

Back to School!

by Wayne Goff

Most children and young adults are back in school now. Perhaps we assume that this way of life is typical for all children of all countries. But that certainly is not the case!

The Bible contains one mention of “school” and that is the “*School of Tyrannus*” in Ephesus where Paul taught the gospel for a time (Acts 19:9). On the other hand, the New Testament mentions “*synagogue(s)*” sixty-seven times, yet that kind of education is entirely different from public education in America.

The Lord **warned** us about the “*synagogue of Satan*” (Rev. 2:9; 3:9) which is a reminder to us today to be careful what you learn! It is better not to know so many things than to know so many things which are not true!

For example, most science teachers who teach evolution in the public schools are *parroting* what they were taught in colleges and universities. Most have probably never read Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, and would be shocked to learn of some things contained in that book!

Still, it is good to get a well-rounded education, and all of us would agree with that. We hear a lot today about “home schooling,” but that was practiced by pioneers of our country back in the 1700’s.

Did you know that “Latin Grammar Schools” were created in the American colonies, the first being in Boston (1635). Reading, writing and arithmetic were the basic subjects, but all was done in preparation for higher learning. One learned the rudiments of their own language in order to have a foundation required to learn the basics of Latin and eventually Greek. How far have we strayed from that standard? But then again, such an education was never available to the masses, but only to the privileged few.

The Puritans founded **Harvard College** where you had to pass a written exam and prove that you could read Latin and Greek before being accepted.

It was not until the 1840’s that states began funding public education in states from Connecticut to Illinois. Southern states maintained a belief that education was the duty of the family and not the government, even distrusting the latter to do so.

The apostle Paul used the tutor analogy to illustrate the purpose of the Law of Moses in relation to the Law of Christ. He wrote: “*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith*” (Gal. 3:24). “*Tutor*” is the Greek word PAIDAGAGOS, meaning “teacher,” and the English word “pedagogue” comes from it! So one can learn much from the Law of Moses, for it served as a “**teacher**” to bring the Jewish people to the gospel!

Did you know that the first **blackboard** was invented in 1801 by James Pillan? The first public high school to open was Boston English High School (1821). The first kindergarten was started in Watertown, Wisconsin, founded by Margarethe Schurz (1856). The Dewey Decimal System was invented by Melvil Dewey (1873) and patented in 1876. It is still the world’s most widely-used library classification.

The first *practical* fountain pen was patented by Lewis Waterman in 1884. The computer age began in 1946 with a vacuum-tube computer built for the U.S. military. And on we could go with more and more information.

The bottom line of all this is that “**education**” is a constantly changing, vacillating thing, and what seems permanent to us today is fairly new in the world. So don’t think too much of human education. The greatest foundation of true education is “*the fear of the Lord*” (Prov. 1:7) and that has been exorcised from public education for the most part today. But remember, that was not always the case either! So parents and churches have a great task in laying the best foundation for their children. What you learn in the home, in Bible classes, and in sermons may be all you know about the most important aspect of “school”!