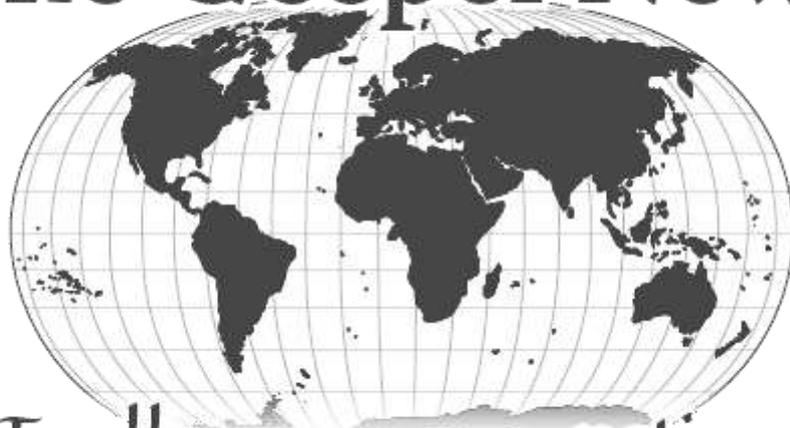


The Gospel News



“To all  nations”

Editorial: "The opposite of love..."

is not hate but indifference". So wrote holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Many others commented the same- that millions of people were systematically exterminated because of the indifference of otherwise "good people". It all happened because 'good' people did nothing. Wiesel continued: "Indifference is never an option... the opposite of life is not death but indifference to life and death".

Time and again Biblical history demonstrates that sins of silence and omission are just as fatal as sins of public, physical commission.

- Sarah omitted to say that Abraham was her husband; and was reproved (Gen. 20:16).
- Onan omitted to raise up seed to his brother, and was slain (Gen. 38:10).
- To omit to hate evil is the same as to commit it (Ps. 36:4).
- Because David omitted to enforce the Law's requirements concerning the transporting of the tabernacle, a man died. His commission of good didn't outweigh his omission here (1 Chron. 15:13).
- We have a debt to preach to the world; we are their debtors, and yet this isn't how we often see it (Rom. 1:14). Time and again we commit sins of omission here. Let's make it our aim to introduce the Lord to at least one person each day [e.g. by leaving calling cards around the place. Contact me if you'd like some].
- Samuel would have sinned against Yahweh if he ceased to pray for Israel in their weakness (1 Sam. 12:23). We so easily give up in prayer for the weak.
- Adam's sin of commission (i.e. eating the fruit) may well have been a result of his sins of omitting to go forth out of the centre of the garden and multiply. By one man's inattention (Rom. 5:19 Gk.) sin came into the world. The same word is translated "to neglect to hear" (Mt. 18:17). Hence Adam and not Eve was the first sinner. This needs some meditation.
- The Lord taught that to wangle one's way out of caring for their parents by delegating it to the synagogue was effectively cursing them, and those guilty must "die the death" (Mk. 7:10,11). To him who knows to do good but does it not, this omission is counted as sin (James 4:17- written in the context of brethren omitting to help each other). Likewise He said that if he had omitted to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, this would have been 'doing evil' and even 'killing' (Mk. 3:4). That's how seriously He took omitting to do good when it's in our power to do it.
- Ps. 44:20 balances the sin of omission against the sin of commission: "If we have forgotten the name of our God [omission], or stretched out our hands to a strange god" [commission]. It makes a good exercise to watch for how many times the Proverbs treat sins of omission as if they are sins of active commission. "He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster" (Prov. 18:9)- 'mere' laziness, as we may see it, an omission of working- is the same as the commission of a purposefully destructive person. And to laze away our hours is perhaps a temptation in this generation as never before. He who doesn't help those terminally ill, saying within himself "Behold, we knew it not"- will be judged by God "according to his *works*" (Prov. 24:11,12). The internal turning of a blind eye in our attitude is in fact an active 'work' which will be judged at the last day. And again, our generation has many opportunities to walk on by and claim we never knew. When we did. And there's no generation like ours for rewarding that

attitude, when it's actually one that could lead to our eternal condemnation. For we are all terminally ill and need God's urgent, saving attention.

- To not lend to one's poor brother will be counted to us as sin (Dt. 15:9).

- If we omit to 'visit' the fatherless (in the Hebrew sense of coming close to, getting involved with, not just 'popping in to see')- then our religion is defiled and impure (James 1:27).

- "As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way" (Hos. 6:9) is the basis for the Lord's parable of the injured man on the Jericho road. According to this Hosea passage, there is no difference between the robbers and the priest who passes by. Surely the point of the allusion to Hosea 6:9 was that the priest who omitted to help was as bad as the robbers who committed the attack. This is how serious are sins of omission, of passing by on the other side from a hurting individual, all too busy with our petty religion.

The more we analyze them, most of the sins mentioned in the Bible [as well as our own sins] tend to be sins of omission. We don't set off into each day brazenly bent upon committing sin. But we so easily are lulled into the mire of mediocrity whereby we simply omit to do that which God requires of us. Wide-eyed and innocent, the rejected will claim, "When did we see You hungry... thirsty... in prison?". They will find it hard to understand that sins of omission were *that* serious. To brush off the idea we might visit the imprisoned [in whatever forms of prison they are in], attend to the needy... because we're too busy today, as we were yesterday, and as we shall be all our tomorrows... these kind of psychological, mental decisions of a moment, made each day, could lead to the Lord telling us that He never knew us. When we consider the Lord's teaching of Mt. 7:22,23 and 25:42-44 together, He's saying that those rejected at the day of judgment will be so on account of their *omissions*- hence their surprise, and anger because they knew that they had *done* good works; they thought that what they had *committed* was morally acceptable to God, and this would usher them into the Kingdom. But their sins of *omission* cost them the Kingdom.

We think we have no time. Because we let the world, the internet, thinking about that movie... take it from us. We quickly justify ourselves by thinking that we do quite enough for others anyway, that we care for our family... when in the end, we are leaving the least of Christ's brethren needy and unvisited. The one talent man wasn't condemned for *doing* anything wrong; but rather for omitting to do at least something with his talent. Likewise the Pharisees were condemned for 'omitting the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith' (Mt. 23:23). These men occupied themselves day and night with what they considered the weighty matters of the Law- its exposition, careful understanding of the Hebrew text etc. But exactly by doing this they committed the crucial sins of omission. In the end, it's action which is the weight of the Law and not dissecting of texts. Whilst true understanding of a text is of course important, we can so easily become guilty of 'bibliolatry', worshipping the Bible as an end in itself without catching the spirit of selfless service to others.

The Lord Jesus was perfect, never sinning, despite being saddled with our human condition just as we are. One aspect of His achievement was perhaps that He didn't focus as we tend to, upon *not committing sin* but rather, positively, on achieving the Father's glory. It was this emphasis which led Him not to commit sins of omission either. As we think of Him in His time of dying especially, I believe we see this. When I imagine myself being crucified - and we all need to go through such an exercise of imagination if we take seriously His command to take up His

cross and die with Him - I imagine being faced with a stream of temptations which I know I'd not overcome. But the Lord wasn't on the defensive, fighting off each temptation as it came, but rather positively focused upon the goal before Him. Quite naturally therefore He was less likely to fall into sins of omission, because He was positively oriented toward the goal. But here we have to examine what is the goal of our lives? Raising families, providing security for them... or seeking the Father's glory, and dealing with every issue in life as a means to that end? This approach should enable us to deal better with the issue of priorities... for so often we justify our sins of omission by reasoning that we had other priorities, and one can't do everything in life. 'How to juggle priorities?' ceases to be a difficult question if we have the clearly defined aim of in all things seeking the Father's glory.

If in the daily round we can know *how* desperate we are, the urgency of our spiritual situation, we will appreciate the more finely what the Lord has done and is daily doing for us, and will be motivated to make an urgent, joyful response. The whole wonder of God's truth as it is in Christ is totally lost on us unless we see our desperate need. And the wider wonder of grace will only be appreciated, the thrill felt, if we feel something of the whole of humanity's desperation. One way of realizing the seriousness of our sin is to recognize that each sin we commit, we could have avoided. We must hang our heads, time and again. In the very end, we can blame neither our circumstances nor our natures, even though these are factors in the committal of each sin. We must each bear total personal responsibility for every sin, both of commission and omission.

Grace And Works

The justification by works mentality can lead to a paranoia about sins of omission. Believers wrongly feel guilty that they vowed to *do* something and didn't; that they enthusiastically decided on some great project in an evening of dynamic discussion with others, or made a promise in the mystical impetus of a short-lived moment... and never *did* it. But the *omissions* the Lord focuses on are omissions of simple acts and attitudes of love, and perceiving ones brethren as truly part of the image and person of He Himself.

The fact that the ecclesia is a hospital for sinners and not a club for the righteous, and that salvation is by pure grace and not works, must not be allowed to blur the cutting edge of the demands for action which there are in following Christ. Only in realizing how far we fall short of them are we led to a more thorough humility and a more radical repentance. Regular repentance is absolutely necessary for each of us - for sin both of omission and commission, in motive, aim, thought, desire, wish and fantasy is sadly a daily reality in our lives. Yet grace reigns as a King (Rom. 5:21), in the sense that the real belief that by grace we are and will be saved, will rule over our lives and transform us (Titus 2:11,12). Grace will be the leading and guiding principle in our lives, comprised as they are of a long string of thoughts and actions. And as with every truly focused life, literally *all* other things become therefore and thereby of secondary value. The pathway of persistent, focused prayer, the power of the hope of the Kingdom, regular repentance...day by day we become alive, real people, not couch potatoes sitting hunched over a screen, but living out in our lives the life that He lived and the death He died.

Duncan Heaster

News from Africa

news from benin

COTONOU

I want to use this opportunity to greet the brotherhood all over the world, as we have entered the time that draws nearer to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. More especially, I thank Duncan and Marcus Heaster and all the other brethren who take care of us here in Africa. I appreciate your effort in the work of the Master. I will not fail to mention Bro. John Woodcock, whose uplifting epistles often come to us. I see him as the living apostle Paul of old; may the good Lord see him through as he battles with life, in this our time of probation.

Generally, the things we see and hear today prove that we are living in the last days, considering what is going on in the Middle East now and the commentaries from people, one would know for sure that the Word of God is True (1 Cor.3:18-20). The mystery of the Truth is hid from the world but revealed to us. The trumpet call is going out now and only those who have spiritual ears will hear. So, no matter the situation we find ourselves, let us know that very soon the Lord will return and we shall rejoice with him, but we must keep our garments clean in order to achieve that goal.

Bro. John Eke Aduje

news from congo

May the peace of our Lord be with you. We continue to preach in Masisi, which is a big city where many people live, especially many refugees, and it would be good to buy a plot of land for a meeting room. We continue to make discoveries about Christianity and breaking bread according to God's Word. We must continue to share the bread and wine and, if we continue, we shall grow from time to time. We beg you to come on site to visit the Christadelphians of Masisi Centrale. Your presence on site would be a great encouragement. To back us up it would be desirable to send us a copy of *Bible Basics* in French.

Bro. Edmond Rajabu

news from egypt

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of OGUNDARE and BESEDI, followed on a later visit, by INNOCENT, DARE, FRED, OSUN, MICHAEL, WALTER, FEMI and SEGUN. May God bless this new ecclesia towards His Kingdom.

People seem afraid of the power of God in their lives, preferring the ways of tradition. I can see that God has made a great partnership between us and I pray it shall continue. I am trying to prepare more people to accept Christ, but in this country things are so difficult for Christians.

Bro. Ogundare

BONDO

Thanks to God, this year Sisters and youths from all corners of North Nyanza held their separate convention here at Tsondo Ecclesia. The sessions were entertaining as well as morally uplifting. We are planning that even Sunday School children should be given a chance to interact so as to enhance their social skills. What we are lacking are funds to make it a success, but we hope God will pave the way. Please send us more Sunday School materials if possible.

Bro. Vincent Odhiambo

BULIMBO

I encourage you to carry on sending me *Gospel News* and other pamphlets to help me understand the Bible because our beliefs are quite different from other denominations. We believe that when we die we must wait for the coming of Messiah and the resurrection. Other people think that after death they go to heaven, which is not even written in the Bible. How can we proclaim the good news through the gospel? Let all of us read our Bibles every day and refer to what we have read and make use of those readings. I ask others to take this opportunity to spread the Word of God to local people in their areas in order to work for the free gift of eternal life in the coming Kingdom of God, which will be set up on earth very soon.

Bro. Emmanuel and Sis. Sarah Joumer

BUNGOMA

I am very grateful for the books I received which will be very helpful. We are sorry that because of inflation and rising prices you are not able to do all that you would like for us. We have the same conditions here in Kenya and it seems they are worldwide. We realise that the things that Jesus prophesied, are happening in our times and when war arises the outcome is famine and hardship. I have baptised two candidates, one brother and one sister, and they have joined us this year in our fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ through the Youth Camp that our Bro. Philip Munday from U.K. and others helped to make successful. May God bless the work that they are doing, especially in Western Kenya.

Bro. Boniface Juma

I was very pleased to receive the Bible. I thank God that He has led us through our hardships during the last year. Some of our family members have passed away but we are still breathing in and out as usual. May God, through His power, assist us in our hardships, temptations and any illness, so that we may become more pleasing in His sight.

Bro. Aggrey Muyila

Gospel News IS influencing me and helping me to grow in the faith, so it is my wish that if you can positively support me in this way my faith and knowledge will continue to develop. I was baptised last year and am still a student at High School.

Bro. Gabriel Wamalwa Werunga

I have received two books, "*Woman's Place*" and "*Christendom Astray*". Here in Kenya we are well apart from various problems and I am looking forward to the Kingdom of God. You have assisted me spiritually through books and prayers so that I have been able to help more people.

In April, God Willing, we are going to baptise three peoples so that they can share with us the Lord's table, breaking of bread and partaking of the wine. I pray that our Almighty God will help us so that we direct people in the right channel.

Bro. Anasetus Khaemba

Members of Luuya Ecclesia while in Bible Study led by Bro. Anasetus Khaemba

CHWELE

It is true that most of us do not have many books to help us in our studies. Thank you for the book on the daily readings for April to June. It is a very good book for the family when doing daily readings and I would be very pleased if there is another book available for the whole year.

Sis. Florence Wafula

ELDORET

I am confident that our Lord Jesus Christ will come to rescue this disturbed world. Thank you for coming to my aid in times of crisis. It is now a year ago since we lost our things and household goods in the political chaos in Kenya. Please pass my best regards to Colin and Margaret Quaaife for sending me a Holy Bible. Praise to the Lord, O Lord you are my God, I will exalt you, I will praise your Name, for you have done wonderful things. I do need some copies of *Bible Basics* in both Kiswahili and English. My prayer is to put up a building for the worship of God in Eldoret City.

Bro. Jacob Okoth

HOMA BAY

It cannot go without saying that last year we saw the hand of the Lord, because we received six contacts who passed the interview well and were baptised, therefore the number has increased in our Ecclesia. I would like to request a copy of "*Bible Basics* 5th edition 2008" and also "*Preparation for Baptism*". Once more may I remind you of my Sunday School children and pray that they may be considered.

Bro. Mike Juma

KATITO

Many thanks for your letter and the book, *udgement to Come* which I find very good and stimulating. I am not well and am in dire need of help. Our Master is still away and the world has seen some remarkable events, like the new President in the U.S., P.M. Ehud Olmert flushed out in the Middle East and warfare preparations in Iran and Russia. Inflation is so high that the cost of living is unbearable, e.g. a 2kg packet of flour costs Ksh 120 here in Kenya. I do agree with your comment that Armageddon is to take place after Christ's return. I receive *Present Day Events* from Australia so you do not need to send it to me. It is nice of having *Gospel News* in a new format – short and clear type.

In Eph 4:11-16, we find that Christ divided to his flock some of the gifts. These he gave for some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, in that order; "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ". It meant that we are still immature and movable in our fullness as a body.

Many have been moved by false doctrine so they have not reached the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to grow to the stature of the fullness of Christ. It is clearly evident that each body part needs each other to make the whole body one, and we can only be 'functional' parts if we have deeper understanding of the Truth and are united, so that we cannot be deceived.

I am here talking with great concern the rise of Christendom. For many people, the search for scriptural truth is a constant pursuit in tandem with the rise of numerous denominations, and the need to gain divine guidance has become more pertinent than ever before. There are publications pitched on spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, which remains one of the most fulfilling endeavours the Messiah vested upon Christians. The emergence of false religions with their false teaching has also spawned the rise of occults and cults, which serve as the centre of evil deceptions.

One of the greatest and most important pursuits in life is thirst for scriptural truth, be it temporal or eternal, in the form of information, knowledge or understanding. Therefore one needs to be emphatic on how important it is to recognise genuine truth, which is right, accurate, factual, real, consistent and reliable. There are many religious books 'out there' that claim to be truthful but they cannot stand the test of proof of truth, reliability, accuracy and Divine authorship like the Holy Bible.

Bro. Lawrence K'Owiti

KISUMU

It is my pleasure to inform my fellow brethren that Kisumu Ecclesia is existing. On behalf of the ecclesia I welcome any isolated brother or sister across Kisumu Town to join us at Jomo Kenyatta Grounds.

Bro. Richard Oduma, c/o T. Oduma, P.O.Box 2330, Kisumu, Kenya

KISUMU CITY

Warmest greetings to you. I am very happy for your encouraging effort. There are always newer pastures to work on. I was unable to find the address of the linkman for Kenya so there is a delay in getting those books and also I managed some photos, which will be ready later. I have built a new house and a nice home and took some photos beside it and one day will get them printed. I have no good job yet, only tarmacking and I go home twice a month, which leaves me with very little time for anything else but my Bible reading and writing notes. It seems I will be dying in isolation and I keep asking myself why this should be, but God is always with me.

Bro. Nelson Anyal

KITALE

Sis. Veronica Fuchaka

KOBUJOI

The notes on the signs of the times are really exciting. I do receive *Present Day Events* from Australia but most often, because of postage costs which are currently high, I miss out confirming. I receive the printed sheets through the post.

Thank you very much for “*The Death of the Cross*” by Bro. Duncan, and the other interesting literature. Thanks also for the news on the gospel work in Latvia. It is very encouraging to see brethren and sisters from various nations pooling their resources in order to enable a Bible Conference Centre there.

I managed to attend a Bible School at Songhor. It was great meeting up with several brethren and sisters from the Nyanza area and sharing together, lovingly, memories of the Truth dating back to our day of baptism up to the present time. We all seemed to have grown in the faith. It was a time to encourage each other to continue in THE WAY as we all see the approach of the coming of our Lord and Saviour.

Bro. Geoffrey Chirchir

LUBOKHA

Gospel News is very interesting and encouraging in my study. Now I am happy with my family as we improve our living standard through your effort and we also learn more from others throughout the world. Secondly, it is my great pleasure to inform you that I have an interested friend, who is very much moved, and having borrowed some of my copies would also like to receive *Gospel News*, if possible.

Bro. Patrick Wekesa

MBITA

Please keep on sending me books about Bible study. I found the book written about judgement very interesting. I know that the book you sent me was not my choice, but thank you and try to keep the promise.

Hello brothers and sisters worldwide, which means that we are together in the Name of Jesus Christ through baptism.

Bro. Jared Oketch

MISAKA

The eclipse of the sun, we read in Luke 23:44, “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.” It was a miraculous eclipse. This event is also recorded in Mark 15:33 and Matthew 27:45. Jesus Christ died on the 14th day of the lunar month of Nisan. The first day of Nisan is fixed by the appearance of the new moon.

Bro. Costa Mwape

MIWANI

True Christians must preach about God’s Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus always talked about the Kingdom of God, (Luke 8:1). The Lord commanded his disciples to preach this same message in all the earth, (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20). True Christians believe that only God’s Kingdom will bring true peace and security to this world. (Psalm 146:3-5). Every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ must have no part in this wicked world (John 17:16); they do not get involved in the world’s political affairs and social controversies and they avoid the harmful conduct, practices and attitudes that are common in the world (James 1:27; 4:4). In conclusion, true Christians love one another, respect the Bible and preach about the Kingdom of God.

Bro. Peter and Sis. Jane Omuny

MOMBASA

I am surrounded by Moslems in Ukunda, so if you can get me a good book concerning Moslems or any brother's writing about Moslems changing to true Christianity, I think I could see and know the difference in their faith and in the Truth more clearly.

Bro. Edward Kunikina

MUHORONI

I thank God for the care and protection that He has shown us and for your lives and the hard work that you have been doing in ensuring that the gospel reaches all parts of the world. Our God is alive and will reward the labourers on Jesus' return. The work needs a lot of commitment both physical and material and I pray for your lives and for the Word of God to continue. I received the New English Bible (NT) that you sent to me with a lot of joy and appreciation, I just wish it were both Old and New Testaments.

Bro. Sylvester Ariri

Thank you very much for the box of Kiswahili *Bible Basics*. As you have mentioned in your letter that you have a stock available, I am requesting that you kindly send them over for us, should time allow please. I wish you the very best for the work in Latvia. I would very much like to visit this wonderful Bible Study Centre one day should the Lord remain away and God willing.

Bro. Alex Abuya

MWEIGA

I received with great rejoicing the 9.90kg parcel containing "SLA-TO-MA" MYSTERY:- DELPHIAN", for which I cannot thank you enough. More than 75 volumes of the SLA-TO-MA are now ready to reach readers for the purpose of exhortation to brethren and sisters and preaching to unbelievers to bring many to Christ in this area. All this work is done in our Lord's Name.

According to the instruction, 'tis in union', which binds all the message of exhortation in our Christadelphian Hymn Book, to us as Christians; I guess you understand my point of view. Not because I want to trade, gain or benefit by this chance of writing books as some unbelieving writers do, for gain. No, no brethren. From the bottom of my heart, I fear to sin against God, I fear to risk my life.

But it is not a sin to look on both sides. The Gospel is a "gift freely given" by God, and "you give freely." Matt.10:8. That means that every God-fearing man cannot be a gospel-gainer in any way at all. But what should we say? I guess that Bro. Paul had more foresight when he commented to the church at Corinth over this aspect, 1 Cor. 9:8-14.

In a case like this he did not intend to make a trap, which pseudo-Christians have fallen into in our day before our eyes, in the case of "Serve not our Lord, but their own belly." Rom.16:18. Therefore, obstacles are now all over the world: the bouncing crisis of world economy, the food relief crisis and other things. This is the danger; as faithful Christians we do not like to jeopardise our lives against God or put to shame the gospel of our Lord in case that we err in rushing to the world because we must table for our everyday meals.

Bro. Lawrence Gitonga

NAIROBI

Jesus has been my reason for living and without him in my daily life I would lose the meaning and purpose of staying in this world. Jesus has a purpose and a mission for me that I have to fulfil before he comes back. The mission he has given his elect is to speak the Gospel to all creatures and teach sound doctrine. This is what you have been doing and I tell you that, as a servant of God, you will never fail to fulfil your mission and plans. Though things seem hard in England, brothers, God is bigger than your situation; when He comes in like a storm against the plains, God is raising a standard to overtake the enemy. Be still in the Lord; all the setbacks, difficulties and hardships you have been seeing, or you are encountering, the Bible clearly says in Exodus 14:13-14, "The Lord will fight for you, just be still in him."

I have discovered something about God, it is that I do not need to struggle to make things work for me, but 2009 is the year of just *trusting and obeying God* and knowing and understanding Him and His mind and heart, Jer.9:23-24.

You are going to move into higher levels in ministry and preaching the gospel. You may see darkness today but I want to tell you that God is working out things behind the scenes, light is coming; where you think there is no way, that is where God is going to make a way. Your work is not in vain. You may think this is impossible but I tell you, God is watching your steps and monitoring your work. I thank God for you because you have been of great support to me in my spiritual growth and my understanding of the Word of God has improved greatly. I am not really troubled by what happens around me; what I usually say to God is to let His will be done according to His Word.

Bro. Jared Kidiga

NAKURU

Bro Samuel Wanga and a workmate at the Supermarket where he works

NDALI

May the God of heaven bless the work of your hands and those who are supporting you. I received the book entitled, *Judgement to come*. I have read through a quarter of the book and it has opened up new thoughts to me.

Bro. Johnstone Kaliwanga

NDHIWA

At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, which shook the prison to its foundation. At once all the doors opened and the chains fell off all the prisoners. The jailor woke up and when he saw the prison doors open he thought that the prisoners had escaped, so he pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself, but Paul shouted at the top of his voice, "Don't harm yourself, we are all here!"

God can use you. God used Saul and changed his name to Paul (Acts 13v9). So Paul wrote many letters to the believers to cheer and encourage them. His purpose was to tell them about the power of God in a believer's life.

Sis. Dorine A. Mboya

Loving and warm greetings in the Lord Jesus, our Master. It was nice to hear from you and I am pleased to hear that you are getting others interested in helping the children. I have been struggling in my life in Christ, as it has many ups and downs, but God still tells me not to despair, so I hope that one day my efforts and objectives will be fulfilled before the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Thank you for the book on crop production. I am planning to call an officer concerned with agriculture and hold a seminar to create awareness of modern food production with the parents, to enable them to know how to care for my pupils (children). I am glad of the effort you make to pass on my cry for help to the linkman and it is my prayer that his suggestions and conclusion will pave the way for the funding of the project somehow. Many people have now heard of Christadelphians in this area through the materials you send and the project activity.

The food situation in Kenya is worsening and most children only have the porridge I supply and feed them with and when they do not have anything left to eat they look at me sorrowfully and it is very hard. That forces me to cry to my God who knows more than man. I welcome any brother or sister from anywhere in the world to fulfil my dream to give me a helping hand to produce enough for these children as it is beyond my resources. The Acocks Green Ecclesia Ndhiwa is small but active enough through God's revelation and most of our members are young men between 24-30. We hold our Bible classes every Wednesday in each member's house in turn.

Sis. Emmy Aseyo

SINDO

I was happy to receive the book you sent, "*The Death of the Cross*". I took time to go through the topic of taking up the cross. Matt.11:29, "Come to me and I will give you rest". Luke 14:27, "Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke 9:23, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." Matt.10:38, "And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Phil.2:8, Christ is an example of humility, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself to become obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." 2 Tim.2:5 tells us that an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

In conclusion, Rev.2:7 refers to the one who conquers, "I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev.22:14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city".

We learn through God's message that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, died on the cross in order to conquer sin and death and win victory by his resurrection, to be the first to get immortality. We must follow his example of humility, he who is the author of our salvation. We also look forward to being given the reward of eternal life – salvation - when he comes the second time to reign on this earth.

Bro. John Owalo Onani

SUNA MIGORI

Is it really possible that names of people once written in the book of life can be blotted out? Yes, it is possible. These are those who have received the Lord and been united with him in baptism, but at a later stage have not read his Word or had fellowship with him in prayer. Daily commitments and activities, as well as aspirations of success in this world, have choked the

spiritual life and eventually they are like branches that yield no fruit and so have to be cut down and thrown into the fire to be burnt. In Rev.20:15 we read, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Brethren and sisters, we need to live in daily repentance and in the grace of forgiveness of sin. It is only the blood of Jesus our Saviour that provides for the daily cleansing of our sins and this ‘applied’ blood that reinforces the names written in the book of life. If we have no use for this cleansing blood our names will be obliterated from the book of life and at the last day we shall be separated from the Lord.

I received the book, *How we got our Bible*, which is an interesting book. I wish you could send some more books, especially *How To Grow a Balanced Diet* or *Where There is No Doctor*. These two books could really assist me very much. On the other hand I am doing well with my forty-lesson course. There was a delay in receiving some lessons but thank you for your efforts to write to Rachel who connected me to my personal tutor called Roy Delve, who wrote to me recently. I was to have been baptised on 6 December 2008, but James, our Chairman had an accident on his motorcycle and the Secretary, Bro. Samuel Masswa had lost his brother in a different motorcycle accident. So as you can see motorcycle accidents are very common in Kenya.

Bro. Benjamin Mwatu

Bro. Joshua Masswa, Bro. Bernard Ochotha and the father of Bro. James, our chairman, taken at a Bible Seminar at Kababu while having breakfast.

TONGAREN

Warmest greetings in the saving name of Jesus our Master and King. Thank you for your letter and all the books and documents you send to me; may God bless you in all that you do. In brief Tongaren Ecclesia has started the project for the families of MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN. The object of the project is to help the most defenceless children living in Tongaren. Our purpose is to help elevate these children from their current economic, emotional and spiritual status and to encourage them to acknowledge and honour the God of creation. This project is a Biblical response to those in need. We need donors who can supply learning aids, such as children’s Bible learning materials, Bibles and Bible lessons. Through this project we may get future Christadelphians by teaching them the truth of the Bible. By the grace of God, children need never be denied an opportunity to learn God’s Word and the grace of the gospel message.

Bro. Isaac Kapa

Photos: 1. Bro. Isaac Kapa with the Sunday School children who have been registered in the project of *MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN*.

2. Bro. Daniel Simiyo with the Most Vulnerable Children of Tongaren Ecclesia, consisting of more than 100 children, inside the Ecclesial building.

news from malawi

BALAKA

Thank you for sending me the books and lectures, which strengthen me to stand firm. I pray every day for the spread of the gospel worldwide, though I cannot travel long distances, but I pray for transport so that I may join my brothers and sisters who are doing the job, to fulfil the words in Mark 16:15-16. Life is very hard now everything is so expensive.

Bro. Eason Makwecha

When I went to Chinamwali Misson in Zomba district, on the way the bus had an accident and some people died while others were injured. I was among the injured and I stayed in hospital for two months. Since I depend on agriculture (subsistence farming) I have failed to harvest enough food and am in trouble due to hunger. Also I am failing to preach well now. Of course I am a church mouse and it does not rise from deceitful lips. Is it possible to help me, as I am lacking in health, food and money as I am in trouble? I have resolved that my words will not be sin in God's sight, but please God that you can help me.

Bro. Harry Benito

CHIKWAWA

Thank you for what you have done for us here. It is only God in heaven giving you more days and years of life to enable you to spread the gospel. As we read in 2 Tim ch. 3, the last days of our life will be complicated with new, strange things like civil war, hunger, selfishness and the like.

Bro. Harold Temboh

Bro. Harold Temboh standing on the left with Bro. Mpezeni right and Bro. Roneck sitting.

GONDA

I greet you all in your team in the name of our beloved King. I am very happy indeed to tell you that I have received three parcels of Christadelphian literature which consist of: a box of *Bible Basics*, *Holy Bibles* and *Hymn books*, *Judgement to Come*, a Biblical discussion, 'Signs of the Times' leaflets and a parcel of *Gospel News*, *Bible Reader's Calendars 2009* and papers needing to be filled in. For all these I am very thankful because it means that God has answered our prayers about the missing parcels. I think that God corrected this problem in order to allow us to have preaching materials and to strengthen our ecclesia to be courageous. As Joshua 1:7 says, "Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law".

I want to thank you for the notes on Sunday School lesson books and general notes on the 'Signs of the Times' you send us here. We had a meeting at Ntowe Christadelphian Ecclesia and Bro. Walker encouraged all present about preaching and he assured us that the day of the Lord will not come until all God's chosen people hear His Word and are baptised. It is the work of all who receive the message, believe it and are baptised, to preach the gospel and to ask God to increase the number of preachers in these last days.

Bro Robert Folley

KASUNGU

How is your life and that of Sis. Gwladys. I hope God is keeping you well now. Here in Kasungu Ecclesia we are all fine and we have commenced this year with eight Bible students. God willing, out of this number some will be baptised. The Sisters' Bible Class have just reminded me that there is another book which I wish I could read and that is "*Beyond Bible Basics*". I remembered this when I saw our sisters in Kasungu studying *Bible Basics*. God has blessed me

because some time ago I was in isolation but now I am praying with brothers and sisters and moreover we have an ecclesia here. Very wonderful!

Bro Harmony Ntchalachala

LILONGWE

I want to write about Colossians. About ten times in the epistles Paul talks about praying without ceasing. Clearly it does not mean that Paul did nothing else but pray. What it does mean is that whatever he was doing, saying, writing or thinking was always accompanied by prayer. In Col.1:3, Paul has the brethren and sisters at Colosse in his mind. Col.4:2-3, It is not for everyone to be a missionary, certainly not in the way Paul was, but all of us have things we can do in service to the Lord. It is important that we all acknowledge what each one can do and we ask in prayer for God's help and support for one another as Paul here asked his brothers and sisters to pray for him. Col.4:12, notice he is said to be labouring fervently for them in prayer, wrestling in prayer is the idea. The prayer he offered on their behalf was that they might "stand perfect, complete in all the will of God." It is a prayer we could well offer for each other. Do we really desire that our brothers and sisters might be successful in working out their salvation? Do we pray that they will? This is the way of Epaphras.

The epistle also contains some examples of Paul's actual prayers. It is easy to miss that they are prayers because they are mixed in with the rest of what he has to say. This is an example to us of the way in which practical thoughts, meditation and prayer can and should all blend together as we think about the way we can help each other grow in grace before God.

There are two examples: one is in Col.1:9-13 and the second is in Col.2:2. Notice how each prayer does not actually come to a full stop but goes on into a meditation about the importance of the Lord Jesus Christ, how we are in him and the great blessings we have through him. Let us consider the first prayer more closely. The prayer begins by asking that we might be filled with a growing knowledge of the will of God. The purpose of prayer is that we might know the will of God and co-operate with it. As Ezra and Isaiah have taught us, we need to get to know what God has revealed and tremble at His Word. When we pray we are not so much making God listen to us, but making ourselves ready to hear His Word.

Bro. Finley G. Nkomelah

MZUZU

Many thanks for the parcel of tapes and books which I received a week ago. I have already listened to some of the tapes and the messages are very encouraging. As I am writing this letter, we are remaining with just a day to close the year 2008. While looking ahead to the New Year, we should at the same time be thinking of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. God willing, as we begin the New Year let us also consider how we have walked in the Lord this year that is just ending. Do we still have the burning zeal in looking forward to the Master's coming? If not, let us pull up our socks in the New Year to match up to our first love for Jesus.

Bro. Sylvester Tembo

We are still working hand in hand, battling and we are still in that battlefield. We don't lose hope for we know that one day we shall rejoice and sing in the Lord. I have only received one book – *Christendom Astray from the Bible*. If there is still the opportunity of other books, may you

please consider me for some, except *Bible Basics* and *Women in the Church*, which I already have. I will be happy if there are any other books.

Fertilizers have doubled in price. Last year's harvest was very bad because only a few farmers grew maize, but many of them grew tobacco which is their Malawian reliable cash crop and due to this problem we still expect a little hunger which always happens during these seasons.

Bro. Dutch Mphayah

NENO

We had suspected cholera cases where the people who are interested Christadelphian contacts are. Then my office provided me with transport to go to investigate and tell the people measures of control. I then met two of the contacts who are teachers at a primary school. I asked them whether they are continuing with the *Bible Basics* book and they said yes. I then gave them the leaflets you sent and the *Introduction to Bible Basics* and urged them to continue and strengthen the other seven families to continue praying.

I still have the Israelis here at Neno and we discuss their belief in Judaism and they provide me with information from the Wikipedia. Bro. Tony Benson, the editor of the '*Testimony*', had an article about Wikipedia in one of the magazines and it is true that we should take care of what is written in Wikipedia. I agree with him because there are Ashkenazi Jews who say they are originated from the sons of Japeth, after the flood who are mentioned in Gen.10 and when we read Gen.11 we find the real origin of the Jewish nation from Abraham and that continues to Gen.12. I therefore find it difficult to believe that the Gen.10 people are Jewish. If possible can you find more information about them. It seems to me that they don't know much about their Bible. They do not read the Bible on their own; they believe only what they were told by someone who they think knows much.

I think we should put much effort to preach to people and I know the effort is already there. When I again visit these people who are interested I will let you know and I hope you will write to them using the address I have given you for a back up.

Bro. A.D. Liwawa

NSANJE

Thank you for the *Gospel News* and "*The Death of the Cross*". We had a meeting with our friends from Chislidi, which we enjoyed but unfortunately we are lacking Chichewa Bibles. Could you please help us because our common language is Chichewa and Christians here need Chichewa Bibles for easy reading.

Bro. M.P. M'Gundeni

RUMPHI

I am devoted to the defence of the Gospel, edification of the household of faith and to maintaining purity.

Bro. Luke Chawinga

SALIMA

I am busy working in the groundnut field. Rains are now with us and I am hoping to send you photographs of both maize and groundnut fields in the near future. Thanks for the books you sent me: *Christendom Astray* and *The Devil explained in the Bible*. They are comprehensive and give me more depth of understanding in the Scriptures.

Bro. Austin F. Nyirenda

SINYALA

God does hear us when we pray. To pray is to talk to God, to enjoy fellowship with Him, to come close to His throne. There we speak to Him with simple words that come from our hearts. We worship Him and make our requests to Him. Whoever has a heart that is cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus and is yielding to the will of God has the privilege of praying. If the person does not meet these requirements he may confess his sin to God. If his repentance is real, God will hear his prayer and cleanse his heart. The Bible says in Heb.4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of NEED." Since the Bible says that there is but one Mediator between God and us, all our prayers to God need to be made through Jesus.

I humbly appeal for your kindness to send reading glasses for Bro. Daniel Banda, Lens clear +2.50. He is failing to read the Bible as his eyes are not good. May the Almighty be with you in all effort to spread his Word.

Bro. Henderson M. Sosola

TENGANI

Bro. Brown Ketche's family

THYOLO

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I would like to thank you a lot for all the good things that you did for me. I thank you also for the encouragement you give me from the United Kingdom through sending me *Gospel News*. May we not forget to read the Bible and meet together as written in Heb.10:25. If Chichewa Bibles are still available please try to send one to me to help my study.

Bro. S. Lombe

ZOMBA

Thank you for the new edition of *Bible Basics for Moslems* as well as the news updates which I found interesting and helpful. Here in Malawi from January to February every year, we always experience hunger and now people are starving indeed. The parcel of maize flour we use and buy each day we call a "Walk Man" meaning a small packet, which is equal to 1-1 and a half kg. that a man put in his pocket to take home. But God cannot leave His people alone, hopefully He will provide something better. All these signs, such as famine, floods, wars, earthquakes and so on fulfil the conditions of the last days, which point forward to the return of our Lord Jesus. The babies are growing healthier, as well as their mother, even the first born son, Frank, they are all feeling better.

Bro. Kenneth Maganger

news from mauritius

I appreciate and thank CAT very much, for all the great job that it is doing in spreading God's Word throughout the world. I sincerely wish that God will bless CAT. even more spiritually and financially and that you will always be successful in every field of activity. I am thankful to receive *Gospel News* as I am happy to read good news from other brethren and sisters in Christ.

Sis. Pinky Seetaram

If we look for some exhortation from the Bible we have some contradiction on this matter. For example, Col.2:20-22 and Col.2:8, Gen.19:26, to remember Lot's wife, also 2 Cor.6:14-18 etc. I want to have your exhortation on this point please. May the Lord keep you well and bless you for your answers. I receive my *Gospel News* regularly and it is very interesting to know the news of all brethren and sisters in the world. Thank you for your good work to my spirituality.

Bro. Guy Jhureea

news from mozambique

On behalf of the Mozambican Christadelphian congregation I write to acknowledge receipt of ten English *Bible Basics*, assorted magazines and other literature. I send my sincere thanks and I believe this will help us so much in our Bible studies. Using the same opportunity, I report having received ten mosquito nets for our brothers and sisters here in Mozambique from the CBM. This shows us how the Christadelphian family care for our health and they will help significantly to combat the malaria epidemic which is very common in our area. Lastly, I would like to inform you that whenever sending me any parcel please can you use the following address: Aaron Mhlanga, c/o Moses Dhlakama, PO Box 320, Chipinge, Zimbabwe. I thank you for posting literature to me. If possible with the next post please can you help me with an English/Portugese dictionary. Thank you.

Bro. Aaron Mhlanga

news from nigeria

ABA

The Ecclesia has made great progress in propagating the Truth inside and outside the State as well as public and Sunday Radio Broadcasts.

(Photo). The baptism of Bro Joseph Onwukwe

CALABAB

I write to inform you that all your letters have reached my hands: *Present Day Events*, *Christendom Astray from the Bible*, and *Gospel News*. Thank you very much for your kindness in keeping me informed on present day world news. I expect to hear from you soon and extend my greetings to other brothers and sisters in the Truth.

Bro. Igani U. Eteng

IKWUEKE

I was very pleased to hear from you and thank you for the excellent books from you in the whole armour of spreading the Truth. I understand that *Gospel News* has reached all over the world. With all the books, we too must be busy workers for our Lord and gather the sweet honey of His Word to grow by it. We must be brave also in defending it from robbers, wise as serpents, harmless as doves; the time is passing quickly.

Bro. Friday E. Enyiogu

Photo: A time of excitement at Ikwueke

I thank you for the excellent *Gospel News* that you send to me and pray for your wellbeing. Sis. Victoria sends her love, along with Ikwueke Ecclesia, in our one hope in Christ Jesus.

Bro. Chituru Ogbonna

news from south africa

CANDU

Bro. Templeton Mdludlu of the Candu Ecclesia in South Africa asked us to print these pictures taken on Easter Sunday morning, April 12, 2009. He would be pleased to see them included in an upcoming copy of *Gospel News*. The first picture shows Bro. Templeton with Sisters-to-be Mirriam Jevu and Nozulo Bula, standing beside the pool in Durban, SA, before they were baptized. The second shows Bro. Templeton baptizing Sis. Mirriam Jevu. The right hand of fellowship and breaking of bread followed, as part of the annual Easter Conference in South Africa.



Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time, though for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 1: 3 - 7

KEMPTON PARK

We rejoice with Bro. Obed on the baptism into our Lord Jesus, at Kempton Park ecclesia, of his wife, Mrs. Betty Mafifi. May our gracious Lord bless our new Sister and may she and our Brother Obed be a source of strength to each other and the ecclesia in their walk to His Kingdom. .

LIMPOPO



The baptism of Bro. Charlie Golele.

YEOVILLE

Yeoville ecclesia rejoiced at the baptisms of Brother Julio Silva, and Sisters Melody Masiraha and Dede Bindamuaka.

news from tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM

First of all I thank you for all the scripts you have been sending to me. My concern is that I used to pursue a correspondence course with Mrs. Liz Robinson, but I got some immigration cases, which caused me to be jailed for two years which interrupted my Bible studies. Now, I have lost all contact with Mrs. Liz. Could you please help me to get my tutor's address as I lost many of my items including my papers about the Bible.

Ernest Shindano

MBEYA

Receive many greetings of love and peace from me personally, from my family of six people, from my neighbours and from over fifty who attend my evening Bible Class, which I conduct here in my home. I received your lovely mailbag with all the wonderful contents. What a surprise! I am particularly impressed by the most wonderful Study Bible, which is very rare in Tanzania and it is the only kind of book like it in this southern part of Tanzania; many people wonder how I got it. It is helping me a great deal in my Bible correspondence course.

I have learned of the death of Bro. Bernard's wife and I am also sending him a letter to encourage him as he is going through a period of sorrow. We all have to face death, but so long as we die in Christ we are sure to be resurrected.

Ewaldi Mushi

MOROGORO

Bro Joctor Rufano when he was at the Teacher's College

MUSOMA

We are all fine and are planning to have another branch in Buhemba in Musoma rural, This will be uplifting spiritually. May God bless you, and looking forward to hearing more from you soon.

The days are quickly flying - how much nearer we are to the reality of all our hopes and dreams. What glorious things are promised to those who love God! No more pain, sorrow, doubt or fear; no more hunger or thirst; freedom from the temptations of the flesh; knowing always the right thing to do and say; being able to help those in trouble; and can you imagine seeing the Creator's Son face to face? Nothing that we worry about now will matter at all in that moment.

Be brave and strong for He is with you always in every way.

Sis Monica Achieng

Sis Monica and her two children Kevin and Bev

USAGARA

Photo: Usagara Ecclesial members and children.

news from uganda

BUGIRI

I told you a while ago that I have a boy named Morgan Marcus Heaster. He is my last-born up to now and he is your name sake. He is now two years old. I gave him your name because of the brotherly love we share and so, dear brother, you may be able to see his photo sometime. The purpose of this letter is to let you know that I have not received *Bible Basics* in Kiswahili yet but I do not know how long it takes by sea mail.

Bro. Samuel Mukisa

BUSIA

I was glad to see my article printed in *Gospel News*. I have a question to ask and I need your guidance. We all know that Adam had two sons, Cain and Abel, and later on Cain killed Abel. The Bible talks of incest as a sin but how did the children of Seth and Cain come about? Also, who are the twenty-four elders that the Bible talks about?

Bro. Peter Mugeni

KIGANDALO

I have been away from my ecclesia for almost three months but I was able to attend the Ugandan Youth Camp. It was a very uplifting Camp although there are not enough occasions like this as there are a great number of young people needing this sort of event. This means that in Uganda the number of Christadelphians is increasing, so we still need spiritual books to enlarge our preaching. My regards go to Bro. Mayende, Bro. J.J. and Sis. Savanah, who helped mostly during the youth camp and the U.K. team, Bro. Richard Janes, Joni and Sis. Esther. We hope they will come back again. May God bless you all abundantly and may he keep you like Daniel in the lion's den.

Bro. Samuel Onyango

Bro. Samuel Onyango at Entebbe International Airport.

MBALE

Every human being tries to find a way by which he or she can be reconciled to God/a god, i.e. Each person wishes to find a way whereby he/she can escape the awful punishment for his sins. Pharoah used magicians to try to solve the awful problem by convincing himself that the God the Israelites worshiped was inferior to the Egyptian gods Ex.5:2. Actually Pharoah and his group can be described as atheists, or agnostic. The Egyptians had designed visible gods, which they

worshipped, hence they had no knowledge of the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who sent Moses.

Today, we are also living in a world where people have designed their own gods, e.g. the Buddhists, while others look at planets and stars to worship. Some others have no connection with the Bible to support their religion as a means to salvation! Actually about one third of the world's population describe themselves as 'Christian'. Indeed each and every religion today, whether very slightly related to the Bible or apparently quite true to the Bible, claims to be the most correct to lead its followers to salvation. e.g. Roman Catholics, Baptist, Reformed, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc. I thank God that I am a Christadelphian. Brothers and Sisters, know that God chose Israel to be His people, not the Egyptians, hence the power of the magicians was null and void, just as God has chosen you and me. Eph.1:3-5, Rom.9:15, etc. Therefore, dear Christadelphians, we need never lose our hope of salvation because God has a plan to save us in His own time. Lam.3:26, Ps.62:5-8.

Thank you for passing on my request to Bro. John Matthias. In Uganda life is not easy, indeed the situation is hard for me and I have nowhere to turn. Imagine now, we are approaching a season to plant crops but I have no money to buy seeds! Actually, it is now ten years since I finished my studies and have been looking for a job but all in vain, yet I am a qualified secondary school teacher of Geography and Economics. In Uganda, the Army is recruiting more staff, where training and deployment is government sponsored, yet I who underwent training as a secondary school teacher, at a cost, is living miserably unemployed! Job 6:13; 21:6-14. Anyway, include me in your prayers to find God's favour as the situation is really hard, especially hunger, sickness, shelter and isolation. I thank my God who has sustained and protected me for this long; give honour and glory back to Him.

I have a female student whom I wish to send to the brothers and sisters in Suume Ecclesia this month for baptism. Let us patiently wait for Christ's return. God bless you.

Bro. Patrick Kukuya

MBARARA

Here in Mbarara ,we are very well and honored to be co-workers in the work of God with people who are very many miles away from us. We are happy for the work you and others have contributed to the lives of people in all circles of life, especially spiritual; thank you too, for *Gospel News* you send to me. I have changed my address to P.O.Box 885 Mbarara, Uganda.

Bro Sunday Moses

Here in Mbarara ecclessia we are doing well and the youth all over Uganda, because we last met in Jan. 2009 for a week of spiritual renewal session called the Youth camp. It was a wonderful time for all the young people to get to know each other so that they don't think they are alone in the work of God. My new address is the one of the ecclessia, that is Bro George Mayimba, Mbarara Ecclesia, P.O Box 885, Mbarara, Uganda.

news from zambia

CHINSALI

I wish to thank you for *Gospel News*, and I would like you to know that it has become the first book on my bookshelf, after my house was burnt to ashes by unknown people. This happened due to my different belief which I have in the Christadelphian faith; to those who are Trinity believers every Christadelphian is deemed a Satanist here.

This happened when I went to attend the funeral of our Bro Joel Mutale who fell asleep recently after a long illness. He has left a wife and eight children. On my way back after the burial, I found my house completely burnt with everything in it. I couldn't believe that this had happened, but now I have come to understand that we have trials. This has been a great blow to me and my family, but I still remain in faith and pray for comfort and spiritual guidance. Furthermore, I wish to thank God that I was not indoors – if I was in the house it could have caused my death. The Lord God be praised for evermore.

Bro. Charles Kangwa

CHIPATA

I would like to thank you for your effort in producing such a wonderful publication. It is my hope that many, through the knowledge acquired will benefit greatly in spiritual growth. May the Lord of mercy bless you all in this challenging mission.

Sis. Esther Mbewe

FRINGILLA

Last year was a bad year for me in the sense that I underwent serious illness, such as shortness of breath, chest pains and body weakness. I was bedridden from August to November 2008. When I went into hospital I was told that I had Asthma. Immediately I was introduced to drugs for this disease.

However, from December and January good fruits have been shown, and this is the indication that God's hand has already touched me. Therefore I would like to tell brothers and sisters around the globe that I am well and looking forward to God continuing to bless me that I may stay in good health, as now.

Brethren and sisters, let's prayerfully read the Bible on a daily basis; God's hand is not short. If we remain faithful, God will richly bless us.

Bro. Ignatius Chilikwa

KABOMPO

I and members of my household greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The atmosphere with us is as when the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, like 'men who dreamed, mouths filled with laughter, tongues with joy,' and our brethren 'have seen the mercies and love of our Heavenly Father upon us. The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy. That we may sow in tears, but will reap with songs of joy. We are going out weeping, carrying seed (the word of God) to sow. 'We will meet the Lord in the air with joy soon,' whether we sleep in the Lord or meet him first before falling asleep. (Psalm 126 and 1 Thess.4:13-18)

I am looking forward to reading the book on AIDS once it is published and you have a chance to send me a copy, for God willing, I hope to translate it into my mother tongue (Luchazi) for students and believers alike to read in the local language they understand. I am grateful for the books, '*The Death of the Cross*,' '*Preaching the Word*,' and all the study materials you have sent

me. I am very encouraged. I now feel that all I have passed through has been for my correction, instruction and guidance on my way to the Kingdom. My desire is to preach until I sleep in the Lord, or meet him in life when he comes.

I have begun preaching at my farm, Lelavana Farm, and I am asking you to pray for me and those who are hearing the word of God, that our Heavenly Father may save some by faith in our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord accomplishes His purpose whenever it is preached. This is why I desire to preach wherever I am, in whatever circumstance. I do not look *at* what I am by the flesh, but what I am in Jesus Christ who is in me. I sing praises to my Lord, meditate on his word in whatever situation. My mind is on the things our Heavenly Father has reserved for us on the day the Lord shall come - heavenly things, not of the flesh. This makes me feel I should not dwell in town or city, but in the typical rural areas, tilling the land and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Dear brother and sister, kindly find some sister who can personally take the responsibility of teaching my daughter Sarah Kaambeu: she has completed grade 12; and my niece Briniah Masaku, she is in grade 11 at High School. Sarah is your sister in the Lord, she was baptized in 2005 by the late Brother Nelson Bwalya, but Briniah has just joined our family in Kabompo from Mufumbere I am sending you their addresses.

Bro. Reuben Kaambeu

I wish to greet all Sunday School students, and tell you about Noah. Why did Noah find favour in the eyes of the Lord God? Let's read Genesis 6:8-9, and 7:1 'The Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation."'

Shall we say that only Noah found favour? He did at that time, but we also can find favour if we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God sent him to die for our sins. Read John 8:24 and 7:38. Everyone who believes that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, can find favour with the Lord, as did Noah, who was righteous in his generation. 1 John 5:1, 4-5.

Sis Gracious Kufuna

My old bicycle is badly damaged and broken beyond repair. Now I am walking with all my family to Kabompo main ecclesia. The bicycle was helping me carry my young children to the ecclesia, but now it is damaged it is not possible and I have to carry them on my shoulders. My wife, your sister, can't carry two children as she has a new baby, and it is a long distance from where I live to the main ecclesia - it's 15km. So I would be grateful if you could help me to buy another bicycle to help the seven members in my family.

Bro. Goodson Kufuna

I am sorry for sending the photo for the Second North-Western Bible School so late, this is due to delays with the photographer. The chief speaker was Bro. Dennis Kombe from Ndola, who is our national secretary.

Brother, I am writing this letter during an asthma attack, which has now lasted three months. After taking a lot of medicine in 1997 the disease seemed to have gone, but now it has started again. I ask brothers and sisters world-wide to pray for me: I believe with God nothing is impossible.

The ecclesia is assisting in replying to students.

Bro. Charles Muhupu

Second N.W. Bible School, August 2008.

KABWE

I will be very glad if my letter finds you in good health, as it has left me here. I received your letter, together with books. Although the books which I requested had all gone, all the same it is good and nice that you have sent me some others. Please continue doing so, God willing.

Since you started sending me *Gospel News* and other literature, I have learned a lot of things, that's where we can learn what is happening in other ecclesias, and what they are doing. I have been moving from one place to another looking for employment. You know things nowadays are much more difficult, so you have to work extra hard in order to survive.

Last year I missed Bible School but this year, if God is willing, I will be there, because that's where I know brothers and sisters from different countries or towns, and that's where we learn a lot of things. Life is so hard, but God is great and controlling everything, since He is the one who created all things, and we are in the last days.

Bro. Greenwell Kunda

KAFUE

I am very grateful for the '*Christendom Astray from the Bible*' book you sent to me and I would like to ask you to assist me with another book called '*The Last Days*,' written by Duncan.

Our way of life is the best way of preaching to most people around us. The word of God, which is already working in us will effectively produce fruit which will yield salvation.

By the grace of the Almighty we have started building our meeting hall; brothers and sisters help with the project once a week. We are appealing to all brothers and sisters who can assist us with building material for the hall.

Bro. Josiah Siane

I have received a book you sent me, thank you very much, the book is becoming helpful to me. I am requesting a DVD, '*The Revelation in One Hour*,' I think it will be very helpful to me to teach others. I would be very happy if you could send me any suitable DVDs. Also '*2,600 years: Daniel and the Revelation – A Brief History of God's World*.'

I have a question on how a Christadelphian brother or sister should dress: what does the Bible say on this? I need your help on this matter. Thank you.

Sis. Moment Mazyamuna

Happily Almighty God will bring an end to all adversity very soon (Isaiah 25:8; Rev.1:3; 21:3-4). In the meantime, He shows that He really cares for us by providing 'instruction' and 'comfort from the Scriptures,' so that we can cope with trials now, as we look forward to that wonderful future just ahead. (Rom.15:4; 1 Peter 5:7). At that time those who are upright in God's eyes will enjoy unending life in a new world, free from every form of adversity. (Psalm 37:29, 37).

Bro. Lotson Kayuni

KASAMA

My young brother has an old-fashioned video/audio set which can play tapes, VCDs and DVDs. He is Catholic, but there is potential for preaching, for he and his family do read and learn our expositions. He invites us at times for discussion. My request is that you may send us any information using the forms mentioned above. This home of seven members can be a good springboard for the word of God, by His grace and will. (1Pet.3:20; 2Pet.2:5)

In spiritual terms the Bible (God's word), has always symbolically associated gold with tested faith. (1Pet.1:7). How do we relate this to Dan.2:32?

Logos Vol.75 #3, Dec.2008 pp.122 (Millennial Temple): the passage suggests the temple will be physical, which a sister like me, fails to understand. In contrast, the following passages seem to suggest something spiritual: John 2:19; 1Cor.3:16; 1Pet.2:5; Heb.3:5-6; Rev.3:12 and Rev.21:22. I would like to have your views on this, and please as you always do, some notes where possible.

Sis. Christine Simpanzye

Trusting all is well with you, I would like to let you know that if things go well and God is willing, I hope to start a carpentry workshop, which could help me make a living. If possible would you kindly, help me by sending the prices of suitable tools which I need to purchase. Tools here in Zambia are very expensive – that's why I want to consider buying them from the U.K.

Bro. Joshua Mushili

KAZEMBE

When studying the Truth, I used *Bible Basics* seriously, together with the *KJV Bible* which I borrowed from the nearest brother. Now the Kazembe Ecclesia has moved from Kasumpa School to Mbereshi. I have remained isolated near Mangamu, but every Sunday I walk all the way to Mbereshi and take part in the Breaking of Bread and exhortations. Could you please send me another *Bible Basics* together with the *Gospel News* as these are essential to me for regularly revising and studying.

Bro. Vincent Mwenje

KITWE

I would like to make some comments on the topic 'The Devil'. Firstly, because the word 'devil' is found many times, but in the New Testament only. Secondly, because many people talk about it in Christian circles as well as in non-Christian circles. Thirdly, because many people believe that the devil is a fallen angel.

Collins Gem Dictionary describes 'devil' as a personified spirit of evil, or a person of wickedness.

Let us look at Matt 4:1-11, bearing in mind that "Jesus was given the Holy Spirit without limit" (John 3:34), so that although he could have allowed himself to be moved from place to place by an evil person, here this happened in the mind of Jesus, in his thoughts.

The word 'devil' is an abstract noun, so that it is a 'naming' word expressing an idea, not a material thing. Examples are: knowledge, truth, efficiency, honour. An abstract noun is the name of a thing which you cannot see, hear, taste or touch. You cannot pick it up and walk with

it. It exists in the mind. In another sense, 'devil' means 'sin' (and the word 'sin' is another abstract noun).

The passage in Matthew 4:11 shows clearly that Jesus was tempted by his fleshly nature but overcame it. The Bible says that he was tempted (Hebrews 4:15) in every way, just as we are – yet without sin. Therefore the word 'devil' is what we call sinful human nature and cannot be a fallen angel.

In our family lives as well as in the ecclesial body, we should follow Jesus' example, and not be followers of our fleshly desires. We should always listen to the word of God which abides in us, as it did in Jesus.

Bro Robert Mpundu Niwele

LUSAKA

I was thrilled to read the transcript of the public debate, *"Are the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit possessed today?"*

Primarily, let me ask the question, if the Holy Spirit works in people who claim so, why then do they belong to different religions? Often these are the people who have disagreed with one another at some time for reasons better known to themselves, and have gone to form splinter churches with different doctrines, yet God is a God of order, not of disorder, and of peace. (1 Cor.14:33)

Even for those so-called 'miraculous healings', are they really from God? Jesus and the apostles remained united through and through – an indicator that God was with them.

To modern healers money seems to play a prominent role in apparent healings. So many people go to them with tokens of appreciation in the form of material wealth, including money. They have amassed a lot of wealth through their so-called gift of healing by receiving tokens in this way. By contrast, Jesus never collected money or any form of wealth from people whom he healed. On occasion, he even provided for them. (Matt.15:38) When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, he told them: 'Cure the sick people, raise up dead persons, make lepers clean, expel demons. You received freely, give freely.' (Matt.10:8) Why are the practices of modern-day healers so different from those of Jesus?

In his famous Sermon on the Mount Jesus said religious imposters would say to him, 'Lord, Lord, did we not perform many powerful works in your name?' Yet he would reply: 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness.' (Matt.7:22-23).

The genuine miraculous healings recorded in the Christian scripture clearly identified Jesus and the apostles as being from God. (John 3:2, Heb.2:3-4) Jesus' miraculous cures also supported the message he preached: 'He went round throughout the whole of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease.' (Matt.4:23)

Such powerful works, or gifts of the spirit, passed away with the death of Jesus and the apostles and any to whom they passed on the gifts. The apostle wrote: 'Whether there are gifts of prophesying, they will be done away with;' (1Cor.13:8). Why? Having accomplished their purpose – identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah and the Christian congregation as favoured by God – such powerful works, including healing, are no longer needed; they are 'done away with.'

Still, Jesus' miracles of healing have an important message for us today. If we pay attention to and exercise faith in what Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God, we can look forward to the time when inspired prophecy will be fulfilled both spiritually and physically. "No resident will say, 'I am sick.'" Isa.33:24, 35:5-6.

Bro. Francis Mukabe

Before I came to the Truth I did man's things, which I should not have done. But I listened when God said to me, 'Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' So my dear and beloved brothers and sisters, as persons we are sinful by nature. However, God has been so merciful to us and given us His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins in order to make us clean. That is why it is stated in the Bible that Jesus was pierced for our sins and also bruised for our iniquities.

Bro. Aaron Salamo

MUFULIRA

God wants us to look to His word and see that life in Christ is good. We love, and pray to thank our Father for everything we receive, otherwise the problems of this world will just make us weak in the Truth.

So we have to go on loving one another – no-one may say 'stop giving to your brother, because here on earth we are facing more trials': in this way we need to make our life acceptable. We must love one another with the love which made Christ offer himself on the cross.

Bro. Charles Daka

NDOLA

There is among us those who want the Magazine to cease, and I say it is not the will of the Lord to give them the authority to say it will not go ahead. If it is God's will the brothers who don't want that the Magazine continue will be striving against the Lord.

I pray to the Lord God that He will help you always, as you are working in difficult times, to publish the magazine, and I trust in the Lord God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He will not fail to help you in this work. I pray that the Magazine will go ahead to the end of the age.

Bro. Harris Ndonga

What is faith? This question is not simple to answer, but one has to read the Bible widely and be able to understand it. Read Heb 11:1. 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Read also Matt.9:20-26. A woman suffered from a discharge of blood for 12 years – what did she do? She sought Jesus Christ our Saviour. This woman had great faith because she knew that if she touched the garment of Jesus she would be healed. Read Luke 7:50. The faith of the Centurion: he heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. Read Heb.11:6, where it says 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' Therefore let us draw near to God and believe in Him. Remember James 2:14-17 where it says 'faith without works is dead.'

Bro. James Mwanza

BINDURA

I thought I had been abandoned once and for all, by you not posting any articles to me to indicate that we are still together in the boat of Christianity. It's actually a long journey to make. Now I'm feeling reassured by your sharing the word of God with me. May God bless you that you may never get tired, and blessings will be poured like manna from Heaven.

I am sorry for my late reply, and it is beyond description to explain the reason, since I am looking for food – especially maize cob and seed maize for planting. Every time we wish to buy, the prices of the commodities are increasing at an escalating rate. However, that has been prophesied in the Bible, that there will be an uprising of nations, starvation, etc. All these things are occurring time after time.

We as Christians should pray fervently that we will be enabled to overcome temptation. Jesus himself overcame all temptation and he knew what was going to happen. Furthermore, we should live like him, firmly strong, so that we cannot be eroded by run off water. This is the time to reform, whether our Christianity is weak or strong. Our situation requires God's intervention (i.e. involvement) so that everything happens according to His will and purpose. That's how it has been planned. In life we are supposed to experience complications to have a 'story,' but as time proceeds, better changes start to be felt. God himself has a purpose for this suffering.

Bro. Joseph Mucheri

CHINHOYI

Romans is filled with messages for us. We are all sinners, but God has provided the way of deliverance from sin's bondage by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross. Through faith in Jesus we receive the gracious gift of eternal life. Sin goes back to the fall of Adam and Eve, and it enslaves all of us and brings death as its wages (Rom6:23). As we read Romans we discover both the power of sin in our lives and our need for salvation. "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." (Rom.4:7-8)

Sis. Margaret Nyoni

CHIPINGE

The word of God is moving smoothly in the area of Chipinge Ratelshoek, with many Bible students all doing their lessons well, and some of the students are about to complete their final lessons and are wishing to be baptised. With the help of Brother Rhobson of Bulawayo and other Christadelphians around Chipinge, the work of God is in an advanced stage. A photo of the Bible students will be sent, God willing, as soon as we have organised it.

Bro. Farai Makandeni

I would like to thank God for the gift of life. He enabled us to enter another year. Right now we are busy on farms. The rains came very late but so far we have a good amount of rainfall which was supposed to give us a bumper harvest if the inputs were to be found in the market. We cannot blame our Heavenly Father this time for the poor harvest we are to have – it's due to our own actions. That is why we are always looking forward to the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

The signs of the times are pointing forward to Jesus' imminent return to restore all the mess we have made of dear mother Earth, resulting in climate change of which we are all responsible.

Bro. Moses Dhlakama

Photo: Chipinge Ecclesia with Bro. Steven Moore (UK).

CHIREZDI

I have received some *Bible Basics* which I am sharing with other brethren and sisters, including students, in our ecclesia. I would be pleased if you will continue with your supply of reading materials.

"The Lord formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7). He created male and female in his own image, they were made living souls

(Gen.2:22-24).

They were the first people to live in the garden of Eden; Adam and Eve living happily with everything, without knowing that their number one enemy was coming. God commanded them not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for the day they ate of it they would surely die. Here comes the enemy: the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die". The woman responded to the serpent's temptation and both Adam and Eve sinned. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord". So sin – which brings death - is our number one enemy – it takes our beloved ones – children, husbands, wives, friends, mothers and fathers and leaves us with a lot of grief.

The only hope of defeating this enemy is to be baptised into Christ our Lord, because he is also the enemy of death. 2 Tim.1:10: "our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel". He died on the cross and defeated sin and death when he rose on the third day. So when we believe, repent and are baptised we can be made like him in his Kingdom to come here on earth, with its capital city, Jerusalem.

Bro. Abel Dumbu

CHISHUMBA

One thing men neglect, is prayer, which heals sore hearts, protects the failing, gives courage and confidence. Not forgetting the hungry, with prayer their stomachs are filled with everlasting food and the thirsty are given the word of God, which is like cold water quenching their thirst.

I am a happy man, like David, for the confidence I hold in Christ. It is never wandering. Despite living in isolation I smile when the thought of God pops in my mind, because it reminds me 'I am never alone' – I have his strength backing me always. Through prayer we talk to Him. He hears every prayer and replies to everyone as they pray.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who sits at the right hand of our Father, is our Mediator. When we pray to God we don't need to forget Jesus and go straight to God. He advised us that Jesus is "the way". Through him, Jesus, we will go to the Father. So in prayer, let's not forget to ask our Mediator to seek mercy on our behalf, to help us by carrying our prayer to the Father.

Bro. Steven Tedza

I have much pleasure to write to you for the first time. How are you? I am still alive and kicking.

I am writing from Chishumba Ecclesia. Four of us were baptised on 4.12.04, two brothers and two sisters. On 13.3.05. I was robbed by 6-10 people at midnight: the store is in the remote area in Hurlungive, and even though there are five stores, only one was working. They asked if I could write my will, because I had few hours left. But God was on my side and caused it not to happen. So I surrendered everything for life: that included my radio, since they were stoning me through the broken windows.

I never looked back, almost filling my store, with God's help things have worked out. Now has come inflation, and I read Haggai 1:1-6. Here now it's little more than living from hand-to-mouth and hoping for the best.

I greet all brothers and sisters, and please pray for our enemies.

Bro. Lamiel Mazvaramhaka

CHISAPE

Thank you for all the literature you send. We are getting information from all over the world in *Gospel News*, and so have news from different ecclesias and personal items.

Here we meet every Sunday at our Hall with nine brothers and seven sisters, except the first Sunday of every month when we have a big meeting at Magunje where we meet jointly with isolation members and Chishumba Ecclesia.

In our preaching we are trying all means, but the problems we are facing are that most people are not educated, so they find the lessons very hard; and since they go 2-3 months without receiving other lessons, some of the students give up. So nowadays we are trying in Shona: we sit around the table with lessons and try to teach them every Sunday. Some of them are illiterate – they don't read or write. We have a big job to cope with this.

Bro. Weston Kamota

HARARE

Here are some words of discipline from Proverbs 3:11-12 and 13:24:

“My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”

“Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him”.

God loves us: He has only our good at heart. Therefore, and to that end, He disciplines us. We should follow His example in the way we discipline our children. To direct a child's development without hindering it by undue control should be studied by parents. Too much management is as bad as too little. The effort to 'break the will' of a child is a terrible mistake. Minds are constituted differently: while force may secure the outward submission, the result with many children is a more determined rebellion of the heart. Even should the parent succeed in gaining the control he seeks, the outcome may be no less harmful to the child. The will should be guided and moulded, but not ignored or crushed. Save the strength of the will in the battle of life – it will be needed.

When all else has failed, physical punishment may be necessary, but violent physical abuse is contrary to the spirit of Christ and is counter-productive in itself. Punishment administered in anger only creates bitterness, resentment, and future problems for all concerned. Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Do not provoke. This advice is essential if the obedience required of the children is to rest on a moral basis. The last part of Colossians 3:21, "lest they become discouraged" gives the reason for this admonition.

There is a great strength and blessing in praying together in our families, with and for our children. When children have done wrong, we have to talk to them kindly and then pray with them. It won't be necessary after that to punish them: their hearts would melt in tenderness before Jesus in answer to prayer.

I have enclosed my son Isaac's photo. I thank God for this baby – he was born with difficulties but is now doing well and is two years old.

Sis. Shorai Phiri

Photo: Sis. Shorai's son Isaac

Thank you for the *Gospel News* that you send to me. As world events keep pointing to the coming of Jesus, we shouldn't relax our grip on the Gospel, but should continue preaching it, spreading it and sharing it as is the need. The way to the coming Kingdom of God may still be miles or kilometers away and there will be some walking to do, so we should keep up this good fight and good walk.

Changing conditions and situations in our country are making life very difficult for many people, including my family and me. Anyway, meetings are being well attended, thanks to the visible hand of God.

Bro. Alexio Kajowe

KARIBA

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Lord God for our daily living; mostly the life He has given us. Therefore I am so happy that you do remember brothers and sisters in different countries.

May God bless all the brothers and sisters world-wide. Also I would like to thank you for your spiritual encouragement. You are not only doing such good things for me, but you are reminding all brothers and sisters about the Kingdom to come. May God bless you for that wonderful work.

Things are not going too well with me, but I am not so much troubled, because our Lord Jesus Christ is around the corner. These are the last days, as Timothy wrote in 2 Tim.3:1-3, "In the last days there will come times of stress".

Here people are busy shouting and accusing others, instead of accepting God's hand in our lives and showing faith by the way we talk about these things.

Please keep on praying for us. Please, brothers, send me the books that you are willing to send.

Bro. Innocent Mushambi

As you read this topic 'Be Careful,' you will realise it's a warning us Christadelphians of the *Christendom Astray*. If we read Proverbs chapter 8 we find with no care we get lost. Most people think that, for example, verse 27 which reads, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there". By this statement someone might think it was Jesus Christ. Please brethren and sisters, read this script carefully; it was not Jesus, but wisdom – go to verse 1 of that chapter, "Does not wisdom call?" Does that mean that wisdom is a woman? No, but simply that wisdom is personified. Further, verse 11, "For wisdom is better than jewels..." So it is she (wisdom) who we should look for.

So by this we learn that it was not Jesus, but rather wisdom, meaning that wisdom was possessed by God at the beginning of His work. It also highlights that it is this wisdom that we should seek (v.32.) Finally, it illustrates that "whoever finds me (wisdom) finds life and obtains favour from the Lord, but he who fails to find me injures himself. All who hate me love death" (v.35-36). So by having scriptural wisdom we find favour from the Lord, but if we despise Him we love death.

Bro. Emmanuel Mhondiwa

MASVINGO RURAL

Thank you very much for continuing to send me *Gospel News*. May our Lord be with us during our walk toward the Kingdom of God. Let us work hard in spearheading the word of God to every corner of the world.

Bro. Admire Museba

MT. DARWIN

Rejoice in the Lord, brothers and sisters, I say rejoice! What a privilege to have someone who can carry all our problems without paying him. Jesus Christ and the Father solve all our problems and shield us from our enemies (Psalm 23:4-5).

Everything which is happening these days reminds us of the coming of Christ, so stand firm. Proverbs 10:25, 1Peter 5:9, James 5:8-9. 'You too, be patient and stand firm, don't grumble against each other or you will be judged.' 'Brothers, take the prophets as an example of patience in the face of suffering.' Paul warns us not to change our behaviour because of suffering. Moses told the Israelites to stand firm and see the deliverance of the Lord (Ex14:13). So let's keep on praying, for God knows how to help us.

Sis. Esther Chigiji

MUTARE

Recently I received a copy of *Christadelphian Tidings* which I found very helpful. Many brothers are very interested in preaching the word of God but shortage of resources limits the work. Please pray for our preaching to be more effective, so that everyone here knows the gospel: I'm prepared to be a full-time worker for God.

A number of brothers and sisters have left this country to look for work in nearby countries because of the difficult situation here.

Thank you so much for your letter and envelope to reply. You thus helped me to write to you because postage has risen to US\$2.00 for a 10g letter. Everything on sale in Zimbabwe is now

charged by foreign currency. I wonder what is happening, as I have not yet received *Gospel News* since Nov.2008 – maybe I will receive it soon.

Recently I have enrolled 20 Bible students; I pray that they may be members of our ecclesia when they fully understand the Word of God. 2 Timothy should be understood clearly by everyone before Christ's coming.

Bro. Gilbert Tevere

SANYATI

By the grace of God, we have survived through what I rate as the most difficult year in living memory for Zimbabweans at large, and the global village in general. Our hopes are on the sure and near return of our Master and Saviour Jesus, who we are absolutely sure will right all the wrongs and unrest the world is facing today.

I write to inform you that I have now moved house from Kadoma to Sanyati (a growth point 100kms west of Kadoma). I now have a position in the technical section of telecommunications, a move from administration. This is something I have always wanted. The position also comes with company accommodation and will save on the astronomical rentals we were being charged in hard currency. We are yet to settle down well, as we are still new in the area, but hopefully, God willing, everything will be fine in the long run.

As I write to you, we have managed to do open air preaching in which we distributed pamphlets during face to face preaching. A number of people we spoke to have shown interest. So as far as preaching is concerned, we will welcome any preaching aids you may have, such as pamphlets.

I have received your reply to my letter about Melchizedek and 'legion of demons,' which arrived safely with all the enclosures. Thank you: the notes are really good, and the signs of the times write-ups.

We pray that the situation obtaining in the world today, especially the financial crisis, will be resolved to enable the work of the mission field to continue.

Bro. Itai P. Tembo

TRIANGLE

The Triangle Ecclesia is very thankful to Bro. Admire Museba (Masvingo Rural), Rhobson Sithole (Bulawayo) and Moses Dhlakama (Rimbi) in Chipinge for interviewing Sis. Barbra Makandeni of Hippo Valley Sugar Estates. Sis. Barbra had a successful interview and she was baptised by Triangle brothers. Many students witnessed the baptism at Cheche river, near the Mill. It was a day of joy because we welcomed our sister in fellowship. We had a breaking of bread and drinking wine and sang Hymn 268, 'Brethren let us walk together in the bonds of love and peace...' It was a special Sunday. A short talk was given by Bro. Pasipanodya, taken from Minute Meditations, about soap.

Soap is a detergent which removes dirt in our clothes. Our children play in mud with good clothes, but mothers take soap and wash them to clean them. This is a true lesson to brothers and sisters who are Christadelphians, who must leave the dirty works of their past to walk in the right paths Jesus has shown us.

I also thank Bro. John Butler for his support in sending me the books '*Elpis Israel*' (the Hope of Israel) and '*Christendom Astray*.' I am growing spiritually and am spiritually minded, though

suffering certain hardships in life. Since being in the Truth with Christadelphians the whole of my life changed.

Bro. Kuvarega Mavuvo

Photo: Left, Bro. Kuvarega Mavuvo and his friend.

ZAKA

First, I want to thank you very much for the five Shona Bible Basics you sent to me, and four booklets, 'Introducing Bible Basics.'

By going through these books, I find them very useful. Shona reading students are enjoying very much the Shona Bible Basics. Also introductory studies booklets are very enjoyable.

In isolation areas we are pleased to receive more books, magazines, etc. so as to widen our knowledge as far as the Bible is concerned.

Thank you also for your letter and the book '*The Death of the Cross.*' Going through it I found it very interesting and helpful. I am reading it in my spare time, and I hope it will help to equip me with knowledge about the need for Jesus to die on the cross.

I have also heard of the problems you have of high postage costs. I hope things will not continue in this state for long and that things will change to allow us to have more books.

I also thank you for *Bible Basic Principles* pamphlets which you sent me, with topics such as free will and pre-destination; the second coming of Jesus Christ; remembering Christ in bread and wine; Jerusalem, city of the great King; and the role of Sisters. By going through these pamphlets, I want to share some points with my fellow brothers and sisters world-wide.

To begin with, I want to talk about remembering Christ in bread and wine. First, when Jesus Christ was in the upper room in Jerusalem, "while they were eating Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat, this is my body. Then he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins". He told them that he was not going to drink of this fruit of the vine until the day when he would drink it in his Father's Kingdom.

We are told that the sharing of bread and wine has deep spiritual meaning; viewed in four complementary viewpoints that is:

- As a commandment of Jesus to be obeyed
- As a remembrance – to remember the suffering of Jesus for us, which brings forgiveness of sins.
- As a fellowship in Jesus, signifying that true believers are one in him.
- As an acted prophecy of Christ's return, as the Lord promised.

We are also told that the *Breaking of Bread* was designed to be shared by sinners who have been forgiven through repentance and baptism. Also we are told that sometimes believers make excuses for absence from the Lord's table – that they do not feel worthy – yet it is precisely because nobody is worthy, because all are forgiven sinners, that they are to meet to remember the sacrifice that has brought them forgiveness. We are told that the Breaking of Bread can be performed anywhere at any time, with any number of believers.

Bro. Christopher Biza

ZUMBA

I am a sister who was recently baptized and I would like to greet all the brothers and sisters around the world, wishing them the best in Christ. It is now the time of the prophecy of the coming of Christ, which is coming nearer and nearer.

Soon, very soon, we are going to see the 'King', Jesus Christ, for it is written, "When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled, for these will come to pass but the end is not yet" – but nearer, just around the corner.

"For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famine, and all these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt 24:6-8). So keep watching!

Sis Nhamo Wiki

News from Europe / Eurasia

news from armenia

EREVAN

I would so like to come to the Bible Schools in Ukraine which I read about!

Bro. Sargis

news from azerbaijan

whilst on a visit to Latvia. Doing the daily Bible readings each evening with a group of English visitors for a week greatly assisted her in making her decision.



Photo: Sis Ljuba [left] with Sis. Cindy Heaster

news from belarus

MINSK

I have some free time at the moment and am happy to help redesign the hristadelfiane.org website.

Bro. Gennady

VITEBSKAYA Obl.

Here our lives continue much as before, but the cold weather makes our bones ache because of our illness. It got as low as -37 C, and was often around -20. When life seems just an existence, I think of the Kingdom, and how God loves us even now.

Bro. Valerij

news from germany

We are delighted to announce the baptism of ROBERT; may he abide in Christ until His return.

I can say I am sincerely rejoicing in the joy of knowing Christ. I am busy with work in the office and school work but my prayers are with you.

Bro. Robert

news from holland

We are delighted to announce the baptism of HENK and thank the Ede ecclesia for their assistance. May he run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way.

news from israel

Zlata and I have been ill, but we are reading the Bible every day with the *Companion* system. Thanks to the Magazine, we keep in touch with how things are going with Christadelphians. We both find we are lacking energy, and we long for Christ's return.

Bro. Vladimir



Photo: Bro. Vladimir after sister Zlata's baptism a few years ago.

When I read in the Magazine of my prayer request for my family, printed in black and white, I was very touched. I feel many of you read this and prayed, and I feel that result for them. How I wish they would come to the Lord and be with us.

Sis. Anna

news from italy

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of FESTUS and PETER in Naples, and we pray God's blessing upon their walk and earnest desire to share the Truth with others.

NAPLES

As for me, I am pressing forward. The grace of God and the joy of the Lord is my strength. We are committed to give the good news of the Kingdom to others. This is our joy.

Bro. Festus



Photo: Brother Festus emerging from baptism

news from kazakhstan

I am writing to you because it's the 10th anniversary of my baptism today! I am more grateful to you and to the Lord than I can explain. I remember the day of my baptism as if it were yesterday. Duncan and Sister Ludmila came to my home. I mourn for Sister Ludmila's passing, but God used her in her time. I am grateful too that my daughter Alvina was baptized. How I made sense of life earlier without the Bible, I don't know. I thank God.

Sis. Roza

I received news about the death of Sister Ludmila. Thanks to her and Duncan, we all here came to believe. She did a great work, and now sleeps. That's all I can say really, with huge thanks to God.

Sis. Tanya

I feel I need to do something in response to the death of Sister Ludmila. To give something, even some small money, but I see that what is required is that we be like her, and 'do' as she did in preaching and caring.

Sis. Elvira

I would like to express publicly my deepest respects to Sister Ludmila.

Bro. Yuri

news from latvia

BALVI

I was in hospital for the winter. I got a little better but I must use regular medicines, which are very expensive and inflation is very high. In such situations there are many difficult problems; in

short life is still difficult. I continue to study the Bible and other publications. My wife is better at the moment but has lung problems too. My son works a long time after school.

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of LEONID and MARIA. May they run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way.

My son is now working in Ireland, so I am feeling quite lonely here. I still battle with my health, and the economy in our area has completely collapsed. I cannot see things continuing as they are, unless Christ comes soon, I truly cannot imagine what will happen.

Bro. Peteris Balcers

news from lithuania

I have at last found work, for which I am really grateful to God. I continue talking with my father and sister, they are studying the Bible daily and I am praying they will decide for Christ in truth. I thank God that you pray for me and care.

Bro. Ryszardas

news from macedonia

Sometimes I find a Bible verse and keep on repeating it to myself. Recently I have been doing that with Ps. 18:32, "It is God who arms me with strength". I wish to tell all people the truth about the work of Jesus, but it's hard here to get people to leave their traditions.

Bro. Kicho



Photo: Bro Kicho

news from moldova

I feel I am getting older, already my granddaughter is five years old. I feel more serious about my faith, and would love to come to the Bible Schools, but it's so far for me and I fear travelling alone. I pray for my son, who is doing his army service, I hope he will think more about God when he finishes; maybe God will work with him through his experiences.

Sis. Tamara

news from poland

POZNAN

We recently had another Bible School. We have revived the magazine Oredownik, and I am sending copies to all here. We all send our greetings to you!

Bro. Henryk

news from russia

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of GULNARA, VALYA, ALEXEI and LENA. May they run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way.

KAZAN

The attendance at our *Bible Basics* weekly classes is still good but we are disappointed some of the people resist being baptized. We will keep trying with them.

Bro. Alexei

We are still mourning the passing of our dear Sister Ludmila Kuritsyna. Brother Andrej and I are running the meetings for breaking bread but we so miss her. I have been in hospital and in all, we are looking all the more for Christ's return.

Bro. Viktor



Photo: Bro. Viktor at Bible School

It is hard and sad news about the loss of Sister Ludmila. I am away from Kazan at the moment in Saratov but I am deeply moved and with you all.

Bro. Ramil

KHABAROVSK

I here am OK, but greatly mourning the passing of Sister Ludmila in Kazan. It was through her that I came to Christ. I have sent you a list of all my family members throughout Russia and Kazakhstan, please send them all a copy of *Bible Basics*, I so wish for them to come to Him.

Bro. Ivan

MOSCOW

I send invitations to all the internet contacts, inviting them to attend our meetings here; but nobody has yet attended. It was a great encouragement to have the gathering here recently. We need to be more zealous!

Bro. Igor S.

PETROZAVODSK

Well today the snow finally lifted, I think Spring has come. Nadia's mother also came out of hospital after a successful operation and is now home; so I am feeling very thankful to God and to you for your prayers.

Bro. Kostya

SANKT PETERBURG

I set myself the task to make an exhortation from Mt. 14:29-31, about Peter walking on the water, sinking, and being saved. So many thoughts came to me from this and remain with me. I greet you all in Christ.

Bro. Valerij

TALITSA

Our ecclesia here expresses our grief at the loss of Sister Ludmila Kuritsyna. We also have lost a beloved Sister in that Br Aleksandr's mother also passed at nearly 79 years of age.

Sis. Vera



Sis. Vera

TULA

This Summer I plan to return home to Uzbekistan for some time. I have been talking on the internet to some young men I know there, and I am hopeful they will accept the truth and be baptized. Please pray for my journey there!

Bro. Timur

Photo: Bro. Timur after his baptism in January

TYMSK

Apologies again for my long silence. The winter has been so long, with the temperatures around -40 most of the time. The ice even got so thick that I could no longer fish through it, so we had rather a poor diet. The loss of Sis Ludmila came as a hard blow to me. May Christ soon return.

Bro. Ivan

VINOGRADOVKA

Truly things are hard for me. The pension is so small, and to keep warm here in this place is so hard. I long to see you again. I realize I am hard and distant to visit here in the far East. My health is failing and I throw myself upon the Lord.

Sis. Galina

YAKUTSK

I am doing my best to raise my son to know God. Sometimes I think he really understands, but he is only his age. Thank you for sending me the booklet about raising children in the Lord. I am searching for what else to do with my life spiritually than just work and raise my child, please pray for me.

Sis. Oksana

YAKUTSK



Photo: Sis. Oksana [right] lives in far northern Russia; her boots are made from reindeer skin.

news from spain

BARCELONA

I received the package of *Bible Basics* and am distributing them, praying that each book will be light in the darkness for those who read it.

Bro. Rachid

news from syria

I have some interested to be baptized, but they greatly fear the authorities, and they don't have passports to travel to Turkey as I did to be baptized. Things are hard for us here with the regime so please continue your prayers.

Bro. M.

news from turkey

Your kindness will never be forgotten. May God bless you, and may many more come to know Him through you.

Bro. A [ex-Iran]

I received the funds sent for my child to go to hospital. Really may God reward you. I will try my very best to be responsive to Him and generous in spirit as you have taught me.

Bro. S [ex-Iraq]

news from ukraine

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of VERA and NIKOLAJ. May they run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way.

DONETSK

I am preparing a speech for the Bible weekend, it will be about Christ in the prophecies of Isaiah. I am debating with many people on the internet, about the trinity, pre-existence of Christ and such topics.

Bro. Valentin

KHARKOV

Vasilij and I continue to break bread, we read the Bible daily, because in our situation we really have to live by faith. I believe we have forgiven others, now in our small way we are trying to live in kindness to others whom we meet, to pray for people, to try to persuade them of the huge love of God. We re-read your letters often. We long for you, but it's just impossible for us to travel far because of my health.

Sis. Lena

POLTAVA

It was a wonderful Bible meeting here in Poltava. I feel I appreciate what the life in Christ is all about more and more. I only wish I had known this great Truth earlier in my life.

Bro. Vladimir



Photo: Bro. Vladimir receiving spectacles at the recent Bible weekend

News from the Americas

news from argentina

BUENOS AIRES

I often remember my baptism. I carry on reading my Bible every day but it would be good to have someone to discuss things with. I have had some Christadelphian visitors from England and am now expecting Sis. Helen Clarke from Australia who is at present teaching in Bolivia.

Sis. Margaret Hamlin

News from Asia

news from china

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of WEI, GAI and LU YU. May they run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way.

I am always happy to do what I can to help people be baptized, for only by this way can people come into Christ and have the eternal life when He returns.

Bro. Feng

Thank you for praying for me. Really I feel a new life after my baptism, it is more wonderful than I had ever imagined.

Bro. Xu Fei

news from myanmar

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of PI, SIANNU, DINGPI, LIANPI, NUAMTAWNG and ELISHAKHAI. May they run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way. So far as we know, these are the first baptisms in this closed and difficult country.

We are facing such problems here. It is already illegal to meet in large numbers. I ask for your prayers, that none lose heart, and that we can continue contact with each other.

Bro. Pi

news from nepal

We are delighted to announce the baptisms of UTTAM, RAI, YOGENDA, NARENDA and BISHNU. May they run the race to the Kingdom with every blessing along the way.

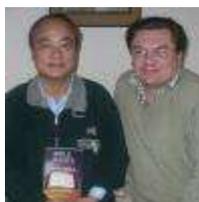


Photo: Brother Rai, who travelled a huge distance by walking, buses and light aircraft to be baptized.

I am 700 km. from Kathmandu, we had more contact recently with the Raute people and are trying to reach have now translated “*What is the Gospel?*” into our local language. Translation was hard because we don’t have the Bible translated, but I am so happy that the message now exists in my native language.

Bro. Rai

My son has been so sick in hospital. Please pray for him!

Bro. Bishnu

In the crises which there are in the world and our country here, I can say I am content, and I thank God for this. We are preparing Bro. Uttam's son for baptism.

Bro. Santosh

News from Oceania

news from new zealand

At the turn of the year Bro Viv Alexander wrote to all the local New Zealand newspapers pointing out the seriousness of the current world problems, causing many to fear and to be anxious about the future. He explained how that a former generation, without all the incredible advances and comforts of our technological age, seemed to be more content. He felt the reason for this was their high regard for the Bible and urged people to get back to the Bible and experience for themselves "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil 4:7). He offered the readers a free copy of the Bible Reader's Calendar. He had over 70 requests and sent the calendar plus *Introducing Bible Basics*. There is still some interest and one who obviously thinks for herself is not happy with some of the teaching of the church and is now under instruction for baptism, and says she feels like a Christadelphian already. MH

Moscow Bible Weekend, April 2009

We had a great attendance of contacts and brothers and sisters. 14 of us crammed into the tiny apartment of Brother Igor and spent an intense time together. We did studies on Jonah, but the highlight of the weekend was the baptism in Igor's bathtub of VALYA and also a husband and wife, ALEXEI & LENA. Alexei and Lena live in the north of Russia in an isolated hamlet. Moscow is still under snow, and where they are all lakes and rivers are still frozen, and they have no bath tub. So they made the journey to Moscow to meet us and be baptized. They had never been in Moscow before. Here's a picture of them on the metro train... it was a huge experience for them,



quite the missionary journey for them. They gave an excellent confession of their faith, having come from atheism through Orthodoxy and JWs to the full picture of the Gospel. As we wanted to make the most of our time together, we went out and bought McDonalds, ie. Big Mac and fries, from a nearby McDonalds. The visitors from the



provinces had never heard of McDonalds and simply loved it. That said, there were other meals to prepare that weekend, and we're grateful to sisters Lena Belyaeva and Tanya Boldetsova for all their work for us... it all got pretty claustrophobic, 14 people couped up in 40 square meters for a weekend!

Incidentally, it was good to see the large print Bibles some of you sent over in good use, and

notes being made in the margins:



BROTHER X

We've received news from our Iranian Brother X, who learnt the Truth through the internet and in February 2008 came specially from Iran to Turkey to be baptized by Brother Scott Ketelsen of the Tacoma USA ecclesia and Brother Duncan. He writes of his experiences:

"I was arrested about six months ago, because of the problems I had encountered in Iran with faith. They gave me one month to change my religion from Christianity to Islam. Ten days after my arrestment, I was also dismissed from my work. When I found the situation so hard, I came to Turkey and stayed in Istanbul for three months. I hoped that some of my problems would be solved. I returned to Iran after these three months, but I got arrested again after 16 days from my arrival. They tried to force me to say the name of the person who introduced Christianity to me and also the one who baptized me. Again, they gave one month to repent and convert to the 'true' religion of Islam. But I had chosen my way, so I did not accept that. Although it was against my will, I had to ignore all what I had in Iran and seek refuge in Turkey. I introduced myself to UNHCR and I got a time for an interview... I am in a difficult situation, I really request you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me. Thank you. your brother in our Lord Jesus".

Please do pray for our Brother. We are doing all we can to assist him with his appeal for refugee status but it will be a long wait.

Brother Leonid, Winter Welfare April 2009

One of our Sisters who lives in the Riga Women's Shelter is a Jewess, a refugee from the Tat mountains of Azerbaijan caught up some years ago in the Armenian conflict there. She was offered a job caring for a bedridden old man of 83; the deal was that she could sleep in the room he was in and collect his pension, care for him, buy his food with it and feed herself also with it. But his pension is so tiny it can't stretch to that. The room belongs to his alcoholic daughter who simply doesn't want to care for her father any more. She took even his war medals to a shop which is both a pawnbroker and antiques shop, and traded them for vodka money. So our sister Liliya is in a difficult situation, wanting to care for the old man but also needing to eat herself. She says that it's better to do this than stay at the Women's Shelter, where the women can only spend the night and must search for work in the day. Anyway, she has been reading the *Bible* and *Bible Basics* to the old man, and it was our pleasure to baptize him on Saturday.

LEONID is fully 'with it' and has quite good sight and hearing for his age. As a 19-year-old he had his right leg blown off at the hip whilst in the Red Army, storming the Vistula. He still has shrapnel in his hip - since 1945! He recounts how as he lay in a field hospital, two medics walked by him and muttered to each other "He hasn't got long", and that he has felt this all his life... and now, as he says with a wink, he knows he really hasn't got so long. Formerly a staunch Soviet-style atheist, "a Rus of the Rus" ['Russian of the Russians'... maybe interesting for students of Ezekiel 38] as he describes himself, he admits that he has always had a niggling doubt that there is a God. In the long painful days and nights he lay there alone in that room, he

prayed for God to come to him. And God did- He sent our sister Liliya to him and she read the Bible to him. God worked through his daughter's selfishness. The room he lives in is just about 2 x 5 metres, actually the former boiler room of a dilapidated tenement building. He's incontinent and there's no hot water, only a cold water tap and sink. No kitchen - it's just one room. No toilet, just a bowl which must be taken outside and emptied. Photos can't really do justice to this pathetic place:



Photo: Now he has gone through Bible Basics he asked if he could be presented with his own copy, and it was our pleasure to do so.



Photo: Leonid is rather proud of his one leg!



Photo: His remaining prized possession - his wedding photo.

This is a triumph for the Lord Jesus Christ, His Truth and His Kingdom. We feel Leonid really has come to Christ in truth. Caring for him is going to involve a lot of home visits, he can be moved but with great difficulty.

Meanwhile, we continue providing winter welfare to many brothers and sisters in need throughout Eastern Europe. We've received some blood pressure monitors and more are on the way. Cindy's been taking the blood pressure of sisters in various places, and after the Sunday meeting in Riga she measured the pressure of several sisters – we will do this at each meeting, God willing, and try to get them some medication where needed. Some of the readings are pretty scary, and the idea is that by measuring each week we'll be able to see some progress. Here's Cindy with the sisters with high blood pressure, and also with her list of names and readings.



Poltava Bible School, May 2009

Charles Abel, (Horley Ecclesia UK)

POLTAVA Bible School convinced me that the spirit of God is alive and well in Ukraine, despite the many setbacks endured by the enthusiastic people of this huge nation caught between Russia and Europe. Almost 50 brothers and sisters had travelled from all parts of Ukraine to attend, some spending over 12 hours on trains and buses to reach their destination, the Almaz

Hotel in Poltava. My three hour flight from London to Kiev and five hours on a coach to Poltava, 300km east of Kiev, seemed easy by comparison. Sadly, I was unable to arrive in time for the Friday evening talk given by Sis Ludmila, the founder of the Poltava ecclesia and main driving force behind much of the work to spread the Truth in Ukraine. However, her in-depth study of the beasts in Daniel's prophecy had clearly captured the enthusiasm of the visitors.

Despite the language barrier I had fun trying to communicate with Brothers and Sisters and interested visitors. Sis Marina, from Kharkhov, had brought her nine year-old daughter, Anastasia. Sis Tamara from Lugansk told me she was a human ecologist, although I'm not quite sure what that means! Sis Anna had travelled up from Kherson with her daughters Tanya (21) and Nadia (14), with Tanya's boyfriend Valeriy. Valeriy had never been out of his home town before.

I had a particularly touching chat with Sis Nadia from southern Ukraine. Through translation, she recollected how she had given birth to a daughter in the Soviet era and been told the little girl would not live – officials had even given her paperwork to that effect. Someone suggested she get the girl baptised, by an orthodox priest operating covertly, to safeguard her salvation. As Sis Nadia recalled, she did not imagine that baptism saved the baby, but she decided God could save, and this inspired Nadia to start searching for true salvation. When the Gospel message arrived in south Ukraine she welcomed it joyously as the truth she had been seeking. Angelika, her daughter, now lives in St Petersburg, with her husband and daughter, all baptised into Jesus.



Saturday started with the daily Bible readings, all conducted in Russian, and followed by some healthy debate. Ukrainian Bro and Sis clearly love and enjoy discussing the Word. There is no holding back in sharing their knowledge and seeking new insights. Their enthusiasm was infectious – even across the language barrier. A very inspiring start to the day! My talks followed, including “Shine like Stars”, “Speaking with Grace” and “Kingdom Visions”. Each was translated by Bro Igor from Kiev, further help to help get my messages across I used a camE font series of PowerPoint presentations, which had been expertly translated by Sis Lena Podgayskaya in



Moscow – thank you, Lena, they made all the difference!

Indeed, I was surprised and really delighted by how attentive the audience was – it can't be easy listening to a visiting speaker who is burbling on in his own language. But these Brothers and Sisters gave huge feedback, nodding enthusiastically, looking quizzical, hanging on each phrase. These are enthusiastic Bible students, eager to improve their knowledge and insight. Lunch, like all the meals, was taken in the hotel, providing a great opportunity for Brothers and Sisters from different parts of Ukraine to catch up on news – this was clearly a church family who were delighted to be together again. Much fun was had pinpointing home towns on a huge map of Ukraine, an activity that really fostered connectedness and stimulated discussion. Duncan also distributed spectacles and a blood pressure monitor - many have little funds left

over each month for medical needs.



In the afternoon we had the joyous baptism of Vera, a lady from southern Ukraine, who had met other Brothers and Sisters in the area. Since the hotel had no suitable facilities the baptism took place a short walk away in the bath of the flat of Sister Veronika's flat. Sis Vera's excitement and relief as she emerged from the baptism waters was wonderful to witness. Back at the hotel the day continued with more talks, Bro Duncan Heaster of Riga Ecclesia in Latvia, discussing Peter's denial and a Russian video about the Holy Land playing after dinner. Only at 10:15 did the last Brothers and Sisters finally drift away to their rooms.

Sunday started with the daily readings again and, with more healthy debate, accompanied by an illustrated talk on Rahab's role in the fall of Jericho by Bro Duncan. At the breaking of bread I exhorted on the theme of dependency, how we are completely dependent upon God's grace and mercy. The emblems were shared with reverence and meditative reflection. After lunch everyone started heading for home, but there was more excitement in store. Nikolay, husband of Sis Nadia, had asked to be baptised, following years of study, prompting a return to Sis Veronika's flat for another joyous commitment to a life in Christ.

As we travelled back to Kiev by coach, across a vast landscape of deep fertile soils, long open stretches of empty highway, lurching between patches of repaired road surface and subsidence, bumping through potholes, ploughing remorselessly through quiet little villages, with cows tethered by the roadside, Poltava memories flooded back. We visited Bro and Sis in their homes. Life is not easy living on a pension of 650Hrivna a month (pound;65). Many employees get little more. No wonder they find life hard. Despite this, the Ukrainian Brothers and Sisters are eager to share their faith. There are no ecclesial halls, but they remain positive all the same, bringing friends and interested contacts to the truth. With a population of over 46 million the potential to share God's word is colossal. In all we packed a lot in and I'm glad we did. Many of these Brothers and Sisters return to lives isolated from fellowship, eagerly awaiting the next gathering. They are not alone. Brothers and Sisters all around the world depend on such meetings for fellowship and mutual encouragement. If you get the chance to attend one, do so. I certainly gained much more from my time in Poltava than I gave out. Praise God for making such events possible.

NOTE: We are always looking for speakers and assistants at these gatherings [as well as sponsors]- please let us know if you'd like to get involved at info@carelinks.net ; and thanks so much to those who enabled this gathering financially.

A Christian In Name Only

Are you putting the precious knowledge of God into action? God calls His people out of the world (John 15:19); He warns them, "Come out of her, my people", speaking of a society living in rebellion against Him (Rev. 18:4). Called "Ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20), true Christians represent God's own government, His laws, His way, His values. But a faithful ambassador is more than just a representative – he is also a reflection.

Jesus Christ lived a perfect human life on earth as the example for all, ultimately, to follow, yet how often do even Christians find themselves emulating the imperfect ways of life promoted by the world around them? How easy it can be to let this world shape our thoughts, ideas and actions! But true Christians will strive to be moulded by God's word as having authority over their lives. And this submission to God will manifest itself in what the apostle Paul called "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). Followers of Jesus Christ have to see to it that their old man becomes just that – old. Our old habits, our old prejudices, our old views need to stay old; in fact they need to stay dead, just like the old man that died at baptism, a symbolic burial in water (Rom. 6:4). The new man, with new habits, attitudes and ways, patterned after God's perfect law and Christ's perfect example must live and grow.

Serving God is a wonderful and joyful experience! It produces happiness, it creates marvellous peace of mind and freedom from the crushing fear and anxiety produced by sin. Yes, the gate is strait and the way is narrow, but the great God who possesses all power and wisdom in the universe makes available His incomparable aid to enter that gate and follow that way (Matt. 7:13-14; 11:28-30). God did not call His people into the spectacular light of His Truth only to let them fend for themselves. Our great High Priest, the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ, is at the Father's right hand at this very moment for the express purpose of enabling us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

True Christians realize that God is there to help, not to condemn, but they must learn to go to Him for the help needed for overcoming the old human flesh so that they can be both representatives and reflections of Jesus Christ; God said He will "work in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

The Christian life is one of change, of growth, of pioneering a new and different way of life! Jesus Christ lives in his true followers through the spirit of Christ manifesting itself in a person's life which is fully submitted to God's rule over them, just as Jesus instructed in Matthew 4:4, seeking God's help to live by every word that proceeds from His mouth. Remember the admonition of the apostle James, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

Bro David Yelulani (Banket Zimbabwe)

A Happy Event In Malta

Solomon Oyinlade is a refugee from Africa who made his way to Malta. For some time he has been studying *Bible Basics* with my son, Duncan, and then he attended the small ecclesia in Malta. Solomon first contacted us from the www.carelinks.net websites; more recently he met Bro Mike Tanner from the UK who was very impressed with his knowledge of the Truth. After some further correspondence with me concerning his answers to *Bible Basics*, Solomon requested baptism. As Duncan was away doing baptisms in Egypt, I went to Malta to do this baptism and was very happy to work with the CBM Linkman for Malta, Bro Derek Davies. After we had briefly interviewed Solomon, confirming the interview with Bro Tanner, I gave a

baptismal address based around the word 'baptism' and then baptized him in the Mediterranean Sea. Afterwards Bro Derek gave a confidence-building exhortation about Christ as the door and received Bro Solomon into fellowship. All the local Maltese brothers and sister were present and helped in the service in various ways.



The Baptism

Solomon lives in the Hal Far refugee centre, a collection of canvas tents which houses 5,000 refugees. There are 350 canvas tents accommodating 14 refugees each. There are seven double tiered bunks, spaced about 1 metre apart. Bro Solomon has a top bunk and sleeps with his face very near the canvas above him. It's very cold in winter at night, and probably will be very hot in summer. Each refugee has a small personal locker for their few possessions – in Solomon's case this includes his *Bible* and *Bible Basics*. Each of the tent blocks have a dusty chalk roadway between them, the dust from which is easily blown by the wind making the site atmosphere very dry. However, the refugee camp seemed well managed and organised.

Our brother has a job in a hotel, travelling 90 minutes each way to tandard from the camp and has little free time. I was very impressed by the local Maltese brothers and sisters and the work done on the Island by Bro Derek and his team. There are 145,000 units of accommodation on Malta, and so far leaflets have been distributed to 80,000 of them. The leaflets feature the phone numbers of local brothers and sister and advertise *Bible Basics* and other Christadelphian literature. They receive about one reply every 500 leaflets distributed. The leaflets are relevant, modern, and full-colour- the latest one is about true 'saints', in contrast to the recent Roman Catholic canonization of the first Maltese 'saint'.

I left Malta feeling the apostle Paul would be happy that on this Island where he spent some months, there is now a small but zealous ecclesia awaiting the coming of the Lord.

M Heaster

Free Cassette Tapes

Bro Cliff and Sis Julia Baines have some surplus cassette tapes of exhortations and Bible talks, they would be pleased to send to any brother or sister who has a working tape player; others would be able to listen to them as well. Anyone interested should contact Bro and Sis Baines direct at: 8 Jordan Mt Road, Mt Hebron, NB., E4G 1G7, CANADA.

Foundation

Foundation means the solid base on which a building is built, usually below ground level. In simple terms I mean how strong or how weak are we in the Lord?

There are a lot of things that we can share as brethren and sisters as we journey towards the Kingdom of God. Many a beloved one has gone astray due to some weakness in their foundation. Before I hit the nail on the head, let us recall Matt 7:24-27 where Jesus is talking about two builders who built their structures using different materials: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice, is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. As the rain came down, the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell with a great crash".

Let us look within ourselves to find where we belong in this passage. Are we like the wise man who built his house on the rock, or like the foolish man who built his house on the sand? If we are a wise man who built his house on the rock then why do we cheapen ourselves with the foolish things of this world, neglecting the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, fighting among ourselves instead of doing what is right, rather than pointing the finger at each other? Jesus Christ is where we can attain the strong foundation because he is a rock that cannot be shaken by any gigantic wind.

Sometimes we may feel that serving God is a waste of time or is toilsome. If so, we should realize that everything we have comes from Him who has chosen us to live, to breath fresh air, and not ever to worship any other gods that can be found in this fleeting life. But we have decided to follow the important things, not the things of this world.

How have we built our foundation? Have we built our foundation on worldly materials or ungodliness? Then we should know that our foundation is ready for destruction. But if we build on the rock of Jesus Christ, then we are on that which is immovable.

The prophet Isaiah has a vital reason why we should base our foundation on the rock that cannot be blown nor crushed in any forms of destruction because it has passed the test already. "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious corner stone for a sure foundation; the one that trusts will never be dismayed" (Isa 28:16). What a lovely and inspiring message from this scripture; when we put our trust in this precious corner stone we will never be disappointed!

Maybe some of our relatives have disappointed us because of our belief, but let us remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was also disappointed (rejected) by his own people, the Jews. Let us hold on to the living God, the Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ. The prophecy is based on Jesus Christ being described as the precious corner stone, which was tested in all forms until he was nailed on the cross for you and me in order that we might be saved. This shows how precious he was, because he remained obedient in all hardships he went through, and when we build our foundation on him we shall never be disappointed.

Another example that we have is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians: "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how they build. For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, straw, his 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 man's work" (1 Cor

3:10-13). This issue is serious for every believer because it would be very shameful and disappointing, if upon being tested our labours were unsatisfactory.

Finally, as we help one another towards the Kingdom of God, we should realise that we maintain our own building on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His spirit (Eph 2:20-22). Let us hold on to this truth that we have chosen and use our free time in devoting ourselves to His word. Let us nourish ourselves with the daily food of our soul. Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows who are His".

Bro Stephen Siamabi (Lusaka, Zambia)

Let Us All Consider

If the Almighty God loved the world (us) to the extent of giving His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins, then we should stop, think and consider. Let us go back to the time when God created man and, behold, he was beautifully created in the image of God Himself (Genesis 1:26,27). But why? What was God's purpose with man that God made him so special?

After God created man, very good as he was, He did not ask for any payment nor any material possession or for anything. All He asks of men is to serve Him, to recognize Him as their Creator and Maker of all things. But, alas, man chose to disobey God and all since have sinned. Through sin, the human race became separated from their Maker. But since God is a loving Father, in order to save mankind, for the plan to work, we should make a choice to serve God or go on sin's way. To serve God is to follow His laws and so recognise Him as the Creator, the Father and Almighty Lord, and also to honour Jesus who is His only begotten Son, who is our mediator, our link to God.

And for this small service, He promised peace and everlasting life with happiness. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:19; John 5:24; 20:31; 1 John 5:13). Brothers and sisters, what an offer! Isn't rejecting God biting the hand that feeds you? Why not serve God and achieve all these beautiful promises. It is nothing much: all we have to do is to overcome all worldly pleasures and turn away from evil and the natural thinking of the flesh. We can have all this through positive thinking

To begin with, let us take a close look at what positive thinking is. How can we cultivate it and build positive thinking into our day, to live in both good and negative situations? And positive thinking actually works. So often, people don't really understand the nature of positive thinking. A positive thinker does not refuse to recognize the negative, but he refuses to dwell on it. It is habitual thinking which looks for the best result from the worst conditions. It is possible to look for something to build on, to expect the best for yourself even if the situation looks bad. And the remarkable fact is that if you seek good you are likely to get it. A positive thinker chooses to keep his mind fixed to the bright future which is always just around the corner and, in this way, it helps to make the dark moments more cheerful, productive and more creative.

There is a well-known fact that what affects the mind also affects the body. There is a close relationship between the two, what affects the one affects the other. “Be strong and be of good cheer, just be courageous and be not afraid, for the Lord thy God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

We have to give God the task. Pray for God’s help on whatever task you are facing. He created you; He promised you help whenever you call for it, so why lean on your own power when there is God who can do things better? There is nothing impossible with God. So if you face any circumstance which you think extremely difficult, tell God. I argue that He is the only One who can turn negativism into positivism. He is the only One with the right power to knock the t off ‘can’t’, leaving you with CAN.

There now, positive thinking does work. Precondition your mind to success and lean on God and there will be no more failures. In return for the deserved loyalty to our Creator, there is plenty of every good thing. So just stop and consider your ways. God alone is that very solution you are very much looking for. Do you give God the chance? If not so far, it is not too late to start now and you will notice the change.

Bro Servious Makondo (Triangle, Zimbabwe)

God’s Judgement Is Coming

First and foremost let us go back to the Old Testament to see what happened to the people of many years ago: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast and the creeping things and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them’. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen 6:5-8).

Today the world and the people have gone back to their old ways as in the time of Noah. And now see, “But the Lord shall endure for ever: He hath prepared His throne for judgement. And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness” (Psalm 9:7,8).

The Lord Jesus said, “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-29).

The Lord sees what we are doing every day. Brothers and sisters who see the Lord’s word, remember it is an example to us today (see Romans 1:18-32). “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of man, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God” (Psalms 14:2).

Brothers and sisters, if we do not understand the word of the Lord, there is no difference between us and the people of Noe’s and Lot’s time, as the Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon,

(Matt 13:10-15; 2 Peter 2:5-9). “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Remember God’s judgement is coming soon and I pray that the Lord God be with you all always, as we await the coming of His kingdom”. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Bro Harris Mulongesha (Ndola, Zambia)

Personal Testimony

I attended the Salvation Army ever since I was a child. There is one thing that led me to think hard over my life: the Salvation Army did not baptise by immersion in the way that the Bible says. We were usually taught lessons by a teacher and at the end of the lessons we were asked to buy uniforms to wear on baptism day. The shirts were written on at the corners “S. S.” meaning “Saved to save others.” We were prayed for by the Pastor on the day of baptism, but one thing that disturbed my mind was that I was not baptised by total immersion in water. The Bible says that there is one baptism in Ephesians 4:5.

We have one example to follow in the matter of baptism which is crystal clear. Jesus the great teacher was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. “As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water” (Matt 3:16). This verse shows that Jesus was baptised by immersion in water.

In 2002, while I was at school in Grade II of my senior level, I met a certain friend, now Brother Dumisanie Mulala. During free time, while we were studying, he took a chalk and wrote the CBM address on the board. He explained to me that the Christadelphians offer free Bible postal courses. They come once a year to Zambia, and he said a team of Christadelphians from UK would be glad to meet me and discuss Bible topics that I did not understand.

I soon applied for lessons and in one month I received the first set of 4 lessons and was given Janice Bushell as my tutor. A while later I received an invitation note from David Nicholls that a team of Christadelphians were coming to Zambia and that I had to make all possible efforts to meet them at the Zambia Institute of Animal Health (Z I A H). I was glad to meet Paul Genders and his wife Elizabeth, and Andrew and Josie Walker at the Post Office, 8 am Central African time. They soon booked a room at a nearby guest house in town and we had much food for discussion from the word of God.

I later continued my lessons with a lovely German man by the name of Günter Rudolph who took me through them, encouraged me in the faith and helped me to become one of God’s true sons in Africa by teaching me the truth. On May 26 2007, Bro Kelly Simayumbula took me to the healing waters of baptism and I was baptised with the witness of Bre Timothy Mwale and Joseph Nyoni. Soon the news of my baptism reached the UK and Bro Gunter Rudolph was very happy and impressed to hear the good news. Bro Andrew Walker was also pleased with the good news and was looking forward to meeting me during their visit to Zambia.

I am now a happy person in the Christadelphian family. I act as the Secretary to our small ecclesia. The Christadelphians have changed my life. I have learned a lot of things from them.

Bro Gideon Hankomone (Mazabuka, Zambia)

Light in the Lord

Do we ever ask when the chaos in the world is going to come to an end? How our Father will bring about His kingdom on earth? This Kingdom, brothers and sisters will eventually be established, but it will be with the sudden coming of Jesus, as a thief in the night, when the world is unprepared for him. But first we must be convinced that there will be nothing but violence in the beginning in order to crush and punish tyrants, and prepare the way for the amelioration of society. The establishment of the kingdom was planned by God Himself from the very beginning. But people do not understand this. They are blind to the scriptural teaching and cannot see the difference between near and far objects. They cannot comprehend.

Jesus himself said "O you hypocrites. You can discern the face of the sky, but how is it that you cannot discern the signs of the times?" God is saying to the nations with a voice of thunder that the time has come when He will intervene and destroy the wicked. "The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth" (Rev 11:18).

Animal man does have a chance to read God's word but when man's wickedness and stupidity become obstacles to God's purpose, He removes them out of the way and replaces them with others. In this way He regulates and controls the world.

We must still keep on loving each other, brothers and sisters, even though the world is going from bad to worse. We hear every day about war, people crying for food, unemployment – so many bad things are happening to the earth. What is the cure? "For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will gasp and pant." (Isaiah 42:14).

Brothers and sisters in Christ our King, we must cease to take an interest in human affairs. Many men and women of this world never think about the return of our Lord to the earth. They speculate upon passing events as though they were formed for no noble destiny but to fret out a brief and crushing existence in a precarious competition for food and raiment. They labour with asinine endurance at the whim of those who by violence, avarice and fraud have gained ascendancy over them. The men of this world do not have God in their thoughts when they treat the affairs of men.

The way of the world is sin. The despots reign with heartless and hateful deformity. They are enthroned, and decorated with crowns, tiara and coronets for their superstitions of a dark age, linked with fraud, hypocrisy and murder. They want to de-fuse truth and science among the people.

But we, as true Christians, take no part in the armed forces. We remember the word of God every day of our lives on earth. "The sentence is by the decree of watchers, decisions by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the most high rules in the kingdoms of men and gives to whom He will, and sets over it the lowest of men" (Daniel 4:17). God shapes the course of events towards the consummation predetermined from the foundation of the world.

In past days, God had His own people among the nations who were wise in His word. They informed everyone of what God intends to do, before it comes to pass; “He reveals his secrets unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 8:7). This revelation is made so that His own people’s faith may be confirmed and enlarged, so that in every generation they might know the times and seasons to which they stand related. This is why we are given an exhortation by the apostle: “We have sure word of prophecy whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth into a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:21). The prophecy came not at any time by the will of men, but it was God Himself telling them, having seen the sins of man, so they know about the good things to come. “Brethren, be mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets. Therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware, lest you, are led away with the error of the wicked” (2 Peter 3:2,16,17).

From these promises, we may conclude that, as the Lord has revealed what is to come to pass in these latter days, it is both our duty and privilege to make ourselves acquainted with it, that our faith may be strengthened. It is our own fault if we are not ‘light in the Lord’. He plainly sets before us what is happening in our day and what is yet to occur. Hence, while the priests of the state church are exclaiming ‘Give peace in our time! O Lord’ (leaders’ voices crying ‘peace and safety’), even while war and political murders abound, to us who take heed of the prophetic word, we have to recognize that the hour of our Father’s judgement is at hand, and their destruction is at the door (Rev 16:15,16).

Bro Charles Daka (Mufulira, Zambia)

Repentance

In Acts 17:30-31 we are told: “In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” God has thus commanded all men to repent for at the last day everyone who is responsible to God will appear before Christ in judgement. Therefore if we have failed to obey God’s command to repent of our sins, we will be lost for ever. It is vitally important that we learn the meaning of repentance.

What is repentance?

“There was a man who had two sons and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard. He answered and said ‘I will not’, but afterwards he regretted it and went. The father went to the second son and said the same thing. The son answered ‘I will, sir’ but he did not go” (Matt 21:28-30). This parable teaches us the true meaning of repentance. At first the elder son in the parable refused to obey his father’s command to work in the vineyard; later, he changed his mind and went to work. All of us are like this son in the parable. We have disobeyed God’s commands many times. But when we stop disobeying God and begin to do His will, we have repented. Repentance is a change of mind. It is a decision to stop doing wrong and to begin doing right.

A man decides he will no longer rebel against God. He will obey the commands of God. His repentance will be seen in the good works that he does. One who has truly repented will try to please God in everything.

What causes repentance?

“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Cor 7:10). Repentance is caused by godly sorrow. When a person realises he has sinned by disobeying God, he becomes sorry for what he has done. This sorrow for his sin will lead a person to turn away from his sin. Thus godly sorrow (being sorry for disobeying God) causes one to repent.

“Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads to repentance?” (Rom 2:4). God is good to us. He has given us Jesus, His Son, to die for our sins; He has given us the Bible to tell about the way to eternal life. When we realise how good God is to us, we should be ashamed to disobey Him. Our sorrow for disobeying our Father will cause us to repent of our sins.

The fruits of repentance

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance and do not begin to say to yourself, ‘We have Abraham as our father’. For I tell you that out of these stones, God can raise up children for Abraham” (Luke 3:8). These words were spoken by John the Baptist. The people of Israel thought that they were saved simply because Abraham, God’s faithful servant, was their father. John told them that they must prove that they had repented. We prove that we have repented by doing good works. Before repenting, we do evil deeds; after repenting, we must do good deeds.

Suppose a man has a fruit tree in his garden. If the tree does not produce good fruit, he will cut it down and use it for fire wood. But if the tree produces good fruit, he will save it. If we turn from our sins but do not do good works in their place, we will still be lost. But if we produce good works, God will love us and save us.

Conclusion

Have your relatives and friends repented of their sins? Are they producing the fruits of repentance? If not, they are lost for ever, Christ will reject them in the last day. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). In Acts 2:37-38 Jesus said to Peter. What shall we do and he said, “Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Bro Biza Christopher (Zaka, Zimbabwe)

“Let Us Endure to the End”

In life, we plan ahead with near hope or future hope. When the plans do not yield expected results, there is a tendency to withdraw to reconsider. What should we do when hopes are not realised? When our expectations seem unfulfilled? When we anticipated the return of the Master but it did not occur? He himself declared, “This generation shall not pass away until these things have happened” (Matt 24:34). Since we do not know the hour or day when the Son of God will come (v 36), we should not faint along the way but endure to the end. We should therefore keep watch (25:13).

Daniel found himself waiting and watching but the time was not ripe for the redemption of Jerusalem as he thought. He saw the developing power of the East in the rise of the Medes and Persians and waited. He was told it would come but it did not occur as he had hoped (Daniel 10:1,2). We face similar situations and feelings. Did we not expect the Lord's coming last year? After all the pain, toil and suffering, I personally thought scripture was going to be fulfilled due to all the signs of the times: hunger, diseases, wars and the general world unrest, the financial crunch. All these I thought pointed to the return of Jesus, but he did not come. After all this, should we allow lethargy to prevent us from being stirred up to continuous personal anticipation/hope? We have heard that "the set time to favour Zion" will come when the right minute, hour or day has arrived. Not until then and not beyond then, for God's appointed time.

We should therefore continue running the race, keep watching with our eyes open, keep listening with our ears open and endure to the end. Our continuing hope gives life and vigour to our spiritual existence. Let us not negatively influence or dampen others' spirits by our own weaknesses and disappointments. The day will definitely come and is fast approaching. But when the Master finally appears, "Will he find faith on the earth?" This is the big question. It will depend on our attitudes and expectations. Let them not fail at this late hour.

In conclusion, let us heed the words of the Master when he says, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Rev 22:12). What a statement as given by the Master himself. Should we get tired, lose hope or withdraw? Absolutely NO, should be the answer.

Bro Itai Tembo (Kadoma, Zimbabwe)

Was the Flood of Noah's Day Really Global

The Noachic flood occurred more than 4,000 years ago. So there are no eyewitness survivors on earth to tell us about it. However, there is the written record of the catastrophe, which states that the flood waters covered the tallest mountain of that time.

The historical document reads, "The deluge went on for forty days upon the earth ... and the waters overwhelmed the earth so greatly that all the mountains that were under the whole heavens came to be covered. Up to fifteen cubits (about 6.5 meters) the water overwhelmed them and the mountains became covered" (Gen 7:17-20).

Some wonder if the story of the whole earth being covered by a flood is a myth or, at least, exaggeration. Not at all! Indeed, to some extent, the earth is still flooded. Sea water covers about 71% of the earth's surface. So in reality the flood water is still there and, if glaciers and polar ice-caps were to melt, the sea level would rise to cover cities like New York and Tokyo.

Geologists studying the landscape of the northern United States believe that as many as 100 ancient catastrophic floods once washed over the area. One such flood is said to have roared through the region with a wall of water 600 meters high travelling at 105 km an hour – a flood of 2000 cubic kilometers of water, weighing more than a trillion tons. Similar findings elsewhere have led some scientists to think that a global flood is a distinct possibility.

For those who believe the Bible is God's word, though, global flood is more than a possibility: it is a fact. Jesus said to God, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The apostle Paul wrote that God's

will is that “all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:3,4). How could Paul teach the followers of Jesus the doctrine of truth if God’s word contained myth?

Not only did Jesus believe that the flood took place but he also believed that it was global. In his great prophecy about his presence and the end of this system of things, he likened those events to the time of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39). The apostle Peter also wrote about the flood waters in Noah’s day: “By those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water” (2 Peter 3:6).

If Noah was a mythical figure and the global flood a fable, the warning of Peter and Jesus for those living in the last days would be meaningless. Instead of serving as a warning, such ideas would befuddle a person’s spiritual senses and endanger his chances of surviving a tribulation greater than the Noachic flood (2 Peter 3:1-7).

In speaking about His abiding mercies for His people, God said, “Just as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more pass over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not become indignant toward you nor rebuke you.”

As surely as the Noachic flood did overwhelm the earth, so God’s lovingkindness will be with those trusting in him (Isaiah 54:9).

Bro Nelson Anyal (Kisumu, Kenya)

Why God favoured Noah

Most of us remember occasions when we hear important news. We remember details, not only where we were and what we were doing but also how we reacted. No doubt Noah never forgot the day he received the news from God, the Sovereign of the universe. And what news could have been more important? God said that He was determined to bring to ruin ‘all flesh’. Noah was to build a gigantic ark for the preservation of him, his family and animals of every kind.

How did Noah respond? Did he rejoice upon hearing the news or did he protest? How did he break the news to his wife and family? The Bible does not say. What it does tell us is this: Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him – he did just so (Genesis 6:22). That, surely, is an important point, for the statement explains in part why Noah found favour in God’s eyes: Noah was willing to do what God asked him to do (Genesis 6:8).

Noah lived early in human history. He was born a thousand years after the first man was created. People then were not the cavemen that many people envisage – hairy, dim-witted creatures who slouched about with clubs in their hands! They forged tools of iron and copper, and Noah may have used these in constructing the ark. They used musical instruments. People married, raised families, cultivated crops and had livestock. They bought and sold things. In these ways, life then was much as it is today (Genesis 5:5; 9:29).

Bro Nelson Anyal (Kisumu, Kenya)

Is There a Devil?

Is there a devil? Yes, but not the grotesque monster in which many people believed fifty and more years ago, and in which many still believe today. Nor is the devil a 'fallen angel' as some others would suggest.

The fact that there is a devil is certain because the Bible frequently refers to it; indeed, we are told that Christ came primarily to destroy the devil and his works: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). The apostle Paul writes, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14,15).

If we try to apply this passage to the old orthodox idea, we are faced with a number of difficulties. For example, to take on the weakness of flesh and blood was a strange way of preparing to fight a powerful immortal devil. We would have thought it necessary to have divine power in its fullest sense to achieve this victory. Again, was it not strange that the process of destroying the devil should be by submitting to death? Surely, to destroy such a superhuman monster, as the devil is to be generally understood, would require life in its fullest most powerful form?

The simplest answer to this question is that Jesus came to destroy sin, and the punishment inflicted by God in consequence of sin that is death. He destroyed sin in himself when he led a blameless life of obedience to God, and by his death he offered up the perfect sacrifice. As a result he was raised from the dead to live for ever, thus opening the way through which the rest of mankind can obtain the same victory.

Sin and death entered the world by Adam's disobedience in the beginning, when Eve was tempted, not by a superhuman monster, but by a serpent (Gen 3:1-14; 2 Cor 11:3). All the passages in the Bible which are supposed to indicate that the devil came into existence by the rebellion of an archangel who was, in consequence, expelled from heaven, and who is now using his god-like power in opposition to God, can be shown by their context to refer to other matters altogether. Here are two examples:

1. Isaiah speaks of "*Lucifer, son of the morning*" who, in the language of metaphor, "*fell from heaven*". He was the king of Babylon, a man who ruled the nations, as can be seen from looking at the whole passage and comparing the verses (Isaiah 14:12,14,4,6,16,12).
2. The war in heaven of which we read in the book of Revelation, and in which Michael prevailed over the great red dragon, labelled "*the Devil and Satan*", and expelled him from heaven (Revelation 12:3-9), was a prophetic forecast, in symbol, of events that would take place in the Roman Empire.

The opening of Revelation 4 clearly shows that the events described in the book were to take place in the future. This symbolic dragon was, therefore, 'cast out' some time **after** the resurrection of Christ. It is a symbolic description of the Fall of the Roman Empire and is further

amplified in Revelation ch17. In the same way that we would not expect to take literally a description of a woman clothed with the sun (Revelation 12:1), so we should not take literally the description of the dragon.

Devil - is a Greek word *diabolos*. It is only found in the New Testament and should always be translated *slanderer* or *accuser*. Because the translators were familiar with the medieval superstition of an evil monster, they chose not to translate this word in this way and in doing so, gave the false idea there was nothing supernatural about this evil force. In reality the word simply refers to the evil desires which are in each of us and that cause us to do wrong or to be against that which is right – as will be seen in the following references:

Revelation 2:10 – the devil here means the people who would put the disciples in prison.

John 6:70 – Judas had an evil desire to get 30 pieces of silver.

1 Peter 5:8 – the devil represents those men who opposed the teaching of Christ.

Satan – is a Hebrew word and should be translated *adversary* and means simply someone who *is against*. An adversary can be either good or bad. God is called **Satan** in Numbers 22:22. This is translated *adversary* in the Authorised Version and by the word *opposed* in the New International Version.

Peter was a **Satan** in Matthew 16:23.

The **Satan** in the beginning of the book of Job was an adversary to Job, and God allowed this adversary to test Job (Job 1:12).

A correct understanding of this subject dispels any fear of a war between supernatural forces of good and evil, with us caught in the middle. There is no possibility that evil may overcome good. God is in control of all things. There is no power that can adversely affect God. God controls both the good and the bad things that happen to us (Isaiah 45:5-7). In the ultimate sense of our eternal salvation, God has promised that He will never try us above that which we can bear (1 Cor 10:13). It is important to realise this.

Whenever the word **devil** or **satan** occurs we should use the word *slanderer, false accuser* or *adversary* and the meaning becomes clear.

We are tempted, as James says, “When by our own evil desire, we are dragged away and enticed” (James 1:14 NIV). If we are tempted to do wrong we know that the temptation comes from within us. We are fooling ourselves if we think we can blame some outsider or monster. James continues “After desire has conceived it gives birth to sin”. If we give way to our temptations we sin: we cannot blame some other evil force. If we are taken to court for our wrongdoing, the judge will sentence us, not a supernatural monster. James concludes, “And sin when it is full grown gives birth to death”. If we wish to escape eternal death we must overcome the power of sin which lives in each of us.

Jesus conquered the devil by overcoming the power of sin within himself. Paul tells us that the fight between good and evil is not a war in heaven, but a war within ourselves (Romans 7:21:25) Jesus shared our human nature so that he might conquer it. He overcame its evil influence throughout his life and because of that, he rose from the grave to live for evermore. We can have our sins covered and enjoy life for ever if we become baptised into Christ and try in our lives to copy his example and to overcome the power of sin that is within all of us.

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

God Tests His Servants

Why does God test His servants? There are so many answers from people around the world. What of you, brothers and sisters? The only true answer is found in God’s own book, the Holy Bible. He wants to see you obedient, see Genesis 22:1-12.

Our problems today are not in vain. The trouble among us is that we do not always consciously believe that the Lord God is there. “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends. Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (Job 42:10-17).

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away (*if we remain obedient to God*)” (Revelation 21:4). Brothers and sisters, with all the problems we face in this evil world today, if we remain obedient to the Lord, we will await the coming of God’s Kingdom in confidence.

I greet you all in the wonderful Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and may the Lord God be with you. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Bro Harris Mulongesha (Ndola, Zambia)

How to Know God

By reading the Bible daily and thoughtfully, one can know God better through the following ways:

The Bible as a Story Book

We can trace the story line in two stages: Seeing the big picture, and examining the smaller segments.

1. The Big Picture

The story line of the Bible shows what God either causes, or allows to happen to people who do not deserve to know Him, e.g. God created Adam and Eve and placed them in a beautiful garden paradise. But the same God allowed this family to set the tone for what was to follow. While giving them indescribable opportunities to enjoy His goodness, He permitted them to fail a simple test: a test of trust, Genesis 3.

The rest of the Bible tells how God responded to man’s need for rescue. Other examples are God sent His only begotten Son and allowed him to be falsely indicted, tortured and executed. Three days later, the Son of God rose from the dead before he ascended into heaven. The story line reveals a God who made us, loves us, shows Himself to us and allows us to accept or reject Him. He is a God who builds ‘tests of faith’ into the environment. He allows evil to come into the picture to test our trust, thus allowing us to choose what is good or bad, and also gives us good times, good health and good relationships.

2. The Smaller Segments

These smaller aspects such as the way God oversaw and directed the flood of Noah, the call and life of Abraham, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, the trials of Job and the coming of Christ. Taking a closer look at the story of Joseph, Genesis 37-50, what is important about the story is what it tells us about the strategies and tactics of God, who stood by while His servant was nearly killed, thrown into a pit and sold into slavery. It shows that God can take tragedy and weave it into a plan that ends better than anyone would have ever expected. God could demote him to prison as easily as He could promote him to highest honours.

3. The People of the Bible

The second way we can know God is by observing His people e.g. what He likes and doesn't, what He loves or hates; directly or indirectly the people of God reflect the character of God.

The people of the Bible are different from those in fiction because they are real eg the rich man Job who lost his riches because of a discussion between God and Job's adversary, Zaccheus, a little man who climbed down from a tree to meet Jesus, leaving behind his life of shady financial dealings.

Questions to help What does each person's experience tell us about:

1. The values or loves of God
2. The aversions and hates of God
3. What God can do in the life of the one who does or does not please Him.

Bro Biza T Christopher (Zaka, Zimbabwe)

Faith

What is faith?

In Hebrews 11:6 we are told that without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. In Hebrews 11:1 we are also told that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Many things that we do in life show some kind of faith. A person takes aspirin when he has a headache. Why? Because he believes the aspirin will get rid of the headache. When a person plants maize, he believes that it will grow. Children have faith in their parents; they believe their parents when their parents tell them something.

How to have faith

In Romans 10:17 we are told that faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of God and Christ. We have faith because we heard about it. We cannot have faith without hearing.

We plant maize to grow for food. Why do we plant it? How do we know it will grow? Because we have heard that it will. An aspirin is taken to get rid of a headache; but why does a person take the aspirin? Because he has heard that it will get rid of the headache. We believe in God and Christ by hearing about them. We hear about them from the Bible. We can hear about them from the Bible in two ways:

1. By reading the Bible ourselves.
2. By hearing someone tell us about the Bible.

It is impossible to have faith in God and Christ without hearing about them. Romans 10:14 asks us these questions: how, then, can they call on one they have not believed in? How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? How can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Different kinds of faith

There are different degrees of faith. In Matthew 8:26, Jesus told his disciples that they had little faith when he rebuked the winds and the waves when the disciples were afraid of them. In Matthew 15:28, he told a Canaanite woman, "Great is your faith" when her request was granted and her daughter was healed that very hour.

Then there is faith which we all have to have because it is necessary for salvation as in Acts 16:30,31. When a jailer asked the disciples what to do to be saved, he was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved, him and all his household. A person must believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. But belief by itself is not enough, as we are told: "We believe that there is one God: that is good, but the demons also believe and tremble" (James 2:19). The demons (those mentally unsound spiritually) believe but are not saved. The true answer is trust and obedience. The demons believe in Christ but they do not trust and obey him.

If we only believe Christ, but do not trust and obey him, we will not be saved. When Jesus gives a command we will obey it if we have the faith that saves: "He who believes and is baptised will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Here, Christ gave two commands: a person must believe, and he must be baptised.

If a person believes in Christ but is not willing to be baptised, then he cannot be saved. He does not have an obedient faith. His faith is dead. Faith alone cannot save a person. James 2:24 tells us that a man is justified by works not by faith alone, but faith has to be there first. A man or woman will be saved when they obey the commands of Christ. Believing in the commands of Christ without obeying them will not save a person.

Conclusion

Faith is based on testimony. We believe it because we have been told about it. Faith is necessary in order to be pleasing to God. Without faith we cannot be saved, yet faith by itself cannot save us. We must have faith that trusts and obeys Christ's commands in order to be saved.

Bro Biza T Christopher (Zaka, Zimbabwe)

Time to Pray: Ezra

We find in Ezra that the people came back from captivity to their homeland as volunteers responding to the call of the king to rebuild the temple. We might think that because they had such a purpose that they would all be dedicated to their calling, that they would not make the mistakes made in the past. Sadly, this was not so. Amongst other things we find that many of

them had taken wives who were from the nations surrounding them instead of finding wives from their own people. We know that this should not be so from the law of Moses, but we also know that even for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ it is wrong to take a wife or husband from the world, as Paul puts it, “to be unequally yoked with unbelievers” in business or for any other purpose is wrong.

Ezra was really upset and sad when he realized such things were happening in Israel. For the holy seed to be mixed with unbelievers, even enemies, was a terrible thing. We read that Ezra tore his clothes in anguish. He then began to pray, “he fell on his knees and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God” (Ezra 9:5,6).

When we have a problem, maybe with our own sin, is the first thing we do is pray about it? If the problem involves other people, maybe our brothers and sisters in Christ, our first reaction may be to try to avoid it, ‘This is nothing to do with me. Why should I have anything to do with this?’ We may even say these things out loud. But this was not the way Ezra reacted. Even though he himself did not have a foreign wife (he may not have had a wife), he prays about this as though he was linked together with all those who had.

Read what he says: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God. for our iniquities are increased over our head and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens... And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and has given us deliverance” (Ezra 9:6-15). I have just quoted the verses that I need, but you might like to read it all. Notice how Ezra has linked himself with the sins of his people. He does not say, ‘It was they who sinned, they should sort it out’; he says, rather, ‘It is our sin and we should sort it out.’

Chapter 10, opens by telling us that Ezra prayed, confessed and wept in front of God’s house, the temple. Having prayed, action was then needed. When we pray, we have to be prepared to go on and act in faith, knowing that God has heard and He will respond. Especially is this so when we pray seeking the forgiveness of our sins. We have to leave the burden of sin and the mercy seat provided by God and go on our way seeking to do the Father’s will in our lives. In the times of Ezra, positive action was needed if the people were to remain in God’s fellowship. Importantly, the action was related to the people’s response to the word of God. Three times in these two chapters, we are told that the people trembled at the words of God. The third occasion their trembling was a mixture of shivering because of the cold and wet and the word (Ezra 10:9). They were out in the cold and rain because of their concern about what was revealed to them.

Often the answer to our prayers has actually already been revealed by God in the word. It is another reason why we need to give regular attention to reading, meditating upon and studying the word. God through Isaiah had earlier said, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word” (Isa 66:2). God is especially interested in those who trouble themselves about what is recorded for our instruction. Such people are unhappy until they have rightly applied their learning to their own lives. So it was with those who responded in Ezra’s day. They agreed to put away the foreign wives who caused them to sin against God’s holy law.

Bro Finley Nkomelah (Lilongwe, Malawi)

The Real Truth on Peace Prospects in the Holy Land

As an official of the recent Bush administration, Elliott Abrahams, writing in the Weekly Standard, made rare realistic comments on the Holy Land situation. He was a senior member on the Council on Foreign Relations. He made [we quote] “three dozen visits to the Middle East in the last eight years, and after lengthy discussions with Israelis and Palestinians, it seems to me obvious that it is time to face certain facts: We are not on the verge of Israeli-Palestinian peace; a Palestinian state cannot come into being in the near future; and the focus should be on building the institutions that will allow for real Palestinian progress in the medium or longer term. What are the chances of a final status agreement in 2009? Not one. Despite the pressures for progress after Annapolis, little progress was made in 2008, and if anything conditions are worse now.”

Our comments:

He made 36 visits to the area in 8 years as a US government adviser and is now free to speak out. Few are more qualified. His assessment of the current situation is basically as we see it and immediate prospects as we understand Bible prophecy indicates. Of course, his long term view and recommendations do not reflect the Scriptures but it is refreshing to get at the present truth. His assessment continues:

It has been true for decades that the most Israel can offer the Palestinians is quite evidently less than any Palestinian politician is prepared to accept. Those who say, "the outlines of an agreement are well known" are wrong: To the extent that such outlines are "well known," they are unacceptable to both sides or they would have led to a deal long ago.

Meanwhile, Fatah as a party is moribund. Its reputation for incompetence and corruption remains what it was when Arafat was alive, for there has been no party reform despite endless promises. If democracy is impossible without democratic parties, the collapse of Fatah suggests that a future independent Palestine would either be run by Hamas and other extremists and terrorists or become a one-party "republic" on the model of Tunisia or Egypt.

The lesson of Gaza to Israelis is identical to the lesson of south Lebanon, and a cautionary tale regarding withdrawal from the West Bank: "Land for peace" concessions have failed and become "land for terrorism." Until there is far better security in the West Bank, few Israelis would risk withdrawing the Israel Defense Forces from operating there.

Furthermore, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is now part of a broader struggle in the region over Iranian extremism and power. Israeli withdrawals now risk opening the door not only to Palestinian terrorists but to Iranian proxies. While Iran is able to sustain the Hamas terrorist regime in Gaza, negotiations over a full final status agreement are little more than staking territorial claims to a mirage.

These factors suggest that a final status agreement is not now a real-world goal. What is? An intense concentration on building Palestinian institutions in the West Bank. The U.S. and the Quartet should take some time away from endless meetings and speeches and resolutions calling for immediate negotiations over final status issues, and turn instead to making real life in the West Bank better and more secure.

Not even Elliott Abrahams, Jew as he obviously is, would make a statement about today like Obadiah 18, “*The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle them and devour them*” Obadiah 18.

That is not our statement or what we would want to see. But, like it or not, that is God’s determination in the Christian’s Bible. It is Israel’s task to defend their land and not ours.

The Jews always have chosen the hard road and they have done so again. For them it is a rocky pathway to the kingdom and only a remnant make it. Christians stand aside and weep.

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Bro Graham Bacon (Australia)

The Wicked Shall Be Turned into Sheol

First we start with Bible references – please read them: Psalms 11:6; 49:12,14,20; Ecclesiastes 3:17-20; Isaiah 26:13-19; Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Matthew 25:41; Luke 12:28; John 5:29; Acts 14:15,16; 17:30,31. The wicked shall be turned into sheol, (the original word translated either hell or the grave) all the Gentiles that ‘forget God’(Ps.9:17). The wicked are those that know not God, or that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are three classes of people:

FIRST: Those that never hear of or understand the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel.

SECOND: those who have come to an understanding of the gospel, but have rejected it. and those who have obeyed it but do not hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast to the end.

The first class die and perish like the beasts and have no subsequent existence. The second class who die will be resurrected and (together with those in this class that are alive at Christ’s) coming will be judged and condemned to die.

The third class are those that are responsible (whether alive or resurrected at Christ’s coming) and found approved at the judgement, and will be given eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

Bro Francis Mayende (Bungoma, Kenya)

Time Flies

Years pass and men die but the purpose of God goes on. We look back on the year that is quickly passing and most of those who began the year with us are still with us, but some have fallen asleep. Times grow more difficult as the troubles of the world thicken, and the clouds of coming danger become more threatening. Do we realize the truth of the saying that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come?

Yet there is a thrill in the thought that we are living in the last days, and that the salvation and that of the world, is nearer than when we believed. We have been warned against these days, and against being overmuch cast down, but we must lift up our heads because they are heralds of better things. Perils have been passed so far in this year, and others are rising up in the distance now, yet though mountains be removed and cast into the depths of the sea, we need not be hopelessly afraid. Loud roars the storm also to those who hear a deeper voice across that storm.

Storms are occasional and passing things; calm is the normal condition of creation. To God, who has contemplated the world of men since the beginning, this reign of sin is but an episode, it will pass “as a watch in the night” (Ps 90:4). We pass our years as a tale that is told, and are actors in but a short chapter of a long story. But it has its happy conclusion. The order of the history of mankind, and God’s dealing with them from the beginning to the establishment of His purpose in the Kingdom of His Son, is peace – war – peace.

There was peace in the Garden of Eden. There will be peace when the earth is the renewed Garden of the Lord, but between these two gardens stretches the wilderness of sin, with its wanderings and wickedness, its serpents and idolatry, its murmurings and thirst, its fightings and fears. A wilderness march of thousands of years.

Bro Gilbert Tevere (Mutare, Zimbabwe)

The Covenants of Promise

A covenant is an agreement by which two parties bind themselves to keep a promise of goodwill between them. Most covenants described in the Bible consisted of two parties, one being God who proposed blessings on the other party. It was assumed that the other party would abide by the terms of the covenant previously made known at the outset. The agreement was usually made binding on both parties when an appropriate animal had been provided and sacrificed.

The First Covenant

The first covenant God made was, however, an exception to the rule because of the exceptional circumstances in which it was made. This was the unique occasion when Noah, his family, the animals and the birds came out of the ark after the flood had destroyed every other breathing creature. It was quite possible that when it began to rain again, Noah and his family would wonder whether another similar flood was beginning. To reassure them, God said that He would make the rainbow, with its many beautiful colours, a sign that this would not be so.

“I will establish my covenant with you: neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth...” (Gen.9:11-17).

As we have already stated, it was customary for covenants to be ratified by the sacrifice of animals, but in this case, Noah had just offered acceptable sacrifices and the very few animals that survived the flood were required for breeding.

A covenant with Abraham

The next covenant that God made was with Abram 391 years later. He made some remarkable promises to him when he was 55 years of age one of which had to do with his descendants. These would become so numerous as to be like ‘the stars for multitude and as the sand on the sea shore innumerable.’

Abram lived in a city called Ur of the Chaldees near the river Euphrates. This was an idolatrous city which he was to leave, and go to a land that God would show him (Gen.12:1-3). After a journey of some 400 miles he arrived at Haran where he and his company rested for a while. Abram’s company consisted of his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, his father Terah and many servants, besides asses, camels and flocks of sheep and goats. After leaving his father Terah in Haran they proceeded south into Canaan where the LORD (Yahweh) appeared unto Abram saying, “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (Gen.12:7).

By this time Abram was 75 years of age and his wife Sarai was 65 and a promise concerning his seed must have sounded very comforting because ‘Sarai was barren: she had no child’ (Gen.11:30). To fulfil this promise, therefore, it would be necessary for God to bless Sarai with at least one baby boy. However, an unexpected famine caused them to go down into Egypt for a while after which they returned to Canaan with much wealth. Because of this Abram and Lot agreed to separate, Lot and his company going down into the Jordan valley and Abram and his company remaining in the hill country of Canaan.

At this time God renewed his promise to Abram saying, “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered”.

After this the years rolled by; Abram reached the age of 85 and Sarai 75 and, understandably, they would wonder how much longer they would be expected to wait for their first child. God assured them that Sarai would have a child (Gen.15:4-5). Abram believed God and as the record says ‘he counted it to him for righteousness’(v.6). Abram was then reassured again by God providing a covenant with the following terms.

The covenant ceremony

“Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not...And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him” (v.9,10,12). Then follows a prophetic introduction to the drama of the covenant itself.

“Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come-hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full”.

And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD (Yahweh)

made a covenant with Abram, saying, “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Gen.15:13-18).

Then followed the names of ten nations that occupied that extensive territory now covenanted to Abram. By this dramatic ceremonial the LORD bound himself by the burning lamp, which represented Himself, that passed between the divided animals, that He would one day fulfil His part.

Abram was well acquainted with this territory of 500 miles in extent, having travelled the region of the Euphrates in his earlier life and more recently spent some time in Egypt also.

Abram was 100 years of age and Sarai 90 when at last Sarai gave birth to her firstborn son Isaac, a sure token that the wonderful promises made to this faithful pair would, in their appointed time, eventually be fulfilled.

The covenant with the nation of Israel

About four hundred years after God made the covenant with Abraham, his descendants, who had been made slaves in Egypt, were brought out by their leader Moses. This was achieved by the exercise of God’s mighty power manifested in the dramatic events of the Exodus. By this time Abraham’s descendants had become a nation of about two million people and these were encouraged to make the long journey back to the land of Canaan. At Mount Sinai they rested and it was here that the LORD (Yahweh) made a covenant with the nation.

This covenant was very comprehensive; it incorporated laws that were to guide their national and religious life. It was introduced by the words, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex.19:5-6).

The people were agreeable, ‘All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD hath spoken we will do”, And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD’ (v.8).

The basis of the covenant was summarised in Ten Commandments detailed in chapter 20 verses 2-17. The moral significance of this ceremony was impressed upon the people by an unforgettable demonstration of divine power. ‘Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly’, (v.18). A comprehensive promulgation of laws was then set before the people which occupies chapters 21 to 23, and was called The Book of the Covenant.

The inauguration of this covenant consisted of a sacrificial ceremony of burnt offerings, ‘And (they) sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD, and Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar (representing God’s part) And he took the Book of the Covenant, and read in the audience of the people and they said, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient”, And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the Covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words”’ (Ex.24:5-8).

What might be called a fellowship meal was then arranged to round off this important occasion. Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel were invited to the top of the mount to see God; the surroundings were awesome. “They saw the God of Israel: and there was

under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness...they saw God, and did eat and drink' (Ex.24:9-11).

There would have been angels present on this memorable occasion who would provide the food to be eaten at the meal.

Lastly, Moses was given two tables of stone, on which were engraved the Ten Commandments. In this permanent form they were to be kept in the ark in the tabernacle.

Some of the covenant laws that were amplified in the book of Leviticus included God's blessings if they walked in His laws and kept his commandments and curses if they did not. In chapter 26 thirteen verses describe these blessings (v.1-13) and twenty-six verses describe the curses (v.14-39).

These curses were dreadful indeed. One of the punishments was that they would be taken captives into a strange land. However, if they should repent and confess their iniquity as described in verse 40, God would relent and restore them to their former blessings. "...when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God" (v.44). The final blessings for the nation of Israel will be achieved in the Kingdom of God.

The New Covenant

The Israelites were subject to the law given to them by Moses but because of the influence of the idolatrous nations by which they were surrounded there were long periods when they failed to keep it. At last, after more than 800 years, in the days of the last kings of Israel, God pronounced judgement on Zedekiah.

"Thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come when iniquity shall have an end", thus saith the Lord God; "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same...I will overturn, overturn, overturn it (the kingdom), and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ez.21:25-27).

It was at this time that because the Mosaic covenant did not often produce the results that He desired, God decided that it was necessary to make a change. So God inspired Jeremiah to write, "Behold the days come, saith the LORD (Yahweh), that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer.31:31-34).

One of the remarkable features of this gracious covenant was the writing of God's law on the hearts of those who were to be associated with it so that they would want to keep it and give God lasting pleasure. Another feature was the complete removal of sin and iniquity that would be remembered no more. However, there was no mention of a sacrifice even though every covenant was expected to be ratified by some kind of sacrifice. Nor was the name of the mediator revealed, nor precisely when the covenant would be put into effect.

However, all these three features were revealed soon after by an angelic message conveyed to the prophet Daniel who was contemporary with Jeremiah. In what is known as the 'seventy weeks' prophecy the angel Gabriel informed Daniel that 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression... Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty and two weeks... And after sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off... And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease' (Dan.9:24-27).

This amazing prophecy was introduced by a message of intent in the following words, "...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy..." (ch.9:24).

The intention of making an end of transgression, sins and iniquity was also included in the New Covenant described in Jeremiah's prophecy as we have just seen.

In verse 26 we are informed that after the stated period shall Messiah 'be cut off' (Heb.'Karath'). This is the same word used in Jeremiah concerning the making of a new covenant. In this case, then, the Messiah is involved by providing a sacrificial death that would make this covenant operative.

In compliance with this requirement, Jesus, who is the Messiah, revealed at the end of his ministry that he was about to offer himself as a sacrifice for sins as recorded in Matthew's gospel 26:27-28. The record says, 'And he took the cup (of wine) and gave thanks, and gave it to them (his 12 disciples) saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins"'. Here Jesus is revealing that by his sacrificial death he would make effective the New Covenant that the LORD said he would make with Israel at some future time.

The Seventy Weeks in Daniel 9:24

The period of seventy weeks, which is little more than a year when taken literally, is connected in the prophecy with the starting point, 'the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem'. You may notice that within this period Messiah is mentioned who is actively involved but who lives, after this, in New Testament times, some hundreds of years after the time of Daniel. This means, then, that we have to understand the term 'weeks' in an extended sense.

Taking a day to represent a year was done, for example, for the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness. In this case we read, "After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years" (Num.14:34). By taking one day for a year, then the seventy weeks, or 490 days means 490 years.

Applying this principle to history we find that Cyrus made a decree to restore Jerusalem but there were other later decrees also. The one that fits the historical fulfillment exactly is the one made in the 7th year of Artaxerxes in BC457. 490 years later in AD33, the 490 years were completed. It was in the midst of the last week, that is in AD30, that the sacrifice and oblation were to cease (v.27).

The cessation of animal sacrifices occurred when on Passover day Jesus was 'cut off', that is, was put to death by crucifixion just as he said he would be. It was then that the making an end of transgression, sins and iniquity was accomplished. Immediately the veil of the temple, being torn from top to bottom, showed the visible and miraculous hand of God. (Matt.27:51) In this way the ritual of the Mosaic covenant was shown to be ended. Jesus became the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb.12:24) through whom, by faith, we may approach unto God in prayer.

Although Jesus died on the cross, he was taken down and placed in a tomb. But he did not remain there for long. He himself said, "...and be slain, and be raised the third day" (Luke 9:22; Matt16:21; Mk.8:31). And so it came to pass: after three days Jesus showed himself alive to his disciples and they were overjoyed to see him (Luke 24:36-43). In him was fulfilled the promise of the Psalms, 'He, the holy one, was not suffered to see corruption' (Ps.16:10; Acts 2:27).

The ascension of Jesus

Another feature that is important is the fact that after 40 days Jesus ascended to heaven to be seated on the right hand of God. This ascension was witnessed by his disciples as recorded in Acts 1:9-11. This wonderful event fulfilled the prophecy through David, "The LORD (Yahweh) said unto my lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps.110:1). In the same Psalm it is added, "The LORD hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec". Jesus is not only Messiah but has been appointed a priest with an oath for those who are associated with the New Covenant.

Jesus, then, has been provided by God in His wisdom and power to be the Mediator of the New Covenant. Jesus has written God's righteous laws on our hearts by his masterly teaching which was both captivating and compelling. To those who mourned because of human weakness, his words were spiritually uplifting, they were the words of eternal life (Jn.6:68).

Those who are thus minded are able to respond to Jesus' gracious invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt.11:28-30).

Bro. Ralph Green (UK)

Three Goals to Guide You

Since we are living in the days when the signs of the times are moving towards the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord, there are, here and there, visits to be made, greetings to be shared and hungry souls to be fed. As I contemplate the Christadelphians today, humbled by my privilege to speak to you, I turn to our Heavenly Father for His divine guidance. In this spirit I try to provide each member throughout the world three goals to meet:

1. To study diligently
2. To pray earnestly
3. To serve willingly

Let us consider each of these goals: firstly, study diligently. The Lord Jesus our Saviour instructed us to seek out of the best books, words of wisdom; seek learning by study and faith. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

A study of the scriptures will help our testimonies and the testimonies of family members. Our children today are growing up surrounded by voices urging them to abandon that which is right and to pursue, instead, the pleasures of the world. Unless they have a firm foundation in the gospel of Jesus Christ, a testimony of truth and a determination to live righteously, they are susceptible to these influences. It is our responsibility as parents to fortify and protect them.

To an alarming extent, our children today are being educated by the media including the internet. In the USA it is reported that a child watches television for four hours a day on average. Much of the programming is filled with violence, alcohol, drug abuse, and sex. Watching movies and playing electronic games is in addition to the four hours. So it is our responsibility not only to teach them to be sound in spirit and doctrine, but also to help them to stay that way regardless of the outside voices they may encounter. This will require much time and effort on our part and they will need the spiritual and moral courage to withstand the evil we see on every side.

But to be learned in worldly things is good as long as they hearken to the counsel of God. This requires the courage to hold fast to our standards despite the derision of the world. I urge you to study diligently the word of God, the Bible, to remind you that it is the human's manual from God, since He did not leave us unarmed. In the world, every sophisticated piece of machinery has a manual: TVs, DVDs, radios, etc. Your spiritual talent will expand as you study and learn. You will be better able to assist your families in their learning. You will have peace of mind in knowing that you have prepared yourself for the eventualities that you may encounter in life. I reiterate: study diligently.

The second goal I wish to consider is: pray earnestly, fervently and without ceasing (Luke 18:1; 1 Thes 5:17; James 5:16). Perhaps there has never been a time when we had such great need to pray and to teach our family members to pray. Prayer is a defence against temptation. It is through earnest and heartfelt prayer that we can receive the blessings we need and the support we require to make our way in these times in our difficult and challenging journey that we call mortality.

We teach the importance of prayer to our children and grand-children both by word and example. So, my dear sisters and brothers, do not pray for tasks equal to your abilities, but pray for abilities equal to your tasks. Then the performance of your tasks will be no miracle, but you will be the miracle.

Finally: serve willingly. You are, of course, surrounded by opportunities for serving. No doubt they are times when you fully recognize these opportunities and are somewhat overwhelmed. Where do you begin? How can you do it all? How do you choose from all the needs you observe, where and how to serve?

I learnt recently of a loving service given to a mother when her children were very young. Frequently she would be up in the middle of the night tending to the needs of her little ones, as mothers do. Often her friend and neighbour across the street could come the next day and say, 'I saw your lights on in the middle of the night and know you were up with the children. I am

going to take them to my house for a couple of hours while you have a nap'. This was an act of service provided willingly without fault-finding.

So my brothers and sisters, I extol you who, with loving care and concern, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and house the homeless. He who notes the sparrow's fall will not be unmindful of such service. The desire to help, the willingness to aid and the graciousness to give come from the heart filled with the Lord. Serve willingly.

PERSEVERE

It seems that an old dog fell into a farmer's well. After considering the situation, the farmer decided that neither the dog nor the well were worth saving. So he decided to bury the old dog and put him out of his misery.

When the farmer began shovelling, the dog went hysterical. But as the farmer kept on shovelling, and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck the old dog.

Each time a shovel full of the dirt hit his back, the dog would shake off the dirt and step up.

No matter how painful those shovels of dirt were, the old dog fought panic, he just kept shaking it off and stepping up.

Finally, the dog, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well. What he thought would bury him actually benefitted him because of the way he handled his adversity.

Perseverance is the ability to shake it off and step up when a load of trials are dumped on you.

(Reproduced from Scripture News Digest)

Bro John Wilo Wise (Mazowe, Zimbabwe)

The Example of Rahab

Recently I have been reading about Rahab in Joshua 2:1-21, how she hid the spies, and later became an ancestor of Christ (Matthew 1:5). She showed remarkable knowledge of the history of Israel. She was a woman of courage, and had the ability to face danger without fear.

One of the unpleasant human emotions is fear, that familiar feeling of terror or panic. We experience it when we face persecution for standing up for what we believe, or when we confront disease or death. But Rahab was a strong woman, a woman of spiritual insight. She made her decision to hide the spies and never turned back. She says, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they came from. At dusk when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them" (Joshua 2:4,5). Siding with the Israelites was treason punishable by death, not only for her but all her family.

In verse 12 we read that she asked the men to swear to her by the Lord that they would show her and her family kindness, because she had shown them kindness.

Kindness is connected with love and compassion: treating others in a considerate, hospitable manner, helping them in their needs, being faithful to them. This is what Rahab did. Unlike the

chief cupbearer in Egypt who never showed kindness to Joseph when he had interpreted the dream. “But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness. Mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison” (Genesis 40:14). When the chief cupbearer was restored to his position, he did not remember Joseph but he forgot him.

Kindness is expected of us as one of the aspects of the fruit of the spirit: “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness” (Galatians 5:22). We are to imitate God’s kindness in the way we treat our brothers and sisters, our family members, our friends.

Sometimes we might face opposition to what we believe from our friends and family, but that cannot stop us showing them kindness. God shows kindness to humanity by giving us the gift of life, by extending His general goodness to us, by giving us many things that we do not deserve. “But when the kindness and love of God our saviour appeared, He saved us not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy” (Titus 3:4,5).

Let us all be like Rahab who was spared her life and her family because of her kindness

Sis Margaret Nyoni (Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe)

Why Parables?

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus actually explains his use of parables as a teaching technique, “The disciples came and said to him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given’” (Matthew 13:10,11).

It was only those who spent the time thinking about the message of the parable who benefited from what it taught. He quoted to the disciples the word of the prophet Isaiah about a people “whose heart was grown dull” (Isaiah 6:9,10). In Isaiah’s time, the Israelites had become insensitive to God’s message; they were both unwilling to think and unready to try to understand the terrible situation they were in.

They thought that because they were the people of Israel, they were all right, but in fact they had drifted slowly but firmly away from God. Serving Him had become a ritual, empty of any real meaning. Jesus explained that only those who want to understand will be able to see through the story to the deeper meaning that lies behind it. So let us dig deeper to discover the truth for us to harvest eternal life in the Kingdom of God which is to appear soon.

Bro Martin W Barasa (Kitale, Kenya)

Exhortation: Obadiah and Hebrew 3-5

The book of Obadiah is just like the book of Revelation, both are books of visions – the one shown to Obadiah by God and the other shown to John by the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

They both teach about what would happen in the future, especially in the day of the Lord's return to the earth and life in the Kingdom of God on this earth.

The book teaches that God will not accommodate the proud in His kingdom. It also reminds us that God will not forget His promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:3). Verses 6-10 of Obadiah clearly show that He will curse those nations that curse the nation of Jacob (Israel). As in Revelation 22:12, Obadiah 15 prophesies how individuals will be judged, each according to his works: the righteous for life and the evil ones for death (Romans 6:23). The righteous shall live with Christ. God will be their God, and they shall be His people. Jesus will hand over everything to his father after 1000 years 1 Cor 15:28; Rev 20:7-8).

The Ethiopian eunuch upon hearing the word of God acted quickly, and when they came to the place where there was water, did not delay but asked "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized" (Acts 8:36). So today, we who have heard the scriptures, should act.

Jesus and the thief on the cross: the thief believed that Jesus had done nothing wrong deserving death and quickly asked Jesus to remember him when he comes into his kingdom. Jesus replied, "Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). That day, the thief's name was written in the book of life, and when Jesus comes in his kingdom, he will remember that thief.

To us, Jesus said that we should go and preach the good news to all nations without delay (Mark 16:15). So if we have heard his voice and read from the scriptures, we should not think of doing it tomorrow, but today.

Today, as we break bread and drink wine at the Lord's table, we should remember that Jesus died for our sins, and we should remember that God is love.

Bro Moses Ajiweka (Chinhoye, Zimbabwe)

King David, Once a Refugee, and the Commitment of Those Who Felt His Pain

JONATHAN AND ABIGAIL, closely followed David's severe trials as a refugee fleeing for his life from king Saul, living in caves and in the deserts along with the hundreds of his companions with their families. In walking in their shoes they so felt their pain, that they extended themselves at great risk to minister to him.

JONATHAN, the son of the unfaithful and unstable king Saul, as he thought of his buddy day after day left no stone unturned in finding his friend and giving him the support and encouragement he desperately needed. This shows the tremendous effort he made in doing so, and God, witnessing this, helped him, knowing that for David this encouragement was quite well-timed, whereas king Saul, with all his expertise, effort and support, could not find David, because God blocked him. *This is a powerful lesson to us of God's willingness to help us against great odds when we are bent on doing His will.* Sadly, Jonathan's plans of becoming second in command when David became king, did not materialize. Is it because, he did not go the full length in fully becoming one with him, joining in his situation, thus continuing to provide

him with the much needed ongoing support, but instead left him in the wood while he returned to his own house and comfortable lifestyle, or misplaced allegiance to his father?

ABIGAIL, the wife of the fool Nabal, was evidently following David's situation very closely too, so when he was in dire need, she was able to offer him very wise counsel, in addition to the necessary sustenance. Notably she uses the same words he used to king Saul when he was being hunted by him – compare “.....*I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it*” (1 Sam. 24:11), with Abigail's statement in 1 Samuel 25:28-29 “... *because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul*” - clearly revealing how closely she identified with him in his experiences. Like Jonathan, she requested David to remember her when he received his reward from the Lord. Unlike Jonathan however, when presented with the break, she left her life of comfort most likely inherited from her very wealthy late husband, *and went the full length to join David in his refugee existence*, and eventually shared in his victory.

Empathy begets the interest that we will only feel when we pause from our busy lives to *walk in another's shoes*, thus *feeling their pain*. This will move us in a determined positive ongoing direction to help, where Our Heavenly Father, seeing our *passion*, will work things out for us. The extent of the effort we make to provide the much needed relief to our refugee brethren, in removing them from the kind of condition, *under which we ourselves would not want to live*, would be seen by our Heavenly Father, and He will bless and empower our efforts.

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

Sis Esther Worrell (Canada)

Have They Met the Standards?

There is an urgent and 'unusual' call from Luo leaders, among them politicians, that their males should go quickly for circumcision on the suggestion that it can help reduce HIV/AIDS by 40% in the province. An open debate about the issue has been conducted and attended by Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga and Luo Council of Elders Chairman, Meshack Riaga Ogallo to get the approval and 'blessing' of the principals. But the question remains: have they met good standards, or is it just trial and error.

Ever since the disease became a disaster, many trials have been seen to help reduce or get rid of it, but in vain. The Luos have been basically blamed for their cultures. Unlike most cultures here in Kenya where circumcision is viewed as a means or order of initiation – from childhood to adulthood, - the Luos place their culture in juxtaposition to those of the Jews but here it differ from them. To the Luos, removal of six lower teeth was their order of initiation and this practise vanished in the 1950s, a good sign of change in a meaningless custom. Instead of mitigating some outdated cultures like wife inheritance, that has widely spread the disease, they lapse from the accepted standards and venture into worthless practises. Why? Because the pandemic knows no barriers, even cutting off the foreskin. Using circumcision as a tool, in turn has its consequences. Some just 'cut' young boys, and have taken advantage to 'poach' the

uncut in villages and do the deed in the open, but how unsterile are the instruments? Are they not themselves spreading the disease, given that they do not first test these people for HIV/AIDS?

While we have a look at the Bible, as some of the advocates do to justify it (Genesis 17), we find that this was a **sign** of ratification of the promise between Abraham, his descendants and God. And it was just a cut in their flesh and no mention of the spiritual being (verses 7,9-13). We Luos are therefore not descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. All peoples are justified by faith and not circumcision (Romans 3:7-9). Now whatever their claim that we live in a diaspora like Jews and are persecuted, that cannot mean that we have blood relations with the Jews. In fact, the leaders should have preached a complete change in our morals especially sexual conduct. Nyanza province (equivalent to an English 'shire'), the main domain of the Luos, is rated as amongst the worst hit by AIDS/HIV due to its climate and cultural practices.

Nevertheless, our respected and educated leaders should come up with good measures that could entice our people but not for political gain. Previously, other communities who practise circumcision amongst their males had a proverb that Luos are unworthy to lead the nation because they were uncircumcised. Perhaps this is why they are embracing circumcision – to fit them for national leadership! I wonder!

Bro Lawrence K'owiti (Latito, Kenya)