

LANDMARK BAPTIST HISTORIAN

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*"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."
Deuteronomy 32: 7*



**Reuben Young Blalock
1867 - 1962
His Missionary Life;
An Autobiography
Chapter VII**

At this time I was pastoring the Union Baptist Church near Sheridan. I would drive out there in my Model T Ford on

Sunday morning and preach at 11 o'clock and at 3 p.m., then come home the same day. It was 40 miles to Sheridan and four miles from Sheridan to Union Church. One Sunday morning when we were nearly to Sheridan, there came up a little cloud, and we heard a sharp clap of thunder. We went on and preached at 11 a.m., and after church someone came and told us that lightning struck a man's house two miles from there and killed the man. I knew the man. He had come to hear me preach years before then. I remembered when I held a meeting there, he would come and seem to get under conviction, then he would stay away. When he was killed I thought of the words, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Oh, how dangerous it is to refuse to trust in Christ when the Spirit calls. I have known several to do that and to suddenly be cut off and that without an opportunity to trust Christ.

I printed the Western Baptist for about two years, then turned the subscription list over to the Baptist and Commoner, and edited a page in that for a time.

In the winter of 1923 I went to Meridian, Idaho; and preached, gathering a little church there. I came back home in Tillamook for Christmas. The next spring we sold our personal property and loaded our family in the old Ford, and moved to Meridian, Idaho. Here we lived for about a year, preaching for the little church and doing missionary work. The church moved to Moro Schoolhouse, a few miles east of Kuna, as most of the members lived in that community.

I traded my homestead in Tillamook, Ore., for a man's equity in a 40 acre ranch near Middleton, Idaho, some 6 miles north of Caldwell. Here we lived for some 2-1/2

years, farming and preaching. I saw I could not pay the mortgage on the place, so I put it up for sale or trade.

About this time we held a meeting at Moro Schoolhouse, Evangelist T.E. Griffith of Princeville, Oregon, doing the preaching. There were 10 or 12 professions, whom I baptized in the Boise River near my home.

At this time Elder J. H. Whitmire, a grand old Baptist preacher, came from Arkansas and settled in the Moro district. He and I became fast friends and worked together until his death, when I preached his funeral here in California.

I held a debate in Caldwell, Idaho, with a Campbellite by the name of Love from Georgia. He was said to be one of their best debaters. The Campbellites sent for him to come and meet me in the debate. They sent for old Daniel Gunners of Ohio to be his moderator, and I had Dr. J.T. Moore of Portland, Oregon, as my moderator. We had five nights of an interesting debate on the doctrines of the Baptists and Campbellites.

At the close of our discussion Dr. Moore suggested having a debate with him in Portland, Oregon. He was for it, but said he had debates ahead for a year. Brother Moore said, "Oh, well, by that time I may be in heaven, and no telling where you will be." In a few weeks Mr. Love was killed in an auto accident as he was on his way to a debate in an eastern state.

After this I had a debate with a Mormon high priest in a school house near Jerome, Idaho. Some of his people confessed their man was defeated and promised to get a good speaker and have a debate later and have it taken down and published in a book, but they never did it.

We organized a little Baptist Church in the school house after this debate, and I did some missionary work in and around Jerome, Gooding, and Twin Falls, Idaho, while I lived in that state.

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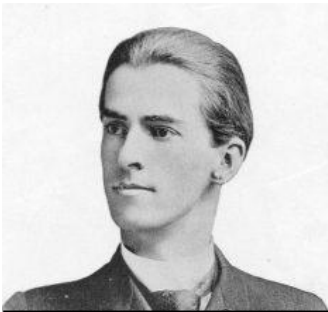


Photo: Rev. Frank Dixon, Pastor of the Tenth-Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland

Baptists in California By Frank Dixon

California Magazine
1892

Rev. O. C. Wheeler was the pioneer Baptist missionary to California. He arrived in San Francisco February 28th, 1849, on board *the California*, the first steamer that ever passed the Golden Gate, having sailed from New York on December 1st on board the *Falcon*. As the *California* entered the harbor of San Francisco she was saluted by the *Pacific Squadron*, under the command of Commodore Jones. Five men-of-war thundered their welcome, the flagship *Ohio* being last. As her first gun was fired she "manned her yards, fifteen hundred men springing into the rigging." The hearts of the missionaries and voyagers leaped to their throats, and no man felt ashamed as he looked through his own tears into the moist eyes of his fellows.

On the 6th of July the First Baptist Church was organized with six members--Rev. O. C. Wheeler and wife of the First Church, Jersey City; Mr. C. L. Ross and wife of the Laight-Street Church, New York; Lemuel P. Crane, Galway, New York, and William Lillie of Columbia, S. C. By August 2nd the first Protestant meeting house in San Francisco was completed by this organization. It stood on the north side of Washington near Stockton. This church was not of the regular ecclesiastical style of architecture, as the First Presbyterian Church, built afterwards, seems to have been, but it was, nevertheless, erected a church, especially for Christian worship. The first accessions to this little flock were received September 2nd of the same year, 1849. They were: Rev. John Cook and wife, and Mr. John P. Pope and wife. Mr. Pope still lives, an honored member. The baptism of Col. Thomas H. Kellam, of Accomac county, Virginia, the first to unite with any Baptist Church of the State by this ordinance, occurred at North Beach, San Francisco, on Sunday morning, October 21st, 1849. The scene was characteristically described by Dr. Wheeler in a paper read before the "California Baptist Historical Society," at its session in Sacramento, 1889, a year or two previous to his death.

"On the following Sabbath morning, it was the 21st of October, 1849, one of those lovely mornings that characterize San Francisco climate in autumn--clear,

still, warm and cheerful to the fullest extent--we assembled at our humble sanctuary, on the north side of Washington street, one door east of Stockton. We had such a congregation as perhaps never assembled at any other time or place. The other churches in the city suspended their morning service. Their pastors, with their officers, and the body of their, congregations, were present and joined in the procession. The Mayor and other municipal officers, and several of the officers of the State, and officials of the general government, resident on the coast or here temporarily on business, also Commodore Jones, commanding the Pacific squadron, U. S. N., and his staff, together with a large number of marines, all in full uniform, the chiefs of the medical staff of the Pacific division of both the army and navy, with their assistants, swelled our numbers and officially gave endorsement to our proceedings. We also had with us Dr. Judd, Prime Minister of the Hawaiian kingdom, then on his way as Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the United States, England and France, having with him the heir-apparent and his cousin, who, under Dr. Judd, were [Page 442] receiving their royal education, and each of whom afterward became king, preceding the present ruler of the nation. We had also with us large numbers of visitors from nearly every civilized nation on earth, who had been drawn here by the gold excitement, and hundreds of the citizens of San Francisco.

"We formed with due deference to the rank and standing of our guests, and marched down Stockton street to Union, to Powell, to North Beach, where the water was shallow with sandy bottom. There was no wind that morning, and the water was clear and calm as a pond in the country. The whole train, from the church to the beach (about three-quarters of a mile), marched with all the decorum and precision you would expect to see in a platoon of the regular army or navy on dress parade. At the water each department of the long procession took its assigned position in silence, and gave to all the exercises the most undivided attention. Rev. S.H. Willey, of the Presbyterian mission at Monterey, who had been a fellow. passenger with me from New York to that place, was on my left, and, at my request, read portions of Scripture and announced the hymn. Rev. Mr. Hunt, of the Congregational Church, was on my right and offered the baptismal prayer. On his right were Commodore Jones and staff, while all around us was the official and unofficial multitude of spectators, every one of whom seemed to be as fully interested as if a personal participant in the exercises.

"When all was ready, the candidate took my hand, and we walked about one hundred yards before

reaching a depth of water sufficient for the ordinance. While we were thus going 'down into the water,' according to previous arrangement, the hymn was announced and the first two stanzas sung by the whole concourse; the last two as we were 'coming up out of the water.' And such singing I never elsewhere heard. It seemed as though every professional and every layman, every soldier and every marine, every officer and every subordinate, every citizen and every foreigner of that vast throng was suddenly and specially inspired by the holy grandeur and the spiritual significance of the divine ordinance which we were administering, to sing for that once, if never again this side of heaven, with the fullness of both his spirit and his voice. The hymn was that written by Dr. Adoniram Judson, to be sung at the first baptism in the Burman Empire, at the beautiful pond on the bank of the Irrawaddy at Rangoon, June 27th, 1819:

Come, If Holy Spirit, Dove Divine.

"As we reached the shore, Commodore Jones came forward, and, giving me his warm, earnest hand, expressed his extreme delight and gratitude for the privilege of attending that most solemn and interesting service of our denomination. We then reformed and returned, in the most perfect order, to our sanctuary, where the assembly was dismissed."

The number of baptisms in the State has increased from one in 1849 to eight hundred and twenty-two in 1891; the number of churches, from one in 1849 to one hundred and seventy-eight in 1891; the value of church property, from sixteen thousand dollars, the cost of the structure erected in twenty-five days in 1849, to eight hundred and fifteen thousand four hundred and seventy dollars in 1891. Probably the most striking progress has been made in Southern California. In 1867, Dr. Wheeler reported the organization of one hundred churches since his arrival in San Francisco, fifty-five of which had become extinct. The remaining forty-five, with a membership of two thousand, were all situated in Northern and Central California. A vast territory of one hundred and twenty-six thousand square miles, including San Diego, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Tulare, Mono, El Dorado, Sierra, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Butte, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Placer, San Mateo and Sutter counties, with a population of one hundred and ten thousand souls, had not a single Baptist minister in active service. Now the Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Tulare associations have sixty-seven churches and a membership of four thousand six hundred and seventy-two, out of a State membership of eleven thousand three hundred and sixty-six. The leading towns and cities of Southern California are occupied by Baptist churches,

which are led by an able ministry. Men like Drs. D. Read and W. H. Pendleton, of Los Angeles, and A. J. Frost, of San Bernardino, C. Winbigler, of Riverside, C. E. Harris, of Pasadena, E. R. Bennett, of Pomona, Rev. H. G. De Witt, D. D., of Fresno, and W. W. Tinker, state missionary for Southern California, have greatly enlarged the sphere of Baptist activity and influence in that section of the State. Alhambra, Azusa, Downey, Monrovia, National City, Palms, San Diego, Santa Ana, all have been touched with the influence of Baptist denominational life.

Of the forty-five church organizations in Central and Northern California in 1867, twenty-three were served by twenty-one pastors; the remaining twenty-two were pastor-less. Dr. Wheeler had little difficulty in organizing churches, but great difficulty in securing pastors to serve them. During the first six months of his labor in San Francisco, he hailed more than forty men who had served in the Baptist ministry, as they hurried towards the mines, mad with the [Page 446] thirst for the treasure that perishes. It was probably fortunate for the cause that these men kept right on to the mines. After waiting a year and a half for reinforcements which had been promised him monthly by the Missionary Society in the East, but which had not come, for the simple reason that the society could not induce such men as it desired to undertake this pioneer work, Dr. Wheeler was at last cheered by the arrival of Rev. L. O. Grenell and wife, and Rev. E. F. Preveaux and wife. Mr. Grenell took charge of the church in San Jose and Mr. Preveaux soon opened a work on Pine street, San Francisco, which, however, was speedily abandoned. Rev. J. W. Capen arrived from the East in 1850, and assumed the pastorate of the First Church, Sacramento, which had been organized in the same year.

From the church of six members established in San Francisco in 1849, the denominational development has reached more than one hundred churches in Central and Northern California, besides those already mentioned as being in the South. These are at present in the hands of a ministry generally recognized as being the most competent body of men, as a whole, that have yet served the Baptist churches of this part of the State. Certainly the record of the past five years, from '86 to '91, is gratifying. In this time the denomination has increased eighty-eight per cent. The development of the State socially and politically has doubtless been favorable to this growth.

The towns and cities surrounding San Francisco, north, east and south, are manned by a force of pastors who have displayed great Sunday School energy and ability in holding ground already gained, and

in enlarging the boundaries of denominational usefulness. Rev. J. Herndon Garnett, formerly editor of the *Leader*, the Baptist paper of the State, now pastor of the Tabernacle of San Jose, is a young man of more than ordinary pulpit power, sufficiently liberal in orthodoxy to impress the public that he is not seeking the living among the dead, yet "after the most straitest sect of his religion," he lives a Baptist. No man is heard more gladly in the general meetings of the denomination, and few pastors in California preach to larger congregations. Rev. W. C. Spencer, of Alameda; Rev. E. T. Whittemore, of Berkeley; Rev. S. S. Fisk, of Santa Rosa; and his son, recently ordained, Rev. Henry A. Fisk, of San Pablo; Rev. W.T. Fleenor, of Ukiah; Rev. J. B. Saxton, of Vacaville; Rev. S. B. Randall, of Los Gatos; Rev. A. M. Russell, of Willows; Rev. Ray Palmer, of Stockton, Rev. W. T. Jordan, of Dixon—these have done an honorable work, many of them in the face of appalling difficulties. Oakland, with more self-sustaining Baptist churches than any other city in the State, has, as might be inferred, carried on an aggressive evangelization. The pastorate of Rev. C. H. Hobart in the First Church has been prosperous. The church has the largest membership of its history. Rev. Geo. B. Rieman, recently deceased, of the Twentieth street; Rev. I. D. Fleming, of the Twenty-third avenue, and Rev. S. Sjolander, of the Swedish Church, have rendered excellent service to the denomination in their several spheres. The Tenth-Avenue Church, corner of Tenth Avenue and East Fourteenth street, Oakland, believes itself to be the most happily conditioned Baptist church in the State, as it is certainly the most attractive interiorly about the bay. Its pastor is Rev. Frank Dixon.

San Francisco deserves especial attention, both because of its destitution and because of the present hopeful condition of its religious life. There are six Baptist churches in the city, including the German, Rev. H. L. Dietz, pastor, the Swedish, and the Colored, of which Rev. Geo. R. Duncan is pastor. The First Church, which now stands on Eddy street, between Jones and Leavenworth, is under the pastoral charge of Rev. J. Q. A. Henry. With its complete organization and energetic spirit of evangelism, it moves rapidly towards a position of commanding influence in the city of San Francisco. The restless life of an aggressive pastor has been imported to the church with most happy results. Mr. A. B. Forbes of this church is a splendid type of liberal Christian gentleman. Rev. A. W. Runyan of Hamilton Square Church contends with the discouragements of a difficult field with heroic persistency, and not without evidence of progress. Rev. Frank B. Cressy, of the Immanuel Church, is scarcely known in person yet to the

Baptists of California, so recent is his settlement, but the influence of his coming has been wholesomely felt. He is ably supported by Deacon P. D. Code.

Very prominent among the leaders of the Baptist cause in California are Rev. G. S. Abbott, D. D., whose brave and gentle utterance of denominational conviction has won for him the warm respect of his fellow laborers, and Rev. W. H. Latourette, the former, State Sunday School missionary, and representative of the American Baptist Publication Society, the latter, the State Secretary of the Home Missionary Society, under which Dr. Wheeler came to this coast. These two men have been closely identified with Baptist history in this State for a number of years, and present results in the missionary realm are largely monuments to their zeal.

Part 1 of 2, Continued in Volume 2 - Number 4

The Passing of Elder John R. Blalock

Baptist Landmarks



**O GRAVE, WHERE IS
THY VICTORY?**

**Dear Churches,
Pastors, Family and
friends;**

On June 18th at
around 7am, Elder John
R. Blalock, the editor of
this paper, was flown by

angels into the presence of his Lord.

Father's day, Sunday, June 17th had been a good day for father, although he started off weak and asked for help standing up from his bed to make the trek over to the chair, where he spent the day.

Normally, I would leave him alone and go to church, but that day, I was afraid that as weak as he was, he might fall, so I stayed with him. At about 4pm, he received a call from Elder Jack Bateman, (one of three children that my father had been responsible for seeing safely back from China, though they all spent the War as prisoners of the Japanese,) who wished him a happy Father's day. The opportunity to hear from Jack, and talk about old times, really made his Father's day special.

That same night, as I helped him back to bed, he was joking with me about his son looking older than him, with a long white beard..

The next morning he did not call out for help, and I thought that he was tired and sleeping in. At about eleven, I went to check on him, and found that he had gone to his home in glory.

I feel sad for myself, but not for him. He is with his Saviour. He has a new body with ears that hear plainly, eyes that see plainly, and hips that will never wear out. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 15:57.

The funeral service will be held on Saturday, June 30th, at Mt. Scott Funeral Home, which is located at the corner of SE 59th and Foster in Portland, Oregon. (see map below) The service will start at 1:30pm and continue until 2:30pm. There will be an opportunity to view the body before and after the service.

After the service, there will be a time of fellowship at the Bible Missionary Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon.

From Tom Blalock, Editor

Photo Memories of John Blalock



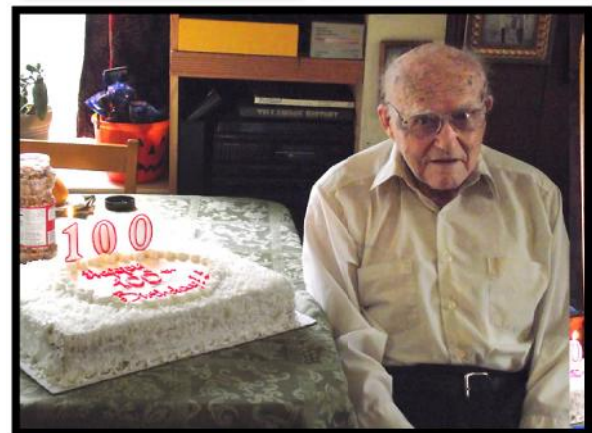
The Rueben Young Blalock Family



China Direct Mission - John back row left



China Direct Mission - John Middle Row 3rd on right



Elder John R. Blalock celebrated his 100th birthday on November 3rd, 2011.

A SNAKE IN THE GARDEN

By Elder R.Y. Blalock

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4,5.

Years ago, the school of higher criticism sprang up in Germany. It, like all other subversive teaching, assumed a high and deceptive name.

It would have been better named lower criticism, or the lowest criticism, for it hailed from the pit, where the temptation and fall of man came from. It placed the devil's question mark after God's Word, "Yea hath God said?" This is the beginning of higher criticism, Satan's word to Eve in the Garden.

This school of criticism flourished in Germany, even before it crossed the English Channel to the British Isles, and before it spanned the Atlantic to America.

This learned (?) school of guessers had a powerful ally in Charles Darwin, the modern inventor of the theory of evolution.

This higher criticism began at the top in the higher institutions of learning and worked itself down and out into all lower schools of learning, and even among the common people and their children.

Its baneful influence is now almost universal. Wherever it goes and whatever garb it parades in, it is the same. It changes not, it is the same devil that spoke in the Garden of Eden, questioning the authority of the Word of God. It still says, "hath God said?"

This denial of God's Word as authority, brought on Communism. It came through the socialist, Carl Marx, and other German higher critics. The Russian mind was prepared for it by the paganism and dead formality of the Russian Orthodox Church. Few Russians knew anything about true Christianity and its principles. So out of this modernism in Germany, always in company with the theory of evolution, sprang godless socialism and its half brother, Communism, which has become the menace of the world.

These not only question God's Word, but go so far as to deny His existence. This is the logical result of the theory of evolution and higher criticism. Schooled in such an atmosphere of infidelity and Atheism, are we surprised that Germany produced such a lying man, man hater, and man destroying beast as Adolph Hitler?

How, it may be asked, did such a dictator as Mussolini arise? He was neither a higher critic nor an evolutionist? The well-read man that he was, was no doubt familiar with these teachings, and much affected by them.

For he, after studying to be a priest, became a socialist and Atheist. There seems to be no doubt now, but that he was a devoted Catholic; a church which makes its members slaves to the church, rather than the truth which sets men free (John 8:32).

Moreover, we know he belonged to a pagan system that has transferred the authority of God's Word from Christ the Lord, to the Pope and the Catholic church. More error and twisted Scripture comes down through the Roman Catholic system, than any other on earth. By denying the authority of God's Word and assuming authority themselves, the Catholics gave us the bloodiest and darkest age of the world.

Out of this setting aside of the authority of God's Word, fifty million martyrs were burned at the stake. Had they

honored the authority of God's Word, instead of the tradition of men, not one of these innocent souls would have been murdered. Yes, the trouble we find ourselves in today, is because God's Word has been set aside.

What about heathen Japan; has she denied the authority of God's Word? Yes, blasphemously so. March 31, 1854, Commodore Perry forced open the doors of Japan to trade and missionary work. It is said that Japan sent a committee to investigate the source of America's progress and development as a nation. As an explanation the committee was given a New Testament, as the true secret of our progress and civilization.

Upon returning to Japan, and reporting their findings to the Japanese government, all doors were thrown open-wide to missionaries. For about twenty years, mission work began to flourish, as in no other nation on earth. However, the devil never seems to sleep; where God begins to work, he thrusts in his counterfeit.

Soon the land was flooded with agnosticism, Darwinism, and higher criticism, all a blatant denial of the authority of God's Word. From that day to this, Japan has been the hardest mission field on earth.

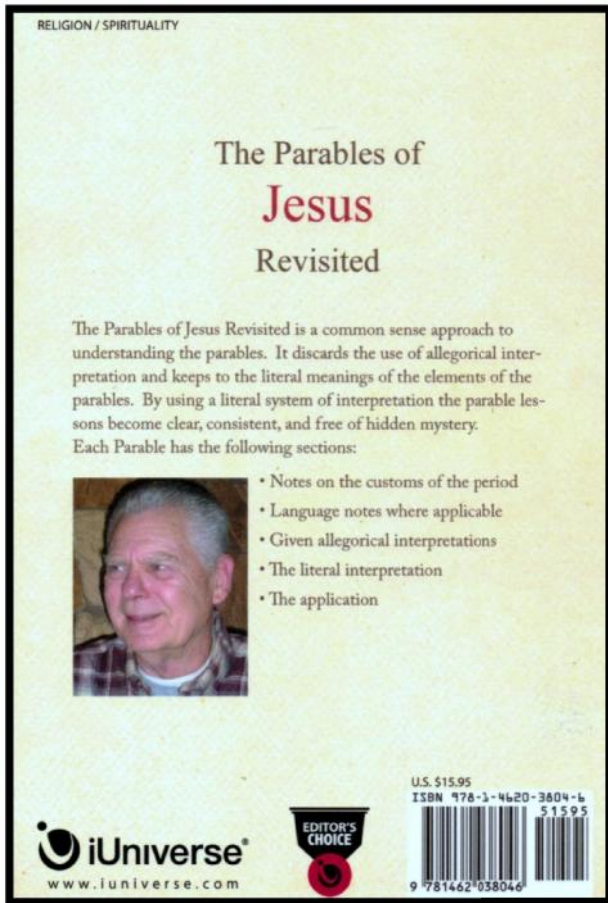
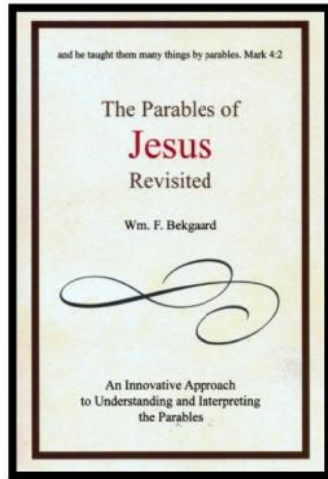
When I spent the summer of 1895 in Japan, the fact of modernistic missionaries there, was common talk. After receiving all this godless literature, and a few modernistic missionaries to back it up, Japan said, we can get all the prosperity of western countries and their material wealth, without Christianity. Yes, Japan had her chance and threw the gold overboard retaining only the dross.

From that day to this she has denied the authority of God's Word and substituted demon worship for the worship of God. Her millions of shrines and her emperor are her gods, and she is an inveterate hater of Christianity.

Yes, be it known to the whole world today, that the prime cause of its chaos, war, and death, is the denial by the world of the authority of God's Word. This very situation has been made dear to those who read God's Word, for over two thousand years. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron..." I Timothy 4:1,2. This Scripture is being fulfilled at this very hour as never before. Any doctrine that denies, distorts, or sets aside the authority of the Bible is a doctrine of devils.

From the Baptists Landmarks, Tom Blalock, Editor
PROMOTING DIRECT FAITH MISSIONS AND
INDEPENDENT MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCHES
Volume Five - January 30, 2012 - Page 152

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Introduction to the Study of the Parables

The parables of Jesus are a source of endless fascination by members of the Christian community. With the exception of prophecy probably more has been written and variously interpreted about parables than any other subject in the New Testament. There seems to be no end to books on the study. Nearly all contain different views, opinions, interpretations,

or applications of the parables. While many authors agree on certain points in their interpretations, they are more often in contradiction. Because of the existing contradictory nature of the general study of the parables, confusion, rather than clarity, ensues. Thus the student of the parables is usually left with the option of arbitrarily choosing the author or interpretation which appeals to him the most, and accepting that view. This is not the way to study or rightly divide the Word of Truth.

By applying arbitrary meanings, a person is simply assigning a meaning to the scriptures in harmony with his notions. Many use the parables to support preconceived ideas and theology. Often parables are used as a "proof text" when no other text will do, or for that matter, can be found. If we are to know and understand the truth, then we must allow the truth to teach us. Error comes from reading into the Word (forcing it) rather than learning from the Word. To understand the parables a valid model of interpretation must be determined and applied. That is the goal of this study.

Wm. Bekgaard

A Time of Fellowship in Fresno



June 5, 2012

Standing, left to right: Rick Howard & William Bekgaard
Seated, left to right: Robert Cullifer & Don Winkleman

Note: A Special Issue will be headed your way in Mid-July, loaded with photos of the Messenger Meeting.

ABA Messenger Meeting Fresno - June 2012

History & Archives Committee of the
American Baptist Association



Front Row, left to right:
Larry Crouch, Michael Thompson, Donald Britton, Chairman
Back Row, left to right:
Philip Pevehouse, Larry Butts, Terry Parrish

History & Archives Committee
of the
Cooperative Association of California,
Booth at ABA Messenger Meeting



Committeemen, left to right:
Don Jones & George Wood



Lester McCalister & William Bekgaard



New Pastor at Grass Valley
Garrett Lohuis & his wife



W. A. Dillard & William Bekgaard

ATTENTION!

Your input is requested.
Suggestions for upcoming Issues
are certainly welcome.
Article submissions of an historical nature
will be used shortly after they are received.