

# TIDINGS

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## THE BELIEVER AND PROTEST

Our calling is not to just ensure we personally refrain from discrimination and bigotry, but rather that we become advocates to eradicate these behaviors in the way we live and how our ecclesias operate.





PHOTOGRAPH BY:

**ALAN MARKWITH (HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON)**

*Location: Gorges de Douanne, Twann, Switzerland. July 2019*

Reflecting on the peace and serenity of the gorge we were in with the flowing stream, one can't help but think of Psalm 42.

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN **TIDINGS** OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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# THE BELIEVER AND PROTEST

*By Dave Jennings*

**WE** have all watched the scenes in urban centers of North America being filled with protestors of every race. These marchers embody the idea that discrimination must stop immediately. This is not a new battleground but has been part of the American social landscape since its earliest days. Our aim is to sort out two separate issues. First, what should be our view as believers toward discrimination, prejudice, and abuse? Secondly, how should we address these injustices, and does it include being involved in peaceful protests?

Some may be inclined to write-off the sincerity of the protestors by citing the pillaging and criminal behavior of a limited few at these events. The criminals that burned buildings and looted retail stores do not represent the voices of the protestors. The issue

of discrimination is very real and has been felt by people of color and women for centuries. For Christadelphians, it might be convenient to assume this is all about the secular nation we live in and has no implications for our spiritual community. That would be a wrong assumption.

## **PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED**

In Scripture, the main description of racism is anti-Semitism. The primary social issue that is dealt with is poverty. Both are significant storylines in Scripture. So, we will begin by looking at how the Bible exhorts us to look after any who are abused or persecuted. We should, of all people, be a community that eschews discrimination and unfair treatment. James wrote: *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the*

*Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (Jas 1:27).* The verb “visit” implies much more than “stopping by” to see how one is doing. It means coming to the aid of one in distress, to look out for. God’s eyes are on the oppressed. He ensures the least likely to protect themselves, those in the greatest need and with the lowest amount of influence, should not be abused. David wrote that God is: “*A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows.*” (Psa 68:5 NASB). In Psa 146:9, we are told “*The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow.*” The very command in the Law was that the fatherless and widows should not be afflicted and that He would hear their cry. (Exod 22:22-23). The principle for believers is that we are to look upon the needy and lend assistance. The very examples the Lord uses for his judgment in Matthew 25 involve showing compassion for those in immediate need—the hungry, thirsty, strangers in need of housing, the naked, sick and those in prison. Each of these conditions cries for our action when they are seen. The righteous meet these needs, even to the “least of these.” As believers, we must address the hardships of any when we can help.

God cares when people are mistreated, and He expects the same from us. I see no way for us to view discrimination and injustice toward our fellow man differently than our God does. We must regularly show compassion and care. We need to listen and be sympathetic. The call is for us to do what we can to comfort and relieve. Think globally but

act locally! I am pleased to know many of our ecclesias are providing support to the needs of their local communities. As discussions have arisen among Christadelphians on this topic, some courageous brothers and sisters of color have stepped up to share their personal experiences. We may have been shocked to hear from those we love that they too have experienced discrimination in our community. Some expressed being left out of social gatherings or not feeling wanted when they first encountered an ecclesia. Others were subject to racist comments. For those who continued steadfast in the Truth and remained, most of the feelings of non-acceptance diminished—they became more familiar with us, and we with them. Sometimes I hear brothers and sisters talk about how much they love a person of color in the meeting as evidence prejudice does not exist in our community. Without exception, the examples given are about brothers and sisters who have been known for many years and who are comfortable within our ecclesial culture. This is not an effective way to assess the experience of someone new to our ecclesial halls. We will end this article by asking us all to consider several provocative questions about what we can do in our personal interactions as well as within our ecclesias.

## PROTEST AND THE BELIEVER

Many believers today wonder about participating in peaceful protests across the country. Undoubtedly, they want to be people who put their faith and love into action, not only in words.

I can understand and appreciate their hearts on this matter. Just reciting Christadelphian traditions on protests and activism is not compelling. We need to speak plainly from the Scriptures and allow our God to order our steps.

Perhaps it is useful to ask whether there are any instances of formal protests or demonstrations in Scripture. Many social issues could have been the source of protest. And many believers were unfairly persecuted. Some were beaten, put in prison, and stoned to death. Herod summarily executed James. Yet, there were no demonstrations, no calls to violence or speeches of condemnation. They knew the Lord was in control and would do His will.

Zealots believed that Israel's right to religious and political freedom should be pursued by any means necessary. We have no account of sympathy with these causes or their means of trying to achieve their goals.

Jesus did challenge **religious** authorities, but he did not challenge the **secular** rulers. Jesus taught his disciples to "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.*" (Mark 12:17) On one occasion Jesus demonstrated righteous indignation about the money changers making a mockery of the Temple service. John the Baptist told soldiers and tax collectors to continue doing their work, only to do it without abusing others.

I have always found it useful to

*But would Jesus condemn actions of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice toward men?*

***Absolutely.***

They believed they would either be saved at that time or in the Kingdom at the Lord's return. God mercifully decided to end some persecutions by Herod with his death at the hand of an angel. He chose not to intervene in all cases. But the message for those early believers was that the Lord's Kingdom is not of this world. In this world, we should not be surprised when the Kingdoms of Men act ungodly.

Some have argued that Jesus and the first-century disciples, under the arm of Roman rule, were not able to protest the laws of the land. However, during the first century, many Jewish nationalistic revolutionary groups arose from continued persecution. The

question when I am perplexed about a given behavior or stand if I could envision Jesus himself being part of such behavior? Could I see Jesus as an infantryman in the United States army? Of course not. Could I see Jesus making political criticisms of candidates and incumbents? Certainly not. Could I see Jesus sitting in a jury box, rendering a verdict for a criminal trial? No. Could I see Jesus walking down the streets of Los Angeles with other protestors, arguing for changes in the governance of the land? No, I could not.

But would Jesus condemn actions of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice toward men? Absolutely. This was in many ways the core of his teachings. He



demonstrated he would embrace those who Jewish society saw as pariahs. He sat down with publicans and sinners. He engaged with the woman at the well of Sychar, a Samaritan with a dubious past. He fed the hungry crowds and healed the sick. Jesus addressed the needs of the oppressed and powerless by serving and loving. The power of Jesus was not only his words but how he personally demonstrated what he taught. This seems to be the challenge he would have us learn today. Demonstrate God's love for all men and take proactive steps to do so in every part of your daily life.

Participating in national protests fighting for governmental and policing changes is not our battleground. This is not our government and not our nation. We are ambassadors for Christ. (2 Cor 5:20). We represent a different government and a different King. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..."* (Matt 6:33). We need to be acutely aware that protests have the underpinnings of Humanism. It is easy to be seduced into the concept of working for a better society by protest. Those who do not believe in God, who deny God and His supremacy over the nations, would be compelled to make this world a bit better through protest and political

involvement. However, we should not allow ourselves to be entrapped by the messaging of making the world a better place by social activism. This world, our culture, and our governmental processes are all slated for destruction. Discrimination and bigotry are to be condemned. However, participating in how a godless world "fixes" the social system is not in the spirit of Christ. We should take steps to feed the hungry and care for those in need. Many ecclesias do good works in these areas and this is consistent with the lives of believers. However, engagement in the government and secular powers of this world are not for those who answer to a different King.

Is there an opportunity for believers to make a statement publicly? If it is done as a demonstration of our commitment and reliance on our Lord, it opens some possibilities. In 1 Tim 2:1-4, the Apostle Paul sets a standard for prayer for all men. He specifically names *"kings, and all that are in authority."* The purpose is for men to be able to lead a *"quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."* Would it be appropriate for believers to host public prayer meetings to pray for the government and police and to ask for the Lord's intervention that men might live lives as the Apostle described? We can proclaim that if we

want real peace, it can only come from Jesus. He said in *John 14:27*, “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*”

## A SINCERE CALL TO ACTION

Some might ask if taking this position is just accepting in a fatalistic way the wrong that is ongoing and choosing not to do anything about it. God forbid! The slogan prevalent across America is “Inaction is Unacceptable.” To this, we strongly agree. Our calling is not to just ensure we personally refrain from discrimination and bigotry, but rather that we become advocates to eradicate these behaviors in the way we live and how our ecclesias operate. This calls for great personal examination. What can I do and how can I help? What is compelling me to get involved? Here are a few questions we should consider.

- Am I open to understanding the plight of those who feel discriminated against? Do I listen to their cries, or do I rationalize this as an issue for others, not me?
- Am I consciously scrutinizing my language and environment to identify subtle racial and dehumanizing bias?
- Will I take a personal stand to stop racist or misogynist comments and behaviors in my family and my ecclesia? Will I embrace “zero tolerance” for such behaviors?
- Why are most of our ecclesias lacking diversity? What are the drivers of this and how can I begin to be a force for change in this area?
- What can I do to ensure all brothers and sisters have a consistent voice?

- How am I preaching and to whom? Am I delivering the Gospel message in a way that speaks to all people?
- Do I avoid the apprehensive visitor in the ecclesial hall because I feel uncomfortable?
- Am I doing whatever I can to support and help those who are destitute or in danger?

We should remember God Himself created diversity. Difference was Divinely designed to be helpful and appreciated. What a different world it would be if all men were the same, or if we did not have a two-gender perspective! Sadly, it was Man who chose to oppress and devalue difference. Valuing our unique qualities is not only consistent with the work of our Lord; it is what will make us far stronger as the body of Christ. It is our God who “tempered” the body together, blending and mixing it to operate in full efficiency. We need to ensure all people feel the ecclesia is a place where they belong and are valued. We need to be “the light on a hill” for those in the communities where we live and work. We all need to ensure we reflect, even in the secret corners of our lives, that we love all men and value them.

## ISAIAH 61

As I have been contemplating this issue, as so often happens, the readings took me right to the place I needed to consider. I was looking for a compelling vision of what action we ought to take. Reading Isaiah 61, I was reminded of that vision we share for justice and freedom. It will not be accomplished by the Kingdoms of Men. The real enemy for all men is sin. Without Christ, we are all locked away in dark prison cells, feeling brokenhearted. We

may never, as a small group, influence what is wrong in our secular culture, resulting in prejudice and abuse. I can do something by living my life in a way that extinguishes prejudice and discrimination in what I do control. But our high calling is to “*preach the good tidings to the meek.*” (Isa 61:1) and to declare that it is Jesus only who will “*heal the brokenhearted.*” The only way there will be deliverance of the captives, recovering of the sight of the blind and providing of liberty to the bruised, is to preach the gospel, the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19). If we are looking for a way to serve our fellow man, this is our message and our activism. Even if we were living in a world that had abandoned discrimination and injustice, this would still be the message that is needed. It is what our Lord has invited us to communicate. Without our Lord,

we are all “*children of wrath.*” (Eph 2:3). If we feel compelled to go to the street corner with a message, we would be well served to carry this one.

The great example of our Lord was that he practiced “*pure religion and undefiled.*” The changes he brought about were beyond political policies and changes in the judicial system. He demonstrated his love all the way to the cross when he gave his life as a ransom for all and opened the prison gates that kept all men slaves to sin. The centuries-old message of believers has always been the great vision of the coming kingdom. When our Lord returns, his redeemed will be drawn from every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. Today he calls all men, everywhere to repent. May we be a people who adopt this vision fully in our lives.

*Dave Jennings*

## THE CURSE ON CANAAN

### What does the Bible say about slavery?

Sadly, Gen 9:24-27 has long been interpreted by some as a justification for African slavery and that blacks were destined to be slaves to white people. Churches have, in many cases, provided the fodder for the moral acceptance of the institution.

However, this is not at all what the Bible teaches and is a terrible misuse of Scripture. Perhaps one of the first places the Christadelphian community can start is to correctly teach what this passage says.

**For the remainder of this short article, visit:**  
**[tidings.org/magazine/curse-of-canaan](http://tidings.org/magazine/curse-of-canaan)**



LIFE APPLICATION

# RETURNING TO NORMAL?

*By Andrew Fitch*

**I**F one were to take a poll of the heartfelt desires of those who follow Jesus, then one could be fairly sure that his reappearing would get the highest count. In past times (only a matter of a few months ago), the next most popular desire would have been hard to predict but in current times the outcome is likely to be more certain. It would probably be a desire to “return to normal.” It’s a natural thing. Normal gives us structure, it gives us routine, it disciplines our lives, it gives us a reset point—a place to reboot to (and from) when we freeze or crash, it gives us security. But, it doesn’t look like returning to normal will be like flicking a switch, it’ll be more of a cross fade, a transition or rather a series of transitions through various phases of “new normal,” whatever that means! For us and our community the shape

of those phases will be governed by a loving consideration of the various needs of our friends and brothers and sisters. Based on the evidence of the past few months we will cope with that well—God willing. We have surprised ourselves with our adaptability and “can do” attitude—surely this is not solely our doing, it’s evidence of the Lord at work in us. But beyond that, what more does the Lord want from us? If He is at work, and we all believe that He is, what is He telling us, what have we learned so far and how can the experience to date influence things going forward?

Reflecting on what has happened so far:

- We have adapted, laying aside some of our traditional practices and, within the spirit of Christ, have sought to create something to

maintain our collective worship, that works for all.

- Within a short space of time we have learned to navigate a whole new channel of communication technology has forced upon us.
- We have become better listeners and in turn more conscious of each other's needs.
- Barriers have come down.
- Attendance has gone up, albeit in a different form.
- Some old fences have come down, leading us to wonder why they were there in the first place.

All this has happened because we haven't been allowed to gather in our buildings. The church is not the chairs, the table, the platform, the lectern, the curtains, the carpet, the rows, the circles, the sound system, we've been liberated from all that. The church is us, connecting with each other. We are the temple and God is the Master Builder. We've always said this, but now we are really experiencing it.

Some have asked: "where is God in all of this?" We are diligent in exploring the answer. We examine the Scriptures and match our findings with the events of the day. We stand in awe of God's ability to bring the affairs of man to an abrupt stop. All of this tells us that God has a plan and that He is in control.

But, is that it? Is there more for us in all of this and are there lessons staring us in the face? When we return to normal will we take any learning from the traumatic experience we've encountered? Will we revert back to the old order and cease to be so flexible or will we maintain our adaptability, to ensure our collective worship works for all? Will we put the brakes on our pace to embrace new things or will we retain our agility to embrace new things that deliver real benefit to our collective service? Will there be a legacy of listening and a raised consciousness of each other's needs? Will the barriers that disappeared in a moment reappear as quickly as they disappeared? Will we simply "turn off" Zoom or will we move forward with it and be prepared to keep it on to preserve our rekindled connections and surge in attendance? Will we re-erect the fences that came down or will we further develop the bridges we have discovered? Will we go back to our buildings and resume "normal service" as if nothing ever happened or will we develop and grow from this whole experience recognizing that we are the building and the Builder is still very much on-site?

*Andrew Fitch  
(London Finsbury Park, UK)*



LIFE APPLICATION

# MODERN IDOLATRY

PART 1 OF 10

By Joel Wilkinson

## BEHOLD YOUR GODS IN 930 BC

*“Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”* is what Jeroboam said to the 10 tribes of Israel. (1 Kgs 12:28) His words, spoken during the reign of Solomon’s son in 930 BC, were identical to those spoken by Aaron hundreds of years before in Exod 32:4! You might ask yourself “How are people so gullible that they would fall for the same old lie?” I would like to suggest the same idolatry deception Jeroboam used is still around, and even fooling God’s chosen people today! It has existed since Eden, it continued through the New Testament and Middle Ages, and is stronger today than ever before. We are continuously besieged with the same lies “Jeroboams” have pushed throughout time. In the chapter before

this, about Solomon, we read this ominous warning: *“They [his wives] turned his heart away.”* (1 Kgs 11:3) If deception worked on wise King Solomon, it can work on us!

Jeroboam was a revolutionary who styled himself as one who *“sticks up”* for his fellows. (1 Kgs 12). Recall that King Solomon, during his many building projects, progressively oppressed the people of Israel through taxation and forced labor. Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, continued this trend, fueling resentment. Jeroboam led a rebellion against King Rehoboam and was successful at achieving a secession of 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel. However, he worried his permanent success was in jeopardy. When the annual religious pilgrimage to Jerusalem approached, he feared the people of the 10 tribes

(now called Israel) would soon forget their animosity toward Judah (and King Rehoboam) and reunite with their countrymen. So, Jeroboam figured out a way to prevent the people from going to Jerusalem: he gave them closer, more convenient places of worship. He set up golden calves in beautiful groves and claimed they were legitimate by labeling them with God's name, "Yahweh." His ruse to sow discord among brethren was so successful that the Bible never stops repeating: *"Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin."* He made Israel to sin.

Jeroboam's approach has been used as a blueprint for would-be hijackers throughout history: exploit envy and grow resentment; sow discord and divide the people; offer convenience and novelty; water down the truth, normalize immorality; replace religious sanctity with a hollow holiday party of gold and glitter. Jeroboam offered a mixture of "alternative," "modern," "progressive," "liberal," "scientific," and even "old school" religion. (the calf, Hathor was a throw-back to Egypt and the Zodiac.)

In 2020, groves like Jeroboam's Asherah are still attracting the most influential members of society (Cain, Aime. Business Insider, March 2018) In the California redwoods, a private elite camp called Bohemian Grove opens yearly with a play containing a mock human sacrifice that takes place in front of a 25-foot owl statue. Bohemian Grove is attended by influential members of government, entertainment, banking, global politicians from the UN, and even former/future US presidents! It may seem bizarre, but this practice is

simply a continuation of the groves found throughout the Bible: Exod 34:13, Deut 7:5, Judg 3:7, 1 Kgs 14:23, Jer 17:2, and many more!

From Genesis to Revelation, every believer struggled to refuse idolatry: Abraham, Jacob, Rachel, the children of Israel, the judges, Solomon, the kings... everyone! Idolatry can be found in almost every book of the Bible! Do we think that we are beyond the reach of the powerful "Jeroboams" of our age?

## OPEN 24 HOURS

Everywhere we look in 2020, the machinations of idol-pushers are evident. We no longer need to "wait for our favorite show" to come on. Entertainment is ALWAYS ON. You now carry your TV (and your wish list) in your pocket! Mammon, the false god of the New Testament, is worshipped more today than ever. The First Commandment in Exodus 20, *"Have no gods BEFORE me"* implies a sense of priorities. The Second Commandment deals specifically with idols of gods: *"You shall not make for yourself a graven image."* An automobile body is literally a graven, molten image. It is an idol if it comes "before" God and causes our priorities to become faulty. Idols are defined as "the work of our own hands" that we ascribe disproportionate worth ("worth-ship"). Pride of possessions (pride of life) is a hungry pit that can never be filled. It eats us up spiritually, mentally, and even physically. Why are humans insistent on this self-destructive behavior? Punishments for disobedience are severe: *"Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed."*

As it turns out, three out of ten commandments are about idolatry! In addition to the first two commandments, the 10th: *“Thou shalt not covet”* also has to do with idolatry. Paul equates coveting with idolatry in *Eph 5:5*: *“One who is covetous (that is an idolater).”* He warns that it is an external threat: *“Let no one deceive you.”* Coveting is equivalent to *“having other gods before Him.”* If you desire to take something from someone else (covetousness, envy), your priorities are faulty, and your “worth-ship” is askew. Covetousness is also a gateway to stealing, adultery and murder. Speaking of priorities, covetousness is considered a virtue in today’s society! If you don’t make it a priority to investigate and buy the latest gadget, people may think that you are either dim, dull or lazy. The entire advertising industry exists and functions because of covetousness. Don’t be fooled by their propaganda! If we sweat and slave over material possessions, we are prisoners to a cruel master, giving away our families and our souls to a bottomless pit. If all our time and effort go toward idols made of wood and stone and metal, (and plastic) we are *“exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images!”* (*Rom 1:23*). Just like the other two commandments involving idolatry, the punishment for covetousness is gravely serious: *“for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”* (*Col 3:6*)

In prophecy, the ultimate symbol of last days idolatry is “Babylon” the “head of gold” (Daniel 2) standing defiantly erect until the day it is struck by Christ, the rock. Revelation chapter 18 says Babylon will be the future “city” in which “all the merchants of

the earth” trade in every commodity imaginable (including human souls!). Does that sound like our age? Paul also warns the Galatian churches in *Gal 5:20-21* *“idolatry, sorcery... envy...those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* Interestingly, “sorcery,” the Greek word *“pharma kea”*—from whence comes “pharmacist” is mentioned alongside idolatry and envy/covetousness. This word appears in other last days passages (*Rev 9:21, 21:8 and 22:15*). Drug use in the first century is not well-documented, but drugs are certainly some of the biggest idols of our day! Through overuse, abuse, and misuse, even legal drugs have become a “poisoner” of Americans. Covetousness, envy and *“pharma”* all appear alongside each other in the 6:00 PM news commercials... just like they do in Scripture!

## POKING ITS HEAD INTO HEAVEN

Idolatry means we humans want to “be as gods,” or we want to eliminate God and become God ourselves. The first idol-pusher, the serpent, suggested the woman could herself become a god in *Gen 3:5*. Man has been worshiping himself ever since! At Babel, the pride of humanity said: *“Let us make a name for ourselves.”* (*Gen 11:4*). Cain and his seed invented agriculture and tools, which gave them independence from God. Especially since the humanism movement began 100 years ago, modern man has declared himself the “sole heir of evolutionary progress” (read UNESCO: Its Purpose and Its Philosophy by Julian Huxley) and seeks to conquer nature through machinery. We are taught in public

school to worship the “creature, not the Creator.” Idolatry wants us to stop depending on God for food, health or security. Insurance, science, medicine, education, the almighty dollar, and unrestrained police/military power are our modern gods in whom we put our faith...not God’s providence and protection! At Babel, the leaders declared they would “reach unto heaven.” Modern man’s infringements into “God’s realm” accelerate each new day, with atomic energy, Cern Lab experiments dissecting matter, CRISPR (Clustered Regularity Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) enabling gene editing, weather control and machine learning. Atheistic scientists are determined to deliver on mankind’s quest for god-like powers by creating chimeras reminiscent of those decorating the walls of Babylon! Google Translate has reunited the languages separated by God at Babel. Politically, we may soon be placing our faith in global humanism (one-world government), global currency, and artificial intelligence. We may live to see the ultimate idol: Tower of Babel meets Image of the Beast!

Paul accurately describes our tech-hungry world when he says of the Romans in *Rom 1:25* “*They worship and serve the creature rather than the*

*Creator.*” The “I” phone has morphed into a black mirror, a robot version of our selves we cannot do without. It is a crystal ball we scry (scroll) to see the future (forecast) and view remote live events. We are constantly bowing our heads unto it, imprisoned in a dark, illusory worldwide web matrix; instead of “beholding the sun” in God’s three-dimensional world. (Eccl 11:7). It is omniscient and omnipresent. This little robot god knows our deepest darkest secrets (searches) and is creating a logbook of our lives (like Rev. 20:12!) – in “the cloud”! (You can’t make this stuff up!) It knows where we’ve been, where we will go, what we’ve purchased, and uses that information to manipulate us into becoming “ideal” consumers/voters/citizens (subjects) with high “social scores.” “*Be not conformed to this world...*” (*Rom 12:2*). Is that even possible when the world is using “smart” technology to make us conform to its utopian vision?

### THE IMAGE IS “SMART”

Anyone who studies Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) proliferation (e.g. Elon Musk, Ray Kurzweil) knows it to be like “eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil” all over again. The temptation to “become like gods” is repeating itself exponentially. We seem to be accelerating toward



what Kurzweil (a technophile) calls “The Singularity,” the merging of A.I. and humans. Elon Musk (PayPal, Tesla) calls it “summoning the demon—It could be terrible, it could be great, but we will not control it.” Musk initially proclaimed himself a prophet, warning the world’s military-industrial complexes against A.I., but has resigned from that effort. Instead, he recently launched a new brain chip technology: Neuralink, a two-way brain/internet interface. He thinks a hands-free, 24-hour full-immersion into the “internet of things” is our only hope of surviving. A.I. Electronic devices implanted in the brain, like vagus nerve stimulators for depression, and vestibular implants, are yesteryear’s “child’s play” compared to the sci-fi microchip nightmares Musk has planned.

If there is anything we know about idols in the Bible, it is their limitations: they can’t talk, walk, fight, hear, etc. In the 2020s, that is all changing. Once again, the Bible predicts that very same unimaginable change. Rev 13:15-17 states, *“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”*

Man has always loved and worshipped idols that couldn’t walk, talk, or think. Imagine what man will do with the “idol of his dreams!”

Let no one deceive you. They will turn, even the wisest, heart away. There are entities, which actively promote idolatry; tempting, luring, and deceiving even the elect to partake. *“They will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods”* is the warning of inevitability given in Deut 7:4. Yes, the Jeroboam spirit is still saying: “Behold your gods!” in the 2020s. And he will make spiritual Israel to sin. The gods of today are still Daniel’s Image and the Tower of Babel, with the addition of the Image of the Beast. In future chapters, the modern-day manifestations of these mind-transforming idols will be uncovered. Answers will be attempted for Who, What, Why, and How. Hopefully, this knowledge will help prevent us from getting “fooled again” by “angels of light” and “wolves in sheep’s clothing” which are incrementally herding us into their nether gloom. Hopefully, we will have the confidence to echo the words of Shadrach *“be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”* (Dan 3:18)

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**Editor’s Note: This is the first article by Bro. Wilkinson.**  
The remaining articles are posted online at:  
***[tidings.org/biblestudies/modern-idolatry](http://tidings.org/biblestudies/modern-idolatry)***

# ALL ONE IN CHURCH

By Carmel Page

**H**ow do you feel when you walk into a hotel? Hotel lobbies tend to have a relaxed and calm atmosphere with comfortable seating; they are places where you can get a drink and use the restrooms.

Compare that with your ecclesial hall. Is the foyer a place where visitors can sit and take stock before deciding if they wish to join us for a service? Is it obvious where the bathrooms are?

Stand inside the front door and look to see how our beliefs are expressed. Are there easy to read verses or would visitors have to browse long racks of leaflets to form an opinion about us? What does the foyer say about our relationship with God? Read your signs. Does more of it tell people what they can do or what they cannot do?

If you can, sit down on the floor in the doorway. What do you see now? This is what a young child sees when they enter. Is there anything in their line of sight to interest and reassure them?

Our halls are for both members and visitors but how are these different needs balanced? How much space is taken up by noticeboards with information for members and how much for visitors? Is there a clear program of events?

Even if you don't have an attractive room to walk into, a warm smile and kind welcome can make a huge

difference. Is the doorkeeper's job to look after the door or the guests? We should introduce ourselves and visitors may do the same. If someone tells you their name, use it. They will feel more comfortable and you are more likely to remember it.

"Have you come for the service?" Checking visitors are in the right place is an easy way to start a conversation. From their answer you may well know if they are Christadelphians, whereas asking, "Are you a Christadelphian?" may make some people feel excluded. It might be they only want to use the facilities, or they are hungry. Ask visitors if they would like a Bible and hymnbook to use and if they are aware of our closed communion practice.

It's not only non-members who may feel uncomfortable; members of other ecclesias may be nervous entering unknown buildings. There may be Christadelphians who are not sure if they will be welcome in your ecclesia. Even your regular members may have had a bad week and need a friendly smile and understanding.

If we greet everyone warmly, then new visitors will have a sense of God's love displayed in the care we show for each other. Their learning about God will have begun before the first hymn.

*Carmel Page  
(Sheffield, UK)*

# THE LIVING GOD

## PART 2

By Duncan Kenzie

### OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

**I**N this series we are considering the phrase “the Living God.” In part 1 we concluded with revisiting Hebrews 10. In particular, we looked at verse 31—*“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (KJV). We looked at how the ark of the covenant was a symbol of God’s desire for a close relationship with Israel, and proof of his faithfulness to them. The New Covenant we are a part of is the eternal covenant, described in *Heb 13:20*: *“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant.”* (ESV) This verse echoes Peter’s words in *1 Pet 2:24-25*: *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to*

*righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”*

The imagery of Shepherd and the sheep used so often throughout scripture, and by Christ in John’s gospel, again teaches us we are in a relationship with our God. He is not remote, distant and ambivalent. Rather, He cares for us and loves us and wants us to draw close to Him. He has demonstrated that to us by the gift of His Son, and He has bound us together with Him with an eternal promise of love and faithfulness.

### UNEXPECTED DELIVERANCE

Let’s look at some more occurrences of the term “the Living God” in scripture. Perhaps one of the most famous is *1 Sam 17:26*: *“And David said to the men who stood by him,*

*‘What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?’* (ESV). Unlike the rest of those preparing for battle, David includes God in the equation. There is no mention of God in all the preceding text in 1 Samuel 17. Rather, this was the perspective: “And the men of Israel said, *‘Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely, he has come up to defy Israel.’*” (1 Sam 17:25-26 ESV) To defy Israel—not the God of Israel. This was the legacy of Saul, who placed ritual worship above obedience from the heart. (1 Sam 15:20-26). In contrast, David sees the Living God as ever-present in his life, and that of his fellow Israelites. He has a deep relationship with Him. David demonstrates this in his response to Saul: “*Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.*” And David said, “*The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.*” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!” (1 Sam 17:34-37). Notice David at first appears to take credit for striking down lions and bears, but then he immediately attributes that to God’s active, caring power at work in his life. When we, too, think in terms of being in a relationship with the Living God, we shift from crediting ourselves with any control or power and focus on acknowledging God at work in our lives. The whole message

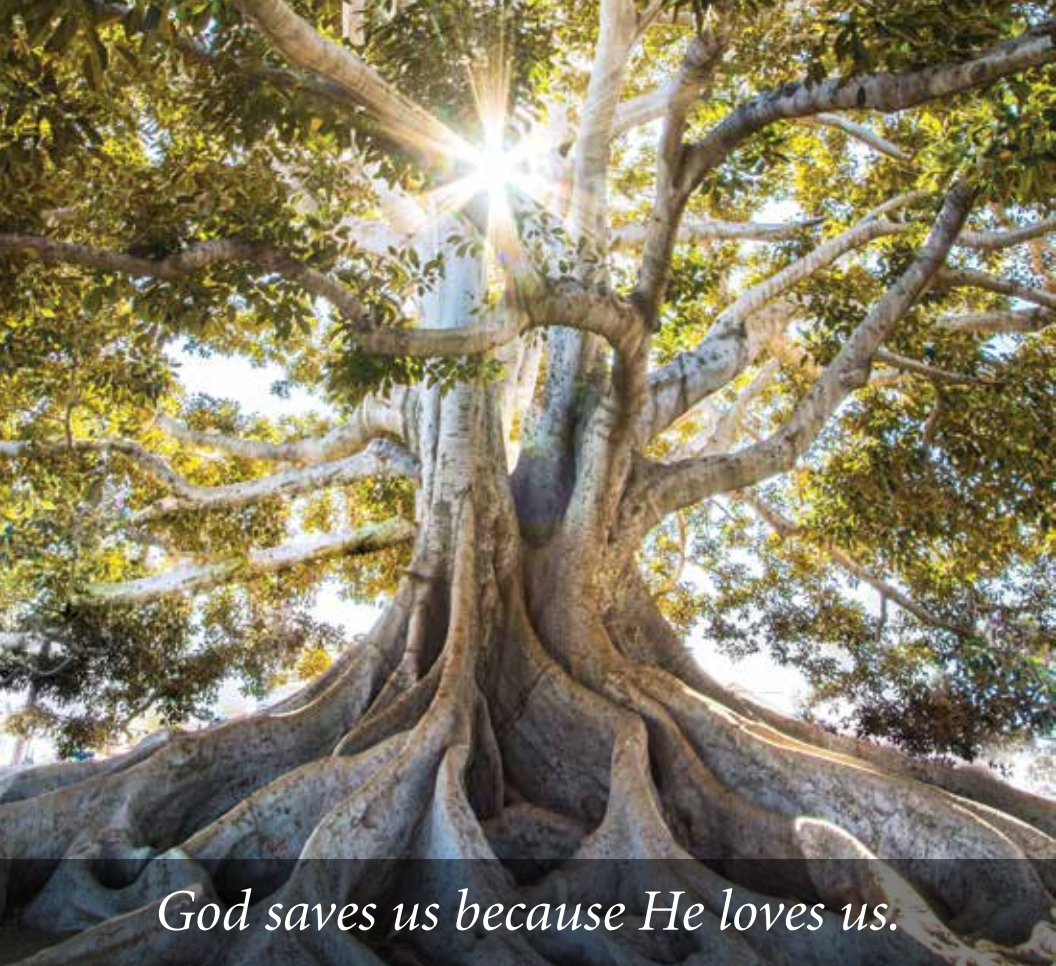
of the David and Goliath story is not so much about David’s bravery as his understanding of the power of God to provide unexpected, miraculous deliverance from certain death. Only the Living God can do this!

## KING DARIUS VERSUS GOD

Our next Old Testament example is another familiar story, found in Daniel 6. When Daniel was about to be thrown into the lion’s den, King Darius sought to “deliver” him. (Dan 6:14.) The word for “deliver” here is Aramaic and occurs only in Daniel. In every instance but this one it refers to God as the deliverer. Darius, despite his lack of political acuity in allowing himself to be cornered by his officials and courtiers, clearly had a strong understanding and respect for Daniel’s God. This is exemplified in verses 26-27:

*“I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”*

It is remarkable a gentile should declare the God of Israel, Daniel’s God, “*is a living God, enduring forever.*” Darius also recognizes God is the true deliverer, not man. We see the same principle here as in the David and Goliath story. God is a living God—and He is a deliverer. You may recall in the previous article we saw this same theme in Joshua 3, where God promises safety to the



## *God saves us because He loves us.*

Israelites as they cross the Jordan into the promised land. Keep this theme of deliverance in mind as we move to the New Testament.

### **PETER'S INSPIRATION**

In Matthew 16 Jesus is experiencing increasing pressure from the scribes and Pharisees and they ratchet up their campaign to discredit and undermine him. He now becomes more explicit in explaining to his disciples who he is, to help strengthen their faith in him and in God's plan. Characteristically, he does this by posing two questions: "*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*" and "*But who do you say that*

*I am?*" (Matt 16:13,15). Note the contrasts: "people" vs "you" and "Son of Man" vs "Me." The first question references those who are searching but not yet completely informed. The second references the disciples and Jesus himself directly. Peter's response is "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" There we have, once more, this special title. How did Peter come to utter these words? Jesus explains Peter did not come to this conclusion by his own or other's insight ("*flesh and blood have not revealed this to you.*") It was a direct revelation from heaven (v.17). This is similar language to Paul's in 2 Cor 3:3, when describing the love

he felt for the Corinthian brethren: *“And you show (or manifest) that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but tablets of human hearts.”* Contrast this with the tablets of stone that brought death through the failure of the Israelites to faithfully follow God under the law. Contrast also with the “letters” from the Sanhedrin Saul, still uttering murderous threats, carried to Damascus to bind up men and women believers for imprisonment in Jerusalem. Both Peter and Paul’s declarations about the Living God embody the theme we’ve seen expressed throughout Scripture: the phrase “the Living God” refers specifically to God’s constant intention for the deliverance of mankind, whether nationally as with Israel, individually as with David and Daniel, or for the true Church, as with Peter and Paul. Further, Peter’s assertion makes it clear the Lord Jesus Christ is at the core of God’s plan of deliverance. It’s a deliverance from sin and death that is implied in the statement, and when Jesus promises to give the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter (and subsequently to the rest of the disciples—see Matt 18:18-20).

## GOD’S MERCY AND KINDNESS

Let’s return to the passage I quoted in the first part of this series: *Heb 10:31* “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*” The writer could have chosen any one of the many titles of God to use here. But he specifically chose one which reverberates with the promise of God’s mercy and compassion. For it is impossible to

experience deliverance from God without experiencing those divine characteristics. His acts of deliverance are driven by these emotions and motivations. God saves us because He loves us. So, if someone tramples the Son of God underfoot and profanes the blood of the covenant by which he is sanctified (v.29), it is truly a terrible thing. But it is not beyond the power of God’s innate character and will for Him to deliver such a one. Who knows how that deliverance may be brought about? And who knows if the one who spurns will choose to repent and be the recipient of God’s deliverance from his sin and folly? But it is a surety this is our God’s intent. *“Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?”* (Rom 2:4). Imagine that! Not God’s wrath or disappointment or frustration with you! God’s kindness leads you to his presence, restores our relationship with him. We need not be afraid of our God when we live a life of untrammelled awareness of our failings, a life of repentance and renewal, a life of holiness in the care of the Living God. This is the relationship we have with Him now, in the present—a foretaste of a more perfect connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and our Father in the age to come:

*“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels”* (Heb 12:22 NKJV).

Duncan Kenzie  
(Saanich Peninsula, BC)

# WHY DO WE HAVE MUSIC?

*By Kristin Atwood*

**W**hy do we have music? Hopefully, we can all acknowledge that when looking at spiritual songs, the words are the most important. So then why even bother putting it to music? Many passages tell us to sing, but why did God tell us to sing? He knows everything so there must be a reason why He knew we would need it. What does God want from us and in what way does music help us in our relationship and connection to Him? Music is powerful. Yet it is so simple. For any of you who know a little bit about music, there are only 7 notes. Yet from that handful of notes comes a large variety of chords and a huge span of different genres of music. Could someone even count the number of songs created over time?

It may seem a cliché to say music is “good for the soul.” But it can calm us,

uplift us, motivate us, and connect us to our Heavenly Father in a way that is hard to describe in words. Let’s take a moment to look at Psalm 57 which beautifully describes how music can connect us to God:

*“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*

*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.”*

If you step back and think about how music is used in the brotherhood, it is in many ways like a thread woven throughout our ecclesias. If you were asked how we use music the most, a majority would probably say we use music to praise God. We love to praise God when we feel thankful, when we are full of joy and when we feel God’s presence in our lives. We praise Him when a new brother or sister is joining the brotherhood through baptism and when a couple decides to join their lives together in marriage. We also know we need to come to God when times are hard. We come to God in music when our hearts are distressed: when a loved one has fallen asleep, when we are in a difficult situation and we can’t see the way out, or when life is just plain hard, and we feel alone. We also love to use music with our children. We love it when we see children lifting their voices to God in Sunday School or just in everyday life. We try to teach

them God’s word through song to help them memorize scripture. There is something so pure and beautiful about children singing spiritual songs. Our CYCs join around the campfire at gatherings to sing to God with great joy and with a solemn appreciation for His greatness. Many of us love to sing or listen to a choir at Bible schools or during special presentations at the meeting. Many of us listen to spiritual music at home while we are cooking a meal, getting ready for the day, or driving in our cars. Music is a huge part of our life in the Truth.

Many of us attend a Bible School during the year. There is something so special about that first hymn at a Bible School—having a few hundred people gathered singing to God communally. Singing together in the kingdom is probably my favorite kingdom vision. Can you picture it? Singing with thousands of brothers and sisters from around the world and throughout time joining with our hearts, minds, and souls to our Heavenly Father. “*Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.*” (*Isa 6:3*).

Quarantine life is a real thing for most of us at this point. Although there are many things to value about this time and while there are always ways we can serve God, singing on a Sunday morning now is just not quite the same. Don’t get me wrong. We sing the hymns on Sunday but sitting in our living room and singing then is when I feel emptiness and loneliness the most. Music can take our worship to a whole other place. Deut 6:4-7 talks about how God wants our ENTIRE

life! He wants us fully dedicated to Him. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”* Personally, when I read these verses, I think about how hard it is to have God involved in every aspect of my day, but when music is involved it definitely helps. How often do you have a song stuck in your head? Wouldn't it

be beautiful if we always had a spiritual song stuck in our head? Something to dwell on to get our minds out from being focused on the cares of this life. God tells us to *“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”* (1 Thess 5:16-18) Our songs are prayers. We can be thinking and singing and praying to God throughout our day. So, let's take the opportunity now to get the word of God inside of our being and lift up our voices in praise to Him.

*Kristin Atwood,  
(Verdugo Hills, CA)*

*Wouldn't it be beautiful if we always had a spiritual  
song stuck in our head?*

*Something to dwell on to get our minds out from  
being focused on the cares of this life...*



# BIBLE STUDY TIP #1

By Richard Morgan

## LOST IN TRANSLATION

God inspired the authors of the Bible to write down His Word for us, which is clear from passages like *Rom 15:4*: “*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*” (All quotes are from the ESV.) In *1 Corinthians 10*, Paul lists several examples of what happened to the Israelites in Old Testament times and says, “*Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.*” (v6) and “*Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*” (v11).

The main aim of Bible study is to extract meaning from the text and work out

what application there is for us today. However, we need to realize that, while the Bible was written for us, it was not written to us. The inspired authors of the Bible wrote thousands of years ago in cultures vastly different from our own. They also wrote in different languages from ours, and what we read, unless we are fluent in ancient Hebrew or Greek, is a translation.

A lot can be lost in translation, and while experts in ancient languages have done their best to convey the original meaning in a language we can understand, we should not fall into the trap of reading the Bible through our 21st-century lens. That trap is especially pertinent when it comes to ecclesiastical words and ideas like “church,” “grace,” and “atonement.” 21st-century dictionary definitions, and our modern-day concepts of

biblical words and phrases, always need to be checked against what was the original intent of the author.

The first step to sound Bible study is to find good modern translations where the translators have done their best to be faithful to the text. We often don't need to turn to lexicons to find a better translation of a word; that spadework has been done for us by the translators. But the English rendition of words and phrases cannot always bridge the cultural divide, and words lose their meaning over time. To help us with understanding the original intent of the author, we have a wealth of resources at our disposal. Finding useful Bible dictionaries and commentaries, where the authors have studied the original cultural and historical background of the Biblical text, is part of sound Bible exposition.

But what makes for a useful resource? A rule of thumb is to choose commentaries and dictionaries that are part of a peer-reviewed series with excellent editorship, such as books produced by InterVarsity Press. Typically, expertise in ancient languages, history, and culture, have been incorporated to create such works. Much of the Bible message is clear for us without these resources. But our Bible study can be enriched by finding ways to get back to what the original readers would have understood. When we gain that knowledge, then we are going to have a clearer understanding of how to apply the lessons to ourselves in the 21st century.

## THE PURPOSE OF BIBLE EXPOSITION

The word exposition can sound a bit stuffy and academic, but it's at the

heart of Bible study. An exposition, whether Biblical or not, is a description or explanation of an idea. Let's take one example from the Bible, say one of the feasts of the Law of Moses. How about the feast of tabernacles? An exposition of the feast would be a description of the feast, explaining the various elements of it. That's very useful because wouldn't it be better for an Israelite to know why they were attending a feast? Understanding the "why" of something is at the heart of biblical exposition. We believe in one God, but why? Why is it necessary, and why does it matter? The descriptive element of an exposition gets to the "what," "where," "how," and "when," but the "why" is what matters most.

Let's go back to the example of the feast of tabernacles, or booths because it was the topic of an exposition in Nehemiah 8. Verse 1 tells us, "*And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel.*" Verse 14 tells us it was at the time of the feast—"*And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month*"—and the end of the chapter tells us they kept the feast.

In between, there's a word that pops out of the text: "understand." You'll find it in verses 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, and 12. To understand something is more than knowing it intellectually or academically. The teachers in Israel, the Levites, had the task to help the people understand the passages they read from the Law. Bible exposition is more than just going over

the various stories and events of the Bible; it's striving to understand the reason behind the inspired words. It's about understanding what God wants us to learn from these things.

Verse 7 tells us the Levites *"helped the people to understand the Law"* and the next verse tells us how they did that—*"They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading."* What they're doing is giving

up into sections or read it paragraph by paragraph, which is how some interpret it. However, the New American Commentary on Nehemiah suggests it has the meaning "to translate" and makes the point that the people listening to the Levites might not have spoken Hebrew having been in captivity in Babylon for seventy years. They also bridged the gap between the culture they were used to in Babylon and their cultural heritage from the

Bible exposition is about striving to understand the *reason* behind the inspired words. It's about understanding what God wants us to *learn* from these things.

an exposition of the Law. They didn't just stand up and read from the scroll of the book of Deuteronomy); they did it clearly.

That's more than just enunciating the words correctly and speaking loud enough so everyone could hear. The same word is found, for instance, in Num 15:34, where it says of a man who had been gathering sticks on the Sabbath that they *"put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him."* It was made clear in the following verse. In other words, the Levites explained it to them—just like an exposition.

The root of the Hebrew word used here, *paras*, means to "break up." So, perhaps the Levites broke the reading

Book of the Law.

The chapter tells us the Levites "gave the sense" of the reading. The word "sense" is a synonym for the word translated "understanding" throughout the chapter. In other words, their exposition was what enabled the people to understand. In our modern times, it would be the equivalent of a Bible school with a series of classes given on the book of Deuteronomy.

There's an interesting word at the end of verse 8. The Levites helped the people "understand the reading." The word "reading" in Hebrew is *miqra*, and everywhere else it's used, translators have used something like "convocation" or "assembly," the calling together of a large number of people.

A convocation has been going on from verse 1 when *“all the people gathered as one man into the square.”* So, really what they’re doing is explaining why the people gathered. We’ve already seen from verse 14 it was the time of the feast of tabernacles. So perhaps what was going on here was an exposition of what the feast of tabernacles is all about.

What they’re doing, in effect, is obeying the principle of Deut 31:10-13. That passage says *“And Moses commanded them, ‘At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law.’”*

We can take several principles from this little study of Nehemiah 8 to apply to our exposition of the Word of God. First, understanding the context is essential. Looking at the context is as

simple as looking at the chapter as a whole. That way, we can understand what’s going on, rather than looking at verses in isolation. We did that when we saw in verse 1 that the whole assembly came together, and later learned in verse 14 it was at the time of the feast of tabernacles. That provides a framework for understanding what the text is telling us. We also considered the broader context of the historical and cultural background, the fact the people had been in captivity for seventy years and probably spoke a different language from the text written on the scroll. Context is vital in understanding the Word of God. The context of the text itself, the literary genre (i.e., if it’s a poem, epistle, etc.), and the historical and cultural backgrounds all provide us information to understand the text more accurately. It’s when we ignore context or put our framework over the text, for instance reading it through our 21st-century bias, that we run into problems.

Second, we looked at the keyword “understand” and found it helped explain what was going on in the text.

It’s when we ignore context or put our framework over the text, **for instance reading it through our 21st-century bias**, that we run into problems...

Words, phrases, or ideas that pop out of the text help us see the primary purpose of what we're reading. Nehemiah 8 is about getting newly transplanted people to understand their cultural heritage as the people of God. Finding keywords or phrases comes from reading the text more than once. Reading is probably the number one skill required for good Biblical exposition. Reading and re-reading the text we're studying, as well as keeping up with our daily readings, is going to help us retain the information and provide us with the opportunity to meditate on and mull over the Word of God.

Third, we saw the importance of understanding the text in its original language. The people themselves had to have it translated for them, and we looked at two words, *paras* (clearly) and *miqra* (convocation). Using a concordance search, we can find other occurrences of the words to see how they are used and translated elsewhere. We did that with the word *miqra*, translated "reading" in Nehemiah 8 but "convocation" or "assembly" elsewhere, helping us understand what the passage in Nehemiah might have been telling us. We also looked at what it might have meant for the Levites to be reading "clearly." We also have access to valuable lexicons, where we can find definitions of the word used in Scripture.

Finally, there's intertextuality. That's the technical word for what we usually call Bible echoes, the way the Bible refers to itself through similar language and

Our task as Bible expositors is to explain the text. That means seeking to understand what the text says and not putting our ideas into it.

ideas or by directly quoting or alluding to other passages. We saw one example of this in the connection between Nehemiah 8 and Deuteronomy 31. One passage explains the other or fills out some of the meaning. Finding links like this can only come by what we mentioned above as the most important aspect of Bible exposition—reading. Reading the text itself, looking in the margin for clues, and doing our daily Bible readings, so we notice Bible echoes, is all-important.

Our task as Bible expositors is to explain the text. That means seeking to understand what the text says and not putting our ideas into it. That's the difference between what scholars call exegesis—reading out from the text what it says—and eisegesis—reading into the text what we want it to say. Sound exegesis, rather than eisegesis, is about careful reading and understanding of the context. It's about looking at clues in the text itself as to what the main themes are. It's also about the proper use of resources like concordances and lexicons and letting Scripture interpret Scripture via its intertextuality.

*Richard Morgan  
(Simi Hills, CA)*

# ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE NAMES

## PART 12

By George Booker

### FINAL PRAISE TO GOD (ROM 16:25-27)

**T**he concluding doxology (praise to God), though briefer, is like the previous doxologies in Romans 8:31-39 and 11:33-36.

#### *Romans 16:25*

*Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past...*

**Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel:** The apostle was confident that God could do for his readers whatsoever they needed (cp Rom 1:11; Eph 3:20; Phil 4:13). The gospel is God's primary instrument to accomplish that end. Paul called it "my gospel" because he had preached

it widely and had explained it in this letter.

**And the proclamation of Jesus Christ:** The "proclamation, or preaching, of Jesus Christ" is another name for the gospel (good news) with the emphasis on its subject: the gospel is about Jesus Christ. The phrase may also mean: "the preaching by Jesus Christ," but the first option is more reasonable here.

The gospel first had to be revealed, in its fullness, after which it could be proclaimed to the Gentiles. The gospel had been hidden ("*sigao*," more literally, "kept silent") in past times until God spoke of it first in the Old Testament and then more fully in the New Testament.

According to the revelation of the mystery: Revelation" translates the Greek "*apokalupsis*": to uncover or

reveal. It is of course the name of the last book in the New Testament, but — more than that — it is also another way of describing the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

Elsewhere, the mystery plainly has to do with the gospel which would be proclaimed to and believed by the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This is stated in the following:

- “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom 11:25).
- “The unsearchable riches of Christ” were to be “preached to the Gentiles” (Eph 3:3,4,8,9).
- God gave Paul a commission to preach the word of God, which consists of “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations but is now disclosed to the saints. To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col 1:25-27).
- “The mystery of godliness” includes Christ being “preached among the nations [the Gentiles] and believed on in the world” (1 Tim 3:16).

**Hidden for long ages past:** As noted above, the Greek word for “hidden” literally means ‘kept secret (i.e., KJV) or silent’. However, when Paul discussed the same theme in Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:26, he used a different word (“*apokrypto*”), which really does mean “kept hidden”—compare the English word “cryptic.” “*Apokrypto*” (to conceal away from sight, and thus to hide) is the opposite of “*apokalupsis*”

(to take the cover away, and thus to reveal).

### **Romans 16:26**

***...but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him ...***

**...but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings:** Even though the Old Testament prophets revealed the gospel to some extent, they did not always grasp all of its implications (1 Pet 1:10-12; see Rom 1:2). It remained for Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament to “reveal” this gospel more fully. The word is “*phaneroo*,” which means to display, disclose, or “make manifest” (KJV).

**...by the command of the eternal God:** God, through His Son, commanded this revealing or making known of the gospel to all nations, in what is often called “the Great Commission”—a commission which embraces all nations in the divine purpose which it proclaims:

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:19,20).*

This recalls the language which Paul used in speaking of his calling (Rom 1:1,5; Titus 1:3). Col 1:25-27, quoted above (see v 25), is in the same vein. Paul had a special commission and concern to reach the Gentiles, as their special apostle (Rom 11:13).

**...so that all nations might believe and obey him....** Paul is stating plainly the “mystery” of verse 25 has to do with the gospel being proclaimed to “all nations,” that is, all non-Jews, referred to in the Bible as “Gentiles,” or nations—“*goyim*” in Hebrew, and “*ethnos*” in Greek.

**Romans 16:27**

***...to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.***

God is described under two terms, “only” and “wise”:

1. “Only” (cp 1 Tim 1:17) recalls the line of thought in Rom 3:29,30. He is the only God of both Jew and Gentile—there cannot possibly be any other—who offers salvation to both groups through the good news of His Son. The simple fact that one God is the Father and Savior of all humankind should encourage love and brotherhood among all people, as much as is possible. After all, all human beings “are his offspring” (Acts 17:28), and we are, all together,

“neighbors” of one another (Matt 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27-37).

2. “Wise” invites the reader to recall Paul’s outpouring of praise to God in His wisdom (Rom 11:33), which brings to a close the long review of His dealings with Israel in relation to His purpose with the Gentiles. Wisdom is also allied to the hidden/revealed tension noted in verse 25, as we gather also from 1 Cor 2:6,7.

*“We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”*

So, the one God—whose eternal purpose has been described as first hidden, and then manifested in the gospel of His Son—draws to Himself through His Son the praise that will occupy the redeemed saints during all the ages to come. The silence that for so

The silence that for so long held the  
divine mystery has given way to  
***open and unending praise.***

The simple fact that one God is the Father and Savior of all humankind should **encourage love and brotherhood among all people**, as much as is possible.

long held the divine mystery has given way to open and unending praise. This song of praise will accompany the consummation of all human history when God will become “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28):

*“And they sang a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.’” (Rev 5:9,10).*

*“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures [literally, living ones] and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’ Then I heard every creature [literally, all creation] in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!’”*

*The four living creatures [living ones] said, ‘Amen,’ and the elders fell down and worshiped.” (Rev 5:11-14).*

*“Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” (Rev 14:1-3).*

*“I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: ‘Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.’” (Rev 15:2-4).*

George Booker,  
(Austin Leander, TX)

# JESUS GOD WITH US PART 2

By Joe Hill

## JESUS: YAHWEH SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE

The angel commanded Joseph, *“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins... and [Joseph] called his name JESUS.”* (Matt 1:21, 25).

While the kingdom of the LORD existed in Old Testament times, the king was the son of his natural father. At his enthronement God adopted him, thus becoming his Father and calling him His son (1 Chron 28:6; Psa 2:6-7; 89:26-27). In contrast, Jesus was God’s son through the power of the Holy Spirit which caused the virgin Mary to conceive and give birth to him (Matt 1:18-20; Luke 1:26-35). So, Jesus did not need to be adopted by God because he was innately “the only begotten Son.” On the other hand,

Joseph, who was not Jesus’ literal father, did adopt him by obediently naming him Jesus as the angel of the LORD had commanded.

The name “Jesus” is transliterated from Hebrew into Greek and means “Yahweh saves.” The Old Testament prophets stressed that Yahweh is the source of salvation:

*“I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me is no saviour.”* (Isa 43:11).

*“...and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a saviour; there is none beside me.”* (Isa 45:21).

*“Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no other god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.”* (Hos 13:4).

To fulfill this promise, God sent His son, Jesus Christ.

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).*

*“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (1 John 4:9-11).*

*“God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8).*

*“All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ... to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them... be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor 5:18-21).*

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Eph 2:4-5, 8).*

In short, salvation is from God through Christ.

## GOD WITH US: JESUS PREACHED THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

One of the most important aspects of God’s covenant blessings is that He would remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As we saw in the first article,<sup>1</sup> this is a fundamental aspect of what it means for God to be “with” His people. For example,

*“Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land... But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.” (Lev 26:42, 45).*

These blessings include the kingdom age, the ultimate “God with us” time. Isaiah foretold the preaching of the gospel of God’s reign;

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth **good tidings**, that publisheth peace; that bringeth **good tidings** of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, **Thy God reigneth!**” (Isa 52:7; see also, 9:6-7; 33:20-22).*

And John described its fulfillment:

*“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is **with men**,*

*and he will dwell **with them**, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be **with them**, and be their God.” (Rev 21:2-3).*

A major part of Jesus’s ministry was his missionary work. He went throughout the region teaching, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing the sick.

*“From that time Jesus **began to preach**, and to say, Repent: for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand.” (Matt 4:17).*

*“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” (Matt 4:23).*

*“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” (Matt 9:35).*

*“If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then **the kingdom of God** is come unto you.” (Matt 12:28).*

Jesus sent out his disciples to do the same:

*“And as ye go, preach, saying, **The kingdom of heaven** is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” (Matt 10:7-8).*

When John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus to ask whether he was the one to come or should they look for another, Jesus responded:

*“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the*

*dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” (Matt 11:5).*

Jesus took his words from Isaiah’s prophecies of the kingdom (Isa 26:19; 29:18-19; 35:4-6; 61:1-3).

## **GOD WITH US: JESUS HEALED THE SICK**

The covenant blessings include God’s healing His people of all sickness:

*“I [the LORD your God] will take sickness away from the midst of thee.” (Exod 23:25b).*

*“And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.” (Deut 7:13-15; see the contrasting covenant curses, Deut 28:26-29, 58-61).*

*“In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.” (Zech 12:8).*

Jesus demonstrated these covenant promises in the healings he performed. As Peter told Cornelius and his family and friends:

*“The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for **God was with him.**” (Acts 10:36-38).*

Nicodemus said to Jesus:

*“Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except **God be with him.**” (John 3:2).*

After Jesus raised the widow of Nain’s son from the dead, Luke records:

*“And there came fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That **God hath visited his people.**” (Luke 7:16).*

Healing was a major part of the ministry of Jesus. Matthew emphasizes this throughout his gospel. He recounts ten general summaries of healings,<sup>2</sup> a dozen healings of Jewish men, women, and children,<sup>3</sup> and two healings of Gentiles.<sup>4</sup>

In all of these episodes, the people being healed came to Jesus or were brought to him. In each case, the faith of those coming to Jesus was cited as the basis for the healing.

*Joe Hill  
(Austin Leander, TX)*

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *Tidings*, June, 2020, pp. 292-298.

<sup>2</sup> Matt 4:23-25; 9:16-17; 9:35-28; 11:4-6; 12:15-21; 14:13-14; 14:34-36; 15:29-31; 19:1-2; 21:14.

<sup>3</sup> Matt 8:1-4; 8:14-15; 8:28-34; 9:1-8; 9:20-22; 9:18-19, 23-26; 9:27-31; 9:32-34; 12:9-13; 12:22-24; 17:14-21; 20:29-34.

<sup>4</sup> Matt 8:5-13; 15:21-28.

**Editor’s Note: In our October and November issues, Lord willing,  
Bro. Joe will continue this article by examining how Jesus  
forgave sins, fed the multitudes, calmed the seas,  
was crucified, buried and resurrected.**

PREACHING AND TEACHING

# MEET SISTER CINTHYA

**We'd like to introduce you to Sis. Cinthya Alvarez Perez, from the Jalisco Sur Ecclesia in Mexico**

**I**N this article, we focus on just one of our new members in Mexico to tell the interesting story of how she came to the Truth and what has transpired in her life since then. We are blessed with many new brothers and sisters in Mexico that share similar stories.

Cinthya lives in a small pueblo about an hour from Guadalajara, called Santa Cruz el Grande. It was not a town that we were targeting for preaching work and was relatively unknown to most of us. However, we are pleased to say there is a healthy and growing ecclesia in Santa Cruz el Grande now and we can see the hand of our God in calling out a people for His Name.

Cinthya, like most people of Mexico and the State of Jalisco, was born



Catholic and practiced Catholicism. But she had questions and doubts about Catholicism, and she sensed something just wasn't right. She began investigating the beliefs of other churches, but it was not until she had a conversation with Bro. Manuel Rodriguez, a faithful brother from Ocotlan (a neighboring city) that her life began to change. Bro. Manuel was a vendor she interacted with in the small store she was operating. He often spoke to her about the Bible and later introduced the Christadelphians to her. She was initially very skeptical about this group she had never heard of, but she noted their teachings seemed to be taken directly from the Bible.

*“My family has responded well because I always remind them of the plan of God and His presence. I have a greater understanding of what God wants and what he asks of us and it helps guide my family even in the small details.”*

Bro. Manuel gave her a flyer about a correspondence course and soon she began studying with Bro. Gabriel Lopez and Sis. Cynthia Paiva de Lopez. Later, classes started and Cynthia invited other family members and friends to join in.

Sis. Cynthia described the process for learning the Truth:

Initially, I had my doubts, but I studied the course. I also searched online to learn about the Christadelphians, to see if they were correct. Cynthia and Gabriel also answered my doubts with scripture and little by little as I studied, I gained more confidence with the teachings.

I gained confidence and from there forward I have been studying the Word. I saw I was living a lie where I was. And I saw that the scripture was totally different from what I had been taught.

Thankfully, Sis. Cynthia's family was supportive of her search.

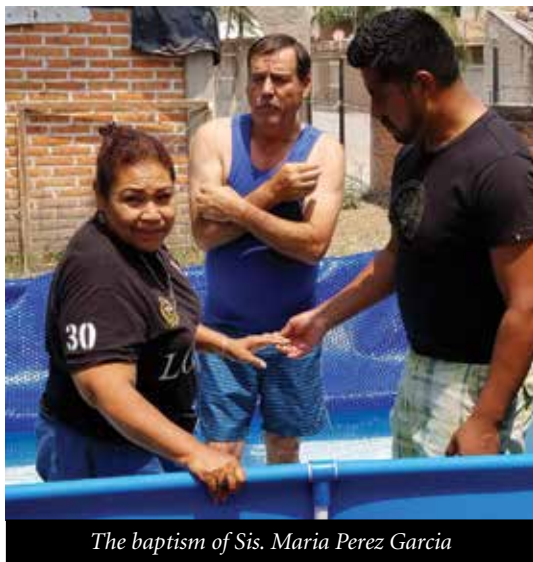
My family never opposed my search, nor said anything. They always said I could believe what I want. But I always implored them to investigate it too. I still talk to them a lot, sharing what I learn, and they react in agreement but have not taken their own steps yet.

They never tell me not to attend, nor put stumbling blocks.

Sis. Cynthia decided to be baptized and after a successful confession of her faith, was baptized on July 19, 2016. Her baptism was a very emotional and exciting experience for her because she knew that with her baptism she would belong to God's family. The baptism occurred at a Mexico Bible School with many brethren from many countries. Her family was also there in attendance. She expressed that she now felt part of a large family of God.

Later, Sis. Cynthia's mother, Maria Perez Garcia, was baptized.

My family has responded well because I always remind them of the plan of God and His presence. I have a greater understanding of what God wants and what he asks of us and it helps guide my family even in the small details. I see the hand of God working in us and my family is made aware of that. I want all my family to know of these things. At first, my mom wanted to defend her Catholic faith very much. She would get angry with me, but I did not stop sharing things. I would show her what teachings were not correct... the idolatry and how they didn't teach of the promises to Abraham or any of the basics of the Bible.



*The baptism of Sis. Maria Perez Garcia*

She would get angry with me and finally after my insistence, I think the doubt entered and she began to study. She said I am going to study because I want to know more about the Bible. And that's how God opened her eyes. She was converted and was baptized last year.

## **BAPTISM OF SIS. MARIA PEREZ GARCIA**

Sis. Cinthya faced a difficult and sad experience last year in the passing of an interested friend, who was ready for baptism. She and other ecclesial members took comfort in knowing that her salvation rests in the hands of our loving Heavenly Father.

We had a sad chapter here with Eva, who was prepared for baptism and ready with a great commitment to God, but physically her family wouldn't let her get baptized as she was bedridden with cancer and on oxygen. But God knows the hearts of all, and we encouraged her to

do her baptism between her and God. We had a lovely year of studies and fellowship with her in the Word, but she passed away before she could actively participate in the ecclesia.

Sis. Cinthya shared her views about the opportunity for the Truth in Santa Cruz el Grande.

That we are in a small town and there is not the motivation to study the scriptures to know the truth. This disappoints me because we try to

carry the word where we can and send flyers into the neighboring towns, but we know that God does the work. But there is an open door and a light. Unfortunately, the people here are very engrained in Catholicism. However, there are people who look and think and ask, is it true? This is remarkably like how I began my search. That gets me excited as there are some that may yet be saved. We have here Lupe and Gera and my mom already in this small town and we are hopeful many more will respond.

Being baptized I feel covered by God and the love of Christ. I have a great hope of salvation. I struggle daily to be what I need to be. I am human and I carry all that. I ask God for more faith to continue forward. I make mistakes, but I have Christ and every Sunday we are in his presence and I come and bring all I carry before Christ and



Bro. Dennis Paggi, of the Verdugo Hills, CA Ecclesia, leads a Study Day at Jalisco Del Sur

submit before him. I feel good. Before, death terrified me, now I say, well Lord, it is your will.

Inside the Santa Cruz el Grande rented hall Bro. Dennis Paggi, Verdugo Hills, is leading a study weekend.

Sis. Cinthya expresses her thankfulness for the brothers and sisters in Mexico that work so hard to promote the Truth. Bro. Manuel was the one who first exposed her to the Truth. Bro. Gabriel and Sis. Cynthia patiently led her through classes leading to baptism.

Bro. Victorino Ramirez has commuted from Guadalajara to provide classes regularly and participate in the Sunday memorial services.

As we stand back and look at how the Gospel was brought to our sister, we admire the hand of our Lord and the angels. May the Lord continue to touch lives in Jalisco and throughout Mexico in these Last Days.

David Lloyd,  
Dave Jennings  
CBMA Mexico Linkmen

*“Being baptized I feel covered by God and the love of Christ. I have a great hope of salvation. I struggle daily to be what I need to be. I am human and I carry all that. I ask God for more faith to continue forward. I make mistakes, but I have Christ...”*

PREACHING AND TEACHING

# SERVING THE DALLAS ECCLESIA

## DOMESTIC MISSION WORK

The beginning of 2020 marked a momentous, dare I say historic, moment for the Dallas ecclesia; we were now meeting at a reserved room in a centralized Recreation Center. For the first time, the ecclesia had a consistent place to meet and gather. All the brethren were excited as we met for Sunday school, with the children being in a separate room, and then had

memorial meeting afterward. We had interested friends join us, as planning became easier and more organized.

Robert and I continued to advertise and plan for future events such as Bible seminars, Sister tea parties, youth gatherings, Bible study and board game nights, ecclesial picnics, and the annual Dallas study weekend. Though we do not always understand it, God's will is supreme. COVID-19 struck the world,



*Bro. Robert Evans leading online Bible Classes*



Pre-COVID Game Night!

changing all our plans. We rejoice in our trials and tribulations, knowing God is working in our lives to help us be better prepared for His son's return. Zooming in on the work being done during this time, we felt helpless. So much got canceled and we prayed for the safety of all. Slowly, we learned to cope and help the ecclesia in new and different ways.

Robert hosted online webinars where we had people in and outside of Dallas join to learn more about God's word. I hosted sisters' reading discussion on Tuesdays and Thursdays where we came together to read God's word and discuss our thoughts on the readings as well as get to know one another better. The ecclesia hosted meeting and Bible class online with more people than ever before joining us. We also decided to host our annual study weekend online. On Memorial Day weekend we had close to 100 brothers and sisters, young people, and interested friends join us as we studied Nahum with Brother Dennis Bevans as the speaker.

We have now left the Dallas ecclesia to live in the Houston area and attend the

North Houston Ecclesia, with the hope that we have made an impact and have pleased our Heavenly Father. Robert and I have benefited much from our experience. We have grown in our walk to the Kingdom with a strengthened and solidified knowledge of the importance of being with brothers and sisters, helping the ecclesia, working together, and above all: loving one another. We have been irrevocably changed and are so grateful.

We thank the members of the Dallas ecclesia as well as the CBMA for this opportunity.

*Bro. Robert and Sis. Tabby Evans  
(Domestic Missionary Couple)  
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,  
CBMA/C Publicity*

**Editor's Note:**  
Bro. Robert and Sis. Tabby have recently announced they are expecting their first child in January 2021, Lord Willing. May God bless them and their growing family.

# THE BAPTISM OF TOM DAVIS

**ON** Thursday, May 7, a student of [thisisyourbible.com](http://thisisyourbible.com), Tom Davis, was baptized into Christ and became a member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia.

Behind that flat statement of fact lie some unusual arrangements. You see, Tom lives 2,100 miles or 3,300 kilometers from our meeting place in Kitchener, Ontario. His home is in Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia, a spectacularly beautiful town located in the South-East corner of British Columbia, on Columbia Lake. The nearest Ecclesia is at least a 4-hour drive away. In any case, due to the present necessity to “socially isolate,” it would have been just as complicated to have arranged a baptism at that Ecclesia. Tom eventually plans to relocate to be near an Ecclesia, but he is not sure yet just which one. Until that decision is made, we in the Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia, are very happy to have him as a member.

Tom was introduced to the Truth through a providential encounter with Sister Arina Legay from the Victoria Ecclesia, while they were both visiting in Vancouver. On February 7 of this year, he registered on [thisisyourbible.com](http://thisisyourbible.com) and, after having read some of our literature and working through much of the Exploring the Bible course on the website, he let me know that he felt ready for baptism.

I did some initial preparatory work with him and determined he was indeed ready. After an hour and a half interview by phone, a date was set for his baptism, Thursday, May 7. Around 20 members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia and visitors signed-in to the App, GoToMeeting, at 4 pm (2 pm for Tom whose corner of B.C. is in the Mountain Time Zone) to witness Tom’s baptism.

Thankfully, Tom’s bathtub was able to accommodate him. (It is one of those tubs that comes with its own “Swim at

your own risk” sign!) Otherwise, we might have had to figure out a Wi-Fi connection on the shores of Columbia Lake, (all the hot springs facilities being closed) near Tom’s home and risk an almost certain case of hypothermia! The baptism went well, and we bade each other farewell until Sunday’s “Welcoming into Fellowship” and Tom’s first partaking of the bread and wine in memory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (See the screenshot of Sunday’s meeting just before its start. Tom is the one circled in the center of the picture.) On Sunday, May 10, we welcomed Tom into Fellowship with his brothers and sisters in the Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia and, indeed, with our worldwide family in Christ. Again, we used

the GoToMeeting App, with close to thirty “present.” including visitors from Toronto and B.C. Given the circumstances, it was a wonderful meeting and it was a privilege and a blessed encouragement for all concerned!

Even under the circumstances of our physical separation, the Christadelphian habit of post-meeting conversation asserted itself. We stayed online chatting for some time, wishing Tom our Heavenly Father’s rich blessing in his new life. Brother Tom, “Welcome to the family!”

*Written by Mike LeDuke,  
Submitted by Jan Berneau,  
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



*Welcoming Brother Tom Davis into Fellowship in a Virtual Meeting*



## Our Community

# NEWS & UPDATES

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### AUSTIN/LEANDER, TX

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The Austin-Leander Fall Gathering at HEB Camp is now going to be a virtual event, Lord willing. Bro. Dennis Paggi is scheduled to lead classes on the topic, “The Miracles, Wonders and Signs of Jesus the Christ”. Please contact the undersigned to get secure login information for the event.

We received a note from Haleigh Harper and Bryan Camarillo regarding their wedding plans for July 12, 2020. Due to current circumstances, they streamed the wedding live for people to attend virtually. Congratulations to the happy couple!

TANYA SANDERS gave a good confession of her faith and was baptized into the saving name of Jesus on July 12, 2020. Many were able to participate over Zoom. We are thankful for our new sister.

*Dennis Bevans*

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### CAMBRIDGE, ON

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BETHANY LAWRENCE was baptized May 6, 2020. The angels in heaven rejoiced, and they continue to rejoice as we welcome DANIELLA RIVARD from the as our new sister in Christ as well.

*Caleb Lawrence*

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### COLLINGWOOD, ON

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The household of faith was blessed with a new sister in Christ when KYLA ABEL from the Collingwood, ON Ecclesia, daughter of Joe and Kate Abel, recently gave a good confession of her faith and was baptized at her home on April 25, 2020. More than one hundred individuals and families attended via Zoom for the occasion!

*Perry Braux*

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### CRANSTON, RI

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It is with great joy, that we share the wonderful news that MEGHAN DINEEN has given a good confession of her faith in the things concerning

the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Her baptism was held via Zoom on Sunday, May 31, 2020.

Our sister, Debbie Ferraiolo, fell asleep in Christ, June 12, 2020, in hospice at Middlesex Hospital after a long battle with liver cancer. You may have known her as Debbie Celone or Debbie Bilello.

On Sunday, February 16, 2020, we gathered for a lecture after a potluck. Bro. James Dillingham gave an address on, “Conscientious Objection”. Amidst this health crisis, isolation, and uncertainty, we have wonderful news from Meriden. YVONNE BRUTON, sister of Sis. Kathy Lamphere has been studying since January and has requested to be baptized. She gave a good confession of her faith by phone interview, and there was a tiny service at our hall with only 5 in attendance for her baptism. May our heavenly Father bless her on her walk to the kingdom.

*Jeff Wallace*

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### **GRANITE STATE, NH**

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It is with deep sadness that we are reporting the falling asleep of our Bro. Roger DiZefalo. Bro. Roger was a consistently faithful servant of our Father, the Lord Jesus, and his ecclesia in NH throughout his baptized life. He was baptized in 1980 and was an active participant in various ecclesial duties including arranging brother, treasurer, exhorter, lecturer, and so many others through the years. He was a constant attendee at mid-week Bible class, teaching in his turn and always had observations and wisdom to contribute to the benefit of all. Bro. Roger supported all ecclesial activities whenever they would occur

and whatever was going on, you could always count on him being there. It is obvious how deeply he will be missed by the Granite State Ecclesia. His faith was in his God and his Lord, ever looking forward to the fulfilling of the promises and always hopeful of a place in that blessed age to come. May the rest of our dear brother in the Lord be short for, “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake....”

*Steve Smith*

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### **KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ON**

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We are very pleased to report that under unique circumstances THOMAS ROBERT DAVIS was baptised into the saving name of the Lord Jesus on May 7, 2020. Bro. Tom lives in Fairmont Hot Springs, BC. He had been introduced to the truth by Sis. Arina Ligay who is a member of the Victoria Ecclesia. Bro. Tom went through the “thisisyourbible.com” instructional series under the guidance of Bro. Mike LeDuke (Kitchener Waterloo, ON) and following a good confession of his faith was baptised in his home. Because of the travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible for another brother and sister to be physically present. There were approximately twenty witnesses to the event who were connected together using “GoToMeeting” conference software. Our brother was received into fellowship at the Memorial service on May 10, 2020. He will be a non-resident member of our ecclesia and we pray that his journey to the kingdom will be blessed.

*Martin J. Webster*

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## MERIDEN, CT

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We rejoice with YVONNE BRUTON and LILY DEMAREST, Our new sisters in Christ! Sis. Yvonne was baptized on Saturday, April 4, 2020 and Sis. Lily was baptized on Sunday, July 5, 2020. We look forward to journeying with them to the kingdom.

We also welcome Bro. Brad and Sis. Sarah Demarest and their family to our membership in Meriden, having transferred from the Springfield, MA Ecclesia.

Thanks, to our sisters! More than 100 “kits for kids” were delivered to the Christadelphian Save the Children Fund in Canada. May their kindness make a lot of kids happy in other parts of the world! The kitbags crossed the border just in time!

*Stephen Harper*

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## MOORESTOWN, NJ

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We are happy to share that Sis. Jess Lam and Bro. Cody Houghton (Stoughton, MA) were engaged last month! Congratulations to them and their families. In the first week of May, the Baruani family moved to Kansas City. We have been glad to have them as a part of our ecclesia since they moved to Delaware from Kenya in November 2018 and will miss them! Godspeed to them in their move, and may God continue to bless them.

We extend welcome to our new brother, KESTER CHARLES. Bro. Kester gave a good confession of his faith and was immersed on June 18, 2020. We rejoice exceedingly, that another has been called out from a world of darkness and look forward to laboring in the vineyard with our new brother.

We have received a letter of transfer

from the South Ozone Park Ecclesia commending to our membership Bro. Jeron and Sis. Danielle Joseph, who recently moved to Burlington.

*Dave Cheetham*

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## POMONA, CA

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Hazel Margaret Brinkerhoff was born at 9lbs. 7oz. Congratulations to Bro. Forrest and Sis. Holly and boys.

We sorrow to hear that Sis. Joanna Alexander fell asleep in the Lord after a long battle with cancer. She will be missed by all who knew her. We extend our condolences to Bro. Robert in this time of loss.

We welcomed Sis. Sue Emmerich (Detroit Royal Oak, MI), Sis. Valerie Ifill (Ann Arbor, MI), around the table of the Lord.

*Jonathan Cooper*

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## SARASOTA, FL

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Sister Norma Bowers of the Sarasota, Florida ecclesia has fallen asleep. She now joins her husband, Brother Floyd Bowers, in waiting for the great day when those who have fallen asleep in Christ shall arise at that great day of resurrection.

The Bowers were stalwart members of this ecclesia for many years, and Norma continued with her faithful attendance for a number of years after Floyd's falling asleep in Christ. Our sympathy goes to Norma's son and daughter.

*James Wilkinson*

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## SIMI HILLS, CA

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We were happy to baptize LIZA MUKHAMEDYAROV during the lockdown. Her baptism was live streamed to the ecclesia before our normal Sunday Memorial Service. We are also happy to welcome Bro. Rinat

Mukhamedyarov as he transfers to our ecclesia from Montenegro. We celebrate with Bro. Rinat and Sis. Liza on their marriage.

*Gordon Hensley*

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## TORONTO WEST, ON

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It is with great joy that we announce the baptisms of a number of our young people:

RYAN CARRICK, son of Reuben and Wendy, on May 16, 2020; AALIYAH PRASHAD, granddaughter of Lennox and Sinetta, on May 17, 2020; and GREG BROWN, son of Roger and Kim, on May 22, 2020. We pray that our walk toward God's kingdom together will be mutually beneficial.

We commend by transfer to the Hamilton Book Road Ecclesia, Bro. Wayne and Sis. Libby Campbell.

We thank Bre. Alex Browning (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON), James Willey (Mississauga West, ON), and Lee Elliott (Cambridge, ON) for their "virtual" words of exhortation.

We continue to stream our Memorial services, lectures and Bible classes to our members as well as those in isolation, especially the ecclesias in Larissa, Greece and Montreal, Quebec, and many others in North America. Please contact the undersigned for the link and note our Memorial service begins at 10:00 am during July and August. All our past services are

recorded and can be viewed on our website at: [www.24langside.com](http://www.24langside.com).

*Brian Carrick*

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## VERDUGO HILLS, CA

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Sis. Dorothy Collister fell, lost consciousness, and was taken to the hospital when she and her husband, Bill, were at exercise class. Unfortunately she then passed away. We will all miss her dearly. Please pray for Bill and the rest of her family.

SADIE ABEL gave a good confession of her faith and was baptized on Tuesday, July 7, 2020, in front of a small group of friends and family. The baptism was watched by many over Facebook, and we are thankful to God for our new sister.

*Jeff Ramirez*

The **Vancouver Ecclesia Fraternal Gathering** will be held online October 10-11, 2020. The Saturday classes will be held at 1:30 pm and 3:00 pm. The Sunday classes will be held at 9:30 am with Memorial Meeting beginning at 11:00 am, all Pacific time. Our speaker will be Bro. Dafydd Jenkins, and the topic will be, **"The Stone"**. Contact Bro. Phil Snobelen by email at: [philsnobelen@shaw.ca](mailto:philsnobelen@shaw.ca) to receive the link for GoToMeeting if you would like to attend.

Please send in news and notices by the 1st 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.

# Thoughts on the Way

## Little Ones

*“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.” (Mark 10:13-16).*

This picture of Jesus blessing the little children expresses so much about this man from Nazareth, more perhaps than we have appreciated. Everyone who has hugged a small child and made funny faces and funnier sounds will understand. There is an abiding humanity, and humility, in this man we know as the Son of God.

When children are blessed, they are happy. The little ones can feel love, along with warmth, security and belonging. There is no doubt that those little ones and their parents left Jesus’ presence with a very real sense that it had been good to be with him. They trusted that his voice, his touch,

his attention, and his prayers could only benefit them beyond anything they could do for themselves. Jesus had given them a gift to cherish for a lifetime: he had drawn them, adult and child alike, to himself, and he had made them feel blessed and happy.

Children are a blessing to their parents (Psa 127:3-5; 128:3,4). They are welcomed into the family with rejoicing.

Isn’t that also how we should receive all the children of God — as our heavenly Father’s gifts to us?

*“There will be...rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents...” (Luke 15:7).*

John, the Apostle wrote:

*“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.” (1 John 5:1).*

We profess to love Jesus, the Son of our heavenly Father. But do we love the “little ones,” the other children of our Father? Or do we judge them as not quite up to our standards, morally or intellectually? Do we see them as unworthy of our fellowship? Have we forgotten that our ecclesia is not an

**“WHOSOEVER SHALL OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES THAT BELIEVE IN ME, IT IS BETTER FOR HIM THAT A MILLSTONE WERE HANGED ABOUT HIS NECK, AND HE WERE CAST INTO THE SEA.”**

exclusive society, in which membership is regulated by us, and restricted only to the very best candidates? In fact, “our” ecclesia is not “our” ecclesia at all! Instead, the ecclesia is a family, the family of God, who is the Father of us all.

Jesus values the “little ones” and not just the little ones who are very young. In Matt 10:42, he refers to certain “little ones” as his “disciples”—that is, grown-up followers of Christ—and says that anyone who gives them even a cup of cold water will not lose his reward. In three separate Gospels, he threatens those who offend “one of these little ones” or cause any one of them to stumble into sin (Matt 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2). And in Matthew 18, he says,

*“See that you do not look down on [despise: KJV; scorn or show contempt toward] one of these little ones. For I tell you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” (Matt 18:10).*

Did his disciples come to understand this? As they followed their Master through several years of preaching and healing, they observed many such “little ones” who he came to cherish. Those who the Pharisees called sinners...did some of them become our Lord’s “little ones?” Was the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4) just another bothersome Gentile, or a “little one” who belonged to Jesus? Was the man who was born blind (John 9) a useless beggar or one of Jesus’ “little ones”? Did the woman detained as an adulteress (John 8) go on to become one of his “little ones” also?

Even at the end of Jesus’ ministry, his circle of disciples does not seem to have absorbed this lesson. In the Upper Room, they began to argue among themselves about which of them would be the greatest in God’s kingdom. Once again Jesus had to rebuke them:

*“The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.” (Luke 22:26).*

And he showed exactly what he meant by assuming the role of the lowest servant and washing his disciples’ feet. (John 13:3-5).

Evidently, Jesus notices all the “little ones”—all the “sinners,” the less respected, the less educated, the common, the unclean, the “poor” in their “shabby clothes” (James 2:2), and those who the better sort might look down upon, for whatever reason. He sees them as his special concern, and he is fiercely protective of them. He is also determined that, if they so choose, they will be welcomed into God’s own family, whether the rest of us like it or not.

*“Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” (Mark 9:42).*

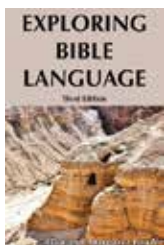
These are Jesus’ words, not mine or anyone else’s.

It is a frightful warning we ignore at our peril.

*George Booker  
(Austin Leander, TX)*

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