

December 2017 USA, Australia, Europe, Ethiopia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Revelation 7-9 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/rev789.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

Download the *NEV Bible* with commentary and *Bible Companion* bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

USA

Our brother Valentin in Spain is out on the streets of Valencia most days with his "Free Bibles" visibility vest on, and even a cap advertising free Bible literature, distributing tracts; and he's also online everywhere he can be.



A man called PEDRO from **Cuba** but now living in **Florida**, USA was attracted to our material about Satan, or the lack thereof in the traditional sense. He studied further and desired baptism, and our local brother Josh was able to baptize him, with the following glowing report: It was a blessing for me to have gotten a chance to spend time with Pedro. Pedro was certainly a man who was strong in his faith and definately in his understanding of the truth. It has been a tough year as his wife left him at the same time that he lost some of his toes to diabetes. There were points where some tears came to the eye, yet his resolve in his faith would quickly come back. He certainly knew that his objective was to be baptised. I picked him up to head out to the beach and he merely wanted to go to the nearest point of water even though we were not that far from some beautiful beaches. He relayed to me his story of how he came to read *The Real Devil* along with speaking with the gentleman overseas. He certainly did not care for being given a hundred point questionnaire on whether or not he understood the faith, however he was not bitter about it. Truthfully he said there wasn't enough space for him to answer the questions and he still answered them all and replied back. The Lord was with us in the language barrier, however his English really wasn't that bad. We ended up pulling over the side of the road and I said a prayer before we walked in the water. He was so excited I started counting and he just fell right back and in and I pulled him out and said You are baptised in Christ my brother! We then looked and around and a woman had shown up and was willing to take our picture and then another guy turned up and specifically asked us what we were doing. We proceeded to explain what baptism was and why we just did it. With a smile on his face Pedro turned to me and said "See we have witnesses to my baptism and we even were able to witness ourselves!" It was in that moment that his heart and desires once again came through. I then asked if he wanted to go break some bread together. So we hopped in the car and I went to the store to get some wine and bread. He took me to the best cuban bread place in town :) We went back to his place and he showed me the room he stays in. Not much but he was excited to show me his computer, bible books, and english to spanish dictionary. He also showed me some of his medicair that he likes to give to others in need. We read the word and had communion together and then prayed together before parting ways. He was so strong in his understanding of the word I truly encouraged him to go out and preach the good word. He felt he needed to learn English more as well as get a better understanding of the word. Truly the man could have lead his own church it

was such a blessing to hear. I told him i would continue to stay in touch with him and help him in any way that I could.



EUROPE

We'd like to remind you that Carelinks messages are not for publication on the open internet, and the following report from a UK brother and sister is typical of why we ask this

This report is not to be copied under any circumstances. We must protect the identities of the people concerned. Thank you.

There are times when, against all the human odds, the Lord Jesus reached out into enemy territory and drew out people to himself. In Luke 8:3 we find Chuza, the wife of Herod's steward named as one of the chief supporters of Jesus' earthly ministry. And we have to think of the risks she was taking. Then in Philippians 4:22, Pauls ends his letter saying, almost casually, 'All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.' (!!) And of course, Paul himself 'the worst of all sinners' as he later described himself, plucked out from the most vicious group of fanatical enemies of the early Christians. We are invited to stop and ask 'WHAT!!! How is that possible?'

This report is necessarily anonymous and there are no photos, because the Lord has reached again deep into the territory of an anti-Christ. The brother and sister from UK write:

"We received a message from a brother and sister in Europe who are asylum seekers to ask us to go over for another baptism. We knew the couple concerned, from a Middle Eastern country, had been teaching some friends about the truth of the saving grace of Jesus, so we assumed it was for their friends. The reality was unbelievable.

This couple have a son and daughter-in-law who live as fully committed Muslims with prominent positions in society in an Islamic country. Compliance with the demands of their religion is essential for them to be able to continue. Ramadan, praying several times a day and similar rituals are hall marks of their daily life. Head-covering for the wife - never a strand of hair on show outside the tightly wrapped hijab.

But is not only in their daily life that this couple complied, for the wife has qualifications in Islamic studies and the Q'ran, and is a teacher in that country. As she later explained, she had to constantly watch her step against the slightest accusation of non-compliance.

Put yourselves into the position of this couple. And I will let Leo Tolstoy say what therefore needs to be said at this juncture: "I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth, if it be such that would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to colleagues, which they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives".

But the Lord had a different agenda and has reached out and touched them. Earlier in the year, while on a holiday to visit their European family, they had an experience which they felt was an encounter with the Risen Lord. The reality was that they met a couple of committed believers who told them simply who Jesus was and why they believed that he was the Son of God and the

Saviour of the world. From their side, it was a 5 minute basic description of the birth, life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus - so simple that a teenager could have done it. From this senior academic's point of the view, it was the most amazing experience in her life.

In furtive telephone conversations with her father-in-law and on a visit to Europe in the summer, she and her husband immersed themselves in the teachings of Jesus, until on 27th November we in UK received a message to come over for their baptisms. It was conveyed to us with great urgency, and had to be conducted with complete secrecy. So we made hurried arrangements to go over mid December - just before 'our important Christmas family plans', amidst all our 'other urgent jobs', to see what we were going to find. We came back with altered perspectives.

We arrived and were quickly ushered into the house and our car into the garage, to find the curtains at the front of the house permanently closed. It turned out that the other daughter-in-law of the Europe based family appears to have serious mental illness and with her partner had violently attacked members of the family the night before we arrived. The front door had been damaged and the whole family live in fear of going out and being watched by this woman, who has already tried to cause difficulties with the immigration authorities, and has been spotted spying on them.

Yet the warmth of the greeting, in full Middle Eastern tradition was unfettered, and in the midst of it were this couple who had come to seek salvation. The woman was more restrained in my company and only shook hands, but her eyes were full of love and were passionate to convey what she wanted to say. But with my wife she held on to her as if they were long lost sisters - although they had never met or spoken before. She later explained that when she shook my hand, it was the first time in her life that she had ever shaken hands with another man. Such is the cultural difference, deeply engrained into the subjugated women of that society. To NOT wear a hijab clearly was to feel naked and she still wore it - though only loosely now.

We had to listen to their disturbing account of the attack last night which had clearly upset them all, yet the irrepressible sense that the Lord was present, and that there was much to learn, replaced fear with joy. We prayed for them together and for the young grand-daughter and for the troubled daughter in law who needs the Lord's healing

The language barrier meant that conversation was slow, and Google Translate came to our rescue time and again. Fortunately they all understand at least some English and were actively helping each other in their own language. Their teenage son had come to Europe with them and despite telling us that the English teaching in their schools was poor, he was able to translate well for us. (Computer games are in English as well as some TV!)

We came assuming that they would return home as they had done on earlier visits to their European family, but gradually it became clear that they were staying and would be seeking asylum - father, mother and son. They had planned it before they left. The father had locked up his business as for a holiday, the mother went home from work as normal, their son was given holiday leave from his college. They packed their cases as normal, locked up the house as normal, went to the airport as they had done many times before and left. They walked away from house, business, car, career, college, from her parents and family, colleagues and friends without saying a word and didn't look back. All they knew was that there was a house with the family in Europe where they could stay for the time being. And all for the Lord. It is impossible not to apply these words to them:

'But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in

him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ! Phil 3:7-10.

We prayed together, we spent hours sitting round the table, reading from the gospels, answering their questions, explaining the gospel of Jesus, the kingdom, resurrection, sin and forgiveness, the new life in Christ, the living presence of Jesus, the reliability of the Bible (They have no doubt about that. This scholar of the Q'ran has totally rejected it as a pack of lies!)

Her husband spoke of the hypocrisy of Islam and his attraction to the honesty and truth of the gospel. (I think the word he used was 'integrity').

In the time we had together we also covered baptism (- obedience, washing away sins, dying and rising with Jesus), Christ as mediator, the false teaching of the trinity, the holy spirit, the significance of women to Jesus, judgment, confession and forgiveness, the second coming of Jesus and the signs of the times.

We spent a lot of time discussing the practicalities of running a small young ecclesia in the home and the differences between churches as buildings and as communities of committed believers. This included how to read and study the Bible together, how to pray using the scriptures as models of prayers, and how to run the breaking of bread service.

My two lasting images are firstly of this husband and wife reading Romans 6 aloud in their native language as they stood by the water. The former Islamic teacher weeping as she read, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as slaves to obedience, his slaves you are to who you obey? Whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness. But thanks be to God, that whereas you were slaves to sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching which was delivered to you. And being made free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness."

And as we said farewell, the scarf which kept slipping from her head had been left behind.

This small, inexperienced, vulnerable group of your brothers and sisters need your prayers. I told them that I would be telling you all about them and it would be good for them to know that you are indeed including them in your prayers. If you would like to send messages of love and encouragement and assurance, then please do so by writing to info@carelinks.net

Sadly we are not encouraging direct contact for the security issue is very real, but we will pass on your messages.

ETHIOPIA

Brother John Aldersley from Carelinks New Zealand and his team have visited and baptized folks in Ethiopia, and are engaging in a lot of ongoing preaching work there, distributing Bibles, Bible Basics and other literature, and succeeding in encouraging local brethren to follow up and baptize people in this large and fascinating land. Here are a few snippets from email exchanges; the Truth is going forth there very powerfully and we pray for continued blessing and leading in that work:

This is reflective of the witness of a group of young sisters who are university students:

Our Bahia Faith friend, Hirut, willing to join us. This is a very top news for both Martha and me. And we have got a great lesson on the power of prayer. As you suggested we reading together our book with my friends, the interest of reading the book increases. The students are interested to read the book and bibles, if possible please make them ready. We have read together, but it consumes our study time, and also difficult to read with men's because we are girls. If possible

please ready books and bibles to my university friends. And also to Hirut a Bible...

[Later]

Hi brother, As you gave me permission to us baptized Hirut She baptized just now. The same place I and Martha baptized. She is very happy. I am excited now that she no more Bahai faith . Thanks to God. John we need to help her to growth her.

From a woman called Hibist:

Hi, From your teachings, I understand that the concept of the concept of trinity is a false idea made by man. I understand we need to define scripture by scripture not analogies like water, ice and vapour.

From biblical baptism book I understand an act of baptism has two main symbolic purposes 1.our sins us washed out because of sacrifice of Jesus in the cross 2. It is a symbol of death and resurrection of Christ. I understand that the doctrine baptism for infants and sprinkle by water is false doctrine.

I understand that baptism by proxy or baptism for the dead is false doctrine.

I understand that the doctrine Satan us real being is man made not biblical.

I need baptism because it is a commandments of Christ shows our obedience and brings us to new life .So now I am ready to repent and to baptized.

Thanks, Hibist

From newly baptized brother Lemma, a former Muslim:

Hi John, I want to express special thanks to all who contributed , your efforts, knowledge and fund, to get eternal life. Today immediately after baptism, I feel all my sins are washed, and run away. Today is my birthday , it is a very new day to start a journey to the kingdom of God through baptism. My baptism today is unforgettable and the joy continues through the whole of my life. Now there is no spirit Muslim in me. When I got baptized today morning and immediately after coming out the water I feel strong and there was much power inside my soul. I know there Will be difficulty in my life but I am ready for this. Now I see a change in my life. I feel my life has a meaningful. Thanks

Lemma

From a pastor who is grasping the Truth of the Kingdom:

My question many pastors and preachers have always made people believe that we shall go to heaven how can I change people from this trust and believe? I have a church that I pastor with 70 members please I need your help how will I teach them to change into this new message?

From a newly baptized brother Ketema:

Hello John, today daily reading according to the daily reading planner you send me is The book of Zechariah, 1:18. John, from Zechariah dreams what do we learned and is it connection with now a days ?

AUSTRALIA

We've had some wonderful meetups with folks who've come to us from our literature, and have placed them in good hands for local follow up. We are saddened by the decline of faith in Australian society. We made a brief video of Brother John Thatcher talking in a Sydney McDonalds of how maths confirms the truth and Divine inspiration of the Bible. It's less than 3 minutes, which seems about the attention span of the younger generation today, and it's

at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qumoUIECd7s>

On Christmas Eve we were able to get out to a shopping centre in **Kogarah** and offer free New Testaments to folks, and then spend time in **Fairfield** NSW with a lovely family of mum and dad and two adult sons who are eagerly considering our literature. Here are John and Grant engaged in chatting with folks outside Kogarah station on Christmas Eve [in temperatures of around 40 C / 104 F]:



We're also planning on finding out about advertising free Bibles on the Sydney buses and trains, given the success of this in the UK.

PRAYER POINTS:

- For the contacts worldwide, especially this time in Australia
- For the Iranian family recently baptized and others like them in acutely difficult circumstances due to religious intolerance
- For those recently baptized
- For the work in Ethiopia

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks