

## March 2019 Israel, Latvia, Australia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Luke 8 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/lk8.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:

**Numbers** <http://n-e-v.info/numcomm.pdf>

**Psalms** <http://n-e-v.info/psalms.pdf>

**Luke** <http://n-e-v.info/NEVLukeCommentary.pdf>

### ISRAEL

This week Mike Flaherty and Duncan spent some time in Israel, assessing the possibilities of doing feeding and preaching work amongst the very poorest of Israeli society who live in the square mile or so around the central bus station in Tel Aviv. This area is totally different to anywhere else in Israel. The rule of the rabbis doesn't extend there, the Sabbath isn't observed, and the area is full of people from every nation under heaven. Drugs and prostitution are rife, with drug usage going on openly on the streets, and brothels and prostitutes working in broad daylight. You can Google and find out more about the area. There are many Africans there, as well as many Eastern Europeans and the bottom rung of Israeli society. You can see men with skull caps sleeping rough, and a homeless Russian woman sheltering from the rain under the same umbrella as an African:



We wonder whether in some ways it was this same sector of Israelite society who responded to the Lord's message. His followers seemed to have certainly included some prostitutes and non religious Jews. And so we spent some days there walking around in the high visibility vests offering free *NEV Bibles* and also offering food and coffee. We bought an urn and gave free coffee and used this as a basis upon which to engage people about the Gospel:



The ghetto area in the side streets from the bus station is really quite rough, with prostitution booths and drug peddling openly operating. The homeless sleep in various open spaces around that red light area and our video includes some footage of it. We found that late at night was the best time to provide food, and this also avoids conflict with the cafes and food sellers who could otherwise feel we were undercutting them.



Interest in the message was encouraging. We met Falasha Jews, a man from South Sudan who walked up to Duncan and said he recognized him from viewing our videos on YouTube [and wanted more explanations about Ezekiel 38], people from Chad, Central African Republic, Russia, Belarus, South Africa, West Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea... every nation under heaven. We attended meetings of some African Pentecostal churches, but couldn't stand the extremely loud music, screaming in "tongues", and stress on making the poor migrants pay tithes to the well dressed pastors. However, we were able to give some of the attendees some Bibles, and we met one man walking along the street the next day carrying one of our Bibles. Mike pointed out to him the *Bible Basics* at the back of it:



So we preferred to make our own contacts on the streets, and had so many good conversations with so many folk who clearly are asking the right questions; as well as giving secular Israelis and off duty IDF soldiers the opportunity of the Gospel:



We believe there is plenty of scope and need for distributing food here as well as the Gospel. But things took a turn for the better when we met FRED and his wife, who had left the usual hard line Pentecostal groups because of the abuses ongoing. They work as cleaners but on the Sabbath they gather together a few like minded folk for Bible study in a park. This was more our scene. This married couple clearly had a strong marriage and were very spiritually sincere. They live in a tiny compartment of the basement beneath a building in the area. There is barely space for the two of them to stretch out there. They have a motorbike which they manage to squeeze in there too, and it is on this that they go to work at a factory on the edge of town. We gave them the water urn, and our left over plastic cups and coffee, as well as New Testaments and *Bible Basics* so that they can continue the work of providing at least something for the homeless whilst preaching to them. We believe that this little church in the park may well be the beginning of something larger and we were certainly led to them by God. Here we are with them in their tiny cellar, with the water urn balanced on the back of their moped:



We hope to make another visit in May and then again in June or July. If you would like to come and help, please contact us. Although bear in mind that working in that ghetto is not very pleasant work and you may see scenes which could be challenging. Mike is an ex Policeman and his comments on the situation in the video should be noted.

So the video summarizing the work is at <https://youtu.be/YAteWHFsyU0>

and anyone considering coming over and helping should view it. As you know, our essential emphasis is upon the preaching of the true Gospel, but there is also a lot of genuine humanitarian need on those streets and this is a great way to combine material care with the preaching of the good news of far better things in Christ. Everything is expensive in Israel and so

we are very open to any financial donations you can make. And of course please do all pray for God's blessing upon this wonderful opportunity to bring the Gospel to Israel.

Brother Mike summarizes his impressions:

"With only days left before Betty and I fly back to Australia, Duncan and I got cheap flights to Tel Aviv for a quick visit to assess the viability of assisting some of the many migrants who are living on the streets. We chose the area of the Tel Aviv Bus Station, an architect designed shopping mall and transit hub which has been described by locals as 'the monstrosity'. There is no elegance to this run down, multi-story maze which throws together a jumble of Hebrew, Russian, Arab, Asian, African and who knows who else with their market shops. The bus station and the surrounding neighbourhood more closely resembles parts of Bangkok than sophisticated Israel. This area is very raw and slightly wild with open drug and alcohol abuse evident as we walked the back streets, yet it was there that we got the greatest response to our offers of free New Testaments.

Our prayers for our Heavenly Father's guidance were constant and many times they were obviously answered, with a young man from South Sudan stop us in the street and state he knew Duncan as the man he had seen on youtube discussing Ezekiel 38. Obviously we were very visible in our hi-vis vests advertising free bibles, but still surprisingly people would approach us for a free bible for them and also for their family. There are many other stories but perhaps the one that encouraged us the most was the young man we encountered from Ghana who was disillusioned with the 'prosperity doctrine' of his old church and started a fellowship under a tree in a park. Bibles were very gratefully accepted and we visited him and his wife in their basement 'room' they were renting where we prayed for them and their ministry.

Tel Aviv Yafo can take you on a roller coaster ride of emotions where you wonder if the bleary-eyed addict will ever sober up to consider the hope Jesus offers, to the pure joy of encountering a believer who has a thirst to know Jesus and God more. One thing is certain; It is God that gives the increase and lead people to us. We are not gifted speakers or debaters, nor did we need to be, but we can all draw courage from God to show people we care about their salvation".

## **LATVIA**

The daily feeding and teaching scheme has continued, and we were encouraged by the baptism of JANIS. He is literally homeless, living in a deserted house; we were able to give him blankets, hand knitted by our Australian sisters, and also food... and a box of chocolates we had laying around. It was below freezing that night. We so appreciate all your donations and support to enable this wonderful project to continue.



## **AUSTRALIA**

We reported last week the great response from women prisoners in Australia who initially received the 2019 Creation Calendar, and are now requesting Bibles. News of our calendars and free Bibles spread from that prison to another prison beyond Dubbo in the NSW outback, and a Bible has been sent there too. So the Gospel continues to spread to unlikely, dark and distant places.

**PRAYER POINTS**

- For those recently baptized
- For the new frontiers of work opening up in Israel- for wisdom, resources and workers, as well as the response to the Gospel
- For our friends Fred and his wife Gift in their work in Tel Aviv
- For all the people now reading the NEV Bibles in dark places and situations in life

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