

Jerusalem Baptist Church



NUMBER 1

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2015

Theme Number: Grace and Mercy

COLOFON

This three-monthly Newsletter is distributed amongst members and visitors of the Jerusalem Baptist House. Please, do not use articles without prior permission from the Editor or Staff. Neither use this Newsletter for evangelistic purposes.

If you'd like to receive an B/W printed version of this newsletter, please write to email:
jerbapch@gmail.com

Editorial staff:

Billie Nucciarone

Dianne Hill

Petra van der Zande



"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone be found boasting. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8-10

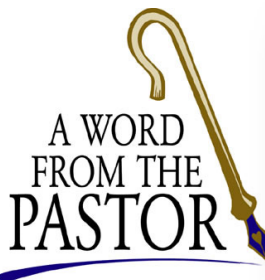
Distribution date next issue:
Beginning of April 2015

"The future always looks bright when viewed through the window of God's promises."

Serving our Lord
until He comes...

God's Purposes and our New Year Resolutions

By Pastor Al Nucciarone



One of my favorite hymns at this time of year is “Oh God our help in Ages Past” penned by Isaac Watts.

We can certainly be thankful to the Lord for his help and protection in 2014. The Middle East was the place of many earth shaking events.

We experienced the war in Gaza, terrorism in Jerusalem and the onslaught of ISIS. The Psalmist declares “When the foundations are shaken, what will the righteous do”.

We must realize that God has been our help in the past. He has remained faithful to us.

Jesus never fails, even though people do. He will be our “hope for years to come” as the second part of the song declares.

We can look forward to 2015 because the Lord remains the same and we have a sure hope. His Sovereign purpose will be accomplished. He will continue to build His church (Matthew 16:18). God’s promises are true and will be fulfilled. God will do His part. The question is, “Will we do our part?”

*God has been our
help in the past.
He has remained
faithful to us.
Jesus never fails,
even though
people do.*

Many people write down their New Year resolutions at the beginning of the year. Many want to lose weight. Some want to earn more money, pay their debts and save more. Some want to spend quality time with their family. These are all very good endeavors. However, good intentions do not necessarily produce desired results. In January, the number of people who join fitness centers is at its highest. In March the dropout rate for these centers is again at its peak. The Lord, however, provides us the strength and motivation to accomplish His will through our lives. Through prayer and beseeching the Lord we have the means to accomplish His will. Let me suggest a few spiritual resolutions we can bring before the Lord and aim to accomplish.

- ◆ **The first** has to do with our relationship to the Lord. He must have first place. Worship is our number one priority. Before we can reach men, we must first reach God. Let us ask that we may draw closer to the Lord. Let us determine by the grace of God to spend quality time with the Lord. I struggle with this. A busy life can lead to barrenness. Too much activity can burn us out. We need times of personal refreshing from the Lord. Let us ask the Lord to help us in our devotional life. Let us get back to our first love.
- ◆ **The second** has to do with our relationship with other believers. How can we win people for the Lord if we lose each other? The Lord said that the world will know we are Christians by our love (John 13). Let us ask the Lord to make us a blessing to others and an encouragement to the Saints. If we do this it is amazing what God will do.
- ◆ **The third** resolution should be to be a good witness to the world. We are to develop deep relationships with our unsaved friends. We are to pray for them, love them and seek to win them to Christ.

Can we resolve, by the grace of God, that He will help us in these 3 areas?
First to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength.
Second, to love our fellow believers.
Third, to love our unsaved friends and loved ones and seek to win them to the Lord.

What seems frustrating and wrong and unfair is not the end of the story. It's just the end of the chapter. The Book God is writing has many, many chapters.

"We count on god's mercy for our past mistakes. We count on God's love for our present needs; but we count on God's sovereignty for the future." Augustine.

November 2014 Activities



November 2nd, the PRAISE TO GOD Choir sang at JBC. This group meets at Christ Church and consists of believers from different countries and students from the King of Kings Music School.

November 27

THANKSGIVING dinner with our JBC family.
Food, Fellowship and Fun!



Chaya thanking God for the past year



Aunee thanked God for JBC



Irene reading one of her Poems



Quiz time!

“Who made guns out of banana leaves as a child?”

usop



“Who was kissed on the cheek by Eric Burden of the Animals Rock group? Billie disclosed who was who. The answer to this question was: Pastor Al!

**More fun with another game:
Guess the title of the Book, movie or
other—and no talking!**



November 30 - our guest speaker was Andrew White— the Vicar of Bagdad. He is unable to return to his congregation because there is a price on his head. He blessed us with the Aramaic blessing.



Andrew's friend, Rabbi Edwin Shuker also came to the service. According to Andrew, he was the best Rabbi in Iraq. The ONLY Rabbi in Iraq, serving the last Jews still living there.



Andrew's congregation in Iraq used to sing "Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King!" at the end of each service, so Pastor Al decided to sing it as well.

HELPING THE POOR AND NEEDY in Kurdistan

Ministry report from Pastor Al

We know that the plight of the refugees from Iraq and Syria has been in the news and in our prayers. Many of them have been driven from their homes by the ISIS army. These refugees include Christians, Muslims and Yazedi people. God laid the burden on us and called us to action.

I was invited by a Jewish believing pastor in the Land to join him and two German young men to travel to Northern Iraq (Kurdistan) to minister to the refugees.

Immediately upon arrival on December 1st, 2014, we began to take action. Our work was coordinated with a Kurdish Pastor who helped us to buy the much needed heaters and blankets. From the Bible Society we obtained Bibles. Our first visit was to Salymania where we gave heaters to around 200 Muslim refugees from Kobani, Syria who had been driven out by ISIS. They heard the message about Jesus and we gave out Bibles.



One man, who was so thankful, told us his uncle had been beheaded by ISIS. Because they perceived him not to have been a 'true Muslim', he could not be buried in Kobani. The man told us he was thinking of leaving Islam.



Kobani, Syrian Muslim refugee

I think most of those refugees were thinking along the same lines. "You are like angels!" they told us. The pastor said that "the fields are white unto harvest". We agree.

In Irbil, the capital, again, the Gospel was preached and Bibles were given out and we distributed hundreds of heaters to more Kobani Muslim refugees.



Preaching the Gospel first before distributing heaters



Our next assignment was in Irbil with Christian refugees from Karakosh near Mosul, Iraq (a Christian village). After being attacked by ISIS, they left with almost nothing. They were so happy not only to receive Bibles (even some audio Bibles) but also heaters, blankets, clothing, and chocolates for the kids.



Pastor Al with Christian refugee children who escaped ISIS. Christian refugee mother holds clothes we brought from Bridges for Peace.



Pastor Al during a visit to a refugee family



Some refugees stayed in empty malls, unfinished apartment buildings and tents. I was able to go from one family to the next to offer a prayer and a hug. Many of these refugees are just nominal Christians who need to be born again. All of them were so appreciative and in their eyes, we were also like angels.

It brought tears to my eyes and I will never forget those moments. Let us pray for these refugees, that they may come to know the Lord. Maybe God allowed this situation to get them out of their comfort zone and thus realize their need of our Lord and Savior.



The Will of God never takes you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.

A MEDITATION ON THE CONCEPT OF PEACE

By Rev. Joel McElreath

As we enter the New Year of 2015 with many wishes for health, happiness, and peace, the following are some thoughts relative to the concept of the real meaning of peace in the Bible.

First of all a definition: PEACE (Heb. *shalom*, peace, Gr. *eirene*, concord). “Completeness,” “soundness,” neighborliness (Psalm 28:3 KJV), well-being and security (Eccl. 3:8), or the reward of a mind stayed on God (Isaiah 26:3). It is linked with honest dealing and true justice (Zechariah 8:16 KJV), and is a prominent feature of the coming Messiah (Isaiah 9:6).

Peace results from God’s forgiveness (Philippians 4:7) and is the ideal relation with one’s brother (2 Corinthians 13:11; cf. Matthew 5:23-24).

Peace, a mark of serenity (John 14:27) to be sought after (Hebrews 12:14), summarizes the gospel message (Acts 10:36). It is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), will benefit those who practice it both now (James 3:18) and at the Second Coming (Romans 2:10), and is the opposite of disorder or confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Christ brought, preached, and is our peace (Ephesians 2:14ff.). (Excerpt from the NIV Dictionary of the Bible)

Peace is the presence of God, not the absence of conflict.

Old Testament — The Hebrew concept of peace.

Peace in the Old Testament, (*shalom*) speaks of the blessing of inner and outer harmony that comes to a person or people who live in a close relationship with God. Believers can, like David, experience peace despite dangerous circumstances by being conscious of God’s presence, or at least of his sure promises. Ultimately the world will know international and interpersonal peace as well, as the very presence of God in the person of Jesus halts strife and war. But peace is not purchased cheaply. Alienation from God and antagonism toward others flows from twisted human nature. Isaiah gives us a hint of the price of peace in his description of the suffering servant: “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

New Testament — The Greek word “*eirene*” originally referred to that orderly, prosperous life that is possible when there is no war. Only much later did philosophers begin to apply the concept to an inner, personal peace. But the NT use of “*eirene*” (90 occurrences) does not reflect the culture of the Greeks. Instead, “peace” in the NT is defined and enriched by the OT’s *shalom*. In every theologically significant use, “peace” is something rooted in one’s relationship with God and testifies to the restoration of human beings to inner harmony and to harmonious relationships with others. Our once-shattered lives are again made whole, and we become in Christ what God originally intended us to be. The vital health and wholeness of a restored humanity is available in Jesus.

The peace that Jesus brings: First and foremost, the peace human beings need is peace with God. This is ours in Jesus; “since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). Ephesians 2:14 adds that Jesus “himself is our peace.” God’s peace may be an inner experience, but the wholeness that is suggested by “*shalom/eirene*” is also visibly expressed in the believing community. Among God’s people, peace means that hostility has been replaced by unity (Eph 2:14-17; 4:3). It means order and harmony (1 Cor. 14:33). It means a commitment to harmony that is as much the Christian’s calling as is holiness (Heb 12:14; 2 Ti 2:22). Paul beautifully portrays peace as it is experienced by the believing community living in fellowship with the Lord: “As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful” (Col 3:12-15).

Summary. In the narrative passages of the OT, “peace” speaks primarily of harmonious relationships between persons and nations. As we move into the Psalms and Prophets, “peace” takes on strong theological overtones where peace is found by the individual and the nation through the presence of God. Awareness of God’s presence quiets the inner turmoil that comes with danger. Fellowship with God, and thus a life lived in his presence,

brings material blessings and the cessation of war. Ultimately God will be present in this world in the person of the Messiah. Then an era of universal peace for all mankind will become a reality.

Some relevant scriptures relating to peace:

- Zechariah 6:13 “Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.”
- Zechariah 9:10 “I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.”
- Isaiah 9:6,7 “And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,..”
- Isaiah 26:3 “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You.”
- Psalms 85:10 “Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”

“God's voice isn't all that difficult to hear. In fact, you almost have to close your eyes and stop your ears to miss it. He sometimes shouts through our pain, whispers to us while we're relaxing on vacation, occasionally, he sings to us in a song and warns us through the sixty-six books of His written Word. It is right there – ink on paper. Count on it – that Book will never lead you astray.”

Charles Swindoll

"GO NOW!"

SERENDIPITY occurs when something beautiful breaks into the monotonous and mundane. A serendipitous life is marked by "surprisability" and spontaneity. When we lose our capacity for either, we settle into life's ruts. We expect little and we're seldom disappointed. However, God delights in surprising us. He dots our pilgrimage from earth to heaven with amazing serendipities. (Charles Swindoll).

In the following testimony, Carmella and Brian (JBC members) share one of their "Serendipities".

While walking out of one of the Old City gates, Brian and I overheard a young lady phoning someone that she and her friends would not be in time for dinner. Looking at each other, we smiled at each other. We both had heard the unmistakable voice telling us loud and clear: "GO NOW!" "Excuse us for eavesdropping," I said to the about 24 year old Israeli woman, "but could we offer you a lift?" She was so happy. We managed to squeeze five young people into our car and took off. After some time one of the girls began to ask us about our faith and why we loved Israel. We learned they were Jewish youngsters from Australia who came to Israel for a five month voluntary national service (instead of enlisting in the IDF) in rest homes, orphanages, etc. They had never heard such a thing that Christians loved the Jewish people! So we told them about 9/11, and that during the last Intifada we wanted to stay with our Jewish friends because we didn't want to abandon them during hard times.

After we arrived at their destination, the youngsters kept saying "Thank you!" over and over before entering the hotel. The young lady with the phone, who happened to be the leader of that group, returned to the car. "Would you be willing to speak to our whole group one day?" she asked us. "We're about 70 Jewish people from Israel, Australia and New Zealand."

"We'd love to," Brian said, "but tell your boss we are Christians and Baptists."

A few days later we received an email invitation to speak at their hotel. We were excited but also very nervous – I was sick to my stomach. Day and night we prayed for wisdom and asked others to pray for us.

When the day arrived, I felt very nervous, but as usual, God put His words into our mouths. Brian was on fire, I was on fire, and the young people clapped and cheered and cried. They asked difficult questions, like, "What do you want from us?" (The Jewish people) or "How do you feel about gays?" and "WHY do you believe Yeshua was and is the Messiah?"

I can't recall what we answered them, but God was faithful and we were on angel's wings.

When our talk was over, we left the youngsters in the large conference room and walked to the car. As Brian pulled out of the parking space we were stopped by about 20 youngsters. Even though it was cold and raining, they wanted to hug and thank us. "You were wonderful!" they exclaimed. "We will never forget you!"

"Read the Bible, and see for yourselves who Messiah is," we challenged them.

Driving home, we both were exhausted. Amazed at what had happened we cried and praised God. Only when we reach heaven will we know if we made a difference. But thank God that we had been obedient to His prompting:

"GO NOW!"

**Time is short.
Opportunity is knocking.
Please answer it.
The age-old aphorism remains true:
"Four things do not come back:
the spoken word;
the spent arrow;
time past;
the neglected opportunity."**

Charles Swindoll

**A letter for all seasons ~ a bird's eye view
on the letter to the Ephesians.
By Wim van der Zande**

Recently, I delved deeply into the lovely, beautiful, deep and powerful letter from the apostle Paul to the saints and faithful believers in Ephesus. In an amazing cascade of words, he gives them all the spiritual challenges they need for a life time.

Paul begins by describing the glorious intentions of God the Father in showering us with heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus, His son, who is lifted up as the heir of everything, the head of the church. We are encouraged to explore the height, length, width and depth of all the Kingdom principles of grace, love, peace, righteousness, truth and unity through the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

No blessing is withheld, no instruction too difficult. He covers all the aspects of life for the believers, the saints, the faithful, and those that are called out on an individual level or as a member of the body of Christ, the Church.

Our calling from before the foundation of the world is so amazingly meaningful – out of darkness and sin into His wonderful light – to become children of God, co-heirs with Christ. Jew and Gentile are one in Jesus Christ, created in Him to do the good works which God has prepared for us.

We are called to be imitators of God as dear children, to walk in love, in the light and in the same mind set as Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.

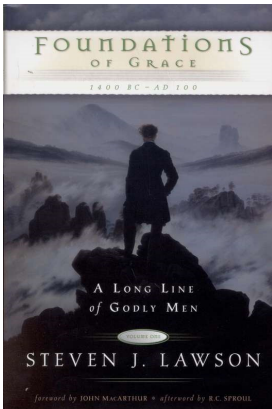
Paul also clearly teaches us how we should behave in everyday life – husband and wife, parents-children and vice versa but also speaks about the relationship between a laborer and his boss, giving the best we have as doing unto God either by being rich or poor, young or old.

He does not forget to mention that our lives as believers in Christ are not a journey over roses, a success story but that it entails spiritual warfare. We need the complete armor of God, not only for show, but probably need to use it more than we would like to.

Brothers and sisters, peace to you and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all of you who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

DVD & BOOK REVIEW

Amazing Grace, from acclaimed director, Michael Apted, tells the inspiring story of how one man's passion and perseverance changed the world. Based on the true-life story of William Wilberforce (Gruffudd), a leader of the British abolition movement, the film chronicles his epic struggle to pass a law to end the slave trade in the late 18th century. Along the way, Wilberforce meets intense opposition from members of Parliament who feel the slave trade is tied to the stability of the British Empire. Several friends, including Wilberforce's minister, John Newton (Finney), a reformed slave ship captain who penned the beloved hymn Amazing Grace, urge him to see the cause through. Rated PG. Approx. 111 Minutes. Including special features. Available through www.Christianbook.com



Foundations of Grace: A Long Line of Godly Men

By: Steven J. Lawson - Long Line of Godly Men Series ; Hardcover, 584 pages
ISBN 9781567690774 Available through www.Christianbook.com

"The teaching of sovereign grace literally stretches from cover to cover in the Bible." Steve Lawson, the senior pastor of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, lets the biblical writers speak for themselves, as each one clearly proclaims the doctrines of grace. From the lawgiver Moses to the apostle John, and from the early church fathers to modern defenders of the faith,

there has marched onto the stage of human history a long line of godly men, a triumphant parade of spiritual stalwarts who have upheld the doctrines of grace. In this first book in the five-volume Long Line of Godly Men series, Dr. Lawson takes readers on a heart-stirring journey through the Scriptures to show that the Bible in its entirety teaches the doctrines of grace.

DECEMBER 2014 ACTIVITIES



On December 7, we welcomed Jeff Siegel from Chosen People Ministries. Jeff shared his amazing testimony with us.

Website: www.chosenpeople.com



Jeff Siegel is a Jewish believer in Yeshua (Jesus). In 1976, at the age of 21, Jeff gave his life to Messiah Jesus – but this decision did not come without a price. His family could not accept his faith, and wanted nothing to do with him. The Lord began to work in

Jeff's life, bringing healing, restoration and direction. For many years now, Jeff has been ministering all over the world, using his baseball experience as a means to share the Good News. In 2001 both Jeff's father and brother came to faith in Yeshua. Jeff and his wife Terri live in a suburb of New York City. Presently he is working on his Masters of Divinity and is also the New York Area Director for Chosen People Ministries. Jeff's passion is to share the Good News to all who want to hear, "to the Jew first and also to the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16).

While visiting a prisoner one day, Jeff was introduced to **David Berkowitz**, a man with another Amazing Grace testimony.

From early childhood David suffered from seizures. During those attacks he felt as if something entered him, causing him to be violent and disruptive. During his school years he was often in fights, suffered from bouts of severe depression and he craved darkness and solitude. Often, he felt an urge to sneak out of the house in the middle of the night and wander the dark streets. Worried and afraid about their only son's behavior, his parents were unable to reach or help their obviously tormented child.

Growing older, David became fascinated by witchcraft, Satanism and occultism. He loved to watch horror and satanic movies and especially liked Rosemary's Baby.



Often, David was tempted to commit suicide by jumping from their apartment building or by throwing himself in front of a car or a train. He struggled to hold on to his sanity and even though he talked to the rabbi, teachers and school counselors, nothing worked.

The loss of his mother at the age of 14 sent David into a downward spiral. After high school he spent three years in the Army. Back to civilian life in 1974, twenty-two year old David found himself alone in New York City and gradually became more involved in occult rituals and incantations until he crossed that invisible line of no return. After years of mental torment, behavioral problems, deep inner struggles and his own rebellious ways, David became a criminal. He murdered six people; many suffered at his hand and will continue to suffer for a lifetime.



In 1978, the man on the Police most wanted list was finally captured and sentenced to about 365 consecutive years, virtually burying him alive behind prison walls. David, declared temporarily insane, was sent to a psychiatric hospital and from there to different prisons. Life in prison was a constant struggle with problems, hassles and fights. He almost lost his life when another inmate tried to cut his throat. He didn't know it then, but God had His loving hands on David.

After being in prison for about ten years, David felt despondent and without hope. Walking the prison yard on a cold wintry night, another inmate came up to him. He introduced himself as Rick and began to tell David that Jesus Christ loved him and wanted to forgive him. Mocking him, David said that he couldn't believe that God would ever forgive him or have anything to do with him. Rick persisted and the two men often walked the yard together. David listened as Rick shared about his life and what Jesus had done for him. He gave David a Gideon's Pocket Testament and because he was Jewish, advised him to begin reading the Psalms. He did, every night. And quietly, slowly, the Lord began to melt David's stone cold heart. He was amazed at the beautiful words he read.

While on his bed one cold night in 1987, David read Psalm 34:6, "this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his troubles".

He read about the Angel of the Lord and those who fear Him and then in verse 8, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who trusts in him."

Something happened inside of him and he began to cry. Quickly he turned off the light so no one could see him and felt the urge to get down on his knees. There was so much guilt of being such a wicked and vile person. David told the Lord he was so sorry for the life he had lived. He couldn't continue in this way, that he felt so frustrated that he had ruined everything: his life and that of others.

"God, have mercy on my life!" he prayed. "Lord, if You want to hear me, please, listen to what I have to say." He poured out his heart to the Lord. When he finally stood up, there was a sense of relief, of deep peace. It was as if the heavy, invisible chain that had bound him for so many years, had

been broken. Even though he didn't understand what had happened, in his heart David knew that somehow, his life was going to be different. That night he slept like a baby.



David holding the Gideon pocket Bible

When he saw his friend Rick again, he told him what had happened.

"So what did you do?" Rick wanted to know.

"I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my life and into my heart," David said.

"What?"

"I asked Jesus to forgive me." David repeated

While being surrounded by other inmates, Rick exclaimed, "Wow! That's great! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!"

"Stop! Stop!" David tried to hush him. "Don't embarrass me!"

"No!" Rick responded. "You don't understand, David. This means you have been born again! You're saved now!"

"What do you mean, born again?"

"That is what I have been trying to tell you," Rick said. "When you invite Jesus into your life, He forgives you of all your sins. He makes you a new person. The Holy Spirit is in you now."

It was the beginning of a new life for David. He got an unquenchable thirst to read the Bible and especially loved the story of King David who, as he found out, also committed murder, adultery and experienced so many struggles and failures in his life.

Today, it is already 27 years ago that David gave his life to Jesus Christ and he continues to serve his Master.

God opened a way for David to start a prison outreach ministry. Prison officials allow him to work in the Special Needs Unit where men who have various emotional and coping problems are housed. They read the Bible together and David prays for them, showing them brotherly love and compassion. David also worked as the Chaplain's clerk and has a letter writing ministry.



Even though he is not allowed to leave the prison, he has been able to share his testimony on different TV channels, secular and Christian.

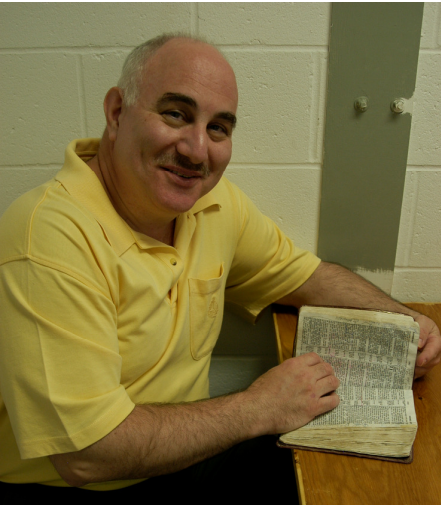
When David Berkowitz, also known as the 'Son of Sam', placed his life in the hands of Jesus Christ, the former Satanist and cruel serial killer became the 'Son of Hope'.



**The best mathematical equation I have ever seen:
1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.**

On March 3rd, 2000, David Berkowitz wrote in his prison journals:
“By God’s grace I am living proof that anyone can be forgiven if they want to be. Who would have ever thought that such a wasted life like mine could be redeemed and salvaged and by absolutely no goodness within myself? Jesus Christ has redeemed me. He purchased me, David Berkowitz, murderer, criminal, monster, devil worshipper, with His own blood. Who could understand a love like this, a love God has for wicked and fallen mankind? I do know that I am not worthy. I was nothing, lost, demented. He put a song of mercy in my mouth that I might tell others of His wondrous love and God’s burning desire to save sinners from their self-destructive ways.”

The list of Christian organizations that make use of David Berkowitz’s testimony is longer than the list of secular news organizations that have tried, in vain, to discredit his faith. David Berkowitz is the real thing. This is well documented on the Arise and Shine website (www.ariseandshine.org), created by fellow Christians as a repository for David’s work. Videos, newspaper and magazine articles, interviews and copies of David’s most recent journal writings are all available on this site. See also: <http://thesonofhope.com>



- ◆ **When I'm JUSTIFIED through Christ's merits, God looks at me "JUST-AS IF- I'D" never sinned.**
- ◆ **Christ's PARDON brings the soul to Heaven; His PRESENCE brings Heaven to the soul.**
- ◆ **Christ can remove our guilty past and give us a glorious future.**
- ◆ **When God pardons sin, He purges the RECORD, erases the REMEMBRANCE and empowers the RECIPIENT.**

God's Grace and Mercy

The hymn “Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,” was written by John Newton. Once an infidel, libertine and contemptible slave trader, Newton’s tombstone later testifies he was “by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.”

Paul, the apostle, described himself as “. . . blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man ... who put many of the saints in prison... (1 Timothy 1:13, Acts 26:10). Later, he declared, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. . . I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16). Obviously, each man was radically transformed. And, it was not their virtue or character that was the transforming agent, but transformation was caused supernaturally by God, His grace and mercy.

Grace would not be grace if it was limited to and bestowed upon only those who merit it. That would impose a precondition upon God’s free gift. The sovereign God told Moses, “I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy” (Romans 9:15). And Jesus said, “it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners” (Mark 2:17). It is God’s business, not ours, to do what he wants to do with his generosity. The Bible states, “Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). So, today, God remains ready and willing to freely pour out His grace and kindness. Grace is available to the person who is virtuous, and to the person who may have been, like John Newton and Paul in the past, notoriously wicked. And so in our generation, God’s grace and mercy were available to David Berkowitz. And he received it. God’s grace not only forgives and cleanses, it changes a man from the inside out. The power of the Holy Spirit has supernaturally transformed a man once filled with hate, violence and purposelessness into a vessel of love and hope, a man who ministers God’s love and mercy to others.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“Grace is given to heal the spiritually sick, not to decorate spiritual heroes” –Martin Luther



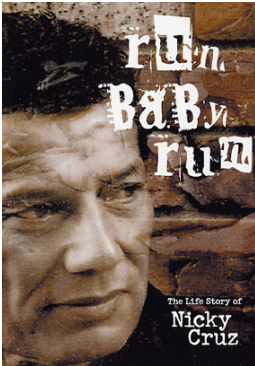
**December 14,
Milton and
Eneida Alvarez
were guest at
JBC.**



**Milton shared his
amazing
testimony with us.**

Milton Alvarez was born and raised in Puerto Rico in an environment of witchcraft and voodoo practice. He was recruited into the MAFIA and rubbed shoulders with notorious criminals who were selling drugs. Being a licensed pilot and a Cruise-Liner captain, by the time he was thirty three, he had traveled all over the world and lived both in the Netherlands and in New York.

Even though he was rich, and enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, there was an emptiness in his heart. Finding no satisfaction in his life, he decided to end it. While changing clothes in his hotel room in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, he turned on the television. A preacher named Nicky Cruz was talking, and it seemed as if he talked directly to Milton. Angry, he began to change the channels, but whatever he did, the same preacher appeared. Suddenly scared, he turned off the TV and walked to another room, but the moment he returned, the television came back on by itself. It seemed this preacher was giving him a final message.



Even though he had never read the Bible, Milton knew that God was speaking to him, "Life or death, blessing or curse, you choose," God spoke to his heart. Later he learned that was a verse from Deuteronomy. What an appropriate word for someone who was about to commit suicide. Falling on his knees he asked God for forgiveness of his sins and for all the wrongs things he had done in his life. "Lord, if You can change me, I will turn my life over to You," Milton promised.

Immediately it was as if someone had taken off a huge weight that had been upon him.

Later that day, people who knew Milton asked, "What happened to you?" He explained to them what God had done in his life and how He had delivered him.

From the day he was saved, Milton began to preach in the streets, on the beaches and in parks and other public places. Gradually, he participated with other larger ministries, enriching himself with the greater wisdom from Christ.

While in the mafia, Milton had survived four assassination attempts. The Brazilian police were stunned when bullets ricocheted from his body. For his involvement with the mafia and cartels, Milton was sentenced to 20 plus years in prison, but instead, he was drafted into the Vietnam War where he became a counselor against drug addiction.

In 1991, Milton and his wife, Eneida, founded Anchor of Salvation World Ministries. This became 'Anchor of Salvation International Ministries', (a non-profit organization).

Milton mixes his powerful preaching with countless every day testimonies of converted common folk, celebrities and the notorious. To name a few of the people Milton knows personally:

- ◇ **Tass Saada**, (former bodyguard and sniper for Yasser Arafat). He became a Christian upon the Lord Jesus revealing himself to him. He was thereafter exonerated of murders by the Israeli government. He later witnessed about salvation in Jesus Christ to Arafat of PLO.
- ◇ **John Henry "El Chino" Millan**, (Former hit man and bodyguard for drug lord Pablo Escobar) became an evangelist after an old woman came up to him one night and told him that one day he would need to call on the name of Jesus when his life was on the line.
- ◇ **Dubbed the "Vampire of Manila"**, a blood drinking murderer of priests in the Philippines whom Milton met in prison, was to be executed. Convicted by the Holy Spirit, the man was baptized and received a presidential pardon just before the date of execution. He now serves God as a Prison chaplain.

SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD

A living example that there is HOPE for the Middle-East!



From left to right: **Pastor Al Nucciarone**, grandson of an Italian immigrant and politician; **Milton Alvarez**, ex-mafia and south American cartel member; **Taas Saada**, ex-terrorist and sniper for Yasser Arafat; **Coach Terry Hill**, preacher's kid.

Meaning of the word GRACE: late 12c., "God's favor or help," from Old French *grace* "pardon, divine grace, mercy; favor, thanks; elegance, virtue" (12c.), from Latin *gratia* "favor, esteem, regard; pleasing quality, good will, gratitude"

- ◆ **GRACE is receiving what we do not deserve; MERCY is not receiving what we do deserve.**
- ◆ **Divine forgiveness brings both remission of penalty and restoration of fellowship.**
- ◆ **Confession of sin is the soil in which God's forgiveness flourishes.**
- ◆ **Only God's gift can erase man's guilt.**
- ◆ **GRACE is everything for nothing for those who don't deserve anything.**

Missing the Mark

In England there used to be a popular game known as "Saints or Sinners". Each contestant had to shoot 10 arrows into a hoop. The one who missed was immediately disqualified, placed in a circle representing 'prison' and called a 'sinner'. Those who shot all 10 arrows through the hoop were the 'saints' who received a prize. Even if someone hit the mark 9 times, and only missed one, this was enough to make one a 'sinner'. You had to have 100% accuracy to qualify for 'saint'.

The Hebrew word for sin is "*hattah*", which means: missing the mark. Failure to keep God's law 100 percent is missing the mark - for an inch is as bad as a mile.

All of us have sinned (and missed the mark) of the glory of God. All of us have to realize that we are lost and hopeless without Christ. We have to cast ourselves at His feet and seek His grace and forgiveness.



Excerpt from Our Daily Bread, January 1971, by M.R. de Haan (Radio Bible Class)

The denial of sin is the Devil's chloroform.

The Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)." Furthermore, it says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23)."

These passages make it clear that everyone has sinned, even though some, like David Berkowitz, Milton Alvarez and Taas Saada did more than others. However, one way or another, everyone has gone astray. Therefore, we must all make the decision to acknowledge our sins before God and be sorry for them. We need to turn from our lives of sin as well as believe that Christ was and is the Son of God.

Corrie ten Boom often quoted her father who once said about church goers: **"Just because a mouse is in the cookie jar, that doesn't make it a cookie. So just because people go to church, that doesn't make them Christians."**



December 21, 2014: JBC Sunday school Christmas Musical “They Called Him Sir” - the story of Na’amán, followed by a Fellowship meal. We witnessed a miracle, for there was enough food for everyone who came—120 people!



December 24, 2014: JBC's Bethlehem Christmas Outreach. Like every year, it was well organized by our brother Bruce Mills.



**GRACE is everything for nothing
for those who don't deserve anything.**



Grace greater than our sin

Hymn # 329 by Julia H. Johnston. 1849-1919

Romans 5:20

Marvellous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Refrain: Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide;
What can we do to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvellous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?

Thoughts on Numbers 9 – by Coach Terry Hill

In this chapter we find the sequence to a successful spiritual life. The children of Israel had a cloud that God provided to guide them by day and a pillar of fire to guide them by night. Sometimes they moved for days and sometimes they stopped for days. The same is true in our spiritual lives. Sometimes He tells us to move on and other times, He says to stop and listen. The sequence found in this chapter for the children of Israel can also be true for us today.

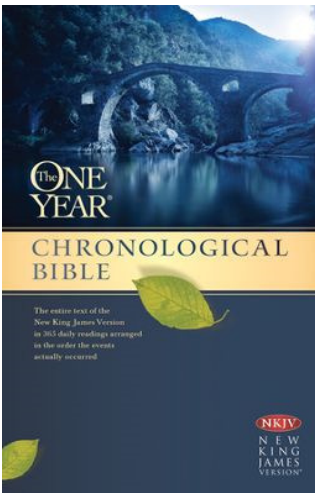
W – Wait for instructions from God, just like He gave Moses.

O - Obey (When God says move, move!)

F - Follow (Continue to follow where God leads you, just as the children of Israel followed God’s cloud provided for them.)

.....
In 2 Timothy 3:16 God's Word shows us which road to take (doctrine). It tells us when we get off track (reproof); how to get back on (correction); and how to stay on (instruction in righteousness). God's Word is a precious gift, so let's read it through this coming year.

The One Year Chronological Bible offers a fascinating way to read through the Bible in one year, in as little as fifteen minutes per day! Gain a better understanding of the order of biblical events and the historical context in which they unfolded. The entire Bible text—books, chapters, and even vers-



es—is arranged in the order the events actually happened. Prophetic books are interwoven with the historical accounts they accompanied. Psalms follow the events about which they were written. Proverbs are placed in the time they were compiled. The life of Christ is woven into one moving story. And Paul’s letters to the young churches in the first century are integrated into the book of Acts. Transition statements help you understand why some Scripture portions appear where they do. Paperback, 1800 pages.

ISBN-9781414376561 Also available as e-Book through www.Christianbook.com

2015 CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH

February 4: Tu B'Shvat, the New Year of the Trees

March 4: Erev Purim

March 5: Purim

March 6: Shushan Purim (celebrated in walled cities, like Jerusalem)

March 29: Palm Sunday

Tu b'Shvat – the New Year of the Trees

By Petra van der Zande

*“As others have planted for you, so you will plant for your children.”
Leviticus Rabbah, 28*

Tu b'Shvat, the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shvat, (February 4, 2015) is not mentioned in the Bible. However, the Mishnah, part of the Talmud, describes it as the New Year for trees. In Israel, on this day, the rainy season is usually over and the sap starts rising in the trees. It is also during this time that the Almond tree, growing wild throughout the country blooms its heart out. Leviticus 19 mentions what was expected from the Israelites upon entering the Promised Land: “When you come to the land and you plant a tree, you shall treat its fruit as forbidden; for 3 years it will be forbidden and not eaten. In the fourth year, all of its fruit shall be sanctified to praise the Lord. In the 5th year you may eat its fruit.”

Having a specific date as the New Year for trees also helped with the law of tithing – 1/10th of the farmer's fruit had to be donated to the priests. During the time of the 2nd Temple in Ancient Israel, when a child was born it was customary to plant a tree – a cedar for a boy, referring to its height and strength, and a cypress – smaller and fragrant- for a girl. Upon the marriage of the child, the wood of the tree was used in making the Chuppah, the wedding canopy.



Cedar and cypress

Throughout the ages, the Diaspora's diverse Jewish communities developed all kinds of customs to celebrate this day. When in the beginning of the 19th century the first Jewish settlers returned to redeem Eretz Israel, an important part of their work was to plant trees on the barren and eroded hills.



Planting trees then, in 1947, and the Yatir forest in the Negev desert, now.

Nowadays, many schoolchildren and adults take part in the established Israeli custom to plant a tree on Tu b'Shvat. This holiday, marking the revival of nature, is symbolized by the budding of the almond tree.

Tu b'Shvat is the Jewish Arbor day, celebrated in Israel by eating dried fruits and nuts which are part of the so-called Seven Species. However, the highlight of the day, accompanied by a special prayer, is when a new sapling is planted in the soil of Eretz Israel, the Jewish homeland.



Purim - its background and how it evolved

By Petra van der Zande

In order to understand the Biblical background of the Purim holiday, it's important to read the whole book of Esther.

Purim is the plural of the Hebrew word “pur”, which means lot – used to determine something by chance. It refers to Haman's use of lots to choose the date for his intended destruction of the Jews.

The main “players” in this Biblical Story:

- ◆ **Ahasuerus** (Hebrew) and Xerxes are the same person. The Persian king reigned from 486 till 465 BC over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.
- ◆ **Vashti:** the king's beautiful wife, who wouldn't compromise her integrity and thereby lost her crown.
- ◆ **Haman:** an anti-Semitic Persian who received influential authority from the king.
- ◆ **Mordechai the Jew:** a righteous person who adopted the orphan Hadassah.
- ◆ **Hadassah:** her Persian name is derived from “Ester”, meaning, star, dazzling or brilliant one.

Matthew Henry, the Bible scholar, wrote that throughout the book of Esther “the name of God is not there, but His finger certainly is”. His providence is obvious – quietly, but sovereignly at work in the lives of men and women.

Although Purim is a minor festival from a religious point of view (it's not mentioned in the Torah as a Feast of the Lord), people celebrate it with fervor. Until 2 AD, Purim was not so much observed. The holiday was called “the Day of Mordechai”, or “day of Protection”. People observed the holiday by reciting the story of the Megillah (Scroll) in their homes and by exchanging gifts.



The Talmud describes public readings around the time of the second Temple. The priests were instructed to stop their service in the Temple and listen to the recitation.

But with the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, this practice ended as well. When the book of Esther became canonized and synagogues appeared, public readings in Hebrew and other languages became widespread.



Antique silver Gregger

Between the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 5th century AD, the reading of the Hebrew Megillah was universally accepted. The liturgy was the same, but the drama, color, merrymaking and pageantry varied from country to country. During the middle Ages the celebration was enlivened by masquerades, jesters, musicians and actors. Noisemaking and selecting a Purim queen or king is traced to 14th Century France.

Purim plays originated from the 16th century. The walking type of theater, the Purim “*shpil*” became actual stage performances, which were performed during the month of Adar in Germany and Eastern Europe, till World War II. In Western Europe, North America and Israel, the emphasis is now on Purim masquerade parties for adults and children.

Purim is a feast of gladness, and the only time permitted to get drunk – so you no longer remember whether it is Mordechai or Haman who is to be praised or cursed. During Purim people send “gifts to the poor”, (*misloah manot*) and it is also customary to give money. This is usually sent through a messenger, not personally, to give the idea of “sending”. In synagogue, just before the reading of the Megillah, people also donate coins. This relates back to the custom that every Jew over twenty years old paid half a shekel for the upkeep of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The three-cornered cookies called “Haman Tashen” (*oznei Haman*) remind us from the story that Haman’s pockets were full of bribe money. One of the fillings can be poppy-seed, “*mohn*” in German/Yiddish, which has similarly pronounced letters in Yiddish as Haman.



Oznei Haman (Haman's ears) is a reference of the old European custom of cutting off criminal's ears before they were hanged.

Because the city of Shusan was a walled city, an extra day was added for the celebrations. Therefore walled cities in Israel, like Jerusalem, celebrate Purim on the 15th of Adar. Purim is an official school holiday in Israel.



“Doing God’s will is never hard. The only thing that is hard is not doing His Will.” Oswald Chambers

If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31
God is in sovereign control of all of life. He not only knows the times and seasons, He is also the Lord of the unexpected and the unpredictable. Our times and our trials are in His hands. Even when we feel embarrassed or confused or do something really weird. Whether we are on cloud nine, enjoying His blessings, or caught in the thicket of some tangled predicament, He won't let us go. By His grace, He remains "for us".

A Purim Word Hunt

Find the words listed below hidden in the grid of letters.
(One example is done for you). Words appear horizontally, vertically
and diagonally. The leftover letters spell out a sentence.

Adar	festival	mishloach
Ahasuerus	gallows	manot
banquet	gragger	Mordecai
bow	Haman	Persia
charity	Hamantaschen	plot
costume	Jew	Purim
decree	king	queen
drinking	lots	Shushan
Esther	mask	spiel
feast	Megillah	Vashti



H	A	H	A	M	A	N	F	E	S	T	I	V	A	L
M	B	F	E	A	S	T	A	N	H	T	A	S	E	C
H	A	M	A	N	T	A	S	C	H	E	N	Q	S	H
C	N	H	M	H	B	E	A	N	S	M	A	U	T	A
G	Q	R	A	E	K	O	D	E	H	O	V	E	H	R
R	U	L	S	S	L	I	W	I	U	R	A	E	E	I
A	E	S	K	H	U	W	N	I	S	D	S	N	R	T
G	T	P	S	D	E	E	P	G	H	E	H	I	L	Y
G	O	I	P	J	E	E	R	E	A	C	T	G	O	U
E	M	E	U	M	R	C	M	U	N	A	I	A	T	S
R	F	L	R	S	A	U	R	R	S	I	E	L	S	S
P	(A)	H	I	B	T	N	M	E	G	I	L	L	A	H
L	(D)	A	M	S	A	K	O	E	E	D	W	O	I	T
O	(A)	H	O	L	O	V	E	T	F	O	R	W	P	U
T	(R)	C	R	D	R	I	N	K	I	N	G	S	I	M

Established in 1925, the **Baptist House in Jerusalem** is one of Jerusalem's oldest Protestant institutions. Jerusalem Baptist Church (JBC) is a member of the Baptist Convention of Israel and is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. We operate under the *amuta* of the Baptist Convention of Israel.

Over the years, faithful congregants have joyfully served in many positions throughout Israel and partnered with many denominations and organizations to serve the Savior here. Each Sunday, the worship service is filled with people from many nations, and visitors from around the globe. You may be surprised to find someone from your hometown worshipping with us when you visit!

The purpose of JBC is to serve the interest of Jesus Christ in this city until He returns.

Sunday morning Prayer Meeting at 9.30 A.M.

Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.

Adult Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.

Children's Sunday School ages K-6. Older children are invited to attend the main service.

Communion: every first Sunday of the month.

Wednesday Prayer Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Friday Ladies' Bible Study at 9.30 a.m.

**4 Narkis Street, Jerusalem
P.O. Box 154, Jerusalem, Israel.**

SENIOR PASTOR
ASSOCIATE PASTOR
DEACON
DEACON

Dr. Al Nucciarone
Rev. Joel McElreath
Coach Terry Hill
Bruce Mills

Phone: 02- 672 3250 Mobile: 050 8193060 (Pastor Al)
Email: jerbapch@netvision.net.il or jerbapch@gmail.com
Website: www.jerusalemchristianchurch.org

**J
B
C**



**CHECK US OUT ON
FACEBOOK**

Jerusalem Baptist Church in Jerusalem, Israel