

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN MAGAZINE OF NORTH AMERICA

The  
**Christadelphian Tidings**  
of the Kingdom of God

Editorial:  
**Sports**

**Service in Christ**

First Principles:  
**Only Christ**

Old Testament  
Bible Students

The “Life Cycle”  
of Sin

Reflection:  
**Social Media**

Thoughts on the Way:  
Was Judas the  
“Friend” of Jesus?

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## Sports, Their Use (and Abuse)

*“For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Tim 4:8 ESV).*

*“‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be enslaved by anything” (1Cor 6:12).*

### Fall spectacles

In the fall, at least in North America, many minds turn to the start of the college and professional (American) football seasons. Many college graduates avidly follow the fortunes of the gifted athletes who play on Saturday — gifted not only for their athletic ability but also by their good fortune in being able to attend college for free. Many CYC’s hold youth weekends combined with sport challenges. Being the product of an English education, I am free from the compulsion to follow any college team, and as I have spent all my time in America in areas with what was at the time a somewhat pathetic professional football team, that sport also has not greatly impacted me, although I seem to be somewhat unusual in that, even in our community.

However, football is perhaps a special case. Sometimes a connection is made between football and gladiatorial combat — sometimes by those who defend the game.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian mentioned three aspects of gladiatorial combat: the physical harm to the contestants, the moral harm to the spectators, and the pagan cultic ritual that surrounded the shows.<sup>2</sup> I am not sure about the pagan cultic ritual, but if you attend a modern major college game with its 100,000+ spectators, rituals are a major part, including, in many cases, a strong patriotic and military presence. I think we can appreciate the skills of the players, the intense teamwork required, and the complex strategy. How often it all comes down to a “two minute drill”, which of course lasts for a least twenty minutes.

### Sports and exercise

There is no doubt that exercise and most form of sports promote and improve a long, healthy life. Simply walking or any other form of moderate exercise for twenty minutes a day can improve heart health and potentially extend life span. In general, the health benefits of moderate exercise far outweigh the risks of getting hurt. This reflects exactly what Paul said two millennia ago: *“bodily training is of some value”*. And so it is with sports: participation, especially for young children and all those of school-age, is of significant value, as it promotes a healthy life-style, occupies their time wisely, encourages good social interaction, and is something that all parents should promote. Joining a sports team is also beneficial, but the culture in many towns is for the parents to get far too deeply involved as to whether the team of their child wins, or how well he or she plays. Winning is not everything in sports.

I must admit I grew up in a different culture. I played sports, but no parent of any child ever attended any of my games, and mostly they were indifferent to the result. Participation was encouraged, but certainly there was no intense pressure to win. The games I was at as a parent in this country showed that the ones with the most intense desire to win at any cost were the parents, not the children. It was their behavior in the game that was the most troubling.

(In most of the following discussion, the numbers are based upon the current state of affairs in the USA. Canada differs, in that the maximum athletic scholarship there is limited to tuition, but the huge difference between college costs in the USA and Canada means that for a Canadian student to go to the USA is rarely a wise idea.)

Unfortunately, almost all sports can cause injuries. High school athletes account for 2 million injuries in the USA, while for children under the age 14, 3.5 million require medical treatment for sports injuries. However,<sup>3</sup>

- Overuse injuries are responsible for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle and high school students. In other words, focusing on only one sport, even though the student might become accomplished at it, will often result in unnecessary injuries.
- According to the CDC, more than half of all sports injuries in children are preventable. In other words, correct protective equipment (bicycle helmets, pads for skateboards etc.) should always be used.

Once again, the parents are the ones to ensure the child does not indulge in sports excessively, and always ensure he or she is well protected. Once again, to be enslaved by a sport is highly undesirable, both for spiritual as well as for religious reasons. In addition, from a strictly practical point of view, it is more realistic to study to obtain an academic scholarship. In order to even hope for an athletic scholarship, the parents have to invest enormous amounts of money and time, and the student has to sacrifice whole chunks of time they could otherwise devote to social or spiritual activities, all to chase what so often is a will o' the wisp.<sup>4</sup>

## Football again

*“He will roll you up tightly like a ball and throw you into a large country”  
(Isa 22:18 NIV).*

So back to football. Should you encourage/let your (male) child participate in American style football?<sup>5</sup> There are many aspects of football that are good. To be any good at it, you have to be imaginative, disciplined, practice teamwork and put the good of the team ahead of yourself. In fact, of all sports, it is probably the most team-oriented since every player has a specific assignment on every play that must be carried out in coordination with his teammates, — and you'd be surprised how much study is involved with learning your assignments. You have to know your job the instant the play is called, especially if it's one called by the quarterback changing plays at the line of scrimmage. There's a lot of discipline involved in the sport. For one thing, you have to build yourself up for the game with a lot of exercises and running that are no fun in themselves. If you do not,

you'll be easily hurt or be too tired to compete by the fourth quarter. In the USA, over 1 million young men suit up every year, and the vast majority will finish the season stronger in body and perhaps character than when they started.

### **The problems — physical**

But there are some serious disadvantages one should consider. The game is physically dangerous. Despite improvements in the safety of equipment, warnings are issued by equipment manufacturers stating the inherent risk that goes with playing the game. There was a young brother in Washington, D.C. who was killed during a high school football game<sup>6</sup>. Is it right to deliberately play as dangerous a sport and then pray to God to keep one safe? I know that we risk injury playing any sport. And of recent times, other than the risk of serious injury, there has developed increasing concern about the long term consequences of concussions, especially on young brains. So unless the game changes in a dramatic way, there is always a real risk of some long term brain damage from the concussions that will most likely occur.

### **The problems — spiritual**

The whole principle of football, with its emphasis on blocking, is explosive physical contact. The result inevitably is a surge of adrenalin and the resultant increase in aggression. A good block received, or a hard tackle, and the next time you have the opportunity, you want to “level” the opponent. Not quite like you are filled with Christian love, or have turned the other cheek.

Again, when we might be challenged with the return of conscription, to have played football is a highly negative consideration. At least one brother was refused exemption and sentenced to prison, which he believed was due to his starring role in his team. Beware of achieving your dream!

Of course, there is no direct or indirect prohibition to be found in the Scriptures, so it is up to each individual family to prayerfully decide for themselves

*Peter Hemingray*

**Letters to the editor can be sent to [letters@tidings.org](mailto:letters@tidings.org). Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.**

#### **Notes:**

1. Playing in the National Football League is no punishment. Rather, it is a great honor. The same is not true about gladiator games; they are often rooted in punishment. Rather, football is a game of pride that is dramatically moving toward safer innovations, strengthening its case for a prosperous future in a medically conscious society. <http://thesportsquotient.com/nfl/2014/10/4-is-football-a-modern-gladiator-game>.
2. “For where there is pleasure, there is eagerness, which gives pleasure its flavor. Where there is eagerness, there is rivalry which gives its flavor to eagerness. Yes, and then, where there is rivalry, there also are madness, bile, anger, pain, and all the things that follow from them, and (like them) are incompatible with moral discipline” Tertullian, (c. 200 AD), *De Spectaculis*, p. 271.
3. <http://www.stopsportsinjuries.org/>.
4. See NY times article “Expectations Lose to the Reality of Sports Scholarships.”
5. Somewhat based on an article in *The Christadelphian Tidings*, 1990, p 231.
6. See *The Faith*, 1949 p. 94.

# Exhortation

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## Service in Christ — The Book of Philemon

This exhortation will start in the little book of Philemon and explore some of the important principles that come out of it. This letter is an example of how Paul used the principles of the Gospel to resolve a complex and hard personal problem between brethren. While the precise scenario is foreign to us, the problem and how the Apostle Paul set out to find a solution is helpful to us, and brings us to examine our relationship to Christ and each other.

The scenario at the core of this letter is that of a slave named Onesimus who ran away from his owner named Philemon to Paul. He sought to stay with Paul and serve him, and not be sent back. All three men are brethren in Christ, apparently from the ecclesia in Colossae. There were expectations that they could have of each other. There were also the laws of the land in which ownership of people was the norm, in which a runaway slave, if caught by his owner, could be beaten or worse. Therefore all three people involved could make a reasonable case based upon their common religion and the legal status of the people involved that certain actions should be taken. This scenario can teach us about how to manage personal problems when there are conflicts between the laws of the land and the laws of Christ, or more generally how to manage complicated personal conflicts.

### Onesimus' perspective

Let's think about this from Onesimus' perspective, the runaway slave who is the least powerful of the three. His life is dependent on the mercy of Paul and his owner Philemon. Paul commented that Onesimus was not a profitable slave to his owner, yet he became profitable to Paul. In other words, it seems, Onesimus was not a very useful slave either in the type of work he was doing for his owner, or that his temperament was not good. After he ran away and joined with Paul, it seems he was an effective worker with Paul for the preaching of the Gospel. Therefore Onesimus could hope that he would be allowed to stay with Paul, for as a fellow believer, isn't the best place for him to be a place he could work for the Lord? He may have been no good at what he did before, but he could see that he could be useful with Paul.

### The owner's perspective

The owner, Philemon's perspective of this would likely have been based upon legal right and ownership. Even as an "unprofitable" servant, Philemon was hurt economically and socially by his slave running away. While there is no evidence that Philemon would take Paul to a magistrate to appeal to law to sort this matter out, it seems that he would have been able to. By Paul's greeting of him, calling him a beloved friend and fellow laborer, Philemon is declared to be a faithful believer and someone with whom Paul could agree and find common cause. Philemon may have felt taken advantage of, or cheated by Paul. Paul may

have spent time in Philemon's house, or at least met both Philemon and his household together, and he may have felt that Paul urged his slave to run away. Due to Paul's spiritual authority, Philemon may have felt he could do nothing against this preacher who could be seen to have stolen from him.

Deuteronomy 24, and other parts of the Law of Moses, has things to say to those who employ others to do work. The overarching principle is of fairness and mercy to those who do not have as much, or are of a lower status, yet are fellow Israelites. The Law would lead people to understand that all others who worship God are their brothers and sisters, and it would be completely unacceptable and sinful indeed to oppress another. Thus it would be awkward, at least, to be an owner of a fellow believer in Christ or fellow spiritual Israelite. In New Testament times, the law of the land, Roman law, not only allowed exploitation and enslavement but upheld the rights of masters as paramount to the foundation of society. Despite this, a Christian should have some conscience and understand that their position was different.

*“When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge: But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing” (Deut 24:10-22).*

The Law of Moses goes far beyond simply paying one's employees promptly instead of beating them into submission. However, the discussion of pledges indicates that a righteous God-fearing person ought not assert his rights, but be merciful to one whose ability to give is small. If one lent some money or items

to someone who was poor, it would be custom to ask for a pledge, collateral, an object of some value to be held until the debt is paid. In the story of Tamar and Judah in Genesis we can see this custom playing out, in a very bad set of circumstances. In the passage above, the law states the owner of the pledge can't go into the other's house, he must respect his neighbor, the one who has borrowed from him, and wait outside until the pledge is returned. The next verses extend the principle even further, for the pledge, if it were some poor person's only coat, must be returned before night so he can sleep and be warm. This means the one who received the pledge would have to forfeit his right to keep the pledge and give it back, even before the debt has been paid. Also, the law declares one can't take a widow's garment as a pledge, for a widow is someone, it is assumed, who would have nothing else. This is a law requiring grace, because the holder of a debt would have to give up potentially what is allowed to him because the one he lent to is so poor he has nothing. Other passages make it clear that an Israelite is to give with an open hand, even to such desperately poor people, the implication being that they may not be able to pay back the gift.

The condition of a slave is even worse than this picture of extreme poverty, for a slave does not receive pay for his labor. The spirit of open handed generosity extended to not taking one's entire crop, but leaving bits of it for the poor to come and collect. This is so far from the culture of business and making money that we are used to in our capitalist age, that it is perhaps hard to imagine that making as much money as possible would not be the principle aim of people. This is the way of thinking taught in the Law of Moses. For Christians in the first century AD or the 21st century AD, while we are not under the Law of Moses, the principles of it are clear enough to one who has ears to hear. We are called to conduct ourselves accordingly to our brothers and sisters, especially if we find ourselves in a position of wealth and power. These are the principles that would affect Philemon, the man with the runaway slave.

### **Paul's perspective and solution**

Paul seeks in his solution to do right and keep the unity and integrity of the faith, so he sends Onesimus back to his owner with words of encouragement and guidance for his owner. It would be very easy in a case like this for Paul to show respect of persons, to favor the person he liked the most, or to honor the rich man because he is an important person, or to favor the poor slave in a desire to look good. A righteous judgement is not about the relative position or status of the people involved, it is about making a decision based on principle. This is the same lesson from the Law of Moses: *"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour"* (Lev 19:15).

The same principles of rightness and equity should prevail for whenever any one of us has to judge between brothers and sisters. We can't use partiality and emotion, but principle. As we would expect, the Apostle Paul gives us a great example to learn from.



This dispute between a slave owner and his slave, if not handled well, had the potential to divide the early Christian church along social class, or alienate one social class against another and set a destructive precedent for the Colossian church and others to come. Just as the dispute in Jerusalem over the distribution for the widows had the potential to divide the early ecclesia there along lines of ethnic and cultural origin, this dispute in Colossae could have divided the Gentile ecclesias along class lines.

*“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt 5:14-16).*

Christ here tells us we are to be the Light of the World, easily recognizable as distinct and different than all other people. Most people, if they were a slave, would feel justified to take from their owner and escape if they could. A disciple of Christ is not to think like this, for an overarching principle is that of honoring commitments. Christ continued in the context of oaths, to teach his disciples to let your yes be yes and your no mean no. In other words be honest and sincere in all you do. A disciple of Christ is to be not only doing the right things but to be known by all around to be doing good, even to patiently accept injustice and hardship, not running away from it through deception.

*“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matt 5:38-42).*

Here, Christ exhorts his disciples to do the seemingly absurd thing of loving one's enemies and doing good to one's oppressors. We are maybe too accustomed to hearing this phrase to realize how radical it really is; how much this commandment is contrary to normal human thinking. Onesimus is being commanded to live this. Later on in the Sermon on the Mount Christ exhorts his disciples not to be anxious but trust in God's kingdom. No one could have had more anxiety for the future than a runaway slave being sent back to his owner. These are the fundamental teachings of Christ that Paul builds upon, and gives explicit teaching for masters and servants, as well as the other key relationships people can be in at various times in their lives.

The parts of Paul's letters where he expounds how a Christian should behave if they are a servant, and for believing masters, are found in a few different places, and the basic ideas are repeated. Paul also instructs believers how to conduct themselves in Christ in their other relationships, including how we need to serve our human masters in faithfulness and sincerity, doing all as if to Christ.

*“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph 6:5-9).*

*“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” (Col 3:22-4:1).*

The call of a Christian is to be a servant. Therefore this little book has a deeper message for us. As if to highlight this principle, when Paul addressed Philemon at the beginning of the letter, it is as dear friend and fellow worker. Likewise, in the chapter of salutations at the end of Colossians, Paul referred to a brother Tychicus as a faithful minister and fellow slave in the lord and Onesimus, a faithful and dear brother who came from Colossae. It seems this is indeed the same Onesimus that is the subject of the letter to Philemon, and Paul is sending these two as messengers to tell them of the preaching work they have been engaged with. It seems possible then that this letter to the Colossians was written at the time Onesimus was with Paul. If we can accept a further speculation, this may be the circumstance in which Paul sent the once unprofitable slave back to his owner, though now he is a faithful brother and living up to the meaning of his name, *Profitable*, at least in Paul's estimation.

## **Conclusion**

As we begin to bring this exhortation to its focus on Christ, we need to consider one more passage.

*“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1Cor 7:21-23).*

This teaches that if we were called while free we are Christ's slave, yet those called while slaves are a special case, for they have the honored position of being the Lord's Freemen if they were able to attain freedom through legal means, by either buying it or being freed. Slaves were a significant part of the population and probably many in the early Christian churches were slaves, so Paul gives instructions to slaves to seek to be free if they could and use that freedom in Christ's service, but for most who could not hope for that, they were

not to be troubled. However, this is a parable for us, who have opportunities and immense privileges by virtue of living in the place we live. We are called to use what we have in Christ's service, for we are to see ourselves as Christ's servants. Furthermore, by nature we are all slaves to sin, and have been bought for a price. Our former slave master was sin, the most cruel of slave owners who will rule us and lead us only to death if we are not freed from him. Christ has redeemed us with his blood, the sacrifice of his life, to show us the way we must go. Therefore, we are asked, in exchange to voluntarily serve him, not out of fear of punishment, but out of love and gratitude.

*“Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever” (Exod 21:1-6).*

This principle of voluntary service as the highest form of service is taught also back in the Law of Moses. Exodus 20 is the Ten Commandments, so this principle of owners and their Israelite servants is one of the first things the Law puts forward. The servant who would not leave his master when he was allowed to, but chose to stay out of love for his family and his master's house could be struck through the ear, permanently marking him as a servant forever (Exod 21:6). This would be a scar they would carry, but would be a sign of honor, commitment and love. For us, this striking through was done at the cross of Christ, and is effected in our lives by our voluntary accepting of it and carrying it out in our lives.

We must not be like the disciples the night in which Jesus was arrested who fled from their lord; behavior more like that of runaway Onesimus than faithful servants and disciples believing in the Messiah and his message.

We have considered the short book of Philemon and the scenario in it where Christian love is tested, where a difficult decision must be made to resolve a painful dispute between brothers. From this we examine the principles from the Old and New Testaments about serving human masters, and ultimately about our service to Christ, and by doing so being made free from slavery to sin. The highest form of service in the Bible is not servitude by fear and force, but by voluntary service out of love, which the runaway slave Onesimus and ourselves are all called to.

The ritual sharing of bread and wine is the symbol appointed to us of our relationship to Christ. By taking bread, the symbol of his body, we associate ourselves with our master and declare our wish to carry out, in some small way, his life in our life. To take on the name of Christ is, by definition, to be a servant of a servant, but it is this service that is paradoxically freedom from serving sin.

Wine is the symbol appointed to us of his life sacrificed to defeat the power of sin. By taking this wine, and sharing it from hand to hand among those of our shared faith, we declare that we will sacrifice our lives to find life in his service.

We are called to examine ourselves, to take heed of our walk before him, for we are warned that *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1Cor 10:12)*. We are not to be complacent or confident in ourselves in any way, for everything we have has been given to us by grace.

Let us remember the slave in Exodus, thinking of ourselves as this servant who loves our master, our master’s house, and would not want to go anywhere else. Let us serve our Lord forever.

*“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever” (Exod 21:5-6).*

*Wesley Butler (Vancouver, BC)*

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## Slaves Who Were “Christadelphians”

In the Southern United States before the civil war, at least two believers were named as slave owners, each of whom had at least one slave who was baptized. Owners and slaves alike were in full fellowship with Dr. Thomas. There were undoubtedly others, but the first recorded believing slave is a “Brother Braxton,” owned by Lemuel Edwards, a wealthy Virginia planter from Lanesville. It was highly unlikely that Dr. Edwards had just one slave, but only one is recorded as being a brother.

Much later, in 1860, Dr. Thomas noted that “the congregation of the faithful in Jefferson, Mississippi, now numbers twenty; of whom one is a slave belonging to sister Maghee, who can read, and is quite intelligent in the gospel, and is highly esteemed by the whites who know her; and being Christ’s freed woman, she is quite contented in the calling in which she was called; and much happier than the white slaves around her, who love and hug the chains of slavery which bind them to the chariot wheels of their hard taskmaster, the Devil [or human evil personified.]”

Thus there were at least one brother and one sister in Christ who were slaves of their Christian masters. How common this was I do not know with certainty: but as it was illegal in the South at the time to teach slaves to read and write, there cannot have been many capable of reading the Bible for themselves and therefore it would be more difficult, although not impossible, for them to make a good confession. But there must have been, in many Southern ecclesias, “a First Century air,” slaves and masters worshipping together, joined by the bonds of Christ.

(Adapted from Chapter 23 of “John Thomas, his Friends and his Faith”)

# First Principles

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## Doctrines to Be Rejected, (17) Only Christ

Doctrines to be Rejected #13: **That the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely.**

This can be restated in a positive way: The gospel includes the covenants of promise granted to Abraham and David and involves the establishment of God's kingdom on earth: *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham"* (Gal 3:8-9).

### History

There was no mention in the synopsis by John Thomas, but Robert Roberts in the first Birmingham Statement I have seen, written in 1868, in the section on "Fables to be refused" said:

XXIV. — THREE-FACT GOSPEL. That the gospel is not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely, but the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. — (Acts 8:12; 28:30-31)

Bro. Thomas wrote *Elpis Israel: An Exposition of the Kingdom of God, with Reference to the Time of the End and the Age to Come*, because the churches had lost sight of the things of the kingdom. The robust faith of the apostles had become a vague gospel of an after-life not requiring the resurrection of the dead, a judgment, nor the restoration of Israel. Christianity hardly required adherence to particular standards, but the most depraved souls winged their way to heaven. *Elpis Israel*, and similar works which followed it, represented the restatement of a gospel which, though never altogether eclipsed, had been ignored by generations of theologians. To quote:

The Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia summarizes the gospel message this way:

The central truth of the gospel is that God has provided a way of salvation for men through the gift of His son to the world. He suffered as a sacrifice for sin, overcame death, and now offers a share in his triumph to all who will accept it. The gospel is good news because it is a gift of God, not something that must be earned by penance or by self-improvement

"The truth is defined as 'the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ'. This phrase covers the entire ground upon which the 'one faith', and the 'one hope', of the gospel are based: so that if a man believe only the 'things of the kingdom', his faith is defective in the 'things of the name'; or, if his belief be confined to the 'things of the name', it is deficient in the 'things of the kingdom'. There can be no

separation of them recognized in a 'like precious faith' to that of the apostles. They believed and taught all these things" (*Elpis Israel*, Part II, chapter 1, page 189).

### **"Repent ye and believe the gospel"**

It is difficult, of course, to summarize "the gospel". It encompasses almost the whole of our message, and occupies the largest parts of many of the books outlining our beliefs. I will, however, quote largely from a summary written by a former editor of *The Christadelphian*, Alfred Nichols, in his magazine.<sup>1</sup> We would note some inevitable overlap with the topic of the Kingdom, covered last month (*The Tidings*, November 2016).

We are accustomed to the somewhat vague conceptions of the gospel that are held outside our body, and to some current and radical ideas that "the gospel teaches us that the death of God in Christ has freed men from the tyranny of a transcendent Power". But are we sure that we know and understand all the implications of the gospel ourselves?

Our Statement of Faith says that "the gospel consists of 'the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.'" So it does, but it means even more. The way the word is used in the Scriptures shows what a great divine conception it is, and how wide and deep are its implications.

The term gospel (Gk. *Euangelion*) originally denoted a reward for the bearer of good tidings; later the idea of reward disappeared and the word stood for the good news itself. This is the meaning of the New Testament word. But if it means "good news" — good news of what?

### **The gospel of God**

Peter and Paul refer to "the gospel of God" for this is where the good news began: He is its source, its glory and its power. And it is, supremely, the good news that God is involved in the affairs of men to the extent that He has established a divine-human relationship of love and purpose.

Speaking of his attitude to bonds and afflictions, the Apostle Paul referred to this relationship thus: "*None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God*" (*Acts 20:24*).

This gospel of grace was what the ministry of Paul was about and his epistles abound in the word grace, for without it there would have been no savior nor the promise of God's Kingdom on earth.

Grace is of the very nature of God: He revealed it to Moses who taught it to Israel; it was manifested by Jesus to the Apostles and the multitudes; and it was preached by the Apostles to the ecclesias. We should lack gratitude and feeling if we were not moved by all that the Apostle Paul wrote about this: not least of sinners "*being justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" (*Rom 3:24*).

This is the heart of the gospel message: the good news that the compassion, grace and mercy of God overflowed in His sacrifice of love so that as Jesus declared: *“God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). It is through the loving, obedient sacrifice of Jesus that He is reconciling to Himself all who will believe in faith.

It is this gospel of God which has His grace at its center, that gives meaning and beauty to the life and death of Jesus and that gives the purpose to what God intends to do, through Jesus and the saints, in His Kingdom on earth.

The Father’s grace in mightily blessing us with His call, unworthy though we be, is a supreme reason for thanksgiving daily to be on our lips and in our hearts.

### **The gospel of Christ**

Like Father, like Son: all the love that God revealed to Moses shortly before the revelation of the ritual of the Law, Jesus revealed in his reading from the prophecy of Isaiah in the synagogue incident at the outset of his ministry. Second only to the self-sacrificing love of the Father, is the sacrificial denial of self in life, and the sacrifice of life in death to which Jesus submitted himself. The good news that results from this is that his perfect obedience won him the power to unlock the grave for others.

Jesus himself preached this “gospel” when he said: *“Everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”* (John 6:40). And he triumphantly proclaimed the fact of his good news when he told John on Patmos: *“... Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death”* (Rev 1:17-18).

The Apostle Paul refers to the burial and resurrection of Jesus as “the gospel which I preached unto you”, and this accounts for his use of the term “the gospel of Christ” which occurs in several of his letters. Thus “gospel” covers the whole field of salvation: the promise of peace for the nations and glory for the saints.

What is of even greater importance for us now, is the assurance of this good news that God, the Father, is actively concerned, through Jesus, with our daily lives, and each second of time that ticks away is the guarantee that He never leaves nor forsakes us. All this was made possible by the sacrifice of the Son who promised that as the Comforter (*parakletos*) he too, would come alongside, or be with us.

There could hardly be better news for us and the world: or a greater gospel to preach to others.

### **The gospel of the Kingdom**

Jesus *“... came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel”* (Mark 1:14-15). There, he was referring not to the kingdom which he will establish at his second coming, but to his own sovereignty as the Messiah-King.

The primary sense of the Greek word *basileia* (translated kingdom) is sovereignty or kingly rule.

That is why Jesus emphasized that the Kingdom was “at hand” or “had come nigh”. He expressed the same idea to the Pharisees on their asking him “when the kingdom of God should come” for he answered: “*Behold the kingdom of God is within you*” (Luke 17:21) or, as the Revised Version renders it: “*is in the midst of you*”.

There is a parallel here with David whose throne Jesus is to inherit. David was anointed King long before he sat on the throne, and before he came to power he began gathering loyal servants who would help him in his sovereign task. When Jesus told the chief priests and elders that “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”, he was still speaking of a present sovereignty.

The chain of events which culminated in his death and resurrection led to the gathering of a sovereign host of servants who become “*an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession*” (1Pet 2:9 ASV). That is why Paul, who wrote of Jesus being “*set at God’s right hand in the heavenly places*” (Eph 1:20), could also write that God “*hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Eph 2:6). This is indeed a sovereign status, which we ill deserve; but woe betide us if we prove traitors to our high calling!

A sovereign “nation” being prepared for the Lord who will sit as King needs a people and territory over which to rule, and it is for this consummation that Jesus and the saints wait. Jesus spoke of the time when he would “sit on his throne of glory” and told the disciples that they would “*sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*” (Matt 19:28). Paul, probably taking his clue from the prophecy of Jesus, that when he sits on his throne of glory “*before him shall be gathered all nations*” (Matt 25:32), wrote that the saints shall judge the world. A sovereign role as earthly princes demands a dedicated response to discipline and training. Our response to a much higher role should be not less, but rather more.

### **The gospel of our salvation**

Paul, writing to the Ephesians and the Colossians, wrote of another aspect of the Gospel: “*The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*” (Eph 1:13). And as he shows in his letter to Titus, God, the Father, and Jesus, the Son, cannot be separated in their work of salvation. In his opening words he describes both of them as “Savior”. Thus, the gospel of salvation is the good news that both are totally involved in the salvation and life of those who believe. There could hardly be a better illustration of this participation in the affairs of the saints than that provided by Jesus in his parable of the lost sheep, which concluded with the promise that there would be “*joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth*” (Luke 15:7), thus linking the families of earth and heaven together.

Unless we are lacking in spiritual sense and faith, we want it this way. And when we are in trouble of any kind we plead in prayer through Jesus for the Father’s involvement in our problems, so that He can help us to solve them. But we are



not so ready totally to involve ourselves with Him and His purposes, and we are generally reluctant to commit all the serious decisions of our lives to His judgments and will.

If we make demands upon God, He makes demands upon us: *“This is the man to whom I will look, says the LORD, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word”* (Isa 66:2). The word “look” means that He will look at those who respond to His call with close attention.

The gospel of the grace of God which has such a wide application includes the good news of the commitment of men to the ministry of this grace — but it is here that we often fail greatly, because we so like to keep the course of our lives in our own hands. Jesus made clear that this does not satisfy his Father nor does it please him. He taught, and lived, denial of self: a complete and absolute denial, and Paul wrote that to *“present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” was no more than our “reasonable service”* (Rom 12:1). This gospel, in all its aspects, is a way of peace, and not of strife; it is a way of walking in fellowship or partnership with God, with Jesus, and with one another. It is a way which abhors the kind of “divisions” about which Paul wrote to the Corinthians: the formation of groups within an ecclesia — a practice which weakens the work of grace among its members. Above all it tarnishes the vision of a people being prepared for the all-in-all of the Father.

We have been privileged to receive a gospel of such grace that nothing that we can do will ever make us merit its rewards, but at least we can continue to strive to *“walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory”* (1Thess 2:12).

*Peter Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI) and  
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**Notes:**

1. *The Christadelphian*, 1970 p 385.

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## Special Invitation

For some years, unity discussions have been taking place with the Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith. In the interest of promoting friendship and mutual understanding, we print the following invitation:

You, your family, and friends are invited to the  
42nd Annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering  
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 31st to Aug 6th, 2017.

Bro. George Booker: “In the Shadow of the Cross”

Bro. Mark Whittaker: “The Faithful Remnant”

Bro. Ed Carpenter: “The True God and Eternal Life”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek at 330-609-6957, or [brad.rek@gmail.com](mailto:brad.rek@gmail.com).

Visit our website at [www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org](http://www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org) for more information and to view talks from last year.

## Old Testament Bible Students

### Old Testament men of faith

With the five books of Moses in print, many Old Testament men of faith had recourse to the divine record for times of adversity and prosperity. We would like to consider a few of these faithful ones who through patience and comfort of the Scriptures had un-wavering hope.

**Ezra** in around 450 BC led a second group of post-Babylon Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and soon found out that there was an unexpected transgression: *“Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice”* (Ezra 9:4). In his penitent prayer he made reference to the forsaking of God’s commandments: *“And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets”* (Ezra 9:10-11). So the scribe Ezra would have been familiar with his Bible to have such resolute faith in dealing with the crisis in the camp.

Likewise, **Daniel** with the captives in Babylon and before a prayer similar to Ezra’s in the first year of Darius says this:

*“I, Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah...”* (Dan 9:2).

Here is another excellent Bible student! In his prayer that followed, there are expressions which highlight his familiarity with scriptures, such as

*“neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets... Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which he set before us by His servants the prophets; ...the curse... and the oath... written in the Law of Moses”* (Dan 9:6,10-13).

Daniel and Ezra lived in critical times of Jewish history. Daniel was with the captives, approx. 550 BC. With the 70 years not yet complete, his impatience was perhaps eating away his endurance. Ezra was with the second batch of patriots, 450 BC, clearing the ruins of the city walls and temple in preparation for reconstruction. Both men needed fortitude which undoubtedly came from their love of the word embedded in their souls.

We move to another pair of Bible students, **Gideon and Jephthah**. With the passing of Moses and Joshua, the developing nation faced grave challenges. It was the time when *“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Jdgs 17:6). Canaanite tribes unsettled the demoralized Israelites. Occasionally, *“the LORD raised up judges who delivered them...”* (Jdgs 2:16,18). Two of such judges were Gideon and Jephthah.

The oppressors were the Midianites, 1250 BC; and Israel was in dire trouble, because food resources were destroyed. **Gideon** was approached by the angel, “*the LORD is with thee...*” (Jdgs 6:12). His rejoinder was, “*Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites*” (Jdgs 6:13-14). So, Gideon had Bible instruction, orally, and a written record would probably have been available. His familiarity with Scripture, then, enabled him to have a meaningful dialogue with the angel, even as Habakkuk did:

*“Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?” (Hab 1:12-13).*

During the time of another famous judge, **Jephthah**, the Ammonites were now the aggressors, and their king made this claim, “*because Israel took away my land, from Arnon even to Jabbok, and unto Jordan, now therefore restore those lands again peaceably*” (Jdgs 11:13). Jephthah, in an amazing display of Jewish history, rebutted thus: “*Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor of Arnon*” (Jdgs 11:15), and then went on to state how Israel, in their wilderness journey, negotiated unsuccessfully with the Edomites and Moabites; the same approach failed with the Amorites, who declared war! The result? “*...The LORD God of Israel disposed the Amorites*” (Jdgs 11:16-23). Jephthah’s case was finally summed up thus, “*while Israel dwelt in Heshbon...Aroer...Arnon for 300 years, why therefore did ye not recover them [the disputed territories]?*” (Jdgs 11:26). Jephthah’s Bible knowledge was truly a defense against the enemy of Israel.

## David

One cannot complete this “Living by Faith...” study without reference to Israel’s greatest Old Testament king, David! The kings were to make a personal copy of the law upon their coronation. This must have fostered a unique sense of devotion to the divine cause. David, in addition, showed himself an excellent Bible student as the following outline (by no means complete) illustrates:

Psalm	Suggested Source	Lesson
1:2	Josh 1:8	Meditation in God’s law, day and night
4:8	Lev 25:18	Dwelling safely under God’s care
7:12	Deut 32:41	God’s impending judgment on the wicked
18:14	Josh 10:10	Providential defeat of Israel’s enemies
18:31	Deut 32:30-31	God is our Rock of Salvation
33:12	Exod 19:5	Israel is God’s peculiar treasure
34:16	Lev 17:10	God’s anger against transgressors, Jew or Gentile

## Deborah

One woman of faith, whose words in Judges 5, bear remarkable echoes to incidents recorded in the Pentateuch.

Judges 5	Pentateuch	Incident
Vs 5	Exod 19:18	Sinai “melting”
Vs 4	Deut 33:20	The Lord out of Seir
Vs 30	Exod 15:9	Dividing the spoil

For all these examples of Old Testament faithful, Bible study was not just an academic exercise, but a vital arsenal in their defense of the Truth and a convincing activity for edification of the Ecclesia.

David, in a most famous Psalm writes thus, *“How love I thy law! It is my MEDITATION all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my MEDITATION”* (Psa 119:97-99).

Meditation is defined thus, “deep, deliberate thought; contemplation” (Webster)

### Spiritual wisdom

So our Bible study should have as its goal spiritual wisdom. Did this meditative spirit pervade in any of the notable Old Testament faithful covered in this brief analysis, or in any others, so that their lives were well directed?

We will begin this consideration of Bible study and meditation with Deborah. A commission was given to Joshua which has an interesting sequence:

*“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy **mouth**;  
But thou shalt **meditate** therein day and night,  
That thou mayest **observe** to do all that is written therein;  
For then thou shalt make thy way **prosperous**,  
And then thou shalt have **good success**”* (Josh 1:8)

A succession of judges replaced Joshua as leaders. Deborah, with Barak, is on the scene against Jabin, Sisera and 900 iron chariots. Victory is miraculously achieved, as *“the hand of the children of Israel prospered...”* (Jdgs 4:24). A victory song ensued, *“then sang Deborah and Barak...”* (Jdgs 5:1). The words of this song show deep deliberate contemplation on the written record of the day, referencing Exodus and Deuteronomy. Likewise, when we sing as we should, *“speaking to yourselves in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...”* (Eph 5:19). We have the wonderful opportunity of to **MEDITATE** on the Scriptural source of the words we are singing.

### Prayer

Prayer is another medium of meditation. Ezra and David, keen Bible students, are excellent examples of how Bible study can inform our public (Ezra’s) and private (Daniel’s) prayer.

Ezra 9:7 “since the days of our fathers...” what depth of thought is deliberately shown by this faithful servant!

Dan 9:4 “...keeping the covenant...” verse 11 “...the oath that is written in the Law of Moses.”

Again, meditation based on familiarity with the written record of the day! We are now left to examine the meditative spirit of Gideon and Jephthah. Gideon requested a sign to verify that the angel spoke to him (Jdgs 6:7). Was he contemplating Moses (Exod 4:1)? As the drama unfolded into another encounter, Gideon “perceived that it was an angel of the LORD” (Jdgs 6:22) and thought he would die! Why? As he was meditating, he was remembering the words written by Moses: “And he [the LORD] said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod 33:20).

Jephthah was falsely told by the king of the Ammonites:

*“And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably” (Jdgs 11:13).*

In reply, Jephthah made several references to the accounts of what happened after the Exodus, each time emphasizing what God had done to forge a nation: “the LORD God of Israel delivered... The LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed... So, whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out” (Jdgs 11:21-24). These events, implanted in Jephthah’s mind come to bear fruits at a crucial time. Likewise, the words of Scripture must inform our response to challenges.

What do we take away from this brief analysis of Old Testament Bible students?

- A written record was available: “The law and the prophets”
- It was studied by men and women of faith: Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, David, Ezra, Daniel.
- For them, it was a sobering source of meditation, leading to prosperity and success.
- It strengthened FAITH, “Faith cometh... by the word of the LORD”
- Can we say with David, “O how love I thy law!” (Psa 119:97).

Clive Drepaul (Brooklyn, NY)

*This book of the law  
shall not depart out of  
thy mouth; But thou  
shalt meditate therein  
day and night*

# The New Testament Church, (15) Preaching

## The church's witness in the world

I would like to begin by reminding you of the preaching offices which we considered earlier, and, most important of all, that the **apostles** were the “special messengers” of Jesus Christ. We noticed at the time that this did not only refer to the twelve apostles because there were other apostles as well. Barnabas was an apostle, and Paul was an apostle, and there appear to have been others with this title<sup>1</sup>. We realized at the time that we have no counterpart in our organization to the New Testament apostles. They appear to have been divinely appointed leaders of the new community, yet even they were subject to ecclesial decisions, as we see below, where in each case it was the church that gave instructions, one may say, to the apostles and sent them forth on their journeys.

*“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2-3)*

*“When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts 15:2).*

Next we have the **prophets**. These were the people who spoke at their meetings and 1 Corinthians 14 gives quite clear instructions from the apostle as to the way the office of the prophets was to be conducted. They were the preachers of the word, and we have already noticed more than once that some at least were women members of the church, because Paul speaks of women “praying” (which seems to mean publicly praying) and “prophesying” (which certainly meant publicly preaching) “having her head uncovered”: *“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head” (1Cor 11:5).*

Then we have the phrase “the **evangelists**” who appear to have been unattached missionaries proclaiming the Christian evangel or good news abroad in the earth. Philip the evangelist was one of these and, of course, Silas, and Paul himself, were evangelists. We might say these were the people who went outside the ecclesial organization preaching the word of God and taking the Gospel abroad to other parts.

And then we have the “**teachers**,” who are associated with “**pastors**,” the pastors and teachers instructing the flock: *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;” (Eph 4:11).* The idea of the pastor was of a shepherd, the church being the flock; the pastors were therefore the shepherds of the flock and also the teachers. This would appear to have been a more domestic office in the local church, as opposed to the evangelists who went out preaching the gospel. These teachers and pastors seem to have done their work more among the flock, building up the ecclesia in the knowledge and understanding of the word of God.

Now these were the preaching and teaching offices as we see them in the New Testament. They were not a race apart as the clergy later became, and the elders of the church often combined the work of leadership and general supervision of the church with the active preaching and teaching of the word. Paul and the apostles exercised their office as elders, and at the same time were, without doubt, evangelists and preachers along with it, rather as in our own organization where a man “doubles up” very often on two or three offices, so it seems clearly to have been in the New Testament. A brother in our own organization may be a speaking brother, a presiding brother, and an arranging brother at the same time, and this, I think, is very proper and very much in harmony with the pattern we see in the New Testament.

Writing to Timothy, Paul has something to say about the elders which illustrates this point: *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour,”* he says, *“especially they who labour in the word and doctrine”* (1Tim 5:17). We shall return to this passage later on. For the present, all I want you to notice is that clearly there were some of the elders who labored in preaching and teaching the word and doctrine and others who did not. Paul is saying that those who labor in “preaching and teaching” are to be counted worthy of double honor, possibly meaning they were to receive a “double portion.”

### **Preaching versus teaching**

I think it is worth noting in passing that there was a distinction between preaching and teaching. The preaching of the gospel, the taking out of the evangel, or good news to the world — was that which converted men to Christianity. They proclaimed the message of life in Jesus Christ, and went out with this message like the water of life to parched and thirsty land. And the “teachers” established those who had been converted, their function being, I suppose, the exposition of Scripture and the application of Christianity to daily living, which was never overlooked in the New Testament church. Central to it all was the manner of persons you should be, *“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing”* (Col 1:10). This is “doctrine” in the New Testament parlance, and the teachers’ job was to apply the doctrine of Christ so that the church having been converted by the preaching of the Gospel was built up and set on its right path by the teachers in their expositions of Christian doctrine.

I suppose it was not entirely unlike our own set-up today, as we suggested earlier, though we do not have any persons whom we call prophets (and I also do not think we have the exact counterpart of prophets in our organization) but the nearest we have, answering roughly to the function of the prophet, would be our Sunday speakers, our preachers, and exhorting brethren. Notice that there were no “lecturing brethren” in the New Testament Church, whilst on our part we do not have any “preachers.”

I wonder sometimes why we cannot just preach the Gospel instead of giving “Bible lectures” which has, at least, a rather frightening sound in the ears of many people. It is certainly true that some of our public addresses are really very much Bible lectures and not really anything like preaching the Gospel.

We have been, in the past, a little afraid of the word “preaching,” and have preferred to give lectures. I merely make a note in passing that our lecturing brethren have no place in the New Testament order but preachers certainly did.

Presumably, the teachers would be answerable to our Bible Class speakers, Sunday school teachers and such like. Never let us ever underrate the importance of those who labor in preaching and teaching in the Sunday school and youth groups because this is very important in our own organization. I am convinced of this today. Fraternal gathering speakers also ought to be “teachers,” not just moralizers, or dribblers forth of platitudes, but shapers of thought, getting people to think carefully about the implication of our Christian calling. These are the teachers in all their various aspects.

**Evangelists?** Well we do not have any that we call evangelists, but we do have Bible campaigners and Bible mission workers, and I would think clearly that they are similar in the work they do to the evangelists in the New Testament times. The work is often carried on in a lonely capacity, going out with the Gospel to lands and places where hitherto it has not been taken. This was essentially the function of the evangelists, but we should never forget the personal witness of the rank and file members, who are the salt of the earth in our community, and were in the New Testament church in the very teaching of Jesus Christ himself.

We use the phrase rather glibly, but when Jesus said, “*You are the salt of the earth,*” he really meant it, and he did not just mean those who are the front men of the organization, but every single member is a grain of salt, as it were, sent out to season society with the ideas of Jesus Christ. Christians are sent out to bring some kind of preservative element into society; sent out to make the world a better place, to make it more savory in the sight of God; to try to infiltrate the thoughts of Jesus Christ, and the message of Jesus Christ into the environment in which they live. **“You are the salt of the earth” — YOU!** Never mind about apostles, prophets and evangelists, pastors and teachers and arranging brethren, even lecturing brethren. You are the salt of the earth.

There is an interesting example of this: *“And Saul was consenting unto Stephen’s death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles” (Acts 8:1).* Now the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, but how they managed to do it, why they were allowed to do it, we are not told, but when the church suffered this persecution all the believers were scattered abroad except the apostles. *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).*

These were the grains of salt being scattered, as it were, from Jerusalem; scattered into society, into the world. It was not the apostles, for they were in Jerusalem. It means, clearly, the individual brothers and sisters, the nonentities, the nameless people of whom we know nothing except that they were members of the Christian church in Jerusalem, and were the people who went out and took the word of God with them. This is something we must all remember.



## How did they do their preaching?

First of all we recognize the fact, which I have suggested before, that they were not a disjointed society without direction, with everybody doing everything haphazardly. It is patently clear that they were organized under the direction of the apostles, who we earlier suggested may have received their instructions on the progress of the work from the lips of Jesus Christ himself, when he “*gave commandment unto his apostles*” after his resurrection as to how the work of the church was to proceed under their general guidance. The work proceeded in an orderly and organized fashion. There are clear signs of this in the Acts of the Apostles.

There would not appear to have been anything quite equivalent to our own Christadelphian method, where we have speakers going out all over the place, with somebody driving up the Motorway, going north, passing somebody from the north coming down the other lane and passing somewhere about Birmingham! This is the way we do it today. It may, of course, serve a useful purpose in our case because we are organized more on an inter-ecclesial basis than they were in the first century, but it may also be less effective than a concentration on local preaching work such as generally appears to have been the method in the New Testament church.

The work seems to have been concentrated in areas, with towns or cities as a headquarters from which, in an orderly fashion, the evangelists and preachers went out taking the message and forming as it were light stands in the surrounding countryside. Dr. Blunt in his *History of the Christian Church in the First Three Centuries*<sup>2</sup> makes a very good case for the organized establishment by the apostles of preaching headquarters in the strategic centers of the Roman world beginning at Jerusalem. As Jesus said, you notice, this word was to be “*preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,*” so they were carrying out the instructions of Jesus Christ to the letter as to how the work was to proceed.

Then from Jerusalem, Blunt suggests we get the growth of the Antioch church as the springboard for the preaching to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas later made their headquarters at Antioch which seems to have become the mother church if you like, from which Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their preaching mission. Then we have Corinth, Ephesus, and finally Rome, and in each of these strategic centers churches were established, big churches, thriving churches, as a basis for operations in the particular province which they served so that other churches would grow up around them, gravitating as it were to the center church from which the Gospel had gone out to them.

It is interesting to notice that similar methods seem to be successful in Bible Mission work (for example in South Africa) where there seems to be the same idea of establishing a center, getting some workers there, building up an ecclesia, and then moving on to another center, leaving always a nucleus of people to carry on the work, in order that there shall be organized development from place to place rather than a sporadic effort going out in all directions like fireworks on bonfire night and fizzling out in space.

Now, having considered the preaching and teaching offices, what about the preachers themselves? I am thinking of the status and support of preachers in the New Testament, where we find statements which indicate that the work of preaching and ministering to the church was for some, I emphasize this, for some, a full time activity and that they were supported by contributions from the body of believers.

This may come as a shock, but I think it is demonstrably true. We have always proudly maintained what we like to think of as a lay ministry, and we boast very often of our unpaid workers, and sometimes tend to sneer at the “paid hirelings” (as we call them in some of our literature) of the established churches. I was brought up to really believe that to be a paid preacher of the Gospel was in itself a demonstration of the apostasy. The truth, however, is that support for preachers of the Gospel and for workers in the church is scriptural.

We may reasonably object to the bishops’ palaces and the rich living (as we allege) of some of them. We may object to them sitting in the House of Lords as the “Lords spiritual” of this country; but there are no scriptural grounds for objecting to the maintenance of full time ministers. And be it noted that the great majority of these full time ministers are on lower salaries than their congregations (or most of ours).

There is an interesting verse in Galatians. Here is a passage, which has been sometimes misunderstood: *“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things”* (Gal 6:6). This is often understood to mean that a man who understands Scripture is to communicate it to others. If you are taught the word it is your business to pass it on to other people, and instruct others also. I am absolutely sure that it does not mean that. It means that the man who has received instruction in the word of God is to be prepared to help the man who is giving him the message.

To “communicate” means to share with him in all the necessary things of life, and this is what Galatians is saying. *“When anyone is under instruction in the faith he should give his teacher a share in all good things he has”* is the NEB rendering. What Paul is saying is, *“If you receive the spiritual blessing of being instructed in the word of God you should be prepared to help the person doing the instruction in the material things of life.”* The Living New Testament paraphrases the verse as: *“Those who are taught the word of God should help their teachers by paying them.”*<sup>3</sup>

*Len Richardson*

**Notes:**

1. See the Special Issue on Apostles, *The Christadelphian Tidings* August 2014.
2. Available in Google Books.
3. And indeed it is true we have, in effect, paid missionaries.

# The Joy of Sunday Schooling

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## Ready-to-Use Bible Word Puzzles

Word puzzles come in many varieties and are fun to do. A good word puzzle makes you think, and solving it gives a sense of satisfaction. Bible word puzzles make great follow-up activities for Sunday school lessons or they can be used as stand-alone activities. We keep several on hand for children to work on during midweek Bible class.

Creating your own word puzzles can be time consuming, and buying puzzle books can get pricy. Today there are all kinds of free puzzles on the internet, ready to print or do online. Finding the right one has never been easier. This article suggests a few sites to try if you are looking for ready-to-use Bible word puzzles. It goes without saying that anything you find on the internet should be carefully examined before being used.

And there is something else to think about before giving your kids a Bible word puzzle. The level of difficulty needs to be considered. This can vary widely from puzzle to puzzle. Puzzles that are too difficult are no fun at all. I have seen word puzzles given to children that are well beyond their ability to understand and solve. When this happens, the puzzle is discouraging to them. At the same time, puzzles that are too easy are not good either. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work with word puzzles.

### **Bible puzzles – <http://biblepuzzles.com/>**

The Bible Puzzles site offers several kinds of Bible word puzzles and games: crosswords, word searches, Codewords, anagrams, Hangman, and Kriss Kross puzzles among others. Most are printable. Many can be done online. In fact, it is probably easier to do Bible Puzzles' Hangman on a cell phone than any other way. The site is easy to navigate.

Codewords combine features of crossword puzzles and cryptograms. They're good for anyone who likes a challenge.






Kriss Kross puzzles are also a variation on the crossword puzzle theme. Instead of having clues to work with, the answers are listed. It becomes a case of fitting the words into the correct places in the puzzle. The Codewords and Kriss Kross puzzles are thematic and a number of them relate to well-known Bible stories. Both kinds of puzzles are printable.

It is worth exploring all the puzzle and game pages on the Bible Puzzles site. There are a lot to choose from. The site also offers some craft ideas, Bible coloring pages, and a few downloadable activity booklets. The materials are free. Donations are not solicited. Bible Puzzles appears to generate its income from ads and the sale of other products.

**WELCOME TO BIBLE PUZZLES!**

Your home for Bible word games including crosswords, Word Searches, Codewords, Kriss Kross, Hangman and Anagrams and picture puzzles including Dingbats and Jigsaw Puzzles.

Play online or download and print for personal, church or Sunday School use.

Bible Puzzles	Latest Puzzles
 CROSSWORDS	Quick Bible Crossword XIX (added 23rd August 2014) Another quick Bible crossword to keep the brain ticking over!
 WORD SEARCHES	Quick Bible Crossword XVIII (added 23rd August 2014) Quick, maybe easy, crossword to test your Bible knowledge.
 CODEWORDS	Paul's Missionary Journeys (added 18th August 2014) A freeform crossword, very suitable for children, contributed by our guest compiler, Nuala.
 ANAGRAMS	Quick Bible Crossword XVII (added 20th July 2014) A new Bible Crossword, quick and interactive...
 DINGBATS	Bible Fill-in : GOD (added 20th July 2014) A Kriss Kross puzzle where all the words contain the letters G, O & D.
 HANGMAN	Quick Bible Crossword XVI (added 8th July 2014) Another quick Bible crossword, taking us up to XVI in the series.
 LOGIC PUZZLES	Bible Logic Puzzle IV (added 7th July 2014) Four fishermen have a miraculous catch of fish, can you work out who caught what from the clues?
 KRISS KROSS / FILL-IN	Quick Bible Crossword XV (added 5th July 2014) This quick Bible crossword is quite an easy one.
 JIGSAW PUZZLES	
 OTHER PUZZLES	

**Christian Bible Reference Site – <http://www.twopaths.com/index.htm>**

Among a wide range of offerings, the Christian Bible Reference Site has menus of Bible quizzes, crossword puzzles, and word searches. They are easy to access from the home page.

Most of the Bible Quizzes consist of ten multiple choice questions. They are labeled as easy, medium, and difficult, and are designed to be done online. There is no direct way to print the quizzes, but it is possible to copy and paste them into your word processor for printing purposes. The site offers a fairly wide range of Bible quizzes to choose from, and a new one is added every week. Quizzes are clearly titled and the menu is easy to use.

The menu of Crossword Puzzles offers large and small puzzles that can be printed or done online. The large crosswords are newspaper-style puzzles. They have no titles and touch only occasionally on Bible subjects. The small crossword puzzles have titles and include several with specific Bible themes. The Word Search menu offers by far the largest number of Bible puzzles to choose from. They are clearly titled so it is easy to see what's available. Word searches come in large (more than 50 words) and small (more than 15 words) varieties. The word searches can also be printed or done online.

Puzzles on the Christian Bible Reference Site are free, but there is a unique way to make a contribution. You can submit your own word search if you like. Under the Word Search tab, just click on "Contribute a puzzle to this page – it's easy!" and follow the directions.

## Living Water Bible Games –

<http://www.livingwaterbiblegames.com/biblegames.html>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Living Water Bible Games website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, GAMES, ABOUT, CONNECT, and DONATE. Below the navigation bar is a quote: "I have hidden your word in my heart; that I might not sin against you." - PSALM 119:11. The main content area is titled "ALL GAMES" and features a search bar with a "UPDATE" button. To the left of the search bar are filters for "Sort by:" (Title, Bible Reference), "Media type:" (Online, Print, Both), and "Game type:" (ALL, WORD SEARCH, BINGO, GREEK, OTHER). The main content area displays a list of games, each with a thumbnail image, a title, a description, and a reference. The games listed are: "100 Favorite Bible Verses - Online Game" (NO REFERENCE), "Abraham -- Bible Word Search" (GENESIS 11), "Armor of God -- Bible Word Search" (EPHESIANS 6), "Bible Couples -- Word Search" (NO REFERENCE), "Bible Husbands and Wives Gemstone Puzzle" (NO REFERENCE), and "Bible Map Bingo" (NO REFERENCE). At the bottom left, there is a "Thank You!" message with a handwritten-style font and a small image of a hand writing on a piece of paper.

The Living Water Bible Games site is easy to navigate. You can access puzzles by typing in a keyword (e.g., judges) or, even easier, you can scroll down and choose a puzzle from the alphabetized menu on the right side of the screen. Most of the puzzles are printable; several can be done online, and some let you to do both. If you want your kids to do one of the puzzles online, try it out first. Strategies vary and some puzzles are harder to do online than others. The majority of Living Water puzzles are word searches related to popular Old and New Testament stories. The site offers a few crossword puzzles as well.

In addition to word puzzles, Living Water offers several printable Bible Bingo games and a variety of other games that you might find interesting to use or adapt. Everything is free, but donations are invited.

### Other sites

Here are three other sites you might like to explore for Bible word puzzles:

**A Kid's Heart** – <http://www.akidsheart.com/bible/biblepzlprnt.htm>.

**Christian Family Word** – [biblewordgames.com](http://biblewordgames.com). The purpose of this site is to promote and sell puzzle books, but it has a lot of free samples to offer. In some cases you need to install an app in order to open the puzzle; others print directly. The sample puzzles have no titles, so it is impossible to know what they are about without opening them. In spite of these drawbacks, the site is worth exploring.

**Kid Sunday school Place**—<http://www.kidssundayschool.com/13/gradeschool/puzzles.php>.

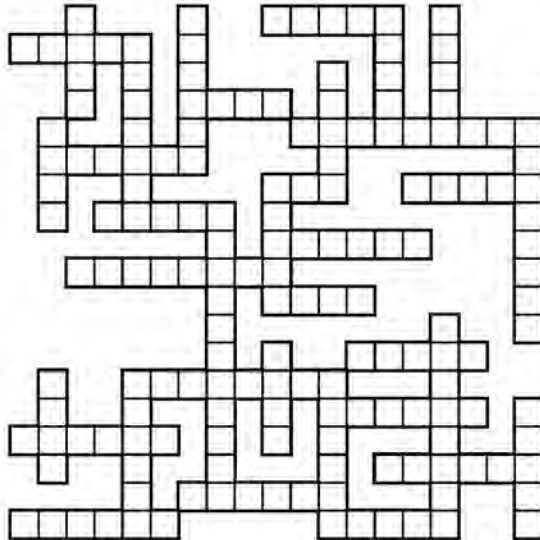
Suggesting websites like these as sources of ready-to-use Bible word puzzles is not an endorsement of the sites themselves. It bears repeating that any material found on the internet needs to be carefully examined for suitability before being used.

**Footnote.** I have a lot of homemade Bible word puzzles in PDF form: acrostics, anagrams, crossword puzzles, cryptograms, jigsaw quotes, word mazes, word searches, and more. The collection is fully indexed by Bible subject, age level, and puzzle type. Puzzles are easy to access from the index. Just print and use. Drop me an email and I will be glad to send the entire collection to you.

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**David & Goliath Fill-in Puzzle**

Created by BiblePuzzles.org.uk



- |                |                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 3 letter word  | 5 letter words | 6 letter words | 8 letter words |
| GOD            | BREAD          | AFRAID         | BROTHERS       |
|                | BROOK          | ARMIES         | CHAMPION       |
| 4 letter words | DAVID          | BATTLE         | FOREHEAD       |
| BEAR           | FIGHT          | CHEESE         | SHEPHERD       |
| FIVE           | GIANT          | COBITS         |                |
| GAIH           | JESSE          | HELMET         | 7 letter word  |
| LION           | SHEEP          | ISRAEL         | FORTY DAYS     |
| SACI           | SLING          | KILLED         |                |
| TALL           | SPEAR          | SHIELD         | 11 letter word |
|                | STAFF          | STONES         | PHILISTINES    |
|                | SWORD          |                |                |
|                |                | 7 letter word  |                |
|                |                | GOLIATH        |                |

Sample fill-in puzzle: [Biblepuzzles.com](http://Biblepuzzles.com)

## The “Life Cycle” of Sin

It's flu season again, and we are all trying our best to avoid being infected. Some of us are getting the flu shot, a vaccine to help the body's fight against the flu if we do contract it. However, we are also fighting against another kind of “virus”: sin.

The lytic cycle is the most basic “life cycle”<sup>1</sup> of a virus. There are approximately five basic steps which make up the lytic cycle: attachment, injection, synthesis, assembly, and release.<sup>2</sup> This article is going to discuss those steps as an analogy to our battle with sin.

### Attachment

In this step, a specific virus attaches to a specific cell. Certain proteins on the virus bind with the membrane of the cell like a lock and key. This is similar to how each and every one of us endures different trials and have inclinations toward different sins. If we give into temptation and allow sin to take hold of us, we have allowed the virus to latch on.

### Injection

In this step, the virus injects its genetic code into the host cell. This is similar to sin integrating itself into our lives once we have given into our temptation and allowed it to influence our behavior. 2John 10-11 warns us of this: *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him **not into your house**, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”*

This passage isn't suggesting not letting those “outside the truth” into your home. We are encouraged to do that in Matt 5:16, *“**Let your light so shine before men**, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* We need to be open to others so that we can be spiritual lights in their lives. 2John 10-11 isn't contradicting that sentiment. This passage is saying something more along the lines of “don't let their evil spiritual deeds and attitudes into your heart”. Don't let the virus inject its genetic information into your host cell.

### Synthesis (creation/formation)

In this step, the virus has infiltrated its own genetic information into the host cell, causing the host cell to replicate the virus DNA. After replication, protein synthesis occurs where the host cell “unknowingly” makes the proteins needed to create new molecules beneficial for the virus (proteins, RNA, replicated DNA, etc.). Normally, the host cell is constantly making proteins needed for your body to function and survive. However, the virus has “hijacked” the cell and is using its machinery to make the proteins the invader needs.

When we allow sin into our lives once or twice, it is very easy to allow it in all the time. We allow it to be a part of our habitual routines and thus who we are and what defines us (aka our DNA). It begins managing us. Matt 6:24 warns

us that **“no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”** Once viruses have taken over the cell machinery, the virus is in control. Your cell no longer does what you want it to do. It must do what the virus wants. Similarly, sin can control our lives, and we cannot be servants of both God and sin.

*“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but **sin that dwelleth in me**” (Rom 7:20).*

*“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield ye your members **as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ...For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace**” (Rom 6:24).*

We must be instruments of righteousness and always be conducting ourselves appropriately, not allowing our sin and temptations to dwell inside of us and take control.

## **Assembly**

In this step, the molecules made from viral DNA assemble to create new viruses. This is similar to the act of sinning becoming increasingly trivial. When we repeatedly do the small things, i.e. telling white lies, skipping the daily readings, or forgetting to pray before a meal, it can have a snowball effect and eventually, our sins aren't so little anymore.

*“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself **unspotted from the world**” (James 1:27).*

We must be unspotted (as much as we can be), and if any part of our lives causes us to be led into temptation or sin, we should reevaluate it to avoid manifesting evil ways. We have a merciful Father, willing to forgive us for our sins, but we must repent, not only acknowledging that it was wrong but also acting in a completely different way. We can't ask for forgiveness every Sunday for the things we've done wrong the previous week and then continue into the next week, doing the same things over again. We have to put a stop to the behavior before it can build up into a habit.

## **Lysis (release)**

In this step, the newly formed viruses burst from the cell, destroying it in the process<sup>3</sup>. This is analogous to sin leading to death. The way we live our lives can either give glory to God, ultimately in his glorious Kingdom, or not. If we allow sin to overcome us and “destroy” our spiritual lives, we condemn ourselves to an eternal death.

*“For to be **carnally minded** is death; but to be **spiritually minded** is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom 8:6-7).*



James 1:14-15 is a perfect embodiment of the lytic cycle.

*“But every **man is tempted** when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when **lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin:** and sin, when it is finished, **bringeth forth death.**”*

The temptation discussed in this verse, “but every man is tempted” is representative of attachment; “when lust hath conceived” reflects the injection and synthesis; “bringeth forth sin” is similar to assembly; and finally, “bringeth forth death” echoes lysis.

When the cell is lysed and the viruses are released, they go on to infect other cells. This relates to how we can live worldly lives and drag others into that way of life instead of shining as lights and being good examples. Our actions and behaviors don't only affect ourselves but also those around us. Christ was an example for us. Likewise, as members of his body, we should be examples for those around us.

How do we fight against these viruses? Fight against sin?

## **Vaccines**

Vaccines can be either attenuated or unattenuated, meaning they can be “alive,” but weakened or “dead” viruses. Vaccines work by injecting these viruses into the body and allowing the immune system to “learn” how to fight the infection, but on a small scale, a weakened scale, something it can handle without a full-fledged illness. That way, when the body is confronted by the real viral infection, it has already built up the ability to fight it off.

This is similar to our spiritual lives because we go through trials and are faced with temptations every day, but we must utilize our knowledge and understanding of God's word to combat them and not give into sin.

1Cor 10:13 states, *“there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, **who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able:** but will with the temptation also made a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* God doesn't give us trials we cannot handle. He puts trials into our lives in order for us to learn and fight against sin.

*“**God disciplines us for our good,** in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Heb 12:10-11).*

God puts us through trials so we might grow and live stronger, more spiritual lives. We face temptation so that we might learn to utilize his word and the gospel to fight against the “wiles of the devil”.

*“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. **Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness*

*of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Eph 6:10-13).*

We must put on the whole armor of God so that we can face the temptations of this world and not fall into a life of sin, so that we can be protected, just like vaccines help the body protect itself against invading viruses.

Our most important defense is our baptism in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*“What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:1-11).*

Why is this important? What is the purpose of connecting sin to the life of a virus? Disease and death are very real to us. We see the immediate effects of them while we don't see the immediate effects of sin and living a worldly life. That is seen ultimately at the judgement.

We do a lot to protect ourselves from disease because we know the effects and we know that it is unpleasant. We need to approach sin in the same way. Sin is a deadly virus, and if we allow it to infect us, then we commit ourselves to death and allow it to infect others, letting death win. However, if we utilize our immune system and vaccines of the truth, knowledge and understanding of the scriptures and our faith in the Lord, we can fight against sin and be saved, eventually, hopefully, gaining eternal life.

*Sarah Hill (Austin Leander, TX)*

**Have an exhortation, devotion or article you would like posted in the Tidings Youth? E-mail Bro. Ethan Bearden at [ejbearden1988@gmail.com](mailto:ejbearden1988@gmail.com), or find him on Facebook.**

**Notes:**

1. Viruses are not considered “alive” by the scientific community. However, for the sake of this article, the Lytic cycle will be considered a “life cycle”.
2. Black, Michael W.; Boothroyd, John C., “Lytic Cycle of *Toxoplasma gondii*” *Microbiology and Molecular Biology Reviews*. American Society for Microbiology. Sept. 2000.
3. This splitting of the cell is called “lysing” the cell or cell “lysis” which is where the lytic cycle gets its name.

# Reflection

## Role Identity vs. Role Confusion: Social Media

### Conflicts in teens

Over the summer, I had the pleasure of teaching, and learning from, a co-ed teen class of 13-19 year olds, at Bible School. The purpose of my class was to introduce the teens to Erik Erikson's human development concept<sup>1</sup> which proposes that each specifically defined age group has a psychosocial crisis between two conflicting forces that needs to be resolved. Teens need to resolve the conflict between a sense of *identity* or of *role confusion*. If they are successful in achieving a sense of identity they are rewarded with the virtue of 'fidelity'. Fidelity is defined as both a commitment to oneself and the acceptance of others, even when there are ideological differences. It is the ability to live by society's standards and expectations and still be true to oneself.

### Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Infancy ( 0 to1 ½)
2	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Early Childhood ( 1 ½ to3)
3	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Play Age ( 3 to 5)
4	Industry vs. inferiority	Competency	School Age ( 5 to 12)
5	<b>Ego identity vs. Role Confusion</b>	Fidelity	Adolescence (12 to 18)
6	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Young Adult ( 18 to 40)
7	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Adult hood( 40 to 65)
8	Ego integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Maturity ( 65+)

We started the week reading Psalm 139 with special emphasis on the following verses, and particularly the bolded phrase which struck a chord with many of the teens.

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. **I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;** your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be"* (Psa 139:13-16 NIV).

God's definition of *fidelity* could be reworded as 'believing that we are all fearfully and wonderfully made, as each of us reflects the image of God in our unique way'.

## **Social media**

Throughout the week we focused on specific societies or communities in which we live. One of the classes addressed social media and the role it plays in these young people's lives, and we talked about their struggle to find their true identity amidst the pressures and expectations of Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. By the way, Facebook, I learned from one of the teens, is "for older people" (emphasis on older!).

To be honest, I came to this conversation with the expectation that adults are generally out of the loop and believe myths about how social media negatively impacts our youth. For example, I recently read in NASW News (National Association of Social Workers, June 2016), "While technology like social media may help students who would otherwise be isolated stay in contact with friends outside of school, it can also isolate people." The article concluded that teens perceive that they are interacting when in fact they are not. It is my understanding that this is a widely held view by many adults who did not grow up with technology and have not adapted as well to this new way of interacting. I went into this class discussion on social media with the expectation that this myth would be busted.

During the conversational class on social media with the teens — which ran through break and into the next session (thanks to the interest and understanding of the third period teacher) — I was both amazed and, quite frankly saddened, to realize that the *isolation, peer pressure, anxiety, depression, sense of unworthiness, low self-esteem* (their words), and *identify confusion* experienced by this group of young people was real and more serious than I had realized. And that they are fully aware of these issues. Intellectually, they knew how "insincere" and "false" social media can be, and at the same time are emotionally vulnerable and feel the pressure to compete and gain validation from their peers; who probably feel the same. Rather than busted, the myth seemed to have more depth than anticipated.

There is an expectation that high school students have a Facebook account in order to keep in touch with school activities. One teen shared about her drama class, and how one student who is not on Facebook misses out on after-school events that are solely posted on social media.

## **The addiction of teens**

I learned that teens appear to be addicted to "being liked". As one girl explained, she did not experience any social pressure from celebrities because she would never meet these people, and knew that their photos have been airbrushed. However, the pressure from pretty girls at school, whom she personally knows, who post almost perfect photos of themselves, which are instantly liked by many people, is intense. Again, intellectually, this group of teens knows that being liked is almost a scam. I learned that the best time to post on social media sites

is between 4pm and 5pm, and again from 10pm to midnight. These are the peak times, and the likelihood of being 'liked' is high. And, of course, if one doesn't receive the required amount of likes, then the posting is immediately removed. This gives the impression that popular, good-looking people are *always* liked. So, even knowing that these are well-used tricks by those who post on social media, it does not stop the emotional fallout of feeling less-than in comparison.

The concept of echo chambers that reinforce negative opinions, views and perspectives was also explained to me. Echo chambers are places where extremely negative political, religious, racially disparaging views are not counteracted with either facts or positive opposites. As one teen explained, "People's views are just echoed back at them" by others who share the opinions. Many of these teens are aware of this sub-group of social media sites where you can be validated and negatively encouraged with eating disorders, self-harm behaviors and suicidal ideation. For example, those suffering from bulimia are encouraged with "Way to go!" type of sentiments when they report new weight loss, rather than with support and resources for help to overcome this eating disorder.

One theme that was repeated throughout this discussion was "the waste of time" that these teens experience as a result of spending too much time on social media. This was true even for those who use social media to learn about what is going on in the world and to keep up with political issues. Reddit was the most commonly used source, and the few teens who use this site shared that they believe it is an unbiased news source, as posts will receive comments that either agree with the original viewpoint or comments that provide an alternative angle. (Reddit is, therefore, a great example of a site that is not an echo chamber.) Although this site is used for current events and generally more productive online time, they still acknowledged that time online seemed wasted. So, why are they still using it?

## **Addiction**

We had already spent a class on addiction issues and, working with the abbreviated definition of addiction, "using more than intended, despite the negative consequences" we began to look at the use of social media through this lens. Towards the end of the class teens were expressing a curiosity about how life would be: if they didn't use social media as a validation tool; if they had fewer but more authentic friendships; and whether this could be done on an individual basis or whether "we'd all have to get off at the same time". One teen shared that she felt she had missed so much of her friend's lives just while being at the bible school (this was on the 4th day), but at the same time realized that by next week when she was back at home, those friends' lives would have moved on to something new and she would be back feeling connected. Going without social media for a week would not actually affect her friendships, rather it was the habit/addiction to using social media that was making her feel left out.

I challenged this group of teens to go one week without social media; only one accepted this challenge. However, I heard later on that day that another teen

had stopped checking her Instagram and Snapchat accounts because “it was a waste of time” and she “didn’t need to know what was going on.” A few weeks after the Bible School, I checked on the teen who had decided to go a week without Facebook and was informed that his account has now been closed and he feels that he “is much more productive” with his time.

Part of the discussion time was used to create a cost/benefit analysis on social media and the following is the result. These are the exact words used by the teens:

<p><b>Pros of using social media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Store photos</li> <li>Stay in touch with friends</li> <li>“Meet” new people</li> <li>Help to organize events</li> <li>Get jobs</li> <li>Find interest groups</li> <li>Have a perception of validation</li> <li>Find old friends</li> <li>Expand mind/view</li> <li>Entertainment value</li> <li>Community news</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons of using social media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Echo chambers reinforce negative views</li> <li>Opinions are treated like facts</li> <li>Warped sense of beauty, worldview, life</li> <li>Lack of privacy</li> <li>Provides venue for infamy</li> <li>Reinforces unauthentic life</li> <li>Desensitized</li> <li>Belief against your morals</li> <li>Victimization — pity party</li> <li>Titillating stories/gossip</li> <li>Some sites are pro-eating disorders, self-harm, and suicidal ideation</li> <li>Over exaggerate problems</li> <li>Makes life impersonal</li> <li>Waste of time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cons of not using social media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feel that they don’t know what’s going on in the world</li> <li>Feel out of the loop</li> <li>Miss event announcements at school</li> <li>Miss unbiased sources of news/politics</li> <li>Miss discussions about the news</li> <li>Can’t talk to Canadian friends</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pros of not using social media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cut ties with people you don’t really care about = be more authentic</li> <li>Seek validation from credible people, and people you respect</li> <li>Less dramatic/exaggerated</li> <li>Life is more truthful/sincere</li> </ul>

## What can we do about it?

A few weeks after the Bible School, I was telling a 21 year old about my class and the incredible discussions that had ensued. She shared her perspective on social media and shared that most of the younger people she knows in her ecclesia typically end their day on social media between 10pm and midnight, and the



“negativity is huge”. Again, I felt saddened that teens are ending their day on sites that either provide a false sense of validation or reinforce a negative self-esteem. She offered advice to parents: “parents need to spend time complimenting their kids”, and “making them feel appreciated”, and “pointing out their good qualities and skills”.

These suggestions are not to be taken lightly or used whenever, but daily. Every day. According to Erikson, this age group looks to its peers for support and validation; this teen class demonstrated that social media exemplifies Erikson’s concept that the struggle between defining one’s identity and experiencing role confusion is real. The danger is that if social media is the only ‘mirror’ that teens use to see themselves, they will believe a warped sense of self and experience role confusion without knowing that this view is not reality.

Naturally, according to Erik Erikson, the main source of information and influence for this age group comes from their peers, and now exponentially via social media. This means that the rest of us - parents, older siblings, ecclesial ‘uncles’ and ‘aunts’ - have a great responsibility to shore up this vulnerable age group by providing validation, encouragement, positive recognition, and compliments because we are the “credible people” and the ones our teens “respect” (see pros on not using social media in the table). We, as adults, need to recognize that social media is not going away, and in fact offers many positive benefits in life. However, we all play an important role in helping these teens find their sense of identity which will help them feel valued, fearfully and wonderfully made, and with provide a sense of purpose in life as one of God’s children.

*Rachel Launchbury, (Portland, OR)*

Notes:

1. See Erik Erikson’s “Childhood and Society” and many other of his books.

# Bible Mission

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## Bolivia — As a Father...

When we read the Apostle Paul's epistle's, the struggles of the first century ecclesias are open before us. The other aspect apparent is the Apostle's own emotion, as a father for his children, he cared so much for his brethren. After many years of missionary presence, the La Paz Ecclesia's members are striving to maintain regular meetings. Some of the original members baptized six to 10 years ago have moved to other countries (and are attending meetings there). Some have stopped attending due to various reasons. As of September 2016, a minimum of four members meet together to remember our Lord — two brothers and two sisters. The two brothers were baptized in November 2015, so the ecclesia is in need of our support.



The members of the Bolivia Ecclesia (from left to right) Samuel, Francisco, Jacqueline and Eva.

Brother Shimon and Sister Joanna Spina were the last missionary couple in La Paz. Since returning to Austrailia, Bro. Shimon has been in frequent contact with members and contacts via email, text and skype. Brother Don Luff visited La Paz in May for their annual Bible Camp and social time. Brother Robert Alderson from New Zealand spent about a week with the ecclesia in July providing good guidance regarding a number of matters. Brother Don Luff followed-up during September for five days of activities with ecclesial meetings every day, as well as personal discussions. On two occasions there was candid study and conversation about cooperation in love as members of God's family. We were encouraged one evening by a study of *'God's 7,000 Year Plan'* — the changes during the Millennium to a world-wide dominion governed by justice and righteousness, leading to a time when God will be all in all. During another study, we reviewed *'Our Basic Duties toward God'* — and we found that there are many — day-after-day commitment being one of them. Another sobering and helpful session, especially in today's evil world, was about *'The Treatment of Women'* — the Scriptures have so much wholesome guidance for the male regarding proper behaviour towards and with women. The Sunday exhortation



was about ‘*Our Speech*’ — are we like our Lord, for they “*wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*” (Luke 4:22) and like Abigail — ‘in her tongue was the law of kindness’ in calming King David’s anger (Prov. 31:26).

Each country has its culture and customs that impact on our growth in the Truth. Bolivia is no different, with its indigenous traditions, church and family pressures, ‘el machismo’, money (or lack of), and the sheer challenge to ‘get along’ under these significant cultural and socioeconomic differences. Esteeming others better than oneself (Phil. 2:3), leads to oneness, and thus harmony. Every ecclesia is made of members with human nature and we should therefore help each other work together, being motivated by the love of our Father and of His son for us.

We appeal for your prayers that our brothers and sisters in Bolivia may continue to grow in the Lord.

*Written by CBMA Bolivia linkman, Don Luff  
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

## **Jamaica — Hurricane Matthew!**

They called Matthew — ‘The Monster’ — however thankfully the category five Hurricane veered east of its projected route towards Jamaica, missing the Island completely. Nevertheless, since the storm path was so wide, most areas of Jamaica were overcast during Sunday, October 2 to Tuesday, October 4 and received various amounts of rainfall, but no flooding as in other countries. As was reported in the news, Matthew continued northward, causing terrible damage and sadly, loss of life on the Island of Haiti.



Some ecclesial representatives and visitors at October 1, 2016, CBMJ Meeting.

Upon arrival in Kingston, Brother Keith Kinlocke met me at the airport and we enjoyed our time together, as he drove me to Brother Leroy and Sister Lorraine Johnson's home for overnight. Lorraine supplied a tasty meal and we had a great evening together around Bible readings and discussion with their two sons, Lorenzo and Okeimo. During our time in Jamaica (September 30 to October 7), we attended the CBMJ Annual Planning Meeting, Saturday October 1st at the May Pen Hall. Among many items on the agenda, the draft 2017 Calendar of Events was reviewed, with discussion centering around the April 2017 Easter Youth Camp and hopefully Truth Corps assistance mid-year. More short term and long term fieldworkers are being sought to help the Jamaican Brotherhood — for example, during the latter part of 2016, Brother Andre George from St. Lucia will be on the Island from October 14 to November 4. Also, Brother Nigel and Sister Devonna Small (from New Jersey) will also be visiting several ecclesias from October 15 to 21.



**The baptism of Sis. Shaddae Bonnick with Bro. Melvin Gordon on the left and Bro. Patrick Johnson on the right.**



On Sunday, we enjoyed fellowship with the Spanish Town Ecclesia at the Remembrance Service. Due to the hurricane warnings, we spent most of Monday and Tuesday with Brother Keith Kinlocke (recording brother of Spanish Town) and his family — Keith and I reviewed many matters with respect to the CBMJ and the ecclesias. We then travelled to Port Maria, Tuesday afternoon, for two days with members there. On Thursday they took me to Port Antonio for a Remembrance Service with our 93 year old Sister Enid Hall. She went to an emergency shelter on Monday, October 3rd for the night, as a precaution, and returned the next day to an undamaged home. She lives in isolation with her son Winston and daughter-in-law Jakelyn on the north-east shore — thankfully, this coastal town was saved from the tremendous force of Hurricane Matthew! No property damage or personal injury took place on this eastern end of the Island, as was anticipated. Our last day was spent in the company of Brother Melvin and Sister Gerzel Gordon at their home in May Pen. It was a pleasure to share time around the daily Bible readings with them, as well as Sister Shaddae Bonnick, baptized on August 7th.

We thank our Jamaican brothers and sisters for their warm hospitality and accommodation arrangements on our behalf.

*Written by CBMC Jamaican linkman, Don Luff  
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

## **Jamaica — Sad News and Happy Times**

We are saddened to report that Sister Cecelyn Salmon of the Mount Pleasant Ecclesia fell asleep in the Lord on February 13th. She was almost 90 years old — born on April 29, 1927. She was a long-time visitor at the ecclesia, since its first campaign in 2001. After responding to the gospel message, Cecelyn was baptized on December 8, 2013. She was a kind and caring person, and known to be a principled lady. Her presence is indeed missed. Unfortunately, due to dwindling membership, the Mount Pleasant Ecclesia no longer holds regular services. The few members receive occasional visits from members of the Round Hill Ecclesia and other overseas visitors, and at the same time have opportunity to attend the numerous annual CBMJ sponsored events.

We also sorry at the loss of another one of our elder sisters in Jamaica, who fell asleep in the Lord. She was a long-time member of the Argyle Mountain Ecclesia, which has been decreasing in size for a number of years. Sister Icyline Grant was baptized September 8, 1991, and passed away on August 4, 2016 at the age 81 — born May 19, 1935. Her husband Brother Levi Grant fell asleep some years ago — he was recording brother of the Argyle Ecclesia for a period of time. This leaves three active sisters in this meeting — Vera Gordon, Janetta Campbell and Maxine Thompson — who regularly attend CBMJ sponsored events. These sisters appreciate pastoral ministrations, and visitors are welcomed at the well-maintained and clean ecclesial hall.

At the same time, we are thrilled about the baptism of a 19 year young woman and neighborhood Sunday School scholar at the May Pen Ecclesia on Sunday August 7, 2016, Shaddae Bonnich. She attended SS since about 14 and now through the waters of baptism has begun a new life in Christ and has hope of eternal life at his return! We earnestly pray for the second coming of our Lord to this troubled world, when all his faithful ones — those who are ‘asleep’ in Christ and those who are still on their sojourn — will share the glories of the Millennium and the ages.

We thank overseas brothers and sisters for their prayers and helpful on-island support, in these last days. Special gratitude is extended to the *Christadelphian Save the Children Fund* (CSTCF) in Ontario, Canada, for the annual shipment of barrels full of Sunday School supplies ready for September study season start-up. This year more items to help with practical daily living needs were included — which are much appreciated. May we all be found occupied in dedicated service and thus worthy when our Lord returns!

*Reported by Don Luff, CBMC Jamaica Linkman  
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

# Book Review

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## CAIN — His Life and Legacy

*CAIN — His Life and Legacy* examines the man Cain, what he did, what he said, and what is said about him. There may be more to it than you think. The book presses us to ask, “if all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” what exactly are the profitable issues raised in the life of Cain and how are they relevant today? The issues raised in the lean and powerful Bible text spotlight human character, thinking and behavior. From the misty antediluvian age to the present, the Bible gives one coherent message, and the message has an unsettling ring of truth.

This book is carefully reasoned, its case well-constructed. With careful attention to the Genesis account, the dichotomy of human thinking emerges: rebellion or faith, fratricide or brotherly love, revenge or forgiveness. These alarming contrasts are present in the lives of the first ten generations of humankind, ravaging recklessly or passing peacefully down through the ages to our own day.

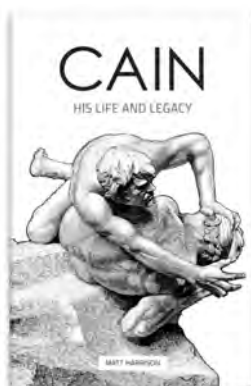
To say this book reads like a murder mystery would detract from the gravity of its subject. But the pull to read on is strong. The author directs our attention to how masterfully Scripture is crafted. We are invited to circle around, to look again as our spiritual senses come into focus. Circling around a question, we gain a fuller view; the author leads us skillfully. For instance, on page 88, “Returning to the original question: Why was Cain so significant to the early Christian ecclesia? To understand why he is mentioned throughout the New Testament, consider why Old Testament authors did not refer to him.” *CAIN—His Life and Legacy* is a sterling example of how to meditate on the Word and how to develop sound habits of Bible study.

In this book we come face to face with the challenge of all time. In seventy-seven generations, the fulcrum of human history in God’s estimation comes fully into view. Cain, not capable of self-reflection, hating the goodness in his brother, justifies murder and seeks self-preservation. Tragically, his lack of self-reflection leads to lack of self-control. He and his descendants act out evil on what is good, feel no remorse, and no need of forgiveness. Over time, their evil deeds even come to be viewed as good.

Belief that “all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” compels us to pay attention. What is the trajectory of our life, individually and collectively? Is it careful faith or reckless rebellion, brotherly love or fratricide, forgiveness or revenge, the way of Cain or the way of Christ’s brethren? I heartily recommend *CAIN — His Life and Legacy*.

*Carol Link (Baltimore, MD)*

# Books from *The Christadelphian Tidings*



## NEW! CAIN — His Life and Legacy Matt Harrison

Today's world dismisses Cain and Abel as mere myth, legend and literary archetypes. Yet they and their descendants were real people who lived in a unique historical context that is relevant even now. This study probes the lessons of the period before the Flood and explores questions Bible students have long asked. Find out why was he was so significant to the early ecclesia.

Published: August 2016 - 106 pages. \$5.00 USD (plus S&H)

### **On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings,** *by George Booker*

Insights, reflections, practical issues, difficult passages, personal observations and more to uplift and encourage all those "on the Way". \$9.00 US (309 pages).

### **Observations along the Way, A Bible Journal,** *by George Booker*

A sequel to "on the Way". An album of a spiritual journey, offering encouragement and food for thought to fellow travelers along the Way to the Kingdom. \$9.00 US (305 pages).

### **The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter**

Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today's times. \$9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

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This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today's young people. \$6.00 US (110 pages).

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**Shipping and handling extra. Make checks payable to *The Christadelphian Tidings*.**

# News and Notices

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**Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month;  
please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.  
Word files or e-mail in text-only format are preferred.**

*The ecclesial position primarily in Ontario, and perhaps elsewhere, is at present confused as unity-related matters are being resolved. Intelligence is published for information purposes only without endorsement by the Tidings Committee.*

## **BALTIMORE, MD**

The Baltimore ecclesia announces with great joy the following baptisms. SETH THOMAS was baptized on August 29, 2015. Seth grew up in the Sunday school and CYC and is the son of Sis. Shawn Thomas, of our ecclesia. ALFRED (BUD) STALTER was baptized on October 11, 2015. Bro. Bud had spent much of his life searching for the truth about God. In his later years, when in need of care, he met Sis. Audrey Small in her capacity as a nurse. It was through her that he heard the gospel of salvation. On July 1, 2016, we had the joy of witnessing the baptism of NANCY HERNANDEZ, daughter of Bro. Bob and Sis. Inez Schneider. The occasion was so memorable. She was baptized by her father. It is wonderful to have Sis. Nancy as a member of the household of faith. MATTHEW, MARY AND ELIZA NASH were baptized on September 4, 2016. Their baptisms remind us that God is calling out of the nations a people for His name. We first learned about the Nash family from Bro. Mike Kaufman (Schooley's Mt., NJ). He told us about a family in Maryland who had a keen interest in Bible truth. Years went by and then in the spring of 2016 we were contacted again, this time by a sister in Australia who noticed a request on a Christadelphian forum website. It was from Mary Nash. She was asking for information about the Baltimore Ecclesia. Bro. Mike had supplied them with so many books, like Christendom Astray, Elpis Israel, Christadelphians: What they Believe and Teach, Ways of Providence. They had read them all and wanted to be baptized. It was our honor and privilege to immerse them into the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In August of 2015, Bro. Ebengo Pelele, his wife, Safarani, and their six children joined our ecclesia. Bro. Ebengo learned the truth and was baptized at the Kempton Park, South Africa Ecclesia in 2012. We are thankful to God for bringing them safely to us after many years of danger and turmoil, firstly in the war ravaged Congo and then in UN camps.

Our Spring 2016 Study Day was led by Bro. Steve Cheetham of the Moorsetown, NJ Ecclesia on the topic of, "Lessons for Us from the Kings" with a timely lecture entitled, "A King for Israel".

For the Fall Frisbee Challenge, Bro. Jim Harper of Meriden, CT led classes entitled, "Things Eternal" and young people joined us from near and far!

Twice a year we enjoy a special gathering of both the Baltimore and Washington Ecclesias. For this year's fall gathering on October 30, 2016, Bro. Benjamin Link gave the exhortation and special address on the topic of, "The Prophecy of Isaiah."

This summer we were privileged to host the Truth Corps. Thanks to the 2016 members: Brethren Alex Cervantes, Jesse Andrews, Matthew Tuckson, and Sis.' Shoshanna Bowen, Janet Link and Cilla Pitcher for their preaching efforts in

Baltimore! Thanks also to the leaders, Bro. David and Sis. Cassie Giordano, Bro. Dana Kohlman and Bro. Gideon Hewitson. In addition to leafleting and supporting our Vacation Bible School, the team helped advertise our fall seminar series by going door to door in the neighborhood. This was an enthusiastic team whose fellowship we greatly enjoyed!

On a sad note, we lost our Bro. John Handy who fell asleep at age sixty-nine, on December 14, 2016. We extend our sympathies to Bro. John's immediate family, including his sister, Helen Handy; his brother, Michael Handy; and his niece, Marshall Handy. Those who knew Bro. John best were well-aware of his kind heart and caring spirit. He first learned about the Christadelphian community from his next-door neighbors, Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol Link. Later he was instructed in the faith by Bro. Bill Link, Sr. and was baptized in 1994. Over the years Bro. John served the ecclesia in a variety of roles including as Finance Brother. The Baltimore Ecclesia would not own its current ecclesial hall if not for Bro. John's quiet generosity. Although our ecclesia grieves his loss, we take comfort in knowing that, "*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all His works.*" (Psalm 145:8-9)

*Andy Bilello*

## **WORCESTER, MA**

As we prepare for a new year, we would like to thank God for our blessings over the past few months. We have witnessed the birth of baby Isaac MacAdams to Bro. Aaron and Sis. Kelly MacAdams and the baptism of KAYLYN PACIFIC. May we and God be with them until Christ returns.

Also, we wish to thank Bre. Jay Mayock Jr., Richard Dineen and Kevin Mayock for visiting and exhorting us. We thank God for a successful outreach effort and we continue to meet with two interested parties.

*Mark Fulmer*

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## **Worcester**

Shortly after my return from Halifax, I visited Worcester, Mass., where I remained about a week lecturing in Warren Hall. I had the pleasure of immersing three, upon whom rests the responsibility of contending for the faith, and defending it against the traditions of men. (John Thomas, *Herald of the Kingdom*, 1853 p. 276)

Of the gospel of the kingdom, and of this principle, I am not ashamed, though in this Worcester, Massachusetts, there are but two others with me in the matter (W Gerelds, *Herald of the Kingdom*, 1855 p. 278)

For two years they had been urging me to meet them in Worcester, Mass, We stayed with the Christadelphians there several days, I think they number about sixteen (John Thomas, *The Christadelphian*, 1866 p. 206)

# Thoughts on The Way

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## Was Judas the “Friend” of Jesus?

*“Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Jesus replied, ‘Do what you came for, friend’” (Matt 26:49-50).*

The NET Bible is very similar to the above, as are the ASV and the RSV. On the other hand, the KJV translates Jesus’ words as a question, which is certainly possible: *“Friend, wherefore art thou come?”*

In either case, whether statement or question in the text, the question which is asked in the title remains the same: Was Judas the “friend” of Jesus? Or, to amplify the question: Did Jesus consider Judas to be his “friend” even at the moment Judas actually betrayed him into the hands of his enemies?

There are other Greek words which are translated “friend”; by far the most common is *“philos”* (one who is loved like a brother), but the word here is very different. The Greek word for “friend” here in Matthew 26 means literally “one who is linked to another”. It may be translated as comrade, companion, or friend. In practice, the word can refer to a variety of relationships: a fellow student or a fellow soldier, a workmate, a neighbor, or even a close personal friend.

Matthew is the only one of the four Gospels to tell us that Jesus called Judas his friend at this moment: In Mark 14:43, the Gospel writer does not report what Jesus says to Judas at this point, although Judas does greet Jesus as “Rabbi” (v 45). In Luke 22:48, this writer reports that Jesus asks, *“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* And in John 18:4-5 and its context, that writer mentions that *“Judas was standing there”*, but does not report that Jesus addressed Judas at all, only that Jesus spoke to the soldiers, the priests’ officials, and the Pharisees.

Of course, these small differences in the four Gospels are to be expected, and should not be used to suggest that the Bible contains contradictions. Very reasonably, every Gospel writer reports the part of the story which best suits his narrative. However, we can get a more complete picture of almost every such incident by looking at all the relevant accounts alongside one another.

So, considering that none of the other three Gospels mention this point, we might ask why Matthew tells us this. Perhaps the answer begins with this: Of the four Gospels, Matthew more often — much more often, in fact — quotes or cites Old Testament passages as being fulfilled by Jesus or others. By one count: Matthew contains 98 Old Testament citations, while Mark contains 34, Luke contains 58, and John contains 40.

Are there any possible Old Testament passages which Jesus might be thinking of here in Matthew 26:50? In fact, two passages in Psalms stand out, in which David speaks of his good friend Ahithophel, who betrayed him during Absalom’s rebellion (2 Samuel 15):



*“Even **my close friend**, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (Psa 41:9).*

*“If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, **my close friend**, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God” (Psa 55:12-14).*

In the New Testament, Psa 41:9 is applied to Judas Iscariot in John 13:18, stressing that this man has shared bread with Jesus only a few hours before betraying him to the authorities. The “close friend” of the NIV and NET, and the “familiar friend” of the KJV, are translations of the Hebrew “*ish shalom*”, which means man of peace.

The language of Psa 55:13 does not appear to be quoted directly in the New Testament, but the verse is so similar to Psa 41:9 that it might easily be seen in the same context. The “companion... close friend” (NIV), or “close friend... in whom I confided” (NET), is a combination of two Hebrew words: “*alluf*” (partner, ally, companion) and “*yada*” (one who is well known). Together, these two words surely suggest much of what we might think of as a friend.

### **The answer?**

The quick answer to our question could be this: Jesus refers to Judas as his “friend” in order to emphasize:

- Their long relationship as close companions who shared in so many experiences, along with the other disciples; and also
- The fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy about one of his disciples.

There may also be another meaning. The scholar D.A. Carson writes this in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*:

The Greek word translated “friend” [“*hetairos*”] is found only three times in the New Testament, all three occurrences being in Matthew... (20:13; 22:12; 26:50). In each case, the person speaking is addressing an inferior who has insulted him in some way, but the words are without malice. Moreover, the speaker and the person addressed are bound in some sort of relationship, and it is that binding relationship which has suffered a [selfish] disregard of what it means.

In other words, the would-be “friend” has acted in a distinctly non-friendly manner. Nevertheless, the person speaking to him still addresses him as “friend”, as if to remind him once more of the treatment which one friend should expect from another.

This assessment seems to be borne out by the passages themselves. In the first use of “*hetairos*” (Matt 20:13), a landowner hires neighbors to work in his vineyard. Those who start work early agree to a day’s work in exchange for a denarius. But then other workers start work much later in the day. When the time comes to settle up the wages, all the laborers receive the same day’s pay, one denarius.

When those who worked a long day see their fellow-workers receiving the same pay for only a few hours work, they begin to grumble against the landowner (vv 9-12). But the landowner answers one of them (probably the ringleader):

*“Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go” (vv 13-14).*

This passage has another connection to the betrayal by Judas: *“Take your pay and go”*. Judas had been promised 30 pieces of silver for his treacherous work. So when he prepared to earn his pay, he also *left* the upper room, the company and fellowship of his other friends, and any association with the gospel which he had once believed. And then he took his leave of life itself.

In the second use of *“hetairos”* (Matt 22:12), a king has invited everyone to his wedding banquet. At the banquet, he notices a man who is not suitably attired, one who cared so little about the invitation that he failed to prepare properly or adequately for the great occasion. The king asks him: *“Friend... how did you get in here without wedding clothes?”* The man had no answer, and no defense. And so he was thrown outside, into the darkness (v 13).

Again, there is an echo of Judas’ betrayal. At the special meal presided over by his Lord, Judas excuses himself early under some false premise, and then proceeds to take the last steps in the preplanned betrayal. As he did so, he left the Upper Room of light, and was engulfed in darkness: *“He went out. And it was night”* (John 13:30).

Several hours later, after assembling the band of men intent on arresting Jesus, Judas leads them to the Garden of Gethsemane late at night. Again, in the dark and shadows of that garden, he betrayed his friend with a kiss, but not before the kind, but warning, words of Jesus: *“Friend, do what you came for.”*

Jesus’ use of the word “friend” at this time reminded his listeners of Old Testament passages about friendship and betrayal, and served as a real and final warning to the traitor. It reminds us that men have turned on their former friends far too many times in the past. Finally, it reminds all of us that the worst abuse of real friendship would be to turn our backs on our Lord and our friend, who has shown us greater love than any other person has ever shown by laying down his life for *his friends* (John 15:13).

*George Booker*

## Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.  
Three months is preferable. Send all submissions to [kathytidings@aol.com](mailto:kathytidings@aol.com)

### FEBRUARY, 2017

**18-19 Saanich Peninsula, BC** Annual study weekend. Speaker: Bro. David Levin. Subject: “Resurrection.” Contact: Bro. Duncan Kenzie 250-655-3228, or [djkenzie@gmail.com](mailto:djkenzie@gmail.com).

## **MARCH, 2017**

**10-12 Austin Leander, TX** Youth Gathering at T4C, near Freestone, TX. Speaker is Bro. Nat Bell (Seattle, WA) on “The Love Letter” lessons from 1 John. Ages 13 and up. To register contact Sis. Andrea Banta at [abanta1992@yahoo.com](mailto:abanta1992@yahoo.com).

**18-19 Baltimore, MD** Spring study weekend. Speaker: Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). Bro. Ted’s topic is: “The King’s Highway”, an in depth study of themes and lessons from Jesus’ sermon on the mount. Classes resume on Sunday at 9:30 am, and Memorial service at 11:00 am. Lunch to follow. Afternoon public lecture TBD. For information: Sis. Carol Link at [linkgang87@gmail.com](mailto:linkgang87@gmail.com).

## **APRIL, 2017**

**13-16 Victoria, BC** CYC Conference Speaker Bro. Stephen Macfarlane on the subject “Samuel – Strengthening Relationships.” Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at [victoria@csll.ca](mailto:victoria@csll.ca).

**14-16 Wichita Falls, TX** Spring Gathering at the T4C camp, Freestone, TX. We are pleased to announce Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON) will be our class leader and his theme for the weekend is “The Restitution of All Things”. We hope many are able to join us at the T4C camp as we consider the things concerning our Lord’s return. For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel, at [Lbeutel@alsco.com](mailto:Lbeutel@alsco.com)

**22-23 Baltimore/Washington** Gathering and Study Day at the Washington Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783. The theme for the weekend will be “As Fitting Saints” and the speaker will be Bro. David Fertig (Northern Virginia, VA). Begins Saturday at 1pm, Sunday at 9:30am. For further information contact Bro. Roberto Lara 301-9637512 or [roblara81@gmail.com](mailto:roblara81@gmail.com) or check our website <http://hopeofthekingdom.com/>.

**29-30 Sussex, NB** Spring Gathering Speaker is Bro. Dale Crawford on “The Prayers of Jesus”.

## **MAY, 2017**

**19-21 Southern California Men’s Weekend**, Cachuma Lake Camp Ground. Come join us for a camping weekend around God’s Word. Studies will be lead by Bro. Dev Ramcharan on “David – Model Man of God”. All meals provided, donations accepted at the weekend. Levi Gelineau [leviandjessica@gmail.com](mailto:leviandjessica@gmail.com) or Gordon Hensley [simi.rosa.hens@gmail.com](mailto:simi.rosa.hens@gmail.com).

**20 Moorestown, NJ** Study day at Moorestown ecclesial hall, 1:00PM. The speaker will be Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON) on “He whom thy brethren shall praise” – A Life of Judah. Contact: Bro. David Cheetham, 856-273-3654, [dnacheetham@gmail.com](mailto:dnacheetham@gmail.com).

**21 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Fraternal Gathering**, at Westin Hotel, Mt. Laurel, NJ. 10:30am. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON). Contact: Bro. David Cheetham, 856-273-3654, [dnacheetham@gmail.com](mailto:dnacheetham@gmail.com)

## **JULY, 2017**

**1-8 Great Lakes Bible School** at Lakeland University in Plymouth WI, located near Sheboygan, WI. The website for registration is [glcbs.org](http://glcbs.org). The teachers and theme verse have not yet been finalized. Registrar: Sis. Lydia Johnson at [lydia.johnson@glcbs.org](mailto:lydia.johnson@glcbs.org).

**1-9 Mid-Atlantic Bible School (MACBS)** at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme this year is “The Word of God is quick and powerful” (Heb 4:12). The youth program theme will be “Old Testament Types of Christ”. Our speakers will be Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, South Australia) on “Zechariah – Prophecies for the Last Days” to the adults and “Moses the Man of God” to the teens; Bro. Ted Hodge, Jr. (Hamilton Book Road, ON) on “Walk in the Light: Epistles of John” to both the adults and the teens; and Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham Hall Green, UK) on “Come to Macedonia and

Help Us” to the adults and “Appreciating God’s Prophetic Word” to the teens. Online registration: [www.midatlanticbibleschool.org](http://www.midatlanticbibleschool.org), email: (Information only) [macbs@live.com](mailto:macbs@live.com). Rates increase after May 15th.

**9-15 Southwest Bible School (SWCBS)** at Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Our speakers are Bro. Bryan Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI) on “Peter’s Conversion” adults and teens; Bro. Joe Miles (Birmingham Hall Green, UK) on “The Children of God” adults and “Accept, and Be Accepted” teens; and Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham Hall Green, UK) on “Daniel — Faith Under Fire” adults and “Conquering the Giants” teens. For information contact, Bro. Josh Hefner 512-297-6058 or [randaljhfnr@yahoo.com](mailto:randaljhfnr@yahoo.com); registration forms available at [www.swcbs.com](http://www.swcbs.com).

**15-23 Midwest Bible School** will be held at Trine University, Angola, IN. Our speakers are: Bro. Ron Cowie (AUS) on “Jesus The Master Teacher”, Bro. Roger Lewis (NZ ) on “Who Was The Nameless Man Of God?” and Bro. Jay Mayoock (CA) on “All in All (Psalm 8).” For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375, 248.462.5740, E-mail: [mike.live@gmail.com](mailto:mike.live@gmail.com) or visit [www.midwestbibleschool.com](http://www.midwestbibleschool.com).

**23-29 Western Bible School (WCBS)** at Menucha in Corbett, Oregon. Our speakers are Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA): “The Exiles Return — a Study of Ezra and Nehemiah”; Bro. Noel Greenwood (Saffron Waldon, UK): “Days of Elijah”; and Bro. Steve Mannell (ON): “Preparing to March — Lessons for Numbers 1-10”. Registrar: Sis. Mary Ellen Laird 503-807-7076 or [registrar@menuchabibleschool.org](mailto:registrar@menuchabibleschool.org). Website: [menuchabibleschool.org](http://menuchabibleschool.org).

**30-Aug 5 Rogue River Bible School** Speakers: Bro. Manny Rodriguez (Reseda, CA) on “Ezra — The Good Hand of God was Upon Us” a character study on Ezra; Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, UK) on “The Word of Truth” verbal inspiration and its implications for understanding Scripture; and Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church St., ON) on “That ye may be the children of your father - Christ’s teaching on the mount”. For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at [pat1posey@gmail.com](mailto:pat1posey@gmail.com).

## OCTOBER, 2017

**7-8 Sussex, NB** Thanksgiving Gathering. Our speaker will be Bro. Bill Lawrence on “1 Peter”.

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*“GO ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”* Such was the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples just before his ascension to the Father, and as a result every true disciple from that day to this has felt the urge to tell his fellow-men the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God. In consequence of the comparatively small number of people who come to a knowledge of the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a strong tendency to look upon every man who embraces the Truth as an embryo public preacher of the Gospel, and probably in most cases there is in the mind of the new brother of Christ an ambition to proclaim the good news in public. Was this exclusively what Christ had in mind? One of the effects of the practice referred to is that brethren are now in a general way being referred to as “speaking brethren” and “non-speaking brethren.” It is very easy to condemn and sometimes unwise to do so, but the writer must frankly express a fear that this has had the effect of lulling brethren and sisters to sleep as regards their individual responsibility to “Preach the Gospel.” How often does a brother or sister personally proclaim the Glad Tidings to his neighbor privately? (*The Christadelphian*, 1931 p 411)

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