

The BBI BULLETIN

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Training Workmen that Need Not Be Ashamed

THE INSTITUTE UPDATE

Dear Friend of **BBI**,

It is no secret that, with the current conditions in our country, many of us are having to make some tough decisions regarding finances. Many individuals and businesses are struggling economically today, and we don't know how much longer the downturn will last. Of course, **Berean Bible Institute**, like most other faith-based ministries, has also been affected as giving toward the Lord's work has been reduced.

BBI does not beg for money or send out a constant stream of "urgent" appeals for donations. Our policy is to simply let God's people know what our situation is and leave it between them and the Lord as to where they will share some of the resources He has blessed them with.

Whenever we have to "tighten our belts" and make difficult decisions about how best to use our financial assets, we must first decide what is really important and what isn't. And, of course, it is important to make informed decisions about these things. We think that the following should be taken into consideration by believers when choosing which ministries to support.

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

A LOOK AT THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATIONISM

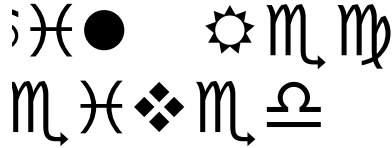
By Dr. W. Edward Bedore

(PART 3 OF 3 ON UNIVERSALISM
AND ANNIHILATIONISM)

In our look at the doctrine of Universalism, we have demonstrated that the word *aion* is used in the Scriptures to speak of everlasting punishment. We believe that in doing so we have also shown that the Doctrine of Annihilationism is not true either. If those who "worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand" will be tormented with "fire and brimstone" in the place where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night: (Rev. 14:9-11; cf. Matt. 25:41,46; Rev. 20:11-15) as the Scriptures teach, then Annihilationism is false. False and dangerous. If unbelievers are erroneously led to think that, if they die in their sins, they will only suffer for awhile before being annihilated, they may choose to reject Christ and an eternal life in favor of continuing in the passing pleasures of sin, thinking that even if they end up in Hell they will not suffer for long.

Those who believe in Annihilationism hold the same or similar views about the meaning and use of the word *aion* as Universalists do. Obviously, they must deny that it means eternal or they would have no argument against everlasting punishment at all. In addition, they must also hold to the position that the soul of man does not exist in a conscious state of being between the time of physical death and resurrection. The state of man between death and resurrection, according to this view, has been referred to as soul sleep, the

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FROM TAMIL NADU, INDIA:

"I am so excited in receiving the *BBI Bulletin*. I am very much blessed for the same. The fall 2008 issue is excellent, Universalism and Annihilationism. I request to kindly send me your issues and publications regularly. We pray for your ministries."

FROM OHIO:

"I would like to receive the *BBI Bulletin*. And thank all those at **Berean Bible Institute**, for your deep heart concern for others to understand, the awesome unsearchable riches of Christ revealed to us through the Apostle Paul. Thank you."

FROM IDAHO:

"Thank you for your faithfulness. May the Lord continue to bless you all."

FROM MICHIGAN:

"Thank you for the information regarding Universal Reconciliation. We have a well-known pastor in our area preaching it. Your articles are timely. Thank you for keeping me on your mailing list!"

THE BULLETIN BOARD



 **Midwest Grace Fellowship
Spring Conference**

Location: Miracle Hills Ranch,
Bethany, Missouri

Dates: June 5th-7th, 2009


Contact: Pastor Ken Lawson
at: (217) 498-6958 or
<kandblawson@sbcglobal.net>

 **41ST ANNUAL BEREAN BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE**

Location: Cedar Lake, Indiana

Dates: June 20th-25th, 2009

Contact: Pastor Richard Ware:
(870) 941-6110 or
<rnrware@aol.com>

 **GRACE BELIEVERS
BIBLE CONFERENCE**

Location: Bitely, Michigan

Dates: July 24th-26th, 2009

 **CELEBRATE GRACE CAMP**

Location: Montrose, Colorado

Dates: July 26th-30th, 2009

Contact: Jerry or Judy Worthley:
(719) 276-2469.

*Only one life; 'twill soon be past.
Only what's done "in Christ" will last.*

(A LOOK AT THE DOCTRINE OF ANNIHILATIONISM
continued from page 1)

dissolution of the soul, or the eradication of the soul. There may also be terminology that we are not aware of that is used by some. Regardless of what it is called though, it is all done in an effort to deny the immortality of the soul of the human being. They must disprove the fact that once a human being comes into existence as a person they will exist forever or else the Doctrine of Annihilationism is annihilated. So, they go to great lengths to do so. Much effort on their part has been put into trying to make the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) say something other than what it says because it clearly teaches that humans continue to exist in a conscious state of being after physical death. Special effort is put into this because if left to its normal meaning as written this passage of Scripture leaves no room for the doctrine of Annihilationism.

There are several different ideas among those who deny the immortality of the soul. One view that is similar to Annihilationism is the idea of Conditional Immortality. Pastor C.R. Stam gives a brief explanation of the variations in the beliefs associated with these views.

“In the camp of those who hold that the ungodly will finally cease to exist there are wide differences of opinion. Most of those who hold to *Conditional Immortality*, believe that man, being mortal, is destined, *in the nature of the case*, to pass out of existence and that only through union with Christ can he obtain so-called ‘immortality.’ Those who hold to *Annihilation*, on the other hand, believe that the ungodly will be exterminated or *put* out of existence. This, however, is only a very general distinction for, as we say, the differences of opinion in this school of thought are many and great.

Some believe that there will be a *single act* of annihilation, others a *process* of destruction; some, that it will be a *punishment*, others, a merciful *deliverance* from punishment; some, that the ungodly cease to exist at the *first* death, others, that this does not take place until the *second* death. But these last are disagreed again as to whether the second death will annihilate its victims *immediately* or *sooner or later* after sufficient punishment. Again, some believe that in the case of the

unsaved man *as such* will cease to exist at death but will be brought into existence again to be tried and destroyed in the second death, while others hold that since (according to their theory) the ungodly cease to exist at death there can be no resurrection for them. Still others hold that ‘the soul survives the death of the body until judgment day, when God will destroy both soul and body of the wicked in the lake of fire.’ (Man, His Nature and Destiny, by Cornelius R. Stam, *Berean Bible Society*, 1961, pgs. 194-195).”

None of these views have any Biblical basis on which to stand even though their proponents have vigorously tried to defend them with certain proof texts that they claim prove their doctrine. Speaking of both Universalism and Annihilationism, C.R. Stam explains where they have erred.

“Both deny conscious existence in death. Both deny the accepted meaning of those terms rendered ‘everlasting’ and ‘forever and ever’ in the *Authorized Version*. Both argue that God would be unjust to punish the wicked forever. But *neither* has concluded *from the Scriptures* that everlasting punishment is not taught here. They have concluded this from their own reasoning and *then* have sought to prove their conclusions from certain Scriptures. In doing so, however, they have been forced to ignore the *Holy Spirit’s* usage of the terms in question and to pervert the plainest statements of the Word of God. (Stam, pg. 194).”

We agree with Pastor Stam’s assessment of these dangerous doctrines and pray that the Lord will deliver those who have been deceived by them from this snare of the Devil that they have been caught in (II Tim. 2:24-26). But, before leaving this subject we think that it is important that we look at some of the arguments of the Annihilationists.

THE DIVINE SATIRE THEORY OF LUKE 16:19-31

Because the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16 refutes the idea of annihilation, Annihilationists deny that the account teaches any truth about the conscious state of the dead between physical death and resurrection. Some have resorted to the idea of it being a “divine satire” saying that Christ was simply using a misbelief of the Pharisees to teach them truth. They say that by

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using Jewish fables about angels transporting the souls of the dead to their final place of abode, the Lord was only making the point that even if one rose from the dead to warn them the Pharisees would not believe, since they did not believe the Scriptures in the first place. Those who hold this or a similar view usually say that the Rich Man represents the nation of Israel while Lazarus, the beggar, represents the Gentiles. The account must be seen as a parable or an allegory according to this view. We believe that this is an erroneous interpretation that is forced on the passage by the use of faulty hermeneutics and unsound doctrine.

To say that the Rich Man and Lazarus respectively represent national Israel and the Gentiles rather than individuals simply does not fit the facts. It is said, by those holding this view, that the Rich Man's blessings of clothes of purple and fine linen and luxurious living pictures the blessings of God on Israel and that the poor beggar Lazarus represents the needy Gentiles. The point being that the Gentiles would come into the blessings that Israel was on the verge of losing. Historically, prophetically, and dispensationally this is an impossible interpretation of Luke 16:19-31.

It is historically impossible because it simply does not fit the facts of Israel's history. Yes, Israel was promised blessings from God but, under the Law of Moses, they could only partake of them when in obedience to God. Throughout their history as a nation, Israel only periodically tasted those blessings. For the most part, they had been under chastisement by the Lord because of their backsliding ways. The historical fact is that, at the time of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry, Israel had for the most part been dispersed among the nations and had been under Gentile rule for almost 600 years. The ruling Gentiles had "fared sumptuously," while Israel was the beggar nation. At this point in history it was Rome that was "clothed in purple and fine linen," as were the Greeks, the Persians, and the Babylonians before them. On and off before and continually since the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Israel as a whole has been in need. Both spiritually and materially! It is important to take note here that a constant theme throughout the prophets and the Gospel Records is the rebuke and warning of judgment on the rich and powerful of Israel for how they treated their

own people who were in need. This is exactly what we find in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus who obviously were both Jews.

This view is prophetically impossible because it pictures the Gentiles receiving God's blessings at the expense of Israel. According to prophecy, the opposite is true as the Gentiles are to be blessed through believing Israel. Prophetically, it will not be until Israel receives the fullness of her blessings in the Millennial Kingdom that the Gentiles will be able to eat the scraps from the children's table (Mk. 7:24-30; cf. Isa. 49:5-6, 22-23; 60:1-3; 61:5-6; 62:1-2). Until that time Israel will continue to be the "tail" nation (Deut. 28:44). This is a foundational truth of God's prophetic program for Israel and the nations of the world.

Dispensationally, this interpretation is impossible even though Gentiles are today partakers of Israel's spiritual blessings (Rom. 15:27) through the Gospel of Grace given to the Apostle Paul (Rom. 15:16; cf. Rom. 11:13; Gal. 1:11-12; etc.). Jesus Christ's earthly ministry was to the "circumcision" (Israel) "for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). His message for that time was prophetic in nature, confirming that God's promises of material and spiritual blessings to Israel's forefathers will indeed be fulfilled when the kingdom of David is restored when Messiah returns in power and glory, a kingdom in which Israel will be at the head of the nations. But, in the present dispensation, the message that the Lord gave to Paul when He appointed him the Apostle of the Gentiles does not recognize Israel's advantage as God's chosen nation and offers no guarantee of physical blessings to anyone as the Kingdom Gospel does. It is an unprophecied, or secret, program that **makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles**. Thus we see that the interpretation that the Rich Man represents Israel and the beggar the Gentiles does not, and cannot fit, into the parameters of the Dispensation of Grace just as it does not fit the facts of history or the proclamation of prophecy.

THE PLACEMENT OF THE COMMA IN LUKE 23:43

Annihilationists do not accept Luke 23:43 as written in the Bible because it refutes their position. The Lord Jesus' words to the repentant thief were, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Not willing to accept that the thief went

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into Hades in a conscious state of being with Christ when he died, the claim is made that the comma found after "*Verily I say unto thee,....*" should be moved to after "*today,*" rendering the passage "*Verily I say unto thee today,....*" They say that the Lord Jesus was simply promising on the day they died that at some time in the future the thief would join Him in Paradise. With this understanding, this verse could be paraphrased as follows, "*Today I am telling you the truth, eventually you will be with me in paradise.*" In support of this idea they teach that Moses' use of "*this day*" in Deuteronomy is a common Hebrew idiom that should be carried over in our understanding of Luke 23:43. This is seriously flawed.

Moses' use of the term "*this day*" in Deuteronomy is more than the employment of a common idiom of his day. It is found 42 times in the book, which is significant because of the content of Moses' message to Israel in Deuteronomy. Moses used heaven and earth as his witnesses against Israel as he restated the Law and the terms of Israel's covenant with God, reminding a new generation that it was as binding on them as it had been on their forefathers (see Deut. 4:26; 30:19-20). It was a new day for Israel as they were preparing to enter the Promised Land and the use of the term "*this day*" was not simply an idiom used for emphasis, but as a direct reference to the time of Moses' final charge to Israel. They would have no excuse for disobedience as God's commandments were not hidden, but were written down for all to read. This fact was established on the day Moses proclaimed it to them (see Deut. 30:10-20). Isaiah reminded the nation of this when he called upon heaven and earth to listen as he pronounced God's judgment on Israel as a rebellious people (Isa. 1:2-5). It had a distinct purpose for the time and circumstances in which Moses used it, so it cannot simply be transferred forward 1500 years and claimed as a common idiom of the time of Christ.

Also, there is no evidence in the Gospel Records of Christ's life that He ever used "*this day*" as an idiom as its proponents claim He did in Luke 23:43. However, we do find several examples of the term "*this day*" used in reference to events to come soon

just as He did in Luke 23 (see Mk. 14:30; Lk. 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32-33; 19:5,9; 22:34; 24:21). Both the textual and the internal evidence is overwhelmingly strong for the normal understanding of Luke 23:43; "*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*"

HADES IS A PLACE OF SILENCE

In the effort to support the soul sleep or soul eradication theories, it has been said that Sheol/Hades is always represented in the Bible as a place of silence where there is no knowledge or communication. This simply is not so. The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 clearly portrays communication taking place in Sheol/Hades and that alone makes the statement "Hades is always represented as a place of silence" obviously untrue. This is so, regardless of how one interprets this passage.

Annihilationists also attempt to substantiate their unsound doctrine and uphold the idea that Sheol/Hades is a place of silence by using verses such as Ecclesiastes 9:10 which reads, "*there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (lit. Sheol).*" However, they fail to take the context into account when they cite passages like this. Whether they do it out of ignorance or carelessness we do not know, but we do know that a verse taken out of context can often be used as a pretense. The theme of Ecclesiastes is what is done "*under the sun*" (Eccl. 1:3,9; 2:11,17; etc., etc.), or what man can accomplish in life by his own power apart from God. When those who have lived life to the fullest, according to man's view, die, they leave nothing of true value behind and take nothing of value with them to Sheol/Hades. All that they thought was of value in this life has proven to be worthless in the end. The Book of Ecclesiastes is not concerned with what takes place after death but with what man does with his life on earth. When verses such as Ecclesiastes 9:10 are randomly lifted out of their context to build doctrine about the afterlife, serious error is sure to follow.

In the book of Jonah the prophet says that he "*prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly*" and "*out of the belly of hell (lit. Sheol)*" (Jonah 2:1-2). It seems that Jonah prayed to the Lord from the belly of the fish right after he was swallowed and was still physically alive. Then, after having died, he went to Sheol/Hades and prayed again from there before the Lord sent him back to his body,

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which the great fish then vomited out upon dry land (Jonah 2:10). But, regardless if one believes that Jonah died while he was in the fish's belly or not, verse two identifies Sheol/Hades as the place from which Jonah cried out to God. This is not a representation of Sheol/Hades as a place of silence but as a place from which Jonah communicated with God on a personal level.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY

The Apostle Paul's statement, "*we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*" (II Cor. 5:8) has been explained away by saying that Paul only meant that he had a desire to be absent from his body and present with the Lord, but he realized that could only take place later in the resurrection. But, that is not what the passage says. Paul is simply saying that for the believer, to die is not a tragedy because "*To be absent from the body*" is indeed to be "*present with the Lord.*" We know that this is true because the Bible tells us that it is so!!!

PAUL'S DESIRE TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST

In Philippians 1:23, the Apostle Paul expressed his desire to depart this life to be with the Lord Jesus, which he knew would be "*far better*" than staying here. In order to get around the teaching of this verse, soul sleep and soul eradication proponents, who are usually Annihilationists, are forced to change its meaning. They claim it really means that Paul only had a strong desire that Christ would return so that he could be with Him. They try to substantiate their interpretation through a word study of the Greek word *analuō*, which is translated "depart" in this verse. This word is only found twice in the Bible, here in Philippians and in Luke 12:36, where it is rendered "return." The argument is that it should be translated "return" in both places. The various Greek lexicons we checked with all basically say the same thing, that the word means to "loose" or "undo" as in setting a ship loose from its mooring lines. Both depart and return are given as valid renderings. This means, like good Bereans, we have to determine from the context how the word is used, and thus its meaning in the verse it is found in.

When we consider the subject matter of Philippians 1:19-26, it is apparent that what the Apostle had in mind was his desire "to be loosed" from his body so he could be with Christ. In verses 12-18, he explains that his being in prison had actually furthered the Gospel rather than hindering it. He also expressed his joy over others who were preaching Christ, regardless of their motivations.

In verse 19 Paul expresses his confidence that God would deliver him from prison in answer to the prayers of the Philippians, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 20 his heart's desire is that he will have a good testimony in order to magnify Jesus Christ in all that he would do in this life, or in death.

In verse 21 he says "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" This is the key verse of the passage. "*To live is Christ:*" Paul is speaking here of his opportunity in this life to serve and glorify Jesus Christ and of the personal vibrant relationship he had with the Lord. "*To die is gain*" explains why he was as willing to magnify Christ in death as he was in life. As good and as fulfilling as life is in the service of the Lord, to die and enter into His personal presence is better. The only thing that can make a life that is "in Christ" better is to **add more of Christ**. This can only happen for the believer by coming into His personal presence.

In bringing this look at Universalism and Annihilationism to a close, we would like to point the reader to John 3:36 as a verse to ponder "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" Think about this verse and consider the words of C.H. Macintosh written 150 years ago:

"This verse by itself throws down both of these heresies. It says to Universalists that '*he that believeth not the Son shall not see life*' and to the Annihilationist it says that '*the wrath of God abideth on*' the unbeliever. The one who '*shall not see life*' cannot be restored and the one '*the wrath of God abideth on*' cannot be annihilated. This is enough to settle the matter for every heart that bows to the authority of Scripture." (Paraphrased from the miscellaneous writings of C.H.M.).

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (I Corinthians 1:18).



(THE INSTITUTE UPDATE *continued from page 1*)

1. There are many good causes in the world that we might like to support, but, we cannot give to all of them.
2. The ministries that we choose to support should be those that are actively involved in promoting the truth of God's Word and boldly proclaiming that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
3. As Grace believers, we should support ministries that stand for the "revelation of the mystery" as the Apostle Paul received it and preached it. If Grace believers don't support Grace ministries, these ministries will cease to exist and the proclamation of the Grace Message will be diminished.
4. The needs of the local church that one attends should be considered before giving to other ministries.

And so, why consider giving to **Berean Bible Institute**? There are other good Grace organizations that are worthy and in need of support. Is there anything about **BBI** that would make its ministry important enough that you would want it to continue? We think that there are several good reasons for supporting **BBI** and we ask that you consider them.

Berean Bible Institute stands, without compromise, for the truth that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and aggressively proclaims it as such.

BBI takes a strong uncompromising stand for the foundational doctrines of Biblical Christianity and strives to defend those truths.

BBI holds to a dispensational view of the Bible, believing that this is the only approach to the Scriptures that provides for a proper interpretation and understanding of God's Word.

BBI teaches that the one true Church of today is the Church which is Christ's Body. It is not an organization but is a spiritual body made up of all who have simply placed their trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and received the gift of eternal life, believing that He died for their sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead.

BBI believes in and teaches the pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church and the pre-millennial Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

BBI is not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ nor of Paul, His prisoner (see II Tim. 1:8). The teaching at **BBI** centers on "Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery" (Rom. 16:25) as it was revealed by the Lord Himself to the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:11-12; cf. Eph. 3:1-9).

BBI believes that the doctrines that define and govern the Dispensation of Grace are found only in Paul's epistles and that this is also true of the doctrines of the formation, position, practice, and destination of the Body of Christ.

Berean Bible Institute has faithfully stood for the Grace Message since its inception in 1996, while providing a comprehensive Bible and ministry training program to help its students prepare for the work of ministry. **BBI** has had a positive impact on the Grace Movement. Several of our former students pastor Grace churches, and others are serving as missionaries, elders in local churches, Bible teachers, Sunday school teachers, mentors, and in other areas of Christian service. In addition, several are pastor's wives.

BBI strives to keep a balance in its training program by teaching both sound Grace doctrine and how Grace truth is to be lived out in life.

If you are now, or have in the past, financially supported the ministry of **BBI**, we thank God and praise Him for you. We hope that you will continue to partner with us in this important ministry. If you do not support **BBI**, we hope that you will consider contributing to its work. If you are not able to give at this time, or if you feel that you would rather channel your resources to another area of the Lord's work, we understand and thank you for taking the time to consider **BBI** and the work it is doing. Regardless though, we do hope that you will pray regularly for the students, staff, and instructors of **Berean Bible Institute**. We would greatly appreciate it.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Dr. W. Edward Bedore, Executive Director

P.S. If you have enjoyed the "*BBI Bulletin*" and know of someone who might be interested in it, suggest that they let us know and we will be glad to add them to our mailing list. It is sent free of charge to any that request it.

The BBI Bulletin is the official newsletter of the **Berean Bible Institute Inc.**, and is sent free of charge to any that request it.

Berean Bible Institute exists as a non-degree granting school of adult education, which endeavors to provide advanced Biblical and doctrinal studies in accordance with the Biblical principle of right division and the revelation of the mystery along with practical training in ministry and leadership skills, in order to help individuals become prepared to do the work of the ministry in local churches, the mission field, at home or abroad, with the overall goal of making the Gospel of Jesus Christ known to the lost throughout the world, the edification of believers, and the promotion of personal Bible study.

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Berean Bible Institute, Inc. admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.



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