

## July 2013 Syria, South Sudan [1]

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Matthew 22, and there's an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/mt22.mp3> You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://aletheiacollege.net/archives.html> ; *Carelinks Bible Radio* is at <http://r-b-c.org/listen.php> ;

and God willing, we have our live video link service in English this Sunday at 08:00 a.m. GMT - you can view direct at [www.carelinks.net](http://www.carelinks.net) [scroll down to the video screen] or if you want to make comments and participate in live chat, use <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/biblecenter>

### SYRIA

As mentioned in a previous Carelink message, we were able to meet with our one Syrian brother whom we baptized a few years ago. He escaped through the mountains to Turkey, where he has now been joined by his extended family. Our brother had already shared the good news of Christ with them in their home village in Syria, but the situation there made baptism almost impossible. So it was with joy that we were able to baptize our brothers nephews and brothers: HUSSEIN, JELAL, BARI, HAMODE and MENNAN. Here they are together with Hannan (third from left) in a tea house after their baptism:



They are very frightened young men, all from the same village. They have all been called up to serve in the Syrian army and also in the rebel command which is in control of their home village. The village has been shelled and bombed, is without electricity, water and sewage; all food has to be brought in from afar and is very expensive; no wages or pensions are paid, indiscriminate killings have occurred, and the whole area is largely deserted apart from the elderly and those otherwise unable to escape. They are desperate for news of their remaining families. There is a legitimate concern about many refugees and asylum seekers that they are simply seeking a better life in the West. But the situation in Syria is different- 100,000 dead, several hundred thousand wounded, basic amenities, income, food and employment cut off for millions, fighting everywhere, and a few million refugees. The situation is truly desperate. There are Syrians everywhere in Eastern Turkey, rich ones, poor ones, some on foot, some in cars, but all uprooted and desperate. It's not difficult to snap photos of Syrian registered vehicles in Turkey:



And Turkey is not a friendly place for refugees. The Police arrest and hassle anyone who looks like one, and Turkey will not give asylum to anyone. Humanly speaking, that is understandable. Because of its geographical position, Turkey is flooded with refugees and asylum seekers- from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq. And now a few million from Syria. Short of putting landmines on their long, mountainous border or shooting at the crowds of desperate people surging over those borders, there's little Turkey can do about the influx of millions of desperate people into their country- apart from make things unattractive for them within Turkey. Our brethren cannot work legally, and their passports cannot be renewed because they have not done their military service. So they are without valid documents. We gave significant financial support to our brethren, some of which they will send to their elderly relatives who they say are literally starving. Please please do try to donate financially. We have requested assistance from the KAMF and other Christadelphian funds but they are not able to support, so please try to support

these brethren if at all you can. And please do pray for these desperate brethren. They are clearly suffering in many ways, not least from post traumatic stress. Only the Lord can resolve their issues and the world's problems, and we so wish and pray for His early return.

### **SOUTH SUDAN** [First part]

South Sudan is the world's newest nation, theoretically comprised of the Christian, black African South which seceded from the Moslem, Arabic North after years of civil war which claimed a few hundred thousand lives and created millions of refugees. However, the border area includes Darfur and other unstable areas, meaning that South Sudan has a steady influx of Moslem refugees seeking shelter from the fighting and famine. South Sudan itself is unstable, with much of the territory outside the main towns in the hands of various rival militias and cattle herding tribes at war with each other for pasture. The roads are severely potholed, not tarred and largely impassible. The only way of safely getting around is by rickety aircraft or barges along the Nile or other rivers. There is no functioning postal system, hardly any banking system, no use of credit cards, an airport with no security scanners- and about everything is imported, which along with the hefty cost of transport makes life very expensive. And yet as a nominally Christian nation, the people of South Sudan know very little about their faith. There are very few Bibles around- everything has to be brought in from Kenya or Uganda. And there's no postal system either. So here is a nation which is crying out to be given Bibles and to be taught the Gospel. It was a common sight at our meetings to see people eagerly sharing a Bible:



There's very little teaching of any Christian doctrine going on because there are few pastors with any real idea about the Bible. It's part of our work at Carelinks to seek to take the true Gospel to those areas where it's not been preached, and South Sudan is one of them. We're pleased to report great response to our work on the current visit, and the first Christadelphian baptisms there.



In this first part of our report we'll focus on the baptism of brother JOSEPH from Aweil, a town near the northern border with Sudan. He is typical of so many. He fled to Ethiopia on foot as a child. His father was killed, his mother and grandmother had the back of their legs cut and their ears cut off [mutilated people are a common sight]. He and one other person were the sole survivors in a bombing raid on one village. He was buried alive when a bomb landed near the hole he and an old lady were hiding in, and it took them hours to dig themselves out of the soil on top of them- they were almost buried alive. We've made a video of his story, we'll put it online soon Lord willing. We asked how he managed to forgive so much, and he has some profound comments. Like many other such 'lost boys' as they are called, he wandered through Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, feeling a strong sense of calling to Jesus, passing through Catholic and Protestant groups, but not learning much detail about the Bible. He prayed to God for guidance, to send someone to teach him the Truth, and then came upon our free Bible offer online. It was a wonderful climax to his amazing journey so far to be baptized.

He is married and has built a large shelter under which he teaches up to several hundred people the new knowledge he has found online from us:



He is eager to teach them the Truth. In his area, there are new arrivals of Moslems fleeing the war in the border areas and the famine. They arrive barefoot and with nothing:



Joseph does his best to look after them and to introduce them to Christianity. Our brother is desperate for Bibles and *Bible Basics* in Arabic to teach them- and for brethren to visit him and teach and probably baptize others. We're quite low on funds at this time- please consider donating towards at least the printing work. We can try to send the literature by DHL to Juba and then it can be transported on barges to his place.

Joseph is a lovely man, generous, courteous, cultured and a true lover of God and His Son and their word. Here he is with his small Bible he got in Kenya, full of notes:



Please pray for this amazing opening! And please, consider getting involved. This is true missionary work- taking God's Word and the saving grace of His Son to those who have not heard. Don't be fazed by the security issues. The people are lovely and we never once felt threatened. Next Carelink there will God willing be even more amazing news.

**With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks**