

# THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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# The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor • George Booker, Associate Editor

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## *An Outlook for Reading the Bible*

*When you begin to read [the Bible], keep a careful check on your outlook. If you believe that we of the twentieth century (who have vacuum cleaners, and airplanes, and atomic bombs) are very wise, while they (with their brooms, and donkeys, and slings) were unlearned and foolish, you may be able to indulge in many a hearty laugh at their folly, and add cubits to your stature of vanity; but you will learn — nothing at all.*

*If, on the other hand, you are willing to admit that there is something which suction and speed and splitting of atoms does not supply — something, indeed, which more and more eludes us as inventions multiply; and, if then you will come as a little child, to ask the Book whether it has something to teach, then you may learn, and be glad, and go on your way rejoicing.*

*Alfred Norris, On Reading the Bible*

# Editorial

## Going to Law

*“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?” (1 Cor 6:1).*

### Introduction

In North America, and particularly in the USA, we live in an exceptionally litigious society. It is quite hard to conduct our lives without some contact with the legal system: I personally have had much involvement with Patents, with their associated legal requirements and lawyers. I have also been deposed by lawyers in connection with my profession, but fortunately never been required to testify in court.

In North America, it very unusual to come across Christadelphians employed in the legal profession. In the UK, however, I know of many Christadelphian lawyers, although whether this is due to the difference there between solicitors (who cannot in general appear in court) and barristers (who can) I do not know.

So how do the comments of Paul in 1 Corinthians affect our attitude to the law? And what is the impact of clause<sup>1</sup> in our commonly used Statement of Faith which says “[It is a doctrine to be rejected] that we are at liberty to... recover debts by legal coercion.”? It is a question without easy answers: it is easy to be dogmatic and say we should totally avoid all voluntary contact with the law, but this does not appear to be indicated by the context and clear teaching of either of these guiding principles.

- Paul in 1st Corinthians is addressing the particular case of a dispute between brethren, which ought to be settled within the ecclesia.
- Robert Roberts acted primarily to prevent Christadelphians suing at law to recover debts, which is an action seemingly in contradiction to the commandments of Christ, where he says *“And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also”* (Luke 6:29).

### Difficult situations<sup>2</sup>

There are a large number of situations that present themselves, and in many of these the decisions we might make will undoubtedly vary. I can give my thoughts, which are based not only on the scriptures, but on the sage advice of those of our brotherhood who have been confronted with similar situations.

### Are we permitted to pursue financial compensation through legal means?

Fortunately, in many cases where we are injured, or our property is damaged, the compensation process is covered by some sort of insurance. Workman's compensation in the USA is an obligation of the employer, and the courts are rarely employed. The Law of Moses provides an example in such cases: we read

*“And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed” (Exod 21:18-19).*

The law in effect provides compensation for the loss of income and medical expenses, without appealing to the judges of the land as far as we can tell. Similarly, most home owners are covered by insurance as a requirement of obtaining a mortgage, and few would have any compunction in making a claim in the case of damage to their house, nor in the case of an automobile accident.

It must be pointed out, however, that insurance policies typically have a clause such as “a person... must cooperate and assist us in any matter concerning a claim or suit.” This could potentially require a policy holder to appear in court to help defend the insurer against a fraudulent claim. I have been subject to such a fraudulent episode myself, but fortunately it was settled out of court. It was indeed partly on the basis of such clauses as this, that some brethren have counseled against obtaining insurance. It seems a stretch to extrapolate a prohibition against taking a brother to court to defending against a fraudulent claim, or indeed to say obtaining insurance is not putting ones trust in God.

### **Are we permitted to take out restraining orders?**

There are situations, unfortunately not uncommon, where a sister has an abusive husband (or vice versa). Our Christian response when faced with abusive insults, legal exaction, and official compulsion is to be generous and non-retaliatory. However Paul when faced with torture in Acts 22:25-27 countered with the legal defense that he was a Roman citizen. It could well be argued, I believe, that similar provisions are available under modern law to protect against illegal violence, and I know of situations where indeed such actions have been taken. Whether this is appropriate in any given case is perhaps a matter of individual judgment.

### **Should we take legal action to recover debts?**

As we indicated above, there was a series of incidents in the late 19th century among the brotherhood, of situations where some brethren considered it quite proper to sue non-brethren to recover debts. This is, a first sight, indefensible on the grounds that when the Apostle wrote to the Corinthian brethren in 1Cor 6, he was not limiting his thoughts to the circumstances where brethren were taking each other to court, but using this as an example of how far short of Jesus’ commands they had fallen. He was certainly not advocating that our treatment of the stranger from the covenants of promise should be inferior to our treatment of the brethren.

But what of the brother who finds that because he is suffering himself to be defrauded, his business is being ruined, his family is going in need, and he is unable properly to remunerate his employees? This is not the only example that might be cited, in which a categorical prohibition against any such action is inappropriate. As a general rule, as cited in our Statement of Faith, “the recovery of debts by legal coercion” should not be the practice in the situation where only yourself would profit by such action. In every situation it is of primary importance that the

principle should be upheld that we are prepared to suffer to be defrauded, and no action whatsoever should be taken that can be considered retributive.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes, however, although you personally might be prepared to suffer yourself, the consequences and harm rendered to others is so extreme that recourse to legal action might well be the only course available.

### **Are we permitted to defend ourselves from legal attacks?**

The scriptural answer to this seems quite clear: as Paul defended himself by appealing to the law of the land, so we should have the same privilege — but the scriptural principle of not seeking vengeance still applies. Defense seems a reasonable course of action: offence (countersuing) is not appropriate. Of course, if we are in any way guilty, we ought to remember the counsel of Jesus:

*“Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing” (Matt 5:25-26).*

In this case the believer is at fault and Jesus encourages us to pay up or face the full consequences of the law.

### **Conclusions**

These are only some of the legal quandaries that can face us. I could add

- 1) Should we use a lawyer in refugee, immigration, and conscientious objection cases? (This is an almost universal practice as far as I can tell.)
- 2) In the case of family break-up due to divorce, are we entitled to seek the services of the court to ensure any children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?
- 3) What do we do in the case of disaffected members suing the ecclesia, or any other Christadelphian organization?

In all cases, we should prayerfully consider the way our Lord suffered himself to be abused, and consider *“vengeance is mine, saith the LORD.”* But in many cases there are others to consider, and also the fact that sometimes we are almost compelled to seek help from the law in our legalistic society. There are no easy answers.

*Peter Hemingray*

#### **Notes:**

1. This clause was added around 1900, after much controversy over this topic in the pages of The Christadelphian. It is not in the 1883 version, nor in any of the preceding statements.
2. Some of these situations were discussed in the Australian Lampstand, Jan 2011, p 10 etc.
3. This situation was considered by Bro. Michael Ashton in The Christadelphian, 1988, p 391. His answer differs somewhat from the conclusions of Bro. Butler in “Dare any of you go to Law?” (Pamphlet c/o the Christadelphian Office).

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## Exhortation

### The Righteousness of God

Let me put a proposition before you: **Salvation depends on doing what is right in God's eyes.** Controversial? Not really, borne out as it is by Biblical testimony from the very first chapters of Genesis.

In fact, if we were to ask: Why does salvation depend on doing what is right in God's eyes? The truth of this proposition becomes immediately evident in Genesis 3. There, all that is wrong in this world is shown to come from not doing what is right with God, from seeking to go our own way, seeking our independence from God and His wisdom. The tragic result was the introduction of death into the world. This was to cut short the evil and destructiveness of those determined to go their own way. The world of Genesis 6 is the dramatic proof of man's capacity for evil when he abandons doing what is right in God's eyes.

Clearly, salvation does depend on our willingness to listen to God and to do what He asks! But, what exactly does He want us to do?

#### Searching for an answer for what is "Right"

This might seem to be an easy question to answer, but it has always been a problem for religious people. The natural tendency is to look for things we must "do": A list of right things to be done that will assure us of salvation.

- In the Catholic system, salvation begins at baptism (one of the seven sacraments) by which God makes the sinner (even if an infant) righteous. Then, throughout his life, God helps the believer to maintain and increase this righteousness by good works. Ultimately, a person is accounted to have satisfied the divine law by his works done by God's help, and thus he merits eternal life.<sup>1</sup>
- The Protestant Church, though founded on the principle of "justification by faith," in practice emphasizes good works as the essential accompaniment of faith. So, for most Christians, a great deal of spiritual satisfaction is found in the performance of good works, and there is the implicit feeling that these good works will win God's approval.
- Judaism felt their system of rules and ordinances (The Law of Moses) defined the list of things they must "do" to be acceptable to God. But it was their righteousness, what they thought was right, not what God saw as right. Paul in Romans provides the most explicit description in all Scripture of the absolute failure of a religion of rules to make us acceptable to God. "*O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death*" is Paul's final, frustrated cry (Rom 7:24<sup>2</sup>).

#### So, what is right in God's eyes? What does He want us to do?

This was the very question Jesus was asked: "What must we do to be doing the works of God?" He replied: "*This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom He (God) sent*" (John. 6:28-29). The "work" God desires us to perform is to

“believe” in His son. Paul develops this thought further *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...”* (Rom 1:16). The power of God for salvation operates only for those who believe the Gospel. Believing another gospel, no matter how sincerely or devoutly held, will never have this power to save.

More importantly, the Gospel has no inherent, mystical power. It is mere words on a page, a voice hanging in the air. The Gospel becomes powerful, able to move us to do extraordinary things, when it is believed. This is the explanation behind the radically changed lives in Hebrews 11. But it is even more than this: Believing the Gospel is also the basis of our righteousness. *“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’ ”* (Rom 1: 17).

It is difficult to make sense of these words as normally translated, so consider this paraphrase that tries to catch the spirit of the underlying phrasing: What God has set forth as being “right” in His eyes is revealed “out of” the faith of those who have believed, and by this means is revealed “unto” those who will believe. This is as God has declared in Habakkuk that the one He sees to be righteous (“just”) is the one who lives “by faith.”

In Romans Paul further elaborates this theme: *“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe”* (Rom 3: 21-22). What God deems to be “right” is not manifested by those who keep the Law, it is manifested by those who believe in Jesus Christ. Paul now leads us to his powerful, culminating exposition of what God declares to be right in His eyes: *“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness’ ”* (Rom 4:1-3).

This reference by Paul to Genesis 15:6 sets before us the most powerful declaration of the “righteousness” God seeks. And yet it is the most misunderstood declaration! Time and time again we hear or read that God counted Abraham to be a righteous man because he believed God. Righteousness was something God “imputed” to Abraham because he had “faith.” Brethren pursue this thought by asking whose righteousness was imputed. Then elaborate explanations are developed about how Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us.

But this reads the statement in reverse! God didn’t say that righteousness was imputed to him who believed: God said that Abraham’s faith was counted to be his righteousness. It is vital we understand this simple, yet utterly profound equation based on the grace of God:

### **Our Faith = Our Righteousness**

*“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it (this unwavering conviction) was accounted to him for righteousness’ ”* (Rom 4:20-22).

We can give God no greater honor than to believe Him, and this, says God, is our righteousness in His sight! This is why the writer of the letter to the Hebrews says “without faith it is impossible to please God” and then goes on to detail a long list of those who became “*heirs of the righteousness that is by faith*” (Heb 11:6-7).

### **Righteousness in Faith and Deed**

Pause for a moment to truly absorb the utter wonder of this Divine declaration. God does not want us to spend our lives like His own people did, or like Catholics or Protestants do, seeking to come up with a list of things we must do to please Him for our salvation. At the very beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, God in essence proclaims, “The right thing I’m looking for is your faith, your trust in what I say.” Doesn’t this make the whole focus of our lives one of learning to believe God? Learning to trust Him steadfastly in every way, and then, living according to this faith?

*“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God” (James 2:20-23).*

The good works or deeds Abraham did were those actions that fulfilled his faith/trust in the word God had declared to him. These deeds completed his faith, making Abraham’s righteousness tangible and living. These are the same ‘good works’ we are called to perform.

### **God at work in us**

This leads to a crucial observation: If God is telling us that faith is what is right in His eyes, then isn’t the most important work of God in our lives the development of such faith? And, on this foundation, the building and shaping of our character and our lives? Isn’t this the point of all our trials, our difficulties, all our experiences? It is as if God is saying to us: “Trust me, hold on to Me and I will give you life. If you yield to me, I will shape you in My hands, I will form you into that person you very much want to be before Me. Just trust Me.” Everything that God does with us is directed to this end.

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope... In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1Pet 1:3-7).*

And it is our faith that will bring about our salvation (v.9), not our good works, no matter how wonderful they may be.

### **God at work in His Son**

Jesus is the supreme example of God’s mighty work in building faith in those who



love Him and seek after Him. He is the true “righteous one” who “lives by faith.” God was building Jesus’ faith throughout his life: When at 12 he was eager to be about his Father’s business, he had to learn to wait for the appointed time. When God led him into the wilderness after his baptism, the trials he faced strengthened his trust in his Father and in his Father’s purpose. The culmination of this Divine labor is seen finally in the garden, where the fullness of our Lord’s faith is forged. Linger for a few moments with our Lord in the garden. “*Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will*” (Mark 14:36).

And then comes a most remarkable statement by our Lord. Finding Simon weary from the high stress of this situation, Jesus gently rebukes him: “*Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Mark 14:37-38). The echo is unmistakable! These are the very words of the prayer he taught his disciples early in his ministry. “Lead me not into temptation...” Why? Because “the flesh is weak”, the strength to overcome any temptation will never be found within us, no matter how willing we are in spirit!

Even more remarkably, this is exactly what Jesus himself had just prayed when he pleaded with his Father to take the cup away. Paraphrasing: ‘Father, don’t lead me into this trial! My flesh is weak; the strength to face this is not in me... But if this is your will, please, Father, deliver me out of this evil as you have promised.’ **This is what faith is all about.** This is why the writer of Hebrews said of Jesus: “*Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save him from death*” (Heb 5:7). His cries and tears were directed to the One who alone could save him. And God heard His son because of this godly fear. He did learn obedience “by the things which He suffered.” And at last, that which was imperfect, that which was weak, was perfected and made strong forever through the mighty work of God. “*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*” (Heb 5:9).

When we look upon our Lord Jesus in the bread and the wine, we see the pattern of God’s mighty work with all His Children: The development of a powerful bond of trust between Father and child, a faith so pleasing that God marks it out as what is right in His eyes. Here, then, is where we will find the explanation for all our struggles, all our difficulties. Here is where our faith will be nourished and strengthened. And, here, is where we will find the courage to say to our Father, “I do trust you.”

*Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)*

Notes:

1. “It is a universally accepted dogma of the Catholic Church that man, in union with the grace of the Holy Spirit must merit heaven by his good works.” Dogmatic Theology for the Laity, 1977.
2. All Quotations are from the NKJV

# Bible Study

## Leviticus and the Tabernacle (6)

In this article we transition from studying the patterns of Leviticus and the Tabernacle to explore their fulfillment in the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. The first five articles of this series have reviewed:

- the layout of the Tabernacle, which is repeated seven times in the book of Exodus;
- the analogies between the awesome theophany on Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle, which represents a portable continuation of the LORD's presence with the children of Israel;
- the parallels between Creation and the building of the Tabernacle, both of which are manifestations of God dwelling in the earth;
- and the alignment of the literary structure of the book of Leviticus and the Tabernacle, which provides a spatial mnemonic to help us remember the principles of God's law.

### A shadow of future realities

These wonderful concepts are an important part of our training in the ways of our heavenly Father, but they are merely a shadow of good things that were and are to come, the things that belong to Christ. That this should be the case is implicit in the law itself:

*“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, **after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof**, even so shall ye make it... And look that thou make them **after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount**” (Exod 25:8-9, 40; see also Exod 26:30; 27:8; Num 8:4).*

The LORD wanted us to know that the Tabernacle and its rituals were a mere reflection of what He had shown Moses on the mount.

Hebrews emphasizes the implications of this inference, arguing that the Tabernacle and its rituals were but a shadow of true heavenly realities and the good things to come:

*“We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of **the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man**. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto **the example and shadow of heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things **according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount**” (Heb 8:1-5).*

*“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb 10:1).*

The same idea occurs in Galatians and Colossians. “Wherefore the **law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ**, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal 3:24-25). “Schoolmaster” is from a Greek word that gives us the English word “pedagogue”. Thayer’s Lexicon describes this role: “a tutor... a guide and guardian of boys. Among the Greeks and the Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood... The name carries with it an idea of severity (as of a stern censor and enforcer of morals)” (p. 472).

*“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: **Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ**” (Col 2:16-17).* Here the word “body” means “substance” or “reality”, in contrast to its shadow. The Amplified Bible paraphrases: “the reality (the substance, the solid fact of what was foreshadowed, the body of it).”<sup>1</sup>

## **A picture language**

Robert Roberts summarizes the situation:

“On the first day of the first month of the second year after Israel’s departure out of Egypt was the Tabernacle set up and furnished with all its appurtenances... They show the terrible majesty and holiness of God, and the impossibility of man saving himself except by strict and reverential and loving conformity to His appointments. These things are revealed in the Gospel; but they become more striking when contemplated over again in **the pictures and symbols of the Mosaic example and shadow of heavenly things**... God proclaims to us by **the Mosaic parable** that He should be first in our knowledge, in our love, in our service, in prayer and hope and continual confidence” (*The Law of Moses*, 1979, pp. 96-97, 108; emphasis added).

John Carter explains:

“In describing this forgiveness and the means whereby it had become possible, Paul and the other apostles use **a wide range of terms and employ a variety of figures of speech**. This **variety of expression** was made possible by the preparatory work of the law of God as a code of instruction to Israel. The ritual law used **a wide vocabulary** in describing various offerings and enjoined **quite a range of words** in the confessions that were required... The ritual, being typical and part of the preparation for Christ’s coming, inevitably gave **the form of the vocabulary** by which the offering of Christ was described. In recognizing this we must guard against the thought that since **the language** was borrowed from the types, it does not describe real facts when used of Jesus. The work of Jesus is explained

in the terms of the law because the law was given to instruct the people of God concerning the principles which govern man's relationship to God — principles which must be recognized as the condition of man's return to God's favour" (*The Letter to Galatians: An Exposition*, 1965, pp. 23-24, on Gal 1:4, emphasis added).

Another writer captures the idea in thought-provoking terms:

"The Old Testament cultus [rituals], we are told, had 'but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities' ([Heb] 10:1). The priesthood had all the outward trappings of true priesthood, but not the essential quality of enabling men to draw near to God. The sacrifices had the appearance of true sacrifice, but not the power to purify the conscience from dead works. What then is the permanent significance of these outworn institutions? 'Hebrews describes the sacrifice of Christ in **language** borrowed from Levitical use... They were **shadows** which pass away and leave nothing but a **picturesque language** behind then.' **A picturesque language! A picture** of an unknown fruit resembles **the real thing** in all except **reality**: it will not satisfy your hunger, but it may help you to recognize the **real** fruit if you should come across it. Similarly, the Old Testament priesthood and sacrifices were only **shadow pictures of reality**, but they prepared men to appreciate **the reality** when it appeared in Jesus Christ. God spoke to the fathers in the cultus in order that they might become familiar with a **picture language** without which they could neither apprehend nor convey the full scope of his later word of salvation."<sup>2</sup>

To this end, we now turn our attention to the substance behind the shadows we have been studying. Having a strong foundation in the language and principles of Leviticus and the Tabernacle will help us to recognize the truth in Christ.

### **The Courtyard (Leviticus 1-17)**

We start in the Courtyard of the Tabernacle, with lessons from the altar offerings.

**Without blemish or spot.** The altar offerings were "without blemish" and "without spot"<sup>3</sup> which foreshadow the sinlessness of our Lord Jesus Christ:

*"How much more shall the blood of Christ, **who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot** to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14).*

*"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, **as of a lamb without blemish and without spot**" (1Pet 1:18-19).*

In particular, *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; **but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin**" (Heb 4:15).*

In Christ, the saints will also be presented without spot:

*“That he [Christ] might present it [the church] to himself **a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish**” (Eph 5:27).*

*“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, **to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable** in his sight” (Col 1:21-22).*

*“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, **without spot, and blameless**” (2Pet 3:14).*

*“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and **to present you faultless** before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24-25; we sing this prayer in Hymn 106).*

**Put your hand upon its head.** For the burnt offering (1:4), the peace offering (3:2, 8, 13), and the sin offering (4:4, 24, 29, 33), you put your hand on the head of the animal as you killed it, indicating a strong identification between you and the sacrifice that represents you. This lesson is fulfilled by Christ who identified himself with sinners. Throughout his ministry, Jesus is willing to be seen with sinners and to touch those who were unclean (e.g., the leper, the woman with an issue of blood, and the multiple dead folks who he raised up). He has compassion on those who were suffering (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:31; 5:19; etc.). Hebrews describes Jesus as our representative, sharing our nature and tasting death for us:

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; **that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man**. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: **for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same**; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb 2:9-11, 14; cf. 5:1-9).*

Similarly, we identify ourselves with Christ through baptism (Rom 6:1-14) and the breaking of bread (1Cor 10:16-17; 11:26). We are supposed to further reflect Jesus in our lives, sharing in the fellowship of his suffering (1Pet 4:13). Paul speaks for each of us:

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).*

**Christ a sacrifice for us.** Christ gave himself as an offering for us:

*“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: **Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to***

**give his life a ransom for many**" (Matt 20:27-28 || Mark 10:44-45).

**"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour"** (Eph 5:2; 5:25).

**"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time"** (1Tim 2:5-6).

The language of sacrifice in Leviticus includes "blood" (78, 9, 0)<sup>4</sup> and ideas related to the "death" and "body" of the offering. This picture prepares us to recognize Jesus as our true sacrifice; the Spirit makes it hard to miss the connection:

- his "blood" (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; John 6:53-56; Acts 20:28; Rom 3:25; 5:9; 1Cor 10:16; 11:25, 27; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:14, 20; Heb 9:12, 14; 10:19; 13:12; 1Pet 1:2, 19; 1John 1:7; Rev 1:5; 7:14; 12:11);
- his "death" (Matt 20:18; Mark 10:33; Rom 5:10; 6:3, 5; 1Cor 11:26; Phil 3:10; 2:8; Heb 2:9, 14; 9:15-17);
- his "body" (Rom 7:4; 1Cor 10:16; 11:24, 27, 29; 12:27; Eph 2:16; 4:12, 16; Col 1:22, Heb 10:5, 10; 1Pet 2:24).

**Present your bodies a living sacrifice.** The disciples of Jesus Christ are exhorted to follow the example of their Lord:

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (Rom 12:1-2; cf. Heb 13:15-16; 1Pet 2:4-5).

**Christ is our sin offering.** The sin and trespass offerings were to make atonement for sins and provided forgiveness (Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 6:8). This foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of our sins. Isaiah uses the language of Leviticus to describe Christ's offering for sin:

**"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all... Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the**

***transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors***” (Isa 53:4-6, 10-12).

This principle — that Jesus is a sin offering for us — is found throughout the New Testament. When the fullness of time was come, the angel says to Mary’s husband Joseph: “***And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins***” (Matt 1:21). Seeing Jesus coming to him, John the Baptist says: “***Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world***” (John 1:29). Jesus explains that the wine represents the sacrificial blood of the new covenant, which is shed for the forgiveness of sins: “***And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins***” (Matt 26:28; cf. Jer 31:31-34; Heb 10:14-18). Beyond the gospels, this first principle is a common theme of the letters:

***“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”*** (Rom 5:6-11; cf. 1Cor 15:3).

***“In whom [Jesus Christ, the beloved] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”*** (Eph 1:7; cf. Col 1:14).

***“God... Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son... when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high... now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself... But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God”*** (Heb 1:1-3; 9:26; 10:12).

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#### Notes:

1. English translations of the Greek word <4983 soma> here in Colossians 2:17 reflect the same point: “body” (KJV, RV, YLT, Jewish NT); “substance” (NKJV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, ESV, Message); “reality” (JBPhillips, TEV, REB, NIV, Jerusalem Bible).
2. George B. Caird, “The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Canadian Journal of Theology*, Vol. V, 1959, No. 1, pp. 49-50, which cites A. Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood*, p. 181; emphasis added.
3. “without blemish” (Exod 12:5; 29:1; Lev 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 4:3, 23, 28, 32; 5:15, 18; 6:6; 9:2, 3; 14:10; 22:19; 23:12, 18; Num 6:13(3); 19:3; 28:19, 31; 29:2, 8, 13, 20, 23, 29, 32, 36; Ezek 43:22, 23(2), 25; 45:18, 23; 46:4(2), 6, 13); “without spot” (Num 19:2; 28:3, 9, 11; 29:17, 26).
4. As defined in the previous articles, the notation (x, y, z) indicates that a word or phrase occurs x times in Leviticus 1-17, y times in Leviticus 18-24, and z times in Leviticus 25-27.

*What, then, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews is the permanent contribution of the Old Testament to Christian faith and worship? I have been suggesting that the contribution is fourfold.*

*(a) Firstly, the Old Testament provides aspirations to which only Christ supplies the fulfillment, questions to which only Christ furnishes the answers. It offers a vision of man's perfection as the wielder of supreme authority under God, a dream of the day when man will cease from his labours and enter God's own rest, a longing for free access into the divine presence, a fervent desire to be free of sin's slow stain.*

*(b) Secondly, it provides picture language for the preaching of the gospel...*

*(c) Thirdly, the Old Testament provides partial anticipations of the realities which are fully present in Jesus.*

*(d) Finally, the Old Testament provides, as we see in the eleventh chapter, models of faith, men and women whose lives were securely grounded in a confidence in the future manifestation of God's redeeming power.*

*George B. Caird*

## **Bible Study**

### **“As it was in the days of Noah” (5) “Every living thing of all flesh”**

#### **Introduction**

In the previous article in this series, we began to consider some of the lessons we can learn from the Bible's record of the ark's construction. One of the details worth noting is that God told Noah to make “rooms” in the ark. The Hebrew word translated “rooms” is *kane*, and it means “nests.” In fact, that is how that word is translated every other time that it appears in the Bible. So, God commanded Noah to build “nests” in the ark. That is, He told him to create homes that were suitable for the animals. This command offers wonderful insight into the kindness and compassion of God. He knows the needs of all of His creatures and makes provision for them. And if He takes such good care of mice, doves, and other animals that have no awareness of His existence, imagine how gracious He will be to us if we put our trust in Him.

The dimensions of the ark are given in Genesis 6:15. It was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. Lots of suggestions could be made about the spiritual significance of these numbers. I think it is interesting to note that they are all divisible by five. Five represents grace, so it could be said that there was grace all over the ark.

A cubit was about 18 inches. So, the ark was around 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It consisted of three stories (Gen 6: 16). Therefore, it had over 100,000 square feet of floor area. It was huge. It has been estimated that its carrying capacity was greater than 500 railroad cars.



As a symbol of salvation in Christ, it is fitting that the ark had one door. The Lord Jesus identifies himself as the door: *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture"* (John 10:9).

And the ark also had only one window (Gen 6: 16). It seems unlikely that it was in the side of the ark. Then Noah could have looked out and seen the Flood waters receding. But subsequent chapters indicate that he was not able to do that. After the Flood, he had to send birds out of the ark to get a sense of what was happening outside. So, the window was probably in the roof of the ark. It was more like a skylight. If that was the case, then Noah and his family would only have been able to look up to the heavens from inside the ark. That certainly seems fitting as far as the symbol is concerned. As believers, we are supposed to lift up our eyes, as it were, instead of focusing our attention on the world around us: *"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens"* (Psa 123:1).

So, the ark had one source of light, one way in, and plenty of room for all who wished to avail themselves of the safety that it afforded. It is a wonderful depiction of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the Flood waters came, it lifted righteous Noah and his family above the tumult and destruction that engulfed the world around them.

### **"With thee will I establish my covenant"**

There are times when disregard for God seems to be everywhere. That was the way it was in Noah's day. People acted without care for what God thought. The same thing is increasingly true today. But God did not allow people's attitude towards Him to defeat His purpose in Noah's day, and He certainly will not allow that to happen now.

God created the world to fill it with His glory. When the antediluvians became corrupt, God did not destroy them all and start over. Then His original plan would have failed. Instead, God saved Noah and his family so that His purpose would be achieved through them. They would live, and many righteous men and women would descend from them as a result.

Perhaps that is why the word "covenant" appears in this context: *"But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee"* (Gen 6:18). This passage is the first place where the word "covenant" is used in the Bible. And there is probably a reason for that.

Before the Flood took place, God told Noah that He was going to make a covenant with him. But He did not actually make that covenant with him until after the Flood occurred (Gen 9: 9). Therefore, God's statement in Genesis 6: 18 amounted to an assurance to Noah that he was going to live through the Flood. And through Noah's survival, God was going to preserve His plan to fill the earth with His glory.

The promise of a covenant also gave Noah hope in a dark and challenging time. It would have made it easier for him to stand out by building the ark, and to endure the discouragement of preaching to a people whose hearts were callous towards spiritual things.

We should likewise look to the hope that has been offered to us in the Bible, and we can rest assured that the promises God has made will be fulfilled. So, when we see wickedness all around us, we should not lose heart. When temptations seem to press upon us, we must not give into them. We must be steadfast in our commitment to God, knowing that His purpose will prevail, and He will reward those who have been faithful, just as He always has.

### **“Every living thing of all flesh”**

When God made His covenant with Noah after the Flood, He included the animals in it as well: *“And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth”* (Gen 9:9-10). Those animals had also been preserved by being brought into the ark: *“Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female”* (Gen 7:2).

It is interesting to note that there was a distinction between clean and unclean animals in Noah’s day, even though the Law of Moses was not in effect at that time. (The Law of Moses later made distinguishing between clean and unclean animals a significant part of the religious life for the children of Israel.) God must have told Noah which animals He regarded as clean and which were unclean, and He probably did so as a way of reinforcing the spiritual lessons that were conveyed by grouping the animals that way.

Leviticus 11 gives the characteristics of clean animals: *“Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat”* (Lev 11:3). Clean animals had a cloven foot, which is a hoof divided into two parts. That made them sure-footed in their walk, which is a characteristic that God wants to see in us. *“He maketh my feet like hinds’ feet, and setteth me upon my high places... Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip”* (Psa 18:33,36). Clean animals also “chewed the cud.” Animals that chew the cud are called “ruminants.” They chew their food, swallow it, and it is partially digested in their first stomach. Then they regurgitate it into their mouths where they chew it a second time before swallowing it again. The image of animals chewing the cud reminded people of the process of thinking something over. In fact, the English word “ruminate,” which means “to think,” is derived from the word “ruminant” that characterizes these animals. The importance of ruminating on spiritual things is the lesson that is conveyed by the clean, cud-chewing animals. God does not merely want us to run our eyes over the words in the Bible. He wants us to actively think about them, chew on them, and ponder their meaning: *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts”* (Jer 15:16).

It is interesting to note where the Bible puts the emphasis in its discussion of clean and unclean animals in Leviticus 11. The section on clean and unclean beasts runs from verse 2 to verse 8. Only one verse in that section (verse 3) is dedicated to describing the characteristics of clean and unclean animals. Most of the text —

verses 4 to 7 — is dedicated to identifying the imposters, which are those animals that had one of the two characteristics of clean animals, but not both. God gave the laws concerning clean and unclean animals so that the people could learn to distinguish between the holy and the profane: *“Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine”* (Lev 20:25-26).

The most important lesson for us in this section — at least as far as emphasis in the text is concerned — is that we need to make sure our close associates are going to be good spiritual influences on us. We need them to be mindful of the Word of God and also to reflect its requirements in their walk. God warns us about contact with individuals who only have one of those traits. (Notice how contact with the imposters is explicitly warned against: *“Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you”* (Lev 11:8).)

We also need to make sure that we are not taking on the characteristics of the imposters by either

- devoting time to the Word of God but not living as it commands or
- by trying to lead generous and kind lives without the guidance of our Heavenly Father’s counsel.

Noah was to take a male and female of each kind of unclean animal and fourteen of each kind of clean animal into the ark. The margin of the King James Version correctly notes that the Hebrew for “by sevens” in the passage about the clean animals in Genesis 7: 2 literally means “seven seven.” That means that there were to be seven male-female pairs of each of the clean animals brought into the ark. More clean animals were saved because they would later be used for food and for sacrifice. In the next article in the series, God willing, we will consider some of the objections that have been raised by skeptics concerning the Bible’s record of the animals being brought into the ark.

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## **Special Invitation**

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

*You, your family and friends are invited to the*

*36th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering  
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 25-31, 2011.*

*Main Speakers: Bro. Ted Sleeper — “Meditations on Creation”  
Bro. Tim Galbraith — “The Tabernacle: A Magic Mirror for Disciples”*

*Bro. Ed Carpenter — “The Light of the Gospel”*

*Contact Bro. Brad Rek 330-609-6957 or lisarek8@cs.com*

*Visit our website <http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org>*

# The Joy of Sunday Schooling

## What's the Goal? Part 3 – Effective Thinking

Over the years I have heard some pretty good rules that brethren follow for making decisions. One of them goes like this: *When you have a decision to make, decide what it is that you want to do; then do the exact opposite!*

It is not hard to understand why this is a good rule. If there is anything about ourselves that we can rely on, it is that human nature will impel us in the wrong direction. When we follow the dictates of our hearts — that is, when we give free reign to self-will — we will find ourselves at cross-purposes with God. To do the opposite thing is to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.

Simple, isn't it? Yet it is incredibly challenging.

There is another rule that is just as simple and just as challenging: *When faced with two or more choices, always make the choice that requires the greatest faith.* Because faith comes so unnaturally to us, the choice that requires the greatest faith is the one that promises the greatest spiritual benefit. It is the one that will bring us closest to God.

If only we would follow these rules. But it takes real discipline, to say nothing of ardent prayer.

### Practice it in Sunday school

If, as adults, we need discipline to make good decisions, what about our children? Do they even know how to begin? Are we taking full advantage of Sunday school to train them in the basics of good — *Godly!* — decision making? If this is not a clearly articulated goal for our Sunday school instruction, we can be almost certain that it is not getting the attention it requires.

Several teaching strategies can be used to help our children learn how to make good decisions. Here are a few of them:

- 1) Take a fresh look at familiar Bible stories from the standpoint of the decisions that were made. The Bible is full of good and bad decision-making models.
- 2) Use case studies. Real life situations not only capture the children's imaginations, they can be used to give them practice in identifying and evaluating the kinds of decisions that people make.
- 3) Use decision making activities. These often start with a basic problem and then explore different approaches, faithful and unfaithful, for solving the problem. Activities of this kind can also be used to show that decisions come with consequences.
- 4) Give the children straight forward "What would you do if ...?" problems to solve.

All of these kinds of activities require the children to do some thinking, and they

change the children from passive listeners into mentally active learners. The rest of this article takes a closer look at these strategies.

**Decision making in the Bible**

The possibilities here are endless. Every story of human enterprise in the Bible involves some kind of decision making process. For example, think of the options open to the woman when she first encountered the serpent in the Garden. She could have refused to listen to the serpent. She could have decided to talk matters over with her husband. Perhaps they could have appealed to the angels for guidance if they were still uncertain about the serpent’s message. Instead we have the first bad decisions in history, leaving us with a lot of consequences to talk about with our Sunday school children.

What were Noah’s options when God commanded him to build the ark? What did Noah do, and what was the outcome for him and his family? We read: *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb 11:7).* This makes it clear. It is easy to take for granted the fact that Noah did the right thing. It is all too easy to forget that he was a real human being who had to make a very important choice and then act on it. What options did the rest of mankind have while the ark was being built? What decisions did they make and what were the consequences for them? We read of the days of Noah in Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-27, which is very helpful.

Another example: the Parable of The Prodigal Son is packed with good and bad decisions. It also offers hope. As human beings we can change from making bad decisions to making good ones. This parable has a lot to teach us about conversion.

Many Sunday school students will be able to identify the decisions that are involved in Bible stories like these. They will also be able to recognize the outcomes that resulted. Consequently, there is plenty of room in almost any Bible story to talk about the relationship that exists between the decisions people made and the consequences that followed. Decisions have consequences.

Beyond this, there is room in many Bible stories to talk about the reasons why people made the decisions that they did. There is also room to identify the characteristics of good decisions and contrast these with the characteristics of bad ones. These are all things that the children need to think through with our guidance.

It is useful at this point to remind ourselves what this kind of instruction accomplishes in terms of addressing Sunday school goals.<sup>1</sup>

Educational TRANSFORMATION Goals						
	Knowledge	Attitudes	Effective thinking	Relationship to God, Christ	Relationship to others	Personal life practices
Bible contents	The Bible story		Identifying the choices, decisions, outcomes involved			Faithful decision making

By looking at the decisions involved in Bible stories, our Sunday school lessons have a new dimension. No longer is factual knowledge the only goal of the lesson. At the very least we have added training in effective thinking to the scope of our instruction.

### **Case studies**

Case studies present real-life situations for our children to think about in terms of the biblical principles that are involved. The range of possibilities is endless here, too. The titles of some of the case studies I have used over the years give a hint of this:

- “A Matter of Life or Debt” (Society’s value system vs. God’s value system);
- “Getting Ahead!” (On-the-job challenges);
- “Gimme, Gimme, Gimme” (Selfishness);
- “International Barriers” (Christ transcends every human boundary);
- “Prison Break” (Facing life-threatening danger);
- “Rough Characters at Philippi” (The human realities of Acts 16:16-24);
- “Scrambled Eggs and Ecclesial Life” (A “my way or the highway” story);
- “Voyage of the Marquis of Wellesley” (Attitudes evident in the story of Dr. Thomas’ emigration to America).

I find it helpful to prepare a few pointed questions to use with case studies. These give focus to class discussion. Discussion of real-life issues tells us a lot about our children and the grasp that they have of biblical principles. It can easily show us where there is need for further biblical instruction.

### **More decision making activities**

I also like “Options & Outcomes” activities. These pose a basic problem for the children to consider. Then several options are explored for dealing with the problem. As each option is explored, attention is given to the outcomes that result. Decisions have consequences.

When I design an activity of this kind, I often try to focus on a basic set of options and outcomes that are true to life:

- Option 1 = make a faithful decision; get a “good” outcome.
- Option 2 = make a faithful decision; get a “bad” outcome.
- Option 3 = make an unfaithful decision; get a “good” outcome.
- Option 4 = make an unfaithful decision; get a “bad” outcome.

The terms “good” and “bad” are used here from man’s perspective, not necessarily from God’s perspective. This allows us to recognize, for example, that a faithful decision with an apparently “bad” outcome (e.g., Christ’s death) may, in fact, be very good!

A fifth option also presents itself. This is to make no decision at all; to ignore the problem and just keep going. Our children need to explore this possibility as well. This can be a faithful decision when we know in our heart of hearts that there is absolutely nothing we can do about the problem. We have to leave the matter

entirely in God's hands. However, this can also be an unfaithful decision if we know that there is something we can and should do about the problem, but we do not want to be bothered. Conscience!

May God help us, dear Sunday schoolers! This is true to life.

Something else is evident in this kind of activity. We choose our options; and we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. But we cannot necessarily control the outcomes that occur. This underscores the importance of making faithful decisions and trusting that God will bring good out of our efforts to please Him.

### **What would you do if ...?**

Finally, "What would you do if ...?" problems provide a simple strategy for teaching biblical principles of decision making. These can be thought up practically on the spot and can be tailored to almost any class and any Sunday school lesson. Just remember to give your students a little time to think about a problem before asking them to tell you "what they would do."

So go ahead and make good use of decision making activities. Make it a Sunday school goal to nurture your children in the principles of faithful, godly thinking.

Perhaps you already do this or have done it in the past. If so, I would like to hear from you. If you have decision-making / problem-solving activities that you have used and are willing to share, I would be delighted to receive copies of them. The Tidings Committee is in the process of creating a Sunday school link on its website (<http://www.tidings.org/>) as a place where teachers and CYC leaders can access all kinds of ready-to-use materials. Case Studies and Decision Making Activities are two of the kinds of teaching resources that will be available on the new Sunday School link.

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#### **Notes:**

1. See the complete Sunday school goal grid diagram in *The Tidings*, "What's the Goal? – Part 1", February, 2011, and "What's the Goal – Part 2", March/April, 2011.

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## **Gratitude**

*Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.*

*Melody Beattie*

# Music in Worship

## What's in our Hymn Book? Part 2

The Hymns in the Christadelphian Hymn Book are rich in their direct and indirect allusions to Scripture. This should not be surprising as each hymn was selected because of its Biblical expressions and ideas. When combined with beautiful music these ideas become a wonderful prompt to help us to recall the people, events and God's teaching found throughout Scripture.

Hymns are not composed or authored in a few moments of quiet reflection. It requires prayerful and thoughtful concentration to write a hymn. Very often the music is composed and then words are written that fit the music. Occasionally this sequence is reversed and music is written to fit the words. However pleasing the hymn music may be, it is the words that give substance and meaning to a hymn.

Many of the hymns we use are rich in concept and draw deeply from God's Word. Following is an example of one such hymn (357) which was studied and analyzed at a sisters' class. The four verses in this hymn have each been considered in detail. It is immediately apparent that each phrase in this hymn has many Scriptural connections and allusions. As we come to appreciate the richness of our hymns, our life in Christ can be encouraged and strengthened in a variety of circumstances and needs.

Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON)

## A Consideration and Study of Hymn 357 "Take courage, my brother"

Written by Bro. James Stott (1922-91) Music by Bro. Andrew Johnson	
Verse 1	
1. Take courage, my brother	<i>"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Psa 27:14). "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD" (Psa 31:24).</i>
And be not faint hearted	<i>"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, 'Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid' " (Matt 14:27). "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you" (Isa 35:4).</i>
Let none of your sorrows	<i>"For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed" (Psa 31:10).</i>



Nor trials impede,	<i>“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4)<sup>1</sup>.</i>
But reach forth your hand and	<i>“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs” (Deut 15:7-8). “But Peter said, ‘I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong” (Acts 3:6-7).</i>
Remember your brother	<i>“The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’” (Matt 25:40).</i>
Forget all your troubles	<i>“Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (James 2:5). “So that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My eyes” (Isa 65:16).</i>
In meeting his need	<i>“If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?” (James 2:15-16).</i>
Verse 2	
2. Be thankful, my brother,	<i>“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful” (Col 3:15). “In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1Thess 5:18).</i>  Other verses: Col 1:12; Psalms 103:1-2; 1Cor. 15:57; Psalm 92:1; Psalm 104
For God has provided	<i>“Because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect” (Heb 11:40). “The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you” (Deut 28:8). Other verses: Job 38:41.</i>

Much more than you need from	<i>"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt 6:33). "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him... Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (James 1:5,17).</i>
His bountiful store;	<i>" 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this', says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it' " (Mal 3:10). "Storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed" (1Tim 6:19).</i>
For God's hand is open,	<i>"What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good" (Psa 104:28). "You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Psa 145:16). Other verses: Neh 2:8.</i>
His love is unbounding,	<i>"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1John 4:16). "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1John 4:9). "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1John 3:1). "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us," (Eph 3:20). Other verses: Jer 31:3.</i>
And, should you require it,	<i>"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matt 7:7-8). "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things" (Luke 12:30).</i>
There soon will be more.	<i>"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him' " (1Cor 2:9). "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:20-21). Other verses: Rom 8:32.</i>

Verse 3	
3. Be prayerful, my brother	<i>“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). “Pray without ceasing;” (1Thess 5:17). Other verses: 1Tim 2:1; Acts 10:4; Col 4:3.</i>
And look to your Maker,	<i>“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psa 95:6). “In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel” (Isa 17:7). “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name’ ” (Matt 6:9). Other verses: Psa 121:1-2; Isa 8:17.</i>
He’s promised to help you	<i>“There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to help you, And in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms;” (Deut 33:26-27). Other verses: Matt 11:29-30; Isa 50:7.</i>
And waits for your call;	<i>“Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him” (Isa 30:18). “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth” (Psa 145:18). “I sought the Lord, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears” (Psa 34:4). Other verses: Matt 7:7; Psa 55:16.</i>
Just tell Him your trouble,	<i>“It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear” (Isa 65:24). “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me” (Psa 50:15). “In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, For You will answer me” (Psa 86:7). Other verses: Psa 55:22; 34:17.</i>
He is the Almighty,	<i>“Thus says the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, says the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word” (Isa 66:1-2). “If you would seek God And implore the compassion of the Almighty,” (Job 8:5). “The Mighty One, God, the Lord, has spoken, And summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting” (Psa 50:1). Other verses: Gen. 17:1; Psa 89:8.</i>
There’s nothing too big and	<i>“The earth quaked; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself quaked at the presence of God, the God of Israel” (Psa 68:8). Other verses: 1Pet 5:7; Luke 18:27.</i>

There's nothing too small.	<i>"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7). "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matt 6:25). Other verses: Luke 1:37.</i>
Verse 4	
4. Be joyful, my brother	<i>"But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee" (Psa 5:11). "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds" (Psa 149:5) "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. . ." (Psa 100:1-5). Other verses: Rom 12:12; 1Thess 5:16-18.</i>
A new day is dawning,	<i>"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:2). "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day" (Prov 4:18). Other verses: Job 3:9.</i>
And brighter and fairer	<i>"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan 12:3). Other verses: Prov 4:18; 2Cor. 4:16.</i>
That morning will be;	<i>"So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts" (2Pet 1:19). Other verses: Psa 30:5.</i>
So join with all voices	<i>"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;" (Eph 5:19-20). Other verses: Psa 19:4; Rev 19:5-7.</i>
And sing loud hosannas,	<i>"As soon as he was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: 'Blessed Is The King Who Comes In The Name Of The Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" (Luke 19:37-38). "And I saw as it were... them that had gotten the victory over the beast,... And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev 15:2-3). Other verses: John 12:13; Matt 21:9.</i>

The Savior is coming	<i>"You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near" (James 5:8). "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;" (Phil 3:20). Other verses: Luke 21:27.</i>
To make us all free	<i>"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1). "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin" (Rom 7:24 -25). Other verses: John 8:36.</i>

Maritta Terrell (Austin Leander, TX)

**Notes:**

1. References are (mostly) either from the KJV or the NASV.

# **Bible Topics Referenced in Hymns**

A chart has recently been prepared that lists hymns from the Christadelphian Hymn Book and shows Bible verses related to that hymn. This is a very useful chart for presiding Brethren or anyone interested in finding hymns that relate to a particular Bible chapter.

This chart can be found on the Tidings Magazine website: **www.tidings.org**. Alternatively, a paper copy of this chart will be sent to anyone requesting a copy. Write to Hymn Chart at P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696 or E-mail editor.

Peter Hemingray

**Articles, questions, and letters may be submitted to Section Editors**

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*"If the LORD delight in us, then..." (Numbers 14:8)... These men saw what all the others saw, and more. They had clear apprehension of the goodness of the land; they were by no means blind to the formidable nature of the difficulties that stood between them and possession. But they saw God. They started with that vision, and saw everything else in its light. ...Yet these men also saw that there was a condition and they named it in the words: "If Jehovah delight in us..." In these words there was surely the recognition of a fact, and the statement of a responsibility. The fact was patent. Jehovah did delight in them. He had ransomed them from slavery, brought them to Himself, provided for all their need, promised them this very land. What further proofs could they have of His delight in them? Nevertheless, they were in danger of placing themselves outside the benefits of that delight, by their rebellion and their unworthy fear. These things were surely written for our learning. Every call of God to His people is a call to those in whom He delights. Therefore they should know that no difficulties need daunt them. They are not called to meet them in their own strength. He will be with them in the path of obedience.*

G. Campbell Morgan

# Signs of the Times

## Signs that Jesus' Return is Approaching

### Islam

The developing situation in the earth at the moment is indicative that God's program of preparation for Jesus' return is well under way. For those watching and waiting for his return, there are several exciting signs which could be significant. If these signs are what they seem to be, the return of Jesus could be perhaps only a few short years away.

Throughout the past 2,000 years, the followers of our Lord Jesus have felt sure that he would come in their lifetime. Like those who have gone before us, we have this same hope. But in our case, if our view of prophecy is correct, there are specific signs occurring that we usually link with latter-day developments immediately before his return.

Central and pivotal in these latter days is the growth and influence of Islam. Islam is growing fast throughout the world. Islamic philosophy and beliefs stunningly resemble the characteristics of the Beast described in Revelation 13 and elsewhere.

Islam is a direct and growing threat to God's people — both Jews and Christians. It is strongly expected that the prophesied attack against Jerusalem (Zech 14) will be by Arab Islamic nations who will be joined by non-Arab Islamic nations such as Iran, Turkey and maybe others.

Islam, and in particular Iran, which has in recent times become the voice of Islam, is strong in its hatred of Israel and in its determination to wipe Israel off the map. Islam is also violently against Christianity, and many Christians have already suffered and been killed by Islamic forces.

The growth, influence and objectives of Islam are a distinct latter-day phenomenon. The writer has believed for years that the Beast of Revelation is likely to be Islamic. As each day passes, the likelihood of this becomes more compelling, as Islam becomes more and more dominant and demanding all over the world. The threat of Islam against Israel is also very significant.

How does this fit with Daniel's prophecies about a latter day evil power which is the final evil power in the image of Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel makes it clear that this power will be cruel and vicious. Daniel gives us a glimpse of this terrible final power:

*"I saw in the night visions and behold, a fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceeding strong. It had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue with its feet" (Dan 7:7-8).<sup>1</sup>*

It was different from all the Beasts before it, and it had ten horns. *"I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before*

*which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (Dan 7:8).*

The description of the Beast in Revelation is remarkably similar to Daniel’s description of this fourth Beast. The Beast of Revelation will be “allowed to make war on the saints and conquer them, and authority was given to it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it . . .” (Rev 13:7-8).

Compare these words with

*“As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them . . . As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down and break it to pieces” (Daniel 7:21, 23-25).*

*“As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High” (Dan 7:24).*

Further, Daniel’s little horn will have “eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things”, and the Beast of Revelation will also have “a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words”.

### **The three horns**

If this interpretation is correct, Daniel’s fourth Beast is Islam, and the little horn will grow out of Islam and will therefore be Islamic.

Daniel states that the little horn will destroy three of the ten horns. This indicates that there are nations in these last days which will have Islamic influence within them, but which do not sufficiently reflect Islamic aims and philosophies in the eyes of fundamental Islamism. These nations are likely to be pro-western and therefore unacceptable to fundamental Islam.

Three of these nations will be overthrown (plucked up) “by the roots”. Their un-Islamic governments will be overthrown and replaced by an Islamic government.

### **Who are these three nations?**

There are current developments in the Middle-East which could indicate that the three nations (three horns) may be Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.

The Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, has now been toppled. There is a widespread belief that once elections are held in Egypt (later this year) an Islamic government will be voted into power. The next few months will determine whether this is the case. If so, we may have seen the first of the horns of Daniel “*plucked up by the roots*”.

Lebanon’s government is also currently in danger of being overthrown by Hezbollah, an Islamic regime backed strongly by Iran and Syria.

In past weeks, Jordan's King Abdullah has sacked his government in response to Islamic demands. Will it, too, be replaced with an Islamic government? Jordan is already feeling the strain of Islamic demands upon it.

All of these three nations are pro-western. If their governments are replaced by Islamic governments, Israel will be surrounded by Islamic governments in the north, east and south. The Mediterranean Sea is to the west. Israel would be completely ringed about by its Islamic enemies.

If the next few weeks or months bring about Islamic governments in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan, it is suggested that we will be witnessing the overthrow of the three horns in Daniel 7 by the little horn (Islam). If so, we are very close to the time of great tribulation spoken of by Jesus and by Daniel (chapter 12), and therefore very close to the time when the Beast will begin to rule for the 3½ years prophesied by Jesus in Revelation 13.

### **Israel's isolation**

Students of Bible prophecy are well aware that Israel must eventually stand alone in isolation from all other nations. Already, most countries of the world are anti-Israel. Up to now, Israel could count on its main allies as being America, Jordan and Egypt. If Egypt and Jordan are overthrown by Islam, and if Lebanon is governed by the Islamic Hezbollah, this will have the effect of isolating Israel even more.

There are two factors that could result in Israel losing America as an ally:

- 1) President Obama is already showing real signs of being somewhat pro-Islam and pro-Arab in his political philosophy. Israel no longer enjoys 100% support from America's government.
- 2) America's economy is weakening. It has massive institutional debt — most of it with oil-rich Arab nations and China. This is a decidedly insecure and shaky situation for America. If its economy "falls over", it will no longer be able to support Israel or anyone else. There will also be major implications for all world economies.

Israel is therefore facing a potentially dangerous situation. Once it stands alone, without allies such as America or Egypt and perhaps Jordan, it will be vulnerable to the long-expected attack against Jerusalem.

The current Islamic activity in the Middle-East could all contribute to a situation where Islamic nations would attack Jerusalem, knowing that Israel will have no-one to come to its aid.

### **The attack on Jerusalem**

The Scriptures make it clear that the expected attack on Jerusalem will leave it in ruins, with its people taken into exile. Here are three powerful prophecies expounding this:

*"I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses plundered and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into exile . . ." (Zech 14:2).*



*“O God, the heathen have come into Thy inheritance. They have defiled Thy holy Temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins . . . Let the groans of the prisoners come before Thee. According to Thy great power, preserve those doomed to die! Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbours the taunts with which they have taunted Thee, O LORD” (Psa 79:1, 11-12).*

*“ . . . For it (Jerusalem) is given over to the nations and they will trample over the holy city for 42 months” (Revelation 11:2).*

Revelation 13:5 tells us that the Beast will rule for 42 months (3½ years). Daniel 7:25 says that the little horn will rule for “a time, two times and half a time” (3½ times).

Once Jerusalem is attacked, the time period of 3½ years is given on several occasions in scripture. We therefore know that the attack on Jerusalem will signal:

- The beginning of the rule of the Beast, and a time of great tribulation for Jews and Christians.
- The trampling down of Jerusalem which will be left in ruins.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to draw attention to events happening right now in the world. Prophecy warns that these things could well occur just prior to the return of Jesus.

If current political happenings in the Middle-East and the natural disasters which are taking place at the moment are reflective of latter-day prophecy, then it is highly likely that Jesus’ return is imminent.

It is always unwise to try and put a time on the return of Jesus, but in view of what is taking place in the world, we are probably looking at a few short years before he returns, rather than decades.

“Lift up your heads”, for we can expect to shortly see our Lord returning in power and great glory to gather his elect, and begin the great work of establishing God’s world-wide Kingdom.

*Ian Hyndman (Beechworth, Victoria, Australia)*

### Notes:

1. All quotes are from the RSV.

## An Opposing View

In fairness, the following critique is contributed by another brother to point out that there are disparate views within the brotherhood of the significance of the events we see unfolding in the Middle East. This is not done, however, in an effort to undermine the fact that we all expect the soon return of our Lord.

### The Foundation thesis of the article is that Islam = Beast

Problems with the thesis:

- 1) The Beast of Revelation 12, then 13 is undoubtedly linked to the Daniel’s 4th Beast in chapter 7.

- a) It is impossible for Islam to fit this link historically since it had no ties to Rome or the Roman empire at the time the 4th Beast came into power.
  - b) Further, the latter day portion of Daniel 7 must be compatible with the latter day portion of the Beast in Revelation — again, Islam does not fit this compatibility test.
  - c) The author jumps in at Dan 7:7-8 and applies this to Islam, but where is the link to the 3rd Beast and to the 4th section of the image in Daniel 2? Daniel 2 and 7 must be seen together.
- 2) Islam does not fit the geographical or historical identification of the Gogian host in Ezekiel 38.
  - 3) While it is true some Islamic nations will be involved in the attack against Israel and Jerusalem, this does not warrant the conclusion that Islam must therefore be the Beast.
  - 4) The Beast is linked to the Great Harlot/Babylon (Rome) in Revelation 17 and ridden by Babylon, the city which not only had dominion over the kings of the earth in John's day, but also holds a dominant position in the last days. The thesis would require Islam and Catholicism not only to join forces, but for the Vatican to play a governing role over Islam in the last days — does the author really believe such to be a sign of the times that we should look for?
  - 5) The Catholics would welcome this interpretation because it eliminates any involvement of the Papacy with the prophecies in Daniel 7 in which the Papacy is condemned by God for having made war on the saints for 1260 years; the author rightly links the prophecies of Daniel 7 regarding the 4th Beast and the little horn with the corresponding prophecies in Revelation 13, but then applies all to Islam.
  - 6) If the 4th Beast is Islam as well as the little horn, who were the first three Beasts? Who were the first three metals of the image in Daniel 2? All the parts of prophecy must hang together. The author has sectioned out just the 4th Beast and attempted to apply an interpretation that leaves the 4th Beast completely disconnected from Beasts 1-3.
  - 7) Of great concern is that the author has adopted Christianity's mistaken view that there is a 3½ year period at the time of the end for the Beast to rule. This aligns closely with the teaching of a future antichrist and again removes all responsibility from the Church; this interpretation will encourage Christadelphians to look for a future Beast and fail to recognize the false system that Paul in 2 Thessalonians and John in Revelation state has plagued the world since the first century.
  - 8) The author's views on future events in Revelation is also evidenced in his application of Revelation 8,9 and 16 to judgments Jesus will bring upon his return as well as his application of Rev 11:2 and 13:5 to future events. Many would apply all these to events already fulfilled.

Finally: All the pieces must tie together. Without this, we have no clear and consistent view, only a series of jigsaw pieces.

*A Concerned Brother*

## Response to critique

First, my article was not intended to be a treatise on all the beasts mentioned in Daniel. It was only meant to deal with the rise of Islam and possible developments concerning the destruction of the three horns (nations) mentioned in Daniel 7.

However, I can understand the concern of the brother who prepared the critique who obviously feels that the other beasts should be considered in the context of the Daniel's fourth beast is to be understood. It may be helpful, therefore, if I explain where I am coming from.

There are three basic premises underlying my thoughts on the rise of Islam, and the matter of the three horns which I have suggested are part of the rise of Islam:

- a) I believe that Revelation is primarily a view of the future, not an historic view of world events, and particularly concerns events in Israel and the Middle-East.
  - 1) This view may have the immediate effect of "turning off" the brother in question, as it was the view of Bro. Thomas and many other Bible commentators of his time, and also today, that Revelation should be seen in an historic context.
  - 2) Nonetheless, it is my view that Revelation can be viewed from a future perspective, not solely an historic one. There are scriptural reasons for this, and I would be happy to present them further if necessary.
- b) I believe all prophecy about the latter days is Israel/Jerusalem centered.
- c) The visions of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel and the beast of Revelation are all descriptions of the powers which have persecuted and oppressed Israel over the centuries (3,500 years).

The base scriptural passage about these persecuting powers is found in Revelation:

*"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition; and the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel to behold the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes, he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition" (Rev 17:8-11, RSV).*

It is suggested that the seven kings mentioned here are the seven powers that have persecuted Israel since their time in Egypt: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, Islam.

The beast that was and is not (the eighth) belongs to Islam (the seventh), and is likely to be the long awaited Mahdi of the Islamic world. When Nebuchadnezzar had his dream, two of those powers had already passed — Egypt and Assyria, so the vision commences with Babylon.

Similarly, Daniel's vision of chapter 7 (the four beasts) was given right at the end of the Babylonian oppression, and just before Babylon was taken over by the Medo-

Persians. Therefore, the first beast is Medo-Persia, not Babylon:

Lion	— Medo-Persia
Bear	— Greece
Leopard	— Rome
4th beast	— Islam

The Roman Empire was the oppressing power when John wrote Revelation (as instructed by Jesus). Thus, John wrote that “five kings have fallen” (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece), “one is” (Rome), “and the other has not yet come” (Islam).

### **The woman who sits on the beast**

There is little doubt that the woman is the Roman Catholic Church, or the Roman Catholic Church and Europe acting together. It is not inconceivable that The Roman Catholic Church will work with Islam. In fact, the Church has already set up a dialogue with Islam to see how they can best work together.

Revelation 17:16 tells us that the beast will destroy the woman. (i.e. Islam will destroy the Roman Catholic Church and perhaps Europe as well). This suggests that Islam will use the Roman Catholic Church in achieving its aim of dominant rule in Europe, and when it no longer needs the church, it will destroy it.

### **Judgments on the nations**

If the futurist approach to Revelation is correct, then the judgements on the nations described in Revelation 8, 9 and 16 will be carried out by Jesus immediately on his return.

**The beast is future:** For the beast to make war on the Lamb, the beast (Islam) has to be in existence when Jesus returns.

### **Closing comment**

I appreciate that the views expressed above (albeit briefly) are not our traditional views on prophetic interpretation of latter day events. However, I believe them to be soundly based on scripture. My views on Revelation are contained in a book available online at [bibleprophecy.bigpondhosting.com/rev/index](http://bibleprophecy.bigpondhosting.com/rev/index)

Whatever interpretive view we take on latter day events, it does not diminish or change our strongly held fundamental belief in the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Ian Hyndman*

**Editors Note:** *this article, with its critique and response, is presented in order to stimulate a discussion of the relevance and meaning of the current events in the Middle East. It is not intended to minimize the value of the work of the pioneers in discovering the meaning of the prophecies, particularly in Daniel and Revelation.*

## Reflections

### Where is the Middle East Heading?

We are not the only people looking at the current turmoil in the Middle East, and considering how it might impact Israel. I was amazed to hear Richard Engel, the experienced Chief Foreign Correspondent of NBC news, make the following comment. He did so on Wednesday, April 13, 2011, while discussing the events of the day in Libya.

“This whole movement in the Middle East, I’m worried about it because while people in the region deserve more rights and they want more rights and they’re embracing more of the will of the Arab street, well, the will of the Arab street is also ferociously anti-Israel, against Israel.

And there’s many people who believe that if you empower the Arab street and the Arab street wants to see a war or wants to see more justice for the Palestinians, that, down the road three to five years, this could lead to a major war with Israel. It could also force a negotiated settlement. But I think, over time, this thing ends in Jerusalem”.

*Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)*

### “Do not be alarmed”

In the Olivet prophecy, Jesus saw troubles coming upon the world, both in the immediate future and perhaps also in our own day. He intended his words to relieve the fears that God’s people might experience as those times of trouble drew near:

*“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come” (Matt 24:6; cf Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9).<sup>1</sup>*

*“Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken... When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away” (Luke 21:26, 9).*

God’s people, if they listen to Jesus today, understand that there is no cause for fear, or “losing heart”, because of all the rumors swirling around. In the ultimate sense, none of these temporary troubles make any difference, because the one absolute certainty in the situation is this: The Lord God of Israel is in control, of all nations and all rulers, as well as of His own people.

For us, this exhortation can be very helpful. Because we have an intense interest in the Bible and the fulfillment of its prophecies, we may get caught up in short-term political observations. We may be led to make predictions about national and world affairs, with a feeling of certainty far beyond our capacity to know. Or

we may be easily led here or there by others who make such predictions. Some brothers, by speaking or writing, develop reputations as political-Biblical prophecy ‘experts’, trying to outguess all others as to the next big events that are coming on the world stage.

In such an environment, we may become addicted to the ‘guessing game’, and to the ‘experts’ who act as though they know for certain what the future holds. We call it ‘being interested in the signs of the times’.

Around us today, there may be rumors in the land, about violence that may occur, natural disasters that may prove calamitous, would-be rulers warning about the dire consequences of what other would-be rulers may bring down upon us all. These threats often prove to be unfounded in the long run. Many such threats in the past seemed real enough when first suggested, but never came to pass. Nevertheless, these dire predictions, even if they never materialize, can pose very real threats of their own for us all.

The danger is two-fold:

- 1) We may find it impossible to consider such ideas without falling into the same trap against which Jesus warns: We may lose heart, grow alarmed, and be filled with dread at what may be coming in the world. Such feelings are counterproductive of the simple faith and childlike trust which Jesus exhorts us to develop.
- 2) The second danger is that we may believe every political prediction we hear — especially the ones which come from other believers. If we put too much stock in ‘the next big thing’ that this one or that one tells us is sure to happen, only to find next month or next year that in fact it hasn’t happened as expected, then we may find ourselves disappointed, or even disillusioned. In such a state we may move to the other side of the spectrum, telling ourselves, or others: ‘How can we believe anything that anyone says about coming events?’ Or even worse, we may think, or say: ‘Since many predictions haven’t come to pass, and so many things continue on more or less the same year after year, how can we even believe the Bible anymore?’

A much better course is this:

- a) Don’t get carried away with every ‘*wind of teaching, or doctrine*’ (Eph 4:14), especially when it is stirred up by speculative prophetic interpretations. Keep in mind that many faithful believers lived and died without ever knowing what some Bible student at the present time may think is terribly important to understand.
- b) Keep everything in perspective. When someone says, ‘Here’s what’s going to happen next’, don’t get agitated. Take a deep breath, and wait a while to consider how much sense this new idea makes. Study to see how it fits alongside the basic truths of the Bible.
- c) Remember: Many righteous people in the past have been surprised by how and when Bible prophecies came to be fulfilled in their day. It is not a sin to understand prophecy only after it has been fulfilled. By the time we all stand before Jesus Christ, it will make no difference whether we got all our details

right as to how and when Bible prophecy was to be fulfilled.

- d) Above all else: Don't worry! If the best way to avoid worry is not to think about the latest rumor, fear, or perceived threat to the world that some brother tells you about, then by all means don't feel guilty. Just smile and ignore what he has to say.

The great scientist and Bible scholar Isaac Newton wrote: "The folly of interpreters has been to foretell times and things by this prophecy [the Book of Revelation], as if God designed it to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event; and His own providence, not the interpreter's wisdom, might be then manifested thereby to the world."

Again, concerning the book of Revelation, its objective can be stated quite succinctly: "The theme of the Book of Revelation is simple enough. Regardless of disasters, despite sufferings, in spite of the seeming victories of the gross and the wicked, there is a power in righteousness that will ultimately prevail. It is a frivolity to scan through the pages of the Apocalypse for hints and clues as to the likely date of doomsday, when the real point of the Book is not the date itself, but the urgent need to straighten up while there is still time!"

Finally, we would also do well to remember Paul's great words of assurance:

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... I am convinced that neither death nor life... neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"*  
(Rom 8:35,38,39).

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

#### Notes:

1. All references are from the NIV.

## Eliza



One afternoon, Eliza found herself walking down one of the many dirt tracks connecting the rural communities scattered throughout Kenya. She was carrying nothing, just the clothes she was wearing. Much worse, however, was the fact that she had nowhere to go. She was one of the unwanted girls of Kenya. Wandering not knowing where she was going, or what the future might hold. There was no one to care for her. No one to show her love. No one to tell her things would be okay. No mother. No father. No grandparents. No friends. No mentors. No brothers. No sisters. Absolutely alone. Little did she know, her journey that afternoon would change her life.

Sometime earlier Eliza's mother had died and her father was unable to provide for her. She moved to live with her grandmother, but with time she too was unable to provide for Eliza. So she moved on to a relative, but was considered a burden, an unwelcome guest. There she was made to work fermenting alcohol from early in the morning to late in the night. All she did was work, day in and day out. Her dreams of going to school faded away. Finally, she had had enough. So she left — with nothing, just the clothes on her back. A young, beautiful, teenage girl — unwanted and alone. And so she wandered.

As she was walking along that dirt track she spotted a white man in someone's home. She was intrigued and wondered if maybe he was a missionary who could help her. She decided to stay close by as she was too shy and afraid to approach the home. After a few days staying nearby, she mustered the courage to enter the home where she had seen the white man. She had found her new home. The home was that of Bro. Justus and Sis. Annette, a local Christadelphian couple that for over a decade has been transforming the lives of hundreds of children in the area. And so, Eliza was added to their family.

Agape in Action has been supporting the children under Justus and Annette's care since 2007. Initially through the Child Sponsorship program and now through the Lela Home, the younger of these children are being cared for. The older young people, including Eliza, are residing in Kimbilio (Swahili for 'refuge'), which is an 'extension' to the home of Justus and Annette that was completed by Agape in Action in 2009.

There are over 35 young people in Kimbilio; many have similar stories to that of Eliza. From troubled and tragic backgrounds, they have found new lives in this place of refuge. From being unwanted and unloved, they have found a family that truly cares. They are all in school or pursuing trades. Eliza has just completed her tailoring trade. These young people are connected to a wide network of Christadelphian youth in the area that form a vibrant part of the Kamakuywa ecclesia. In January 2010, eight of the young people in Kimbilio were baptized, including Eliza. Others continue to study and we pray that they too may also decide to become part of a very special family with a Father that will never abandon them.

Bro. Justus and Sis. Annette encapsulate the very spirit of Agape in Action. For the past decade, this couple has put their love into action on a daily basis by taking in over 100 orphaned and unwanted children and young people. They have given these young people much more than life and opportunity. They have given them a hope.

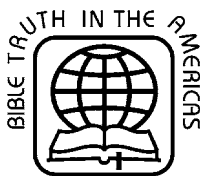
*From the Agape in Action Annual Report 2010*

**In the U.S., donations to Agape in Action may be sent to:  
521 Valmont Drive, Monrovia, CA 91016**

**In Australia, donations to Agape in Action may be sent to:  
14 Windemere Road, Albany Creek, QLD 4035**

**In Canada, U.K., N.Z., and elsewhere, donations may be sent to:  
39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON N1G 1A2, Canada**





## Bible Mission News

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### Guadalajara – An Ecclesia on the Move!

Warm greetings from the Ecclesia in Guadalajara.

This first quarter we have been blessed with many visiting brethren willing to help out our effort here in Guadalajara. We are very grateful for the blessings of the time, expense and ministrations given by all these loving brethren. In January we had Bro. Michael Conner from California give us a Bible study and exhortation on Sunday, then Bro. Gordon Dangerfield from Victoria, BC, Canada, for a week in which he gave four classes on the First letter from the Apostle John and an exhortation. For two weeks, we enjoyed the company and service of Sis. Malu Farias from Veracruz during her school break. The second half of February, we enjoyed the classes on the Holy Spirit given by Bro. Bill Rawson. Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol Rawson worked daily in our Bible Center which allowed us to have some time to prepare the new location.

We were compelled to move by the presence of a new neighbouring business which constantly played loud and offensive music. The move seems to be a blessing as we have found a place that is cheaper and about the same square footage. We moved March first and have already acquired some new contacts from the new neighbourhood and don't seem to have lost any of our regular attendees. March 13th we had a potluck to say welcome to all in our new hall.

Bro. Dennis Paggi from California was just here this second weekend in April and gave three classes on the Apostle John... the man and his background, and an



**New Hall in Guadalajara has an inviting appearance, with pamphlet display, and a place to sit and read with a coffee. This works well, since someone is there most of the day.**

exhortation. This complemented well the study we had with Bro. Gordon and one of our regular Bible classes in which we were studying the Signs in the gospel of John. Our other classes right now include the study of Abraham by Harry Whitaker, Called to be of Jesus Christ (Romans) and "If we live by the Spirit..." both by Bro Bill Rawson. Our Bible Center is open daily and gives three public classes a week and various personal classes. We have about 25 regular contacts who visit us to study the Word of God.

Please note we are planning a campaign in the first week of August. Please contact Bro. David Lloyd, davidlloyd@earthlink.net, if you are interested in helping out with the campaign. If these dates don't work for you but you would like to come help at another time, please let him know that as well. Guadalajara is busy daily and could especially use the help of some sisters who are good at preparing lessons for very young children. Spanish is not necessarily required to be able to help. Keep our effort in your prayers and please contribute what you can to CBMA... it looks like we are very close to our Masters return and there is much work to be done.

*Much love in our Masters Name, Your sister by grace,  
Cynthia Paiva*

## Baptisms in Brazil — no Ecclesia yet . . .

It doesn't necessarily take an ecclesia for baptisms, and that's certainly the case in Brazil. Faithful sending of correspondence courses, and Skype baptismal instruction and personal visits are just another way to preach the Truth.



On Bro. Jim Hunter's latest trip to Latin America he was able to baptize Sis. Geselia Maria de Oliveira in Recife and Bro. Pedro Galeano in Mossoró. Sis. Geselia was baptized in the Atlantic Ocean on March 31, and that was followed with the Breaking of Bread and giving the right hand of fellowship back at the hotel. Our new sister (on the right) was accompanied by one of her friends.

On April 4, after a couple of flights from Recife, Bro. Jim was able to spend some time reviewing, interviewing and baptizing our new Bro. Pedro. Bro. Pedro first came in touch with us in June 2003, and this was followed with correspondence course lessons. Fortunately





he is Paraguayan and speaks Spanish, so we can communicate well. The baptism came off very nicely in the ocean about 35 minutes east of Mossoró. The Breaking of Bread and receiving into fellowship were done at Bro. Pedro and his wife's house in the city.

This was a busy but very rewarding trip to Brazil, since Bro. Jim ended off his travels visiting Bro. Emerson Acosta and his family in

Porto Alegre for a number of days for studies, and a Breaking of Bread with Bro. Emerson. We pray that God will help these three members of the brotherhood in Brazil remain steadfast, in isolation. Thankful with today's inexpensive communication methods, the Hunters can keep in contact with them on a regular basis.

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,  
Publicity  
Christadelphian Bible Mission  
of the Americas*

**Bro. Emerson Acosta  
and his family**



## **Baptism in Puerto Rico — the first one in 25 years!**

After many years of no activity with regard to baptisms in Puerto Rico, we are very happy to report the baptism of Roberto Perez Martinez. He is a 69 year old retired university professor with 35 years experience in a chemistry lab. He lives in the neighborhood of Bro. Miguel and Sis. Aida Robles in Ponce, Puerto Rico — who were both baptized in the mid-80's — the only active Christadelphians on this Island.



Bro. Miguel and Roberto have known each other for years, but late last year Bro. Miguel noticed Roberto starting to walk in his neighbourhood on a regular basis, but with a very sad countenance. After enquiring, Bro. Miguel found out that Roberto's wife of 43 years had passed away, which left him a very lonely and sad man. Subsequently, Bro. Miguel started conversations and then study with Roberto once or twice a day ever

since. Roberto started studying via **labiblia.com**, our Spanish language website which has correspondence courses that are mailed to the student by Sis. Jean Hunter.

Bro. Miguel baptized Roberto Friday morning, March 18th in the presence of Sis. Aida and Bro. Miguel's oldest son Miguelito (about 40). A lifeguard was present and assisted in a neighborhood pool. Bro. Miguel, Sis. Aida and Bro. Roberto shared their first Breaking of Bread the next Sunday morning at Bro. Roberto's place.

Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter have said for several years that some of their best response has been from Puerto Rico, and Sis. Jean has close connections with many in this country. We are reviewing appropriate follow-up for Bro. Roberto and the other contacts for 2011.



*Submitted by Sis. Jan Ber-  
neau  
CBMA/C Publicity*

**Bro. Miguel Robles Lugo,  
Bro. Roberto Perez Martin  
and Sis. Aida Robles**

## **Reintroducing the CBMA**

On April 9 and 10, the Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) met with the members of the Moorestown and Washington, DC Ecclesias to discuss the work of the CBMA as well as the many volunteer opportunities available to members.

The Lord has greatly blessed us by providing a window of opportunity to preach widely across the Americas. Currently, there are 45 overseas ecclesias in the Americas, with nearly 1,000 brothers, sisters and Sunday School members. The work has historically been built by the efforts of mission workers who have dedicated, in some cases, decades of their lives to working in Latin America and the Caribbean. This work has slowly spread the Truth into areas where new ecclesias have been established over time.

However, the "model" for CBMA Mission work is changing. New technologies, such as the Internet, have accelerated the penetration of the Truth in the Americas. While we will always consider our "on-the-ground" mission workers the backbone of CBMA work, there are now many opportunities for brothers and sisters to make substantial contributions to the work in shorter time spans and in some cases from their own homes. The "reintroduction" of the CBMA was designed to inform the brothers and sisters of Moorestown and Washington, DC

of the new volunteering model and some of the exciting work that currently exists. There are four separate categories of volunteer opportunities that the CBMA presented.

**Introductory mission trips** — These trips are scheduled to be conducted in a number of areas in 2011-2012 (Lord Willing). These trips are led by CBMA representatives that have familiarity with each country and the ecclesias to be visited. The tour guide will provide a taste of Mission work and introduce participants to our wonderful brothers and sisters in these countries. If you are considering Mission work in the future, an introductory trip is a good investment of your time and money.

**Participation in Mission Work** — The CBMA introduced several immediate opportunities to be part of planned campaigns or ongoing outreach in the Caribbean. These volunteer opportunities are appropriate for all willing workers and prior experience and Spanish language skills are not required.

**Individual Volunteer Opportunities** — These are important contributions each brother or sister can make right from their own home. Examples include on-line tutoring, writing on-line articles and Works of Faith financial contributions.

**Ecclesial Volunteer Opportunities** — A number of Works of Faith opportunities represent good matches for ecclesias and/or Sunday Schools. It involves collecting materials and resources needed in Latin and Caribbean ecclesias as well as raising funds to improve halls or repair the homes of members in Mission areas.

As you can see, there is something for all! We encourage you to volunteer today for one or more of these exciting opportunities and make a difference in the Americas.

For questions or to get information on volunteer work, please contact Bro. Dave Jennings at [djennings@cox.net](mailto:djennings@cox.net). To see a full list of current Works of Faith opportunities please look at the **CBMA.net** website or contact Sis. Jan Berneau at [jberneau@earthlink.net](mailto:jberneau@earthlink.net).



*Submitted by Sis. Jan  
Berneau  
CBMA Publicity*

**Presentation to the  
Moorestown and  
Washington, DC  
Ecclesias**

## Addresses for Bequests and Donations

**Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA)** supports preaching work throughout the Americas, Truth Corps, etc. Visit [www.cbma.net](http://www.cbma.net) for current activities as well as to make US dollar donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941, or contact [jeffandkellie@gelineau.org](mailto:jeffandkellie@gelineau.org)

**Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC)** supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and bequests for similar activity. Visit [www.cbma.net](http://www.cbma.net) for an update on current activities as well as to make Canadian dollar online donations. Donations by cheque should be sent to Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, Canada, V3R 0J7

**Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF)** supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Ray Pratt, P.O. Box 88, Deland, IL 61839-0086. Website: [wcfoundation.org](http://wcfoundation.org)

**CBMA Overseas Book Service** welcomes gifts of used Bibles, reference books, and Christadelphian books. Please contact Jan Berneau, 1221 N. Whitnall Hwy., Burbank, CA 91505-2110.  
Phone: 818-842-2868  
[jberneau@earthlink.net](mailto:jberneau@earthlink.net)

**Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee** publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696, [www.tidings.org](http://www.tidings.org)

**Christadelphian Tape Library.** Contact Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923.  
Phone: 732-381-4590  
Fax: 732-499-8415  
[christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net](mailto:christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net)

**Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation** provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Clive Daniel, 8583 Sansum Park Drive, North Saanich, BC, V8L 4V7, Canada

**Agape in Action** provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to 39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2 or 521 Valmont Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 or via website [www.agapeinaction.com](http://www.agapeinaction.com)  
Email: [agapeinaction@rogers.com](mailto:agapeinaction@rogers.com)

**Christadelphian Save the Children Fund** provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy mission areas.  
[www.christadelphianchildren.com](http://www.christadelphianchildren.com)

**Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas** funds projects to support those in need in North and South America and the Caribbean. [www.cmadfa.com](http://www.cmadfa.com)

**Christadelphian Heritage College** c/o Brantford Ecclesia, 442 Dunsdon St., Brantford, ON, Canada, N3P 2B1

**Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH)** donations in US dollars can be sent to CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457-5012

**Karolyn Andrews Memorial Fund (KAMF)** provides help in cases where brethren or families have been victims of persecution because of their faith. Checks in any currency to KAMF, c/o P.O. Box 87371, Canton, MI 48187-0371

**Joy Fund, Inc.,** provides grants to ecclesias, individuals, and families to assist with basic needs. c/o Stan Newton, 6861 Skyview Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647-2938

**Spanish language literature** is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, email: [jdhunter@gte.net](mailto:jdhunter@gte.net)

**Christadelphian Care Line** fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. 866-823-1039

**Alcohol Help Line** fully confidential help for overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039



## News & Notices

(Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month;  
please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.)

### **HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON**

Our Sis. Margo Maier has transferred her membership to the Niagara Falls, ON Ecclesia. We pray for the Father's blessing to be on her in her new ecclesial home.

*Tom Thorp*

### **HONESDALE, PA**

Bro. Ron Frisbie (Echo Lake, NJ) visited us on April 24, 2011, to share our meeting and Bible study. We are glad to welcome all brothers, sisters, and friends to our meeting. Our Memorial meeting is at 10:00 am followed by Bible school at 11:00 am every Sunday, God willing. Bro. Walter and Sis. Nancy Garing are the proud new grandparents of a baby boy, Tyler Shawn Garing. Congratulations!

There is a new recording brother at the Honesdale, PA Ecclesia. It is Bro. Stephen Demarco. His email address is [stephendemarco@verizon.net](mailto:stephendemarco@verizon.net), and his telephone number is 607-797-7991.

*Stephen J. DeMarco*

### **VICTORIA, BC**

We rejoiced in the recent baptism of MEGAN MCSTRAVICK on February 26, 2011, in a lake. Sis. Megan is the daughter of Bro. Mike and Sis. Sandra McStravick, and the granddaughter of Bro. Horace and Sis. Sylvia Macpherson.

We received by transfer from the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia, Sis. Ann Sandoval. Our sister is a welcome addition to our local fellowship. Bro. Chris and Sis. Naomi Winter have been transferred back to the Kamloops, BC Ecclesia. Bro. Thomas and Sis. Esther Cawston have been transferred to the New Westminster, BC Ecclesia. We wish our departing members God's richest blessing in their new ecclesias.

We enjoyed the presence of Bro. John and Sis. Angela Hellawell for our Study weekend on March 5, 2011. Bro. John also provided exhortations, lectures and a Bible class while they were here. Bro. Simon Snobelen led the classes at our recent Annual Pacific Northwest CYC Conference at Shawinigan Lake. We welcomed many brothers and sisters over the past six months including Bro. Joel and Sis. Amy Thorpe from Mississauga West, ON. Bro. Joel gave the words of exhortation.

On Saturday, February 5, 2011, we held a Bible Mission Fundraiser that included an evening meal and an auction. We were pleased to be able to raise about \$10,000.00 for CBMC.

Our semi-annual Joint Arranging Meeting will be held on May 7, 2011. We welcomed brethren from the four Island ecclesias for these valuable events. Bro. Shane Kirkwood will provide our classes for the Annual Fraternal Gathering to be held on September 2-4, 2011. His theme will be, "Psalms for the Journey." For further information please contact the undersigned at [csnobelen@csll.ca](mailto:csnobelen@csll.ca).

*Clyde Snobelen*

## **Minute Meditation**

### **Gold is tried in the fire**

Roy Posner wrote, “The greater the opposition, the greater the opportunity.”

We feel seriously tested when we face opposition, especially relating to our religious convictions. God sends us these trials as opportunities for us to more vigorously examine the scriptures and to proclaim its principles. If we are defending the principles of the Truth against a hostile world, we know we must stand fast against error, hoping to convert those in darkness to the hope of life eternal. When we debate doctrinal points with our brethren, we feel equally impelled to defend what we see as scriptural truth. However, it is important to remember that we must exemplify a Christ-like spirit while speaking up. It is possible to be in the right and still sin in defending what is right. The end does not justify the means.

Unfortunately, it is a human characteristic to think that because we believe that our cause is right we can run rough-shod over those who are standing in our way. In our zeal we can sin grievously against those who oppose us. History is full of examples of religious persecution, when one group, convinced of the righteousness of their cause, forcibly attempts to convert others, with the lofty goal of bringing more sinners to repentance. Sadly, it is the true followers of Christ who often are the ones persecuted because no true follower of Christ would use those tactics. Jesus taught us by example how to respond to those who oppose us. Peter tells us that the Lord, “when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:”

Paul tells us that we should follow the Lord’s example and “being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:” Paul is not suggesting that we should compromise our beliefs, but that we must defend the truth in a Christ like manner. Paul tells us how, “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”

Of course, most people do not think that they are opposing themselves, for as Solomon tells us, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.” It is important for each of us to examine ourselves and to search the scriptures, as those in Berea did, to make sure that our understanding is correct. We may be trying to serve our Lord but be doing it in the wrong way, as David discovered when Uzzah was killed in David’s first attempt to bring back the ark. We may assume that we have God on our side when actually we do not. We humbly need to seek to align our thinking with godly ideals, as Joshua discovered when he asked the man with the sword, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” The answer was “No,” to both. The man was the captain of the Lord’s armies, an angel. Even though Joshua was Moses’ successor, he could not assume God was on his side. Joshua learned to rethink his position, that he must diligently seek to know the will of God and do it, to be an effective leader of God’s people.



It requires great patience on our part to defend the truth and do so in meekness as Paul admonishes us to do. The one thing we should be doing is praying for those who are opposing us. This command comes from our Lord who said, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

Jesus not only told us to pray for those that oppose us, he showed us how to do it. On the cross he prayed for those who were crucifying him: “Then said Jesus, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’” God’s answer to that prayer possibly began immediately, for as Jesus fell asleep we read that “Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God.’” Who was that centurion? We do not know for certain, but we wonder if the prayer was specifically answered when a little later Peter is sent to Caesarea to baptize Cornelius the Centurion.

Prayer is powerful. Prayer changes us, and when we pray for those who are opposing us, it will help us deal with them in a Christ-like way. We are promised that we will be tested and we will be tried, which means that we must not be surprised when we face opposition. We are given these opportunities to defend our faith and learn to endure trial with patience. Paul had many enemies in and out of the Truth, so we should not expect less. God is a righteous judge who will do right. Isaiah tells us, “Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.’” If we truly tremble at the word of God, we may suffer persecution for our beliefs, but Isaiah’s words give us comfort that though we may be persecuted now, in the end faithful service will be rewarded.

It is how we respond to our trials when we are being tested that is important. We are to actually rejoice when we are tried. Peter tells us, “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

*Robert J. Lloyd*

## **Coming Events (Lord Willing)**

(Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.  
Three months is preferable.)

### **JUNE 2011**

**3–5 Meriden, CT**, Spring Study Weekend. Bro. Cliff Baines (Sussex, NB). Theme: “Practical Principles in Peter”. Contact Bro. Stephen Harper 203-440-0504, sharper.rn.ocn@att.net.

**4-5 NY Fraternal** at the Ozone Park Ecclesial Hall. Bro. Mark Vincent: “The Books of Wisdom”. Contact Bro. Ben Drepaal at yerubbaal@yahoo.com.

**4 Simi Hills, CA** Study Day with Bro. Peter King speaking on the subject, "Isaiah: Prince of Prophets". Classes begin at 9:00am.

**10-12 New York Sister's Retreat.** Split Rock Resort and Golf Club, PA. Speaker Sis. Letisha Blair-Lamour (Mt. Pleasant, Jamaica). Topic "Being Born of the Spirit" on Christian Living. Cost of weekend is \$286.50 per person. Please make checks payable to "NY Metropolitan Sisters' Retreat". Mail to Sis. Averil Ferguson, 814A Tilden Street#5B, Bronx, New York, 10467. For information, contact Sis Averil Ferguson 718-881-8705 or [averilpsm23@juno.com](mailto:averilpsm23@juno.com).

**19-25 California Christadelphian Kids Camp** for ages 9-16. Ojai, CA. Speakers Bro. Ken Styles and Bro. David Wisniewski on Elijah. Contact Bro. Tom Graham at [tom@bigbrand.com](mailto:tom@bigbrand.com).

**19-25 Rocky Mountain Bible School,** Glenwood Springs, CO. Speakers Bro. Mark Vincent: "The Quest for Meaning in Ecclesiastes"; Bro. Dennis Paggi: "The Miracles, Wonders, and Signs of Jesus Christ"; Bro. Simon O'Grady: "Knowing our Lord Jesus Christ, His Name and Titles". Contact information provided at [www.denverchristadelphians.org](http://www.denverchristadelphians.org) or contact Bro. Josh Livermore at 303-288-3966.

**30-July 5 Calaveras Family Bible Camp,** Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Arnold, CA. Bro. Jason Hensley on the topic "The One Who Made Israel to Sin". For more information, contact Bro. Brian McDonald at 626-335-3787 or [bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com](mailto:bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com).

## JULY 2011

**1-4 North Battleford, SK** Shekinah Study Weekend. Bro. Dev Ramcharan will be speaking on the First Epistle of John. Contact Sis. Laura Jackson at [t.jackson@sasktel.net](mailto:t.jackson@sasktel.net).

**1-7 Terra Nova Christadelphian Bible School** will be held in Terra Nova Park, Newfoundland. Speakers and subjects are Bro. Joni Mannel (Walsall, UK): "At the breaking of bread " and Bro. Frank Abel (ON): "Wait on the Lord". For complete information and registration please visit our website [terranovabibleschool.com](http://terranovabibleschool.com). Contact Bro. Gary Hynes, 32 First Street, Mount Pearl, NL, Canada A1N 1X8 (709-747-2750); [contact@terranovabibleschool.com](mailto:contact@terranovabibleschool.com).

**2-10 Mid-Atlantic Bible School,** Shippensburg, PA. The theme this year is "O Taste and See that the Lord is Good" – Psalm 34:8. The Youth Program theme will be "Occupations in Scripture". The speakers are Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas, TX): "The Gospel in the Law and Prophets" to the adults and "The Truth Affirmed" to the teens; Bro. Simon O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand): "Knowing our Lord, Jesus Christ, His Name and Titles" to the adults and "Daniel and His Story" to the teens; Bro. Michael Owen (Seaton, UK): "Christ-Centered Families in the 21st Century" to the adults and "Finding the Joy of the Truth" to the teens. Registration forms on website <http://www.christadelphians.net/macbs>.

**9-16 Fifth annual Manitoulin Family Bible Camp** on Manitoulin Island. The speakers are Bro. Neville Clark (Adelaide, AUS): "Moses — The Man of God" and Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): "Walk Worthy of the Calling with which You are Called." Contact [www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com](http://www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com) or Bro. Rick Sales [ersales@xplornet.com](mailto:ersales@xplornet.com) or 519-925-6847.

**10-16 Southwest Bible School** will be held at Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Speakers are Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, NZ): "Revelation — Exhortations from the Apocalypse", Teen class: "Encounters with a Risen Lord"; Bro. Stephen Palmer (Cardiff, Wales): "Ezra and Nehemiah"; Teen class: "David and Solomon"; Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Spiritual Muscle for the Five Big Mistakes"; Teen class: "Lessons from Daniel".

Registration information at [www.swcbs.org](http://www.swcbs.org) or by contacting Bro. John Clubb at (940) 636-0412; [jclubb4081@aol.com](mailto:jclubb4081@aol.com); 1612 Douglas, Iowa Park, TX 76367.

**16-24 Eastern Bible School**, Connecticut College, New London, CT. Theme: "Set Your Minds on Things Above". Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch North, NZ): "The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels"; Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): "Idolatry in the 21st Century"; Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "The Re-Creation of Zion". For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers, P.O. Box 296, Auburn, MA 01501, or [cindy.nevers@tecbs.org](mailto:cindy.nevers@tecbs.org) or visit our website [www.tecbs.org](http://www.tecbs.org).

**23-30 Christadelphian Bible Camp**, Manitoulin Island. Theme is "Looking unto Jesus". Speakers will be Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, NSW, AUS): "Impressions of Christ" and Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, NZ): "Joseph – 'God did send me before you to preserve life' ". More details on website [www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca](http://www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca). For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at [jabrowning@rogers.com](mailto:jabrowning@rogers.com) or phone 1-416-284-0290.

**23-31 Midwest Bible School**. Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are Bro. Ed Binch (Avon, IN): "Jehoshaphat: Being Saved by God's Grace"; Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "The Angels of God"; Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch North, N.Z.): "The Current Work and Role of Christ". Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Drive, Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, [mike.live@gmail.com](mailto:mike.live@gmail.com) or visit [www.midwestbibleschool.com](http://www.midwestbibleschool.com).

**24-30 Pacific Coast Bible School** Idyllwild, CA. Speakers are Bro. Craig Blewett (South Africa): "The Message we have heard"; Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "To Speak Well of God"; Bro. Steve Hornhardt (AUS): "Come and See — A Consideration of Revelation 3, 6 & 12". Contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 9306, [mail@gelineau.org](mailto:mail@gelineau.org) or Bro. Gary Patterson [garympatterson@hotmail.com](mailto:garympatterson@hotmail.com) or visit our website [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://www.californiabibleschool.org).

**31 - Aug 6 CBMA** Old fashioned Bible Campaign in Guadalajara, Mexico. Many preaching activities, fellowship, devotionals/hymn sings, a Bible School class each night etc. Learn a little Spanish during the week and meet and work with your brethren in a growing Hispanic ecclesia. No Spanish required. Ages 18 and up in this preaching effort. Contact Bro. David Lloyd at 818-352-6486 or [davidrlloyd@earthlink.net](mailto:davidrlloyd@earthlink.net).

**31- Aug 6 Rogue River Bible School**. Speakers are Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "Waiting for the Lord", Bro. Graeme Osborn (Vernon Okanagan, BC): "Weapons of our Warfare" and Bro. Steven Hornhardt (Salisbury, Adelaide): "Come & See — Witnessing for Christ". [rogueriverbibleschool@gmail.com](mailto:rogueriverbibleschool@gmail.com) or Bro. Rob Posey at 541-474-6963.

## AUGUST 2011

**20-26 Winfield Bible School**. Theme: "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in You." Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX): "The House of Prayer for All Nations"; Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Australia): "Philippians: Shine as Lights"; Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "Hebrews: The Power of Faith in Jesus Christ". Registration: Bro. Don Zantingh 250-545-5988 [donzantingh@hotmail.com](mailto:donzantingh@hotmail.com) Accommodation: Bro. Harold Cawston 250-478-0343 [h\\_jcawston@shaw.ca](mailto:h_jcawston@shaw.ca).

**27-2 September Vancouver Island Bible Camp**, Camp Pringle, 2520 West Shawnigan Lake Road, Shawnigan, BC. Our speakers are Bro. Shane Kirkwood: "Encounters with the Master"; Bro. Stan Isbell: "Godly Mariners and Ships on the Sea – Lessons from the Bible of Men, Their Ships and the Sea"; Bro. Bill Link: "The Lord Shall Yet Comfort

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### **SEPTEMBER 2011**

**3 Moorestown, NJ**, Labor Day Study Day. Bro. Richard Palmer (UK): "Reflections on Science and the Bible". Contact Dan Langston for more information; [dklangston@gmail.com](mailto:dklangston@gmail.com).

**11-16 Adult Study Week**, Daily Interactive Bible Study on "The Life of David", at Wildwood Manor, Ballinafad, ON. For information about the workbook, or to register please contact Bro. Jack and Sis. Shirley Robinson [jrobin@worldchat.com](mailto:jrobin@worldchat.com) 519-448-1696 or Bro. Peter and Sis. Margaret Stonell [thestonells@hotmail.com](mailto:thestonells@hotmail.com) 905-627-9428.

### **OCTOBER 2011**

**8 Brantford, ON**, Thanksgiving gathering. Copetown Community Centre. Speaker will be Bro. Roger Long (Coventry, UK).

**8-9 Echo Lake, NJ**, Fall study weekend. Theme is "Making use of the senses we are born with" and our speaker is Bro. John Parry (UK).

**21-23 Women At The Well Retreat**. Miracle Hot Springs Resort in Palm Desert. Sis. Nancy Brinkerhoff (Denver, CO) on "Hannah's Prayer." Contact Sis. Bonnie Sommerville [kenandbonnie@simihills.org](mailto:kenandbonnie@simihills.org) or send a non-refundable \$50 check made out to Sis. Bonnie Sommerville, 19111 Kinzie St., Northridge, CA 91324. Phone: (818) 341-3932.

### **NOVEMBER 2011**

**12-13 Sarasota, Largo and Orlando, FL**, Study weekend. Bro. Phil Prater (Paris Ave., OH) will lead a study in "The Seven Abominations" based on Proverbs 6:16-19. Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at 239-849-3301 [jameslwilkinson@hotmail.com](mailto:jameslwilkinson@hotmail.com).

### **DECEMBER 2011**

**24-30 Third Ontario Winter Bible School** Best Western Highland Inn, Midland, ON, Canada. Theme: "The Faith that Works by Love". Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Adelaide, AUS): "Jehoshaphat - The King who sought Yahweh with all his heart" and "The Spirit of the Law" (teens); Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Rugby, UK): "The Message of Nehemiah: Faith in the Face of Adversity" and "Building on the Walls with Nehemiah" (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, (Hamilton Book Rd, ON): "Loving our Neighbour: A Study of the Second Great Commandment" and "Reasons to Believe" (teens). Contact Sis. Barbara or Bro. Ron Kidd Apt.510, 110 Belmont Drive, London, ON, Canada N6J 4W3 (Tel: 519-690-0391; e-mail: [rbkidd@rogers.com](mailto:rbkidd@rogers.com); or visit our website: [www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com](http://www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com).