resources to provide training for our Spanish speaking brothers and sisters in Christ.

In Christ,



Dr. Robert E. Nix, President of *Berean Bible Institute*

*THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION continued from page 1*

to have a relationship with God and know the peace of God in his everyday life. Furthermore, Paul was given the ministry of reconciliation, meaning he was chosen to unveil this message of grace and reconciliation to the world. Paul saw himself and other believers as ambassadors for Christ, sent out into the world to implore others to be reconciled to God so they too could experience what he had experienced in Christ. Paul captures these ideas in II Corinthians 5:18-21:

*“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Here, Paul focuses on Christ as the mediator of reconciliation. Verse 19 shows that reconciliation with God comes through Jesus Christ. Paul says in II Timothy 2:5, *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”*

Christ is the mediator who was sent into the world to die for our sins, to make sufficient provision for the sins of the world, thereby creating the pathway of reconciliation. The motivation for this was the love of God for humanity, and even when we were sinners and enemies of God, Christ died for us to effect our

reconciliation to God as believers (Rom. 5:8-11).

The Danyang-Kunshan Bridge in eastern China is listed as the longest bridge in the world at over 102 miles long, traversing lowlands, lakes, rivers, and rice patties, ultimately connecting Danyang to Kunshan. It cost 8.5 billion dollars, took 4 years to build, and utilized 10,000 workers. As impressive as that is, the Lord Jesus Christ built a bigger bridge. At the cost of His own life, He alone built the only bridge from humanity to God, traversing the otherwise impassable gulf of sin between us. Jesus is the greatest bridge builder in history in that sense, and the only one who could provide the pathway of reconciliation to God as the sinless sacrifice for sin.

Next, Paul focuses on the message of reconciliation, which is that Christ provides forgiveness and reconciliation through His death, burial, and resurrection. II Corinthians 5:19 says that *“God was in Christ,”* indicating both the deity of Christ and the purpose of God in and through Christ. God’s purpose in Christ is *“reconciling the world,”* meaning all of humanity, through Christ’s death for sins and His resurrection. This does not mean that every individual soul is already reconciled unto God, but that anyone in the world can be fully reconciled. God has done the reconciling work and moved toward his enemies through the person of Christ, but man must still respond in faith to Christ.

Furthermore, the purpose of God in Christ is *“not imputing their trespasses to them”* (II Cor. 5:19). This means that God did not send Christ to presently impute sins to humanity. To impute means to reckon to one’s account. God is not currently imputing sin to people under the ministry of reconciliation. God’s present offer to the world is rooted in grace and peace. He, in grace, is offering eternal life through Christ rather than condemnation, and He is offering peace with Him rather than wrath.

Some might think that God not imputing trespasses is the same as already having one’s sins forgiven before trusting Christ, but there are other truths from Scripture one must keep in mind to understand Paul’s meaning in II Corinthians 5:19, of which we will mention three.

First, Paul taught that having Christ’s righteousness imputed to one’s account was the same transaction in which one was forgiven of sin. In other words, being declared righteous (or justified) and receiving forgiveness of sins are part of the same salvation

# got questions?

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package. Romans 4:5-8 illustrates this:

*“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”*

In this passage, Paul explains how the righteousness of Christ is imputed to one’s account through faith. Paul quotes David from Psalm 32:1-2. He says David describes the idea of imputed righteousness (Rom. 4:6), but the words of David do not speak of imputed righteousness, but forgiveness and not having sin imputed (Rom. 4:7-8). This demonstrates that, in Paul’s thinking, when you are forgiven in Christ, you at the same time are given the righteousness of Christ, and now you have a righteous standing before God. It all happens at once: the moment of salvation.

A second truth is that one must be *“in Christ”* to be forgiven. Ephesians 1:7 says, *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”* This passage shows that only in Christ, as a believer, do you have forgiveness of sins. To be *“in Christ”* means to be identified with Christ through salvation, having been spiritually baptized into Christ and His Body by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13). Forgiveness and reconciliation are available to all, but only received by faith in Christ. A sufficient provision has been made, but is only applied to believers.

The third truth we will mention that relates to the imputing of sin is that God’s wrath against sin will still be manifested. Colossians 3:5-7 says, *“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.”* This passage shows God’s wrath is still coming upon the world because of sins, which are trespasses against God’s character and revealed will. God is not presently imputing sins to the world, only because right now He is offering grace instead. This will not last forever, and judgment will still come. God’s wrath will be poured out on the world in the Tribulation, of which much can be read in the book of Revelation. God will pour out wrath, not because everyone’s sins are already forgiven and they are simply unbeliev-

ing, but because not all took advantage of the forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, the unsaved, who are unforgiven and unreconciled to God, will face Christ as the judge at the Great White Throne and be cast in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15). Their works, or deeds, will be judged because apart from Christ, their deeds are sinful. Thus, as Paul says in II Corinthians 6:2b, *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* For now, wrath is on hold.

Paul next focuses on the mission of reconciliation in II Corinthians 5:20. We who believe, like Paul, have experienced reconciliation with God and are now called to bring the message of reconciliation to all we can as the ambassadors of Christ. An ambassador is a diplomat sent from one country to another to represent the home country. For the United States, an ambassador is the highest-ranking representative to another nation and is meant to speak and negotiate on behalf of the president of the United States. The ambassador then must say the right thing and represent his country the right way. In like manner, believers represent the heavenly Christ to earth, and therefore we must speak the right message and live the right life as His ambassadors.

*Believers represent the heavenly Christ to earth, and therefore we must speak the right message and live the right life as His ambassadors.*

Many who say they represent Christ preach a message that is not of Christ. Some say people must follow the law to be saved. Some say a person must be baptized to be saved. Some say to do good works to be saved. The true message committed to us is the Gospel of the Grace of God. By grace through faith are we saved, by placing our personal trust in Jesus Christ, that He died for us, was buried, and rose again (Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). This is the only message that saves.

In addition to the right message, ambassadors must live right. The messenger must live out the message. Since we make known the gospel of Christ, we need to be Christ-like. Since we have the gospel of Grace, we must be gracious. Since our message is born from the love of God, we must be loving. Since our message is the truth of God, we must be truthful and live in integrity.

Further, since it is the message of reconciliation, we must be people of reconciliation. We must acknowledge any issues or violations between ourselves and others and be willing to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Likewise, Christ works in our hearts so that we might be forgiving to those who may have wronged us. Recalling the story of Joe Avila and the Wall family, we see what that can look like in our lives, and how powerful the gifts of forgiveness and reconciliation are.

The message of reconciliation reminds us that without Christ, we had only sin to define us. II Corinthians 5:21 again says, *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* This verse captures the great exchange of our sin for Jesus’ righteousness for those who believe in Him. He takes away our sin. We receive His righteousness on our account before God, and thus God views us as righteous in Christ, enabling us to be indwelt by His Spirit and be His children, thus being reconciled.

Once a year Israel would observe the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23). The High Priest would first make a sin offering for his own sins. Then he would take two

goats, the first of which would be sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant, to serve as a covering over the sins of the people. The High Priest would lay his hands on the other goat, called the scapegoat, and confess the sins of Israel to signify the transfer of sin to the goat. That goat went into the wilderness, symbolizing the idea of taking sin away. Both goats foreshadowed Christ, who as the righteous Son of God died in our place for sin, and took our sins far away. But, unlike the High Priest, Christ had no sin of his own. Thus, He who knew no sin became sin for us, so we could have His righteousness imputed unto us. It is Christ’s payment of sin that makes reconciliation possible, that we might have eternal life and an everlasting relationship with our Heavenly Father, living in His love and acceptance of us.

Therefore, as reconciled ambassadors for Christ, let’s take this message of Grace to others and show them how they can be reconciled to God and know forgiveness.

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1. Emily Harris Greene, “Joe and Amy: A Story of Reconciliation,” Prison Fellowship, <https://www.prisonfellowship.org/2021/07/joe-amy-story-reconciliation/> (accessed March 6, 2024).

## The Basic Rules of Bible Interpretation

Dr. W. Edward Bedore

1. The Bible is our first and final authority for faith and practice - Its authority overrides that of philosophy, denominations, traditions, leaders, and emotions.
2. Scripture has but one meaning - Each passage of Scripture has a definite meaning of its own. If Scripture has more than one meaning, we can never be certain of its meaning. It should be understood to mean what it meant to those it was originally addressed to.
3. Scripture explains Scripture - In Bible study, let the Bible speak for itself. Compare Scripture with Scripture, acknowledge differences as well as similarities, and be careful not to add to or subtract from it.
4. Pay attention to context - Give careful consideration to the preceding and following Scriptures of a passage and how they affect it.
5. Pay attention to dispensational distinctives - Prophecy and Mystery must be recognized as separate programs, as are Law and Grace.
6. The Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point of all Scripture - Always keep in mind everything in the Bible is in some way related to Jesus Christ and God’s overall plan of redemption.
7. Rely on the Holy Spirit to give you understanding (I Cor. 2:11-16). Human intellect alone cannot grasp the true significance and depth of spiritual truth (Eph. 1:15-20; Col. 1:9-10).

# For Our Learning

Pastor Matthew Ritchey, Managing Editor

## God is Working

*“Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* Esther 4:13-14.

After being refused and embarrassed by Queen Vashti’s refusal to dance at a party being held for all the important people of the kingdom, Persian-Median King Ahasuerus banned her from being Queen (1:12, 19). He then gave instruction for the beautiful young virgins of the kingdom be gathered and trained; it was from this group that he would pick the replacement queen (2:2-3). Esther is one of the young women selected to be the potential replacement for the queen (2:8). Esther was a Jew who was raised by her older cousin Mordecai (2:7).

Mordecai served in some capacity at the king’s gate (2:21). Everything seemed to be going fine until Haman was promoted over all the princes (3:1). Haman expected people to bow to him, which most were willing to do (3:2), but Mordecai refused to bow to anyone but His God (3:2). Haman was furious at this one man’s refusal to bow to him. After learning the disobedient man was a Jew (3:5-6), Haman conned King Ahasuerus into making an official legal decree to encourage the punishment of every Jew in the kingdom (3:8, 13).

The Bible should prepare us to be prepared to face pushback when we live for the Lord in a fallen world. This is true whether it was Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to bow before Nebuchadnezzar’s idol (Dan. 3:16-18); Jesus telling His disciples that when the world showed hatred toward them to remember that it hated Him first (John 14:18); or Paul declaring that all who live godly will face persecution (II Tim. 3:12). Do not lose hope when difficult times arise, others have gone before us and given us an example of faithful service in troubling times.

Esther sends a messenger to Mordecai to find out why he is troubled. Mordecai informs her of the decree to persecute the Jews and instructs Esther to go

before the king to beg for the life of her people. Remember, the king’s decree was against the Jews and, even though no one in the palace knew, Esther was a Jew (2:10,20). In addition, Esther tells Mordecai that it could mean her death if she were to go before the king unbidden. She was taking a BIG chance.

We are not called to serve the Lord when the circumstances are right, the comfort level is acceptable, and the stars are aligned. We are to serve Him in season and out of season, whether matters make it convenient or not (II Tim. 4:1). Sometimes there will be no personal gain for us this side of Glory, but there is no greater value than stepping out in faith and living for Christ is every situation.

Esther was safe and comfortable. No one knew she was a Jew so she was in no danger. She had the resources of the king, so she was not hurting for necessities or non-essentials. Mordecai was asking her to put all of that on the line – her comfort, her provision, her favor, her life.

I call your attention to two things Mordecai says in his response to Esther. First, if you don’t allow the Lord to use you, He will find another way for His will to be done. We have been blessed with the privilege of being a chosen vessel fit for the Lord’s use. God has asked us to serve Him, but if we choose our comfort and possessions over Him, He can work without us. As Jesus stated in Luke 19:40, *“If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”* God does not need us, but He desires to use us. Are we willing?

Second, consider Mordecai’s implications when he asks Esther to consider the possibility that the Lord had placed her in the kingdom for that specific moment. The proper approach for the circumstances you are in is: How can the Lord be served in this situation in which I find myself? In other words, stop looking at things from how we will gain or how we will be inconvenienced and begin to filter them through the consideration of how the Lord can be honored.

You more than likely know how it worked out for Esther (if not, read the book). Even without the name of God directly mentioned in the book of Esther, what a testament to the providence of God in that circumstance at that time. None of the things that took place in the book of Esther were chance, irony, or luck. It was all the providence of God. Let us live in a way that in every moment the Lord is able to do His good pleasure in our lives. I’m sure in Glory we will be amazed at the providence of God in our lives!



# Bible Answers to Bible Questions

& Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

**QUESTION:** If Paul was preaching the mystery of Ephesians 3 that was unsearchable and hid in God, why did he say in Acts 26 that until Acts 26 he was preaching NONE OTHER THINGS THAN THOSE WHICH MOSES AND THE PROPHETS SAID SHOULD COME?

**ANSWER:** The answer is in the next verse where it tells us the aspects of Paul's message to which Moses and Prophets agreed: *"That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and unto the Gentiles."* THAT IS THE CORE OF THE GOSPEL AT ANY TIME AND IN ANY DISPENSATION!

Paul was not on trial for preaching the Mystery, he was being accused of being dangerous and infectious (see *"pestilent"* in Acts 24:5) against Judaism, especially by preaching to Gentiles. Paul is showing his innocence by pointing out that the Jew's own Scriptures testified of a Savior who would come to die (Dt. 16:5-6; Ps. 22:16; Is. 53:7;), rise again (Dt. 26:10; Ps. 16:10; Is. 53:9;), and bring salvation to all nations (Gen. 12:3; Ps. 22:27; Is. 49:6). Redemption is NOT a mystery. The promise of a Redeemer predates even Abraham, the father of Israel (Gen. 3:16). The message around that redemption is different under Law and under Grace, and the Mystery packages redemption in a way previously unknown until revealed to Paul, but it still has the same source of redemption: Jesus Christ, the One who gave Himself once for all.

Paul wisely was using the Jewish scriptures to present his defense that the Jews had no grounds for charging him with blasphemy because, even though it was happening in a different way under Grace, their own Scriptures speak of Christ's death and resurrection providing redemption for all nations.

**QUESTION:** I would like to know if the unbelievers at the Great White Throne judgement will receive a new body fit for Hell or will their old body with all the ailments from this life be resurrected before they are judged for their works and are cast into the Lake of Fire?

**ANSWER:** The Bible tells us that the unbeliever will be resurrected from the dead to stand before judgment. Daniel 12:2 tells us, *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."* It would seem the resurrection of the body is similar among believer and unbeliever; it will be the eternal destination that it the most different.

Yes, the resurrected body of the unbeliever will need necessary changes to last for eternity. We are told in Revelation 20:15, *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* The Lake of Fire was said to a place of torment *"day and night for ever and ever"* (Rev. 20:10). The bodies we currently inhabit are not made to last for ever and ever, so there will be some sort of change to the unbeliever's resurrected body to be able to last for eternity.

Another important difference between the believer's resurrected body and the unbeliever's eternal body is that the believer will receive a glorious body that is fashioned after Christ. The unbeliever has no such hope to look forward to. What it exactly will entail, I'll leave that to the Lord to work out the finer details.



**BEREAN  
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The mission of Berean Bible Institute is to train Pastors, Missionaries, and Christian Leaders for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God

given to and through the Apostle Paul. **Berean Bible Institute, Inc.** admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

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