

TIDINGS

Volume 88, Number 4, April, 2025

ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH

Ecclesias have an essential
role in helping to build faith.

Building faith in the
Christadelphian community.

TIDINGS

Volume 88, Number 4 / April, 2025



EDITORIAL

According To Your Faith, Dave Jennings 2

LIFE APPLICATION

The Hebrew Word NASA' and Forgiveness, Jessica Miller 9

EXHORTATION AND CONSOLATION

Reflections From My Battle With Cancer, Glenn de Caussin 14

Jealousy and How to Overcome It, Robert Prins 20

SPECIAL SECTION: PROPHECY

The History Between the Testaments, Jason Hensley 22

SPECIAL SECTION: MOTHERS IN ISRAEL

Maternal Moses, Nancy Brinkerhoff 26

BIBLE STUDIES

Hidden Treasures in the Titles of the Psalms, Leen Ritmeyer 32

David's Mother, Paul Wade 42

FIRST PRINCIPLES

Heaven and Earth, Richard Morgan 46

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsinkable Faith and **In My Life I Love You More** 51

PREACHING AND TEACHING

Personal Witnessing in the Philippines, Michael Alesna 52

Meal-A-Day Nicaragua Project, Hannah Tunnell 58

St. Lucia Visit, Martin and Lois Webster 61

Wilderness Conversations, Stephen Dodson 64

THOUGHTS ON THE WAY

What is the Bible All About?, George Booker 66

E D I T O R I A L

ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH

ECCLESIAS HAVE AN
ESSENTIAL ROLE IN HELPING TO
BUILD FAITH.

THE measure of our faith is important to God. Faith determines how He chooses to work through us and the limits by which He will manifest Himself. God wants us to increase our faith, both for His glory and so that we might bear fruit. We are to “*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*” (Hebrews 10:22). Jesus and the angels are working with us to help our faith flourish, not to barely meet the requirements of day-to-day life. He wants us to experience true joy and shine brightly as lights in this world. Faith growth requires our attentiveness and determination. Faith must not be static. Its increase is essential for the man and woman of God. Our faith is the basis of our justification (Romans 3:28). It gives us confidence in the judgment of our Lord (1 John 2:28).

But what does a life of full faith look like? What do earnest prayer and dedication to God mean? How does a sincere life of faith affect our decisions and priorities? Is it visible?

The Lord Jesus Christ acknowledged faith when he saw it. He marveled when he saw the faith of the centurion (Matthew 8:10). Those infirm and with great faith were told, “*Thy faith hath made thee whole.*” (Matthew 9:22). Later, the charismatic gifts in the first-century ecclesias were distributed by God’s view of one’s faith (Romans 12:3). When the gift of prophecy was given, believers were encouraged to “*speak out with as much faith as God has given you.*” (v. 6 NLT). Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that he longed to see their faces and to “*supply what is lacking in your faith.*” (1 Thessalonians 3:10 ESV). Paul celebrated the faith

of the Thessalonians because of their “*work of faith.*” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). To the Colossians, he remarked that he had “*heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.*” (Colossians 1:4). To Timothy, Paul wrote of the “*unfeigned faith*” that was in his immediate family, and in many of the members in Ephesus. (2 Timothy 1:5).

We can witness faith, and it is what distinguishes us as a spiritual creation in Christ. The disciples, when being exhorted on the Lord’s standard for forgiveness, declared, “*Lord, Increase our faith.*” (Luke 17:5). Jesus encouraged his disciples to know that if they just had just a small portion of faith, like the mustard seed, their faith had the enormous potential to grow to “*become greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.*” (Mark 4:32). Even if our faith is small, the husbandman will prune and purge the vine so that we can bear more fruit (John 15:1-7).

Unbelief is the enemy of faith. This situation happens when our confidence is in our own sufficiency, and we reject the sovereignty of God. The parable of the Sower described the seed that fell on stony ground as germinating but then withering away under trial because there was no root. Since the beginning, men and women have struggled to trust God when there was no visible way to resolve their fears. Our Lord wants to nurture strong roots in us that not only survive the trials of life but allow us to bear much fruit.

Sometimes, we speak of our doctrinal beliefs as being our “faith.” Certainly,

these beliefs make up the platform of our faith. These are the doctrines we have embraced after study and prayer. They clarify how the Lord works in the world and our personal lives. But having an intellectual knowledge of these doctrines, as vital as they are, never saved anyone. Belief demands faith. Fundamentally, faith is about an internal belief and trust in God rather than in ourselves. This environment is where all faith can grow.

Faith Defined

Hebrews 11 defines faith for us. “*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith growth is built on this surety. It gives believers a perspective that otherwise could never be discerned by the carnal mind. Our perspective of life today is different because of our faith. Our vision for the future is shaped around

When we reformat the verse, taking the negatives out, what emerges is a very compelling and helpful message for the disciples' lives.

**But without faith,
it is impossible to please him.**

We may all wonder from time to time if we are bringing any pleasure to our God. We need to be cautious so that we don't create false, legalistic religious measures to help us feel that we are giving Him honor. At the end of the day, what pleases our God is true, unfeigned faith, being people who fundamentally believe and trust Him. While it may be difficult to examine our hearts accurately, our God correctly assesses our faith. He knows exactly where our faith is strong, as well as the areas of weakness. Because of this, we can be assured He is correcting us by providing trials to strengthen our faith. (Hebrews 12:5-10). He does

Belief demands faith. Fundamentally, faith is about an internal belief and trust in God rather than in ourselves. This environment is where all faith can grow.

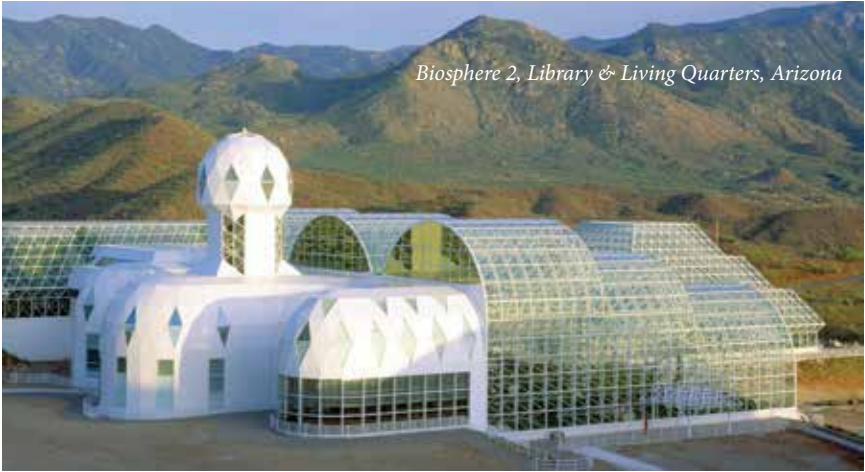
our faith. Hebrews 11 is all about men and women who were convinced, who saw beyond the present, and whose focus was on the resurrection and the future glories in Christ.

Years ago, a mentor in the truth shared with me a valuable way to look at faith. Hebrews 11:6 is a popular verse because it speaks of how a lack of faith limits us. However, it is written in a negative sentence format, effectively conveying an important message. Without faith, we cannot please Him.

this for our thinking to be “exercised,” bringing about the “*peaceable fruit of righteousness.*” (v. 11). God is working intimately through His Son to help us build faith.

How is Faith Grown?

One's faith is manifested by behavior. Our behavior is the window to view the authenticity of our beliefs. When we choose to love in the face of conflict and distress, this is a visible sign that our faith is governing our actions. Of course, the opposite is true. We feel



great sadness as we examine ourselves and see that our behavior does not demonstrate the faith we aspire to. Yet this is what the Lord wants for us. He wants us to come face to face with our need to increase our faith to rebuild our belief. These moments of disappointment become the seedbed for growth, the roots that sustain.

Lessons From Science

There's a fascinating case study about the need for adversity and trial in nature. The Biosphere 2 was constructed between 1987 and 1991. It was a domed 3.2-acre closed environment in the Arizona desert. Originally, Biosphere 2 was meant to demonstrate the viability of closed ecological systems to support and maintain human life in outer space as a substitute for Earth's biosphere.¹ The Biosphere 2 dome had seven self-sustaining biomes, ranging from rainforest to wetlands to desert. Eight scientists lived in the dome for two years, followed by a second mission for eight months. Much was learned about

sustaining life in such a controlled environment. Some plants thrived and grew faster than in a normal environment. But they noticed a very interesting phenomenon about the growth of trees.

They found that these trees wouldn't completely mature. Before they could, they used to collapse. Later it was found that this was caused by the lack of wind in the biosphere. And it turns out wind plays a major role in a tree's life. The presence of wind makes a tree stronger; it is thus able to mature and not fall down due to its own weight.²

Adversity and trials are essential for trees to develop roots that secure and sustain life. Without opposing forces, trees grow but ultimately fall. I am sure you can see the implied lesson about our faith. Untested belief, where opposition is either avoided or not encountered, doesn't acquire a robust root system. This example reminds us of the man who built a house, "digged deep," and laid the foundation on a rock. The house was not shaken

when the flood and stream beat on it. (Luke 6:48). This is why building faith demands a willingness to be exposed to trials and persecutions. The fruit of these trials secures us when the storms come. Faith is not built in protective domes.

Outside the Boat

I've heard some criticize Peter for his lack of faith when he sank into the waters of the Sea of Galilee. I think this misses the point terribly. This account is a wonderful illustration of understanding what builds and limits faith. When Peter stepped out of the boat, he had literally blocked out all the sounds of the wind and the waves. Of course, they were there all along, beating on his face and the small wooden boat. But to Peter's credit, the hazards of the wind and waves were to him irrelevant. He walked on the water because he was focused completely on his Lord. Unfettered, unfeigned faith can do just that. In our weakness, we are made strong. Peter's faith failed, not by getting out of the boat (most of us would be with the eleven in the boat!), but when he took his focus off the Lord,

he started looking at the threats all around him. His thoughts went from complete trust in his Lord to "What am I doing here?" But even when Peter began to sink, the Lord was there to lift him up. Our Lord still extends his hand to us today when we find our faith insufficient. He will not permit us to sink when we are still building an incomplete faith.

Faith is almost always grown outside the boat. Outside the boat is where the uniqueness of our belief is put to the test. The workshop for our faith is the workplace, the neighborhood, the highway, and the places we interact regularly with the world. The ecclesia can be that place to a lesser degree, but it occurs in a nurturing environment surrounded by other like-minded people. It is not often where faith is built, but more likely where it is reinforced. The most powerful tests of our faith occur when we stand alone in difficult personal situations. It is built when we determine to accept wrongful accusations at the workplace, demonstrating that we fundamentally trust in God's care. Our faith is strengthened when we witness about



our Lord to unbelievers, whether they listen or not. Faith can be built while dealing with a life-threatening illness or enduring patiently through financial hardship. These are some of the trials of our faith. In each of these challenges, we, like Peter, must keep our focus on the Lord. We sink into the mire when our faith in him is distracted or wavers. We must rely on him to lift us up.

How Ecclesias Can Help

Ecclesias have an essential role in helping to build faith. In fact, the *Tidings* has a charter that is “dedicated to increasing faith of individuals and ecclesias by creating and distributing valued content on spiritual matters and thus glorifying God as a unified community.” But do exhortations, Bible classes, and articles in a magazine really build faith? I think not. They may provoke us to build faith, but words alone do not form the full picture. It requires testing and application. I may read a wonderful article about forgiveness and be inspired by it. However, unless I apply the principles to real-life situations, it is unlikely that I will build my faith. Jesus knew that for his disciples to understand their need for faith better, it was not good enough for them to sit at his feet listening to his words. He sent them out in pairs and later the seventy. There was a fundamental need for them to make the words of Jesus their own, to embrace the rejections he felt, and the wonders of faithfulness they would encounter.

Having been raised in Christadelphian Sunday Schools, I am most grateful for

the men and women who thoughtfully prepared the lessons and shared their perspectives. I remember when a teacher taught a lesson and then asked the students to put the lesson into practice. We once read about how we should prefer the needs of our brother or sister over our own. The following Sunday, we put this into practice. We sent cards to the infirm and shut-ins. We visited a local convalescent home to read the Scriptures with a wonderful sister. The Sunday School lesson was provoking, but the following activities helped me to remember this over a half-century later. We can have classes on preaching and preparedness to witness, but what really builds faith is the personal act of preaching. I remember the first time a mentor took me around the local ecclesial neighborhood to hand out invitations to a Bible talk. I was initially quite anxious. But I learned that most people cordially received the invitation. I realized that this was something I could do to serve my Lord.

God taught His people through His Word but also through their experiences. Ecclesias would be well served to encourage activities to help members and young people experience the testing of faith. A young man once told me his past church had a “development” program for their teen group. They did have classes on how to witness. But what made it real, what built faith, was when they all descended onto a local mall, witnessing to anyone who would hear and inviting them to a teen program. Ecclesias, youth groups, and Sunday Schools would all

do well to contemplate how they might encourage members to put faith into action. The question is, “How can we create opportunities for our members to practice this spiritual principle?”

Standing By

While we’ve discussed active ways to promote increased faith, there is much to say about standing and waiting, too. One of the real trials of our faith is trusting that God is in control, especially when He isn’t working on our desired schedule. It is a difficult test when we want something desperately, which we believe must be according to His will, yet it doesn’t seem to happen. I’ve been praying for years for some who have left our community and no longer wish to converse about God. It is so easy to give up. But the message, as Moses declared at the brink of the Red Sea, is to “*stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.*” (Exodus 14:13). There is great value to faith in learning to wait on God. It builds faith when we know He is in control of everything. Like Abraham, we can say, “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (Genesis 18:25). Jesus, who had faith without wavering, faced cruel abuse by committing “*himself to him that judgeth righteously.*” (1 Peter 2:23). When we wait on our God by trusting in Him, it builds faith, gives us peace, and pleases Him.

Paul’s Advice

The Apostle Paul was a man who always had zeal for God, but based his confidence on things he later described

as “*rubbish.*” (Philippians 3:8 ESV). Activity alone doesn’t build faith. Activity must be based on following the character of our Lord. So, how can we pursue faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul explains:

Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:6-9 NLT).

There we have it. Find what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. Then, make a point to put these into practice. The great consolation is that the God of peace will be with us to build strong roots to survive the storms of life.

Dave Jennings

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Biosphere-2>

² <https://awesci.com/the-role-of-wind-in-a-trees-life/>



THE HEBREW WORD NASA' AND FORGIVENESS

By Jessica Miller

WHEN you think of NASA, what comes to mind? For most, it's probably an image of a shuttle launching into space. At each launch, there's a phrase following the countdown. That phrase is, "Lift off!" The Hebrew word *nasa'* means "to lift." NASA is an acronym for National Aeronautics and Space Administration and has no connection to the word *nasa'*. However, the coincidental similarity in English makes the word's meaning easy to remember.

Nasa' is most commonly translated as "lift" or "bear." In Exodus 19:14, God tells the Israelites, "I carried you on

eagles' wings."¹ Cain laments that his punishment is greater than he can bear (Genesis 4:13). The scapegoat bore the iniquities of the Israelites (Leviticus 16:22). This is the general sense of *nasa'* in almost all of its 600+ uses. However, in sixteen instances, *nasa'* is translated as "forgive" or some variation. This is a unique word. The other primary Hebrew word translated as "forgive" (*salah*) is only used of God's forgiveness, never of one person forgiving another. But *nasa'* is used for both God's forgiveness and the forgiveness we offer each other. The convergence of the two usages of this

word, the parallels between forgiving and lifting, is where we find beautiful imagery and practical application for our interactions with one another.

Only God can offer the forgiveness that directly leads to salvation. Humans can't do that for one another, no matter how much we may want to in some cases. The forgiveness God asks and expects us to offer is the lifting of a burden off the shoulders of the one who has wronged us. We do this in our treatment of that person, by how we speak of them, and in our thoughts toward them. We can also symbolically lift the sin of another into the heavenly realm for God to deal with and let go of our right to collect on that debt. We can't wipe away sin, but we can lift the burden. We see examples of this type of forgiveness in the lives of Joseph and David.

Joseph

Joseph's brothers mocked him, threw him in a pit, and sold him into slavery. By the time Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers years later, he had evidently done the hard work of forgiveness. The following phrases in Genesis 45 demonstrate this forgiveness's appearance in practice.

- *Please come closer to me.* (v. 4).
- *Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves.* (v. 5).
- *God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.* (v. 7).
- *Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God.* (v. 8).
- *You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and*

your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. (v. 10).

- *There I will also provide for you.* (v. 11).

Joseph didn't pretend the sin hadn't happened. He said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt." (v. 4). Joseph acknowledged the sin while displaying kindness. He seemed to be mindful of the guilt and shame his brothers would've been feeling all those years, especially now when confronted with their sin. He assured them there was a purpose for it all. He did not want them to feel grief or anger at themselves despite the fact they permanently altered his life out of envy and spite.

When their father died, Joseph's brothers wondered if he would finally repay them for their sins. There is palpable compassion in Joseph's response to them. He wept and then said,

Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (Genesis 50:19-21).

Joseph assured his brothers his forgiveness was genuine and not pretense while his father was alive. We might have wanted our betrayers to feel a little fear and uncertainty if it were us. But that wasn't the case with Joseph.

Again, Joseph did not deny their evil intent but focused on God's sovereignty. This is a powerful example of how

to mentally reframe betrayal in our own lives. Justification of sin is neither helpful nor appropriate, but seeing God's hand at work during the trial can bring peace and trust that cannot come if we are solely focused on evil.

This lesson is reiterated in Romans 8:28: *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

How quickly Joseph's brothers' minds returned to their sin! And how often do we hang on to our sins, even when God has forgiven us?

If we truly believe our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), we will feel this lifting, this *nasa'*, in our lives and extend it to others.

DAVID

The word *nasa'* was used when Abigail asked David not to destroy her household because of her husband's actions, to lift the consequences of Nabal's folly away from them (1 Samuel 25:28). David responded by not killing Nabal, and eventually marrying Abigail after Nabal's death at God's hand. Let's look at some other examples in David's life that show in detail how he practiced forgiveness, specifically with Saul.

Try to pick out which word in the following passage comes from the word *nasa'*.

Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. (1 Samuel 16:21).

The word for “armor bearer” is *nasa'*. David was a literal lifter of Saul's armor. We also see a symbolic lifting in their relationship. David lifted Saul's mood by playing his harp when he had an evil spirit (1 Samuel 16:23). He also forgave him when he sinned against him.

Saul tried to kill David several times, and David eventually went on the run. While hiding in a cave, he wrote several psalms, including Psalm 142.

I cry aloud with my voice to the Lord; I make supplication with my voice to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before Him... I said, “You are my refuge... Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low; Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.” (Psalm 142:1, 5-6).

Despite his fear and sorrow, David turned to God for comfort instead of dwelling on anger and bitterness. He lifted the sin up to God, asking for the burden to be taken off him.

Twice during this time, David had the opportunity to kill Saul but refrained. When David found Saul sleeping and cut off the hem of his garment, he immediately regretted it. 1 Samuel 24 highlights David's forgiving attitude toward Saul.

So he said to his men, “Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed.” ...Now afterward David

How often do we hang on to our sins, even when God has forgiven us?

arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself... "Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you... For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you... May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you." (1 Samuel 24:6, 8, 10-12).

David knew he would be king someday. He could have killed Saul and plausibly claimed this was God's plan for his ascension to the throne. But David was a man who tried to walk with integrity. He showed honor in bowing to Saul, demonstrated pity, and refused to act rebelliously against him. He recognized that God would take vengeance and that it would not come from David's own hand.

Final Example

Numbers 21 tells the account of the children of Israel rebelling and being bitten by venomous serpents and God's solution. *"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.'" (v. 8).*

Jesus revisits this story with Nicodemus in John 3:14-15, saying, *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."*

The word "standard" in the first passage comes from the Hebrew word *nec*. This word is also translated as "pole," "ensign," and "banner." It means "something lifted up" and is related to the word *nasa'*. Christ was literally lifted up—first on the cross and then in exaltation. We look to him to be healed of our sins, as the Israelites looked to the bronze serpent for healing of their bites. Moses often used the word *nasa'* when asking God to forgive the people, to lift their sins off them. In Numbers, God lifted the sin away by having the people



look upon something that had been lifted—the serpent. Our sins are lifted away by looking at someone who has been lifted—Jesus. This parallel is a more beautiful and complete picture because Jesus' lifting also includes his exaltation.

When we forgive each other, we imitate Christ in a small way. Practicing forgiveness—the lifting away of sin—is a direct acknowledgment of Christ's work as he was lifted up on the cross and then sat at his Father's right hand in glory. We've been given the privilege of participating in a symbolic lifting away of sin from others, which is ultimately only possible if we are all looking to the one who has been lifted up to bear our sins away. When forgiveness is the hardest, this image and promise should provide comfort. We are forgiven (lifted) as we forgive (lifting others).

This intriguing Hebrew word, *nasa'*, shows us practical ways to demonstrate forgiveness. In some cases, forgiveness will not mean a restored relationship. We may have people in our lives with whom we need to enforce boundaries related to time and contact. This action does not negate the fact that

forgiveness can still happen. In these cases, forgiveness may take place almost entirely through lifting up prayers and elevating our thoughts and words about the person rather than in direct interaction. But often, there can be undertones of resentment even with those with whom we interact most if we have not fully enacted the forgiveness we may say and even think we have granted. When this is the case, we can take lessons from the actions and principles of forgiveness in the lives of Joseph and David. Ultimately, it is only through the lifting up of Christ that we can share in this opportunity to help lift the burden of sin off the shoulders of our brethren and those around us. We honor Christ's sacrifice when we take full advantage of this privilege and responsibility.

Jessica Miller,
Richmond Chapel
Unamended Ecclesia, VA

¹ Scriptural citations are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

Editor's Note: A similar concept to nasa' continues in the New Testament. The Greek word used often for forgiveness is aphiemai, which is translated as "sending away, yielding up." It carries the idea of turning over the offenses against us to our Lord so that we may lift up and reflect the Lord Jesus Christ to those who offend us. It was what Jesus did when he was reviled and threatened. "He committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Peter 2:23).

REFLECTIONS FROM MY BATTLE WITH CANCER

By telling people about your own journey and always asking for prayers, people know what is going wrong and that you would appreciate their help.

By Glenn de Caussin



IN 2018, my friend Bro. Chris Stickney and I traveled to China for a week-long fun vacation. We were heading to the airport at the end of the trip, and I stumbled down some stairs, twisting my ankle. I didn't mention anything to my wife, Sis. Jennifer, about my fall, because I thought I could walk it off and didn't want to worry her. When we got home, my swollen ankle was not improving, and she was concerned. So, she made me go to my general practitioner to have it examined. It just so happened I turned fifty years old that year, so my doctor also ordered me to do a stool test, which is standard practice for that age milestone. The stool test ended up being abnormal, which I also didn't tell Jennifer about, but the next step was a colonoscopy. The day after the colonoscopy, the tests revealed that there was a large dark tumor. The following day, I got the news of having cancer.

Truth be told, this began a series of hundreds of doctor visits, hospital stays, and cancer treatments. It has not been a short journey, nor has it been simple. The odd thing, and possibly the most challenging part of it all, is that most of it has been a "silent" illness. Most of the time, I felt normal. I also looked normal once I was past the current treatment. So, I felt guilty for getting all the prayers for something where people couldn't even see that I was very ill. I didn't want others praying for me when there were some who were in greater need of prayers.

At the start, before any treatment, my surgeon discussed my cancer, which was either Stage 2 or 3, and its typical survivability, which was around 75%. That didn't sound too bad—I like to be

optimistic. But he also said something that stuck with us and turned out to be so true. Cancer treatment is "A marathon, not a sprint." It was true because there was something new, something worse to tackle at each point. The biggest turn was during my first colon surgery, where they found the cancer had spread to my liver. They later discovered it had also spread to both of my lungs. At this point, it is Stage 4 cancer, and my survivability went down, but not my determination. Over the past five years, I have had three rounds of chemo, three rounds of radiation, four different resection surgeries, a handful of other minor surgeries, implants, near liver failure, and stents inserted into my liver to handle all the complications from having all these cancer treatments. This regimen resulted in multiple days in the hospital. Indeed, we were running a marathon.

I must emphasize the incredible support Jennifer has provided. She has never failed me, standing by my side as my advocate with medical professionals and keeping both our family and the ecclesial community informed about my condition. Without her insisting, I probably would not have gone to the doctor for my ankle. I probably would not have asked to announce my condition to the ecclesia, which led to so many prayers on my behalf. Honestly, I would probably be dead now and most likely would not have positively changed spiritually either.

I truly believe, and it might sound odd to hear this, that cancer was definitely one of the best things that have happened to me. I don't recommend it, of course, but for me, there has

been so much spiritual reflection and quality time spent with my family. If I were given a choice not to have cancer, I would struggle with that, as I would be afraid I would lose the positive experiences that come with the disease. That said, the journey through cancer treatments has been overwhelming, intense, and surreal at times. It is hard to capture the emotional and physical challenges experienced. Asking, receiving, and accepting that others are praying for you is a very powerful and humbling experience. I am eternally grateful for the prayers, cards, and support from my family and the ecclesial community. It has been a great strength for my hope—not just my hope for surviving cancer but of ultimately being in God’s Kingdom by His grace.

Another aspect of being ill is the impact on your own family. Memories still haunt me as I told my parents I had cancer and how it distressed them that one of their children might die before them. When I told my sister, her exclamation was to wail and repeat, “No!” It was a wake-up call to know how serious my illness could be.

Since then, constant prayers and love were mixed with recurring bad news as the prognosis changed. It was an emotional roller coaster. Just thinking about it makes my heart sink and eyes well with tears. These feelings associated with the illness and how it affects those around me led me to understand why “*Jesus wept.*” in John

11:35. I was writing an exhortation, and John 11 spoke to me because of the health situation I was going through. So many in the ecclesia have told me they have prayed that God might heal my cancer. Certainly, my family and I have prayed too. But I realized this illness wasn’t just impacting me, for we know many are suffering and struggling with their faith. We all want our loved ones saved and healed. So, the illness tends to affect many others beyond the sick person. Sometimes, the loved ones suffer more than the sick person does.

Asking, receiving,
and accepting
that others are
praying for you is
a very powerful
and humbling
experience.

From my point of view, what I see in John 11 is more than a miracle. It includes a group of many people. It is Jesus, his Father, Jesus’ friends, a family of two sisters and a brother, his disciples, a community circling

around Mary and Martha, and Lazarus, Jesus’ good friend. I pictured this story in my head and how it was similar to my life of family and friends. I felt Mary and Martha’s urgency as they called for Jesus to come and heal Lazarus. I was struck by how my family and spiritual community all were pleading for the Lord’s healing hand to touch me and save my life.

We see from the beginning of John 11 that it is the plan of God for Jesus to stay away from the village of Bethany, where Lazarus was gravely ill. It was very painful for Jesus not to be with his friend during his illness. It was painful for Jesus not to heal him, as he had done for so many strangers before. When Lazarus died, Jesus finally went

to visit his family in Bethany. As he neared the village, people came to greet Jesus. First, Martha met him, and Jesus shared that his delay was for a Godly purpose. Next, he saw Mary, who ran to him and fell at his feet. When Jesus saw Mary weeping at his feet, he was moved. Jesus saw the pain of the situation, and it finally overwhelmed him. He saw Mary's anguish and helplessness in wanting Jesus to be there to heal her brother. Despite Jesus knowing that he needed to show the glory of God, Jesus broke down and wept. The pain of Jesus seeing his family and friends so sad was more overwhelming. This empathy for those in pain is what I now feel sometimes, and I, too, just weep.

Even though I have been through so much over the years, I still can't resolve the question of why I am still here. When you are in a large community, there will be plenty of others that also have cancer. There will be survivors like you, coupled with others who aren't. These experiences make you ask: "Why should I be saved?" Apparently, this reaction is called "survivor's guilt," and it is sometimes hard to take.

A couple of weeks ago, I gave an exhortation at our ecclesia. As I prepared for the exhortation, I came to an epiphany about why I was saved. The circumstances of my exhortation were unusual. I wasn't scheduled to speak, but a series of events led me to be requested to speak by another brother who had a conflict. In Sunday School class the week before, we were studying Philippians 2. The class leader, Bro. Jeff Gelineau, presented a quote from the movie *Saving Private Ryan*,

where Private Ryan, much later in life, questioned the worth of his being saved at the expense of so many lives of the men who were sent to save him. This thought made me question why I have been saved and what I will do with this gift. This quote was reinforced by the recent passing of Sis. Doreen Green. Her story was an inspiration, as she did so much for others across the world. She was always looking far ahead to the race to the Kingdom and her resurrection. The key point of my exhortation was to be glad and thankful for all the grace of God that He provides. He saves us all. We just need to respond to God's love and grace.

I have been continuing my physical marathon with regular blood tests, MRI, and CT scans every three months as they search for any new growth. It has been almost seven years since my initial diagnosis. My final lung resection was almost two years ago, which brought about the start of my cancer remission. Just a week ago, I went to have my quarterly medical body scans. Like every visit, I enter with anxiety and hopefulness that it will go well and that the cancer will still be in remission. It was more stressful this time because if the scans showed no tumors, it would mark two years in remission. Two years of remission is considered a milestone because the chances of recurrence drop dramatically going forward.

The MRI scan is always emotionally exhausting since it is almost an hour long. Technicians always ask what music you would like to listen to during the long scan. I always ask for Frank Sinatra because he is my

daughter's favorite and why she named her son Francis, my first grandson. I usually tear up while lying there, thinking about my family and journey. After the morning tests, I headed to my doctor. You get to know your doctor's personality despite the short visits with him. He is always straight-faced, rarely joking. He might sometimes hint at a smile and speak with a quiet, gentle voice. This time, his nurse joined him when he came into the room. His face betrayed him; there were no jokes, no smile, and only a somber look. He paused for a moment to tell me the results. Hiding there at the edge of the old scar tissue was a new tumor that was slowly growing. It was now about 10x8 mm. Most likely, the tumor was

top and not seeing the finish line at all. I was feeling a bit alone, thinking about having to tell Jennifer and my kids I hadn't passed the remission milestone. We have yet to announce the news to the ecclesia and again ask for prayers. We will wait to hear the plan from the lung surgeon on February 27th. I would appreciate any prayers for me; they mean a lot.

The news made me think of an object lesson that my brother, Bro. Rodney had given on "*Or what man is there of you, who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?*" (Matthew 7:9 NKJV). My brother had a plate of stones and one of bread, asking the child who got the stones if they liked the snack he gave them to eat. He took

I would appreciate any prayers for me; they mean a lot.

always there but was previously too small to see.

My two-year cancer remission hopes were dashed. My first thought was about my family, my ecclesia, and everyone who has prayed for me. I was concerned I had given false hope during my exhortation a couple of weeks before. I felt like I had let brothers and sisters down, and my eyes welled up. The doctor gently touched my shoulder and reassured me that this was not my fault. He encouraged me by saying he knew I had been through a lot and had been strong. The feeling of that day was like going up a steep hill, pushing to get to the top, hoping for the finish to be in sight, but getting to the

the stones back and said no one in their right mind would ever feed their hungry children stones. That lesson brought me comfort. This cancer is not my fault, and God is not inflicting me purposely with pain. It is just an illness which is tenacious. It encouraged me to keep running the race and to realize I also have a spiritual race to run in the Kingdom. It teaches me I can look forward to that spiritual hope, even if I continue to have bad news and lose hope in my flesh. I know I can always look forward to the resurrection. Paul wrote:

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our



lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
(Philippians 3:20-21 ESV).

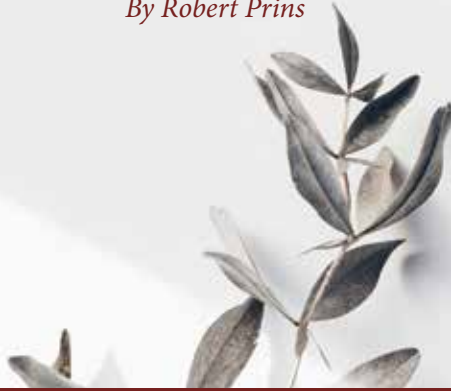
If I have any advice to pass along, it would be that prayer and cards have been a very important part of my journey. By telling people about your own journey and always asking for prayers, people know what is going wrong and that you would appreciate their help. Also, realize that the more you share, the more people might be empathic and offer suggestions. Try to be gracious and listen gently to them. Later, while alone, you can reflect on their thoughts and decide if it is worth pursuing or rejecting. I received many suggestions for cures, some of which I later tried, but some I rejected. I also tried to include my doctor in some of the “extra” things I would do as supplements, and my doctors were typically open. Communication with

your physician is important to make sure it doesn’t affect the cancer regimen that has been prescribed. Definitely listen to your doctor and follow the standard cancer regimen because researchers are constantly improving the techniques, and they do help. Since it is a marathon, be ready to keep going, and don’t lose hope. My wife has been extremely helpful to me. She is my advocate and does all the work I don’t enjoy doing, like updating others on my status. Your family and ecclesial community are rooting for you. I’ve also learned there are many people with terrible illnesses, some of whom are spiritual. You can help them in their journey, which will make your journey memorable and spiritually fulfilling.

*Glenn de Caussin,
Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA*

JEALOUSY: AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT

By Robert Prins



1 Corinthians 3 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ.

I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom

you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.

For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.

If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours,

whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours,

and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

THE problem with a sin like jealousy is that we don't go out of our way to do it. It's a sin that creeps up on us and usually catches us unaware. It's one of those sins that is so stealthy that we don't even see it in ourselves until it is really big and has rooted itself in place. It is challenging to weed out.

The other problem with jealousy is that we hate to have it pointed out to us. In fact, if someone came to tell us that we have a problem with jealousy, I could almost guarantee we would also suffer from anger at that particular moment too!

Paul says that if we harbor jealousy, we could be labeled "worldly."

You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? (1 Corinthians 3:3 NIV).

So here are five ideas for overcoming a jealous spirit:

1. Stop comparing. Comparison is a killer, no matter what way you look at it.
2. Count your blessings.
3. Be thankful for everything. Thank God for the blessings you have counted.
4. Grow a joy-filled attitude. The more joyful we are, the less jealous we can be.
5. Pray for contentment, peace, love, and God's help to overcome our negative thoughts.

*Robert Prins,
Pakuranga Ecclesia, NZ*

THE HISTORY BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

By Jason Hensley

FOR centuries, the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah represented God's chosen people on earth. Eventually, due to their reckless treatment of God, His grace, and His word, the northern kingdom was destroyed. The Assyrians, led by Shalmaneser, conquered Israel, scattered its people throughout their realm, and created what is now known as "the lost ten tribes of Israel." This development also influenced the term "Jew," a shortened form of the name "Judah." The only Israelite nation left was Judah, and thus, rather than being known as Israelites, the descendants of Jacob called themselves "Jews" after the southern kingdom.

In contrast to Israel, Judah's story is more complicated. Whereas the northern kingdom failed to have any righteous kings, Judah's worship still centered around Jerusalem, and a handful of

reformers helped to keep the people returning to God despite their constant waywardness. Eventually, however, God also destroyed the southern kingdom. As the prophet Jeremiah reported, their religion focused on the superficial: "Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'" (Jeremiah 7:4).¹ Destruction seemed impossible; how could God destroy His temple—His house?

Nevertheless, destruction came in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem. His soldiers tore down the temple, and the city was left in ruins. Throughout Jerusalem, numerous archaeological discoveries testify to this destruction—from Babylonian arrowheads to layers of ash and burned buildings. Jerusalem's fall to the Babylonians is a historical truth.



As part of this attack, Nebuchadnezzar took most of the city captive. That captivity, which had begun with Nebuchadnezzar's first attack on Jerusalem years prior, spanned seventy years, ending in 539 B.C. with Cyrus's proclamation for the Jews to go home. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi discuss the events of this period. And with that, the curtain closes on the Old Testament. But what happened after that? In fact, when the curtain opens again in the New Testament, hundreds of years have passed. Now, instead of the Persians, the Romans rule. Instead of speaking Hebrew, everyone seems to speak Aramaic and Greek. Plus, new groups of people exist. Unlike the Old Testament, which often referenced the king, the priests, and the Levites, the religious leaders are now the priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes. But who are they?

The time between the Testaments changed Judaism in major ways. Not only did the language and culture change, but many of the beliefs changed. To create a larger historical narrative and again place the story of Israel into

the greater historical context, this article will begin to examine what happened to the Jews between the Testaments. This context again aids in our discussions with friends because it demonstrates how Judaism changed from what it was initially. It thus explains some of the false beliefs that existed among the Jews throughout the New Testament. In this article, we'll examine the history between the Testaments, and in the following article, we'll see how that history changed Judaism.

The History

Alexander the Great created a vast political earthquake as he sped across the Middle East, conquering army after army, never losing a battle. Finally, the Persian Empire, led by Darius III, surrendered to him. Greek influence spread throughout the area, and Greek became the *lingua franca*.

Yet what concerns us is not necessarily Alexander the Great and his effect on Judah, which was somewhat minimal, but rather the influence of his successors. As prophesied in Daniel 8:22, after Alexander died, his kingdom was divided into four (technically, it was initially divided into five, but after his generals finished fighting each other, four still lived). Two of these generals wielded the most significant power over the Holy Land—Seleucus in the northeast and Ptolemy in the south. Jerusalem and Judah sat between these two rivals and, thus, often suffered from their battles against one another.

Eventually, a man named Antiochus IV ruled over the Seleucid empire. Just to

give a sense of his character, consider how he changed his name—“Antiochus IV” sounded too much like his father and those who had come before him. Instead, he wanted others to call him “Antiochus Epiphanes,” with “Epiphanes” meaning “illustrious” in Greek. Determining to conquer Ptolemy, he marched his troops down into Egypt. Despite his successes, the attack soured just outside of Alexandria. Livy, an ancient Roman historian, described the dramatic scene. Antiochus was confronted by Popilius, a Roman general, with orders from the Roman senate for Antiochus to cease his attack.

He was met by the Roman commissioners, to whom he gave a friendly greeting and held out his hand to Popilius. Popilius, however, placed in his hand the tablets on which was written the decree of the senate and told him first of all to read that. After reading it through he said he would call his friends into council and consider what he ought to do. Popilius, stern and imperious as ever, drew a circle round the king with the stick he was carrying and said, ‘Before you step out of that circle give me a reply to lay before the senate.’ For

a few moments he hesitated, astounded at such a peremptory order, and at last replied, ‘I will do what the senate thinks right.’ Not till then did Popilius extend his hand to the king as to a friend and ally. Antiochus evacuated Egypt at the appointed date.²

Antiochus returned home furious. On his way, he vented his anger upon Jerusalem. The apocryphal book of Maccabees chronicled his visit:

He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. He took the silver and the gold and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures that he found. (1 Maccabees 1:21–23 NRSV).

This destruction began Antiochus’s attempt to suppress Judaism. He forbade them to follow the Torah, outlawed circumcision, and ordered them to sacrifice pigs. When it came to his turn to offer these polluted sacrifices, an old priest named Mattathias refused. As one of his younger counterparts took his place, Mattathias drew his sword, killed the unfaithful priest, and began what is now known as the Maccabean revolt.

Astonishingly, the rebels defeated the Greeks. They eventually pushed the Seleucid troops out of the temple and rededicated it to God, cleansing the altar Antiochus’s sacrifices had defiled. Today, Jews remember this event during the celebration of Hanukkah, the Hebrew word for “dedication,” which maps to the “feast of dedication”



Louis-Jean-François Lagrenée,
“Popilius envoyé en ambassade auprès
d’Antiochus Epiphane pour arrêter le cours
de ses ravages en Egypte,” 1779.

referenced in the Gospel of John (John 10:22). In our modern society, Hanukkah revolves around light and the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days. No historical sources exist for this miracle. The Talmud, written approximately 700 years after the event, first connected the holiday to the miraculous oil. (Shabbat 21b:10).

With the Greeks defeated, the Jews once again possessed an independent Jewish kingdom. The Maccabees and their descendants ruled this kingdom for a few generations, although disunity and controversy plagued their family. Eventually, amid a controversy of succession, two brothers, Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II, approached the Romans and asked for help determining which of them should be the rightful ruler of Judea. Happy to intervene, Rome sent General Pompey to besiege Jerusalem and conquer the territory for Rome. As a result, neither of these Maccabean descendants received the throne, and instead, Caesar made Antipater the Idumean, a convert to Judaism and the governor of Judea.

Antipater may not be a familiar name, but you've probably heard of his son, Herod. Antipater's sense of realpolitik set up his son to advance to the governorship. Unlike his father, Herod made his mark in building. He made huge changes to the temple mount and built fortresses like Herodium and Masada. Yet perhaps he is most infamous for his attempts to destroy any opposition to his leadership—murdering multiple sons, one of his



Hanukkah

wives, and the children of Bethlehem.

Conclusion

The history between the Testaments isn't pretty. One battle follows another, and in many circumstances, those fighting each other are Jews. Ambitious and power-hungry individuals sacrifice others to get slightly ahead, and eventually, these sacrifices lead to the end of the kingdom and the enslavement of the nation to Rome. The stories show what happens when family, friends, and spiritual siblings choose to fight one another rather than work together.

Yet, on a broader level, they also set the context for the New Testament. As God wanted, this atmosphere was the world into which Jesus was born. Why then? Why that particular group in the first century, after all that the Jewish community had experienced?

That's what we'll consider next when we see the impact of this history on Judaism.

*Jason Hensley,
Associate Editor*

¹ All All Scriptural citations are taken from the English Standard Version, unless specifically noted..

² Titus Livius Patavinus, *History of Rome*, trans. Canon Roberts (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1912), 45.12.

MATERNAL MOSES

*It is up to you to be the spiritual leader in your household,
knowing that raising your children to be a part of God's family
is your **number one** priority.*

By Nancy Brinkerhoff



IT is not a new observation that a great proportion of the human Bible writers were men. And, with some notable exceptions, the main characters largely were as well. Women mostly got supporting roles, though some of these stories of leading ladies are truly beautiful and meaningful. Even the audience in many passages is assumed to be male.

Yet we also know that there is a true Author, one who is beyond gender, beyond Ancient Near Eastern culture, and beyond humanity. Both female and male were made in God's image in the beginning. Perhaps that is why, even in narratives written by, for, and about men, we can see ourselves and our struggles as women who love this true Author.

Personally, I have been surprised at the powerful insights to be gleaned from characters with whom, on the surface, I have little in common. For example, one of the truly inspiring figures for me as a mom is the very maternal Moses.

Moses... As a Mom?

Does it sound strange to think of Moses as a maternal figure? Perhaps it is. But, as a young mom surrounded by needy little people day in and day out, those endless stories of the complaining Israelites just hit differently. My kids couldn't solve their own problems because they were, of course, little kids. Moses' (adult) children were out in the desert, far outside both their

comfort zone and their ability to care for themselves. But both situations left the many turning desperately to the one with their never-ending needs. Moses was just as tired and thirsty as the people were, wasn't he? But there he was every morning, teaching them right from wrong, making sure they were properly fed, dealing with their whining, changing their diapers... OK, maybe not that last one.

Exodus 18 details Moses learning the ropes of leadership (motherhood?) and receiving some powerful advice.

Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. (Exodus 18:13).¹

How many moms—especially those with babies or toddlers—can relate to the image of being surrounded by others and their needs from morning to evening? Even now, years later, I read the verse and feel that oppressive neediness. No wonder an outside observer could see that a change was necessary.

Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people who come to you will only wear yourselves out." (Exodus 18:17).

It's pretty direct and unequivocal: You'll only wear yourself out. Many parents can likely relate to or remember this feeling of burnout, and perhaps some readers are in the midst of it right now.

How many moms—especially those with babies or toddlers—can relate to the image of being surrounded by others and their needs from morning to evening?

However, the proposed solution is both insightful and uncomfortable.

The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. *“Listen to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you.”* (Exodus 18:19). First, of course, Moses had to be willing to accept unsolicited advice and from his in-laws, of all people.

Select capable men from the people... have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you... That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. (Exodus 18:21-23).

Wait. Do you mean the solution might be that I must admit I can't handle it all alone? I may have to ask others for help. Ouch!

Of course, some of us naturally express our needs and easily ask for support. But I suspect I am not the only one who finds it extremely difficult, painful even. Instead of asking for help, we let things build up; we grow frustrated at ourselves and our families. We check out of contributing to our ecclesias; we let our marriages suffer. Truly, *“What you are doing is not good.”*

It can be agonizing and humbling to realize that *“the work is too heavy for you, you cannot handle it alone.”* And, sometimes, asking for help does turn out just as painful as we feared it would be. Sometimes, our sisters and brothers do judge our homes or our parenting. Sometimes, they come in trying to help and do it all wrong. Some of those judges Moses appointed probably didn't rule exactly as he would have on their cases. And I bet he had to

hear about it whenever that happened. Involving others means giving up some control and being vulnerable to their judgments. Sometimes, especially in the short term, it isn't really true that *“they will make your load lighter because they will share it with you.”* But maybe, just maybe, learning to ask for help and rely on others is exactly the process God wants to use as part of our growth.

Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. (Exodus 18:24).

Moses wisely recognized that trying to do it all on his own wasn't working. Not only did he have the humility to take the unsought advice, but he was also willing to risk the pitfalls of asking for help to better care for the family God gave him. This yielding is a powerful example for us as moms.

Family In Crisis

Reading Moses' stories through the eyes of a mom can open up a deep and valuable level of meaning. The previous chapter provided another compelling example of Moses' maternal care for his “children.”

The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.” (Exodus 17:8-9).

We are not told whether Moses' choice to stand on the hill instead of fighting was a command from God or his own initiative. Remember that, even forty years later, Moses had lost none of his physical vigor (Deuteronomy 34:7). But, somehow, leading the battle for his people was a task he could delegate



away. Reaching out to God on their behalf was not.

So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. (Exodus 17:10-11).

Again, we are not told whether God specifically instructed this. Did Moses know the tide of battle would turn when he lowered his praying hands? Or did he observe and draw his own conclusions? Either way, it must have been a stunning realization. His family's success was directly dependent on his continued prayers.

The lesson hardly needs to be spelled out for us as moms. But sometimes,

we underestimate just how important it can be to pray for our children. It seems so much more important to be down there fighting. But what if we saw ourselves as Moses up on the mountain? What if we prayed for our kids and their battles as if their lives depended on it? What if they do?

When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. (Exodus 17:12).

Poor Moses. Imagine the children of Israel returning from the battle that night, exhausted but exhilarated. Did any of them even notice their drained leader who made the victory possible? It is a very maternal image.

Aaron and Hur held his hands up— one on one side, one on the other— so that his hands remained steady till sunset. (Exodus 17:12).

Again, a reminder that we can't do it on our own. Even in a task like praying for our children, we need support and encouragement from others. It is worth considering who "Aaron and Hur" might be in our lives and for whom we may need to play that support role.

Maternal Failures

Even Moses' most notable failure carries a flavor familiar to us as moms. Who hasn't occasionally lost their temper at the constant complaining and childishness we are surrounded by? The story is painfully relatable.

Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses and

said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord!" (Numbers 20:2-3).

Of course, for Moses, these were fully grown adults; in fact, they were the next generation down from the children he had loved and prayed for decades earlier. But, somehow, I see it taking place in my own kitchen, in the house we lived in when our children were small.

Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. (Numbers 20:6).

They started out with the right reaction, going to God with their family's needs.



But we know where the story is going, the way some of these stories for our own families go.

So Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. (Numbers 20:9-11).

Yes, we know there are deeper levels to the narrative, that the rock represented Jesus, and that God was working in far more significant ways in Moses' life. But don't ignore the human level—the frustration, the impatience, the years of dealing with their never-ending complaints. We seldom intend to lose our temper with our families and usually feel terrible afterward. Did Moses have the same reaction?

Notice also the hints of issues we've seen earlier in Moses' life and ours as moms. "*Must we bring you water?*" Perhaps Moses here is still struggling to learn the same lessons we often do: thinking that it's all up to us, forgetting our reliance on God and others. This thought is exactly what the angel follows up with later.

But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." (Numbers 20:12).

It seems so harsh, doesn't it? As a parent, it is frightening to contemplate what the consequences of our failures could be. Yet Moses kept going. All through the rest of Numbers and Deuteronomy, he is back to the job God had given him, faithfully caring for his children.

Conclusion

We can think of other ways in which Moses sets an example for us as moms: his fears about his own inadequacy and his initial reluctance to take on the job melting away into sacrificial love. And Moses is far from the only one. This job God has given us as mothers in Israel can be as difficult and demanding as any we see recorded in the Scriptures. And so, we try to learn the lessons of Moses as a mom.

May we each learn to accept advice, as Moses had to do. May we learn to ask for help despite the problems it might bring. May we come to appreciate the power of praying for our children as they fight their battles. May we learn to rely on God rather than ourselves, as our own strength will always fail us. And may we recover from our failures with full faith in God's grace. Most importantly, we may learn to draw strength from these examples of faithful motherhood in the Bible, wherever we find them.

*Nancy Brinkerhoff,
Denver Ecclesia, CO*

1 All Scriptural citations are taken from taken from the New International Version.

HIDDEN TREASURES IN THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS

By Leen Ritmeyer

PSALMS FOR OVERCOMING

IN this study, we will examine the titles of psalms and their spiritual meaning. This beautiful book in the middle of our Bibles was the most popular scroll in Jesus's time. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, forty-one copies of the Book of Psalms were found, more than of any other Bible book. These psalms are for overcoming. We should all know what we need "to overcome." The Apostle Paul is very clear about this:

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

Paul, therefore, exhorts us to renew our mind or our spirit. He sums up this chapter with:

Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21).

The Apostle John writes:

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5).

Jesus, of course, was the first to overcome the world in himself:

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have

tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33).

Still, we need to overcome the devil, the adversary as well:

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:8-11).

Overcoming By The Power of The Holy Spirit

How did Jesus overcome the world in himself? Through death, Jesus destroyed him that has the power of death, that is, the devil. As Samson overcame the lion, so Jesus too could only overcome the power of the devil or human nature with God's help:

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of Yahweh came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. (Judges 14:5-6).

Samson overcame the adversary by the Spirit of Yahweh. We, too, need the

power of the Spirit to overcome. But, as we don't believe that we have the Holy Spirit, as evangelicals claim they have, how can we be helped by the Spirit? We are even told that we must pray in the Holy Spirit:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit! (Jude 20).

How can we develop this Holy Spirit in ourselves? It is imperative that we do, for our salvation depends on it:

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:10-11).

Praying in the Holy Spirit

How, then can we pray in the Holy Spirit? Speaking for myself, I know that I am not alone, and we often feel inadequate in our prayers. We don't always know what to pray for as we ought, in other words how to pray in an acceptable way. Solomon was also looking for the right words to pray.

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and written upright, words of truth. (Ecclesiastes 12:10).

In this study, we hope to show the pivotal role the psalms played in the life of Jesus and how they can help us develop the mind of Christ. We hope you will leave this study and be better equipped to approach God in prayer, overcome the "old man," develop a sound mind, and go on to perfection. "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,*" but hopefully, we will see that there are directives in the very titles of the psalms to guide us to victory and how to use the Spirit word to make intercession for us, for these titles are an integral part of the Psalms and therefore part of the inspired Word of God.

Jesus overcame this by using the psalms. Several are recorded as he hung on the cross: Psalms 22, 31, 69-70, and more.

After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples:

And he said unto them, "these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me, [or about me]" (Luke 24:44).

**We often feel inadequate in our prayers.
We don't always know what to pray for as we ought,
in other words how to pray in an acceptable way.**

So, in the psalms, we have a record of the mind of Christ, as it also is mentioned in:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16).

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to Yahweh; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20).

Hidden Treasures in the Titles of the Psalms

An English brother named Joseph Hobson taught us the truth in Israel. He used the psalms for his prayers and said they are our instruments for overcoming. He got this idea from the Hebrew titles of the psalms. The translation of the Hebrew first verses was quite a revelation, as it gave us an insight into the spiritual meaning or purpose of the psalms.

What is presented in the English Bibles as the title is actually the first verse of the psalm in the Hebrew Bible. That is how it appears in translations, such as the Dutch, French, German, Spanish, and the Good News Bible Translation, but not in the King James Version.

David wrote most of the psalms during the time that he was persecuted by Saul.

They give insight into David's mind in his tribulations and in the joy of the salvation that God had promised him. Reading through the psalms, we see the daily struggles he had to cope with and how he overcame them:

David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. (2 Samuel 23:1-2).

Therefore, the words of the psalms are Holy Spirit words and Jesus used the psalms for his prayers. In the gospels, we have a record of all that Jesus did and what was done by him and to him, but it does not indicate what went through the mind of Christ. That information we can only learn from the psalms. Not only do the psalms contain the mind of Christ, but God Himself “dwells” in the psalms:

Thou art holy that inhabitest the praises of Israel. (Psalm 22:3).

The fact that the psalms are instruments for overcoming is hidden in the spiritual meaning of the first verses of the psalms. Most of these first verses have been left untranslated, as it was thought that they were just instructions for the conductor to follow a particular popular tune of the time.

James Thirtle (1854-1934) wrote a booklet on the titles of the psalms.¹ He believed the titles of psalms contain musical directives. He understood the phrase “*To the Chief Musician*” to mean “To lead in music.” He suggested that

this designation belongs to the previous psalm. Subsequent studies, however, have contested this view.² That view is of little help to those who seek spiritual comfort in the psalms.

I found George Fenwick's book on the titles of the psalms a most helpful exposition on this subject.³ His book is one of the earliest publications to endeavor to translate the psalm titles directly. Thirtle never referred to this book. With Fenwick, I believe that the Hebrew titles have a spiritual meaning and, therefore, rightly belong to the first verse of the psalm.

For example, the so-called title of Psalm 18 is quoted in 2 Samuel 22:1 as the first verse. There is no reason to depart from this Biblical example. Thirtle's idea that psalm titles belong to the end of the previous psalm comes from Habakkuk 3:19:

Yahweh God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the Chief Musician upon Neginoth.

However, if we translate this verse from the Hebrew, it reads:

*Yahweh God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places **to victory on my stringed instruments.***

Stringed instruments are *Neginoth* in Hebrew. The phrase "*To the Chief Musician upon Neginoth,*" occurs in the first verses of Psalms 4, 6, 54-55, 67, 76.

In Hebrew, the ending of Habakkuk 3:19 is identical to the "title" of Psalm 4: "*To the chief musician on Neginoth.*" The contents of the psalm clearly

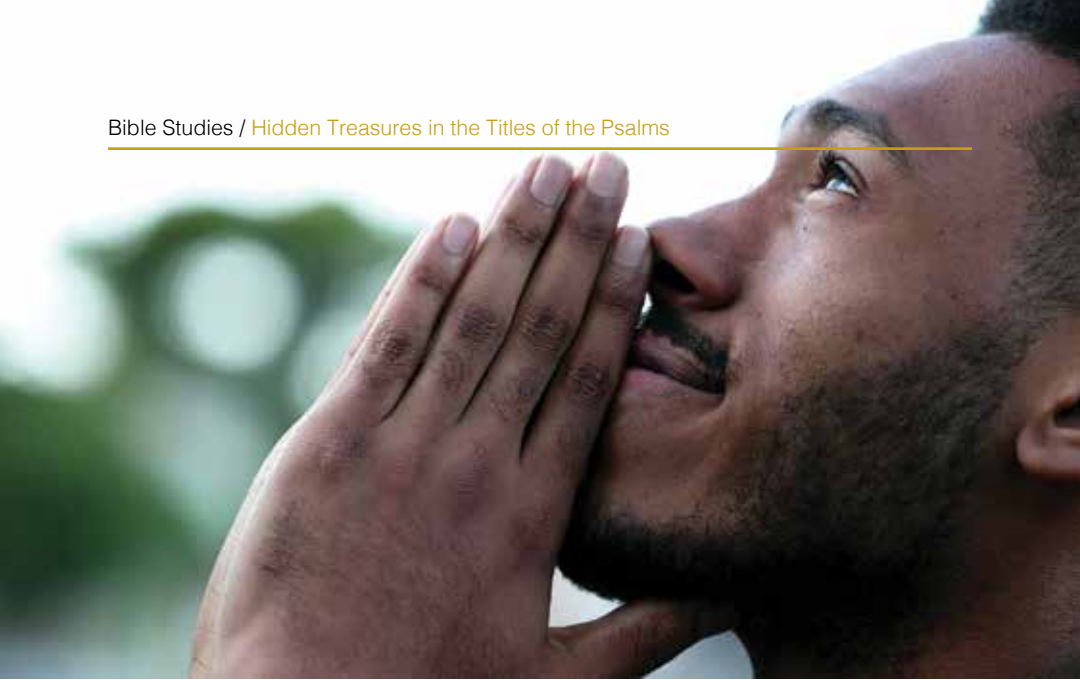
indicate that David was struggling with the "*sons of men*" who distressed him, turned his glory into shame, and loved vanity:

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that Yahweh hath set apart him that is godly for himself: Yahweh will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in Yahweh. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:1-8).

David said this prayer as he contemplated his difficulties that day, just before he went to bed. As did Daniel, David prayed three times a day:

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. (Psalm 55:17).

Psalm 55 was a prayer about "*the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked.*" (v. 3). In this case, it was Ahitophel who joined the rebellion of Absalom against David. David had called him "*a man mine equal, my guide*



and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company.” (vv. 13-14).

There is no reason we couldn't say this prayer, too, when we are in difficulties, which are often caused by those near us. David's suffering didn't change his attitude toward God; it strengthened it: "As for me, I will call upon Elohim, and Yahweh shall save me." (Psalm 55:16). In the Hebrew, David spoke in the future tense: "I will call... Yahweh shall save..." After he had prayed to God three times a day, he could say:

[God] has delivered my soul (Heb: redeemed my soul in peace) from the battle that was against me, for there were many with me. (Psalm 55:18).

David's confidence in adversity is described in an earlier psalm:

I have set Yahweh always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth. (Psalm 16:8-9).

This psalm was used by Jesus to get the confidence to continue unto the end, even unto the death of the cross. This is what Peter said on the day of Pentecost:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, "I foresaw Yahweh always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." (Acts 2:23-28).

Hebrew Meaning Of “To The Chief Musician”

Many psalm titles begin with “To the Chief Musician,” despite the fact that no Chief Musician is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The only times that this word is used are in 2 Chronicles 2:2, 18 and 2 Chronicles 34:13, where it is translated as “overseers.” I suppose the idea of a Chief Musician is derived from the fact that a conductor “oversees” a choir or orchestra.

What does “To the Chief Musician” mean? Was it just a directive to a non-existing conductor?

In Hebrew, “To the chief Musician” is *le-menatseach*, and it is used in the first verses of fifty-five psalms. This word comes from the root *natsach*, and is used first in 1 Samuel 15:29, where Samuel calls Yahweh the “Strength of Israel.” In the margin, it is rendered “Eternity” or “Victory.” In 1 Chronicles 15:21, this word is translated “to excel:”

Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obededom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps on the Sheminith to excel.

These men used harps as instruments for overcoming. They were among the 288 people “instructed in the Song of Yahweh,” as mentioned in 1 Chronicles 25:1-7. We would also benefit from being instructed in the Song of Yahweh.

In 1 Chronicles 29:11, this word is indeed translated as “victory”:

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for

all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. (1 Chronicles 29:11).

This word “victory” forms the basis for the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples.

This word *natsach* is also used in the well-known passage in Isaiah 25:8:

He will swallow up death in victory; and Yahweh GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for Yahweh hath spoken it.

“In victory” in Hebrew has the prefix *le* attached, so this verse actually says, “He will swallow up death to victory.” Jesus was victorious, not only over his own death but over death itself, so that we also can be saved from the power of death. This verse is, of course, quoted in 1 Corinthians 15:54, and here the Greek word for victory is *nikos* (as in Nike shoes, Nikon cameras). Christ was the first to gain victory over death, as it is written in Hebrews 2:14: “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Natsach means victory or to overcome. In modern Hebrew, when you have won a game, you say: *Nitsachtli!*—I have won, or I have the victory, I am victorious.

“To the Chief Musician” therefore means: “To the victor, or: To him that overcomes.” As we said before, Jesus was the first to have victory over sin and death, but in his letter to Laodicea, Jesus says: “To him that

overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Revelation 3:21).

The rewards for overcoming are too exciting to miss. They are mentioned in Revelation Chapters 2-3. It seems obvious that there is a connection between “*Him that overcometh*” (*o nikon*) of Revelation and the “*Chief Musician*” (*menatseach*) of the psalms.

Neginoth—Stringed Instruments

The title of Psalm 4 continues with “*on Neginoth.*” It means “stringed instruments.” The Hebrew is derived from *nagan*, which means to play on an instrument with strings, especially the harp. These instruments, which were used by David, were the vehicle used by Yahweh to reveal his Spirit, as David said:

Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of Yahweh spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. (2 Samuel 23:1-2).

When an evil spirit of Yahweh came upon Saul, David played for him on the harp, and his spirit was refreshed:

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. (1 Samuel 16:23).

Saul was probably refreshed more by the Spirit words that David composed on the harp rather than the music that David made, although that must have been attractive as well. We can be sure that Jesus also used these instruments to refresh his spirit. As he made these words his own they became the “*Word of Christ,*” as the Apostle, in Colossians 3:16, calls the “*Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs,*” which are in the middle of our Bible. That is our true Hymn Book. Why should we not use it?

The Prayer of God

Luke 6:12 records that Jesus “*continued all night in prayer to God.*” What is the point of saying that if we don’t know how he prayed and what he prayed for? How can we imitate the Son of God if we are left in the dark in the matter of prayer? Well, the Greek text is a lot clearer. It says that Jesus continued all night in “*The Prayer of God.*” Jesus did not spend the night composing his own prayers, but he made full use of those provided by God for him through the “*Spirit Words of the Psalms.*” David suffered so much that Jesus could use his words at the right time. David must have wondered sometimes about “*What, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*” (1 Peter 1:11). We find an example of this in the title of Psalm 18, where David is delivered from the hand of Saul, but Jesus is delivered from the hand of *Sheol*—the grave. Both words are the same in Hebrew.

Psalm 18

Psalm 18 must have been a great source of strength to Jesus when “*The sorrows of hell (Sheol) compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.*” (Psalm 18:5). The faith of Jesus is expressed in verse 6, which is written in the future tense in Hebrew

In my distress I will call upon Yahweh, and I will cry unto my God: he will hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry will come before him, even into his ears.

God’s answer was evident in Luke 23:44: “*And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a **darkness** over all the earth until the ninth hour.*” It is so comforting to read this. Jesus knew from Psalm 18:9 that God would come down to witness the death of His Son and shield him from prying eyes by the darkness that came over all the earth. It gives us an insight into the feelings of God, who, as a father, saw His beloved son die on the cross.

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the

brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. Yahweh also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, Yahweh, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. (Psalm 18:7-15).

Jesus knew that God would save him:

He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but Yahweh was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. Yahweh rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of Yahweh, and have not wickedly departed from my Elohim. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath Yahweh recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight. (v. 16-24).

Psalm 22

Psalm 22 is one of the psalms that Jesus prayed on the cross, and it helped him overcome the power of death itself. That is the meaning of the title:

To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David. (Psalm 22:1).

It means “**to him that overcomes over the power of darkness.**” Jesus referred to this psalm when he said to the chief priest and to the captains of the Temple, and the elders that had come to arrest him in Gethsemane:

*When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the **power of darkness.*** (Luke 22:53).

When he was hanging on the cross, Jesus did not only say the first verse of Psalm 22, but he also undoubtedly prayed the whole Psalm to God, who was able to save him from death. Through his death, Jesus has also delivered us from the power of darkness:

*Who hath delivered us from the **power of darkness,** and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.* (Colossians 1:13).

The Apostle Paul tells us how we should change our lives because we are also delivered from the powers of darkness:

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:10-14).

We have seen how David and Jesus overcame by using the psalms. The more we become familiar with the psalms, the more they can help us to overcome. Once those beautiful expressions become ours, we can also use them in our prayers.

*Leen Ritmeyer,
Cardiff Ecclesia, UK*

1 Thirtle, James, “*The Titles of the Psalms, their nature and meaning explained?*” (1904).

2 This has been contested by Biblical scholars, such as James Fraser, *The Authenticity of the Psalm Titles*, Ph.D. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1984. E. B. Nestle, “*The Titles of the Psalms,*” Exp Tim 23 (May 1912), 383. For a more complete evaluation of Thirtle's work see Roderick V. Smith, “*The Titles in the Psalms*” (M. Div. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1974), pp. 45-51.

3 George Fenwick, *Thoughts on the Hebrew Titles of the Psalms, and on some of those in the Septuagint, endeavouring to discover the Meaning and point out the use of them.* London 1749, new edition 1855.

DAVID'S MOTHER

Even though David's mother's name is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, she was important because Jesus Christ was known as David's son.

By Paul Wade

WHO is David's mother? Some may ask, "Does it really matter?" Perhaps not, but it is interesting that we find the names of so many other mothers in Israel but not David's mother.

As an example, "And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king." (1 Kings 11:26). Jeroboam was so wicked; do we really care about his mother's name? On the other hand, David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), yet we are not told his mother's name. What we do know is found in 1 Samuel 22:3-4,

And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

There does not seem to be absolute proof of what her name was. However, I have been able to piece together some information on this topic. It is my belief that three of Jesse's children, David, Zeruiah, and Abigail, all had the same mother. I base this on what is recorded in 1 Chronicles 2:13-17, where the three of them are linked together.

And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third, Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, David the seventh: Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai,

and Joab, and Asahel, three. And Abigail bare Amasa: and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmeelite.

With this in mind, let's examine 2 Samuel 17:25-29.

And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead. And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse, And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

In verses 25 and 27, a person named Nahash is mentioned. Although possible, it is unlikely that these two are different people. In verse 27, Nahash is identified as the father of Shobi; therefore, he is the king of Ammon, who reigned in Rabbah.

Now, going back to verse 25, it states that Abigail was the daughter of Nahash. This cannot be so, as she is the daughter of Jesse and an Israelite. However, the Hebrew word for daughter is *bath*, which means descendant, and therefore, the text probably should

have read granddaughter. We find this error based on the same Hebrew word *bath* in 2 Kings 8:26.

Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.

We know that Athaliah was Omri's granddaughter since she was the daughter of Ahab, the king of Israel.

If it is true that Abigail was the granddaughter of Nahash, then Abigail, Zeruah, and David were all the children of Nahash's daughter.

The words recorded in 2 Samuel 17:25 have puzzled translators and Bible commentators for many years. Let me list here the variety of solutions that I have read and collected.

1. Nahash is a woman and David's mother. (Unlikely)
2. Nahash is Abigail and Zeruah's mother but not David's. (Young's Concordance)
3. Nahash is a man. His widow married Jesse and bore David. (Bullinger, The Companion Bible)
4. Nahash is another name for Jesse. (The Authorized Version's margin)
5. David's mother was the daughter of Nahash, King of Ammon, and sister to Hanun and Shobi, the two sons of Nahash (Bro. A. Chambers, Brisbane, Australia)

Of these five explanations, the fifth explanation seems to be the only one that adheres to the Scriptures available. But it explains a lot of things.

1. David, as the son of an Ammonitess, had no status in the family and was not even included when Samuel came to review the sons of Jesse to select the future king.
2. He was relegated to keeping the sheep, although it would appear that Jesse was wealthy enough to have servants to perform this task.
3. Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, treated David as a servant when Jesse sent him to check on his sons' well-being in the war with the Philistines and Goliath.
4. After the death of Nahash, his oldest son, Hanun, treated David's servants so shabbily. Hanun probably felt threatened by David since he was likely Nahash's grandson, and he may have felt David would try to assume the throne of the kingdom of Ammon.
5. On the other hand, Hanun's younger brother, Shobi, didn't feel threatened and provided David and his men with all kinds of provisions when David was banished to Mahanaim (2 Samuel 17:27).

Of course, none of this is proof of David's mother's identity, but it is certainly compelling evidence of who she might have been.

I also find that the example of mothers in Israel was important. Here are some examples.

Deborah is the only female judge in Israel's history. *"The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel."* (Judges 5:7).

There was the wise woman at the city of Abel of Bethmaachah when Joab

pursued Shebna, the son of Bichri, who had led a rebellion against David and his Kingdom. *"I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD? And Joab answered and said, 'Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.'" (2 Sam 20:19-20).* She solved the situation and saved the city by having Shebna beheaded and casting his head over the wall to Joab.

I also find it interesting that the mother of David's grandson, Rehoboam, is recorded in Scripture, and lo and behold, she was an Ammonitess, just like Rehoboam's great-grandmother.

And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. (1 Kings 14:21).

Again, here is an example of a wicked king of Judah who bore at least some responsibility for dividing God's holy nation, and yet his mother's name is recorded, even though David's mother is not.

Looking at the next verse (1 Kings 14:22), we read, *"And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done."*

I would like to say one last thing about mothers and their importance. In the genealogy of Matthew 1, five women are named. They were all important mothers and played a critical part in God's plan of salvation for us. Also, note that they are not all of Israel!

1. Tamar, the mother of Phares (v. 3).
2. Rahab, a Canaanite, the mother of Boaz (v. 5).
3. Ruth, a Moabitess, the mother of Obed (v. 5).
4. Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon (v. 6).
5. Mary, the mother of Jesus (v. 16).

Even though David's mother's name is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, she was important because Jesus Christ was known as David's son.

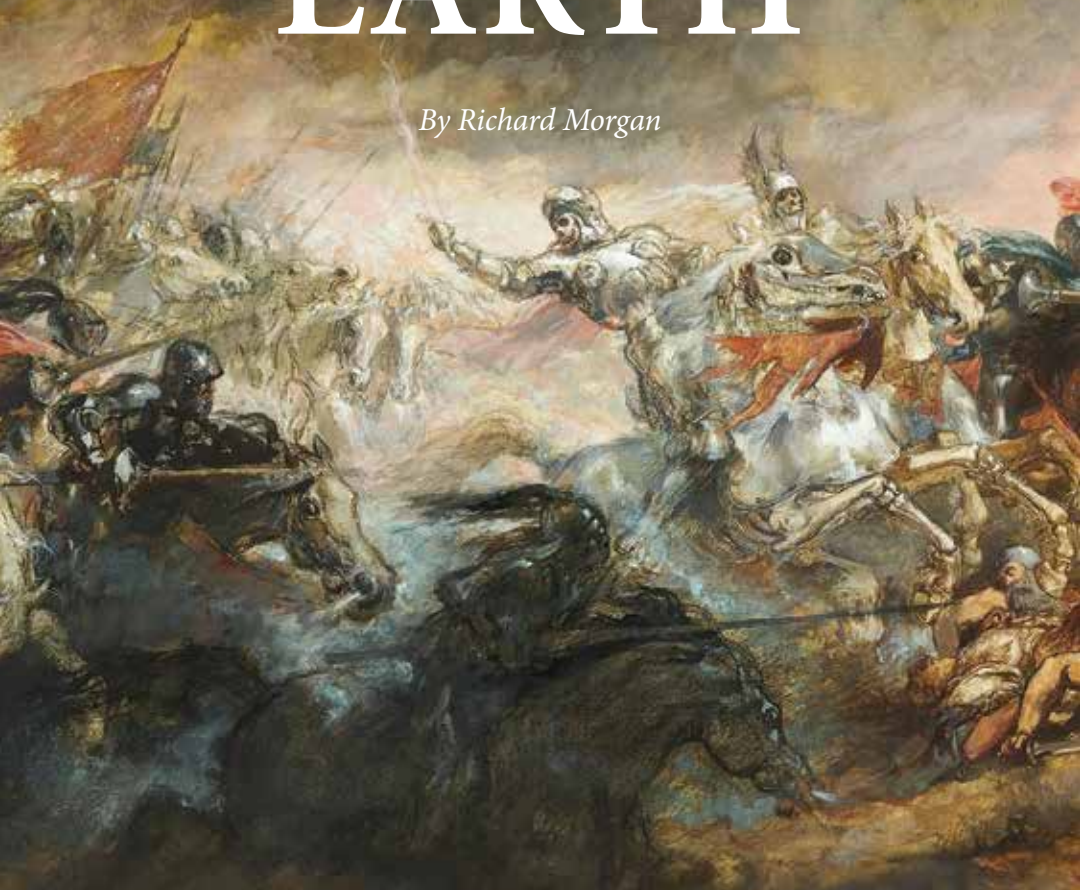
And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:31-33).

As stated earlier, none of this is absolute proof of David's mother's identity. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly sound Scriptural evidence of who she might have been.

*Paul Wade,
Houston West Ecclesia, TX*

HEAVEN AND EARTH

By Richard Morgan



IN my article, *Spiritual Forces of Evil in the Heavenly Places* (March 2025), I referred to the ancient Near East worldview regarding heaven and earth. According to that worldview, every earthly phenomenon has its heavenly counterpart, the power that lies behind it.

One intriguing example concerning heaven and earth comes from Isaiah 24, a chapter about God's judgments on the earth. Read through the chapter and see how often the word "earth" comes up. We're told, "*The LORD will empty the earth*" (v.1), "*The earth shall be utterly empty*" (v. 3), "*The earth mourns and withers*" (v. 4) and so on (see vv. 5-6, 12-13, 17, 19-20 for other uses of the word "earth").¹

Based on this prevalence of "earth" throughout the chapter, it is verse 21 that really stands out:

On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth.

This is the last time the word "earth" is used in the chapter and forms a summary of the judgments "*On that day.*" But it also says that God is going to do something else—punish the host of heaven, in heaven.

What does that mean? In a chapter all about the earth, why suddenly mention other judgments in heaven of all places?

Except that these aren't other judgments at all. Instead, what we see in verse 21 is an intriguing Hebrew parallelism. The "*host of heaven, in heaven*" refers to the same people as "*the kings of the earth, on the earth.*" What we're seeing here is a war on earth paralleled with that same war taking place in heaven.

To understand what's going on, consider a passage a little earlier in Isaiah where God brings judgments against Egypt in the form of civil war—"*I will stir up Egyptians against Egyptians, and they will fight, each against another.*" (Isaiah 19:2). The prophet says that because of this war "*the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out.*" (v. 3). In other words, there's more going on here than a physical battle with people dying. The verse says the **spirit** of Egypt is broken because of the war.

The word translated "*emptied out*" is rare but we've already met it in Chapter 24, where we read the words "*the LORD will empty the earth*" (v.1), "*The earth shall be utterly empty.*" (v. 3). The only other time the word is used is in Jeremiah 19:7, which says, "*And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies.*"

What we see in each of these references is the heavenly counterpart to the earthly judgment. The kings of the earth, Egyptians, and people of Judah and Jerusalem die in battle, but the real purpose of these judgments is emptying out of the spirit of Egypt and voiding the people's plans. Or, to put it in the language of Isaiah 24:21, "*The LORD will punish the host of heaven, in heaven.*"

Visible and Invisible

In any battle, there will be an earthly and heavenly aspect. Earthly things are visible, like the number of troops and the type of weapons they use. When comparing two armies, we might note that one army has more troops and better weapons. But that doesn't mean

the physically bigger and better army wins because we have to consider the heavenly aspect, which is invisible. This hidden factor might be something like the ideology of the smaller army or its will to fight that might override the fact that the other army seems bigger and better.

The Dragon Cast Out

Perhaps the Bible's most famous war in heaven is recorded for us in Revelation 12:7-9.

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels

were thrown down with him.

Historicist scholars have identified this battle as the end of pagan Rome. Its earthly counterpart was the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312, when Constantine fought against Maxentius. This encounter is thought to be the beginning of Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Constantine won the physical battle and became sole ruler of the Roman Empire, but from a heavenly point of view the real battle was against the ideology and philosophy of paganism.

Angels of the Ecclesias

Have you ever wondered who are the angels of the seven ecclesias who received letters as recorded in Revelation 2-3? Various ideas have been put forward, such as referring to guardian angels or elders in the ecclesias.



However, if we look at the letters through the lens of the Ancient Near Eastern concept of heaven and earth, we see something rather intriguing.

Let's take the letter to Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7) as an example. When addressing the ecclesia, we read in verse 2, "*I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance.*" What is surprising about these references is each time the word "you" or "your" is in the singular. In Greek, like in many modern languages, words for "you" can be either singular or plural. But why address the members of the ecclesia in the singular? Because Jesus is addressing them as a group.

However, when we turn to the next letter, to Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11), there's a change from the singular use of "you" to the plural. In verse 9, we read, "*I know your tribulation and your poverty,*" with the word "your" in the singular. But in verse 10, where it says, "*the devil is about to throw some of you into prison,*" the word "you" is now plural. That makes sense because only some members of the ecclesia are going to suffer in this way, so the plural "you" identifies a subset of the whole.

Bearing in mind the use of the singular "you," read the letters again like this: "*To the angel of the church... I know your works.*" It reads as if Jesus knows the **angel's** works with the singular "you" matching the singular "angel."

Furthermore, the expression "*the angel of the church*" uses a Greek expression that could identify the angel as the church! It's like saying "the land of Israel" in the sense of the land that

is Israel rather than the land that belongs to Israel. So, it's not that the angel belongs to the ecclesia; the angel actually **is** the ecclesia.

What is possibly going on here is that Jesus is addressing the personality of the ecclesia. Remember, according to the concept of heaven and earth, every earthly phenomenon has its heavenly counterpart, so much so that the ancients thought of those phenomena as having personalities, even for inanimate objects, but especially for institutions. The angel of the ecclesia can thus be seen as the invisible personality of the institution which is the ecclesia. Jesus addresses that personality as a whole with the use of the singular "you."

Angels of Nations

The explanation above regarding the angels of ecclesias might also account for this strange passage in Daniel 10:10-14.

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael,

one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

Who is “*the prince of the kingdom of Persia*” (v. 13) who can withstand an angel? Notice there is only one prince, but at the end of the same verse, he is dealing with “*kings*” plural. We can, therefore, view the “*prince*” as the combined spirit or personality of those kings and the nation as a whole. It was that **spirit** that was getting in the way, not their military might, to fight a literal battle against an angel of God.

Later in the chapter, we read:

Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.”
(Daniel 10:20-21).

The fact that it’s an angel fighting against the prince of Persia identifies it as a heavenly battle—a battle of wills. Then, the prince of Greece comes along, and a new spirit is added to the mix. Perhaps the mention of Michael, another prince whose name means “one like God,” represents the spirit of those who represent God in their dealings with these nations.

Conclusion

The concept of heaven and earth, as understood in ancient times, focuses our attention on the individual spirit of institutions. Contrary to the belief among many Christians that the devil and demons exist as real personal beings, these spirits have no corporeal existence and only exist within the context of the institutions themselves, although they can be transferred in the way in which the dragon of Revelation 12 gives his power to the beast of Chapter 13. Another way of saying that is the spirit of paganism lived on in the developing Roman Catholic system.

Today, we intuitively understand the idea of an institution having a personality or spirit without using the same language as people in the Ancient Near East. But when we tap into the language of Bible times, we can better appreciate some of the harder passages of Scripture, some of which I have highlighted in these two articles.

*Richard Morgan,
Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA*

1 All Scriptural citations are taken from the English Standard Version, unless specifically noted.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNSINKABLE FAITH

I thought Jessica Miller's article on "Anchors" (*Unsinkable Faith*, February 2025) was excellent in the *Tidings* I received in the last couple of days—thought-provoking, explanatory, and well written.

That said, I do really enjoy the magazine, and get a lift when I see a new issue is available. Some articles appeal to me more than others, but I like the idea that there's plenty of material available to suit a wide variety of readers. I also really liked David Levin's articles a few months back, and need to re-read them. It's great to have them online and easy to access.

Nancy Sharp, Portland Ecclesia, OR

IN MY LIFE I LOVE YOU MORE

I could not believe what I was reading as I just read this article (February 2025). I could have written this myself almost word for word. Such has been my life experience in the last several months. Over and over, it came to me that the only people who I can truly trust in this life, and who have seemingly out of the woodwork suddenly appeared for me, are my brothers and sisters in the Truth. Sisters who I have not seen for sixty years, from many places on the globe, are the ones who are encouraging me each morning online and praying for me as I navigate having my brother move in with me as he deals with incurable brain cancer. Everything that should be simple now always becomes a problem. It's wearing, and therefore, I need the support and appreciate it more and more. Thanks for confirming that I am not alone in my perceptions! I have lived in isolation almost my entire life and have managed, but suddenly, it's my faith family that is comforting and encouraging me. You have written the truth! I agree, and thank you!

Penny Cates, Nassau, Bahamas

PERSONAL WITNESSING IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Michael Alesna

The Journey Of Faith: Let's Walk Together And Finish The Race

EVERYONE has their unique story in the service of the Master. Our environment leads us to experience differing trials in our lives. Our education, upbringing, and friendships all contribute to molding us. But along the way, humankind has only one destination in life, which is death. I always remember King Solomon's counsel in his writings, "*What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*" (Ecclesiastes 1:3). God's promise is clear: eternal life and God's Kingdom. As Joshua said, "*But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*" (Joshua 24:15).

My Early Days As a Sunday School Student

I am from one of the ecclesias in the Philippines, the Mailag Ecclesia, located in Valencia City, Bukidnon. We are at the far southern end of the Philippines, about 700 miles from Manila. I grew up in a family of Christadelphians. My grandparents were pioneers of the truth in Mindanao. Although a poor rice farmer with limited oratorical skills, my grandfather was a fervent preacher of the gospel to all who entered his humble home. He labored with other pioneers to establish a small ecclesia at Kalilangan and fostered a Sunday School. Muslim persecution forced many of the members to relocate to Mailag (about seven miles away). My earliest recollections were as a seven-year-old Sunday School scholar

being faithfully taught Bible lessons by my mother and other teachers. I was thrilled to learn the Bible lessons, the action songs, memorizing Bible verses, and I enjoyed joining drama presentations. The annual prize-giving presentation was a highlight of the year, as we demonstrated the lessons learned to our parents and friends. Over the years, I saw the need to personally commit to following the Master and be baptized. It took me two further years of Bible study, but the joyous occasion finally arrived, and I was baptized. Friday, December 17, 2004, was the day of my baptism at, exactly 11 am. I will never forget that day.

Taking The Obligation After Baptism

Baptism marked a profound turning point in my spiritual journey. I believe baptism is the first act of obedience, a commitment to live according to Christ's principles by God's command. This personal dedication fueled a desire to deepen my understanding of the gospel and share the teachings

with others. Hereafter, I was very excited to teach Sunday School in my ecclesia.

Well, the next day became more complicated, which I didn't expect to happen. The same month, the majority of our young people journeyed to another island for a CYC conference, leaving me with my grandfather as the

only brethren remaining in the ecclesia. The following Sunday morning was my first memorial meeting as a brother. Since all of our young people had joined the conference, my grandfather

I believe baptism is the first act of obedience, a commitment to live according to Christ's principles by God's command.



The Mailag Ecclesia Sunday School

asked me to assist in conducting the memorial meeting just two days after my baptism at sixteen years of age. I was very nervous, but with God's help, I did my best. The following week, my grandfather asked me to prepare a short exhortation. I was very nervous and spent long hours in Bible study and preparation. However, I now understand it was integral to my spiritual development.

The Trials Inside The Ecclesia

Over the following year, the number of brothers and sisters in the ecclesia declined as some moved away to study in major regional centers or for employment. Only two brothers were left in the ecclesia (me and my grandfather) for almost two years. There was no excuse for absence, and we both were called on every Sunday. I also taught the senior Sunday School and baptism preparation classes for students and interested friends. We also commenced teaching a "Preparing for Baptism" class for our interested friends, as young people from other ecclesias moved to our area to

undertake tertiary studies at the local regional university and college. Our little ecclesia grew, and we commenced a regular CYC class and monthly activities for our young people. From humble beginnings, the ecclesia now numbers over forty brothers and sisters.

"Go You Into The Entire World & Preach!"

In my eighteen years of teaching Sunday School up to the present, most of the time has been focused on Sunday School work, CYC, and baptism preparation classes. I rejoice that some of my students have embraced the truth, gotten baptized, and are now assisting in the work. The transition from being a student to a teacher is a success, yet the work is still at its starting point, and we are not done. Over recent years, other young people have supported me in the work, and we progressively have set up weekly classes for children in other surrounding villages despite the opposition from other Christian faiths. Today, we teach more than 250

children weekly in five villages, with an expanded Sunday School of 180.

Lessons In Life: What Makes Us Strong?

The journey of my youth in ecclesial life unfolded like a sacred manuscript, each chapter revealing new dimensions of my spiritual identity. The youth conferences, with their vibrant energy and spirited discussions, were like an annual pilgrimage where I felt a profound sense of belonging. Amid workshops and worship, I forged friendships that transcended the boundaries of ordinary companionship, fellow travelers on the pilgrimage to understand our faith and purpose, and following our Master. One of the transformative aspects of these conferences, fraternal workshops, and seminars was the realization that my personal journey was part of a larger life narrative that, God willing, will affect others' lives. We were a generation bound by a common desire to explore the depths of our spirituality, question, seek, and enrich our faith as brothers and sisters of Christ. Those activities cannot be completed without "learning by doing." It helped to shape me into who I am today. I aim to focus my activities on my ecclesia and its goals. Looking back, those formative years in the ecclesial embrace fostered my growth. The lessons learned, the connections forged, and the truths internalized become the bedrock upon which I

Looking back,
those formative
years in the
ecclesial embrace
fostered my
growth.

strive to make God the center of my adult life. The journey was not without challenges and trials in life that have molded me to become strong in faith and ready to address the challenges every day of my life.

The Bible Education Center

My journey has led me to pioneer the Bible Education Center (BEC) in Valencia City with the financial support of overseas brethren. We rent a shopfront in the nearby city and use it as the focus of our preaching.

The BEC is dedicated to providing free Bible study resources, engaging discussions, and weekly Bible study sessions to help people learn more about the Scriptures. Visitors are always welcome to join us in exploring Biblical teachings, particularly fundamental doctrines. Our office offers free Wi-Fi and coffee, creating a comfortable space for open discussions about God's Word. In addition to our regular sessions, we also conduct lunchtime Bible lessons twice a month at Central Mindanao University, one of the largest universities in Mindanao, and we generally attract more than thirty students. Furthermore, we hold monthly Bible classes for Bangcud National High School senior students to extend our outreach.

Another key part of our program is a monthly seminar at McDonald's. Like our other classes, we focus on



The Seminar at McDonalds

doctrinal topics, followed by a one-hour Q&A session where attendees can engage in deeper discussions. With 90% of our attendees from diverse religious backgrounds, thought-provoking questions are always raised, making each session a rewarding yet challenging experience for myself and the young brethren. Both of these activities (BEC and McDonald's seminar) commonly attract at least 30 or more attendees.

I engage with individuals seeking a deeper understanding of Christadelphian beliefs. The center serves as a focal point for discussion, study, and reflection for everyone who seeks the truth. Almost nine years in the BEC office have helped me a lot in terms of spiritual knowledge and understanding the doctrines of different religions, as we have plenty of visitors from various faiths. Some are pastors. It is important for me to know what their beliefs are. What is their history? And how do they attempt to

defend their doctrines? Knowing their views helps us to answer questions and lead them to the truth. The BEC has become the best training ground for most of our young people in the ecclesia, and we are thankful that there is a place where everyone can openly learn the word of God. The BEC also allowed me to visit adjacent ecclesias in the Philippines, preach the word of God, and strengthen the spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters in the Lord. During a visit to a small ecclesia on an adjacent island, I met my wife, and we are now happily married with three young children.

Last year, we taught a total of 288 students across five different Sunday School areas near our village. The young people in our Ecclesia are deeply committed to teaching Sunday School, as many of us also grew up attending these classes in our early years. We currently have fourteen Sunday School teachers assigned to different areas. Each area has at least

four teachers to cover the Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior classes, with lessons conducted on Saturdays and Sundays. One of the biggest challenges we face is the lack of proper classrooms. Many of our lessons occur under trees, in open spaces, or in the homes of non-Christadelphian parents who kindly offer their space. Before Sunday School begins each year, we conduct house-to-house enrollment, personally asking parents for permission to teach their children about God's Word. While some decline, most welcome the opportunity for their children to join. For younger kids, free Sunday School materials, snacks, and prizes are crucial in keeping them engaged and excited to attend. We also encourage our students to invite their friends, which has helped our Sunday School community grow steadily. The Cagayan de Oro City BEC office provides Sunday School notes and activity sheets. It also coordinates an annual two-day Teachers workshop in the Philippines to introduce the year's syllabus and enhance the teaching skills of the national team. We are very grateful to our overseas donors, particularly the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation, for their untiring support.

The End Of The Journey Is When Jesus Comes Again

Walking in the truth is not an easy lifestyle, as we need to avoid immorality and live like our Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone who knows the truth should walk in the light as we are now sons and daughters of God and pilgrims in this

world. The journey to the Kingdom of God is full of trials and tests that we need to run with perseverance, patience, and longsuffering, along with the character of our Almighty God. Jesus said in Matthew 24:13, *“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”* We need to run the race with endurance.

We pray that we can survive until the end, as Apostle Paul did, finishing the race and hoping for a crown of righteousness.

*Michael Alesna,
Mailag Ecclesia, Philippines*



Bro. Michael and his family

MEAL-A-DAY NICARAGUA PROJECT

By Hannah Tunnell

JESUS commands us to give many times, give in abundance, give without public fanfare, give to strangers and enemies alike, and give with the mentality that even a little can go a very long way (Matthew 5:42; 25:40; Luke 3:11; Luke 6:38).

Those words have never resonated and inspired me more to action than they did this past summer when I found myself in rural Nicaragua without a single pair of socks or spare underpants to my name. I volunteered for this trip through the Christadelphian Meal-A-Day of the Americas (CMAD) organization. I had worked with them on projects in previous years, so I was familiar with their mission to serve as a practical witness to our faith by touching the lives of our neighbors in need. In following Jesus' relentless example throughout his life, we love our neighbors and, in doing so, shine as a light alongside them and illuminate the path so that together, we can both walk towards a beautiful future Kingdom. One of the principal tenets of CMAD, which I admire most, is empowering those they support to stand on their own two feet and allow their voices to be loud in the room when deciding what is most needed. This principle lifts up their communities both physically and spiritually. Because of this mindset, I found myself compelled to board an airplane in San Diego in late July 2024 on my way to Bluefields, Nicaragua, to learn about the hard work one of CMAD's many partners, a local nonprofit called BlueEnergy, is doing. BlueEnergy runs many different projects in this small coastal Caribbean

region to sustain and engage the local community. They have an overall focus on sustainable agricultural practices to alleviate hunger and poverty. Through constant communication with our CMAD trustees and trip coordinators, they pre-arranged a rather impressive line-up of tasks to fit into our 1-week visit, including seed germination, composting, community outreach education, clean water sanitation, and a solid two days exhaustively transforming the landscaping and infrastructure at a local primary school.

I was ready for all of it. I was eager and willing to work hard—to go with open ears for listening and an open mind prepared to be taught. But it ended up being my heart that God knew needed to be moved the most. International travel logistics always involve a bit of hope and a prayer, and long story short, I arrived in Nicaragua a day late with no suitcase in sight! From that very first step outside the comfort of my home, I was transformed from someone who was there to help into a neighbor who needed help. In these newly humbled circumstances, I apprehensively rolled up to the colorful cobblestone entrance of the BlueEnergy headquarters, only to receive my first lesson in the true meaning of generosity of spirit. The staff poured from the building into the entry courtyard with warm smiles, enthusiastic greetings, and exuberant hugs, which needed no language translation.

Upon realizing that there was no language barrier for me, one of the ladies quietly drew me to a side room to let me know that she had heard

about my plight and had made a second trip to her house and back while I was still in transit. She had pulled together several pairs of her own shirts and pants, which she hoped might fit me and that I was welcome to borrow for the duration of my stay. To be clear, all the staff are locals in the community, and these clothes were not frivolous castoffs that were easily spared. In that minute, I was reminded of the widow Jesus saw giving two mites—all that she had.

My lesson continued when another staff member offered me the raincoat literally off her back when she saw me struggling with the incessantly rainy weather so alien to a San Diegan. Yet another of the staff hailed us a taxi and took me to the bustling town center so that I could have the decidedly unique experience of shopping for socks, undergarments, and basic hygiene supplies in a foreign country in my second language.

My CMAD teammates (who were American, German, and Australian) loaned me some basic necessities, even though we had met just hours prior. And in being on the receiving end of so much sincere love and light myself—before my supposed work here had even begun—I was able to appreciate for the first time the weight of the impact that this mission could bring.

Giving from the heart—as Jesus knew—isn't just about putting new and improved possessions into our neighbors' hands. It's about restoring people's dignity. Their hope. Their ability to turn around and then help others in a beautiful, never-ending cycle.

Throughout the rest of the week, I witnessed so many wonderful examples of this spirit. I met a single mother who applied for a grant through a BlueEnergy workshop, transformed her tiny backyard into a sustainable edible garden to support herself and her son with disabilities, and now holds classes for other women in her neighborhood to learn what she now knows. I had a lengthy conversation with a woman whose two young nieces would directly reap the benefits as we worked side-by-side for hours planting fruit trees at the school so that the children would have food and the hillside protected from erosion. BlueEnergy itself employs some of Nicaragua's brightest young minds and passionate advocates who truly know how to lift up their community.

Like the Apostle Paul, time would fail me to tell you all the good works being done there, so I encourage you to investigate further through the CMAD website. Giving is never one-directional in this increasingly interconnected world, and above all, I am incredibly thankful to have been so personally immersed in the process through my experiences. In a final reminder of God's goodness, a staff member arranged for a contact to secure and deliver my wayward suitcase when it finally reappeared on the last day of my trip. Thus, I was able to journey home with a full heart, a restored faith, a heap of new, lifelong friends, and a lesson learned in why one of the greatest commandments of all is to love your neighbor as yourself.

*Hannah Tunnell,
San Diego Ecclesia, CA*

ST. LUCIA VISIT

By Martin and Lois Webster

THERE are times when an airline will surprise us. On our outward journey to St. Lucia on January 11, 2025, we left Toronto a little late but arrived thirty minutes early! The disadvantage of arriving early was that we had to wait for our taxi ride down to the CBMC apartment in San Souci, a suburb of Castries, the nation's capital. We quickly settled into the routine of daily life in St. Lucia, contacting members of the ecclesia and friends

within a day or two of our arrival. One of the advantages of having visiting missionaries is that the Memorial Service can be conducted in person rather than the members attending Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia via Zoom. Each Sunday we were there, we led the Memorial Service, which included hymns from the Christadelphian Northern Choir, with the members singing along. Like many of us, the members have their own "favorite"



The St. Lucia Ecclesia at Memorial Service.

hymns, which we tried to use week by week. We did each of our three readings, followed by an exhortation based on one of those portions.

Following the Memorial Service, we had lunch and had some good discussions on Bible topics. One long-time contact, Stan Drapin, has a good knowledge of the Bible with a correct understanding of many first principles. It was good to see him actively participating in the discussions.

We began a series of midweek Bible classes based on Matthew 5, with two or three members attending as they were able. We had two or three classes each week, and typically, the arrangement was made that they would arrive at 11:00. However, 11:00 St. Lucia time could be 11:30 or even later!

Regardless, we would have our class using a series of PowerPoint slides, taking the class at a steady pace, with plenty of discussion from each member present. Each class would typically last about 45-50 minutes, followed by lunch, then the daily readings, with plenty of discussion on each of the portions.

There are always challenges in the mission field. Bro. Martin spent several hours in the hospital with Bro. Benji St. Ange, who had fallen and required treatment, including a head CAT scan. He was kept in for two days but has since made a good recovery.

Bro Julian Jackson has been volunteering at an after-school program for several years, and this year, we took a case full of Bible books from Sister

Louise Birchall (Christadelphian Save the Children Fund) for a new initiative planned for the next few months. The program leader, Mrs. Chriselda Branford, appreciated the books. The new program is expected to start within a few weeks. More books will be taken down in subsequent visits to St. Lucia.

Martin assisted Bro Julian in preparing a request to a government agency (the St. Lucia Social Development Fund) that will help his mother, whose home has been very badly damaged by hurricanes. Half of the roof consists of a tarpaulin. This arrangement means that when the rain and wind blows, a lot of water enters the house!

Generating new contacts is a challenge. Most people have their own church, and they are reluctant to change. Also, the culture of belief in the devil and demons in the Caribbean is very strong, so presenting the Bible's truth about

this topic meets significant opposition. However, people are aware of current events, and a few good discussions were held about what is happening in the world, especially in the Middle East. When traveling on buses, we would leave a "thisisyourbible.com" or Bible reading plan on the seats. Members also take copies of Glad Tidings and the reading plan to give to friends and others they meet.

We have many contacts through thisisyourbible.com and continue to keep in touch with them with notifications of visits. Preliminary planning for further outreach using a mail drop to P.O. boxes in the area of Castries and other convenient locations has commenced.

There is an urgent need for help in St. Lucia. Has anybody retired recently? If so, perhaps you can help? The accommodation in the CBMC apartment is good, with air conditioning and all the amenities we have at home.

For more information, please contact Bro. Mike LeDuke at 1-519-574-6014 or mduke@gto.net.

*Martin and Lois Webster,
Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia, ON*



Mrs. Chriselda Branford
and Bro. Martin
reviewing children's books.

WILDERNESS CONVERSATIONS

By Stephen Dodson



BEFORE the COVID-19 lockdowns, I started a podcast called "*Wilderness Conversations*," designed for the Christadelphian community. The initial inspiration came from attending funerals and learning about the lives of brothers and sisters who I knew but whose stories were largely unknown to most of us. Everyone has a story; capturing these firsthand accounts and sharing them with interested brethren and sisters would be valuable.

As someone who spends much time on the road in Sydney traffic, I've been a podcast listener for years.

Having material focused on our understanding of the truth would be beneficial. Initially, the idea was to explore controversial topics and debate them, but that quickly evolved into a goal of creating engaging, informative, spiritually edifying content that is not controversial or negative.

Some episodes concern those who share their journey of faith and the challenges they have faced. Many stories resonate with other listeners and spark meaningful conversations within our community. In addition to general stories, the idea of book reviews quickly became apparent. The goal was to share

information, understanding that most people will not buy or read the book. An interview could at least convey the message to a broader audience. An unexpected but inevitable result was that it encouraged book sales.

I publish the podcast on Apple and Spotify and upload episodes to YouTube. I know a few older listeners who have mastered their smart TVs and understand YouTube but are unfamiliar with webpages or podcasts. The different platforms provide some statistics on the listening audience. Spotify added podcasts to its content during COVID-19 and has since become a major portal for podcasts.

There are about 750 regular listeners on each of the two platforms, meaning that with nearly one hundred episodes, there have been well over a hundred thousand listeners on these two platforms. Apple provides listener statistics, showing 1,252 listeners in Australia, 89 in the UK, 80 in the USA, 60 in New Zealand, and 50 in Canada. Interestingly, Spotify reports that 50% of listeners are female, 48% are male, and 2% are not specified. Additionally, 20% are under 27, 30% are between 28-44, and 50% are over 45. Who said older ones don't know technology?

I often get asked why I do it and how long I will do it. The simple answer is that I get just enough feedback to keep me going. Someone will contact me each week because a particular guest or subject has inspired them. Recently, a sister was bedridden in hospital and told me that listening to the stories of her brothers and sisters and the engaging content of our writers kept her going.

The biggest challenge? That's easy—content. So many people have great stories but are reluctant to share them. It's understandable. The reasons are a lack of confidence to articulate their story, a feeling that they might be “bragging,” or a disbelief that anyone would be interested. Sharing our stories, I think, is an integral part of our fellowship. Please let me know if you or someone you know has a story or a subject of interest.

In the meantime, all the past episodes are available online. I invite you to listen to “Wilderness Conversations” and join our community of listeners. Share your thoughts, favorite episodes, or any stories you'd like to hear in future episodes. Let's continue to learn and grow together.

*Stephen Dodson,
Riverwood Ecclesia, Sydney, NSW*

Spotify: <http://bit.ly/4kDKZkR>

Apple Podcasts: <https://bit.ly/3FeB3hP>

wildernessconversations.com



What is the Bible All About?

Luke 15:11-32

A young man and an older man walked along together, talking about all sorts of things. The young man said to the old man: "As you know, I've been reading the Bible, and I've been studying the first principles, and I agree with them. But I'd like you to tell me: What is the Bible all about? Tell me, what's the bottom line?"

What did he expect to hear from the old man? Something like: "I tell you, son... just give all the right answers, get baptized, and come to meeting, and I can guarantee you'll be saved."

We understand that believing the fundamentals of Bible teaching is very important. It is clearly the place to start! These ideas represent the gospel—the good news of the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.

But the really good news is that we can be saved! That is what the Bible is about! And that concept ought to take our breath away... It ought to make us get up every morning with a smile on our faces and a song in our hearts. It ought to be our daily food and drink,

our warmth in the coldest weather, and our cool shade in the heat of summer. Not only can we be saved, but we will be saved!

The gospel is the story of salvation from Genesis to Revelation. One of the most important stories is a very simple one, so simple that we can all easily grasp its meaning.

The old man stares off into the distance. His eyes are a bit dim now, but he seems to see something that the younger man can't quite make out. "Son," he says, his voice trembling just a bit, "Let me tell you a story..."

There was a man who had two sons. (Luke 15:11).¹

And their father, being a good father, loved them both very much.

The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate." (Luke 15:12).

The younger son's first request is the cry of a child: "Give me!" as though it had suddenly dawned on him that his father had wealth that would be his one day.

So [the father] *divided his property between* [the two sons].

The young man was "grown up" now, and ready—he thought so anyway!—to take what was his and enjoy it. And the father does not say, "No!" Instead, he gives his son what he asks for. As the old saying goes: "Be careful what you wish for. You may get it!"

Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. (Luke 15:13).

"Got together" in this case means to convert to cash. The young man literally "cashed in" his property; he got his hands on money that he could carry away, and carry it away he did! He was not content to stay at home; the world was an inviting place. "I'm outta here! Look out, world, here I come!" He traveled far away and carelessly wasted all his father's blessings and gifts.

After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. (Luke 15:14-15).

To a Jew, the pig is the dirtiest, most despised of animals. Now, the young son finds himself in a place of "pigs," living with unclean beasts and doing unclean things.

He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. (Luke 15:16).

It's a fact of life: the world gives nothing away. Nothing, that is, except poverty, illness and regret. Sadly, the young man came to realize that it was all "*vanity and vexation of spirit.*" Whatever he begged, borrowed or stole from the world was never going to be enough to fill the aching void inside himself.

When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!" (Luke 15:17).

The memory of his father's love and a safe home touched him even in the distant land. "He came to his senses." Now we can imagine that the angels begin to pay attention because there is about to be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

I will set out and go back to my father. (Luke 15:18).

He had suffered so much in strange places, with strange people. But he had learned a valuable lesson: Suffering is not punishment if it brings us back home.

I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. (Luke 15:18-19).

This is definitely a story of salvation:

- First, he realizes his own sins, and he knows he needs help.
- So, he confesses: "I have sinned." No whitewash, no explaining away, no excuses, just "I have sinned."

- He has the profound feeling of not being good enough: "I am no longer worthy." News flash: he never was! Nor are we worthy of God's greatest gift!
- And finally, there is the second request by the young man to his father. It is no longer "Give me!" That was the first request, the prayer of youth and greed. Instead, here is the prayer of a much wiser son: "Father, I don't care about what I can have; I care about what I can be. Don't give me anything. Just make me one of your servants—someone worth keeping!"

So he got up and went to his father.
(Luke 15:20).

What he needed was a new beginning, and he could only find that new beginning by going back to where he had started, finding his roots, and returning home to his father!

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20).

Even before he got back, his Father watched for him, looking down the road. He must have been watching for a long time, ever since his son had left. At last, he saw him in the distance—the sad, ragged figure of his once proud young son, struggling back up the road to the old home. The Father can scarcely contain himself. He is "filled with compassion." He ran to his son with the urgency of parental love, and he embraced him and drew him into his bosom. There was no bitterness, no reservation, no dignity, or formality.

The one he had held in his heart all the time he was gone had come home. And now he embraced him, not wanting to let him go.

The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (Luke 15:21).

It was not enough merely to think the words to himself, as the young man had done before beginning his journey home (Luke 15:18-19). He had to say them. He had to make a public confession of his sin and unworthiness in front of witnesses. There had to be no doubt as to his intentions in the minds of others or in his own mind.

The father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.' (Luke 15:22).

Just as quickly as the confession began, it was over. No one would use the evidence of his past sins to make him feel inferior. He had asked only to be one of his father's servants, but his father now elevates him to the rank of a favored son. His father dresses him in the very best garments. And his father gives him a ring—the symbol of authority and of a new inheritance to replace the one he had lost.

Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.
(Luke 15:23).

The welcome is followed by a special meal of fellowship and rejoicing.

For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate.
(Luke 15:24).

What power and what joy there is in those two little words: "of mine!" Now he belongs to the father again! His sins and all his past are set aside, and he is now someone worth keeping. "On the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him." (Malachi 3:16).

Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. "Your brother has come," he replied, "and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound." (Luke 15:25-27).

We need to see clearly here. The older son should be commended. He had always been working—he was not a bad son. While the younger son had gone off to live a life of sin and selfishness, the older son had been doing his duty. And now it looked to him as though his younger brother had had all his fun and would also be the father's favorite. It was just not fair!

[So] the older brother became angry and refused to go in. (Luke 15:28).

The problem is this: by keeping himself away from the feast of rejoicing with his younger brother, the older brother was also now keeping himself outside his father's "house."

So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you

never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" (Luke 15:28-30).

Sure, there is resentment here. We can understand that, can't we? "But, Dad, I have been a better son than he ever was." And he was right. But we hear the echo of a prayer a Pharisee offered in the temple: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people." (Luke 18:11).

There is a serious danger in that echo. Our business should not judge people. Our business should serve our Father!

Besides, how can the older son now claim perfect obedience when, at this very moment, he is going against his father's wishes? One son may have been "lost" in a far-away land, but the "good" son is now showing by his attitude that he is "lost" too. He is lost at home, like the coin that was lost in the house, even though he never left home.

"My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." (Luke 15:31-32).

The older son had called his younger brother "this son of yours" (Luke 15:30) as though to disclaim all kinship. But the father gently and patiently reminds him that he is "this brother of yours!" Like the sheep that wandered away from the shepherd and the flock, he was lost, but now he is found.

The power and beauty of Jesus' story also lie in the fact that it is an unfinished story. There is a final, unanswered question: Did the older brother go into the house again, or did he remain outside? Was he lost right at home?

The question is left unanswered in the story because we are expected to answer it every day in our own lives.

Any of us can be like the older son. The stubbornness, the self-righteousness, is there within all of us. But forgiving our brother is not an optional matter. It is at the heart and soul of the gospel story. It is the only basis by which the Father will forgive us!

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15).

We can, all of us, be like the younger son, too. We may not travel to a distant land to enjoy decadent living— maybe because we can't get enough money! But we may take day trips, short vacations, or holidays away from our duty as children of God. Our lives may consist of many such little trips away from the Father. Then, each time, we hurried back and hoped that no one noticed we were gone.

We cannot travel anywhere, not the farthest country, from which we cannot return to the Father's love. The Father is always waiting. When men and women know they are "starving to death" spiritually, like the prodigal son was starving literally (Luke 15:17), then they are ready to come home.

The story of the Bible is the story of salvation. The story of salvation is the

story of the wanderer coming home!

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31, 32).

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. (2 Corinthians 5:19).

The Father has made every effort and provided every opportunity by which we might be drawn to Him and saved.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32).

If there is any single Bible story in which the gospel and all our hopes are expressed, then it must be this one. Everything else that we might learn from the pages of Scripture, everything else that we might glean from a lifetime's experience in living the truth in a hard and sometimes cruel world, everything else we might know of the human condition and human need, ought to be viewed in the light of this simple picture. "I wandered away, but I came back. I was lost, but now I am found. I was blind, but now I see!"²

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20).

May this be the last story, and the best story, in the lives of each one of us.

*George Booker,
Austin Leander Ecclesia, TX*

1 All Scriptural citations are taken from the New International Version, unless specifically noted.
2 Newton, John (1725-1807) *Amazing Grace*, 1779.



THE CHRISTADELPHIAN
TIDINGS
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

is published monthly, except bimonthly in July-August, by The **Christadelphian Tidings**.

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE PAID at Simi Valley, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Christadelphian Tidings, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065.

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee: Alan Markwith (Chairman), Peter Bilello, Linda Beckerson, Nancy Brinkerhoff, Tej Chippada, Steve Davis, Jeff Gelineau, Jason Hensley, William Link, Shawn Moynihan and Jim Sullivan..

Christadelphian Tidings Editorial Committee: Dave Jennings (Editor), Jason Hensley (Associate Editor), Section Editors: Nathan Badger (Life Application), Jessica Gelineau (Music and Praise), Steve Cheetham (Exposition), Richard Morgan (First Principles), Dave Jennings (Teaching and Preaching), Jan Berneau (CBMA/C), George Booker, (Thoughts on the Way, Q&A), Jeff Gelineau (News and Notices, Subscriptions), Melinda Flatley (Writer Recruitment and Final Copy), and Shawn Moynihan (Associate Editor, Books and Media).

Subscriptions: The Tidings Magazine is provided **FREE** for any who would like to read it. The Magazine is available in PDF Format online at **tidings.org**. If you would like to order a printed subscription to **The Tidings** you may do so simply by making a donation to cover the printing costs. The suggested donation for printing and shipping to the US is **\$70.00**; (we ask for a minimum donation of \$50.00.) Foreign countries are higher, see www.tidings.org.

All subscription information is available online at **www.tidings.org**. You may subscribe online and make donations online or by mail to the above address. Information on how to subscribe in other countries is also available online at **www.tidings.org/subscribe**.

The Christadelphian Tidings is published on the 15th of the month for the month following. Items for publication must be received by the 1st of the month. Correspondence to the editor, Dave Jennings at **editor@tidings.org**. Publication of articles does not presume editorial endorsement except on matters of fundamental doctrine as set forth in the BASF. Letters should be sent via email to **letters@tidings.org**. Please include your name, address and phone number. The magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.

©2025, **Tidings Publishing Committee**. In the spirit of Christ ask for permission before reproducing any material. Contact us at **editor@tidings.org**

Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are from *The Authorized (King James) Version*. Rights in the Authorized Version in the United Kingdom are vested in the Crown. Reproduced by permission of the Crown's patentee, Cambridge University Press.

Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the *New King James Version*®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from the *ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)*, copyright© 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (RSV) are from the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright © 1946, 1952, and 1971 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NRSV) are from the *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. lockman.org™

Scripture quotations marked (CSB) have been taken from the *Christian Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Join the *Tidings* Book Club!

Just \$9.99 (USD) per month!



tidings.org/bookclub

To make a donation or to subscribe, visit us at
WWW.TIDINGS.ORG

The brothers and sisters who write for *The Christadelphian Tidings* do so on a voluntary basis, and the magazine is provided FREE to any who would like to read it. The magazine is available in digital formats online at www.tidings.org.

If you would like to order a printed subscription to *The Tidings*, you may do so simply by making a donation to help cover the printing and mailing costs. The suggested donation is US\$70.00, and minimum donation is US\$35.00. (Check online for rates in other countries.) If you can afford to donate more, please do so in order to help out those that cannot afford the cost.

The Christadelphian Tidings of the Kingdom of God
First Class Postage paid at Simi Valley, CA
Send address corrections to:

The Christadelphian Tidings
567 Astorian Drive
Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941

Stay connected and up to date. Find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!

