



# EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



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## From My Window

In 1965, British scholar Hugh J. Schonfield rocked the theological world with his multi-million dollar best seller, *The Passover Plot*. His thesis was simple: The Jesus of the first century crafted his own legacy without performing a single miracle. He arranged his final days to mirror OT prophecies. He was "slipped" a drug while on the cross to slow his bodily functions. However, he unexpectedly died when a Roman soldier thrust a spear into his side, thus ending his plot. How sad! The real fact is this: Jesus is God who became flesh to bear the sins of the world in his body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). His resurrection provides life to all who will believe in Him. Today, you can either enjoy life through faith in his name or scrape up a mere 64 cents and buy Schonfield's book. One lives today and offers you true hope, while the other offers an empty imagination of history.

Dr. Davey with alumni who minister in the Denver area



## Alumni in Ministry Spotlight

This past month I took an extended trip to the Denver, Colorado area to visit a number of our graduates who have been placed by God in this strategic location. God is doing an amazing work with our graduates who are planting and building churches for His glory. Please join me in praying for these twelve, hard-working grads and their ministries: Matthew Campbell, *Highlands Baptist Church*; Jed Kaessner, *Choice City Church*; Daniel and Debra Lowe, *(unnamed) church plant*; Rod Dunning, *Heritage Bible Church*; Chad and Melody Mondragon, Rob Hall, Johnny Borchardt, *Sola Church*; Travis Cover, *Carbon Valley Bible Church*; Dave Hine, *Grace Baptist Church*; and Jon Watson, *Outreach Media Ministry*.

Local Pastors in a strategy meeting with Dr. Davey in the VBTS Boardroom





## Truth for the Agora: “God our Savior” 1 Timothy 1:1

**The** careful reader of 1 Timothy will observe a curious and unique phrase, which opens Paul’s letter (1:1): “God our Savior.” In fact, in this letter Paul *only* refers to the Father as “Savior” (1:1; 2:3; 4:10), and he also does it again three more times in his “twin letter” of *Titus* (1:3; 2:10; 3:4). This begs the question, Why did the Apostle choose to identify the Father as “our Savior” in 1:1 instead of His Son, Jesus? Is Paul proclaiming something new with his God-description? Or, is Paul redacting Luke’s birth announcement of Jesus: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David, the Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11)? No, I do not think so, and here are three reasons why.

**First**, in Paul’s earlier letters he had always considered God as the “ultimate subject” of man’s salvation, so this term, though new, is not unique to Paul’s theology (Lea/Griffin). For example, in 1 Corinthians 2:7, Paul writes that the cross of Jesus was “decreed by God before the ages for our glory.” What Paul is making clear in this text is that God is the Architect of our redemption, while Jesus is the means by which God accomplished his plan. Therefore, in Titus 1:1-4, he explains that “eternal life which God who never lies promised before the ages began” was accomplished in “Christ Jesus our Savior.”

**Second**, Paul was writing to first-century believers who were facing emperor worship and mystery religions, both of which used the designation “Savior” to describe the adoration they desired. For example, Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54) demanded this praise for himself, and Nero (A.D. 54-68) accepted the multiple titles “lord,” “god” and “savior.” Meanwhile, in Ephesus where Timothy was ministering there existed one of the “seven wonders of the world,” which was a temple to the goddess Artemis. This mother-goddess dominated the worship of the people of Ephesus and was known as “Artemis the Savior.” Therefore, is it any wonder that Paul emphatically pens: “we have set our hope on *the living God who is the Savior of all people especially those who believe*”?

**Finally**, in using this phrase “God our Savior” in 1 Timothy 1:1, Paul was drawing the attention of the reader/listener to the “well-known appellation of Yahweh in the Greek OT, where the exodus was the archetypal salvation event” (Towner). This phrase would remind them of “the whole history of Israel, rooted in God’s saving act of the exodus” (Montague). In the authoritative words of Isaiah 43, “I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior . . . I, I am the Lord, and beside me there is no savior.” Therefore, in 1 Timothy 2:3-6 Paul declares that there is only “one God” and “he desires all people to be saved.”

**What** a sweet detail for us to consider today. Our God is the Architect of our salvation. He alone is the living God, and therefore, there is none like him. To this personal and powerful God we cry out: “*God our Savior!*”