

# 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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## Despair

*"Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution" (Kahlil Gibran).*

*"A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair" (Abraham Heschel).*

*"It is impossible for that man to despair who remembers that his Helper is omnipotent" (Jeremy Taylor).*

*"Failure is not fatal. Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. It should challenge us to new heights of accomplishment, not pull us to new depths of despair. From honest failure can come valuable experience" (William Arthur Ward).*

*"I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history. I refuse to accept the idea that the 'is-ness' of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'ought-ness' that forever confronts him" (Martin Luther King, Jr.).*

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

# Editorial

## Presumption

*"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).*

### The Thief on The Cross

The story of the thief on the cross is very well known — more perhaps for the use made by other denominations concerning heaven going than for the true message of the account. But the true message of *"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"* is not my primary concern: it is our use of what the account does not tell us, rather than what it does. To quote a typical Christadelphian commentary:

*"We indeed justly!"* That thief spoke for all mankind when he uttered those words, but especially for those who repent. Impaled though he was on the cross, he had in his heart repented, and was at the foot of the cross of Christ, confessing that he was a sinner, and that only the Lord Jesus could save him. On the other hand, his fellow stayed symbolically where he was because he would not repent. Sin crucifies us all in the end — rich or poor, handsome or plain, eminent or lowly — *"for every man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets"*. And there is no way out except to do what the thief did, that is, to "die" with Christ, knowing that if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. Preeminently, in dying with Christ, the thief did, in fact, what others have simply to do in symbol in the waters of baptism. He died with Jesus in good conscience; and in faith, if so be he also might attain to the resurrection of the dead. Hence his petition: *"Savior (Jesus), remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."*<sup>1</sup>

And again

"The contrast between the two malefactors can hardly be missed, and is indeed picked out markedly by Luke's choice of word "other" — a different kind of man. The one ends his days foaming out bitter curses and sarcastic sneers at Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. The other not only rebukes him but also acknowledges his own fate as well-deserved. His estimate of Jesus is remarkable: *"This man hath done nothing amiss."* Inevitably the question leaps to the mind: How did he know that Jesus had done nothing amiss? Even if taken in a vague, general way as signifying: This Jesus has committed no bloody crimes as we have, his words are sufficiently startling as betraying a knowledge of the kind of man Jesus was and the work he had been doing. But if the words are taken at their face value then it would seem that this thief had known Jesus before, and known him so intimately as to be able to say with emphasis: *"This man hath done nothing amiss; his character is without any blemish; none has ever convicted him of sin."*<sup>2</sup>

So we have apparently two malefactors, both of whom started their time on the cross by upbraiding Jesus, following the account in Matthew. One then rebuked the other, according to Luke's account, and recognized the true person of the Lord Jesus, who had done no wrong. And so this second thief was rewarded with *"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."* We read no more of either thief: both clearly died the same day as Jesus. Jesus was raised on the third day, and the second thief was assured of a place in the future kingdom — in the paradise the earth will become.

So the presumption is that the first thief did not repent, and therefore was condemned out of his own mouth. But are we certain? The time frame of the crucifixion was for many hours of pain and suffering, and undoubtedly there was more said than is recorded for us.

There is a saying, attributed to St. Augustine, that illustrates this:

Do not despair one of the thieves was saved.

Do not presume one of the thieves was damned.

The first phrase of the couplet indeed is an expression of the Christian hope: that despite the situation, faith in the Lord Jesus can result in salvation. How much the second thief knew of Jesus beforehand we are not told, but certainly, with his mind not wholly focused on his own imminent demise, he could recognize both the innocence of Jesus, and the power residing in that Son of God. His petition *"remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"* is a prayer we could all echo, but few can begin to appreciate the example of this thief. He is one of many, outside the group of disciples and apostles, who expressed a degree of faith not found in the expected followers of Jesus. We can think of the Roman centurion's answer to Christ's offer to heal his servant, and which called forth the Master's exclamation, *"I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel!"* Of the Samaritan leper, who amongst the ten who were healed, alone returned to Christ to offer thanksgiving. Indeed, of the centurion who upon the death of Jesus declared *"Certainly this was a righteous man."*

The example, then, of the second thief is of great comfort to those troubled by their own inability to live up to the high standards set up by our Lord Jesus, who feel impelled to echo the words of the tax collector *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* There is no doubt the thief deserved to suffer his judicial death, as we can perhaps see from Mark *"And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection"* (Mark 15:7). However, there is no doubt of his ultimate reward. So, in our darkest moments, the beacon of the destiny of the thief serves as a vital remembrance of the grace and mercy of God and of His son, Jesus.

### **The Other Thief on the Cross**

But what about the other thief, the one who railed at Jesus and was then rebuked by his fellow victim? Do we feel he is an example of those who were told *"except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* By silence, we presume he did not repent — and was therefore condemned, as we will be unless we repent. And thus we presume that those who do not apparently repent are doomed to eternal destruction. We

punctuate the phrase in our own mind as “Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned.” Thus we take it this to mean, as many have, that if we presume that our faith has indeed saved us, we could despite our efforts fall into the category of those on the left hand, condemned to the everlasting fire.

Or alternatively we could punctuate it differently, and take it as a warning not to presume about the destiny of any individual. After all, both thieves, according to the record, initially mocked Jesus.

*“Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, ‘he saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now, if He will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.’ The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth” (Matt 27:41-44).*

We know from the record in Luke that the one repented: but if we did not have this record, we would surely have presumed both thieves were subject to destruction. Arguing from silence is surely very dangerous. However we choose to interpret the saying, we must acknowledge there were not two crosses on Golgotha, but three. Jesus, by his presence there, as by his presence now, silences our every natural tendency to separate the world into sinners and saints. Without the evidence of Luke, we would have naturally said only one of the three on that Judean hill was destined to be saved. So can we be sure that only two were to be saved? There is a natural human wish to be able to categorize: winners, losers, those who triumph, those who fail. But these are not necessarily the categories that will ultimately be decided at the judgment seat.

*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt 7:21-23).*

We cannot tell who will be redeemed by external clues. Only God knows the heart of man — only Jesus, the judge, is able to make distinction between the saved and the damned. And we have to wait for the judgment for the truth to be revealed. Undoubtedly there were three present on the hill: but to presume we know the fate of all three is to presume upon the prerogative of God.

But as we should not presume, we should not despair. As we cannot tell who will be saved, we cannot tell who will be condemned. In the darkest periods of our lives, we can take refuge in the example of at least one of the thieves in the cross, who certainly will be remembered at the coming of Jesus.

*Peter Hemingray*

#### Notes:

1. John Mitchell, *The Christadelphian* : 1994, S. 131:371
2. Harry Whittaker, *The Christadelphian* : 1970, S. 107:449

# Exhortation

## Days of Infamy

### Days we Remember

July 4, 1776. December 7, 1941. November 22, 1963. September 11, 2001. All of these are dates that will live in infamy, and the mere mention of the date conjures an up an indelible image or a specific memory unique to one's experience. Many of the older among you will surely remember where you were on that day in November 1963 when JFK was assassinated. I will certainly never forget 9/11; being woken up, as usual, by the clock radio and hearing the DJ's describe the action while still being half asleep. Then, realizing that something very serious was going on, I turned on the TV to witness the full extent of the attacks. We are still living in the aftermath of the events of that day.

However, the events of those days didn't just "happen." In retrospect, those events weren't all that surprising. The path to the Declaration of Independence was years in the making. Relations between the colonies and Britain had been deteriorating since the early 1760's. The Revolutionary War had been going on for 13 months by the time independence was officially declared. The Continental Congress had empowered a committee of five in June of 1776 to write a formal declaration that underwent several drafts before it was formally approved.

The Japanese had been planning the attack on Pearl Harbor for almost a full year before it was carried out on December 7th. Some have even suggested that the US pushed Japan into it through a series of provocative economic and military decisions, such as the US seizure of all Japanese assets in the states and embargoing all oil exports to Japan. There is a conspiracy theory that goes something like this: the US wouldn't get in the war of its own accord, the country needed to be pushed so steps were taken that ensured a Japanese attack. The Japanese also took the move of the US Pacific Fleet from San Diego to Pearl Harbor as a direct threat.

Similarly, post 9/11 it came to light that the FBI knew about the hijackers movements in the US and their attendance at flight schools. Other warnings should have alerted officials, such as the intelligence briefing the President received only a few months earlier that was entitled "Bin Laden determined to strike inside US."

What's the point of this history lesson? Through it, I hope I have illustrated that things just don't "happen." Invariably, there are always signs, hints, foreshadowing.

Genesis 7:6 tells us that Noah was 600 years old when the flood began. Gen 5:32 tells us that he was 500 years old when he became a father. Sometime in that intervening century he was commanded by God to build the ark (Gen 6:14). Surely someone noticed Noah building this really big boat. I highly doubt Noah did this in secret. People must have seen what he was doing, and he should have received some sort of notoriety for what he was doing. In addition, I really believe

he must have done some sort of preaching to warn people, as is indicated by the reference in 1Pet 3:20.

Look at how God acted with Abraham with regards to His judgment on Sodom. He promised to spare the city if he found 50 righteous people there, then 45, then 40, 30, 20, finally 10. God was willing to be exceedingly merciful in that situation. I think it is reasonable to assume that if Noah had found other righteous people beside his family that they too would have been saved. Alas, it was not to be; the signs were ignored and only Noah, his wife, sons and their wives entered the ark.

## Foretelling Jesus

There is one thing of note about the Old Testament: it is rife with references to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus himself spoke of it; *“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself”* (Luke 24:27 NIV), and also Luke 24:44-45. Also look at John 5:46, which says *“If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.”* And what does Moses say? We read *“The LORD your God raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers...I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers”* (Deut 18:15,18).

Consider what God says to David *“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I establish the throne of his kingdom forever”* (2Sam 7:12-13). And consider *“But you Bethlehem Ephrathah...out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel”* (Micah 5:2). From this we can establish that he was to be of the line of David and born in Bethlehem. Confirmation of this comes in Matt 1:6, 16 and 2:1.

Consider also the prophecy *“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son...”* (Isa 7:14). And also God to David through Nathan *“I will be his father, and he will be my son”* (1Chron 17:13). These establish that he is the Son of God and Rom 1:2-3 confirms this; *“The gospel he promised beforehand...regarding his Son...a descendant of David.”*

Moreover, the Old Testament also mentions his message, what he would preach — Isa 61:1-2 and 50:4. We are there told the message was the “good news”, i.e., the Gospel (Isa 61:1).

The miracles Jesus would perform were also foretold, for example *“Then will the ears of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped”* (Isa 35:5). Matt 12:22-24 verifies this and also confirms that Jesus was to be rejected, which was said in Isa 50:6 and 53:3 (*“He was despised and rejected by men”*) as well as Psa 69:19-20. Indeed in his darkest hour, just before his death, his closest friends abandoned him — Matt 26:31-43. While his death was imminent the disciples couldn't stay awake while he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. And we know how his prediction of Peter's denial came true.

Jesus was asked by the disciples for the signs of the end when he would bring the kingdom. Jesus goes on to predict the destruction of Jerusalem that took place in A.D. 70. "...they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name" (Luke 21:12). Many of the apostles and other followers were persecuted and put to death by the Jews and Romans. He even tells them when it will happen; "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened" (Luke 21:32). Let's do a little dating here for a second. It is generally accepted that Jesus was born around 3 B.C. So, given that he was crucified at 33 he was saying this in A.D. 30. If a generation is 40 years then this gets us to A.D. 70.

Where does all this leave us? Quick story; some time in the mid 1990's in the basement of the Livonia, MI, ecclesial hall I was asked if I was going to go the Manitoulin Bible Camp that coming summer. I indicated that I would not, and was asked why. I responded that I don't sleep in tents. I was then asked what would I do in the kingdom? I said that; firstly, we didn't know where we would be sleeping in the kingdom; and secondly, if I'm there I don't think I'll be complaining about the sleeping arrangements.

My point is that I don't know what things in the Kingdom are going to look like, but I feel pretty confident that I'll like the way things are set up. My focus is getting there, doing the things in this life that I need to do, training my mind, keeping on that straight and narrow path as best as I possibly can, looking to the example that Jesus set for us on how to live and act and behave.

May 14th, 1948<sup>1</sup>, June 5th, 1967<sup>2</sup>, October 6th, 1973<sup>3</sup>, and December 9th, 1987<sup>4</sup> — the signs of his coming are all around us. Just read a newspaper or watch the news.

*"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26).*

We need to set our focus NOW, get on that straight and narrow path NOW, because when he does return shame on anyone who says, "wow, I didn't see that coming."

*Matt Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)*

**Notes:**

1. The British mandate over Palestine officially terminated at midnight, May 14, 1948. Earlier in the day, at 4:00 p.m., David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the creation of the State of Israel and became its first prime minister.
2. Start of the Six day Israel-Arab war where the Jews capture Jerusalem from Jordan and for the first time in almost two thousand years they control the City of David.
3. The Yom Kippur war when Israel captures Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.
4. Date generally regarded as the beginning of the First Intifada — the Palestinian uprising against Israel that is still ongoing today.

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*"If you do not want to fall, do not walk where it is slippery" (John MacArthur, Jr.).*



## Bible Study

### Leviticus and the Tabernacle (9)

Having walked our way around the Outer Court and through the Holy Place, we now enter the Most Holy Place, to see the substance behind this shadow.

Passing through the veil that separates the two rooms of the sanctuary, we recall that there is one piece of furniture in the holy of holies, the Ark of the Covenant covered by the mercy seat and overshadowed by the attached cherubim. It is here that the LORD dwells (Exod 25:8, 22; 1Sam 4:4; 2Sam 6:2; 2Kgs 19:15; 1Chr 13:6; Psa 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16).

#### **The Day of Atonement (Lev 16; 23:26-32; 25:9)**

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered into the Most Holy Place. By sprinkling the mercy seat and the altar with the blood of sin offerings for himself and the people, he made atonement for the tabernacle and the altar:

*“And he shall take of the blood of the bullock [of the sin offering, which is for himself, v11], and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (Lev 16:14-16; cf. 16:33; Heb 9:1-10).*

This “figure for the time then present” foreshadowed Christ’s offering of himself to cleanse heaven itself:

*“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption... It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb 9:11-12, 23-24).*

Of course, the tabernacle and the altar had not sinned; they needed to be cleansed because they were in the midst of an unclean people. Likewise, neither heaven nor our Father in heaven nor the angels in heaven with Him, had sinned; they needed to be cleansed in order for God to dwell among sinful mankind. So, fol-

lowing the pattern of the Day of Atonement, Jesus offered for himself and for the people (Heb 5:1-9).

Unlike the shadow in which the high priest offered every year, Jesus offered himself once for all time: *“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time without sin unto salvation”* (Heb 9:28).

We wait for him to return, to bring the high priestly blessing:

*“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them”* (Num 6:24-27).

In the meantime we sing: “To God be the glory, great things he has done! So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded his life — an atonement for sin, And opened the holiest that we may go in” (Hymn 132).

### **The Most Holy Place (Leviticus 25-27)**

**The Year of the Jubilee.** The section of Leviticus corresponding to the Most Holy Place (Lev 25-27)<sup>1</sup> includes the laws concerning the year of Jubilee:

*“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family”* (Lev 25:8-10).

Four classes of laws govern the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee:

- **Sabbath for the land.** The land was to lie fallow every seventh year (Lev 25:1-22; Exod 23:10-11).
- **Forgiveness of debts.** All debts between Hebrews were cancelled every seventh year; lending to the poor was encouraged, and this lending was to be without usury (Lev 25:35-38; Deut 15:1-11).
- **Redemption of slaves.** After six years of service, slaves (including those who were paying off debts) were emancipated (Lev 25:39-55; Exod 21:2-6; Deut 15:12-18; Jer 34:8-22).
- **Redemption of property.** Every 49 years in the year of Jubilee each family returned to the property they had been given in the promised land (Lev 25:10, 13, 23-34, 41; Neh 5:1-13).

The Spirit refers to these years as *“a year of rest”* (Lev 25:5; cf. Lev 25:2-6, 34-35), *“the year of release”* (Deut 15:9; 31:10; *“release”* occurs six times in Deut 15:1-18), *“the acceptable year of the LORD”* (Isa 61:2; *“acceptable”* is from the same Hebrew word translated *“enjoy”* in Lev 26:34 twice, 43; and *“accept”* in Lev 26:41, 43), *“the year of liberty”* (Ezek 46:17; cf. Lev 25:10; Isa 61:1; Jer 34:8, 15, 17), and the *“the year of jubile”* (Lev 25:13, 28, 33, 40, 50, 52, 54; 27:17, 18, 23, 24).

The year of Jubilee is the crown jewel of the law's lessons on the Kingdom Age. The historical foundation for these promises was God's redemption of Israel from Egypt to bring them into the land:

*"The land shall not be sold for ever: for **the land is mine**; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me... I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God... For unto me the children of Israel are servants; **they are my servants** whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Lev 25:23, 38, 55; cf. v42).*

Bro. Barling summarizes the significance of these relationships and the Jubilee:

"Land and People alike belonged to God in the ultimate sense... He intended the one to be the free inheritance of the other, and both alike to be a dwelling place for Him. The fiftieth year was but the pre-eminent reminder to the nation of this fact: it was superlatively the Year of Rest, both recalling the original occupation of the Land after the toilsome sojourn in the wilderness, and at the same time anticipating that glorious future era when the nation would at last attain to its ideal destiny and enter into the perfect Rest symbolized by the inner sanctuary of the Most Holy Place... It spoke of newness of life and also perfection of service—"It is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you" (*Law and Grace*, p 168).

"If sold, it [the land] automatically reverted in the great Sabbatical Year of Jubilee to its rightful tenant, whose inheritance it was... (Lev 25:10). It was like the occupation of Canaan all over again: it even brought release to the slave in the same way as the occupation had completed the release of those redeemed from slavery in Egypt... Coming, however, as it did once only in the adult life of the average man and woman, it must have seemed, when it did come, like the advent of the final Rest" (*Law and Grace*, p. 180).

Bro. Ashton connects the Jubilee trumpet and the trump of God at Christ's return:

"The sound was to be 'sent abroad... throughout all your land' (Leviticus 25:9 RV), suggesting that a sequence of trumpeters would sound the jubilee, with the blast rippling outwards from Jerusalem to the farthest borders of Israel. No wonder the apostle catches the echo of this once-in-a-lifetime release and speaks of the Lord's return to call his people from the grave 'with the trump of God' (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Like that great day of release from the snares of death, each man and woman would enter into God's rest" (*The Beauty of Holiness*, pp. 163-164).

Similarly, Bro. Barling identifies our situation, as we eagerly anticipate the ultimate Jubilee:

"We today are in the position of the Israelites when they awaited the return of Aaron from within the Tabernacle on the Day of Atonement. Jesus, having gone into heaven, will as assuredly return. To such as look for him shall he appear the second time without sin, unto salvation (Heb 9:24-28). Once again the trumpet will sound, and the great antitypical

Year of Jubilee will begin with the dead returning every man unto his inheritance” (*Law and Grace*, p. 200).

**The Gospel of the Jubilee.** Throughout his ministry Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and throughout he declares it to be a year of Jubilee. Early on he came to his hometown of Nazareth and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day:

*“And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:17-21).*

Jesus was quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2a LXX;<sup>2</sup> he inserted the phrase “*to set at liberty them that are bruised*” from Isaiah 58:6 LXX.

On the phrase “*to proclaim liberty*” (Isa 61:1), Kay writes, “The LXX has *aphesin*, as in Lev 25:10. In Lev 25:28-33, etc. *aphesin* is used for ‘jubilee.’—It was such a release, then, as involved a return to their lost inheritance” (*Speaker’s Commentary*, Isaiah, p. 292).

The Greek “*recovering of sight to the blind*” paraphrases the Hebrew “*the opening of the prison*” <06495 p@qach-qowach> derived from <06491 paqach>, which is commonly translated “*to open the eyes*” (see Gen 3:5, 7; 21:19; 2Kgs 4:35; 6:17, 20, 20; 19:16; Job 14:3; 27:19; Psa 146:8; Prov 20:13; Isa 35:5; 37:17; 42:7; Jer 32:19; Dan 9:18; Zech 12:4). Recovery from blindness and release from prison are linked in “***To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house***” (Isa 42:7), and in the Psalmist’s Hallelujah song of Jubilee:

*“Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul... Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. **The LORD looseth the prisoners: The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind:** the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD” (Psa 146:1, 5-10).*

Kay writes, “In reality:—the prison-house, from which man’s spirit needs to be delivered, is ignorance of God; and this may be viewed, on one side as blindness, on the other as darkness (2Cor 4:4, 6)” (*ibid*).

This was only the beginning of Jesus’ preaching the gospel of the Jubilee.

**Blessed are the poor.** A Jubilee year was a special blessing for the poor (Exod 23:11; Lev 25:25, 35, 39, 47; Deut 15:4, 7, 9, 11; Isa 61:1 LXX). After naming the twelve (Luke 6:12-16), Jesus opens his Sermon on the Plain with these Jubilee themes:

*“Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets”* (Luke 6:20-23; cf. especially Isa 61:1-3 LXX).

In response to John the Baptist’s inquiry, Jesus responds,

*“Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me”* (Luke 7:22-23; cf. Isa 35).

The poor are liberated from the slavery caused by debt, and are restored to their land, the land of the fathers, the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Lev 26:42-45).

**Don’t worry what you will eat, God will provide.** Every seventh year, including the year of Jubilee, the land was left fallow so it could rest (Lev 25:2-6, 11-12, 19). This might raise a reasonable concern, to which God responds:

*“And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store”* (Lev 25:20-22).

By addressing the same concern, Jesus implies they were in a Jubilee year:

*“And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on... Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls... And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind... your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:22-32; cf. Matt 6:25-34).

The Jubilee year setting of these words indicates they should not be taken as a general command to laziness (see 2Thess 3:6-15); instead, God’s provision for a sabbatical year means you worked hard for six years and God blessed you with sufficient abundance to “rest” yourself and the land in the seventh.

**Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.** Forgiveness of debts was a fundamental principle of the Sabbath year (Lev 25:35-38; Deut 15:1-11). Likewise,

Jesus preached, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt 6:12; cf. Luke 11:4; 6:37). At its core, this is an economic command; financial debt can enslave a person like few other masters. It also includes the forgiveness of sins, sin being the master of us all (Matt 6:14-15; 18:23-35; Luke 11:4).

**Lend freely to your poor brothers and sisters.** Requiring that all debts be forgiven every seven years could cause a significant damper on lending; God addresses this propensity to tight-fistedness:

*“At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that **lendeth** ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD’s release... If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him** sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. **Thou shalt surely give him**, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, **Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land**” (Deut 15:1-2, 7-11).*

Jesus echoes this command to be generous:

*“And if ye **lend** <1155 daneizo; cf. Matt 5:42; 18:27> to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also **lend** <1155> to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and **lend** <1155>, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful... **Give**, and it shall be given unto you” (Luke 6:34-36, 38; cf. Matt 6:22-24).*

*“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:33-34; cf. Matt 6:19-21).*

**The restoration of all things.** Nehemiah exhorted his brethren to keep the Jubilee (Neh 5:1-13), emphasizing the idea of restoration:

*“**Restore**, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. Then said they, We will **restore** them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest” (Neh 5:12-13; cf. 5:1-13).*

The Greek word for “restore” <600 *apokathistemi*> is a keyword of the gospel message:

- The man with a withered hand “*stretched it forth; and it was **restored** whole*” (Matt 12:13; Mark 3:5; Luke 6:10).
- Jesus put his hands again on the eyes of the blind man, “*and made him look up: and he was **restored**, and saw every man clearly*” (Mark 8:25).
- Elijah “*truly shall first come, and **restore** all things*” (Matt 17:11; Mark 9:12).
- “*Lord, wilt thou at this time **restore** again the kingdom to Israel?*” (Acts 1:6).

The covenant blessings and curses described in Leviticus 26 show that the LORD’s fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs is conditioned on the repentance of Israel (see especially Lev 26:40-45). Similarly, Peter preaches to the Jews in Jerusalem:

*“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of **restitution** <605 *apokatastasis*, from 600> of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).*

**The tabernacle of God is with men.** The covenant fellowship between God and His people is described as the LORD setting His tabernacle among them:

*“And I will set my tabernacle among you... And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Lev 26:11-12; cf. Ezek 37:21-28).*

This is a key feature of New Jerusalem, the heavenly bride prepared for her husband the Lamb (cf. Isa 61:10):

*“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev 21:3).*

Just as Mount Sinai, the Tabernacle, the Temple, Jesus, and the saints at Pentecost were each engulfed in the cloud of glory, the ultimate fulfillment of the LORD’s purpose is to turn the whole earth into a Most Holy Place filled with His Shekinah glory: “*But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD*” (Num 14:21; cf. Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14; Psalms 72:18-19). We celebrate this thought when we sing: “Hark! Ten thousand, thousand voices, Sing the song of Jubilee; Earth through all her tribes rejoices, Broke her long captivity... Yea, He reigns, the Great Messiah — In Millennial glory crowned; ‘Israel’s Hope’, and ‘Earth’s Desire’, Now triumphant and renowned” (Hymn 296).

Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX)  
(Series concluded)

#### Notes:

1. See article (5) in this series, *Tidings*, May, 2011. For example, the word “covenant” occurs eight times in Leviticus 26 (cf. Isa 61:8; Ezek 34:25; 37:26), connecting this chapter to the ark of the covenant which housed the tables of the covenant.
2. LXX (Seventy) stands for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

## Bible Study

### "As it was in the days of Noah" (8) "And The Ark Rested"

The Bible records that the Flood began on the 17th day of the second month of the year (Gen 7: 11). During the weeks that followed, the earthquakes and storms continued. That kept the waters that covered the earth in a state of turmoil (Gen 7: 24–8: 3). But God kept Noah and those with him in the ark safe. Psalm 29 offers the assurance that God was in complete control of what was happening: "*The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever*" (Psa 29:10). This passage illustrates that there is no time or place that is outside of God's dominion. That is a wonderful fact to keep in mind. There are going to be times when we are going to feel tossed and turned by life, just as Noah and the ark were heaved to and fro by the waves. But we need to remember that even though God's steady and loving hand is unseen, it is always present. He remains in control of our lives even when it seems that the world around is falling apart. And if we place our trust in Him, we can rest assured that He will guide and protect us, just as He kept the ark safe as it bobbed among the waters that had engulfed the earth.

And God's care extends beyond merely keeping us alive. He provides for our emotional needs as well. By itself, the ark probably would have been a pretty dreary place. So, God made provision. He had Noah bring lots of animals on board. Having them there to feed, to pet, and to play with would have made the ark a warmer and happier place. It would have made the many hours spent on the seas pass more quickly.

The welcome distraction the animals brought was certainly a practical benefit of having obeyed God's command to bring them onboard (Gen 7:5). Our Heavenly Father is caring and wise, and His commands are given out of love. Doing what He requires often yields natural benefits — as in the case of bringing the animals into the ark — in addition to eternal reward.

#### "God remembered Noah"

Gen 8: 1 records that "*God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark*". The phrase "*God remembered*" should not be taken to mean that God had somehow forgotten them for a while. That would contradict the many other passages that testify that God is continually aware of even the minutest events of our lives. Instead, "*God remembered*" is a phrase that is used throughout the Bible to signal when God is about to intervene to change a situation. For example, the Bible records that God "*remembered his covenant*" with the Patriarchs before He acted to send Moses to deliver the children of Israel from the Egyptians: "*And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them*" (Exod 2:24-25).<sup>1</sup>



Gen 8: 1 continues by describing the action that God took to change Noah's situation. He caused "*a wind to pass over the earth.*" It had the effect of calming the environment (Gen 8: 2). The violent storms ceased, and the waters began to recede (Gen 8:3).

Nautical experts have estimated that the bottom of the ark would have been about 12 feet below the waterline.<sup>2</sup> That meant that it could come to a rest while the land around it was still completely covered in water. So, after God calmed the sea and the waters had receded enough, it was able to do exactly that.<sup>3</sup> The ark came to a rest several months before the highest mountain peaks appeared out of the water (cf. Gen 8:4, 5).

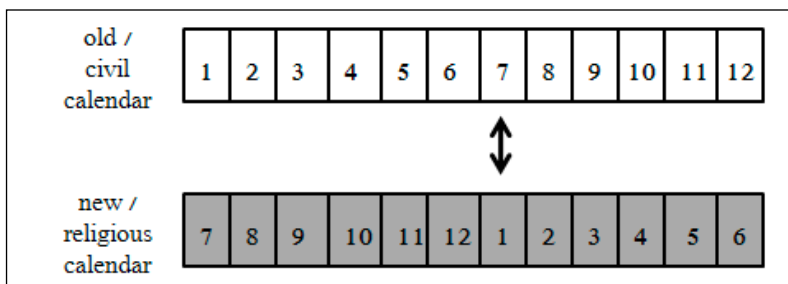
### **"In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day"**

The Bible records that the ark ended its journey on the "*mountains of Ararat*" 150 days after the Flood began: "*And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat*" (Gen 8:4). Note that the Bible uses the word "*mountains*" in this verse. The precise location of where it came to rest is not given. The Bible only provides the general region where the ark's journey ended, which is the mountainous area where the borders of modern-day Iran, Turkey, and Armenia converge. In fact, the Hebrew word translated "Ararat" in Gen 8 is rendered "Armenia" in 2Kgs 19:37 and Isa 37:38. There is a mountain in that area that is nearly 17,000 feet high, which is known as Mount Ararat today. But there is no particular reason to regard it as the final resting place of the ark any more than any of the other mountains in the region.

It is remarkable that the Bible focuses so much attention on the day that the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. It gives so little information about the five months during which the earth was covered in water, and almost the entire human population of the planet was extinguished. We are told that the Flood began on the 17th day of the second month (Gen 7:11). The ark came to a rest 150 days after that on the 17th day of the seventh month. That date is mentioned Genesis as "*And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days*" (Gen 7:24). It is mentioned again in Gen 8:3 and Gen 8:4. So, it really seems to be a point of emphasis in the account.

And that is probably because of what happened many centuries later on that date. To see the connection, however, it is important to realize that a new calendar was introduced when the children of Israel came out of Egypt. At that time, God ordered that the calendar be re-calibrated so that Passover would occur in the first month of the year: "*and the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you*" (Exod 12:1-2). That meant that the seventh month of the old calendar became the first month of the new calendar. See Figure 1.

The dates of the feasts in the Bible, such as the Feast of Tabernacles, are given using the new calendar, which became the ecclesiastical or religious calendar. The old calendar was retained and became the civil, secular, or non-religious calendar. Both continue to be used today.<sup>4</sup> What the calendar change meant is that the seventh



**Figure 1 Correspondence between the old and the new Jewish Calendar**

month of the old calendar — the month that the ark rested — is the same as the first month of the religious calendar.

So, let us consider what else happened in the first month of religious calendar, Abib. On the 14th day, Passover occurred: *“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’s Passover”* (Lev 23:5). That was the day that Christ died. On the 15th day of the first month, the first day of the feast of unleavened bread was observed: *“And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein”* (Lev 23:6-7). That was a Sabbath day. Then, on the week when Christ died, there was a weekly Sabbath on the 16th day of the month (Matt 28: 1) On the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, the firstfruits’ offering was made. On that day, the priest took a male lamb and offered it as a burnt offering, and he took a sheaf of barley from the firstfruits of the harvest and waved it before God: *“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD”* (Lev 23:10-12).

The ceremonies of that day were very significant. A male lamb without blemish was offered, symbolizing perfectly the sacrifice of Christ. Then a single sheaf of barley that had been cut down and died was held aloft and waved. Paul tells us what that symbolizes. It represents the resurrection of Jesus: *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept”* (1Cor 15:20). That ceremony took place “on the morrow after the Sabbath” following Passover. That was the first day of the week after Passover. That was the very day that Christ rose from the dead! And it was the 17th day of the first month of the religious calendar.<sup>5</sup> That was the same day that the ark came to rest on the “mountains of Ararat.” See Figure 2.

This connection between Noah and Christ has important implications for us. God caused the details about the end of the ark’s journey to be preserved when so many other parts of the story are omitted. Remember that there was a huge amount of human drama associated with the Flood. Had it been recorded, it could have oc-

<u>Date</u>		
14 <sup>th</sup> Abib	Passover	Christ crucified.
15 <sup>th</sup> Abib	Feast of Unleavened Bread, first day	
16 <sup>th</sup> Abib	Weekly Sabbath	
17 <sup>th</sup> Abib	Firstfruits	Christ resurrected.

**Figure 2 Events that occurred in the first month of the religious calendar**

cupied thousands of pages of text. But God does not care for human drama, and He does not want us to be preoccupied by it. He wants us to focus our attention on following in the footsteps of Christ. That is probably why the aspects of Noah's life that point forward to Christ are emphasized in the record. And when we see the Lord in the life of Noah, it is a reminder to us that people should be able to see the Lord in our lives as well. We will continue our consideration of Noah's departure from the ark in the next article in this series.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

**Notes:**

1. See also Genesis 30: 22 and Numbers 10: 9.
2. Jack Glover. "Thoughts on Noah's Ark." *The Testimony*, August 1995.
3. The LXX renders "and the waters asswaged" as "and the water stayed."
4. See, for example, Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.81. He states, "Moses...appointed Nisan...as the first month for the festivals...the commencement of the year for everything relating to divine worship, but for selling and buying and other ordinary affairs he preserved the ancient order (i.e. the year beginning with Tishrei)."
5. Rob Hyndman. *The Times: A Chronology of the Bible*, (Victoria, Australia: Bethel, 2000). Available at <http://www.robjhyndman.com/bible/times/times.pdf>

## ***New Editor of the Christadelphian***

*As some of you might have noticed from the September **Christadelphian**, it has a new editor, Bro. Andrew Bramhill. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the former editor, Bro. Michael Ashton over the past twenty-five years. He has provided a steady hand in these past turbulent years, and given freely in efforts and advice to us in North America. I am sure we will see him over here quite frequently in the future, and I am sure you will all join with me in wishing him well. I would not say "in retirement", for I expect his efforts for the Truth to continue, although perhaps not in the strenuous way his editorship required.*

# The Joy of Sunday Schooling

## Learning Together (1)

Sunday school teachers are used to working with mixed-ability classes. As in ecclesias, we do not separate off the intellectually bright from the slow. We can all learn from each other, appreciating the special contribution that each part of the body can make to the successful function of the whole.

Sometimes we may have in our Sunday school children who are “learning disabled”. They may have congenital abnormalities, like Down Syndrome; they may be brain damaged, or simply slow learners. They may have multiple handicaps. Some are easy to recognize by their physical characteristics. Others will be less obvious. But we shall soon be aware, as we teach them, that they have memory retention problems, difficulties with concentration and problems with understanding.

How like us! We have to admit that we are all “learning disabled” in the things of God. We hear the message and so soon forget it! We start the readings and find our minds wandering! We are all too often “fools and slow of understanding” in spiritual things.

If we remind ourselves of this, we shall be even more motivated to do our best for all the children in the class, whatever their capability. What is more, we shall encourage the class to respect all of the members. Cleverness is no passport to the kingdom. Humility and love are essential requirements. Children with learning difficulties provide a real opportunity for the strong to help support the weak. The disabled will often demonstrate strengths of their own that the more apparently capable may lack.

### The Lord's example

But how are we going to cope with such children and make their learning experience worthwhile, at the same time as managing the rest of the class? What did the Lord do with his slow learning disciples?

- 1) He cut through the complicated burden of the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees to get to the heart of God's message. The key points of any effective lesson will be simple and relevant.
- 2) With admirable patience he kept repeating the same points, over and over again.
- 3) He made extensive use of visual aids, drawing on the experiences of his listeners.
- 4) He engaged them in active learning. We all generally learn by doing faster than we learn by listening. He demonstrated his message and gave his disciples opportunities to have a go themselves! In fact the whole point of teaching people about God's kingdom is to enlist them into active service now, in preparation for the future.

## Keep it simple

Take the story of Naaman (2Kings 5). Much of the detail and KJV Bible language that the more able children can grasp will be lost on the less able: e.g., Syria, “mighty man of valor”, leprosy, mistress, prophet, talents, raiment, rending of clothes, flesh, rivers of Damascus.

But we might successfully link the story to the children’s own experience: being in someone else’s house without your own mom and dad, being kind and helpful to a sick person, going to the doctor (would taking a big present make any difference?), being obedient — medicine is not always welcome!

At the heart of the story is the lesson to be kind and helpful in all situations, and to be obedient to God. We shall want to emphasize that baptism is a key demonstration of such obedience. A simple proof, like “*You must obey the voice of the LORD your God*” (Deut 27:10), would be appropriate.

Of course, the lesson will not be all talk. Some activity will be needed — drawing and coloring, simple model-making, dramatization, filling in missing words, checking off the right answers, a simple word search. Clearly what is possible will depend on the capabilities of the class. Where there is a great range of ability and maturity, different activities will be needed to meet differing individual needs. The teacher’s knowledge and experience of each child is the guide.

## Involve the parents

Education is a partnership, involving parents, students and teachers. Sometimes disabled learners are not easily able to communicate with parents what has gone on in the lesson. But if we teachers can get the parents working with us, how much more effective the process of learning will be. So we must talk to them, spend time finding out what they can tell us about their child’s abilities and interests. They can help us to find out what succeeds. We can seek their cooperation in preparing for the lesson, in following up by reinforcing the message, by ensuring that any follow-up task is managed successfully.

Above all we must remember that the key partner in our work is the Lord, himself. His attitude to us will be the inspiration for our attitude to each of our students!

*Michael Owen (Seaton, UK)*

**Sunday school resources coming soon on the Tidings website:**  
**<http://www.tidings.org/>. Can you help preview Sunday school materials before they are posted on the web? Please contact Bro. Jim Harper at [sundayschool@tidings.org](mailto:sundayschool@tidings.org).**

## ***Tidings on Facebook***

*There is a now a Facebook page for the **Tidings**. Hosted by Bro. Levi Gelineau, it currently posts the Daily Readings along with some other comments. In future we hope to add relevant News and Notices, so please “Friend” this page. (Bro. Levi can be contacted at [leviandjessica@gmail.com](mailto:leviandjessica@gmail.com).) [And if you have no idea what I am talking about — do not worry!]*

## Reflections

### Overcoming the Dens and Caves of Life (3)

In the previous two articles, we have considered how David had confronted some of the caves of his life, either in physical or mental peril and anguish. We conclude this theme, continuing David's experiences and contrasting them with those of Jesus Christ.

#### 6) Reaching Out to Others

In 1 Sam 22 we find David escaping Gath for the Cave of Adullam. Perhaps we can picture him hiding in the recesses of this dank, dark cave warily watching for Saul and his troops. Chapter 22 also explains that David did not spend all his time in the cave alone. Instead, his brother's and father's house gathered to meet him in the cave (1 Sam 22:1), and this small group grew daily to include *"everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented [Hb. bitter of soul]"* (1 Sam 22:2), until 400 men had mustered around the former captain of Saul's army!

One might naturally assume that David and this troubled crew shared a mournful 'pity party' amidst the solitude of the cave. However, David could clearly see that the strength of this group lay not in collectively commiserating over their troubles, but in elevating each other and channeling their energies into something positive. This could only happen if someone provided strong leadership and spiritual guidance, and so, David bowed to the privilege and "became a captain over them" (1 Sam 22:2). Gradually, through David's organization and ability to draw out the best from people, "this desultory, low spirited company was forged into a closely knit, responsible and loyal troop, energized by the courageous, godly, faithful strength of a man who 'had not where to lay his head' ".<sup>1</sup>

There are several powerful lessons to observe from this moving record. When we learn of someone who is experiencing troubles, it may be our first inclination to avoid them. Perhaps we do not know what to say, or how to help. We may steer a wide course from them, fearful the dark and despair of another's cave will swallow us up. Rather, when we are aware of the struggle, we should take the example of David's family and 'go down to the cave', reach in with a helping hand and assist those who are "bowed down" and "among lions" (Psa 57:4).

While suffering in the cave, we can become completely focused on self: our problems, our challenges, our misery, what I need, what I am dealing with. The magnitude of our trial may indeed be quite serious and burdensome (it is not to be minimized!), but we will benefit greatly, at some point, by shifting our focus from self to others.

David and his crew would gain nothing by collectively wallowing in their personal distress, debt and discontent. This only serves to further rot and destroy ones spirits. Instead, listening to others, comforting the downtrodden, helping lift others

from the mire, and sharing the confidences we have in God can help restore our spirits and move us forward. Granted, God as a comfort provided the 400 men to a lonely, anxious man, but they also became his responsibility. As God had ‘sheltered David under His own wing,’ so David saw a need to shepherd this flock of sheep threatened by beasts of prey. In effect, it also became an opportunity to “*praise thee, O LORD, among the people*” (Psa 57:9).

With David as captain, the gloom of the cave was swiftly swept away. Adullam means ‘justice for the people,’ and it was here that David began to rebuild the justice which Saul’s faithless leadership had destroyed. It is remarkable to observe that the number of men following David grows from 400 to 600 in the space of one chapter (cf. 1Sam 22:2 with 1Sam 23:13). It is equally striking that Adullam is described as a cave in 1Sam 22:1, but shortly thereafter as a stronghold (Hb. fortress) (1Sam 22:4 ESV)! God had ‘answered David’s prayers’ (Psa 142:1,6), ‘brought his soul out of prison,’ ‘compassed him’ (Hb. to crown, as a captain) about with the righteous’ (Psa 142:7), and provided him ‘refuge under His wings’ (Psa 57:1).

When we channel our energies into Godly support and leadership, it is amazing how the cave can, with time and patience, slowly dissolve and give way to God’s warmth and light.

## **7) Exiting the Cave**

It would be a mistake to assume that David readily applied the aforementioned solutions, and immediately ‘the storms of destruction passed by’ (Psa 57:1). Although we do not know how long David abode in Adullam or En-gedi, the Psalms suggest a prolonged stay, accompanied by a protracted struggle to come to grips with the trial. The battle between the ‘carnal mind’ (Rom 8:7) and the ‘inward man’ (Rom 7:22) was intense, as evidenced within the Psalms by the frequent flip-flop of confidence and despair. Trust in the Father was not developed overnight, rather it took time and tears.

It also took time before David was ready to rise and exit the cave. He had found refuge, respite, friends and family while in the cave. Perhaps life had stabilized, and the thought of moving from the cave, only to expose himself to Saul and the risk of greater distress, was strong motivation to stay put.

Our personal trials may also require a prolonged struggle, in which God-centered solutions do not come about immediately. The caves may crush our spirit and deplete our energy. Often, it is challenging to shake off the despair, draw near to God, and work with Him to overcome our challenges. Emerging from the cave is not an easy process.

But, prayer cannot simply be presumption. “Prayer is cooperating with God. It does not leave everything to Him, nor does it ignore His help”<sup>2</sup>. If we ask God to help us with our burden, He expects us to act on our prayers. David could not pray for refuge from Saul and then stand waiting in the open fields of the Shephalah for his imminent destruction. Likewise, he could not pray, “Bring me out of prison” (Psa 142:7) if he was not willing to look for the exit and firmly grasp God’s hand as He drew him from the pit.

Eventually, divine direction came to deliver David from the danger. The prophet Gad meets David and tells him to “depart, and go to the land of Judah” (1Sam 22:5). It was time to exit the cave and find safety, but it was also a test of David’s obedience. Without questioning, David and his men accept God’s guiding hand and travel onwards to the forest of Hereth some 20km north near Hebron.

There comes a time in our own cave experiences, hard as it may be, when we must do the same. Pick ourselves up, stumble from its dark recesses to the opening, and though blind to the future, move forward in full confidence that God ‘knows our way’ and will continue to be ‘our refuge’ wherever we may reside ‘in the land of the living’ (Psa 142:3,5). In *The Man David*, Harry Tennant provides a touching summary of this last solution:

“Weeping relieves feeling and betokens inner emotions, but it does not solve problems. Out of our tears finally, if they are to be of value to us, there must emerge a resolve of spirit. Perpetual and inconsolable grief is defeat and self-destruction. However great the burden, however irreplaceable the loss, however terrible the desolation which brings about our sorrow, for the follower of Jesus the moment must come when, having poured all our tears into God’s bottle, we lift up our head and say ‘Arise, and let us be going!’ ”<sup>3</sup>

### **Christ and the Cave**

David’s experiences at Adullam and En-gedi are two of the most prominent ‘cave events’ in Scripture. Yet, the most significant is contained in the New Testament. While preaching to the Jews in Antioch, Paul summarizes the account when he says *“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre”* (Acts 13:29). The word ‘sepulchre’ or ‘tomb’ is the same Greek word translated ‘cave’ in John 11:38 whereby John describes the burial place for Lazarus. It is heartening to recognize that even Jesus spent time in a cave.

The Old Testament foreshadowed the power of this event many years earlier. In Josh 10, we find Joshua mounting a battle at Gibeon against the united forces of five Amorite kings. Collectively, the kings represented the sin that Israel was commanded to remove from the Promised Land. In an attempt to evade Joshua, the kings flee and hide in the Cave of Makkedah, several kilometers north-west of the Cave of Adullam. When Joshua finds them, he has the men dragged from the cave, and instructs his captains to place their feet on the necks of the kings (Josh 10:24). Afterwards, *“Joshua smote them, slew them, and hanged them on five trees ... And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave’s mouth”* (Josh 10:26-27).

The events at Makkedah pointed forward to the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The feet placed on the necks of the five kings are an echo from Gen 3:15 where the head of the serpent is to be crushed by the heel of the seed of the woman. In effect, sin (as represented by the kings) was slain by Joshua (a type of Christ),



hung on a tree to die, removed in the evening and placed in a cave behind a great stone (Mark 15). Although God rolled the stone back and raised Christ from the cave (Mark 15:46), sin was left behind, never to exit again.

Once again, God's salvation is illustrated through events surrounding a cave. The very man that released others from physical, emotional and spiritual caves (e.g. Lazarus, Legion) was saved from the cave and freed from the shackles of sin. His release from the cave is surety of our own salvation. Ultimately, it is sin that brings us to the cave, but 'king sin', along with our human struggles, can be overcome through trust and hope in God. As he stood over the five kings at Makkedah, Joshua reminded Israel of this same hope: "*Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight*" (Josh 10:25).

In addition to the physical cave, it is encouraging to recall that the Lord Jesus also experienced emotional and spiritual caves throughout his life. He was ill-treated, slandered, betrayed by friends, pursued by his enemies, and accused falsely. At times, he must have been lonely and overwhelmed, ready to retract from those around him, curl up in a dark place and leave the crowds behind. In the garden he was '*greatly distressed, troubled, and very sorrowful, even to death*' (Mark 14:33 ESV).

When his spirit was overwhelmed, Jesus turned to the same solutions as David. In the dark and anguish of Gethsemane, Jesus left his disciples three times to pour out his pain to God in prayer (Mark 14). Several times Jesus weeps to relieve his emotions (Luke 19:41; John 11:35). During the transfiguration, we can be sure he drew strength from the faithful 'past' experiences of Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:28-31). In Mark 13 Jesus expresses his 'future' assurance of the kingdom age: "*then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory*" (Mark 13:26).

Throughout his ministry, Jesus devoted himself to helping others through comfort, healing, and teaching. Of Christ, Isaiah declares, "*the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*" (Isa 61:1). Despite their weaknesses, even the disciples are commended for supporting a lonely man during his darkest hours: "*Ye are they which continued with me in my temptations*" (Luke 22:28). Finally, Jesus recognized it was time to exit the despair of Gethsemane, and to be obedient to the cross, when he instructs his disciples "*Rise up, let us go!*" (Mark 14:42).

Cave experiences played a necessary part in the development of the Lord Jesus. While pursued by his betrayers, there was method in the madness: like David, he was being prepared to become the next King of Israel. We are comforted and inspired when we realize, that he too "*offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard*" (Heb 5:7).

## **‘They Without Us’**

We began by considering the faithful saints of Hebrews 11 who experienced both triumph and trial, including experiences where many “*wandered in dens and caves of the earth*” (Heb 11:38). Hebrews 11 closes with some encouraging thoughts for ALL who have spent time in caves and relied on God’s strength to help them through: “*These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*” (Heb 11:40).

Despite the tough times they endured, they have not yet received their full inheritance. Instead, they await a future day when, together with us, we will ALL witness the fulfillment of God’s salvation in the kingdom age.

The darkness of the cave is an overwhelming experience. Everyone who truly follows God will enter the Cave of Adullam sooner or later. Perhaps our sin brings us there; perhaps the testing of our faith, or perhaps the correction of the love of God. The experience has been designed by God and is necessary for our proper growth. Adversity is one of the tools God uses to chisel our characters into shape, and we must allow that to happen. Through it, our patience, trust and faith in God are developed.

Far from abandoning us, God brings us to the cave to recognize, like David: “*THOU art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness*” (2Sam 22:29). The cave is not made for despair. Instead, it forces us to seek refuge in God and to lean on God-given solutions as illustrated so faithfully in the life of David — a type of Christ, and a man after God’s own heart. In so doing, our Father will ultimately dispel our darkness, rescue us from the cave, and “*deal bountifully with us*” (Psa 142:7).

(Concluded)

Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON)

### **Notes:**

1. Harry Tennant, *The Man David*, 2nd ed., The Christadelphian, 1996, p. 42-43.
2. H.P. Mansfield, *Making Prayer Powerful*, Logos Publications, 1974, p. 37-38.
3. Harry Tennant, *The Man David*, 2nd ed., The Christadelphian, 1996, p. 33.

## **The Wise Man Among You**

### **Legal Papers**

When I was in the maternity ward after birthing my daughter, I was given a package containing several items. There were coupons for baby products, a photographer’s price list, and there were the legal documents which I was obligated to fill out and file in order to legally register my daughter’s birth and chosen names. It was exciting to fill in these documents at a time when I wanted the whole world to be aware that one of the greatest things ever to happen to me had been born. The idea that it was a legal obligation made little or no impression on me.

This summer that daughter got married. When planning a wedding we accept the responsibility of another legal obligation, and the signing of the necessary

documents is such a small part of that day that it is often passed over with very little thought.

How many of us have made a will? When a loved one dies, it is often necessary to obtain the legal death certificate in order to process the will of the person who has died. A will is considered to be especially important if you have children. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob recognized this, and their final wills and testaments are recorded for us in Genesis. Joseph's final will and testament asked that his bones be taken out of Egypt and buried in the land of Canaan (Gen 50: 22-26; Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32). His will was a form of prophecy fulfilled, in the act of compliance. If we have made up a will, then there are legal obligations to the wishes mentioned in that will. Perhaps the estate of a brother or sister is left to the ecclesia with specific instructions that the homeless be fed or that the ecclesial parking lot be repaved. Whatever it is, the legal will is filed and the laws of many countries allow and support that final wish or gesture.

Consider this, that in North America and in most other countries in the world, all our births, marriages, and deaths are legally registered. In order to travel anywhere in the world, we are required to carry a passport which indicates the country where we hold citizenship. We live and therefore are legally obligated to obey the laws of the land in which we dwell, and the country in which we are born is legally obligated to bestow on its citizens the rights and privileges for which they qualify. These rights and privileges are not something that we have to apply for in order to benefit from, but are an automatic occurrence assumed for all the qualifying individuals of the country. Perhaps we are not conscious of or even acknowledge the use we make of the legal system in everyday life. This is not completely unscriptural: Paul took advantage of his legal position as a Roman. (Acts 16:35-39)

## **Disputes**

Although we may feel somewhat comfortable with the above mentioned scenarios, what about when disputes arise and a brother or sister finds themselves in conflict with another person, whether within the ecclesia or outside of it? How do we feel about an individual who pursues legal action against another, seeks legal advice, uses the legal system to settle a dispute, or allows the legal system to police an agreement already reached? Most of us hope to avoid having to deal with these situations, and the best way to do that is to avoid using the legal system of the land, and to encourage members of our community to do the same. If someone is seeking legal advice or taking legal action to solve a problem, a typical reaction from our community is to reprimand that person. We chastise them for behaving in a way that we feel is contrary to how a brother or sister of Christ should behave, and ask them to cease their pursuit of justice through the legal system. Using the legal system may become our focus, instead of us trying to understand the reasons motivating the individual to pursue this avenue for resolving the conflict in the first place.

“The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem.” — Theodore Rubin.

In his pride the wicked does not seek God; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. He says to himself, *"Nothing will shake me; I'll always be happy and never have trouble"* (Psa 10:4,6 NIV).

We need not feel as though we are all alone with this issue; the ecclesia in Corinth struggled with the same things. Paul acknowledges that there will be disputes, or conflicts. His first and foremost concern was that the ecclesia assist those who are struggling with these challenges by accepting that they happen and providing a way of helping people through them. Paul addresses it by asking the probing question: *"... is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?"* (1Cor 6: 1-10 NKJV). In other words, Paul was asking, is there not one hoary head that you can employ to discern between opposing parties, when disputes arise? Surely there must be someone who is well respected, who is able to use the moral Godly principles which you have been taught, and who can use the wisdom of their years to come up with solutions to disputes you might have with other brothers or sisters, or even with your neighbor outside of the ecclesia. Is it not possible that you could police your own agreements so that brethren don't land up in prison, or even in trouble with the authorities of the land in which you live? Surely this is better and more likely to be justly decided than going to the courts of the land? Surely mercy is more likely to be a factor with your wise man, than with these same courts?

This was not a new concept in Israel. Think for instance of the judges which Moses appointed to help him with the matters of governing as they travelled through the wilderness (Exod 18:13-26). Think of the men sitting at the gates of Bethlehem who upheld the law, and witness it's provision for Boaz to take Ruth as his wife (Ruth 4:1-12). Outside of Israel the laws were made by men, and perhaps the courts of Paul's day in Corinth, were so corrupt that justice was rarely done, or perhaps the courts were amoral, and not built on Godly principles. For whatever reason, Paul implores the Corinthian brethren to look within their congregation of believing elders for a wise man who could help them settle things amongst themselves.

The fact that Paul asks this question, tells us a few things about this community and the believers of that time. First, they obviously struggled with similar challenges that we struggle with today. They were human beings dealing with all the imperfections and sinful tendencies of their natures, and the world around them. They were influenced and seduced by the world, and often failed to measure up to the example set by Christ. They were living in a community and country that did not care what their beliefs were, with laws and traditions that were often contrary to beliefs they held. Not only was it a challenge to stay pure and avoid the world's influence, but also it was a challenge to preach by example. Next, they were asked to look as much to the keeping of the moral code as they were to the laws of the land. Obedience to the laws of the land included giving to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's (Matt 22:21). And the moral code demanded that they become and remain accountable for their personal lives, before God (2Cor 5:10). This would include the way they treated their neighbor and each other; it involved looking after the fatherless and the widow (James 1:27), and lastly serving the community in which they were living (Rom 12:9-21; John

3:16). Does this command to a high calling and the struggles or conflicts with human nature sound familiar? Not much has changed in the past two thousand years. We are asked to do the same things: to be obedient to both the laws of the land and accountable before God.

Many have decided that to compare ourselves to Old Testament times on this topic is irrelevant since we are not under the Law of Moses, which was perfect, and we are not living in Israel. Others have decided that the first century advice from Paul is irrelevant since pagan government no longer governs us. Obviously, Corinth was built and run on human and often pagan religious laws and traditions which would have given the believers then an extra challenge to cope with and all the more reason to seek for the ‘wise man among them.’ However, we neither live in ancient Israel, under the Law of Moses, nor in First Century Pagan Rome, thus we might be better served if we consider this issue in the modern context. Perhaps the biggest difference now is the fact that in our time some nation’s laws are presumably based on Christian principles. Even if countries take measures to separate their legal systems from religious definition or influence, laws such as “thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal” and so on, are recognizable in the laws of these Christian based countries. On top of that, the consequences of breaking those laws, although perhaps not as severe as the original consequences would have been, are deemed to be severe enough to deter those who would flout their authority.

However even in a country whose laws are based on Christian principles, the question of how much we use the law and how often we take advantage of that law is something that presents many of us with a difficult challenge. There are various reasons given for shying away from either providing a wise man within our community or using the legal system of the country we live in to settle disputes or legal questions. These reasons include the following:

- Some do not understand the legal system of the land, and are intimidated by ignorance into inaction, not motivated to educate themselves where necessary.
- Some rationalize that we don’t have time or energy to involve ourselves in the disputes of others, because of our prior commitments within the community.
- Some come to the conclusion that to get involved is wrong and somehow condones the behavior of one or both parties, or makes us into busy bodies poking about where we should not be.
- Some believe that a brother or sister seeking legal assistance is in the wrong, simply because they are seeking it, and that they should “turn the other cheek”, “suffer yourself to be defrauded” and seek to “live peaceably”.

Therefore, often the reaction is to avoid confrontations, avoid casting a judgment of our own or voicing our opinion, or ignore them in an effort to keep order and peace. The result is that nothing is resolved for the people directly involved in the conflict. Whatever the reasons and reactions to these conflicts, the fact remains that disputes and conflicts do arise, and to wish they would go away, or to suggest that they don’t exist, would be akin to believing that we are all perfect and in the Kingdom. We are conceding to greater ignorance when we do not acknowledge them.

Our ecclesial schedules, the demands of family, the strain of work, and other obligations, make life very busy. Ironically, although we may have very high demands on our time, as students of the Bible we are readily willing to discuss in great detail and at great length many Biblical topics. Discussions involving doctrine and interpretation, are given our full attention, often with a view to conversion. However, many times the topics that are personal, moral or relational are avoided, ignored, or left with the best of intentions, to be dealt with another day. Yet, these are usually the areas in which conflicts, needing a wise man among us, arise. We can excuse this by acknowledging the importance of preaching the gospel, and none would dispute this, but we are also supposed to be known as people who love each other. It is to be our defining attribute as disciples. If we are unable to resolve conflicts, we do not promote love. We are also supposed to be known as those who uphold a moral code, given to us by God. If we do not speak to personal behavior, in a loving way, and support the belief that we need to treat each person we come into contact with as Jesus would have treated them, and by doing so to reflect the love of God into their lives, then what good is all the doctrinal teaching going to do? A person can know what is right and wrong from a doctrinal standpoint and yet be condemned by their behavior and lifestyle. Christ did not come to save the righteous according to the law, but to reach those in the darkness of immorality. We are asked to carry on his work, to be lights in a dark world, to shine Christ's light for the lost to see. We are asked to come along side those in the darkness and show them the right way, and encourage them in striving for it. In light of this fact it would seem ultimately important, even essential that we take a very good long hard look at how we are handling any sort of dispute that may go before a court of law in whatever country we happen to live, before the parties involved have to resort to using the legal system available to them.

### **The Wise Man**

So, who is this wise man? It is worth noticing a few things about what Paul has to say on this topic. First, that a wise man is not necessarily described as someone who holds any particular office within the ecclesia. So often we feel that to take on legal matters ourselves would overburden our Arranging Brethren who are already weighed down by "*the cares of the ecclesia*" (2Cor 11:28). However a careful reading of the text does not allude to that at all. The only quality necessary is wisdom; both in what is necessary as a follower of Christ, and in life experience. And grey hair is a definite asset! Second, we are not asked to write or rewrite the law of the land or God's law. There is a format already in place and all we need do, is use the God given principles and examples to help us interpret the law and protect the innocent. As a community of believers, we are not asked to like the fact that there are conflicts, but we are asked to deal with them in a spirit of love, and we are given the tools and the instructions to do just that. Whether it is a breach of contract in business or a divorce settlement, the principles of the conflicts, and the solutions to the conflicts are the same. We as a community of believers in the same things that the Corinthians believed in, and under the same laws of Christ that they adhered to, similarly should be seeking, "the wise man" among us.

If a contract of any kind is formulated and filed as law within the courts of the land in which we live, it becomes law. With that comes the legal understanding that the courts we have trusted with the decision will be the same courts that we will trust to do the job of making sure the parties meet their obligations and responsibilities. When we waive the responsibility we have to our brothers and sisters to find the hoary head to help find solutions to conflicts and disagreements between us, we inadvertently waive our ability to comment, criticize, or control the policing of that agreement. When one, or both, of the parties fails to meet the obligations and responsibilities to each other, it does no good to then bring this reference of 1 Cor .6:1-10 to the parties involved as proof that they have to let the matter go and allow God to decide on what judgment will be placed on the offending individual. At that point this is not only unrealistic, but also impossible. The courts of the land will do the job they have been asked to do, without any reference or even acknowledgement of our personal or ecclesial views.

However, a careful reading of 1 Cor 6:1-10 helps us to avoid the frustration associated with poorly made decisions and permits us to be part of a very cooperative and communally beneficial solution in resolving conflicts. This passage indicates that the responsibility of conflict resolution falls primarily on the ecclesia! If there is no wise man to be found, or if we choose not to appoint that wise man to handle these challenges amongst us, we are in fact encouraging and sometimes forcing our brethren who come up against conflict and disagreement, and to seek to have it assessed and decided upon in the courts of the land in which we live. Although this is something that we readily acknowledge, we kick against the very thing that we have encouraged, if things go awry. Further, in not providing a wise man to speak to brethren or ex-brethren about the moral aspects of their conduct does a great disservice to not only our brother or sister, but also to those parties involved in their wrong doing, and those who are victims of his or her immoral actions. Some would promote withdrawing from a brother or sister completely in an effort to remind him or her of the error of their ways. That withdrawal also absolves us from any need for intervention with what that individual is doing. In actual fact it gives the distinct impression, if not the blatant message, that withdrawal then removes accountability.

Obviously some personal relationships, including things such as molestation and physical abuse, need to be dealt with by the legal system of the country. In many places individuals are legally obligated to report molestation of children, and other forms of abuse, and there is no place for the wise man, however willing they may be to help in this situation. Sometimes there needs to be serious measures taken to protect the children and other family members from an abusive individual. It would seem incomprehensible that Paul would be alluding to these sorts of situations when suggesting that they appoint a wise man from among them. In turn, do we condemn a person for using the God given securities available to them in order to save a life or protect a child? Do we punish the victims because of the crime, instead of reaching out to them in love and giving them our protection? Do we in effect support the behavior of an abuser, molester, or violent criminal, by disallowing or discouraging legal action towards them? By asking our community

not to use the legal system available to them in these examples, we in fact become an accessory to the crime by enabling it to continue. This is a fact, which we very well could be called to account for ourselves by both the courts of the land and the God which we serve.

The idea of a wise man among us to counsel those in need of assistance in settling disputes is a concept that is often easier to discuss than to implement. Let us consider then what this would look like if we could put it into practice. A very familiar scenario is a divorce. If a divorced couple are struggling to meet the obligations of their divorce agreement, having a wise man in place would provide the buffer needed between the two parties to come to an agreement as to the responsibilities of each party and how they will be implemented. It also allows the wise man to act as the person they are accountable to if they do not meet their responsibilities. If there is a breach in the agreement the wise man can be there to help rectify the issue or challenges they are facing. Perhaps the woman is not allowing the man to visit the children. The man would go to the appointed wise man and in turn that wise man would go to the woman and discover why she is acting in this way. A solution that meets the criteria of the agreement can be developed, and at the same time the woman's concerns about the situation are better understood. If the man is unable to pay for the support of the children from the marriage, the woman could go to the wise man and he in turn would speak to the man regarding this matter. Perhaps the ecclesia needs to step in with some short term financial help, or employment for the man, but at the very least the children would not suffer from want, and the situation would not escalate to the level of either party having to take further outside legal action against each other.

Going outside the typical example of divorce, we could also consider the personal contracts that we enter into with not only fellow believers, but also those outside of our faith. The wise man could help formulate the contract within the parameters and wishes of the parties involved, and there would be less opportunity for the vulnerable to be taken advantage of by preying individuals either within or outside of the community. The same system of using the wise man as a buffering between the two parties when they come into conflict, could be used not only to solve any issues arising, but also to give council and advice to both parties which could help to give perspective to the situation. Perhaps Paul's suggestion of using the wise man could be seen as form of outreach, while protecting and taking care of the flock already gathered. By setting up a system of administering this sort of care and compassion to our members and to those that we are interacting with, we could be known as a community who advertises and actively supports the ideas of honoring contracts, promoting good marriages, healthy families, and being active in our community, so that they know who we are by what we do!!

It is a question for today: Is there not a wise man among you?

*Eileen Henthorn (Victoria, BC)*

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*"Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living, the other helps you make a life" (Sandra Carey).*



## Thoughts on Science and Faith — Noah's Ark

In a recent *Tidings Magazine*,<sup>1</sup> an article tackled three common questions posed by those who challenge the veracity of the Bible's flood account and Noah's deliverance:

- 1) Were dinosaurs on Noah's Ark and if so what happened to them?
- 2) How did they all, including dinosaurs, fit in the ark?
- 3) How did all the animals make it to the Ark?

The intent of the article was three-fold. First, it was meant to acknowledge that these kinds of questions are legitimate when asked in good faith, particularly by young people and interested friends. Second, as believers in the Bible, we have a responsibility to ourselves and to those with whom we come into contact to have developed thoughtful answers to those kinds of questions. We should never let indifference to the subject be the reason we offer "just have faith" as an explanation to a reasonable question. Third, since the Bible is the inspired Word of God, we need not fear challenging questions being asked of it. It will withstand any legitimate test.

However, the article was limited in two main respects. First, due to space constraints, it did not properly acknowledge the limitations of the answers to the questions that were presented. Second, it did not state in sufficiently clear terms that while the questions posed need to be addressed, there is a need to be aware of and avoid the trap of thinking that only the historical records of science and archeology, or our own intellect for that matter, can be used to prove the veracity of all Scripture. These two limitations will each be considered in turn to address the article's deficiencies and to clarify its intent.

### **Were dinosaurs on Noah's Ark, and if so what happened to them?**

To explain the existence of dinosaurs, how they could have fit in the ark and why they became extinct in a postdiluvian Earth two different theories were discussed in the article. The first theory is commonly referred to as the "water canopy" theory. This theory, first proposed by the Quaker, Isaac Newton Vail, over 125 years ago, states that a thick layer of water vapor (or ice) blanketed parts of the antediluvian Earth's atmosphere. This atmospheric water canopy would have been the source of the water used to flood the entire Earth during Noah's time. Also, it is argued that this water canopy would have protected antediluvian creatures from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation. This protection would explain the longevity of pre-flood humanity. Animals, including dinosaurs, would have also benefited from this protection. According to those who proclaim this theory, this elongated lifespan could explain why some humans and even dinosaurs grew to be "giants" (Gen 6:4). Once this water vapor canopy precipitated and the protection was removed (i.e., the flood), some animals were particularly affected by the sudden increase in UV radiation and became extinct (e.g., dinosaurs). This theory is commonly used by some in our community in support of their understanding of the Genesis account.

Unfortunately, neither the Bible nor science directly supports the idea that a "water canopy" existed over this Earth during Noah's time. The Hebrew word (*raqia*)

used to describe the “expanse” or “firmament (KJV)” in Genesis 1:6-8 does not necessarily affirm the existence of a water canopy. In fact, it is used later in the same chapter to describe the place where the constellations reside (Gen 1:14), as well as the place where the birds fly (Gen 1:20). But more importantly, *raqia* is also used to describe a postdiluvian expanse (Psa 19:1). Therefore, the text does not provide any direct or indirect evidence of an antediluvian “water canopy”.

Scientifically, this concept also presents us with major difficulties. The presence of a thick canopy on the Earth’s atmosphere would have significantly impeded “the lights in the expanse” from being directly observed from the Earth, creating a potential contradiction of Gen 1:14. In addition, the theory also postulates that the canopy would have retained within it enough water vapor volume to cover the Earth during the flood — upwards of 22 feet — above the tallest mountains. This amount of water vapor would have dramatically increased Earth’s atmospheric pressure and the unbearable surface heat produced from this rise in pressure would have significantly hindered life on Earth. Due to space constraints, we will not be able to discuss in detail the many other scientific reasons that contradict this theory, including the effects that gravity would have had on this canopy and the obvious problems that photosynthetic organisms would have faced given the reduced amount of light capable of reaching Earth’s surface.

### **How did they all, including dinosaurs, fit in the ark?**

The second topic discusses how dinosaurs could have possibly fit in the ark together with all the other animals. In the article it is suggested that perhaps “baby dinosaurs” were placed in the ark, thus providing a solution to the insurmountable problem posed by the size of some adult dinosaurs. The first problem with this somewhat reasonable proposition is that the vast majority of the fossil evidence unambiguously points to the pre-Adamic existence of dinosaurs thus, in all likelihood, Noah did not have to deal with this difficulty because dinosaurs were not alive during his time. But for the sake of argument, let us assume that “baby dinosaurs” made it into the ark. Why aren’t these dinosaurs with us today? There is no scientific evidence or historical record to support the hypothesis that UV radiation or any other postdiluvian climate change (i.e., within the past ~6,000 years) would have selectively eliminated this entire Order of the *Reptilian* Class. It is a very attractive speculation, but that is all it is. Regardless, although questions of exactly when dinosaurs first populated Earth and how they became extinct (gradual versus catastrophic) are still debated in the scientific community, the evidence consistently supports the conclusion that both of these events predated Adam and Eve. Some within our community contend that both science and Scripture support the idea of life on Earth prior to the Edenic Creation. For example, Gen 1:2 could be rendered “*And the earth **became** waste and empty*”, and this would be in harmony with Isa 45:18. In fact, some of our past brethren believed in the existence of an inhabited pre-Adamic Earth: see, for example, *Elpis Israel* chapter 2 by Bro. Thomas or *The Christadelphian Expositor: Genesis* by Bro. Mansfield.

### **How did all the animals make it to the Ark?**

Finally, theories regarding the incredible worldwide journey that many species

would have undertaken to reach the ark are not directly supported by science. For example, it is argued that perhaps distances across continents were much shorter in the antediluvian world (i.e., allowing for easy travel from one continent to the other). Great tectonic plate movements surrounding the flood event could have dramatically changed Earth's landscape, establishing the long distances we find today between places like Australia and the Middle East. Once again this is speculative, and it is not directly supported either by science or by the Biblical account in Gen 6-9 (i.e., we may assume earthquakes but they are not mentioned in the record). No verifiable geological footprint has been found to support a global catastrophe of such magnitude. In addition, although science might be able to explain how all the animals journeyed to the ark, it is incapable of describing how they returned to their points of origin following this cataclysmic event. For example, how did some of the marsupial species found only in Australia journey all the way back to Australia following the flood? It is worth noting that the account in Genesis 6-9 does not rule out the possibility of a local flooding event, and some brethren have argued that the flood could have been, in fact, local. For example, Bro Roberts argued strongly for a local flood.<sup>2</sup>

### Caution

None of us can truly conceive the appalling and awe-inspiring power of Yahweh. The article correctly states, "There are no definitive answers to these questions". No wrong can come from this proclamation. It points us to our faith. Caution is warranted when we attempt to provide evidence-based answers to these miraculous events using "scientific" arguments, which some reasonably regard as outdated.

In the history of our Christadelphian community there has always been numerous opinions regarding the origins and age of our planet. Some brethren believe that the Earth dates back to approximately 6,000 years while others believe in a much older Earth (millions or billions of years). Opinions have also varied when it comes to our understanding of where and how the flood took place. At all times, however, we have been encouraged to seek "*after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*" (Rom 14:19). For example, while the Scriptures do not necessarily reveal the age of our planet, they clearly teach us that God, our Father, is the Creator of all.

Due to space constraints, the article presented only one of the many explanations that have been offered to the questions posed. This omission of other points of view was not intended to be an indictment on those who hold them. Nor was it intended to promote indoctrination of the views contained within it.

Nevertheless, this consideration presents an opportunity to raise an important issue. In recent years, there have been Christadelphian publications and lectures where scientifically questionable presentations about creation and the flood were presented as material that *must* be accepted and taught by all. What is more concerning, some of the brethren who were proclaiming these theories did so while ridiculing those who make a living as scientists. This ought not to be.

We urge caution in promoting scientifically questionable theories in support of

one view of creation (or the flood) to the exclusion of others. First, it could lead to unnecessary fractures in our body. As the return of our Lord nears, we ought to focus on the things that unite and edify us as a community. Second, trust is the key to teaching and preaching the truth. Using questionable theories as teaching or preaching tools can backfire and may provide an unwarranted burden on our young people or on those who have just begun seeking out the Gospel. How? In today's world, almost anything we say and claim can be easily vetted using the vast amount of information that is readily available on the Internet. It is therefore imperative that we speak, teach and focus only on that which we believe to be true, while avoiding the use of conjectures to teach or preach the truth. That is not to say that reasoned arguments backed by scientific or archeological evidence are to be excluded from our presentations and conversations. When properly used, they can be quite beneficial.

### **Let us meet the challenge with faith**

*"And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace' " (Luke 7:50).*

Faith is essential for salvation (Rom 1:16-17). There are times when the intersection of science and Scriptures can serve to strengthen that faith. But often science will challenge our belief in the veracity of Scriptures. Moreover, as discussed above, the use of scientific inaccuracies could cause even more harm than good. In these instances, it is profitable to rely on our faith. We must keep in mind that answers to our intellectual questions regarding challenging Biblical accounts (i.e., creation, the flood, the resurrection, etc.) might remain inaccessible to us until that day when all shall be revealed (Isa 40:5). Let us together meet this challenge with faith.

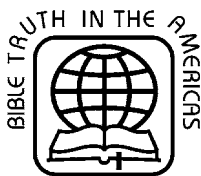
A complete understanding of the physics, chemistry and biology underlying God's miraculous work will not necessarily make any of us better servants of our Almighty Father. Having tangential proof of God's work does not necessarily lead to obedience: the Pharisees and Sadducees teach us this fact (e.g., Luke 16: 31). Faith and the instruction of Scripture help us become obedient. Noah, before beginning his arduous work of constructing the ark, did not need evidence or explanations of how the flood would take place. He did not need to know how the animals would get to and fit in the ark or how he would feed them. His faith in God guided and saved him (Eze 14:20, Heb 11:7). When faced with questions regarding the veracity of this account it might be helpful to not simply rely on scientific arguments or evidence but also be mindful of the beautiful lesson in faith that it teaches us.

*Edgardo Rodriguez (Ann Arbor, MI) and Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)*

**Note: Brethren Rodriguez and Mutter are happy to be contacted by anyone interested in discussing these ideas in more detail. They can be reached at [edgardo-rodriguez@uiowa.edu](mailto:edgardo-rodriguez@uiowa.edu) and [rmutte1@umbc.edu](mailto:rmutte1@umbc.edu), respectively.**

#### **Notes:**

1. "As it was in the days of Noah": (6) Objections Considered, Ryan Mutter. *Christadelphian Tidings*, July 2011 p 277.
2. *The Visible Hand of God*, Robert Roberts, p49 (1st Edition).



## Bible Mission News

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### Five baptisms in El Salvador

On Sunday, June 26, the Christadelphians in El Salvador arose much earlier than usual in happy anticipation of the events planned for the day. All were due to arrive at the San Salvador hall by 9 am to celebrate together the decision taken by five friends of the Usulután Ecclesia to follow Jesus every day and to make their intention public through baptism. And so we gathered from different parts of the country, looking forward to this eagerly-awaited event with joy in the ecclesia and in heaven, as Jesus said so long ago:

*"... there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)*

After studying for almost a year and a half under Bro. Jaime Mate during the visits he made every weekend with his wife Karla and three of their children, a four-hour round trip, we were able to see the fruit of his labours for God reflected in the fervent desire of these new members to belong to the great household of the Christadelphian faith. It was incredibly stirring to hear the confessions of faith of each of the new brethren. They are José Santiago Chávez Castro, 51; Juan José Chávez Posada, 18, son of José Santiago; René Armando Chávez Silva, 23, son of Sis. Carmen Chávez and younger brother to Bro. David Chávez; Alexander Vladimir Rivas Velásquez, 18; and Samael Adonay Flores Carranza, 17.

The task of instructing the candidates was shared by the other members of the Usulután Ecclesia: Carmen Chávez, her son David, Julio García and his wife Angélica, who gave freely of their time during the week to reinforce Jaime's classes.

The day of the baptisms was the occasion of a great celebration. The 150 attendees enjoyed a delicious lunch thanks to the love of the sisters who had been working in the kitchen since early morning: Lily Rivera, Lilian Villacorta, Karla Mate and Cristina Sorto. This was a very large gathering for us; many relatives and friends came from Usulután in a hired bus and also present were the brethren and sisters of the other satellite ecclesia in the city of Sonsonate. In addition we were happy to have with us Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter; Jim gave the exhortation based on Psalms 1, 19 and 103, which was very instructive for us. He also gave the public lecture which followed and Jean gave a Sunday-school class to the large group of young people present.

We pray that God will strengthen and guide our new brethren in the faith and guide them to walk hand in hand with the rest of us who have embraced the hope of eternal life and have set ourselves the goal of being in God's kingdom. We know

that the return of our Lord Jesus is imminent and we must not cease to preach, for there are still many people who need to come to know the divine plan and be a part of it. We ask for your prayers that the work may continue to increase in El Salvador and the world over. Amen, come, Lord Jesus.



*Submitted by Sis. Silvia Fernández,  
San Salvador, El Salvador*

**From left to right:**

**Samael Adonai Flores Carranza, 17;**

**René Armando Chávez Silva, 24;**

**Alexander (Alex) Vladimir Rivas**

**Velázquez, 18;**

**Juan José Chávez Posada, 18;**

**José Santiago Chávez Castro, 51**

**(Juan José's father)**

## **A trip to Guatemala City**

On the weekend of August 13 and 14 a group of brethren and sisters from El Salvador had the opportunity to visit the ecclesia in the capital of our sister country, Guatemala. The purpose was to share fellowship with Rec. Bro. Jorge Trinidad and the other members in Guatemala City and encourage the friends who have been regularly attending meetings there. With this in mind, two lectures were given at the ecclesial hall on Saturday afternoon: "Do you understand what you are reading?", stressing the importance of really knowing the Scriptures, and "After death, what?", covering various aspects of the nature of man. There was enthusiastic participation from the interested friends; in fact they became so wrapped up in the studies that though the activity began at 3 pm the visitors stayed on until 8 pm, with many questions and much edifying discussion of the themes of the talks.

On Sunday, following the breaking of bread, we gave a lecture entitled "The forgotten kingdom of God," pointing out the necessity of understanding the promises God made to Abraham and David and the way in which the true gospel hinges on them. Unfortunately the discussion couldn't carry on as long as it had the previous day because we had to rush to catch the bus back to El Salvador!

In the course of the week-end eight interested friends came out, four of them from one family. The sessions were full of questions, answers and reasoning from the Scriptures. All of us were blessed with an uplifting opportunity to share the good news of the Kingdom of God.



**Five contacts on Saturday at the ecclesial hall**



Sunday's group in front of the Guatamala city ecclesial hall.

*Bro. René and Sis. Crisia Castillo and Bro. Neftalí and Sis. Zuelen Espinoza  
Sonsonate, El Salvador*

## Guadalajara — Several Perspectives

I've always wondered what contribution I could make to ecclesias in Latin lands. While I took Spanish in high school, I certainly would never claim to have Spanish fluency. I have wondered if I took a trip to one of our ecclesias in Mexico, Central or South America whether I could really make any tangible contribution? Would the visit be for the benefit of my brethren, or really all about me?

In early August, I had the pleasure of joining a group of brothers and sisters from North America who participated in a campaign in Guadalajara. Few of us had any usable Spanish speaking skills. We were eager to serve in whatever capacity we could. The team consisted of a mix of ages — ranging from eighteen to, well, let's just say a few of us that were more “mature.” What I re-learned was an important lesson about our God. He uses what we **are** capable of offering and provides, in His way, a blessing to compensate for what we cannot.

The work centered around the city of Guadalajara, a city of more than seven million. The ecclesia in Guadalajara is thriving and growing, now at 14 members. Sis. Cindy Paiva and Bro. David Lloyd (Link Man for Guadalajara) planned the activities for the week. I would choose the word “resourcefulness” to describe their use of the team. Rather than focusing on what we could not do, we engaged in a multitude of activities that, through the blessing of our Heavenly Father, led men and women to the Bible Study Center where the ecclesia meets. At the end of the week, each of us had distributed several thousand leaflets, created Sunday School lessons for future use and updated essential computer records for contact follow-up. In all, more than a dozen men and women came to the advertised classes and public Bible readings and about the same number registered to begin receiving the postal correspondence course. It is rare to have the opportunity in a week's time to see the response to a team's work. We were all greatly uplifted.



**Bro. David Lloyd handing out leaflets in front of the Bible Center in Guadalajara**

Distributing leaflets in Guadalajara is FAR different than in North America. Men and women are receptive to the leaflets. They actually stop at intersections and wait for you to hand it to them. As you can see from the photo shown here, we were excited to see them pause to read the leaflet, often while they were waiting for the crosswalk light to change. There were a few occasions where we were engaged in dialogue by recipients. In some cases, they helped us out by themselves trying to speak a little English. But, remarkably, I found

myself able to cobble together just enough Spanish to answer their questions. The work was not tedious and as a team and we found ourselves looking forward to the distribution of the leaflets.

But, to tell the story from my point of view exclusively is to lose the true appreciation of the week. What will remain with me are the loving and close relationships we developed with the brothers and sisters in Guadalajara. The story of each brother and sister is truly amazing and a clear witness of the hand of the Lord in the ecclesia. What I learned was that the team's presence in Guadalajara was not only encouraging to us, but highly encouraging to the members too. Here's what Bro. Gabriel Munoz, a brother now for six years (pictured here on the right conversing with Bro. Paul Harris, Washington, D.C. Ecclesia), had to say about the team's visit.



*"We are very happy to have brothers and sisters visit us. Most of all, it is helpful to get to know more brothers and sisters so that we get to know that we are not alone in this world and we're not the only Christadelphians. It is always a great help when they give us exhortations or when we can just have good Bible discussions. We also welcome all the help that*

*we can get to preach the Truth. Whenever they can come, they will be always welcome in the Guadalajara Ecclesia and we will always receive them with open arms. It is not really required to speak Spanish because we can help with that. If you are willing to come and help, please come. If you can speak Spanish, that is an added blessing."*

Sis. Cindy Paiva has been living in the Guadalajara area since 2003. She and her late husband, Bro. Carl, were instrumental in the early work of forming the ecclesia and Sis. Cindy remains thoroughly immersed in the daily work. There have been many volunteers from North America who have come to help the ecclesia. The



San Diego, CA Ecclesia particularly has been a great help over the past few years. Sis. Cindy excels at finding useful work that members can do, based on their interests and capabilities. Here's how Sis. Cindy (seated in the middle in picture below) viewed the campaign.



*From my perspective, there is always much to be done here in Guadalajara, as we are open every day. The whole group distributed flyers, which may seem rather simple work, but is very effective as the people do read them and save them and actually give them more credence when they come from foreigners. But beyond that, the interchange that happens with the brethren here and the visiting brethren is vital. They get to exchange ideas and*

*talk of their faith at a much higher level than they are able to do with the contacts and the young brethren here. The daily readings were often the venue for this exchange. Although we read in Spanish, those who do not read fluently would read silently from their own Bibles and be able to make comments at the end... having them translated so all could benefit. There are also many other tasks: I also am always grateful for those who have some computer skills to help with a variety of files I deal with. There is printing, cutting and binding of literature and flyers as well. Sis. Brittany Magill filled a very vital role in preparing and organizing simple activities for the very young Sunday Schoolers here. I explained my need and she ran with it, enlisting the help of Sis. Dassie Link, Sis. Megan Milne and Bro. Sam Van Rueter. They also taught the Sunday School group all day, not letting language be a barrier to the love they shared. Sis. Sandy Sillars was the angel behind the scenes keeping all the meals, everyone's health, and a myriad of other things all on course, as well as providing inspirational music and singing each night before we went to bed. Bro. Michael Conner, who speaks Spanish well, gave several motivating classes and the exhortation in Spanish which was greatly appreciated by brethren and contacts alike.*

Here's a few brief comments from the team members about their experiences.

*My contribution to the Guadalajara Campaign was not at all what I had expected. I went there thinking that I was going to have a hard time helping out because I did not know any Spanish. Quickly, though, I found out my true purpose of serving. Some days I did go out with the group and help hand out flyers, but other days I stayed at the Ecclesia and prepared Sunday School lessons. Because Sis. Cynthia is the only Sunday School teacher, it is very hard for her to get the lessons prepped before each Sunday. I found that helping out around the hall and doing lesson plans and crafts for the kids was a big help; the help that I was not expected to be so useful at! There is no*



**Sis. Brittany Magill,  
Pomona, CA**

*need to know Spanish to help around the Hall, and a great deal of work is needed. I felt that I accomplished a lot in the weeks' time. With help from the other group members, we completed six months' worth of prep work for the Sunday School class in just two days!! It was definitely worth all of my time to go down and serve! **Sis. Brittany Magill, Pomona, CA***



**Sis. Megan Milne,  
Brampton Ecclesia, ON**

*My experience in Guadalajara provided me with many insights and joys. There were memories I wouldn't soon forget and a motivation to do things differently once back in my hometown. It also left us with a keen sense of appreciation for this blessing-filled life and MANY photos to sort through! But what I loved most was knowing that the work we did each day was helping local Mexicans come to a knowledge of the Truth. By delivering flyers and speaking with them, perhaps these perfect strangers would be regulars at the meeting in Guadalajara and later become*

*part of our worldwide family through Christ? A memorable moment was teaching Sunday School to the youngsters. I learned that language is more than mere words. It's said "actions speak louder than words", and how true this is! We spent three hours playing and interacting with these kids, without the privilege of speaking the same language. But you know what? We communicated through other means, and I learned an important lesson about how we are called to lead by example - living our way of life through actions. Going to Guadalajara allowed me to use my talents and abilities. Everyone has something to offer. Everyone has a gift. Each may be different, but they are all so necessary (1 Cor.12:12-31). God has given me abilities and I can use them to further God's Word by redeeming the time I have left in this life before Christ returns. **Sis. Megan Milne, Brampton Ecclesia, Ontario***

*Being in Guadalajara was such a blessing and I look forward to going back as soon as possible. The brothers and sisters are very excited about the truth. Though the meeting is small, the enthusiasm is great. Hymns are sung with gusto and discussion is thoughtful and interesting. The love of the truth shows in the faces of all who have found it, and in the faces of those who are now seeking to know God. The culture is different from what I'm used to, and I love it! It's much more relaxed and peaceful. People would eagerly take the leaflets we handed out and to our amazement they'd stand there and read them! If we missed someone in handing leaflets out they would come back and ask for one. That is very encouraging for me, a novice at preaching. I would like to let everyone know that I never felt unsafe in Guadalajara. I realized that there is so much more work to be done to build up the Ecclesia. People are yearning to learn*



**Sis. Hadassah Link,  
Baltimore, MD**

*more and like Jesus said in Luke 10:2, "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few." I encourage all my fellow brothers and sisters to do what they can to help out, whether it be donating money, actually spending time in Guadalajara, or sending encouragement in letters or emails. Most importantly, prayer is what will help the most, without God's help we cannot do anything. We have a beautiful hope and it's amazing to see even when going to a different country with a different culture the bond of the truth is still strong and evident. **Sis. Hadassah Link, Baltimore, MD***

One of the great blessings we have in the Lord is the honor to work together in His service. May the Lord continue to richly bless the Guadalajara Ecclesia as well as all the ecclesias around the world who are proclaiming the Name of our God.

*Bro. Dave Jennings, Pomona, CA*

## My Experience



**Bro. Guillermo Gomez  
Fajardo,  
Guadalajara, Mexico**

Hello, my name is Guillermo Gomez Fajardo. I was born into a traditional Roman Catholic family. As for myself I have never identified myself as Catholic. I have always thought that they gave very little importance to our Lord Jesus Christ and I never was in agreement with how they do things in all the churches. One Sunday, the 14th of November 2010, I was walking along a street called San Pedro in Guadalajara, thinking of all the problems that I was going through. At that time, there were gusts of wind and in that very moment a flyer, that said "Study the Bible with Understanding" in the Christadelphian Bible Center, literally stuck itself to my body. The Bible topics caught my attention: Basic Principles of the Bible, The Work of Jesus, and The Sabbath Day. I thought that this is the calling for which I had asked God.

On the 16th of November, 2010, I went for the first time to the Christadelphian Bible Center. Sis. Cynthia Paiva attended to me and told me that I could take two pamphlets. I took them and went to the park to read them. I returned that same day at 3 pm to do the daily readings. We read Nehemiah 3, Hosea 13 and 1 Thessalonians 1 and 2. That same day they gave me my first Bible study course. During November and December I was going during the week for studies and pamphlets. In January 2011, I began attending on Sundays. I was beginning to like all that I was learning. I finished four Bible courses and many other study books, as well as studying much with the brethren. I was baptized the 12th of June, 2011. Always, when I am at the Bible Center I find happiness and a tranquility that I have never had in all my life. Mathew 12:49, 50 *"Here are my mother and my brothers. For whosoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

## Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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**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)

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Email: [agapeinaction@rogers.com](mailto:agapeinaction@rogers.com)

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**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. For info email [daconstiles@att.net](mailto:daconstiles@att.net)

**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.)

### **BOSTON, MA**

We are pleased to announce the baptism of DEBBIE MAILING on July 24, 2011, into the saving name of Jesus Christ. Sis. Debbie is the daughter of Bro. Wayne and Sis. Cindy Scott as well as the granddaughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Penny Caddell.

It is with sadness however, that we announce the sudden passing of our Bro. Avarad Moore on August 10, 2011, at the age of seventy-six. Avarad was a longtime member of the Boston meeting and the loving husband of our Sis. Ann Moore, as well as the father of our Sis. Cindy Sullivan and Diana Linskey.

It is also our unfortunate duty to announce that our Bro. Mark and Sis. Anita Vincent and family have transferred back to the Stirling, UK Ecclesia. The Vincent's were a marvelous addition to our ecclesial family in Boston over the past five years and they will be sorely missed, though we know that they will be a great addition to our fellow brethren "across the pond".

*Jim Sullivan*

### **ECHO LAKE, NJ**

The ecclesia rejoiced on August 19, 2011, at the marriage of our Sis. Suzie Prashad to Bro. Adam Phillips, both members of the Echo Lake Ecclesia. We pray for the Lord's blessing upon them both as they are now united in their walk toward the kingdom.

The recent hurricane in NJ flooded many areas and caused widespread damage, but by God's mercy all of the members were preserved.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord: Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, and David and Maryann Jorgensen (Union, NJ); Tom and Sally Davies (Pomona, CA); Ruthann Jorgensen (Rochester, NY); Dot Phillips, Vickie Tuck, and Alyssa Tuck (Meriden, CT); Susan Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ); Matthew Link (Washington DC); Seon Levius (Barbados); Borgette Charles, Keena Charles, and Jamaul Husbands (Georgetown, Guyana); Colleen Bailey (MD), Joel and Amy Robinson (Hamilton Book Road, ON); Scott Wallace (Boston, MA); Craig and Jenny Hill (Enfield, Aust.). We thank Bro. Craig Hill and Bro. Scott Wallace for their words of exhortation.

*Stewart Marsden*

### **HONESDALE, PA**

Our ecclesia was very pleased with the visit of Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ), and his inspiring exhortation. After our meeting we all attended our annual picnic at a nearby lake. We wish to thank our sisters for their wonderful and abundant food, as well as thanking God for his providence. We have also, along with our work promoting the four hundredth anniversary of the KJV, been mailing Bibles directly to a needy ecclesia in Malawi, Africa.

*Stephen J. DeMarco*

## **JASONVILLE, IN**

We report with sadness the loss of two beloved brethren. Bro. John Plew, 89, a brother to Bro. Ted Plew, and Bro. Ron Howe, 47, husband of Sis. Chariss Howe. Our loving sympathy to Sis. Chariss and their two children. Our dear brethren are sorely missed in this small ecclesia, and our hope, as theirs, is in the resurrection at our Lord's return.

*Ted Plew*

## **MERIDEN, CT**

Since late last year we have enjoyed the fellowship of brothers and sisters from several ecclesias including Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Cranston, RI; Echo Lake, NJ; Maple Ridge, BC; South Florida; Sussex, NB; Tulsa, OK/Joplin, MO; Wachusett, MA, and Worcester, MA.

On March 6, 2011, we were delighted to welcome 16 members of the Honesdale, PA Ecclesia who joined us for the celebration of Sis. Lois Beck's ninetieth birthday. We would like to thank Bro. Kirk Kenneway (Wachusett, MA) and Bro. Sam Taylor (Echo Lake, NJ) for their exhortations in the past few months.

Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines (Sussex, NB) visited in June. Bro. Cliff led our spring study weekend on the theme, "Practical Principles in Peter". We enjoyed Cliff's and Julia's company very much and are grateful for the ministrations rendered on our behalf. The study weekend ended with our annual Sunday school picnic which was enjoyed by the ecclesia and many visitors.

Our Sunday school year ended with a Bible Read-A-Thon. Young and old alike joined in a non-stop reading of the New Testament that began at 5 PM on Friday, June 17, 2011, and ended 16 hours and 58 minutes later with two of our young sisters completing the book of Revelation. We followed the order of the daily reading plan. At one point the reading team consisted of a nine-year-old Sunday school student taking turns with an elder brother of 78 years, young and old alike!

We are delighted to announce two baptisms. On April 17, 2011, NANCY ANN WIGHT was baptized into Christ. Sis. Nancy is the wife of Bro. David Wight and the daughter-in-law of Bro. Everett and Sis. Faith Wight of our ecclesia. Bro. Everett was responsible for her instruction. Quite without prearrangement, Sis. Nancy was baptized on the fortieth anniversary of Bro. David's baptism, April 17, 1971. On August 14, 2011, YUNFANG ZHANG was baptized into Christ. Sis. Yunfang is from China and first came to a Learn to Read the Bible Effectively seminar, led by Bre. Gary Chodkowski and David Stiles, in 2002. She has been attending Memorial Service ever since. We are grateful to God for calling our two new sisters. May He bless their journeys in faith.

Following Sis. Nancy's baptism, Bro. David Wight transferred his membership to Meriden from the Telford, PA, Ecclesia. In May, we welcomed Bro. Sandy and Sis. Janice Piskura back to Connecticut. They have now transferred their membership to Meriden from the Washington DC, Ecclesia. In September we also welcomed Sis. Sarah Waite by way of transfer to Meriden from the Moorestown, NJ Ecclesia. We are very happy to have all of them with us.

Last December, our Bro. Jimmy Hart had double by-pass heart surgery and has just recently gone back to work again. Our Sis. Edythe Skinner, now in her mid-nineties, was hospitalized in January and is confined to her home. Our Bro. Ron Sweet fell during the winter and has had other difficult health issues. He is unable to get out to ecclesial services. We pray that God's blessings will be with our brothers and sister.

Death has claimed three of our beloved former members. In January, Bro. David Rawson, father and father-in-law of Bro. Chris and Sis. Donna Rawson, fell asleep in Christ. Bro. David was baptized in Meriden in 1980 and was more recently a member of the Springfield, MA Ecclesia. In February, Bro. Mickey Duffelmeyer fell asleep in Christ. Bro. Mickey was baptized here in 1985 and was more recently a member of the Westerly, RI Ecclesia. He was the husband of Sis. Ann Duffelmeyer and father of Sis. Heather Woodward of the Baltimore, MD Ecclesia. In April, Donald Lipfert died in Maine. He was the beloved brother of our Sis. Gertrude Turner and was a highly respected member of our ecclesia many years ago. Our sympathies are with the three families that have been closely touched by these deaths.

Plans for our new ecclesial hall in South Meriden are going forward. Building plans have cleared the necessary municipal hurdles opening the way for construction to begin in the near future. We pray that God will continue to bless the progress of this work.

*Stephen Harper*

## **NORTHERN VIRGINIA**

The Northern Virginia Christadelphian Ecclesia began meeting on April 3, 2011. We have continued to have our weekly memorial service in members' homes and at a local community center not far from Dulles International Airport. Everyone wishing to visit with the Northern Virginia Ecclesia can contact us through our ecclesial email at: [nva.ecclesia@gmail.com](mailto:nva.ecclesia@gmail.com), or call Bro. David Fertig at: 703-644-6311.

We have been blessed with visiting brethren and sisters almost every week. They include Andrew and Erin Amis and family, Jason and Stephanie Fertig, Roberto and Megan Lara and family, and Heather Locke (Washington DC); Chuck and Robin Colby (Mansfield, PA); and Leslie Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON). We thank Bre. Andrew, Jason and Roberto for their words of exhortation.

It is with sorrow that we note that Bro. Pete Huff fell asleep in the Lord. Bro. Pete was a member of the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia, and the father of Bro. Lee Huff in our meeting.

On a happier note, we are pleased to announce that we have been blessed with the baptism of ZACHARIAH THOMAS KEMP on August 28, 2011. Bro. Zack has been a long time member of the Washington DC Sunday school, and after giving a good confession of faith, was baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that God will continue to bless the efforts of our new lamp stand in Northern Virginia.

*David Fertig*

## **VICTORIA, BC**

A number of our members fell asleep in Christ during the past quarter. Bro. Jerome Knorr (June 16, 2011), Sis. Ruby Martyn (July 10, 2011), Bro. John Evans (July 20, 2011), Bro. Fred Crawford (Aug 18, 2011). Our Sis. Ruby became one of our few centenarians reaching her 100th birthday earlier this year.

Bro. Malcolm and Sis. Josie Shrimpton were transferred to the Saanich Ecclesia, with our love, during August 2011.

We enjoyed the presence of Bro. Shane Kirkwood at our recent Fraternal Gathering held on the Labor Day Weekend. His theme was "Psalms for the Journey". Bro. Stan Isbell presented our Sunday Evening Lecture entitled "Fear of Death, the Gospel's Answer". We are continually blessed with visitors. The list is too long to publish,

however, their presence is a constant reminder of the value of our larger world-wide fellowship in Christ.

We will hold another Bible Exhibition this fall on October 14-16 at the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney BC. The exhibition will be on display during their annual Art Fair. Our semi-annual Joint Arranging Meeting of the Vancouver Island Ecclesias will be held in November 2011. A Fall Study Day will be held the weekend of November 5-6. The theme for the weekend will be "Turning Points" and our Bro. David Lawrence from the Prince George Ecclesia will lead the study. For further information please contact the undersigned at [csnobelen@csll.ca](mailto:csnobelen@csll.ca).

*Clyde Snobelen*

## **WICHITA FALLS, TX**

Since last reporting our ecclesial news we have welcomed around the Table of our absent Lord the following visiting brothers and sisters: Kerri Maier and Sarah Maier (East TX); Bethany Young (North Houston, TX); Seba Wolfe, and Levi Wolfe (Abilene, TX); Jeanna McLaughlin (Dallas, TX); Sharon Glumac, and Carmel Glumac (Houston, TX); Victoria Bates (Paris Ave., OH); Linda Jones (Los Angeles, CA); and Stan and Eunice Newton (Pomona, CA). We thank Bre. Levi Wolfe and Stan Newton for their words of exhortation.

In April we held our annual Spring Gathering and Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston Brisbane, Aust.), lead a series of classes on the sermon on the mount entitled, "The Lord's Manifesto for Life". There were 175 in attendance that benefitted from the lessons brought forth regarding the characteristics which lead to eternal life. We thank our brother for his efforts in strengthening us in the things of the kingdom.

In July, we welcomed back Bro. Ben Beutel and also welcomed Sis. Sarah Beutel (formerly of Reseda, CA) to our ecclesia. We are thankful to have two more fellow laborers in our midst as we continue our journey together toward God's kingdom.

In August, we were blessed with the addition of two potential Sunday school scholars. On the tenth, Bro. Aaron and Sis. Loretta Clubb welcomed Jack Albert and on the twenty-fourth, Bro. Ben and Sis. Sarah Beutel welcomed Audrey June. All are healthy and we pray our heavenly Father's blessing will be upon both of these little ones.

*John A. Clubb*

## **WORCESTER, MA**

We are sad to announce that our dear Sis. Virginia Ross has fallen asleep in the Lord after a long struggle with cancer. She was a tireless worker in the truth for decades and always had a smile and kind word for everyone. We pray for the comfort of her family and look forward to seeing her in the kingdom.

Our Sis. Marilyn has returned after a long absence and we are pleased to be meeting with her again. We are also pleased to announce our new sister, ANNE GAUTHIER who was baptized recently and is now engaged to Bro. Wayne Cortis. May God bless Sis. Anne, Bro. Wayne and Sis. Marilyn as we all walk together to the kingdom.

Sadly, our beloved Bro. Kevin Mayock transferred recently to the Moorestown, NJ Ecclesia to be with his family. Bro. Kevin served in many offices over the years, was a wonderful exhorter, and a leader in our CYC. May God be with him until we meet again.

*Mark Fulmer*



## Minute Meditation

### Do we worship in vain?

Abigail Adams (1744-1818) was the wife of John Adams, the second president of the United States. She wrote in a letter to her husband, “We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them.” In other words, talk is cheap.

Unfortunately this practice of saying the right things but not following up with right actions was not new in her day. Almost two thousand years ago Jesus remarked, “This people draws nigh unto me with their mouth, and honours me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” The people gave the impression of upholding the highest standards in faith and practice in what they said, but in their hearts and by their actions they were not so doing.

Jesus was actually quoting what God had pointed out to Isaiah many years before. “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”

Unfortunately in our day, godly thinking is not valued. Folks don’t even go through the motions of worshipping God. As a result, true wisdom is hidden, as was predicted in Isaiah, and the deeds of many are evil. Jesus tells us, “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Who hasn’t been tempted to say the wrong thing when provoked? We need to remember that what we actually say is important and will be remembered at the judgment. As the expression goes, choose your words carefully — you may have to eat them. If we truly trust God with all our heart, then when we face a bitter trial, rather than condemning God as so many of those around us do, we rely on God to bring us through the trial, using words similar to those we find in the Psalms. “I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” Throughout all his tribulations, we are told that “In all this Job did not sin with his lips.” We, too, need to be careful with our words because we will be held accountable for them.

We also will be held accountable if we say and do not, Abigail Adam’s concern. We may impress others with our lofty ideals, but do we actually act on them? Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian playwright, once said, “A thousand words will not leave so deep an impression as one deed.”

We need to take seriously the warning in the parable that Jesus told to the scribes and Pharisees: "Jesus said: I will tell you a story about a man who had two sons. Then you can tell me what you think. The father went to the older son and said, 'Go work in the vineyard today!' His son told him that he would not do it, but later he changed his mind and went. The man then told his younger son to go work in the vineyard. The boy said he would, but he didn't go. Which one of the sons obeyed his father? 'The older one,' the chief priests and leaders answered. Then Jesus told them: You can be sure that tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you ever will!"

We must act on our beliefs. Mouthing good words is not enough. Our actions and behavior should be consistent with what we say, for "Actions speak louder than words." The chief priests and leaders may have spoken of justice, mercy and truth, but they did not demonstrate these principles in their lives, as Jesus later explains. Abigail Adams was correct in her suspicion of the sincerity of those who did not follow up their high sounding words by acting on them. James admonishes us that faith without works is dead — if we have faith, then we should have works that demonstrate that faith.

Are we honoring God with our lips only? Are we worshipping in vain by going through the motions of worship rather than truly believing in God and acting on that belief? Let us whole heartedly trust in the Lord and spend our time working in His service.

John tells us, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Jesus explains, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." May we be diligent workers in our Lord's service showing our love by deeds of kindness. May we hear those welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Robert J. Lloyd

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*Last night I passed beside a blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring with vespers chimes.  
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.*

*"How many anvils have you had?" said I,  
"To wear and batter all those hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,  
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know!"*

*And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon.  
Yet though the noise of telling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed, but the hammers are all gone.*

John Clifford

# Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

## 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).
- 8-9 Sussex, NB**, Thanksgiving study weekend. Speaker Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA).
- 8-9 Vancouver BC** Fraternal Gathering. Theme: The Way of Life. Speaker : Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA). Contact Bro. Jonathan Stodel, jnthn@telus.net or for accomodation Sis. Pam Snobelen, pamela721@shaw.ca.
- 14-16 Victoria, BC** Bible Exhibition at the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney BC. The exhibition will be on display during their annual Art Fair.
- 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 or send a non-refundable \$50 check made out to Sis. Bonnie Sommerville, 19111 Kinzie St., Northridge, CA 91324, (818) 341-3932.

## NOVEMBER 2011

- 5-6 Kouts, IN** Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Road beginning at 10:00 AM. Bro. Bill Link, Jr. ( Baltimore,MD), Theme: "The Epistle Of Jude: 'It was needful for me to write and exhort you.'" Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219)762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.
- 5-6 Victoria, BC** Fall Study Day. The theme for the weekend will be "Turning Points" and our Bro. David Lawrence from the Prince George Ecclesia will lead the study. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at csnobelen@csl.ca.
- 11-13 Austin Leander, TX** Study weekend at the HEB Camp near Leakey, TX. Bro. Nathan Badger (ON) will be speaking. To register email Sis. Maritta Terrell, mt-ct@swbell.net.
- 12-13 Pittsburgh, PA** CYC Study Weekend. Our speaker will be Bro. Ryan King (Westerly, RI). The subject will be "Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve". Contact Bro. Bob or Sis. Rebecca Pommer, 518 Donahue Lane, Tarentum, PA 15084. Phone: (724)224-7363; e-mail: pghecclesia@gmail.com.
- 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.
- 25-27 Washington, DC** Family Bible Study Weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD) is scheduled to lead us in classes entitled "The Testing of Your Faith: The Challenge of James". Contact: Robert Kling, 301-498-5245, rkling@acm.org for additional information.

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## **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; or visit our website: [www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com](http://www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com)).

## **FEBRUARY 2012**

**6-March 2 Palm Springs Bible School**. The speakers at this year's school will be Bro. Joni Mannell (Birmingham, UK) and Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Valley, CA). The School offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's Word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. To register, please contact Jeff Gelineau at [Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org](mailto:Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org) Or visit our website [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://www.californiabibleschool.org)

## **APRIL 2012**

**8-15 Australian Christadelphian Conference**, Adelaide, Australia. Theme: "Lift Up Your Heads". Speakers Bro. Tec Morgan (Washwood Heath, UK): *The Exodus Deliverance* (adults) and *Ecclesiastes – Making Sense of Life* (youth); and Bro Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): *Pictures of Redemption* (adult) and *Parables from Luke* (youth). The main studies which will be complemented by a range of other meetings and activities. Full details and on-line registration are available at the website [www.adelaide2012.com](http://www.adelaide2012.com).