

## July 2019 UK, Sri Lanka

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Jeremiah 4 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/jer4.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>

Helps for the *Bible Companion* readings this week:

**2 Samuel** <http://n-e-v.info/2samcomm.pdf>

**Jeremiah** <http://n-e-v.info/JeremiahNEVCommentary.pdf>

**Matthew** <http://n-e-v.info/NEVMatthewCommentary.pdf>

### UK

Brother Stewart Webster regularly distributes *NEV Bibles* in **Wigan** on Saturdays, and he reports as follows: "I had 5 Iranian asylum seeker helpers today, Ali, Sevan, Hamed, Roya and Elham. They were fantastic and we gave out at least 20 bibles over 2 hours. The pictures even include us handing a *NEV NT* to the Mayor of Wigan who had come out to support some Wigan council and independent charity organizations who had erected stalls in the town centre. Our Iranian friends were excited (especially Sevan) when I told them they had just given a Bible to the most important man in Wigan. I spent a couple of minutes explaining to the Mayor about the background as to why they were here and he seemed genuinely interested. The help I get from my Iranian friends, brother Hamed, soon to be brother Ali and sister Sevan, Roya and Elham has been given without any encouragement from myself and is an amazing testimony to the power of the simple gospel message in those who are poor in spirit and whose lives have otherwise been torn apart".

What a wonderful witness, with the Gospel going to those in high places; we think of Eph. 3:10,11: "The intention was that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ".



### SRI LANKA

Almost 17 years ago to the day, in 2002, we baptized a number of Pakistani brethren on the beach in Karachi, Pakistan. Many of them were to go on to suffer terribly for their faith and Christian witness, particularly suffering from the infamous blasphemy laws in Pakistan. These laws empower the Muslim majority to accuse any Christian of blaspheming Mohammed or the Koran, and to then push for heavy punishment or the death penalty. Brother Shahzad was one of those brethren. He was a lawyer and had to move three times to avoid extremists seeking to kill him for his Christian positions, and on one occasion he narrowly escaped death, by God's grace. He and his young family have now fled to Sri Lanka, where many other persecuted Pakistani Christians have also gone. But the Government provide little or no welfare, and don't permit refugees to legally work. So life is so hard for them. Sri Lanka is the easiest and nearest open country to flee to, but there is no support for them and many live in real poverty as they

await some possible relocation by the UNHCR after a period of years. But this means that there are a significant number of persecuted Christian Pakistanis in Sri Lanka, who have already suffered for their faith and are now rather lost in a strange and hostile environment. They are an ideal group to whom we can explain the true Gospel and take them further in their understanding and commitment. So Shahzad has been preaching, and requested Urdu *Bible Basics* in order to teach his contacts further. Despite very much opposition and pressures of various sorts, we were able to hold a *Bible Basics* seminar with some of the contacts. We went through each chapter of *Bible Basics*, resulting in a series of audio and video files in Urdu which comprehensively goes through all our basic doctrines; hopefully this will be a useful resource for those preaching to Urdu speakers.

The material is at [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqHWDPHDmR\\_wY8X1L-zMful0y9bpxbHkB](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqHWDPHDmR_wY8X1L-zMful0y9bpxbHkB)

The calibre of the contacts was most inspiring and encouraging. They were humble, teachable, with a good level of fluency with the Bible. It was humbling to be with women with young children whose husbands had either been murdered or simply disappeared, or who had been sent by their husbands to the relative safety of Sri Lanka because of blasphemy charges being pushed against them. Now they had understood the basic truths of the true Gospel, they expressed how the Bible and the Lord Jesus, and their entire faith, had become so much more alive- to the point they felt that they had before been merely traditional Christians. We were able to bring with us many more *Bible Basics* and *NEV Bibles*, which are clearly read and valued by these dear folks.



There's a video of all these things at [https://youtu.be/OpBqSD\\_n6pw](https://youtu.be/OpBqSD_n6pw) and in it, you can hear the truly wonderful testimony of some of the sisters when asked "How do you feel now you've been baptized?". So at the end of the seminar we were able to baptize brothers MICHAEL, KHURRAM, NABEEL and AZAL and sisters CHANDRA, SHAZIA, ROMA, ASTER, IRUM and SAKAISH. These dear ones are really willing to die and rise with their Lord, and despite their imperfect knowledge of things in the earlier lives in Pakistan, they had even then demonstrated that basic desire. Now, empowered and enriched with more knowledge of the Lord's ways, baptism was absolutely the right thing for them and really the Angels rejoiced at all this fruit:



We then broke bread, with some expressing great joy that they were doing this with understanding for the first time. You can see brother Shahzad in the green T-shirt below:



After the recent terrorist attacks in Colombo targeting Christians at church [they killed around 300 Christians with over 500 wounded], there is heavy security and many Pakistani Christian

refugees are frightened to move around; and there is undoubted racism against them from the local Sri Lankan population. Two formerly Muslim contacts, KHALIL and TELHA, arrived at our hotel in the afternoon and wanted to be baptized as secretly as possible. After discussing for quite some time, it was already evening, and they were clearly ready for baptism. They feared using the beach, and there was only a shower in the hotel bedroom. So we urged them to use the hotel swimming pool; but they were nervous that other guests might be there. We went there anyway, and found the sign photographed below: "Danger: Pool closed @ 7:00 PM, strong chemical (chlorine) in use". And a 'no swimming' sign. There were no guests there and no pool attendants, as the pool was closed. So we quickly prayed, took off our clothes and went in and did the baptisms in the strongly chlorinated water. They wanted no photos as they are so paranoid of being targetted for betraying Islam [a crime punishable by death under Sharia law]. But Shahzad did snap this one of the sign and the chlorinated pool, as a witness to the wonderful hand of providence working with us.



We have spent significant funds already on the huge range of needs with this group, and we do appeal for your donations. And naturally, as brother Shahzad says in his message, your prayers above all.

Brother Shahzad also suggested that their group would be open to exhortation and live encouragement by *WhatsApp*- the idea being that you use your phone to give a video talk to the group, which would then be cast onto a TV screen so they can also see you, and you can then get involved with answering their questions afterwards. Let us know if you're interested in providing this support.

### **PRAYER POINTS**

- For brother Stewart's witness in Wigan UK
- For the refugee brethren and their families in Sri Lanka
- For our brethren still undergoing Islamic persecution in Pakistan
- For those recently baptized