

# PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Volume 1, Issue 3

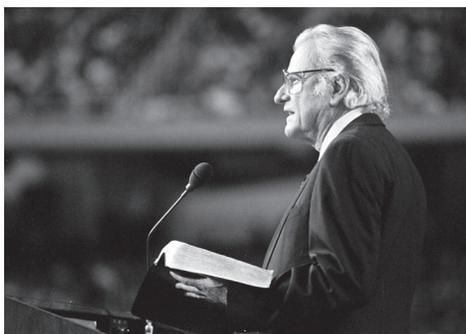
May 2018

## Billy Graham Touched Us, Too!

By Dr. Don Bierle, *FaithSearch* President

The passing of the world's spiritual statesman and evangelist, **Rev. Billy Graham**, set my mind into reflection. Others will recount the impact he had on millions around the world. I just want to reveal that his influence was even greater than many people even imagine.

In the 1980s, the **Billy Graham Evangelistic Association** headquarters were located in Minneapolis, MN. I was a college professor teaching about eighty students each year a course in personal evangelism. When crusades were televised, Billy Graham personnel trained all



Rev. Billy Graham, 1918-2018.

Photo credit: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

my students in telephone evangelism and invited them to serve as phone counselors. This led to incredible excitement in class as students shared the joy they experienced in leading people in prayer to salvation in Jesus Christ. I have no doubt this propelled many of those students to a life of witness to the present day.

In 1992, I left my college professorship, and with my wife, Vernee, responded to God's call to a full time evangelism ministry. My first action was to write a book of my testimony: how I went from agnostic to believer, and the apologetic evidence which persuaded me of the truth of the Bible and the Christian faith. A year or so later, the Billy Graham Association reviewed my book, *Surprised by Faith*, and selected it to be used as a gift to their new converts, and in appreciation of gifts given by their donors. Their distribution of about **150,000 copies** of my book propelled our fledgling ministry into immediate awareness among Christians across America. This year, 2018, *FaithSearch* is celebrating

continued on page 2



*FaithSearch* International exists to proclaim the Gospel with evidence to all peoples everywhere. *FaithSearch* International is not denominationally affiliated.

## IN THE NEWS

**King Hezekiah** is one of the most important kings in the history of Israel. He was crowned king of Judah in 727 BC. His reign witnessed the defining event that engendered the tradition of Jerusalem as the hallowed city of God: the inability of the Assyrian **Sennacherib** to destroy Jerusalem. This confirmed both Hezekiah and Jerusalem as God's chosen.

Participation in the episode by the **prophet Isaiah**, and Hezekiah's trust in his counsel, are credited with the salvation of Jerusalem from the Assyrian menace.



Box marks the approximate location of the **Ophel excavations** (2009-2013), south of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. (Photo ca. 1934-39)

The **Ophel excavation** by archaeologists just south of Jerusalem's Temple Mount has yielded an exciting discovery: **bullae** (a seal made by the impression of a signet in a soft material, such as clay or lead) of both Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet. Both bullae, measuring about 0.4 inches in diameter, were stamped with a signet bearing the name of its owner. King Hezekiah's seal impression mentions his name and the name of his father, Ahaz, in the upper register, as well as Hezekiah's title as king of Judah in the lower register.

The left end of Isaiah's bulla is broken off, taking a letter with it. If restored as the author suggests, the mid-

continued on page 2

## FOR REFLECTION

### Scientific Breakthrough?

A geneticist in Iceland announced with exultation, "*My understanding is that we have basically eradicated Down syndrome from our society. There is hardly ever a child with Down syndrome in Iceland anymore.*"

A breakthrough genetic cure? Hardly! They accomplished it by **eugenics**—the killing of unwanted babies by abortion. Nearly 100% of pregnant mothers in Iceland carrying a baby with Down syndrome are advised by doctors to choose abortion—and they do. Some other countries are not far behind: 90% in the United Kingdom, and 67% in the United States.

God's Word gives value to all human life as being "created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26-27). Does that  
continued on page 2

## Billy Graham Touched Us, Too!

*continued from page 1*

our fortieth year of ministry, without doubt helped immensely by God's use of this great start.

By the mid-1990s, *FaithSearch* had grown and taken on several additional evangelists. As President of the ministry, I was concerned about structuring these proclaimers to minimize the chance for corruption in their financial dealings in the field. The Billy Graham organization readily invited me to an extended conversation in which they shared how they did it. I incorporated their plan which has resulted in years free of evangelist greed and manipulation for personal gain. I would otherwise have had to learn by trial and error—and doubtless unnecessary pain.

In 2000, Vernee and I were invited by Billy Graham to **Amsterdam 2000**, a gathering of over 10,000 evangelists from around the world. I had the opportunity to present a workshop on the use of apologetics in evangelism. To interact and observe the worldwide work of God through people of every continent, race, color, and culture made a deep impression on us. Instead of only sharing the Gospel in the U.S., we began responding to opportunities to share the Gospel with evidence in **India, the Philippines, Russia**, and other countries. God prepared me to say "Yes" to His global prompting because of Amsterdam 2000. Today *FaithSearch* has shared the Gospel with evidence to hundreds of thousands in fifty countries on all the continents. My book *Surprised by Faith* has been translated into sixteen languages.

Finally, about ten years ago I was wrestling with the question of the *FaithSearch* mission of evangelism. Did God really call us to exclusively preach the Gospel of salvation? At that time the Billy Graham ministry invited *FaithSearch* to join about seventy-five other ministries as guests at their retreat center, The Cove. The Holy Spirit revealed to me how few of them were dedicated primarily to evangelism. They dug wells, filled food shelves, taught English as a second language, provid-

## For Reflection

*continued from page 1*

include those with disabilities and the unborn? When Moses said he was "slow of speech," God responded: "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" (Exodus 4:10-11). Experience has shown that God often uses Down syndrome children to be a special blessing to families who welcome them with the same dignity and worth as anyone else. (See also Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:13.)

**Who will be the next category of people to be eliminated because they are inconvenient or a burden to society?** 

Source: *Answers Magazine* (January-February, 2018 or Vol. 13, No. 1), "Eliminating Down Syndrome," *Bible & Culture News* (no author), p. 46.

## In the News

*continued from page 1*

dle register identifies "Isaiah," while the lower register simply states his occupation – "Prophet." There are alternative views of the text of the Isaiah bulla, so the final interpretation must await further research.

In 2 Kings 19-20 and Isaiah 37-39, the names of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah are mentioned together fourteen of the twenty-nine times the name of Isaiah is recalled. No other figure was closer to King Hezekiah than the prophet Isaiah. The discovery of their bullae, if authenticated, would be another confirmation of the historicity of the biblical record. 

Source: *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April/May/June 2018, Vol. 44, Nos. 2 & 3, pp. 64-73.

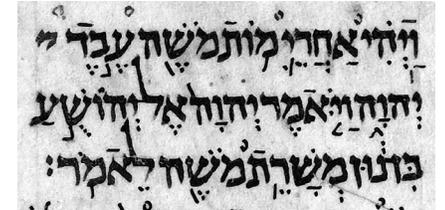
ed recreation for inner city kids, etc. Important to be sure! God made this clear to me at that time: He had called us specifically to focus on His Word for salvation. The result was the formulation of our current mission statement: To proclaim the Gospel with evidence to all peoples everywhere.

*FaithSearch* International owes a debt of gratitude to Billy Graham. We shall only know in eternity the influence this man of God had on everyone. We know right now the influence he had on me and *FaithSearch* International. I offer this brief summary as a tribute and a thank you—Billy Graham! 

## BIBLE JOTTINGS

### Manuscript Evidence for the Old Testament

A *manuscript* is a hand-written document. Prior to the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, copying by hand was the only way to duplicate any document (the original is called the *autograph*).



A manuscript fragment of the book of Joshua from the tenth century AD.

The original Old Testament was written primarily in the Hebrew language. The **Septuagint** is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, done in the third and second centuries BC. The **Peshitta** is the translation into Syriac from Hebrew, probably in the second century AD. The **Vulgate** is a late fourth century AD Latin translation.

*"At present there are more than 3,000 Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, as well as 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate, over 1,500 manuscripts of the Septuagint, and over sixty-five copies of the Peshitta. Upon careful examination, only about 10 percent of the Hebrew text has any question about its readings, and of that percentage only a small portion is concerned with any significant difference in the meaning of the text."* 

Source: "Where Did Our Bible Come From?" Dr. Paul Wegner, *Decision Magazine* (September 2017, Vol. 59, No. 2), pp. 12-15.

The *FaithSearch* Paraclete is published by *FaithSearch* International, an interdenominational, donor-supported, 501(c)(3) organization, based in Minnetonka, MN, USA.

*FaithSearch* is a member in good standing of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

