

The FAITH BUILDER

HOPE
Community Church

THIS ISSUE
Apologetics

Nov/Dec
2006



Christian Vision, Church News & Bible Reading Guide

Around the Clock Ministry

Pastor Paul Manwiller

I want to take a minute to highlight an area of our church's ministry that is consistently bearing good fruit. This ministry operates twenty-four hours a day. It reaches around the world. And it is impacting a surprisingly large number of people.

I am referring to our church's website, www.hopechurch.info. It happens over and over again: I hear that somebody's mother in California has been downloading our church's sermons every week. Or somebody in another country is faithfully reading *The Faith Builder* magazine on the web. Or a pastor in Michigan wants to talk to me about God's work in our church after reading our church's book online. This fall Rachel Evans, who was recently baptized, chose to get involved in our church after finding us on the web. Based on reports like these, and based on the number of hits the website shows we are receiving, it is clear that God has made our church's website an effective ministry tool. If you haven't been to the website recently, here's what is available:

1. HOME PAGE: A general introduction to the life of our church.
2. THE PLAN OF SALVATION: A page with Scriptures and graphics that explains salvation. This may be the tool you need when, in the middle of the night, you are talking with a friend about how to come to faith in Jesus.

3. SUNDAY SERMONS: A page with streaming audio recordings of all the sermons this year, along with the corresponding PowerPoint slides.

4. SUNDAY WORSHIP: A page that includes live recordings of worship from Hope Church. Our *Songs of Deliverance* CD, distributed this year at Easter, can also be downloaded here.

5. MAGAZINES: You can download this and all other issues of *The Faith Builder* magazine from this year.

6. CHURCH BOOK: As I mentioned before, our church's book, *Remember*, is also online. The book records our church's history from 1992-2000. If you have never read these stories about God's miraculous provision in the early years of our church, it is well worth doing. God has blessed us so much!

7. BULLETIN NEWS: This next page gets a lot of traffic. It is the up-to-date church news from this Sunday's church bulletin. Where will the meeting be? What time? If you can't find your bulletin, all the info is on the website.

8. MEET THE PASTOR: A page that introduces newcomers to the pastor and tells them a little bit about my ministry background. It also includes some pictures of my family.

9. KIDS & TEENS: This page

explains what our church offers for the youth. It has information about our Sunday school classes and youth outreach events.

10. HOPE GROUPS: This page explains the vision we have for Hope Groups, and includes information about when and where each group meets.

11. MINISTRIES: This page features two discipleship ministries, the Titus 2 Ministry and our Parents Meetings.

12. MISSIONS: A brief description of what the missionaries from our church are doing.

13. CHURCH HISTORY: A thumbnail sketch of our church's development, recounting how God brought us to have congregations in Ypsilanti and Livonia.

14. MAPS: And finally, a page with maps. This is helpful when you are trying to give a friend directions to one of our services.

The sermon recordings, PowerPoint slides, and bulletin news are updated every week, so people who use the website are getting something fresh every time they go there. I have been honestly surprised by

how much the website is currently being put to use. At the same time I felt I should invite you to take a look at what is currently available on the website. Think of it this way: there's a lot of good info at hopechurch.info. ☩



Why I Believe In Jesus (Part 1)

Sarah Boyer



Evidences that the Bible is trustworthy are part of the reason I believe in Jesus. If we can respect the Bible as a reliable source regarding creation, the flood, and the nature of early man, then we can trust it to tell truthfully what Jesus said and did.

One of the arguments that the Bible is true is complexity in creation. For example, the European green woodpecker has a tongue that goes up over his head, down the back of his neck, through the middle, out between his eyes, in one nostril, and out the beak. I wonder what that could have evolved from. Even bacteria, the simplest living organism, show evidence of design. The flagellum (the spinning tail that propels the bacterium) is designed almost exactly like a jet turbine engine. These two are among a great many cases that support the Bible's description of creation.

Another part of the Bible which many people question is Noah's flood. The flood of Noah left a layer of sedimentary rocks all over the world. There are many marine fossils inland. Also, there are flood legends in almost every people group, which is explained if everybody alive today descends from Noah.

Chinese characters bear hidden witness to the Bible's accuracy about creation and the flood. Chinese characters are made of parts that mean different things. The components for the Chinese word *to create* are dust, a mouth, a mark meaning movement or life, and able to walk. The reference to the creation of Adam is obvious; he was made out of the dust of the earth, given the breath (from God's mouth) of life, and created as an adult, able to walk.

Another such example is the word boat, which is made of the parts vessel, eight, and mouth, (also representing person.) This is significant because Noah's Ark, the first big boat was a vessel carrying eight people (mouths.) I believe that the person(s) who thought up how to write the language they spoke after Babel knew and believed the Genesis account and thus preserved it, giving proof that Genesis is not just a fable.

Another conflict between the Bible and common thought is regarding the nature of early men as "cavemen." Some people have always lived in caves. The American pioneers did on occasion. Right now, some Australians live in caves, complete with electricity. Therefore, the fact that some early men lived

in caves does not mean they were primitive. There are many archaeological finds that show that early man was very advanced. Archaeologists believe that a certain Peruvian people group had flying machines because they dug furrows that form pictures visible only from the air, and they found ancient hot-air balloon cloth there. The Mayans had a more accurate calendar than the one we use today. The ancient Egyptians used electric current to coat tools with a different kind of metal. Early man was no more primitive than we are.

These are some of the things that convince me that most of the evidence shows that God created the Earth, that the flood happened, and that the Bible's description of early man is accurate. So, when the Bible says that Jesus claimed to be God and acted like God, I can believe that too. ✠



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The FAITH BUILDER

"Dear friends, **BUILD** yourselves up in your most holy FAITH" (Jude 1:20)

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Why I Believe In Jesus (Part 2)

William Boyer



I believe in Jesus because He knows me. In contrast to other religions and philosophies, the Biblical view of mankind is realistic and fits what we observe around us and within us. One of the big questions that religions and philosophies of life seek to answer is whether human nature is fundamentally good or inherently evil.

Some teach that people are basically good and, if left to themselves, will do the right thing, treat each other fairly, and be responsible. In this view, people are born good but are corrupted by their surroundings, including society. However, any parent can verify that children are born selfish with no concern for fairness or justice, rather only concern for themselves. Babies do not need to be taught to hit, grab, or hoard; rather they need to be trained to be gentle, to share and to be fair. This view just does not fit with the extent of humanity's universal capacity for evil.

The horrors of World War I put an end to this fanciful notion among serious philosophers, but since then we've had World War II, Stalin's reign, genocide on large scales, and terrorism. Every newspaper is still filled with reports of people abusing one another on international scales, in families, in cities, and in business dealings. Even our entertainment is filled with tales of violence. If people are inherently good, we are left with a great unexplainable, mysterious inconsistency: how could people have gotten into the state where we treat each other so badly?

Another possible view of human nature is that people are fundamentally evil. How else would one explain child abuse, war, starvation caused by local warlords appropriating aid supplies, terrorism, abuse of prisoners, and the need for prisons? But this view fails to account for heroes throughout history who have sacrificed their comfort and lives for others' lives, freedom and security; for fathers' and mothers' daily sacrifices to provide food, shelter, better lives, security and love for their families.

This view cannot account for the effectiveness in fighting evil by exposing it: when faced with public exposure, large corporations, even nations, will often grant justice to the oppressed. People publicly cry out for fairness on behalf of others. Though we imperfectly grant it to others, we all admit to a sense of

justice that demands fairness from others – at least for ourselves, but often also on behalf of others. This universal longing for fairness just cannot be explained by viewing people as inherently evil.

A third alternate view of mankind's nature is fundamentally materialistic and states that good and evil are fictional ideas referring to nothing more than whether a result is convenient to the speaker. In this view, neither the universe nor people as an insignificant part of it, have any purpose or meaning; it is nonsense to talk about purpose or good or bad in describing the results of the laws of nature acting on random events. In this view it makes no more sense to praise a proton or electron as "good" when it obeys the laws of nature than to condemn a person or his actions as bad, since the person is nothing more than an evolved collection of random protons and electrons acted on by natural laws.

However this view of human nature fails to explain what we see around us in the sacrifice of heroes for others' freedom, and the longing for justice for others when we see oppression. This view also fails to explain what we find within ourselves: a longing for purpose and a desperate certainty that it is there to be found; in our longings for relationships; longings for beauty and a drive to create it in music, art, and literature. We long for love and desperately seek someone to devote ourselves to who will, in turn, seek our welfare and pleasure. Faced with the existentialist claim that any significance is of our own making and the materialist statement that there is no significance whatever, we instead respond with human passion when our wives, children, or mothers are threatened. We know in our hearts that we and our loved ones matter more than a random collection of atoms.

God – and is now flawed in all parts of our nature. This means that we share in a limited way, as creatures, many of God's qualities.

Being in God's image is why we believe in fairness and justice; being fallen is why we seek it for ourselves more than for others. Being made in God's image is why we seek to live in relationships with others, seek love and are most fulfilled when we give it; being fallen is why we fall into unkind selfishness even toward those we love best. Being in God's image makes us want what is best for our children, but being fallen makes us too selfish to seek it consistently. Being in God's image makes us long for beauty and enables us to create it; being fallen makes us settle for anything unusual or stimulating. We long for others to recognize our worth, just for being ourselves, but being fallen, our best is always tainted.

The Bible teaches that our fundamental nature has great dignity, worth and goodness, but every aspect of our character is tainted with a selfish lack of regard for what is right and fair. Perhaps our failings are most evident in our attitudes toward God as we fail to give Him the thanks and honor that are simply His due for creating the universe, giving us life and being the source of every good thing. But despite our rebellion against Him, God offers us what we most need: a relationship with Him. By His death on the cross, Jesus died to reconcile us to God, so that we may be freely forgiven and accepted by God as His children if we will receive what He freely offers.

Then we can know and have in our lives what we really most need: a relationship with God, the significance and fulfillment that comes from living with and for the King of the Universe, and the love that accepts us as we are but will not quit until we are made perfect.

So I believe in Jesus because

His Word accurately describes the deeply flawed nobility that I see in people when I look at the world, and He shows that He knows what I am and need when I honestly look inside myself. And He meets my need so well, it is clear that He lovingly made me. †

Four Views of Human Nature:

1. People are basically good and, if left to themselves, will do the right thing
2. People are fundamentally evil
3. Relativism; good and evil are fictional ideas
4. The Biblical view; man was created in God's image, but has fallen into sin

In contrast to all alternative views of human nature, the Biblical description is consistent with our observations, including those within. The Bible states that mankind was created as male and female in God's image for relationship with Him, but that mankind fell into sin – rebellion against

Why I Believe In Jesus (Parts 3 & 4)

Brandon & Rosie Zylstra

ROSIE ZYLSTRA:

When I was a sophomore in high school (and a new believer) I took a class in western civilization which was mostly unremarkable. One thing I did take away from it, however, is the indelible mark that Jesus has made on our world. During a study session one day, I was reading about the spread of Christianity. The textbook authors dryly explained the appeal of Christianity to the quickly multiplying church. They remarked that the idea of an infinite being who has known and cared for you since the beginning of time is a powerful one; one which moved many people to become followers of Jesus.

I remember being baffled at how the authors could so easily distance themselves from what they were writing. I was filled with all the zeal of a new believer and thought, "How can they not recognize the hope that the Gospel offers? How can they write about this so blandly, as though it has no impact on their lives?"

I believe in Jesus because the hope he offers this world is real. As followers of Jesus we have the hope of eternal life, the promise of purpose on earth, and the assurance that the Creator of heaven and earth has loved us and will continue to love us with an unending love.

As I look back at my life, I notice many ways in which I have chased after love. As a young teenager, many of my thoughts were devoted to how to dress/behave/talk so that I would be accepted by peers (especially the male variety!) I also was anxious about whether my teachers liked me. Did they approve of my work? My demeanor?

I know that I am not alone in this pursuit of love and acceptance. Our culture dramatizes this often. So many of our movies and TV shows keep us on the edge of our seats by leaving us wondering, "Does he REALLY love her?" Reality shows seem to be filled with people just agonizing to have someone (judges, audience members, "The Bachelor") ascribe worth to them.

We have been created with a thirst for love and there IS someone who can quench it. John 3:16 tells us that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in

him shall not perish but have eternal life." Psalm 139 says, "You created me in my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Surely this God who has created us so carefully and sacrificed his son's very life for us has a love far more powerful than the shallow approval so many of us have sought.

Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, is a big seller precisely because he is attempting to answer the age-old question, "What am I here for?" People have wondered this so often that it has become a source of parody (ever read "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy"?). Well the answer to life's meaning is not 42, as Hitchhiker's Guide would have you believe, but instead it is to honor and ascribe glory to God.

Ephesians 1 describes how we were predestined to the "praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6). This is why Rick Warren's book has struck a chord with so many people; we are desperate to have a meaningful place in history. Again, God has fulfillment for a hungry world.

Another pervasive cultural question is that of the afterlife. People ask, "Do you believe in Heaven? Hell? Limbo? Purgatory? Nirvana? Reincarnation? Is there an afterlife at all?" Our fallen world is suffering greatly under the effects of all of our sin and we are left wondering, "What else is there?"

Once again, Jesus has the answer! In Revelation we are told that for the bride of Christ there will be "...no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Rev 21:4) My daughter told me recently that she thinks heaven will have flying ponies, chocolate and shoes. Her eyes got big when I told her that it might have that, but it will have things even better than we can imagine too. For the saints of God, there is an unspeakably wonderful answer to this age-old ponderance.

C.S. Lewis has made the point that people have hunger, primarily because there is food. The desire is there because there is something to fulfill it. I see three important desires or questions which seem to be written on the human heart. The gospel answers these longings so precisely and so completely that my only response to it can be, yes, I believe in Jesus. ✚



BRANDON ZYLSTRA:

I believe in Jesus because there's no plausible alternative. More precisely, I believe in the God of the Bible, and I believe the Bible's description of reality – ranging from its description of history to its description of human nature to its description of the cosmos to its description of God's nature. I believe these because they fit together into a coherent whole which is consistent with everything I can reasonably conclude to be true. No other competing system of beliefs – whether one that accepts the label of "religion" or one that claims not to be religious – has this coherence and consistency. All others, so far as I can see, have internal conflicts or else conflicts with other things widely understood to be true.

The Bible makes many claims about historical events and persons, and though many people attack these claims they repeatedly turn out to be true. People attack the claims of the Bible because, I presume, they want to undermine the Bible's claim to divine authorship. If they could prove the Bible to be inaccurate on some historical point, this would support the supposition that it is merely a clever hoax, or a collection of fables and legends.

It seems that the argument is often based on lack of evidence of a particular person place or thing, rather than an actual piece of evidence showing an inaccuracy. For instance, it used to be argued that Nineveh never existed, simply because no evidence had been found for it. This is a flawed argument on two counts: first it ignores the clear textual evidence that we have IN the

Bible, showing an unwarranted prejudice against the Bible. Secondly, as just mentioned, it is an argument from lack of evidence. As seems to have been the case often, it was just a matter of time before Nineveh – or artifacts from or pertaining to Nineveh – were found. If there were a compelling argument from history or archaeology to challenge the historicity of the Bible, there are many people who would be trumpeting these arguments from every rooftop and NPR tower. So far I've heard none.

Many people have argued the question of whether humans are basically good or basically evil. Many people have taken the position that humans are basically good, while many others have taken the position that humans are basically evil. The former will point to the noble and self-sacrificing things that sometimes humans can occasionally do. The latter will point to the many numerous ways in which all humans fall short, and sometimes in gruesome, cruel, and horrific ways.

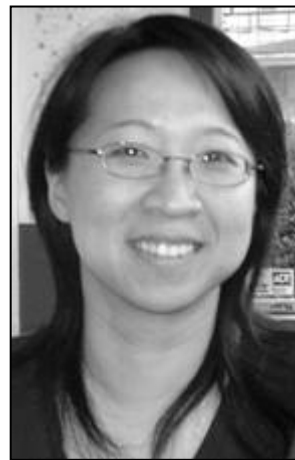
The Bible, however, perfectly resolves this dilemma. We were created in God's image, and our fundamental nature still bears his imprint, and therefore we can act nobly and do things that are legitimately considered good; but we fell into corruption, and this has affected every aspect of our nature, and therefore we regularly act in ways that are evil. This is an important and much misunderstood point: although the corruption of sin has affected us in every way, it has not necessarily affected us to the fullest extent possible. We are totally depraved, but not necessarily maximally depraved.

To more easily understand this, picture a glass of water with a drop of lethal poison stirred in. There is no corner of the glass where the water remains pure: any drop of water you could extract from the glass could kill you, but this does not mean the contents of the glass are identical to the contents of the bottle of poison the drop was taken from. The water is poisonous, but it is not pure poison. There is still hope of purifying the water, which would not be the case if the water were nothing but pure poison, and which would be unnecessary if the water were nothing but pure water.

There is still hope of purifying our souls, which would not be the case if we were fundamentally evil, and which would not be necessary if we were fundamentally good. The Bible not only offers the only analysis that makes sense, but it offers us hope, and hope is something we desperately need. †

Why I Believe In Jesus (Part 5)

By Chi-Ying Luo



I believe in Jesus for the following reasons:

1. WHAT JESUS SAID IS TRUE; OBEDIENCE IS NOT A FOOLING GAME

When I had just become a Christian, I did not like a lot of teaching in the Bible. Some of it did not even make sense to me. It was hard for me to practice those “unpleasant teachings,” such as the submission of wives and leadership of husbands. But after I decided to open my heart to Jesus’ teaching and carefully asked Him to help me trust Him and to guide me to understand it, the blind spots of my hearts were removed and I started to understand why God said so. Then I started to agree.

The more I know Jesus, the more I find out how my intelligence is limited. Every time I am open and obedient to God in terms of those issues where I disagree with Him, I always find out He is right later. He knows what He is saying in the Bible and His knowledge is far beyond ours. I never found any regret in following His words so far. His opinions are definitely better than my opinions.

2. JESUS’ TRUTH MADE ME REALIZE A LOT OF THINGS I HEARD IN MY HOME COUNTRY WERE NOT TRUE

The place I come from taught me a lot of Buddhist thinking. For example, the purpose of our lives is paying out debt. If I am in suffering, that means I owe someone in the past or in a previous life. I suffer to pay off the debt. The way of paying debts is to do a lot of good things and be a very good person. However, for some reason, I knew I could not do it, because there is a desire in my body that always wants me to do something bad. I could manage my behavior well, and I tried so hard to be a kind and loving person. But my heart was filled with anger and other bad things. I felt I had to pretend to be a better person. I was so tired and exhausted. The other thing I was taught was to give up my own desire – to just

empty my self. But it did not make sense to me because I knew I

wanted to be filled by something but I did not know what it was.

When I found Jesus, I realized He has already paid off my sin/debts. I don’t need to worry about carrying my debt around. I just need to receive His forgiveness. Even though bad things are still happening in my life, Jesus can use them for good to build up my character.

I also found out that only He can fill my life. What I was looking for is the love I lost in my childhood. The place I come from did not teach me how to fix it. I was taught to just face it because the problem came from a bad thing I did in the past or my previous life, and I deserve it. I just need to get up and be a nice person and give up my desire. This theory does not solve my problems at all! But I found Jesus’ love was the one I have been looking for my whole life. It can truly fill my emptiness. He lives beyond time and He can fix anything He wants. Again, the place I came from did not tell us anyone can do this for us.

3. JESUS ANSWERS MY PRAYERS

There are so many countless prayers that have been answered in my life. While I was struggling with an issue, with nobody around to help me, He sent people I didn’t even know to help me. For example, He gave me a job offer when I was so depressed and had asked for encouragement. When my car went into a ditch and got stuck in a snow storm, a police car came to save me after I prayed. God helped me find many things when I asked Him to help me find them, etc.

There are so many prayers that have been answered. Some of them are very creative and I am always in awe when God sends help. God sometimes answers my prayer late because He is training me to be patient. But I know God has a good plan for my life and that He will always be there for me. †

Why I Believe In Jesus (Part 6)

By Dale Miel



I often hear people claim that they believe in Jesus, but as I talk to them I realize that they don't have a personal relationship with Him. What they have is this idea of a God who created the universe and then left everyone to their own means. They don't think someone powerful enough to create the universe could possibly take a personal interest in our lives, but I know from personal experience that that's not right. I'd like to share a couple of my own experiences as proof that Jesus is real and that he takes a personal interest in all of our lives.

One Halloween night when I was in college, all my friends (including my roommate) were gone for the weekend on a retreat (both Campus Crusade and Inter Varsity were having retreats that weekend) I had stayed on campus because I didn't have the money to join them. It was a noisy weekend with several drunken revelers running through the dorms and making so much noise I had trouble getting to sleep, but I finally managed to.

Just after I got to sleep there was a knock at my door (more like a pounding than a knock) that woke me up. I opened my eyes and waited to see if the knock would be repeated and when it wasn't I closed my eyes and tried to get back to sleep. The knock came again and I yelled, "Who is it?" When no one answered I

tried to get back to sleep again, but then the knock came again and I threw the covers off and headed for the door as there was another knock.

"I'm coming," I yelled as I crossed the tile in my bare feet and reached for the doorknob. By this time I was getting angry and wondering why someone wanted to play a joke like this on me in the middle of the night, so I decided to quickly jerk the door open to catch the prankster before he knew what was happening.

Just as my hand touched the knob a voice said, "Stop!" Now, I don't mean I heard a voice in my head; I mean I heard an actual voice when there was no one else in the room with me. That one word was enough to make me stop, think, and realize that everyone I knew, everyone who might have a reason to wake me was out of town for the weekend. With that in mind I decided to open the door slowly instead of quickly, and when I did I found that someone had taken a florescent bulb from one of the lights in the hall and leaned it against my door. If I'd jerked the door open as I originally intended the bulb would have fallen into my room and smashed against the tile floor with me standing there in my bare feet.

The second incident I want to tell you about happened just after I moved to Ann Arbor. I was still working at the Meijer

on Ann Arbor-Saline road at that time and I was riding my bike to work one day.

Traffic was heavy on Main Street and I was riding on the sidewalk because didn't feel safe on the street. I was approaching the Detroit Edison building when I saw a car in the parking lot headed for the exit. As soon as I saw it I realized that the driver wasn't going to stop before he reached the sidewalk, and when I slammed on my brakes I realized that I wouldn't be able to stop before I reached the parking lot exit.

I still have no idea what happened next, but even as I realized that the car was going to hit me I found myself standing flat footed on the sidewalk as the car drove over my bike. Now some people may say that what happened was that my feet must have slipped off of the pedals, and I just slid off the back of the bike, but if that was the case why didn't I have any momentum when I hit the sidewalk? The only thing I seem to remember about that second of time was that it felt like someone picked me up off my bike and set me down safely on the sidewalk. Ridiculous, I'm sure, unless you believe that Jesus is real and takes a personal interest in our day to day lives. †

FOR KIDS



GUESS WHO I AM



The year is 62 A.D. We are having a secret church meeting in my villa. Recently some of the people in Philippi (where I live) have begun to persecute us and oppose our work to promote the Gospel. The members of the Philippian church have all gathered together in my home to hear that latest letter from the Apostle Paul. I and my household are sitting up front waiting expectantly. I'm glad to see the Philippian jailor and his family came this week. Right behind me I can also hear Euodia and Syntyche still arguing about something. I wish they would stop; it is causing divisions within our church. Epaphroditus walks to the front of the room, opens a scroll, and begins reading the words of the Apostle Paul, who is still in prison. In his letter, Paul thanked us for our gifts, told us how much he missed us, and explained how he was doing. He also asked Syzygus to help Euodia and Syntyche to stop arguing with each other. Thank God! It was so good to hear from Paul again. We had been worried about him and Epaphroditus. Years earlier, Paul and Silas had come to our city and planted the very first church in Europe, right in my house! I was a dealer in purple cloth, had a good income, and thought I already had a good relationship with God. But after hearing Paul's message, I realized I needed to be saved. I and my whole household believed and were baptized. Can you guess who I am? †



NEW ADDRESSES: Edward and Pam Hicks have purchased a home in Plymouth. They are making some improvements on the house and they plan to move in at the end of October. The new address is: 1490 Penniman St., Plymouth, Michigan, 48170.

Mary Redoutey has moved to a new apartment in Westland. Her new address is: 6804 North Merriman Road, Apt. 1085, Westland, Michigan, 48185.

Don and Tracy Pitcher have moved to a home in Willis. In this house they will be better able to care for Don's father, who plans to live with them. The new address is: 8800 Victory Lane, Willis, Michigan, 48191.



NEW BABIES: You may remember that in one week our church added three new babies!

Mark and Deanna Arbenowske have received a beautiful gift from God, their first baby boy. Noah Tyler Arbenowske was born August 29 at a hospital in Flint.

Susanna David, daughter of Larry and Margaret David, was born on August 27. Baby Susanna was born at home in Detroit. She was 8 lb., 9 oz. and 21 in. long. She is welcomed by her older brothers and sisters: Gabrielle, Matthew, John, Naomi, Caleb, and Ransom.

Shaun and Rachel Kalis joyfully announce the birth of their daughter, Abigail Joy Kalis. Baby Abigail was born on September 2 at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti. She was 7 lb, 5 oz. and 19 1/2 in.

These children were also recently dedicated to the Lord (read more in the next column; pictures on next page). †

BABY DEDICATIONS:

On Sunday, October 15, our church dedicated four children to the Lord during our morning worship in Ypsilanti. The Hoppe family presented their daughter, Mercy, to Christ. Wayde Hoppe thanked God that, when Wayde was in a youth, God put a desire for twelve children on his heart. And with the birth of Mercy, God has fulfilled that desire.

The Hunt family dedicated baby Sarah. Sarah's grandmother from California was present for the service.

Baby Abigail Kalis, surrounded by many relatives, was also dedicated. Shaun Kalis gave thanks to God for the wonderful things He has given: salvation, changed life, marriage, and the gift of this new baby. Rick and Jenny Routson dedicated their son Elijah. Grandparents from Tennessee and Illinois were able to attend. That day was also Elijah's first birthday.

The following Sunday, October 22, we had another dedication of children during the evening service in Livonia. During this service, Mark and Deanna Arbenowske presented their son, Noah, to the Lord. Larry and Margaret David dedicated their daughter, Susanna, to the Lord. †

OVERSEAS FRIENDS:

Leah Ransom is participating in a cross-country prayer walk in Romania. Leah herself is only walking part of the distance, but she is providing prayer support and practical help to the team member who has organized the walk.

Brad and Kirsten Pingel are in Asia, where they have moved out of the apartment where they had been living. The Lord has provided them with a very suitable house. They also announce that they are expecting another baby.

Haipin Wang tells us that she and her husband were able to renew their wedding vows in a Christian church. This had a powerful, positive effect on their relatives who attended the event. However, Haipin's father was critically injured shortly before the service and was unable to come. Haipin asks us to pray for his recovery.

Shontaya Overall is having an excellent experience with her medical work in Honduras. God is revealing His love for her through His provisions and answers to prayer. Shontaya plans to return in early December. †

BAPTISMS: Our church baptized two believers on October 22, Rachel Evans and Cathy Li. Rachel is a student at the University of Michigan. She has been attending our worship services in Ypsilanti. Rachel explained that she had been baptized as a baby, but now she wanted to express her faith in Jesus through believer's baptism. Some of Rachel's friends from U of M came to witness the baptism.

Cathy Li was also baptized that evening. She is the mother of Jing Li, a girl who was baptized earlier this year. In her testimony, Cathy said that a few years ago her mother in China met a Christian who led her to put her faith in Jesus. Later, one of Cathy's sisters in China was saved. And then her daughter, Jing, was saved here in Michigan. Finally, Cathy herself put her faith in Jesus. Cathy's family often attends our worship services in Ypsilanti, although they now live in Windsor, Ontario. As usual, the baptism service was a time of great joy for our church and for the guests who attended. †



Rachel Evans



Cathy Li

SEMINARIAN: Ryan Landt, a former Hope Church member, sends his greetings. He and his wife, Sophie, are students at Western Theological Seminary. Ryan is doing an internship at a Christian Reformed Church. Sophie is working with youth. Both Ryan and Sophie plan to take a mission trip to Mexico in January. †

Baby Dedications



Mercy Hoppe



Sarah Hunt



Abigail Kalis



Elijah Routson



Susanna David



Noah Arbenowske

Trip to Apple Orchard



Playing Catch With Apples



Eating Fresh, Tasty Apples



Fellowshipping Together



Worshipping Together

2006 Church Men's Retreat



Watch Out!



After a Rainstorm



Target Practice



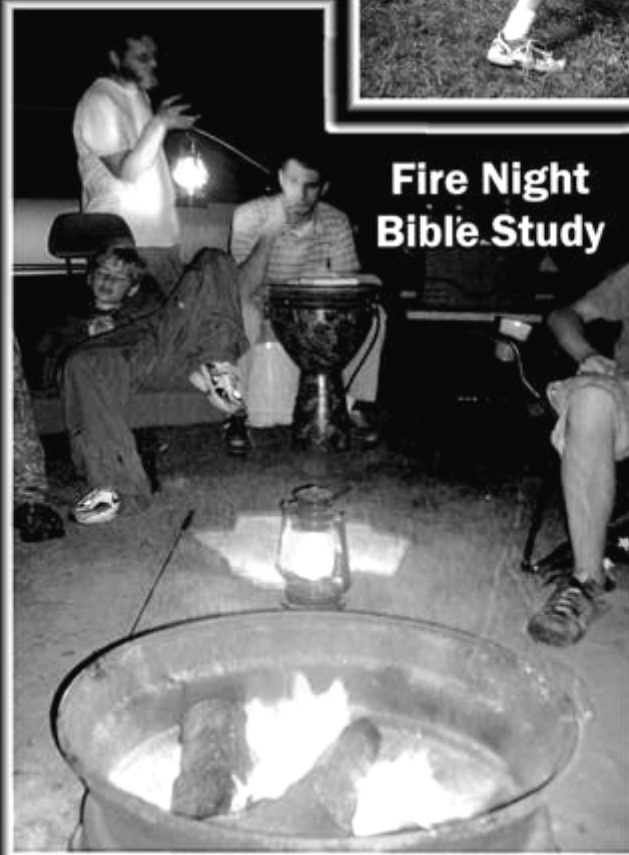
Slingshot Competition



Baseball Game



Happy Camper



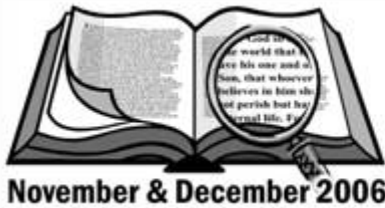
Fire Night Bible Study



Smash!



Primitive Eating



BIBLE READING GUIDE

The Kings of Israel & Judah

Wednesday, November 1: 2 Samuel 6

The Ark of the Lord is brought to Jerusalem. David's wife, Michal, doesn't think he is acting very kingly. What does David say about the matter? Why do you think the slave girls he speaks of would honor him for this behavior? What do they see that Michal apparently doesn't see?

Thursday, November 2: 2 Samuel 7

King David wants to build a house for the ark of God, but God says He's going to build a house for David. Who will build a house for God? What is the name of the prophet who delivers the message to David? What is David's attitude as he prays in response to the Lord?

Friday, November 3: 2 Samuel 8

King David continues to conquer the surrounding peoples and build the nation of Israel. What is the key to his success? How does David treat his people? (see v. 15) Who is in charge of David's army? What role do David's sons have in his government?

Saturday, November 4: 2 Samuel 9

What promise had David made to his friend Jonathan concerning Jonathan's children? (See 1 Samuel 20:14-17). What is the name of Jonathan's son that David locates? What does David do for him? Why does he do it? Who is Ziba? What is Ziba's job?

Sunday, November 5: 2 Samuel 10

What king dies in this chapter? What does David do when he hears about it? What does the dead king's son do to the men that David sends? What happens after the humiliated men return to David? In spite of enemy pressure, God expands Israel's territory.

Monday, November 6: 2 Samuel 11

Why do you think David was at home, wandering around in the middle of the night, while his army was at war? A restless heart often leads to trouble. What is the opposite of a restless heart? How does David make himself guilty of murder?

Tuesday, November 7: 2 Samuel 12

What story does the Lord use to confront David with his sin? What does the Lord say will happen because of his sin? What does David do after his son dies? God forgives David for his sin, but still brings upon him the earthly consequences of his sin.

Wednesday, November 8: 2 Samuel 13

Absalom was understandably angry with his brother Amnon; what should he have done about it? (see v.22) What did he do instead? Sin tends to lead to more sin, in our lives and in the lives of our families. By God's grace, godliness also tends to lead to more godliness. Let us choose to be godly.

Thursday, November 9: 2 Samuel 14

Why does Joab send the wise woman to David? What story does she tell David? So Absalom returns to Israel. Why does he set fire to Joab's fields? What is it that Absalom really wants? What are the main things that sons (even grown up sons) want from their fathers today?

Friday, November 10: 2 Samuel 15

How does Absalom win the hearts of the men of Israel? King David flees Jerusalem with the people that remain faithful to him. God says in Acts that there will be people in the church today who will try to do the same thing Absalom did. (see Acts 20:28-31) How can we recognize such a person?

Saturday, November 11: 2 Samuel 16

Ziba and Mephibosheth return to the story; do you remember who they are? Then we meet another relative of Saul's; what is his name? What does he say to David? How does David respond? Notice how David remembers God, even in the worst of circumstances.

Sunday, November 12: 2 Samuel 17

Ahithophel was once David's advisor, but he has turned against David and now advises Absalom. What does he tell Absalom to do? Who is Hushai? What does he advise Absalom to do? Why did Absalom think Hushai's advice was better? Was Hushai's advice really better for Absalom?

Monday, November 13: 2 Samuel 18

David sends his army to fight Absalom and the rest of Israel. Who are David's generals? What does David charge the generals? Verses 6-8 say that the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim and that "the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured" How did the forest devour Absalom?

Tuesday, November 14: 2 Samuel 19

As a father, David mourns for his slain son Absalom. Joab rebukes him, saying that this mourning is not right for the king. Why? David

is restored as king of Israel, and some of the people that were against him now turn to follow him again. What does this reveal about their character?

Wednesday, November 15: 2 Samuel 20

Who is Sheba? Who is Amasa? Why do you think Joab kills Amasa? Why does Joab and his army besiege the city of Abel Beth-maacah? What does the wise woman there do? The last verses of this chapter review who was who in King David's cabinet.

Thursday, November 16: 2 Samuel 21

How long was the famine in this chapter? What did David do about it? What did the Lord say about it? Who are the Gibeonites? The death penalty is required as punishment for murder, and since Saul is already dead, it is his relatives that pay the penalty.

Friday, November 17: 2 Samuel 22

When did David sing this psalm? (see v.1) In vv. 21-25 David says he has kept the ways of God and not acted wickedly – but clearly he did sin sometimes. How can he sing this? Many of David's psalms are prophetic. Do any of these verses apply prophetically to anyone else?

Saturday, November 18: 2 Samuel 23

David's last words were sung as worship to the Lord. Who is the "man who was raised on high"? (v.1) Who is "the anointed of the God of Jacob"? Here is a list of David's mighty men and some of their exploits. Why were they such great warriors?

Sunday, November 19: 2 Samuel 24

Why does David take a census? Why was taking a census a sin for David? What would be an equivalent sin for a Christian today? For a church today? What choice does the Lord give David? Why does the Lord stop the plague?

Monday, November 20: 1 Kings 1

Who is Abishag? Who is Adonijah? What do Adonijah and Absalom have in common? Who had David predetermined would become king after him? Why did Adonijah grab the horns of the altar? How does Solomon display his wisdom in this chapter?

Tuesday, November 21: 1 Kings 2

David gives Solomon some kingly advice before he dies; what is it? David also charges Solomon

to carry out judgments against Joab and Shimei. What did these two men do wrong? Why did Solomon have Adonijah killed? (see 1:52 and 2:46) What discipline does Solomon give to Abiathar the priest?

Wednesday, November 22: 1 Kings 3

What does God say to Solomon in a dream? What does Solomon ask for? Solomon faces a difficult situation; what does he do to figure out who is the real mother? What does this teach us about wisdom for decisions in our own life? Have you ever faced a situation where you had no human way of knowing what to do?

Thursday, November 23: 1 Kings 4

How did Solomon get such riches? Solomon's provision for one day (v. 22) was for his whole household - family, servants, officials, etc. How much food did they eat? What does that tell you about the size of his household? How would you define wisdom? In what different areas of study does Solomon show great wisdom?

Friday, November 24: 1 Kings 5

Who is Hiram? What kind of a deal does Solomon make with Hiram? What kind of wood does Hiram send? The important thing to notice is that Solomon is going to all this time and expense for one purpose: to build a temple to worship the Lord. What lessons can we learn from this chapter about giving our very best to God in worship?

Saturday, November 25: 1 Kings 6

How big was the temple Solomon built for the Lord? What were the outside walls made of? The inside walls? What was carved on the walls and doors? What is a cherub? How were the cherubim arranged in the inner sanctuary? How long did it take to build the temple? What does the Lord promise Solomon?

Sunday, November 26: 1 Kings 7

Here is a description of Solomon's palace, and more details about the furnishings of the temple. How long did it take Solomon to build his own palace? How big was it? What did it look like? Who is Hiram? What does Hiram make? What is the significance of the fact that Solomon did not weigh the bronze items?

Monday, November 27: 1 Kings 8

The dedication of the temple. What do the Levites bring up to the temple? How many sheep and oxen did they sacrifice? What was in the ark? The glory of the Lord fills the temple as a cloud, and Solomon blesses the people and prays for them. What theme is repeated again and again in Solomon's prayer?

Tuesday, November 28: 1 Kings 9

The Lord speaks to Solomon again; what does He say? Solomon and Hiram have a covenant with each other. Hiram pays tribute and works for Solomon; Solomon offers protection and

shares his bounty with Hiram. Notice that Israel is now a peer of Egypt, and Pharaoh gives a dowry along with his daughter to Solomon. What was the dowry?

Wednesday, November 29: 1 Kings 10

Why did the queen of Sheba visit Solomon? What did she find? If a visitor today came to you, looking for evidence of God's blessing, what would you be able to show him in your life? Verse 23 says that Solomon was the richest and wisest king on earth at that time. What kind of tribute did people bring to Solomon?

Thursday, November 30: 1 Kings 11

What sin did Solomon commit that made the Lord angry? What did the Lord say to Solomon about it? Let us learn from Solomon's sin and not make the same mistake ourselves. Who does God say He will raise up to take the kingdom away from Solomon? What is Jeroboam's job in Solomon's kingdom?

Friday, December 1: 1 Kings 12

Rehoboam is king after his father Solomon dies? Why do you think he follows his friends' advice instead of the elders'? Whose advice do you follow in making big decisions? Because of Rehoboam's bad decision, the kingdom is divided. Jeroboam quickly strays from God's will. What does Jeroboam do wrong?

Saturday, December 2: 1 Kings 13

The Lord sends a prophet to confront Jeroboam. What does the prophet say? What happens when Jeroboam tries to arrest the prophet? The first prophet meets a second prophet on his way home who invites him to dinner. Why was it wrong for the first prophet to eat dinner there?

Sunday, December 3: 1 Kings 14

Jeroboam sends his disguised wife to Ahijah the prophet. What is the prophet's message? Rehoboam led Judah astray, also. What sin did Judah commit? God says that David did "only that which was right in My sight" (v. 8), though we know that David sinned grievously. But God counted David's whole-heartedness (his faith) as righteousness. How are you like Jeroboam and Rehoboam? Like David?

Monday, December 4: 1 Kings 15

More kings. Who is Abijah? Who is Asa? Who is Nadab? Who is Jehoshaphat? Who is Baasha? Why was Abijah a bad king? Why was Asa a good king? Do you see a pattern developing? Bad kings reject the Lord God, and practice idolatry. Good kings have hearts that are wholly devoted to the Lord, leading them to try to obey the Lord, even if they fail sometimes.

Tuesday, December 5: 1 Kings 16

Name all the kings described in this chapter. What is the one sin that is common among all the ungodly kings. Omri acted more wickedly

than all who were before him. (v. 25) Then Omri's son, Ahab, did more evil in the sight of the Lord than all who were before him. Who rebuilt Jericho? What happened to him?

Wednesday, December 6: 1 Kings 17

Here we meet Elijah. What does he prophecy to Ahab? How does Elijah survive during the drought years? What kind of woman must the widow have been in order to believe Elijah's word that her flour and oil would not run out if she made him some bread? Do you have such faith? How does Elijah raise the widow's son from the dead?

Thursday, December 7: 1 Kings 18

Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to prove once for all who is God: the Lord, or Baal. What specifically is the challenge? How does Elijah make the Lord's sacrifice even more convincing? What other miracle does Elijah perform at the end of the chapter?

Friday, December 8: 1 Kings 19

Elijah is suddenly fearful and depressed. Why do you think he is afraid of Jezebel after God has just worked so powerfully through him? How does God nurture Elijah? In what form does God appear to Elijah at Mount Horeb? What directions does God give Elijah? One of the best ways to overcome spiritual depression is to get new orders from God, giving you a fresh vision and a clear sense of purpose.

Saturday, December 9: 1 Kings 20

Who is Ben-Hadad? His vast army surrounds the Israelite capital. But God gives direction through a prophet, and wicked King Ahab is desperate enough to obey God this time. After his surprising victory, how does Ahab disobey God? How does a prophet act out Ahab's disobedience?

Sunday, December 10: 1 Kings 21

Why do you think Ahab wants Naboth's vineyard so much? Ahab already had great wealth, but he was unsatisfied. Let us not be fooled into looking to our stuff (what we have or what we want) to make us happy. How does Jezebel get the vineyard for Ahab? Who is really in control of the kingdom?

Monday, December 11: 1 Kings 22

Who is Jehoshaphat? Are the 400 prophets that Ahab has with him true prophets? How can you tell? What is their prophecy to Ahab? Who is Micaiah? What is Micaiah's prophecy? Ahab believes God's word enough to try to prevent it from happening. How does he try to prevent it? How is Ahab's plan foiled?

Tuesday, December 12: 2 Kings 1

How has the new King of Israel, Ahaziah, gotten injured? Instead of going to God for healing, who does the king want to consult? What message does God give through the prophet Elijah? Why does God send fire from heaven to

consume the king's men? What lesson do you think God wanted the fire from heaven to teach the Israelites?

Wednesday, December 13: 2 Kings 2

Why does Elisha, the younger prophet, refuse to separate from Elijah? How do the two men cross the Jordan River? How is Elijah carried into heaven? What miracle does Elisha perform involving salt in a spring? What miracle does Elisha perform involving teenagers and two bears?

Thursday, December 14: 2 Kings 3

God's people are still broken into two kingdoms. Who is king of Israel? Who is king of Judah? What predicament do these two kings get themselves into? Jehoshaphat, who fears God, asks if there is any prophet available. What does Elisha tell the people to do? How does God bring victory for His people?

Friday, December 15: 2 Kings 4

Here are four amazing miracles. What does God do for the widow who is in debt? What does God do for the Shunammite woman and her son? What does God do for the prophets who got food poisoning? What does God do for the hundred hungry men? Can you think of similar miracles involving Jesus? The power of God is the same at the time of Elisha, Jesus and now!

Saturday, December 16: 2 Kings 5

Who is Naaman? Who tells him about the healing power of God? Can young children be effective witnesses for God? What does Elisha ask Naaman to do? Why is Naaman angry about it at first? After Naaman is healed he puts his faith in the Lord! Why does Elisha refuse a reward? How does the servant, Gehazi, secretly try to get the reward for himself?

Sunday, December 17: 2 Kings 6

What is the problem with an axe? What does God do? How does God protect Elisha from an army of enemy soldiers? What does God allow Elisha and his servant to see? Is there unseen spiritual protection around you? The northern capital city, Samaria, is under siege. Why does the king decide to kill Elisha? Why do ungodly people, when they are in trouble, sometimes blame God and try to harm God's people?

Monday, December 18: 2 Kings 7

Samaria is still under siege. What word of prophecy does Elisha give? What scoffing reply does the king's officer give? How does God defeat the enemy? Who finds the Aramean camp abandoned? What happened to the king's officer who scoffed at Elisha's prophecy?

Tuesday, December 19: 2 Kings 8

For those who love the Lord, God is at work in every detail, working all things together for our good. How is this principle seen in the story of the Shunammite woman? However, there are

many others who do not love the Lord, such as the kings in this chapter. Who is Ben-Hadad? Who kills him, and how does he die?

Wednesday, December 20: 2 Kings 9

Who does Elisha anoint as the new king? Which two kings does Jehu attack and kill. His main target was the wicked king of Israel, son of Ahab. But the king of Judah put himself at risk by hanging out with the wicked neighbor king. What tactic does Jezebel try to use to avoid death? How does she die?

Thursday, December 21: 2 Kings 10

God's judgment falls on the rest of Ahab's family. How does Jehu kill all of Ahab's sons and relatives? How does Jehu kill every priest of Baal? But Jehu did not get rid of the golden calves, which were also idols (see verses 28-31). Because of Israel's sin, God slowly reduces the size of the land (vv. 32-33).

Friday, December 22: 2 Kings 11

King Ahaziah has died (in chapter 9), and his mother decides to make herself the monarch. Who does Queen Athaliah kill? Do you realize that the people she is killing are likely her own grandchildren? Who is saved from death? How does he become king? How old is Joash when he starts his reign as King of Judah?

Saturday, December 23: 2 Kings 12

Joash starts a program of repairing the temple. How does the repair effort get bogged down? What extra measures are needed to be sure the work really gets done? It is similar with our own spiritual lives and our church. What direction do our lives naturally go? Why are good intentions never enough? What firm measures are needed in our lives to assure that spiritual rebuilding actually takes place?

Sunday, December 24: 2 Kings 13

Jehoash goes to see the prophet Elisha. Why does Elisha have the king shoot an arrow out the window, and what does this mean? Why does Elisha have him strike the arrows on the ground, and what does this mean? A key lesson: if God asks you to do something, do it a lot, not just a little! What miracle is Elisha connected with, even after his death?

Monday, December 25: 2 Kings 14

Who is Amaziah? Is he a godly king? What victory did he win? What defeat did he suffer? Notice that now we have God's people, Israel, fighting against God's people, Judah. Who is Jeroboam II? Is he a godly king? Why does God allow him to have success in spite of his ungodliness?

Tuesday, December 26: 2 Kings 15

What health problem does God send upon King Azariah? (See 2 Chron. 26:16-21 for a full explanation). Who is Zechariah? Is he a godly king? Who is Shallum? Is he a godly king? Who is Menahem. Is he a godly king? Who is Pekahiah? Is he a godly king? Who is Pekah? Is he a godly king? Finally, who is Jotham? Is he a godly king? Notice that Judah has some godly kings, but Israel does not.

Wednesday, December 27: 2 Kings 16

Here is yet another king for Judah. What is his name? Is he a godly king? The kings of Aram and Israel attack Jerusalem; to whom does King Ahaz turn for help? After the war, Ahaz sees a pagan altar in Damascus. What does he want his priest, Uriah, to do? What other changes does King Ahaz make in the temple worship in Jerusalem?

Thursday, December 28: 2 Kings 17

Who attacks Israel? Where are the people of Israel forced to go? Why does God send his people out of the Promised Land and into exile? The capitol of Israel had been Samaria. The Assyrians have taken the Jews out, and they replaced them with non-Jews, brought in from many lands. These newcomers intermarried with the few remaining Jews and became known as Samaritans.

Friday, December 29: 2 Kings 18

Israel has been taken into captivity, but the nation of Judah remains. Who is the new king of Judah? Is he a godly man? What does he do to please the Lord? God gives Hezekiah success against the Philistines, but then the Assyrians (who took Israel into captivity) come and besiege Jerusalem. What does the Assyrian commander have to say about Hezekiah? About God? ☩

The FAITH BUILDER Nov/Dec 2006 Stick With Jesus!

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TO: _____

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