

# TIDINGS



## EDITORIAL

# BETTER ANGELS?

## EXHORTATION

Awake

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## REFLECTION

The Faith That Conquers (Part 2)

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## THOUGHTS ON THE WAY

Are We All God's Children?

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## ALSO...

- Bible Study: All the Children of God Have Names (Part 8)
- Joy of Sunday Schooling: Know Them By Heart!
- History: Conscientious Objection (Part 9)



COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY:

**BRO. DENIS THERIEN (WORCESTER, MA)**

*Location: Hilton Head Island, SC*

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"I enjoyed thinking about God's creation as the sun rose over Hilton Head Island."

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN  
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OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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# Better Angels?

## Bill Gates

Back in 2012, Bill Gates declared the book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, by Steven Pinker as the most important book he had ever read. In it, Pinker argues that war and violence are declining and that our world is now more peaceful than ever in recorded history. I have read the book, and Pinker marshals an impressive array of statistics in 800+ pages. His notion has almost become an accepted viewpoint.

This editorial is also prompted by my watching a PBS show called “The Violence Paradox,” as I was preparing a class on our beliefs regarding a future kingdom on earth. This is an event we believe will be preceded by a time of severe tribulation. The TV show strongly presented the views of Pinker, yet the world view of our community is one of a current society full of conflict, violence, and fear. Our public lectures, few though they may be in North America, are replete with topics such as “Will There Ever be Peace on Earth?,” and “Why is There so Much Trouble in the World?”.

It must be admitted that the word “Tribulation” is not covered much in our literature, and when it is, the topic is usually regarded as part of our Christian life, as in “...in the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). So, let us consider the validity

of Pinker’s thesis, in contrast with the Bible’s view.

## Better angels?

The title of Pinker’s book is taken from Abraham Lincoln’s inaugural address, on the eve of the Civil War. We are told that Lincoln personally<sup>1</sup> wrote the phrase, in the hope that the internal “better nature” of both Northerners and Southerners would prevail — not from angels ensuring peace in the nation from above. His hope proved in vain, and I believe the thesis of Pinker, of an evolving “better” world, will prove in vain also. Clearly, the common understanding of most citizens of our nation is a belief otherwise. President Trump’s battle cry “Make America Great Again” would not have resonated so strongly, if the prevailing sentiment were of a better world. Every day, seemingly, we in the USA read about senseless mass shootings, and our children have regular drills. Even our ecclesias have started to be worried about the possibility of violence. And every family seems to expect trouble from strangers. I

*The world  
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fear...*

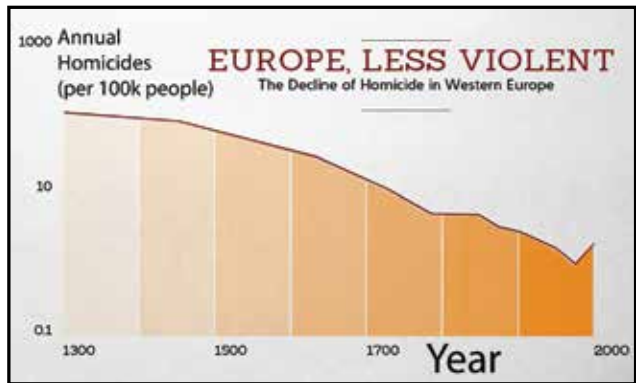
think back to my childhood, which was frankly a free-range experience: I wandered far and wide as way back as I can remember without a care in the world. Today, you read<sup>2</sup> of parents of children 10 years old being reported for letting their children go to a playground a mile away; of Illinois, which says a child has to be 14 before being left home alone. It makes you wonder how much our world has gotten better, at least in the perception of most people.

### The Evidence

Pinker relies heavily on statistics covering death as a ratio of the existing population, describing the brutality of early tribal society compared to the modern state. He cites the age of enlightenment in the 17th and 18th century as a time when slavery, torture, death sentences for minor offenses etc., were all eliminated. He shows how at least for the last 50 plus years, the major powers have not engaged each other in wars. And how, according to his statistics, the proportion of the populace killed in Europe has declined over the last 700 years,<sup>3</sup> as illustrated. You can see the little blip at the end: this is WW2, but after that, the ratio of homicides to population has continued to decrease. Of course, the population of the world has increased greatly, so a catastrophe like WW2, which killed about 50

million, would have wiped out most of the population if it had occurred not long before the birth of Christ.

Pinker has been criticized for his selective use of data, and his heavy focus on the Western world. But the real problem is that, while there is no doubt human knowledge and the associated improvements in technology have continued over time, in ethics and politics there have not been similar advances. Peace and freedom are fragile, and improvements are intermittent and easily lost. War and oppression take over; increase of wealth is punctuated by times of turmoil. The wealth and stability of the Roman empire devolved into the “Dark Ages,” when civilization in most of Europe collapsed. The Chinese empire in its turn was destroyed in the 8th century. It is argued this event resulted in the



death of the largest percent of the world's population ever. Before that, in the 11th century BC, civilization in most of Asia spiraled into turmoil. Many other empires have come and gone (including the British Empire!).



Over time, it is clear “civilization” as we know it is only temporary, and has all too frequently collapsed into periods of barbarism. And as we look at the world around us, we have problems which make our concerns with such events as periodic mass shootings seem almost inconsequential. As I write this, Australia is burning, a probable symptom of climate change. The world is one mistake, or one crazed leader, away from nuclear war<sup>4</sup>. And politics in many countries is trending from a peaceful democracy to either a dictatorship or a scorched earth political process. The Doomsday Clock is still at two minutes to midnight, a symptom of both nuclear dangers and the threat of climate changes. So is the world safer, and are the “better angels of our nature” showing that the world is entering a period of peace and tranquility? I do not think so. Whether it is a madman, a failure of our computer

safeguards, a new disease, or the environment, the warnings of Jesus look more real than ever. And who knows if the current Iran/USA conflict will turn into a real war, and involve the nuclear-armed states of the Middle East, including Israel?

### **Tribulations**

*“When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” Then he said to them: ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven’*  
” (Luke 21:9-11).

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The Olivet prophecy had its first fulfillment in AD 70 (and a lesser one in AD 131, when the Jews were finally expelled from Jerusalem). But there is no doubt that Jesus was warning, not



only the Jews of his time but also the disciples of the last days, of great tribulation. He also warned, of course, of false teachers, which were prevalent in the Early Church. Whether these false teachers of the latter days are those within Christadelphia or in the larger “Christian” Church is not quite certain, but I believe it is the latter — those demagogues and similar we see and hear from so often in the media, those televangelists with their massive followings — those who falsely claim the Holy Spirit gifts, who proclaim the “prosperity gospel” and who achieve enormous personal wealth by promising great fortune to their congregants if only they contribute money.

As we look back in history, there have been, separately, all the signs promised. World wars, the black death, famines like that in Russia in the 1930s, have all resulted in the death of uncounted millions. But we seem to be promised such catastrophes all occurring simultaneously, which is a frightening prospect. As Luke says *“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”* (Luke 21:28).

The reminder for us is, as I am sure Jesus intended, of our duty at all times: watchfulness and prayer for

our redemption will come when the perils seem worst, when disaster seems imminent.

In the gospel of Matthew, the parable of the ten virgins follows immediately after the Olivet prophecy, with its central message of both watchfulness and preparedness. We do not know when our Lord will come. We only know that disasters, both natural and man-made, are certain before the great and terrible day of the coming of our Lord. We will all know when he actually comes, for:

*“At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”* (Luke 21:27).

Will the “Better Angels of Our Nature” result in peace, and freedom from being killed? In some ways, perhaps a little. But the Doomsday Clock<sup>5</sup> is telling us that disaster, both man-made nuclear, and man-induced climate change, pose cataclysmic perils. So, let us watch and prayerfully acknowledge that:

*“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened”* (Matt 24:22).

*Peter Hemingray*

Notes:

- 1 See <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2019/07/04/better-angels-in-our-past/>
- 2 Look up Wikipedia on “Free-range parenting”.
- 3 [https://www.gatesnotes.com/About-Bill-Gates/Better-Angels-of-Our-Nature-in-Graphs-and-Numbers?sou\\_2](https://www.gatesnotes.com/About-Bill-Gates/Better-Angels-of-Our-Nature-in-Graphs-and-Numbers?sou_2)
- 4 Few realize that in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, two out of three commanders of a Russian submarine were in favor of launching a nuclear torpedo.
- 5 On Jan 23, 2020 the clock was set at 100 seconds to midnight, the closest ever.



Exhortation.

# AWAKE

*“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you”*  
(1 Thess 1:1-4)

## The Opening

What great reminders these words are of the position we have been blessed within God’s family and the joy, hope and peace that brings to our lives. I love how much it means to Paul, that his siblings in Christ are doing well, the constant place they have in his prayers, and how much he encourages them. His introduction alone is a great exhortation of the encouragement and reminders we should be giving each other, and the joy we should get

from having siblings in Christ to walk the path to the Kingdom with us.

The Thessalonians were a remarkable ecclesia. We learn from Acts 17:1-10 that Paul probably spent, at most, a few weeks teaching the gospel in Thessalonica, before being chased off by jealous Jews. When the Jews and the mob they riled up could not find Paul, they pulled Jason out of his home; he was the host of the apostles and his house the presumed ecclesial meeting place. The new Christians



were dragged before the authorities on trumped-up charges by the mob, and forced to put a deposit in place with the government to ensure they would not cause any more trouble. But in spite of the short exposure they had to the gospel and the persecution, they took hold of their faith. Paul says that they had *“become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything”* (1 Thess 1:7-8). Their reputation preceded them throughout the region. Paul further says:

*“Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia...”* (1 Thess 4:9-10)

In Acts 17 it says there were some Jews in this ecclesia, but also many Greeks, among them leading women from the community. They had completely embraced their new life as followers of Jesus, leaving behind their idols and showing God’s love to so many throughout the region where they lived. But persecution had come to these new believers.

*“For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the*

*Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind”* (1 Thess 2:14-15).

And so, it is at the end of Chapter 4 that we find Paul reminding them that those who had paid for following Christ with their lives would be raised again at the resurrection. Paul tells them they don’t have to grieve as those who have no hope. He encourages them that both those who sleep and those who are alive will be united with Jesus forever when he returns.

It is in this context that Paul begins chapter 5 by telling them that they have no need for anything to be written to them about the times and seasons, because they know the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. Verses 1 through 11 are loaded with Bible echoes to the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 24 and 25 about the Kingdom of God, his final instruction to the disciples about the times and seasons before being taken to Heaven, to the letter to the Ephesians and even to Daniel when he interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream about the image.

### Times and seasons

The times and seasons echoes are clear reminders that God is in control of the events of this world and is working with His Son to bring about the return of Jesus to the earth with his Kingdom. In Acts the apostles asked Jesus if he would now restore the kingdom of Israel. He said in reply: *“It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority”* (Acts 1:7).

Daniel answered Nebuchadnezzar's demand to be told his dream about the image and its interpretation. He said *"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him"* (Dan 2:20-22).

Again, we see the emphasis on God's control of the times and seasons, of the kingdoms of men and the rulers thereof. God knows what is in the darkness of this world, and God is the light.

Paul picked up on the theme of darkness and light as he talks about those that will experience the day of the Lord as "a thief in the night," and how that should be different for us that walk in the light.

The use of the phrase "a thief in the night" draws us back to a series of parables Jesus tells at the end of the Olivet prophecy in Matthew 24 and continuing in chapter 25 about the Kingdom of God. In Chapter 24 we see the strong man who would not have slept had he known the thief was coming.

*"Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour*

*you do not expect. "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes."* (Matt 24:42-46).

And in Matthew 25, the lessons from the parable of the virgins and the sheep and goats at judgment are clear:

*"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. ... And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me' "* (Matt 25:13, 40).

Jesus' exhortation is clear. We must watch our character. We must choose each day to stock up on the oil of God's word and be soft clay in His hands. We must choose to be willing servants of His by serving those around us, choosing to be people He can use to show the world His character and His love — people that declare God's way is the right way, that He is righteous.

Paul echoed the exhortation to stay awake and be mindful of who we are choosing to be: *"So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober"* (1 Thess 5:6).

Paul transitioned from here to the same point Jesus made, that staying awake means immersing ourselves in God and allowing Him to transform us into reflections of His love. Paul said that we should wear the breastplate of faith and love, have faith and trust in God, that His ways are right, and the Love for God and others will come from faith and trust in Him. We are

to have our mind set on the joy before us, wearing the helmet of the hope of salvation, knowing that our salvation is sure, because He who promised it is faithful and has not destined us for wrath. As the letter to the Romans says: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31). Therefore, Paul says, because God is on our side and has given us salvation, encourage one another and build one another up.

In the rest of chapter 5, Paul laid out what staying awake should look like as we walk together toward God’s Kingdom.

He started off by reminding us how to encourage each other and help each other:

*“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone” (1 Thess 5:12-15).*

There is a strong exhortation here to always see positive and loving motives in our brothers and sisters. We will need to have tough conversations sometimes and Paul says if someone loves you enough to have that tough conversation with you, you should esteem them very highly.

Solomon tells us: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Prov 27:6). A true sibling in Christ will want us to be with us in the kingdom so badly, they will be willing to say something we need to hear, even though we may not want to hear it. Their love for us will compel them to patiently and peacefully call us out on behaviors and attitudes that need work in our lives. Our response to them in these moments should be love, recognizing the love it took for them to come to us for an uncomfortable conversation. I think when Paul says do not repay anyone evil for evil, (1 Thess 5:15), this means, “when you feel someone has done something evil to you, do not repay them with evil, but seek to do good”. How many times have you found yourself taking something personally, assuming someone meant to do you harm, only to find out that they had your good at heart hiding under what may have been poor execution? I know I have found myself in that position, feeling like a heel and wishing I had attributed positive motives to my sibling in Christ.

And even if there was some negative motive behind what someone has done, we still have an opportunity to help them if we respond positively. Most of the time there is some level of both positive and negative motives behind the things people say and do. By choosing to attribute their actions to positive motives we help them be the best version of themselves. We help them to become more like God and learn the power of being people whose actions are driven by God’s love.

## Stay awake

Paul concluded the chapter and the letter with a simple but powerful formula for staying awake:

### 1) Pray Always

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess 5:16-18).*

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).*

Rejoice and praise God for making us members of His family; talk to Him all the time and remember with thankfulness that He has always been

there for you. This will bring us peace and confidence that God is with us and will continue to provide what we need on our walk to His Kingdom.

### 2) Listen to God

*“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thess 5:19-20).*

*“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night” (Josh 1:8).*

God, through His Spirit, has left His word for us. We must not quench it or despise it. We need to see in it the power to transform us into people who can more perfectly reflect our Father’s character.

### 3) Practice doing good

*“... but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess 5:21-22).*

*We have to practice what we have learned, clinging to times that we get it right and working to build on those moments in our lives.*



*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:8-9).*

We need to dwell on the good, and let it fill our minds. Our thoughts will become actions, and it is when we attempt to put God’s word into action that it truly comes alive. We have to practice what we have learned, clinging to times that we get it right and working to build on those moments in our lives.

#### 4) Ask for help

*“Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss” (1 Thess 5:25-26).*

Even Paul asked for prayers from his siblings in Christ. And look at the joy in the greeting of a holy kiss. We need to place a high value on our relationships with each other, taking full advantage of every opportunity to be lifted up by our fellowship and to lift up those around us.

#### 5) Trust God and His Son

*“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (1 Thess 5:23-24, 28).*

## The remembrance

We have come to the point in our service when we remember what our Father and His Son gave up to invite us into the Family of God. We know that we can trust God to sanctify us completely, and to present us blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This bread and wine are the reminders to us of the example we have to follow. Jesus was “awake” his entire mortal life. He knew who he was and why he was here. He believed his Father was right to require him to lay down his whole life as an example for us to follow, and he wore the Helmet of the Hope of Salvation, the joy set before him. He was patient with those God had given him, losing none of them. He prayed, he listened, he practiced the good, he supported those around him and he trusted God. Now he is elevated to the right hand of God and our hope is to also be immortalized members of God’s family for ever. Let us choose to walk in the light, trusting in the power of God to transform us. This mortal life is a short moment, compared to the prospect of eternal life in God’s family. Let us not sleep in the darkness of this present age, but choose to be awake.

Let us be awake and working to be people who show God’s love to the world, like Jesus did, so that we may be found ready at his return to join him forever.

*Bradley Styles  
(Simi Hills, CA)*



A photograph of a family of four sitting on a blanket in a field at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. A young child is on the left, looking towards the family. A woman is in the center, holding a baby. A man is on the right, looking towards the woman. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying the time together.

Bible Study.

# ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE NAMES (PART 8)

## Rufus and His Mother

*“Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too” (Rom 16:13).*

### Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord

“Chosen” probably means more than chosen as a Christian; it suggests a specially selected and distinguished believer. The same word *“eklektos”* describes the chosen or elect lady (possibly figurative for the ecclesia) addressed by John in 2 John 1:1. A related word *“ekloge”* is used of Paul at the time of his baptism:

*“The Lord said to Ananias, ‘Go! This man is my **chosen** instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’ ” (Acts 9:15-16).*

This word, *“eklektos”* may also describe all believers who are “chosen” in Christ, to be *“holy and blameless in his sight”* (Eph 1:4). But this is probably not the meaning here, where Paul seems to set Rufus apart from his other fellow-believers.

It is quite likely that this Rufus was a son of Simon the Cyrenian, the man who was compelled to carry the cross for Jesus to the place of his execution:

*“A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross” (Mark 15:21).*

From the same evidence it may be assumed, quite reasonably, that Simon's wife (and then Rufus' mother) is mentioned also in Romans 16:13, as a sterling character.

### **The man who carried Christ's cross**

It is obvious that Rufus was a special believer, as was his mother. It is quite likely that the process by which son and mother became special — not only in the eyes of Paul but also in the eyes of the whole ecclesia — began a generation earlier, before Saul of Tarsus was even a believer, and possibly before Rufus was even born.

J.J. Blunt has done a great piece of investigative work to draw the threads together by which such a connection may be made:

“Clement of Alexandria, who lived about the end of the second century, declares that Mark wrote this Gospel on... Peter's authority at Rome. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, says that Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, being requested by his brethren at Rome, wrote a short Gospel.

“Now this circumstance may account for his designating Simon as the father of Rufus at least; for we find that a disciple of that name, and of considerable note, was resident at Rome, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. ‘Salute Rufus,’ says he, ‘chosen in the Lord’ (Rom 16:13). Thus, by mentioning a man living upon the spot where

he was writing, and amongst the people whom he addressed, Mark was giving a reference for the truth of his narrative, which must have been accessible and satisfactory to all; since Rufus could not have failed knowing the particulars of the Crucifixion (the great event to which the Christians looked), when his father had been so intimately concerned in it as to have been the reluctant bearer of the cross.

“Of course, the force of this argument depends on the identity of the Rufus of Mark and the Rufus of Paul, which I have no means of proving; but admitting it to be probable that they were the same person (which, I think, may be admitted, for Paul, we see, expressly speaks of a distinguished disciple of the name of Rufus at Rome, and Mark, writing for the Romans, mentions Rufus, the son of Simon, as well known to them) — admitting this, the coincidence is striking, and serves to account for what otherwise seems a piece of purely gratuitous and needless information offered by Mark to his readers, namely, that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus; a fact omitted by the other Evangelists, and apparently turned to no advantage by himself” (Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences, pp. 280,281.)

The story of Simon the Cyrenian is an extraordinary one. Evidently, he was a Jew who traveled a long

distance — all the way from North Africa — to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He had no idea of the adventures that would come his way, events which seem to have changed his life dramatically and absolutely. Never again would he see the world and himself in the same way.

We can assume that Simon entered the city with great anticipation. The Jerusalem of Passover would be an exciting and festive place, when many thousands of Jews from all over the Roman Empire had converged to remember the LORD God's deliverance of His people out of bondage in Egypt into freedom in the Land of Promise.

But Simon had scarcely joined the crowds on their way to Herod's magnificent Temple before he found himself drafted into service by a Roman soldier. It looked as though

so far to worship the One true God, in the one special place out of the whole earth where He had chosen to place His Name and His Presence, and now, out of nowhere, he was suffering this terrible and shameful thing — to walk along with a condemned man and watch him die.

But something happened along the way. He felt strangely drawn to the solitary figure he was following, how he submitted to all the indignities heaped upon him, almost like a lamb mute before its butcher, uttering no word of complaint. What kind of man was this?

When his duty was discharged, Simon must have stayed to watch the awful scene unfold. He must have heard the captain of the Roman soldiers, the centurion, say in wonder that this crucified man could be, might be, the



*Hill of Golgotha in Jerusalem, Israel*

it would be a short task, but a very distasteful one. He found himself carrying a criminal's cross, trudging along under its weight and following an extraordinary figure on the way to the hill of execution, called Golgotha. He must have been so angry, and yet he dared not show it — to have come

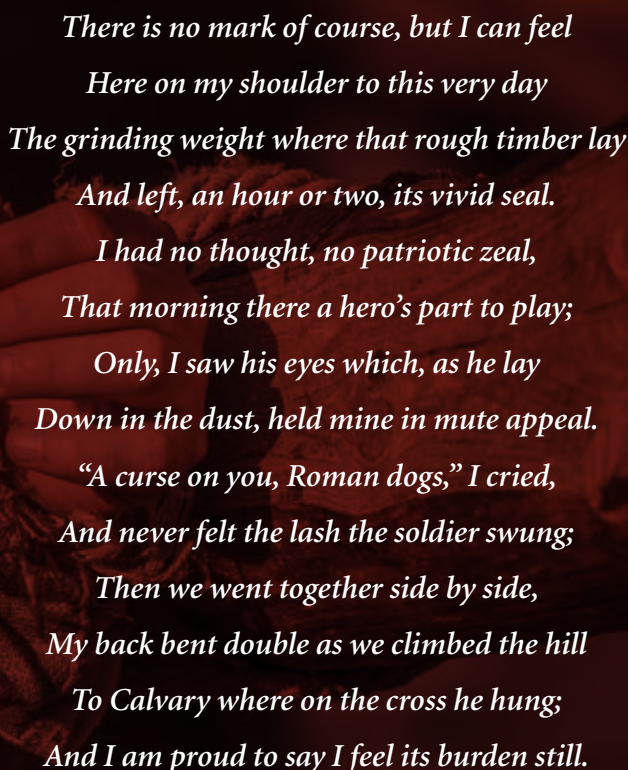
Son of God! He may have heard the words, almost whispered by the dying man, forgiving those who gleefully or callously tortured this extraordinary man, and then watched him suffer and die.

That chance encounter on the road to Golgotha changed Simon's life. He

came to celebrate the Jewish Passover, but he may well have stayed right through the seven weeks leading up to Pentecost. Before he left Jerusalem, he must have met a number of the disciples of Jesus, and heard the news, perhaps even seeing the evidence, of the empty tomb, the resurrection, and the last words of the risen Lord to his followers. In a short time, as such things are measured, Simon came to see the Passover in a new perspective — “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” His life would never be the same again. What he had first thought to be the

most horrific experience imaginable had turned into a truly transcendent honor: “I was the one — and not even one of his disciples then — chosen to follow the Savior to the place where he sought, and achieved, my redemption. When he said those words, ‘It is finished’, it was then I knew it was only beginning for me!”

In time to come, the great revolution during Simon’s time at Jerusalem would touch his wife and influence his sons, Rufus and Alexander. Simon’s conversion is poetically interpreted in a brief poem by an unknown author (*See below.*)



*There is no mark of course, but I can feel  
Here on my shoulder to this very day  
The grinding weight where that rough timber lay  
And left, an hour or two, its vivid seal.  
I had no thought, no patriotic zeal,  
That morning there a hero's part to play;  
Only, I saw his eyes which, as he lay  
Down in the dust, held mine in mute appeal.  
“A curse on you, Roman dogs,” I cried,  
And never felt the lash the soldier swung;  
Then we went together side by side,  
My back bent double as we climbed the hill  
To Calvary where on the cross he hung;  
And I am proud to say I feel its burden still.*



What Simon saw and felt on the fateful day — and the weeks that followed — changed not only himself. It also changed his family and many, many others. And it changes men and women even today. No wonder that Simon's son, Rufus, and Simon's wife (was she by now his widow?), became extraordinary disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and great friends of Paul the Apostle.

***And his mother, who has been a mother to me, too:*** Paul had a number of “mothers” in the Truth (see Matt 12:49,50; Mark 3:35; 1Tim 5:2)! Perhaps this special woman perceived his unique loss when he became a follower of Christ, at the same time “*losing all things*” (Phil 3:8), and she attempted to minister to him by providing what he was now lacking: a warm and loving family.


“Let Christian mothers find here a great field for that wonderful heart of instinctive loving care given by God to mothers, that they extend their maternal care beyond their own family circle, to all Christians, and especially to all laborers for Christ. The Lord will remember it at his coming!” (Newell, Romans Verse-by-Verse).

Joseph Bland writes:

“The truth breaks down barriers of wealth and position, and unites as one those who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ. The mere fleshly relationship is as nothing compared with the higher spiritual relationship begotten by the word of truth. We feel something of the spirit of Jesus when he asked the question, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?’ and when asking the question, and beholding his disciples, *‘he stretched forth his hands towards them, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother’* (Matt 12:48-50). These are the experiences that should be ours towards each other.”

(The Salutations in Romans 16, *The Fraternal Visitor*, Vol. 12, 1897, p. 271).

George Booker  
(Austin Leander, TX)



***The truth breaks down barriers of wealth and position, and unites as one those who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ.***





Sunday School.

# KNOW THEM BY HEART!

## Memorizing First Principle Bible Passages

Here are four sets of first-principle passages. Can your Sunday School and CYC kids tell where each passage is found in the Bible? Can you? This ready-to-use matching activity can be applied in several ways.

Try it yourself: Read each passage and try to match it with its reference. Use a Bible, a Bible app, or the answer key to check your solutions. How many did you get right?

Cover up the references. Then read each passage and try to recall where it is found in the Bible. Do you know them by heart?

Use it as a class activity. Here are some ways to do this:

Give each student a set of passages and references, without the answer key. Then have them work together

as a class to see how many they can match. When they think they've got it right, let them use their Bibles or Bible apps to see how well they've done. Talk about the passages and have the students tell what they think each one means. (Suggestion: have students list the passages in the front of their Bibles when they get home, labeling the lists as "The Nature of Man," "Man's Mortal Soul vs. Immortality," etc.). Form teams and have them take turns trying to match a passage with its reference. Keep score.

Write each passage on a file card. Write its reference on another card. Use the cards as a matching/manipulative activity. Again, Bibles can be used to check results.

# The Nature of Man

## REFERENCES

|               |              |           |              |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Gen 2:7       | Gen 3:19     | Job 33:4  | Job 34:14-15 |
| Psa 103:14-16 | Eccl 3:19-20 | Eccl 12:7 | Rom 3:23     |
| Rom 5:12      | Rom 6:23     | Rom 7:18  | 1 Cor 15:22  |

- 1) All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- 2) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
- 3) For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.
- 4) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.
- 5) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.
- 6) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 7) For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.
- 8) If (God) should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.
- 9) The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
- 10) The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.
- 11) The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- 12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

## Answer Key

[1] Rom 3:23, [2] Gen 3:19, [3] Psa 103:14-16, [4] 1 Cor 15:22, [5] Rom 7:18, [6] Rom 6:23, [7] Eccl 3:19-20, [8] Job 34:14-15, [9] Eccl 12:7, [10] Gen 2:7, [11] Job 33:4, [12] Rom 5:12.

## Man's Mortal Soul vs. Immortality

### REFERENCES

|                   |            |                 |            |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Job 33:22         | Psa 16:10  | Psa 89:48       | Isa 53:12  |
| Ezek 18:4         | Matt 26:38 | Acts 2:31 (KJV) | Rom 2:7    |
| 1 Cor 15:53 (KJV) | 1 Tim 6:16 | 2 Tim 1:10      | James 5:20 |

- 1) Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.
- 2) (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.
- 3) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
- 4) For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.
- 5) (God) alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.
- 6) He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.
- 7) His soul draws near the pit, and his life to those who bring death.
- 8) Let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
- 9) My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.
- 10) Our Savior Christ Jesus ... abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
- 11) To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.
- 12) What man can live and never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?

**Answer Key**

[1] Ezek 18:4, [2] Acts 2:31 (KJV), [3] 1 Cor 15:53 (KJV), [4] Psa 16:10, [5] 1 Tim 6:16, [6] Isa 53:12, [7] Job 33:22, [8] Jas 5:20, [9] Matt 26:38, [10] 2 Tim 1:10, [11] Rom 2:7, [12] Psa 89:48.

# Death

## REFERENCES

|                     |                      |                       |                     |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Job 14:12</b>    | <b>Psa 6:5</b>       | <b>Psa 13:3</b>       | <b>Psa 30:9</b>     |
| <b>Psa 88:10-12</b> | <b>Psa 115:17</b>    | <b>Eccl 9:5</b>       | <b>Isa 38:18</b>    |
| <b>Dan 12:2</b>     | <b>John 11:11-14</b> | <b>1 Cor 15:17-18</b> | <b>1 Thess 4:14</b> |

- 1) A man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake or be roused out of his sleep.
- 2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
- 3) Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.
- 4) Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon? Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
- 5) For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?
- 6) For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness.
- 7) For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.
- 8) For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.
- 9) If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
- 10) Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. but I go to awaken him. ... Lazarus has died.
- 11) The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence.
- 12) What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?

## Answer Key

[1] Job 14:12, [2] Dan 12:2, [3] Psa 13:3, [4] Psa 88:10-12, [5] Psa 6:5, [6] Isa 38:18, [7] 1 Thess 4:14, [8] Eccl 9:5, [9] 1 Cor 15:17-18, [10] John 11:11-14, [11] Psa 115:17, [12] Psa 30:9.

## The Gift of Eternal Life

### REFERENCES

|                   |                    |                    |                       |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Psa 21:4-6</b> | <b>Isa 35:10</b>   | <b>Dan 12:2-3</b>  | <b>Luke 18:29-30,</b> |
| <b>John 3:16</b>  | <b>John 6:40</b>   | <b>Rom 2:7</b>     | <b>Rom 6:23</b>       |
| <b>Gal 6:8</b>    | <b>Titus 1:2-3</b> | <b>1 John 2:25</b> | <b>Jude 1:21</b>      |

- 1) And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”
- 2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.
- 3) And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
- 4) And this is the promise that he made to us — eternal life.
- 5) ... Eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word ...
- 6) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- 7) For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- 8) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 9) For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.
- 10) He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever. His glory is great through your salvation; splendor and majesty you bestow on him. For you make him most blessed forever; you make him glad with the joy of your presence.
- 11) Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.
- 12) To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

### Answer Key

[1] Luke 18:29-30; [2] Dan 12:2-3; [3] Isa 35:10; [4] 1 John 2:25, [5] Titus 1:2-3; [6] John 3:16; [7] Gal 6:8; [8] Rom 6:23; [9] John 6:40, [10] Psa 21:4-6; [11] Jude 1:21; [12] Rom 2:7.



## Summary

It is helpful for students to know where these first-principle passages are found in the Bible, but they also need to know that the lists are not exhaustive. The Bible has a lot to say about these subjects. So here is another suggestion: as an additional homework assignment, have your students add to the lists. Have them use their Bibles, Bible apps, or other study tools at home to identify at least two additional passages under each heading. Then have them share their findings with the rest of the

class and add the passages to the lists they are developing in the front of their Bibles.

Send me an email if you would like a ready-to-print copy of this activity.

*"May grace and peace be multiplied to you – and your students – in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet 1:2).*

*Jim Harper  
(Meriden, CT)*

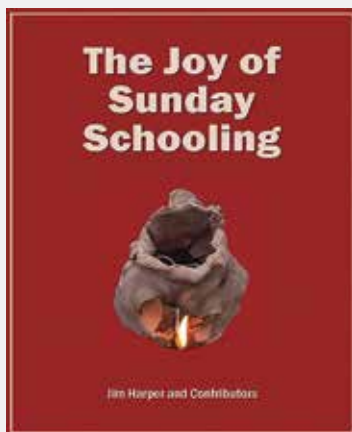
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Reflection.

# THE FAITH THAT CONQUERS

## Part 2: Against All Odds

### Faith Changes Everything

We began this series on the need for a faith renaissance in our community. We focused on how the Bible puts faith at the very center of our relationship with God. We discussed how faith supplies victory — our *nike*. We looked at how *nike*, *demos* (Nicodemus) and others in Scripture provide shining examples of how faith overcomes all and transforms us in the process.

Faith is no abstract concept. It is the essential guide to every decision we make. Even more, faith literally changes everything in our lives. No matter how fierce the storm, faith creates calm. This is an awesome and comforting part of our faith. It

needs to be better recognized and acknowledged, especially when we often stare into a dark horizon ahead.

We each face dark storms in life. Often, it seems there is no escape. Yet that is the marvel about putting trust in God. Faith changes everything, no matter the odds. The faith that conquers knows calm in every storm — because things are not what they seem.

### Stormy Seas

Jesus had just finished the Sermon on the Mount, presenting the Gospel in profound simplicity to a huge throng. When evening came, he set out on the Sea of Galilee with the twelve Apostles. The Lord fell asleep, but not the Twelve. A storm arose. Even

though four of them were seasoned fishermen, all twelve were scared to death. They shook the Lord to wake him: *“Master, we are perishing!”* (Mark 4:38). In fact, their fear ran so deep that there was an edge to their statement, “Master don’t you care that we are perishing?”

Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind, saying: *“Peace, be still”* (v. 39). Immediately there was a great calm. The storm’s fury stopped. The Lord then supplied the critical punchline for his awestruck apostles: *“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”* (v. 40).

The apostles saw impending doom. Jesus saw a peaceful calm. What was the difference? Jesus’ faith changed everything. So can ours.

### **The Power of Faithful Sight**

As a seasoned traveler, I have watched a thunderstorm at night from a plane on several occasions. (Thankfully, in every case the plane was a safe distance away!) Seeing a storm from that vantage point is an awesome sight — the flashes of lightning illuminate the clouds with an eerie beauty. But a 50,000-foot thunderstorm looks much different when you are on the ground. The lightning flashes are still awesome, but as they draw nearer the wind gusts grab your attention — especially if you see a funnel.

It matters on which side of the storm you stand. Viewed from above, a storm is a visual extravaganza. Viewed from below, the advancing storm is a cause of fear. The problem is that we

usually only see storms from ground level.

The point is this: We make decisions based on what we see. Faith changes what we see.

### **Elisha**

Perhaps no one in Scripture understood this profound principle better than Elisha (though Paul is a great candidate, too). Two incidents from his life illustrate the point.

The first involved his gracious benefactress, a Shunammite woman who was never named. Elisha would often pass by her house. It was a nice house, as they were a family of means. The woman surmised that Elisha was not the typical traveler; she sensed he was a man of God. She told her husband they should do more for him. And so, they did. They built a special penthouse room for him, complete with his own bed, lamp, and chair. Whenever he came their way, he had a special place to rest, a room all his own (2 Kgs 4:9-10).

Elisha and his servant, Gehazi, found great respite under that blessed roof. There was a puzzle for Elisha, though. The woman had done so much for them. What could he do for her in return? Gehazi offered the answer, *“She has no son, and her husband is old”* (v. 14). So, Elisha told her that in

a year’s time she would hold a son in her arms. She was incredulous, knowing her husband’s advanced age.

Like Sarah before her, God’s promise came true. Things were not what they seemed.

***The point is this:  
We make decisions  
based on what we  
see. Faith changes  
what we see.***



*Elisha Raising the Son of the Shunamite, by Frederic Leighton*

Elisha had faith. Her child was born, a beautiful son. But after the child grew into a lad, he went into the field to work with his father. Under the blazing heat he began to complain of the heat and then collapsed — the apparent victim of heat stroke. They carried him inside, laid him on his mother's lap and there he died (2 Kgs 4:20).

At that point, the woman did something highly unusual. She laid the boy on Elisha's bed, called for a servant and an ass and set out to find Elisha. Did she know that only he could bring her beloved son back to life?

She found the man of God. As soon as Elisha understood the gravity of the situation, he gave his staff to Gehazi and sent him off running to place it on the lifeless lad — to no avail. Finally, Elisha arrived with the woman. He ushered everyone out of the room. He went in, closed the door and prayed (v. 33). He stretched himself over the lad, arm upon arm, leg upon leg. He did this

twice and suddenly the boy sneezed seven times. Elisha turned with eager gladness and told the woman, “*Take up your son*” (v. 36).

The family saw a dead son. Elisha saw a sleeping boy. What was the difference? Against all odds, the boy arose to life.

Even after witnessing this miraculous raising to life, Gehazi still needed to learn this powerful principle of faith for himself. That is the second great lesson of faith from Elisha's life.

Elisha had been providing a valuable service to the King of Israel. Elisha supplied advance warning so the King of Israel knew exactly where the King of Syria would conduct his raids in Israel. The raids were intended to kill or capture Israel's king. With Elisha's prescient aid, the King of Israel always escaped unharmed. The King of Syria was incensed. How did the King of Israel always managed to escape? Was there a ‘mole’ in his army? No, his advisors told him. The king of Israel had something better

— a prophet named Elisha. “Where is he?” roared the King of Syria. “In Dothan”, his advisors replied. So, the King of Syria sent a huge battalion of troops to surround that city in Israel (2 Kgs 6:8-14).

Gehazi awoke early in Dothan, looked out and immediately grasped the gravity of the situation. They were surrounded by a great army with horses and chariots. There was no escape. He ran to Elisha: “*Alas, what shall we do?*” (2 Kgs 6:15).

Gehazi saw capture and death at the hands of a vast army. Elisha saw something else. Elisha and Gehazi went outside. I imagine Elisha putting his hand on Gehazi’s shoulder as he said, “*Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them*” (v. 16).

No matter the odds of the situation, the faith principle always applies! Things were not what they appeared to be. Not at all. Elisha was about to provide the greatest lesson he would ever give to Gehazi.

*“Then Elisha prayed, and said, ‘O LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see.’ So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kgs 6:17).*

With faith, those who are for us are always greater than those against us. It simply does not matter how desperate things seem to our feeble eyes. God provides a better way for those who believe. We cannot say for certain that chariots of fire continually surround us. But we can

say with confidence that goodness and mercy surely follow wherever we go — all the days of our life.

## David, against all odds

God wants us to know, deep in our bones, that faith brings victory against all odds. The Bible is, in fact, a wonderful collection of underdog accounts, where the little guy or gal always wins. These are not the stories of comic books. They are records of amazing faith. God wants us to realize that faith really does change everything. It always snatches victory from the seeming jaws of defeat.

Nowhere is this lesson more telling than with David and his greater Son. In both cases, the odds seemed insurmountable. Yet victory was sure and decisive.

The account of David and Goliath is familiar to us all. I heard a class recently by Bro. Martin Webster who summed it up better than I had ever heard. He titled his class: “David and the Dwarf.” Israel’s army saw a giant, one that struck fear deep in their hearts. For forty days in a row, the giant bellowed his taunts, “Send out someone to fight me, you uncircumcised dogs!” No one came. Until David.

David did not see a giant. He saw something else — through his keen eye of faith. And he understood the principle that Elisha knew so well: The battle is the LORD’s, not ours (1 Sam 17:47). By any human measure, David was done. A giant with a massive spear against a shepherd boy with a mere slingshot. It was no contest. But what David knew (and we are all still learning!) is that



human measures don't count when we have faith. *"The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground"* (v. 49). The giant was no more.

Israel saw a giant. David saw a dwarf. What was the difference?

Against all human odds, David's stunning victory was the prelude to a much bigger victory to come. The greater son of David would fight an even bigger giant, with even slimmer odds than the shepherd boy. The greater Son's victory would truly change everything.

Jesus faced all the power of the Roman Empire and Jewish officials. He had no army. He had no sword. Not even a slingshot. What is more, Jesus faced an even more formidable foe than Rome.

### **Jesus faced the greatest enemy of all — death itself.**

*"He himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil (diabolos)" (Heb. 2:14).*

That false accuser had been denying God's way from the very beginning. "Just do it" was the voice of the serpent to Eve. That is not the *nike* God intends for those who put their trust in him.

Jesus knew that to win this victory he would have to die willingly, fully trusting that his Father would raise him from the dead. This was a test of his faith, not a contest with death.

Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem. He carried his cross to Golgotha. He

walked willingly into the valley of the shadow of death. Yet in all these steps he did not see his giant foe. He did not see death. No, Jesus saw life after resurrection. Just consider these thoughts streaming through his mind while he hung on the cross:

- *"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"* (Psa 23:4).
- *"My feet stand on level ground; in the great assembly I will praise the LORD"* (Psa 26:12).
- *"I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"* (Psa 27:13-14).
- *"The LORD is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to Him"* (Psa 28:7).

Jesus' greatest expression of faith came at the bitter end. Robbed of physical strength, Jesus summoned the words he had pondered many times: *"Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"* (Luke 23:46). THAT was the ultimate act of faith.

The Jews saw a dying man. Jesus saw a risen savior. What was the difference? Praise God, Jesus won that battle. It wasn't even close. God raised him from the dead. Death could not hold a man with no sin. And his *nike* is ours, if we have faith in him. His resurrection from the dead is our great beacon of hope.

## Walking by Faith

Each of us faces one storm after another in this life. It may be a disease. It may be the loss of a loved one. It may be the loss of your job. It may be an affliction you must carry each day. It may be a horrible accident. What we “see” scares us. We would not be human if it did not. Some of the storms are filled with such fury that we feel like we cannot escape. The odds seem insurmountable.

God wants us to know that faith changes everything. When we have faith, life is measured by the impossible.

Most of us have had brushes with the impossible. One of my memorable touches came with my Sunday school teacher, Sis. Kathryn Ward. When she was 68 years old, she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer — one of the most virulent forms of cancer. Very few victims live more than a few years with this disease. Kathryn lived eighteen years after her diagnosis.

Her doctors had no explanation for those years of grace. But those who knew her did. She was a woman of enormous faith. She already knew the battle is the Lord's. When her doctor told her she had pancreatic cancer, she did not see succumbing to a mortal disease. She saw years of service to her Lord. And she redeemed each of those years by being an ambassador of faith and loving support to others.

That service included reaching out to other cancer victims. Among them was a dear professional colleague of mine who developed pancreatic cancer himself. Kathryn had never met him, but she carefully crafted

a faithful letter, written in her beautiful, handwritten script. I later learned that this letter was read to my colleague's entire family before they shared Thanksgiving dinner. It meant that much. Kathryn lived Paul's exhortation. She did not know how many years she had (None of us do!), but she was determined to live in faith whatever remained.

*“For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ... For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety...He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage ... for we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor 5:1-7).*

What does walking by faith instead of sight mean to us? It means that faith conquers every storm, perhaps not immediately, not in the way we may want, but always in an eternal way. It means things are not what our human eyes reveal. The eye of faith is always a much different perspective. It means that God presents us with a lifetime of decisions, seeing if we choose the way of faith or human sight. And each one of those decisions is preparing us for our greatest battle of all — the one we each must face against death.

Like Elisha, David and Jesus, we take courage in every storm. Because human odds do not matter. Only our faith does.

*Mark Drabenstott  
(Kansas City, MO)*



## History.

# Conscientious Objection in North America

*In part 9 Bro. Peter talks about the time during WW2 in the US.*

### Summary

As we described in a previous article, Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps were set up for all those conscientious Objectors (COs) who refused service when subject to conscription, starting in 1942. If you look at the web site, [civilianpublicservice.org](http://civilianpublicservice.org), you will find the database of those who were banished to the camps. It makes it easy to find those Christadelphians who served in camps, and shows 129 such, with records of their birth dates and the camps they were assigned to. On the other hand, a government document<sup>1</sup> gives 136 in camp, and also notes that a ratio of about 5 per 100 members served, which was the

highest for any denomination: only Mennonites came close. Only ten Christadelphians are recorded as serving in the armed forces; as far as I know, all were dis-fellowshipped. My personal records show at least 147 names of those who were conscripted and refused military service, with five serving time in prison, and one dying as a result of his time in service. The discrepant figures are because I include those who served their time in prison or on a farm on Cape Cod, MA, and were never in CPS camps.

Only a few of this number have given accounts of their experiences in WW2, but these will give at least an idea of the deprivations and struggles

they experienced in defense of their (and our) conscience. It is to be hoped that their examples will encourage us and sustain us, if we are once again forced to stand up and give account for our belief in a Kingdom, which is not of this world.

## The Draft and Selective Service Boards

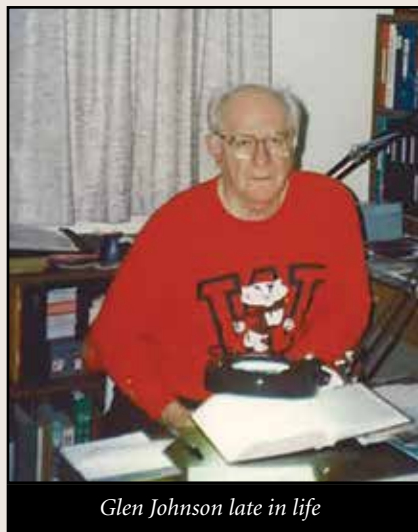
The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 provided that the administrative machinery for classifying the registrants, should also be mostly utilized for determining the claims of conscientious objectors.

At the base of the classification structure stood the local Selective Service board. There were some sixty-seven hundred such boards in the United States, and the official theory was that they were composed of the neighbors of registrants about to be classified. It was the local board which determined initially whether the claims of a registrant for objector status would be recognized. Most boards acted fairly and sympathetically: in quite a few cases exemption was granted without any need for appearance, but there were exceptions.

## Examples of draft problems

**Glen Johnson<sup>2</sup>** was a very early example of a brother encountering a draft board that refused to grant CO status. He was the first person in Rockford, IL to request a CO status, and they decided that this case must be made an example for later cases. They denied him the CO classification without hearing his case. He appealed for the next two years, each time receiving a rejection

on the grounds that his local board knew best. The judge made it clear at the trial that Mr. Johnson was not on trial to decide whether or not he was a CO — the local draft board said he was not. He was on trial for draft evasion. After hearing the case, the jury deliberated for 30 minutes then returned a verdict of guilty, and Mr. Johnson was sentenced to five years



*Glen Johnson late in life*

in prison — the maximum sentence. At this time, he was 23 years old. After nine months in prison, Glen was paroled into CPS camps, where he stayed until April 1, 1946. So, for 5 1/2 years he was under stress as a CO, during some of which he volunteered for medical experiments, such as being infected with pneumonia. He died on June 15, 2011 at the age of 92, leaving behind a large Christadelphian family.

**Ernest F. Clark's<sup>3</sup>** World War II Selective Service Classification Story is long and complex. It took almost three years between his registering for the draft in Oct 1940 and his



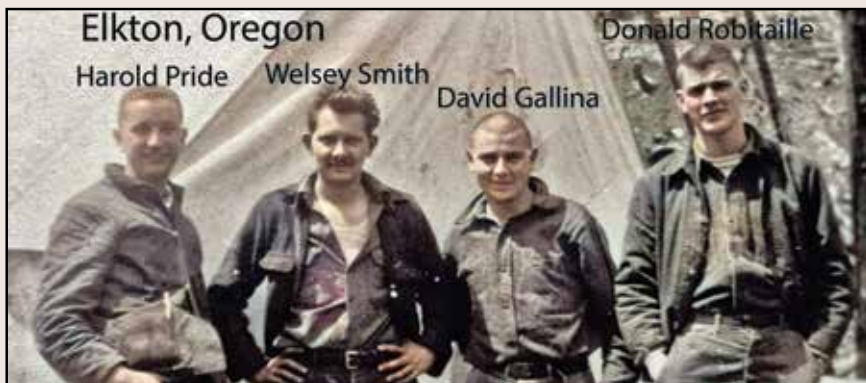
*Ernest Clark in Big Falls, NY*

finally being assigned to camp in Sept 1943. In between, he was deferred after a physical examination, later for dependency (he married meanwhile), then for war production, which was challenged by the government, and finally, granted CO status, and he went to camp until July 1946.

**David Gallina<sup>4</sup>** wrote,

“I did have a rough time with my draft board. They gave me a hard time even after the reports they receive from both the FBI and the hearing officer which was in my favor stating I was sincere in my beliefs, that I should be classified 4E. Then my draft board still classified me as 1A. I finally had to make a presidential appeal. After a lot of paperwork and letter writing I was finally granted a presidential appeal, which ruled in my favor and ordered my draft board to classify me 4E and be sent to CPS camp to do work of national importance.

“I was sent to Big Flats New York in Oct 1944. There were seven other brethren already there. Then I was transferred to Elkton Oregon along with about 25 others, of which two were brethren. At Elkton at the time were at least four Christadelphians, as seen in the picture. I was finally discharged in Sept 1946.”







*The Patapsco Camp near Baltimore, MD*

### **The first camp**

On May 15, 1941, about 6 months after the draft started, the first CPS camp opened, in Patapsco State Park, near Baltimore. It was sponsored by the Friends (Quakers), like most of the camps Christadelphians were assigned to. About 26 draftees entered the camp, accompanied by over 50 press and others. Among these were three Christadelphians: Reuben Cobbs, Walter Phillips and Leonard Rankin. A month later, Ernest Owens joined them, and he later gave an address on his observations there. To quote:<sup>5</sup>

“... a good number of our associates at the camp have voiced amazement at the consistent attitude of the Christadelphians.

“They also have voiced their surprise at the attention that we receive from the Brotherhood; especially is this true of our brethren and sisters in Baltimore. Each one of us at camp are overwhelmed at the kindness and consideration that is shown to us. That fact alone has done

much to buoy us to higher levels in our resolve to hold fast to the priceless treasure that we possess in the knowledge of the Truth.

“The morale of the boys in the Truth at camp is extremely high. We have a Bible Class among ourselves.”

Ernest Owens died in the Truth in 1989, a longtime member of the Echo Lake ecclesia.

### **Life in the Patapsco camp<sup>6</sup>**

The conscientious objectors' schedule was identical with that of the army except, of course, for drilling and for a 20 minute period of meditation after breakfast at 6 a.m. COs spent their days building rest rooms and drinking fountains for the park. Other projects assigned to the CPS camp included building a stable, bathhouses, an outdoor museum, three public shelters and six public latrines; repairing park buildings; installing water systems; building seventy-five fireplaces; constructing roads and trails, with necessary ditches; installing guard rails along the roads; planting thirty acres of



trees and improving 150 acres of land; clearing five miles of fire lines; making a parking area; marking boundaries; making maps; fighting forest fires and surveying the park. So almost all were involved in manual labor, although David Somerville reported in his notes that he was mostly engaged in electrical work.

Many later CPS camps were intentionally located in remote areas to minimize the interaction of COs with the general public. The Patapsco camp was unusual in its close proximity to Baltimore and Washington, and the Christadelphians took full advantage of this.

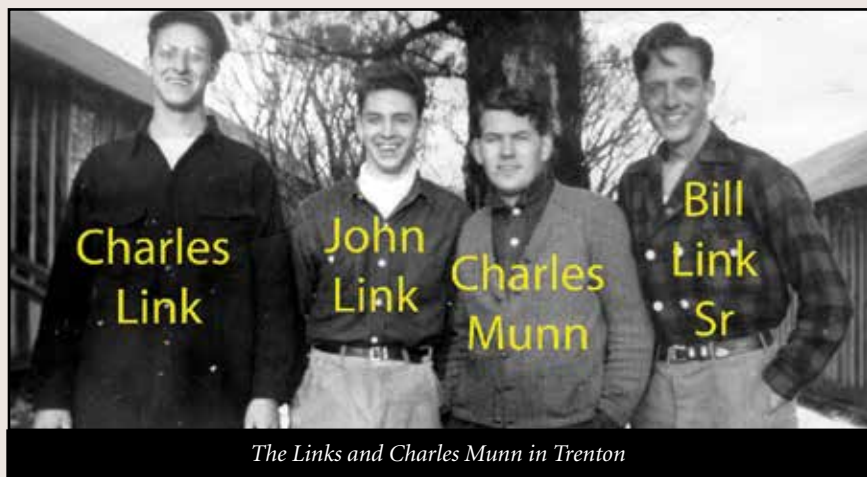
### A few accounts

I have far more accounts than I have room for in a magazine article. I hope to write a book with much fuller accounts in due course. These two are only samples.

**The Link Brothers.** These were siblings, Charles, John and Bill. John the eldest, entered in July 1942, Bill

and Charles together in May 1943. All served together for most of their time, after separate orientation camps. For all three, it was quite an exciting time. I can quote from an (edited) account as written by Charles in 2002.

“After six weeks (at Big Flats, near Elmira, NY) Bill and I requested a transfer to Trenton, North Dakota, where John was, and we had no problem with our request. The weather was bitter in winter (-40°); so who would want to go there. The project was under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation — clearing and leveling the land, building roads, bridges and irrigation ditches and nine complete farms (houses, small barns and sheds) which the government in turn sold to private families. Our project was on a huge parcel of government-owned land which had been flooded by the Missouri River. Most of us liked the work. In addition to the farms, we built a huge underground potato



*The Links and Charles Munn in Trenton*

warehouse. Meals were hearty — slaughtered our own beef, milked our own cows, didn't grow many vegetables though — after all, it was often said 'out here we only have two seasons — Winter and July'. What young man wouldn't be thrilled to operate heavy equipment — caterpillar tractors, carryalls, bulldozers, trucks, etc.?

"It was very rewarding work. The gov't superintendent, (John Mardis) was a great guy. I am sure he appreciated us volunteering to work on his project. His foremen were good too. They might not have thought we were patriotic but quietly respected us. We were watched — but not spied on. Christadelphians were recognized as hard workers and consequently were usually given good jobs. At 19 years of age I was crew leader. As such I had permission to use any truck I wanted, at any time, for any purpose, without being questioned. Of course, I had not left at home a wife, child, nor girlfriend, and this experience was very thrilling to me. I had only been baptized for less than a year and here at camp we had our own little ecclesia and regularly broke bread. Recreation was very good also: we played football in the quadrangle, ping-pong in the rec. room.

"One incident I recall that still amuses me took place after a two-foot snowfall. I got out the D-7 bulldozer to clear the driveways, roads and paths

around camp. Supper bell rang and I was only half finished, so I parked the dozer up against the latrine. I was coasting to a stop, hit the left track brake (instead of both left and right together) and the dozer blade swung left and knocked a hole in the latrine wall. Mind you, it was winter. No one brought anything to read in that latrine until the hole was boarded up."

After a few months, the Links requested a transfer nearer home, as their father, August (Gus) Link was ill, although he survived to 1993. (Gus Link had been imprisoned in Camp Meade as a CO in WW1.) They were all initially transferred to Luray, VA, about 100 miles west of Washington, DC, and then, after six months, finally to a mental hospital called Spring Grove State Hospital in Catonsville, MD, very close to Baltimore. There they were able finally to attend an ecclesia, and William met and later married Dorothy Hardy. Their experiences in the mental hospital are illuminating and typical of many other Christadelphians who also worked in such establishments.

Charles picks up the story.

"There were 6 wards in this (Bland Bryant) building. The two basement wards were for the incontinent patients. Upon our arrival we were shocked to see many of those patients sitting naked on the cold concrete floor, a smelly place. The two ground level floors were for those who for the most part seemed sane. It was from these wards they eventually were released to go



*The Bland Bryant Building today*

home.

“Sadly, their sanity seemed OK as long as they were living among other sick people but when released into society they would crack and come right back to the hospital. While in hospital some had permission to walk around the grounds by themselves, but most had to be kept under surveillance with assigned responsibility for hauling laundry, etc. The two upper wards contained the violent patients.

“There were about 18 of us in the Mennonite- run GPS unit, working 12-hour shifts, 6 days/ week.

“Before we arrived the only people available for this type work were civilian attendants. They literally black-jacked the patients into obedience. When visitors came, they were told the injuries occurred by a fall, etc. Most visitors brought cigarettes, candy, towels, etc., and asked the attendant to see that their relative was given these things

as needed. Guess who enjoyed them?

“Most patients had never been outside in the fresh air since being admitted. For some this would have been years. So, we organized group walks. How easy for a hundred men to have escaped while walking with 4 or 5 attendants

— but they didn’t. Know why? Because they were now being treated with love and care.

“No more getting black-jacked into submission. They wanted to stay with us. We did other things to make their quality of life better, too. We assisted in giving electric shock treatments to those who might otherwise hurt themselves and others.

“Here’s another job we tackled to make life better for our patients: their mattresses were loaded with bed bugs, so we periodically scrubbed and sprayed them till new mattresses could be ordered. All patients on the incontinent wards were wakened every few hours and marched into the latrine to void, rather than wet their bed. We did the same thing on other wards with patients we came to know had weak bladders. They did not mind, being wakened — they had all day to make up for lost sleep.

“Doctors (and occasionally state officials) made unannounced visits. It became obvious to them that conditions for the patients had greatly improved since our coming. Releases into society became much more frequent now — some permanently.

“No wonder the civilian employees hated our guts. They would throw chunks of coal at us as we walked down a dark road after a walk up town. They would barge into our dining room on occasion and overturn the tables on us spilling food and dishes all over.”

In the middle of 1946, this unit was closed down, and the Links went home. Not only did their physical work help the Bureau of Reclamation, but their influence, along with others, on the Mental Health system was lasting. Needing employment after the war, all found it difficult, with almost all employers only hiring ex-servicemen, but by the grace of God all did finally find suitable work.

All the Link brothers found their wartime experience of value in their maturation, and had an interesting rewarding time, in retrospect, despite the occasional hardships and community living. They were greatly helped by having their siblings present for most of the three years.

All three Links survived for many decades after the war, as faithful brethren in the Lord, and as of January 2020 Charles is still with us.



*William Turner 1909 - 1943*

**William (Bill) Turner** (1909 – 1943) was one who died during the war. According to those who knew him, he gave up a promising opera career after baptism, becoming a store clerk. Drafted in Sept 1942 he died on March 17, 1943 of pneumonia, which was not treated in camp. According to the note in *The Christadelphian* in Sept 1943: “Bro. William Turner fell asleep in Jesus at the age of 33, after a very full three and a half years in the Truth. He was a zealous brother who had served the ecclesia faithfully in many offices. He is greatly missed. He was taken ill at the CPS Camp in Gorham, New Hampshire, last November, and had several attacks afterward. His death occurred while he was at home for a short furlough”. He was much missed in the ecclesia in Meriden, CT.

## Summary

For the most part, Christadelphians faithfully followed their convictions, went to their assigned CPS camps, and, unlike many COs, worked hard at their assigned tasks, complained little, and lived quietly. They are mentioned only in passing in the numerous books about CPS camps. Only a few of the 147 have given accounts of their experiences in WW2, but the samples here will give at least an idea of the deprivations and struggles they experienced in defense of their (and our) conscience. Many

found their experiences somewhat rewarding, despite the hardships and remote locations. Many more than mentioned here have been happy to talk about their times in camp, although some have declined, considering their period a loss, and a waste of their time.

It is to be hoped that their examples will encourage us and sustain us if we are once again forced to stand up and give account for our belief in a Kingdom which is not of this world.

*Peter Hemingray  
(Pittsburgh, PA)*

Notes:

1 Conscientious Objection: special monograph #11, 1950.

2 Account from Bro. Glen Johnson, as told to his grandson Bro. Chris Wubbels

3 Information supplied by Bro. Jim Harper

4 From information from Bro. David Gallina, May 2019

5 *The Berean*, Jan 1942 p. 29

6 This section is largely based upon an issue of "*The reporter*", from NIBSCO, 2016, #1.

## Community.

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Brother Peter,  
Grace and Peace to you.

The main reason for writing is to thank you for some of the really interesting editorials and history in the magazine this year.

Also our big interest in 'C.O.' (Conscientious Objection) and our community; I dug quite a bit of history out to 'educate' the senior youth group at Leeds years ago; I, with help from 2 senior brethren, ran 8 mock tribunals in the North, (after a history lesson), even doing one at Swanwick! (A former major English

Youth weekend). Often the now 'mature' remind me of those times when I see them! I always made the young sisters 'stand' too, with good effect; they often witnessed better than the young brothers.

The magazine 'special issues' are always of great interest; also we liked the December 2019 issue, and its emphasis on sisters, a greatly underused resource I feel!

With Love in Jesus our Lord and King,

*Malcolm Cross (Darlington, UK)*





Community.

# BIBLE MISSION

## News from the CBMA and the CBMC

Baptizing Individuals. Building Ecclesias.

### CHILE CONVIVENCIA

The Convivencia this past November in Chile, the southern cone of South America was a special one: brothers and sisters came from many countries in Latin America, there were two baptisms, and a much larger contingent than normal of brethren from New Zealand who went over to support it (10 in total, of which most were “young people”).

The school started on a rather sad note with the unexpected falling asleep of brother Francisco Pardo, a dear brother from Bolivia who was five hours from boarding the plane to fly to Chile for the Convivencia when he fell ill and died shortly afterwards. It was with great sadness that we had

to notify the Bolivian brethren as they arrived in Santiago for the start of the Bible school that he had fallen asleep (as their last intelligence was that he was taken ill). Brother Francisco was a beloved brother who provided a calming stability to the ecclesia in La Paz, Bolivia. One of our lasting memories with him was during the first Convivencia in Chile, back in 2017, when he was asked how things were going, and whether he was enjoying it. His reply was that he was at a loss for words and didn’t know how to express his joy to us, being able to be with so many brothers and sisters who believed the same as him – and that, when there were only around 40 brethren in attendance!



We pray that God may give him rest and raise him up soon, in the last day, when our Lord will return.

The baptisms of Sonia Carrasco and Gloria Guajardo from Temuco brought in a lot more positivity to the Bible school. Both have had a number of years of study and enthusiastic learning of God's truth contained in the Scriptures. They were both interviewed at the Bible school, and the baptisms really instilled a sense of joy and encouragement to everyone there.

protesters had started lighting their delightful fires in the streets a block from where we were staying, it was probably a good thing they left when they did! Although, the trip to Argentina almost didn't happen at all, given that the bag carrying one of the passports, wallets, and all of the bus tickets and information for Argentina was locked inside the house as everyone left... We are just very grateful for the Uber driver who clambered up to the second story and then jumped across to a door that



After the Bible school, I returned home to my family (including a new addition only 6 weeks of age), while a lot of the Kiwis, some Ecuadorians, and some Costa Ricans all travelled together across the Andes into Argentina, in order to spend time with the brothers, sisters, and contacts for another week of "Post-Convivencia". Given the Chilean

just so happened to have been left open! He got a large tip that day!

However, everyone finally made it there, and as with all good Argentinian visits, a lot of meat was consumed, and the Kiwis were able to experience a true Argentine grill (replete with intestines, black pudding, kidneys, and numerous other tasty delights).

Many of the brethren and friends in Argentina were unable to attend the Bible School this year so this was a wonderful opportunity to see them all, breaking bread with them, sharing fellowship over the word of God, and bringing a little bit of what we had enjoyed at the Convivencia to their own doorstep.

*Written with love in our Lord, Bro.  
Andrew Yearsley*

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,  
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

## KIWIS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Our time in Chile and Argentina was unlike anything we had experienced before. The fellowship was joyous, the discussions robust, and the food outside of the western box. Having never been further afield than Australia, or our own country, we were not sure what to expect. The warmth and hospitality of the brethren in South America who had gathered for their annual Bible school, the Convivencia, far exceeded our expectations

We arrived with wobbly Spanish, armed only with gestures, nodding of heads, waving of hands, smiles and “no hablo español.” To some, that might seem a barrier, which in a way it was, but the most special thing about being Christadelphian, is that we all have a common link...our faith in God and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ...and that link made the barrier of a common language fall away.

There were brethren at the Convivencia from Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Argentina and Chile. For some of them, it was their first time meeting so many other Christadelphians in one go, as a few of them live in isolation. We all piled onto a bus to get to the Convivencia, excited about the weekend ahead but nervous because of our lack of Spanish. Without much incident, apart from taking a wrong turn up a narrow mountain road, we arrived safely.

We broke the ice in the most Kiwi way we know... playing games. We played *Signs*, *Pit* and *The Mind* until





well after bedtime. This continued throughout the camp and made for fantastic bonding time with the young people.

To assist us with the talks, we were given bullet points in English of the topics being discussed, and with English and Spanish Bibles, we followed along with as much as we could. However, even without being able to understand every word, it was so wonderful to be surrounded by so much spiritual enthusiasm and discussion. We all agreed that it was much easier for us to follow along with the Spanish songs rather than trying to pronounce the words while reading, so, we all joined in with an enthusiastic spirit.

And, as it always does, the Q and A session, held one evening, went well over the allocated time due to some fantastic ongoing conversations.

When it came to Bible readings time, all the attendees showed the best patience possible with us, while we stumbled along in Spanish. It would be hard to find a fellowship that has the warmth, hospitality, and thoughtfulness shown by these brethren.

Our time together in South America was really a once in a lifetime experience that all of us will cherish forever. We felt so blessed to be welcomed into the lives of our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world, and all of us intend to keep in touch, and, God willing, return when able.

*Written by Sisters Abi O'Grady,  
Anna O'Grady, Anna Oosthuizen,  
Laura Brown, Connie Davies  
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,  
CBMA/CBMC Pucibity*



Community.

# NEWS & UPDATES

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## BROOKLYN, NY

We rejoiced this month at the baptism of ABIGAIL DUESBURY and RUDOLPH SOBERS; a memorable Saturday with a packed hall of brothers, sisters, young people, including South Ozone Park and Manhattan Ecclesias. Sis. Abigail is the third child of Bro. Ian and Sis. Wendy Duesbury, whose other 2 children, Sis. Anastacia and Bro. Akeem are already faithful members. Rudolph is the brother in the flesh to Bro. Lewis Sobers of the Colon, Panama Ecclesia, and his baptism follows a period of intense interest in the truth. We thank our heavenly Father for the blessing of 2 new members.

This year, God willing, we continue to reach out to the Caribbean and

Panama Ecclesias by visits whenever there is opportunity. Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago are already earmarked and Panama is like next door for a few Brooklyn Members!

*Clive Drepaul*

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## MERIDEN, CT

During the past year we have enjoyed the fellowship of many visitors at the Lord's Table. We have welcomed brothers and sisters from Abington, MA; Ashton-Upon-Lyne, UK; Baltimore, MD; Brantford, ON; Cranston, RI; Adelaide, Aust.; Echo Lake, NJ; London, ON; Norfolk, VA; Pittsburgh, PA; Sarasota, FL; Southern New Hampshire; South Ozone Park, NY; Springfield, MA; Verdugo Hills, CA; and Westerly,



RI. Our thanks are extended to the following brothers for words of exhortation: Eric Pride Westerly, RI; Joshua Lagasse Norfolk, VA; Tim Morgan Ashton-Under-Lyne, UK; and David Birchall London, ON. Bro. Pride led our Spring Study Weekend in June, “*Make Prayer Powerful*”. We thank him for his helpful studies.

In September, Bro. David and Sis. Louise Birchall did a presentation for us on the wonderful work of the Christadelphian Save The Children Fund. We held a fund-raising dinner for CSTCF and give them a large collection of school supplies for the children they help.

Our Sis. Patricia Sabeen fell asleep in the Lord in February. Sis. Pat was a long-time member of the Boston, MA Ecclesia and moved here in 2018. Our hearts go out to Bro. Duncan and Sis. Diane Sabeen and the family at this time of loss. It was also sad to learn that Sis. Rosamond Smith fell asleep in the Lord in April. Sis. Ros was a member in Meriden for more than 60 years before transferring to Worcester, MA, her original home ecclesia, in 2017.

We are pleased to have Sis. Christine Dillingham with us while she carries out a medical fellowship at Yale in New Haven, CT. We also rejoiced with Bro. Brad and Sis. Alyssa Sabeen on the birth of their second son, Henry James, in February. Henry was born just five days after the death of his great-grandmother, Sis. Pat Sabeen.

God willing, we look forward to our next Spring Study Weekend and Sunday School picnic on June 6-7, 2020. Bro. Jim Sullivan of the Boston

MA Ecclesia will lead the studies, and we extend a warm welcome to all who can join us.

*Stephen Harper*

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## MONROE, WA

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We’ve been blessed with four weddings and a baptism at the Monroe Ecclesia over the last six months. On June 28, 2019, Bro. Alex Hawthorne and Sis. Leah Vetkos, and on July 27, 2019, Bro. Stephen Ball and Sis. Tabitha Vetkos, were joined together in marriage. On September 14, 2019, Bro. Ethan Lake and Sis. Scarlett Onstot and on January 6, 2020, Bro. Joshua Tunnell and Sis. Moriah McInturff were married. With the exception of Bro. Joshua Tunnell San Diego, CA, all of our newlyweds are members of the Monroe Ecclesia. We wish them God’s richest blessings in their marriages and pray that they might all be heirs together of the grace of life. We commend Sis. Moriah Tunnell to the love and care of the San Diego, CA Ecclesia.

On June 17, 2019, we extended the right hand of fellowship to EMERANCE BERNARD following her baptism in the saving name of Jesus the night before. In more recent years, following relocation with her family from Tanzania, Sis. Emerance grew up in our Sunday school. We rejoice with her parents, Bro. Bernard and Sis. Sofia in welcoming our new sister.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome Sis. Rena Drake, by transfer from the Seattle, WA Ecclesia.

*Tony Ball*

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## ORLANDO, FL

The Orlando ecclesia is always very thankful for the many visitors that we receive from around the world. In the last posting we shared information about a Refugee Family that is living in Jacksonville, FL. Bro. Andre Lubacha and his family have faced many new challenges since they have arrived in the US. They continue to need our prayers and support in trying to adjust to the American culture.

We always want to thank the people that visit the Orlando, FL Ecclesia when they are in town and we express special thanks to the brothers who share words of exhortation. From the date of our last posting, July 21, 2019 through December-7, 2019, this is a list of the visiting brothers and sisters: Elaine David (St. Mary's, GA); Andre' Lubacha (Walengiamina, Butanga); Imani Lubacha and Clestin Lubacha (Jacksonville, FL); Nick and Ria Parino (San Diego, CA); Mike, Alicia, Adalynn, and Zariah Skanks (Winter Springs, FL); Charles and Sarah Cintron (Ann Arbor, MI); Ed and Helen Robinson (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON); Emily Myers and Zadok (Brantford, ON); Glenn Davies (Christchurch, NZ); Julian and Sandra Basley (Guildford, UK); Jeff and Julie Witte (Garfield, NJ); The Malanga Family (Garfield, NJ); Julie Sanfilippo (Orlando, FL); Wilson and Betty Ross and Sam and Maggie

Di Liberto (Randolph, NJ); Shem and Shiropashad Plantation, and Edward Rampersaud (Kissimmee, FL); Sheldon and Jeanette Lynn (Vero Beach, FL); Ashraf Ali (Manhattan, NY); Gloria Saygon (Georgetown, Guyana); Jerome Linton (Atlanta, GA); Jessica Miller (Fayetteville, AR); and Dan and Beth Richards (Lombard, IL).

There have been several changes in the Orlando Ecclesia since the last posting. Bro. Thomas and Sis. Natalie Sanfillipo have been blessed with another addition to their family, Andrew. Bro. Nick and Sis Ria Parino have relocated to the Orlando area and become members of the Orlando, FL Ecclesia.

The most recent change is that the Davenport family, Bro. Randy, Sis. Glenna and Sis. Krista, have relocated to La Grande, Oregon. Also, Bro. Randy is no longer the secretary of the ecclesia. The new contact for the ecclesia will be Bro. Nick Parino at: [nptruthfound@aol.com](mailto:nptruthfound@aol.com).

*Randy Davenport*

The sympathy of the Sarasota Ecclesia is extended to Sister Jimmy Corwin and family on the falling asleep in Christ on January 1, 2020 of our Brother Al Corwin. Brother Al served the ecclesia faithfully for many years after he and Sister Jimmy moved to Florida from Springfield, MA. In recent years, he endured declining health and now rests in the sure hope of the resurrection.

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

*Email to [tidings.publisher@gmail.com](mailto:tidings.publisher@gmail.com) or submit online at [www.tidings.org](http://www.tidings.org).*

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





Community.

# FOR THE CALENDAR

## MARCH, 2020

### 14 New York City Sisters Day, Queens, NY

Topic: “*Developing & Exemplifying a Christ-Like Character*” - Speakers: Sis. Carolyn Carter (Atlanta, GA); Sis. Mary Quamina (South Ozone Park, NY); Sis. Elsa Grandison (Brooklyn, NY). Contact Sis. Averil Ferguson (718) 881-8705 or Sis. Patricia Hinds (917) 864-3867 for further information.

**14-15 Praise Weekend, Portland, OR** Bro. Jeff Ramirez (Verdugo Hills, CA) will be teaching classes entitled “*Reasons to Praise*,” and there will be Praise Workshops in the afternoon. Please register with Mary Ellen Laird, [lairdme@web-ster.com](mailto:lairdme@web-ster.com)

**28-29 Study Weekend, Baltimore, MD** Bro. Perry Saunders (Orlando, FL) will be leading classes on the topic of “*A Prosperous Kingdom*.” Please register with Sis. Anna Hewitson, [anhewitson@gmail.com](mailto:anhewitson@gmail.com)

## APRIL, 2020

**4-5 Spring Gathering, Pittsburgh, PA** Bro Roger Lewis (Christchurch, NZ) will present classes on “*Ezekiel - The Exemplar*.” Traveler’s lunch will be provided at noon on Saturday and classes

begin at 1:00pm. Please contact David Pommer, Recording Brother, at [david.pommer@verizon.net](mailto:david.pommer@verizon.net) or call him at (724) 224-7363.

**10-12 Fraternal Gathering, Toronto, ON** held at the Mayfield Secondary School.

**17-19 New England Brothers Weekend, Charlton, MA** “*The Presence of the Lord*”, with Bro. John Perks (Ottawa, ON.) Held at Camp Joslin. Registration: Bro. Ben Link, email [newengbros@gmail.com](mailto:newengbros@gmail.com) or call (443)465-2327

**18-19 Baltimore / Washington Gather and Study Day** at the Washington Christadelphian Ecclesia, Adelphia, MD. Stephen Robinson, (Pittsburgh, PA): “*Faith in the Time of the Judges*”. Saturday at 1:00 pm and Sunday at 9:30 am. 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphia, MD

**25-26 Boston Study Weekend, Boston, MA** Bro. Steve Snobelen (Bedford, NS,) “*Developing a Biblical World View*” Registration: [steve.davis@hopeinstoughton.org](mailto:steve.davis@hopeinstoughton.org) or call (508) 212-8784

**25-26 Spring Study Weekend, Sussex, NB** Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA) will be leading studies on the Subject: “*The Greatest Story: The Drama of Scripture*.” We look forward to the fellowship opportunity this presents.

## MAY, 2020

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**15-17 CYC Study Weekend, Largo, FL** Families and Campers of all ages are invited to join us at Fort DeSoto Campground & Park in Tierra Verde, FL. Speaker is Bro. David Fertig (Northern VA Ecclesia.) **Important note:** You need to reserve your campsite in advance. Contact Bro. Chad Monahan at [chadmonahan@gmail.com](mailto:chadmonahan@gmail.com).

**15-17 Richmond-Petersburg Young Peoples Gathering, Powhatan, VA** Bro. Jordan Canady (Paris Ave., OH) "*The Bride of Christ*." Cost is \$30 for Ages 16+ or baptised - Contact David Michael - [davehanmichael@gmail.com](mailto:davehanmichael@gmail.com)

**16-17 Spring Study Day and Gathering, Moorestown, NJ** Bro. Ian MacFarlane (Hamilton Book Road, ON) "*The Epistle Prayers: praying with purpose*." Details to follow.

**16-17 Prince George Fraternal, Prince George, BC** Bro. Marc Hunter (Saanich, BC) "*Questions in Genesis*." Register with Sis. Muriel Billington @ (250) 967-4392 or [keith.billington@telus.net](mailto:keith.billington@telus.net) - Accomodations are first come first served basis.

## JUNE, 2020

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**19-21 New York Metropolitan Sisters Retreat** held at Homewood Suites in Lancaster, PA. Sis. Sandy Davis, (Boston, MA) and Sis. Janelle Valz, (South Ozone Park, NY.) "*Cultivating Resilience and Perseverance in Times of Trouble*" Contact Sis. Averil Ferguson: [adferguson922@gmail.com](mailto:adferguson922@gmail.com) (718) 877-6616 or Sis. Patricia Hinds: [Patricia.hinds@yahoo.com](mailto:Patricia.hinds@yahoo.com) (917) 864-3867

**27-July 5 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School** at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. Theme: "*Walk as Children of Light*" – Eph. 5:8-9. Bro. Mark O'Grady, (Tawa, NZ) "*Isaac: Man of faith, Children of Promise*;" Bro. Joseph Palmer, (San Diego County, CA) "*Exhortations from the Apocalypse*;" Bro. Mark Vincent, (Stirling, UK) "*Conquest (Joshua and the Canaanites)*." Register online at: [www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.org](http://www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.org).

## JULY, 2020

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**5-11 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School** at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. Bro. Mark Giordano, (Norfolk, VA) "*Until Messiah the Prince and the Restoration of Jerusalem*;" Bro. Stephen Mansfield, (Golden Grove, South

Australia) "*Barnabas The Encourager*;" and Bro. Dev Ramcharan, (Toronto, ON) "*Quicken thou me according to thy word, a Study of Psalm 119*." Register online at [www.swcbs.org](http://www.swcbs.org).

**11-19 Midwest Bible School** at Trine University in Angola, IN. Bro. Roger Lewis, (Christchurch, NZ) "*Zerubbabel- My Servant*;" Bro. Mark O'Grady, (Tawa, NZ) "*Elisha*" and Bro. Tim Badger, (Brighton, AUS) "*I Will Be with You – Exhortations from the Book of Joshua*" Register online at: [www.midwestbibleschool.com](http://www.midwestbibleschool.com)

**19-26 Idyllwild Bible School** for the 65th year at Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. Bro. Arne Roberts, (Dunstable, UK) "*Wholly Holy*;" Bro. Ken Styles (Royal Oak, MI) "*The Blessing of Forgiveness*;" Bro. Nathan Lewis, (Christchurch, NZ) on a topic not yet announced. Register online at [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://www.californiabibleschool.org)

### SPECIAL INVITATION (Non-Christadelphian)

**20-26 46th Annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering** at Slippery Rock University, in Slippery Rock, PA. Bro. Steve Ross: "*Life Lessons from the Kings of Israel*"; Bro. Glen Anderson: "*Tyre in Prophecy*" and Bro. Doug Davis: "*Manifesting the Fruit of the Spirit*." Contact Bro. Brad Rek at (330) 609-6957, or [brad.rek@gmail.com](mailto:brad.rek@gmail.com). Register online at [www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org](http://www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org).

**26-August 1 Western Christadelphian Bible School** at the Menucha Camp and Conference Center in Corbett, OR. Bro. Luke Barratt (Portland, OR), Bro. Mark Drabenscott (Kansas City, MI), and Bro. Maurice Green (Barnet, London, UK). Register at [www.wcbsretreat.com](http://www.wcbsretreat.com).

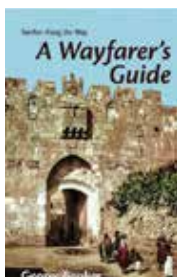
## AUGUST, 2020

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**2-8 Rogue River Bible School** Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON) "*The Garden: Revelation and Restoration*;" Bro. Shawn Snobelen (Victoria, BC) "*Developing Faith*;" Bro. Stephen Mansfield (Adelaide, AU) "*Prayer: Looking Vertically in a Horizontal World*." For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at: [patlposey@gmail.com](mailto:patlposey@gmail.com).

**17-22 Lakefield Bible School** in Lakewood, ON. Bro. Caleb Lawrence (Cambridge, ON) "*Minor Characters - Major Faith*;" Bro. Stephen Snobelen (Bedford, NS) "*Biblical Perspectives on the Environment*." [www.lakefieldbibleschool.com](http://www.lakefieldbibleschool.com)

# Books by *The Tidings*



**Farther Along the Way: A Wayfarer's Guide** by *George Booker*

A resource for fellow travelers on the Way of Life: word studies, insights into details of Scripture, perspectives on difficult questions, and analogies that relate to the spiritual life. Published: Jan 2018 - 301 pages. \$9.00 USD

**Little Words** by *John C. Bilello*

Explore the meanings of key Bible words, their subtleties of meaning and their applications to our walk in Christ. Published: May 2017 \$8.00 US (278 pages).

**CAIN — His Life and Legacy** by *Matt Harrison*

Probes the lessons of Cain and his time before the Flood and explores questions Bible students have long asked. \$5.00 US (106 pages).

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

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

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

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

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

Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today's times. \$3.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

**Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage** by *John C. Bilello*

Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. \$6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

**The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis** by *David Levin*

Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. \$12.00 US (364 pages).

**Pictures of Redemption** by *George Booker*

Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. \$6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

**ORDER ONLINE at [www.tidings.org](http://www.tidings.org)**

*(Prices do not include Shipping - You will be invoiced for the amount due)*

# Thoughts on the Way

## Are We All God's Children?

*This is a very good question. My answer, however, may be disappointing: "Yes and No."*

### **Yes, we are all God's children**

In his missionary travels, the Apostle Paul came to Athens (Acts 17), a center of Greek culture. There he visited the Areopagus, which we might think of as a place of worship (with many gods, or idols), and a place of learning (what we might call a university). Paul was asked to address the council of wise men, who apparently were always ready to hear any new theory, about religion or philosophy or science or what-have-you.

Where did Paul start? He had seen nearby a shrine dedicated to "*THE UNKNOWN GOD*" (Acts 17:23). This was either (a) a reference to the Jewish God who, unlike the pagan gods, could not be seen, or (b) a reference to some truly never-heard-of god, as far as the Greeks were concerned. Either way, it made a good starting place for Paul, who now declared to the wise men that he would tell them about this "unknown God."

As we might expect, Paul went straight to the first part of Genesis, and the creation of Adam and Eve:

*"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not*

*live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth"* (Acts 17:24-26).

Paul even went so far as to appeal to one of the Greek poets:

*" 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring' "* (v 28).

This was a prudent thing for Paul to do. As a Jew, he could have said bluntly, "We Jews are God's special people, and all the rest of you are second-class at best!" Instead, he chose to emphasize, in effect, that "We are all God's children." His reason was obvious: he did not want to antagonize the Greeks — he wanted to get their attention in a positive way, in the hopes of preaching the gospel to them:

*"God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him"* (v 27).

*"Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around... I found an*



*altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you” (Acts 17:22-23).*

In this last quote, the KJV of Paul’s speech to the Athenians has some rather misleading words: Paul did not really insult his audience by calling them “superstitious” (KJV); if anything, he flattered them as being “religious” (NIV). Nor should we suppose that Paul was so rude as to say, “Whom ye ignorantly worship” (KJV); instead, the NIV rightly has: “Whom you worship as unknown.”

So, yes, we are all God’s children, no matter what race or nationality or faith (or lack thereof). God has created all of us in His image, and has blessed all of us with wondrous gifts, which sustain and enrich our lives.

### **But... No, we are not all God’s children**

The remainder of Acts 17 explains what we mean by the “No” answer:

*“Now [God] commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising [Christ] from the dead.’ When they [the wise men of Athens] heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, ‘We want to hear you again on this subject’ ” (vv 30-32).*

In these verses, Paul shows the distinction between those who are (or will be) God’s children and those who are not. Those who “want to

hear” the gospel are surely on their way to being God’s children. But those who sneer and walk away are well on their way to losing such a wonderful opportunity. The bottom line? If you truly want to be one of “God’s children”, then listen to Him (and His Son and prophets and apostles). But if you don’t want to be one of God’s children, then you are free to walk away. The choice is yours.

*“You are a chosen people... a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9).*



*“Yet to all who received [Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1:12-13).*

Many other Bible verses, Old and New Testament, reinforce this great divide. It is a divide between believing and rejecting, light and darkness, love and hate (or indifference), life and death. The good news is: we can choose to be God’s children, in the best possible way!

*George Booker*

# TIDINGS



## IS LIFE GETTING BETTER AND LONGER? OR IS CATASTROPHE AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST IN OUR FUTURE?

**We consider the topic in the editorial for this month.**

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