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The Official Periodical
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The Walls of Jericho
Modern Media Alert

For our young readers...

Benhadad
Needy

*"Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?
Canst thou send lightnings...?" JOB 38:34&35a*



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Meditation

Strong Young Men

Rev. P. van Ruitenburg (Emeritus), Chilliwack, BC

In the Bible we regularly read about children, youth, and young men. The Lord speaks to them directly and seriously. Ecclesiastes 11:9 reminds the young man to rejoice in his youth, yet also to remember that God will bring every work into judgment. What a wonder that the Lord addresses young people personally. Nobody is too young to follow Him.

With that in mind, let us consider what the Apostle John writes in his first epistle: *“I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one”* (1 John 2:13b). He adds in verse 14 *that the young men are strong, that the Word of God abides in them, and that they have overcome the wicked one*. John speaks highly of the younger generation.

Who are the “young men”?

Who are the young men mentioned in 1 John 2? Are they young in age, or are they spiritually young and not yet mature? To answer this question, we must read the context carefully. See 1 John 2:12-14 and notice how often John uses the word “because.” He mentions the little children twice, the fathers twice, and the young men twice.

At first, the order may seem surprising. We might expect John to address little children first, then young men, and finally fathers. Instead, he first addresses the little children, then the fathers, and lastly the young men. This raises an important question: Who are the little children? They cannot simply be infants in grace.

Little children, fathers, and young men

Another remarkable point is that the little children are told that their sins are forgiven and that they have known the Father. Would we not expect this assurance especially in the fathers? How should we understand John’s words?

The explanation is not difficult. The margins of the Dutch Statenvertaling make clear that the “little children” in this chapter refer to all God’s people! John addresses them tenderly in this way because they are all born again. This is also seen in 1 John 2:1, 2:18, and 2:28. John was old when he wrote this epistle, and he speaks pastorally to the whole congregation.

We may therefore conclude that John first addresses God’s people in general as “little children.” He then speaks more specifically to two groups: the older generation, called the fathers, and the younger generation, called the young men. The fathers have known Christ, who is from the beginning. The young men and women have overcome the wicked one and are strong.

Three marks of young believers:

1. They have overcome the wicked one (verses 13 and 14).
2. They are strong (verse 14).
3. The Word of God abides in them (verse 14).

1. They have overcome the wicked one

Did the younger Christians overcome the wicked one? Yes—but only by God’s grace. They did not overcome by nature, by their own strength, or by free will. This was the work of the Holy Ghost. The Lord began His work in their hearts and enlisted them in spiritual warfare.

Though they were young, they were made true soldiers. They were drawn into a battle against the three-headed enemy and especially against Satan, who is called the wicked one. Once they were spiritually dead and friends of Satan, but the Lord placed enmity between them and the devil. They became enemies of sin and friends of God. Love was poured into their hearts, and the true choice was worked in them.

How is this with you, young friends? Have you broken with Satan? He seeks to devour you. He tries to confuse, discourage, deceive, and make you doubt the Word. Therefore, hear the call: choose this day whom you will serve.

What does it mean to overcome the wicked one? The young Christians John describes here do not cease to pray or to meditate upon the death of Christ: *“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind”* (1 Peter 4:1a).

2. They are strong

John also writes to the young men because they are strong (verse 14). What a remarkable testimony. These young Christians stood out. They were not ashamed to defend the doctrine, and they did not give in to sinful temptations. They said no to idolatry, impurity, greed, lies, drunkenness, and harmful substances.

Consider the following Scriptures, which call believers to strength and watchfulness:

- *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God”* (Ephesians 6:10-11a).
- *“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 2:1).
- *“Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8).

3. The Word of God abides in them

The third mark of these young men and women is that the Word of God abides in them. They love to study the Bible. What a beautiful mark of grace. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

They keep opening the Scriptures and continue digging into that gold mine. They find warnings, accusations, and threats, and they have to agree with them. They also read in the gospel of the one-sided work of God and the power of God unto salvation, and the Holy Ghost applies the Word to their hearts.

The Word of God is not merely near them; it is in them. They are temples of the Holy Ghost and a habitation of the Word. They do not merely read the Word; they taste it, eat it, and love it.

This should make us think of our young people in university and at work. Many are hardworking, decent, and sound in doctrine, yet they are in great danger. Pray to be strong. Satan does not sit still. Therefore, you need the Word in you.

The need of Christ in the heart

Are you making money? Are you in a relationship? Do you have a good education or a solid upbringing? These are blessings, but they are not enough. We need the Word of God abiding in us. We need the Saviour, Jesus Christ, in our hearts and not only in our minds. He is the Word. He conquered Satan and paid the price.

Abide in Him

Dear readers, this life will not continue forever. Suddenly it will come to an end, and the Son of God will appear. Will we be ready? Will we have confidence? Or will we be ashamed because we knew the truth so well but never fought the good fight and therefore missed eternal life?

Let me end with the verse spoken to all true believers: “And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (1 John 2:28).

Summary of 1 John 2:12-14

Group	Verse	Reason John writes
Little children	12	Their sins are forgiven.
Fathers	13	They have known Him who is from the beginning.
Young men	13	They have overcome the wicked one.
Little children	13	They have known the Father.
Fathers	14	They have known Him who is from the beginning.
Young men	14	They are strong, the Word of God abides in them, and they have overcome the wicked one.



Bible Study

The Prophet Zephaniah (7)

Rev. C. Van Dam (1893-1976)

(Translated from the February 4 through November 4, 1965 issues of *De Saambinder*)

God would destroy His enemies without regard to persons, wherever they tried to hide. They would not be only the secret idolaters but also the mockers, who secretly drank sin like water, without participating in religion—those who seemed to live according to the law but secretly transgressed and despised that same law. They were people who were not emptied from vessel to vessel; they filled themselves with wine and strong drink (Jeremiah 48:11). Oh, they said, every morning will take care for the things of itself. They mocked the pious who were greatly burdened by the general decline. After all, they could not gain honor or profit from religion. They considered religion to be nothing but a burden. Their minds were already dulled, and their hearts were already so hardened that Zephaniah might as well be talking to a wall. Yet, he had to tell them, for God wanted to free Himself completely

from their blood. The Lord would have the last word and silence all His enemies. He would leave them speechless with fear and amazement that God would even surrender Jerusalem and permit the holy temple to be plundered. He would fill both the city and the land with lamentations. Even if they planted vineyards, they would not drink their delicious wine. Even if they built beautiful houses, they would not live in them. Prosperity would kill the foolish, for it incited people to deny God and His providence. God would show them that He knew all their horrible sins and that He executed justice and righteousness on earth. God would fulfill His Word, including what is written in Zephaniah 1:14: “The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.”

Through Zephaniah, the Lord announced His judgments

and pointed out their cause in an unmistakable manner, adding that the time of judgment was now very near. It was as if He wanted to make one last attempt to turn them away from their idols and encourage them of the very necessary confession of sins and of reformation. That day would be so terrible that even the bravest among them would cry bitterly. The voice of the Lord would far outshine all other voices in power and clarity. Zephaniah said this through the Holy Spirit to warn them that it was imperative to settle their accounts for eternity and that it would be terrible for them to fall into the hands of the living God. They may in their folly put off the evil day, but Zephaniah had to tell them, “Do not deceive yourselves and one another, for the day of God’s wrath is near and greatly hastening.” The strongest and the bravest would then weep like a child over the slaughter of men that would take place.

Nothing should have appealed to people more than that the end of time was near. It should have made the inhabitants of Jerusalem tremble, but Zephaniah was like a voice crying in the wilderness. It did not penetrate their hearts, just as the voice of John the Baptist did not sufficiently penetrate those who had been sent by the Pharisees.

The great day of the Lord is near! Is that not a faithful warning? Is it not clear that the truth of the Word of the Lord, found in Ezekiel 33:11, is true: “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” The Lord hates and punishes sin. He cannot and will not do otherwise, by virtue of His holiness and righteousness. He is not the cause of man’s downfall;

(To be continued)

the poor lost world brings that upon itself. Did not Christ stand centuries later weeping at the gates of that same city of Jerusalem, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes”? These are the most powerful proofs that every harsh thought of the divine Being springs from ignorance and enmity. Man is too blind, by nature, to be able to behold the glory of God, much less to praise it.

Let us make a comparison between Judah and the Netherlands; then we may arrive at a clearer judgment. Having reviewed the first chapter of Zephaniah in a child-like simplicity, various questions naturally arise when comparing Judah and the Netherlands. For example, the question is whether there are still prophets today, and if so, whether they still live in our country. In the Old Testament, there were holy men who were called seers, or prophets. They were the ministers and teachers, leaders in Israel in doctrine and life. Some of them (Elijah, Elisha, Micah, and others) do not seem to have written anything; they were more involved in the events of their time. Others, also gifted with the Spirit of prophecy, made predictions in the name of the Lord that related to times more or less distant and were guided by God’s Spirit to record prophecies. The prophets were called to this important office without distinction from all the tribes of the Lord’s people. As prophets, however, they did not bear an office—they enjoyed no privileges nor received any money from the treasury; neither did they receive tithes like the priests. *(May the Lord bless us with more of these teachers and leaders in our churches today. —Ed.)* ■



From Our Inheritance

The Walls of Jericho

Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)

(Taken from the December 1960 issue of The Banner of Truth)

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days” (Hebrews 11:30).

The Apostle Paul, who in this chapter presents many examples of the exercise of faith, also quotes the history of the capture of Jericho as a special instance of the excellency of the true faith.

The people of Israel met with peculiar and mighty hindrances upon their way to Canaan. Jericho’s strong walls are also included among these obstacles. Considering these strong walls, the inhabitants of Jericho closed the gates of their city, supposing that they would be sufficiently protected behind these walls against Israel’s God and people. The spies

sent out by Moses had once reported about these walls, “The cities are walled and very great.”

How wonderful and consolatory, however, is the history of the capture of this city. There, the God of Israel has proved the greatness of His power and the certainty of His faithfulness. The Lord, as the Captain of the host of the Lord, appears unto Joshua and gives the command to go round about the city with all the men of war found in Israel. They had to follow the priests bearing the Ark and listen to the slow sounding of the rams’ horns which were to be blown by the priests. Once a day for six days, they were to compass the city, and on the seventh day they were to go around the city seven times. Then, when the long blast of

the trumpet would be sounded and the signal given to shout, all the people were to shout with a great shout and the walls of Jericho would fall down. Also, according to this command of the Lord, the army of Israel marched around Jericho, following the holy Ark and attending to the sound of the rams' horns which were being blown slowly. Yea, finally, after the completion of the prescribed processions about the city, the people shouted with a great shout and, behold, the gates and walls fell—gates, which had appeared so strong, had to plunge down before the face of the Lord.

How many walls can arise before the eye of the spiritual pilgrim as he travels forth to the heavenly Canaan—the walls of sins and enemies which seem to be so strong and powerful. It seems that it is impossible to cast down these mighty walls. Fear often fills the hearts of God's children when they must behold the power of their enemies. They find in themselves that there is no strength against that great multitude. However, this is now exactly what is not necessary. The walls of Jericho shall not fall through the force of Israel's army, the bravery of Israel's warriors, and the military skill of Israel's leaders. The walls of Jericho shall be cast down to the ground through the strength of Israel's God. This is the lesson which Israel's hosts must learn in their marching around the city of Jericho. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." The more they marched about the city, the better they could see the strength of these walls and the reinforcements which were placed upon them.

The Lord often lets His children go round about, that they may learn more and more to understand the strength of their enemies and not to underestimate them because it is undeniable that their power is tremendous. Never underestimate the enemy. Sin is a powerful enemy; the world and the Prince of Darkness have great power. Oftentimes, people talk so lightly about this, as if we could conquer our enemies in our own strength. One must then, at times, pass through painful and shameful experiences before he knows that he cannot cast down the walls in his own strength. Yet, while Israel marched about the city, the rams' horns were blown slowly by the priests, who carried the Ark of the covenant. This sound continually assured Israel of the presence of the Lord, which was granted unto Israel. Blessed are they who know this sound, the joyful sound of the gospel trumpet, which proclaims unto us the presence of the Captain of the host of the Lord. Now, let the spiritual Israel take courage. The sound of the gospel assures us that all the walls shall fall, yea, even to the earth. There shall not remain an enemy to distress and frighten your soul because, if the Lord shall arise, the enemies shall be scattered as the chaff which is driven forth by the wind.

*Never underestimate the enemy.
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Hear the sound of the trumpet. Did you not hear that sound when your soul was cast down and despondent? Well, there would be every reason for your great despondency if the Lord Himself would not go before you and that holy sign of His presence in the preaching of His precious gospel would not be given continually.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, and now we must observe that Israel did not shout when the walls had already fallen. If that had been so, it would not have been a shouting by faith. How often does one meet those who would first shout when the walls have fallen down and they have seen it with their eyes. They seek the ground of their life in the experiences they have and want to believe on the ground of meetings, experiences, etc. Here we read that the people shouted when the walls yet stood straight and firm and when these strong walls seemed to make mockery of their shouting. Nevertheless, they shouted in faith, namely, that faith which relies upon the One that is strong, in whom help is laid up and is mighty to deliver. Faith takes hold of Him alone and no longer seeks strength outside of Him, knowing that in Him is all power in heaven and on earth.

That is the faith that conquers the world because the object of faith is the Conqueror of death, grave, and hell, who triumphed over all enemies.

He goes with and before you, people of the Lord. Let not your soul look discouragingly upon the strong walls which seem to prevent your entrance into Canaan, but may you by faith behold Him who has triumphed over sin, death, and the grave, and in whose power you shall be more than

conquerors. Faith shouts, even while the walls yet stand, but these shouters shall not be made ashamed.

Much shouting is heard in this world that is not the fruit of a true faith. The world shouts in her seeming victory over God's Church and children. How often has the world already shouted when she supposed that the Church would forever perish and that the people of God would be trodden down to the earth. Yes, certainly they have already shouted often, namely, those inward scoffers who have asked mockingly, "Where is God whom you expect?" However, that shouting was changed into terror and woe, as was the portion of the inhabitants of Jericho. The shouting of Israel's army, though, was through faith, and that shouting in true faith shall not be put to shame because the Finisher of faith is its guarantee.

As in all the examples presented in this chapter, the apostle wants to prove in this text the excellency as well as the necessity of this faith so that we might come to a right understanding thereof. Surely, this is necessary. Mark well, nothing less is sufficient for us than this faith which conquers the world. There is so much that man tries to put in

the place of this faith to lean upon, but all props which are found outside of Christ and His perfect righteousness shall forsake us in the hour of danger and will make us ashamed in the face of the enemies; faith alone conquers the world, sin, and enmity.

Only true faith knows the unconditional cleaving to God in the face of impossibilities. Such faith knows that holy listening to the slow sound of the ram's horn, which informs us of the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, yea, the presence of the Lord Jehovah Himself. Such faith shouts when the trumpet sounds and preaches that Christ possesses all power in heaven and on earth. Such faith preaches that although these walls of Jericho remain standing for a while, they shall, in God's time, be thrown down, and it shall be an eternal fall.

Therefore, O people of the Lord, by faith the Church sings, also in her conflicts and struggles:

*God shall arise and by His might
Put all His enemies to flight
With shame and consternation.
His haters, haughty though they be,
Shall at His august presence flee
In utter desolation;
For when Jehovah shall appear,
He shall consume, afar and near,
All those that evil cherish.
As smoke before His dreadful ire,
As wax is molten by the fire,
So shall the wicked perish.*

—Psalter 420:1 ◻

Scripture to Consider

*Only take heed to thyself, and keep
thy soul diligently, lest thou forget
the things which thine eyes have seen,
and lest they depart from thy heart
all the days of thy life: but teach them
thy sons, and thy sons' sons.*

DEUTERONOMY 4:9



Instructive Gleanings

Righteousness (6)

Rev. P. Kleijer, Lethbridge, AB

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

Crown of Righteousness

When the Apostle Paul wrote these words, he was an aged prisoner, and he felt that he had come close to the end of his life. It would not be long anymore before he could leave this Mesekh to enter into the joy of his Lord. Once more he wished to give instruction to his dear spiritual son, Timothy. He knew a difficult time would

come after his departure. Despite this, Timothy had to preach the Word. Is it not the same today for all those whom the Lord has called to preach His word? A minister would like to see fruit upon his labor, and that is no wonder because it gives joy when he may see the bride of Christ prepared for the great Bridegroom. However, let us bear in mind that we are called to preach and to let the Lord care for the fruit thereupon.

Paul was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand, as he says in verse 6. When he looked back, he could say that he had fought the good fight. Rev. P. Blok once said, “Paul did not claim that he had

fought the *fight good*, but that he fought the *good fight*.” Despite all his shortcomings and the difficulties he faced, Paul could still say, “It is a good fight, for it is the Lord’s fight.” Now Paul looked forward to the end of the battle and to his coronation. The annotations of the Dutch Bible state, “That is, eternal life, with which the righteous or the justified are crowned, as it were, with a prize according to God’s gracious promise—a similitude taken from fighters or combatants, who, for a prize, received a crown, when they had contended lawfully.” This is a crown we will never receive on earth. Man, by nature, does not seek the crown of righteousness. Bunyan wrote in his book, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (Christiana’s Journey), about a man with a muck-rake in his hand who was busy raking pieces of straw. The Interpreter showed this to Christiana and those who were with her. She saw that someone held a beautiful heavenly crown above his head. It was as if he told this man, “Come, give me that muck-rake; then you will receive this crown,” but the man never turned his head from what he was doing to look up to the crown that was offered to him. This is the image of a man of this world, of you and me by nature, my dear reader. We are so busy with earthly things all day long, while we know that we have to leave it all behind. People of God, was this not the same with you when you lived in your natural state?

In the Grecian games, the conquerors received a crown. That was their great and high reward. This was the glory given to such a one. Paul knew that when he would enter the heavenly glory, he would receive the crown of glory from the Lord—not because of what Paul had done but because of what Christ had done. Therefore, he says a *crown of righteousness*. It is purchased with Christ’s righteousness. Without Christ it cannot be received or enjoyed. Paul would obtain and possess this crown in a righteous manner. He would neither steal it nor take it by force or violence, as sometimes takes place in daily life. It is the free gift of God the Father unto His children. This crown was laid up in heaven for Paul. He was not crowned here upon earth, but it was waiting for him. If he would receive the crown here, he might lose it, but it was in heaven, where it was safe. By grace he knew that

it was for him, and for all those who love His appearing. That will become the wonder for the living Church. The Church will receive this crown of God’s free mercy, for they have not merited it themselves.

Dear reader, to receive this crown is to receive glory. To receive this glory, we must be stripped of our own glory. Neither my work nor my righteousness will give me a right upon that crown. This would only cover my head with shame. The Church, however, will receive their crown from the hand of the Lord, the righteous Judge, and Jesus Christ. When will the day come that they shall receive it? It says, “The day of His appearing.” That is the day that He will appear upon the clouds of heaven, the last day. Then He, accompanied by His angels, shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Paul was looking forward to the day of Christ’s second coming. The Apostle Peter knew that they would receive this crown from the Lord’s hand because he wrote, “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4). The Church will receive it and will never lose it; neither will this crown become dim.

Paul’s hope and expectation at the end of his life was not in anything of self but in the Lord. What is your hope and expectation, my dear reader? We have seen a man busy gathering some straw. Perhaps, you say, “How foolish to be busy with that.” It is a picture of your and my life by nature. Our eyes must be opened for it. Rev. Heerschap used to say, “Ask for discovering light.” The crown of righteousness will be obtained through strife. Suffering is bound to strife, but be not discouraged, people of the Lord. It is clearly written, “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:11). We also read in God’s Word that the crowns were cast before the feet of Him who sat upon the throne. He is the One who is crowned by His Father and in whom lies the glory of His Church. Then He will be given all the honor and glory.

*All the blessings of goodness Thou freely didst give;
With the purest of gold He is crowned;
When He asked of Thee life Thou hast made Him to live
While the ages shall circle around.*

—Psalter 45:2 ◻

(To be continued)

It is a great disadvantage to mistake good nature for grace, for we deceive ourselves into thinking we have gone far enough toward God because we wish well to all and no harm to any. It must be known that good nature, even at its best, is not grace. It is full of characteristics that fight against grace, not having in it that true knowledge and love of God nor that inward purity which is required. For when one does what seem to be good works, if they do not proceed from a heart truly sanctified by God, they are nothing more than glossed-over sins issuing from a corrupt fountain and tending to the sea of death.

—Francis Rous (1579-1659)



Among All Nations

What Did Justus Vermeer Say About Israel?

Rev. J.M.D. de Heer, Rotterdam-IJsselmonde, the Netherlands

(Taken from the book *What Our Fathers Said About Israel*, Chapter 17)

Although the name of Justus Vermeer is widely known, not much is known about his life. What we do know, however, is that he had a large place in the hearts of God's people in Utrecht, the Netherlands. From 1732 until his death in 1745, he served as an elder in this city. He had read law at the local university, but his heart was drawn most of all to the study of God's Word. In his house he organized meetings during which the Heidelberg Catechism was explained by him. As the words spoken in those gatherings were written down, many today can still profit from these lectures. Rev. G.H. Kersten called them "thorough, instructive, and practical." For that reason, it should not surprise us that Vermeer's explanation of the Catechism has seen several reprints.

Since Justus Vermeer was not a minister, his sermons were called "exercises." Interesting for our purpose is a bundle of exercises in which three meditations on Jeremiah 33:6-7 can be found. The first sermon on this text is entitled, "God's Great Promise of Salvation to His Miserable People." Surrounded by his friends, Justus Vermeer gave utterance to his hope for the nation of Israel. On which foundation did he base this hope? "God makes a promise in this Word. He says, 'I shall do it.'" When one looks at the state of Israel's unbelief, one can only say that all those who are born and die in this state will perish, but, thankfully, there is a different side. "The promise made to this nation is a great promise." That gives us ground to have expectation!

In Jeremiah 33:6, Mr. Vermeer finds "the completeness and certainty" of Israel's deliverance from all sorts of misery. "God will heal them; according to Hosea 3:5 they will return to the Lord their God and to David their King. It may never look so dark, but in the latter days they shall fear the Lord and His goodness." There must have been a great longing in the voice of the elder when he continued, "Oh, that will truly be the case if only man may lay hold on God's Word and promise; the truth thereof is everlasting, and the Lord

does not lack might, wisdom, or lovingkindness. How much a Christian should seek to habitually hope in Him, even when it is dark, so that his faith may increase! When Paul views Israel in the last days, he says in all simplicity, 'God is able to graft them in again' (Romans 11:23). Well, in the same way we must speak when we have received something from the Lord and it is dark all around us."

Mr. Vermeer's hope for the Jewish people comes equally to the fore in his third treatise of Jeremiah 33. He does not deviate from his belief that Judah's deliverance is "a pattern of spiritual deliverance" from the power of sin. In other words, Jeremiah 33 shows us how God converts a sinner. That said, the prophet also points at the restoration of the Jewish people, a restoration that will surpass their return from the Babylonian captivity by far. Their spiritual restoration will be so great that their homecoming from the exile will, as it were, go into oblivion. That is the firm conviction of Justus Vermeer.

With apparent approval he quotes a passage that he found in a commentary on Jeremiah written by a certain Sebastian Smit. This passage reads as follows: "Formerly the Jewish nation was delivered out of Babel so that it would expect the coming of the Messiah and be transformed into a holy Church of God. When Paul considers God's way with Israel, he sinks away in adoration and exclaims, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?' (Romans 11:33-36). With all this the apostle bows at the Lord's feet to glorify Him."

The impressive doxology of Romans 11 will one day be taken over by all Jews and Gentiles who have been redeemed by the Lord. Together they will sing the praises of God's wondrous ways. Will we be among them? □

(To be continued)

The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance. He who will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink of the pit may find by woeful experience that it is a righteous thing with God that he should fall into the pit! Sin is a plague, yes, the greatest and most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah! how few are there that tremble at it, that keep at a distance from it!

—Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)



Commentary

The Twelve Apostles (10)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Brant County, ON

The Holy Ghost Given to the Apostles

The apostles were together in unity awaiting the promise of the Father. They had expectation! The ground for this expectation was rooted by faith in Christ Jesus. What does that mean to expect the fulfillment in Christ by faith? Then a sinner believes He will do it not because of man's work but because of Christ's finished work. In prayer, the Person and His work become the pleading ground to receive the fulfillment. Take courage from Acts 2 that the Father fulfills His promise at His time and upon the foundation of Christ's work.

This is a comforting truth. The promises of God are fulfilled not because of the sinner but because of Christ. In Acts 2, a waiting Church is directed to the wonder that the Lord fulfills His promise but also instructed as to why He can fulfill the promise. Therefore, the way which will be held, in light of the promise of God's presence as Comforter, is to direct the faith and expectation outside of the sinner.

To receive the Holy Ghost is to be filled with the fullness of Christ. The Comforter is comforting His people with the fullness of Christ's glory by faith. Here the apostles receive all Christ's benefits sealed to them through the presence of His Spirit. The Sealer is the Comforter because the sealing work of faith is uniting them by the imputed righteousness of Christ to be the Father's possession. The sealing comfort is to have a deadness toward sin and a right to eternal life. Then sin does not triumph; then death is not feared. In this benefit God's people are assured by the Holy Ghost of their security in Christ regarding their restoration and reconciliation. Then the Holy Ghost seals all the works of grace in Christ to their soul. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Then they are comforted and strengthened in the fulfilment of the promise of the Father to unite them to Himself through Christ by the Holy Ghost.

The disciples knew the work of the Holy Spirit before this, but when Christ gave them instruction regarding the coming of the Holy Ghost, they missed Him, not in His work but in His Personal presence. Now, on Pentecost,

God desired to fulfill this for His people. Notice from this that the Person of the Holy Ghost as Comforter is the benefit of Pentecost for the apostles.

What is the direct fruit of His revealed presence? That is recorded in Acts 2:4a: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The missing, the emptiness was filled. Behold the fruit of this: "And began to speak...as the Spirit gave them utterance." The Spirit of God is the content of their heart, and what the heart is full of it speaks about. Here, by faith, God has a restored relationship with His creature, and it begins, by faith, to give utterance to that wonder. That blessing is revealed on the day of Pentecost.

The fruit is evident. The work of God has to be declared in different languages, so the Spirit gives them utterance in all the different languages present to speak concerning the wonderful works of God. Dear reader, notice from this that God speaks your language! With this I do not only mean the treasure to have the Bible in English and also to have the word explained to you in your language, but I see in this something which remains timeless. Many people stood there in the temple; just like you, they knew the truth from their young years, but now in their own language they hear a message of fulfillment. All the demands of God are answered in the precious blood of Christ. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened unto the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). There the Spirit gave utterance to testify of the gospel in Jerusalem. There, by the Holy Spirit, twelve men may give utterance to the wonderful works of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Dear reader, that language God still speaks today. That is the New Testament to be declared in His blood. In your sin He testifies that in Me is repentance and forgiveness. In your impossibilities He declares in Christ to be the God who does what is impossible by man. Have you understood it, not by comprehension but by faith? Blessed are they that believe! In Acts 2, by faith three thousand people not only hear it but also believe it. Blessed truth of Pentecost! The Holy Spirit gives utterance through His instruments that sinners may hear the wonderful works of God. ▢

(To be continued)

Christ and His cross are not separable in this life; howbeit, Christ and His cross part at heaven's door, for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble cannot find lodging there.

—Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)



Media Use

Modern Media Alert

Submitted by the Synodical Modern Media Committee

The article below is a timely and necessary warning, written by our Synodical Modern Media Committee. May we all be given to take heed, because the times are evil, the world allures, the devil is sly, and our hearts are corrupt. "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil" (Proverbs 16:6). —Editors

Television/Movies/Modern Media and How It Affects Our Families

In the United States, modern video production began in the early 1900s. The first Hollywood movie was produced in 1910. The medium of television was invented in 1927, and within a year, it began to spread across the country. The media industry produced black and white films from the 1940s to the 1960s. Digital cameras were invented in the early 1970s, providing ease of use for storage and reducing the cost of producing images. Now computer-generated imagery, 3D technology, and virtual reality utilize computer graphics and audio to create images in art, printed media, videos, and video games.

The entertainment industry brought these media from the theater into our homes using 8mm film projectors, 16mm film projectors, the VHS tape format, and television. Now in the 21st century, we can easily stream movies and live sports events from online services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, and Disney directly into our homes.

Philo Farnsworth invented the television in 1927 and believed that it would bring families together, allowing them to share their experiences and stories. He thought this would lead to a more informed and united community. Later in life, he regretted his invention and even suffered from depression when he realized that the continuous programming of television, along with the alluring, materialistic, and sensual advertisements, as well as the continuous solicitations promoting long hours of television viewing, had made television even worse than the theater.

Many years ago, one of our church publications told the story of a stranger who was invited into many of our homes. He was introduced as a great storyteller, one who would keep our families spellbound for hours. This stranger's stories brought many sinful lifestyles into our homes by sharing worldly dress, drunkenness, and profanity to tell his tales. This stranger became an integral part of our household. Dad and Mom seemed to accept him even

though it went against our biblical teachings. You were told at the end of this article that the stranger's name was called "Mr. TV."

If we consider this abbreviated explanation of TV, how has the modern media of our time, which we have invited into our homes, affected us? Perhaps we need to step back and ask ourselves what has changed. Most of our older generations were brought up with no television or media, and in some cases, no radios, since they believed it would bring the world into their homes.

As more and more young people (including parents) in our churches and schools subscribe to services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, or Disney, we need to understand what is taking place. Our homes can be visualized with a dark, ominous shadow creeping into the family life that God has so graciously given us. This shadow represents sin, and as the darkness slowly expands, it takes away the warmth and light that once filled the home. It lures family members from meditating on and receiving the exhortations

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and comforts of the Holy Scriptures to the world of fantasy with an addictive power. Their faces reflect the unease and tension created by this darkness. Doubt fills the mind more, and one begins to question

God and His Word. Consternation is kindled in the heart, which in turn causes more confusion and negative thoughts about God.

The CEO of Netflix was quoted as saying, "Sleep is my greatest enemy," and "Netflix actually *wants* you addicted." It's obvious from these quotes that Netflix does not hide the fact that its movies and programming are designed to foster addiction. Chief Content Officer of Netflix, Ted Sarandos, said, "Our series of movies are created for users to watch multiple episodes." Thus, again, the end goal is addiction since they want complete control over you as their viewer. When we allow these technologies into our homes, they will shape and influence our lives. We need to understand that *technology is never 'neutral.'* Designers use their goals and values which are not based on the Word of God to influence the way you live your lives.

This is so opposite of what we are taught in Holy Scripture: "Woe to them that call evil good..." (Isaiah 5:20).

We must use God's Word as our compass and beg that we will be kept by Him. "For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6).

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

We know that Walt Disney was not a church attendee. Even though there are churches on practically every main street in America, you will not find any churches on Main Street in Disneyland or Disney World. Despite this, we have allowed Disney’s cartoons and movies to influence our families. “Few entertaining movies have made such a profound impact on our families and churches as Disney’s animated features.” Why would we allow our youth to learn applications of right and wrong from the worldly influences of Disney in our homes?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that American children spend seven hours a day in front of electronic media. Research has shown that interactions with visual media stimulate dopamine in a person’s brain, which becomes addictive and leads one to prefer virtual interactions over reality. “Be not ye therefore partakers with them” (Ephesians 5:7).

Since our thoughts dictate to a large measure what we are or will become, should we not guard what is brought into our hearts with modern media? “For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee” (Proverbs 23:7). We also know that our eyes are the means by which most external information enters our hearts. Evil images only stimulate our thoughts and help create the temptation of lust in our hearts. “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23). When we allow our eyes to take in sin, we reveal more and more what lives in our sinful hearts.

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Psalms 101:3).

The media of television is a great time stealer. The average American watches television seven hours a day. *This amount of time spent watching or using modern media is detrimental to our thinking/reasoning.* Often, this media emphasizes superficial aspects, drama in life, and is directed at the individual interacting with it. It does not stimulate logical thinking and reasoning. Increasingly, it stimulates our emotions rather than our intellect, and demands more and more stimulation to succeed.

Since the dangers associated with television and online video are a 21st-century phenomenon, we find very little of these dangers explained by our early Christian church fathers. We do know that early Christians avoided the Roman theater. Christians were forbidden to attend the theater during the time of Constantine, who ruled in the 4th century A.D. An early church father, Tertullian, in 150 A.D, opposed the theater in his treatise *The Shows*: “Are we not...enjoined to put away from us all immodesty?” “...whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8b).

The Puritans in 17th-century England, who were in the Long Parliament, closed down the theaters when they came to power. They believed that secular entertainments distracted people from worshipping God.

In the past, other Calvinist-related churches and theologians also prohibited attendance at theaters. However, in recent years, most modern Reformed churches have “looked the other way” regarding movies in the theater and in the home.

John Newton, an Englishman who lived in the time of colonial America, 1725-1807, summarized the truths of the Scriptures in a letter regarding the theater. This letter could be considered much more pertinent today, when the theater has been brought into our homes:

My dear Madam,

*I am well convinced that if there is any practice in this land which is sinful—attendance on the playhouse is eminently so. **The theaters are fountains of vice!** I can hardly think there is a Christian upon earth who would dare to be seen there—if the nature and effects of the theater were properly set before him! By its innumerable train of dissipations, the god of this world blinds the eyes of multitudes, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine in upon them.*

I wish you, therefore, to use all your influence to make them shunned as pest-houses and dangerous nuisances to precious souls! Especially if you know any whom you hope, in the main, are seriously disposed, who yet venture into those haunts of Satan—endeavor earnestly and faithfully to undeceive them!

The time is short! Eternity is at the door! Was there no other evil in these vain amusements than the loss of precious time (but alas! their name is legion)—we have not the leisure time to regard them.

*And, blessed be God, we have no **need** for them! The gospel opens a source of purer, sweeter, and more substantial pleasures! We are invited to communion with God! The wonders of redeeming love are laid open to our view. Well then, may we bid adieu to the perishing pleasures of sin!*

Well may we pity those who can find pleasure in those places and parties...where Jesus is shut out; where His name is only mentioned to be profaned; where His commandments are not only broken, but insulted; where sinners proclaim their shame, as in Sodom, and make no attempt to hide it; where wickedness is veiled in the disguise of amusement—to make it more insinuating!

“And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts” (Isaiah 22:12-14).

God's Word is clear on the use of authentic human interactions and not substituting them with virtual interactions. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Do we not see the dangers when we spend more time using modern media than reading and studying the Bible or good books? "Love not the world" (1 John 2:15a). "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

The NRC Synodical Modern Media Committee wishes to communicate the above information to reawaken our awareness of the increasing onslaught of the powers of darkness against the church today. We hope that this will result in a prayerful effort to address this issue throughout our families, churches, and school communities with renewed energy. This could include warnings from the parents, the pulpit, in the classroom, and during house visitation. □



Questions from Our Readers

Doubly Guilty

Rev. H. Hofman, Beckwith, Grand Rapids, MI

Sometimes we hear from a minister that we are a "doubly guilty people." What does this mean? Why are we doubly guilty for our sin? Do we owe God twice the payment or the punishment for our sins? Is this for only God's people to understand or even for the unconverted also?

Before I make an attempt to answer this question, I should clarify that I do not possess the spirit of Joseph or Daniel who interpreted dreams or the minds of other men. Therefore, in this case, it might have been easier to have directly asked the minister who used the expression what he meant by it. It can be very helpful for a minister to occasionally receive this kind of feedback, as we can easily assume that what we have said from the pulpit is abundantly clear. My experience is that occasionally we can be surprised by what is actually understood and what is not!

Still, the question caught my attention as an interesting one, so although I cannot read the minds of other ministers, I think what follows may be what is meant. I need to interpret the statement without knowing the context in which it was said. So, if I am misinterpreting the matter, I would hope that the minister in question will contact me personally and let me know what was meant, so this matter can be rectified.

Here are a few thoughts that come to mind. It is possible that this statement was made as a superlative. This means: to stress or emphasize a matter. In this case whether we are doubly guilty or threefold or fourfold would emphasize the weight of our guilt, and who can ever minimize our guilt? According to this reasoning, the same counts for our liability to God's punishment. In the Dutch rhyme version of Psalm 51:2 we sing: "Dies ben ik, Heer, Uw gramschap

dubbel waardig." ("Therefore, Lord, I am doubly deserving of Thy wrath.") In this context doubly means: utterly, beyond question. The brothers of Joseph said: "*we are verily guilty concerning our brother*" (Genesis 42:21). They were not only guilty of selling their innocent brother but had also seen the anguish of his soul when he besought them, and they would not hear...this certainly added to their guilt and made them doubly guilty.

Another possibility is that the guilt or sin referenced in the sermon referred to having been warned more than once, or to a sin committed against better knowledge. Further, to answer your question regarding whether this is applicable only to God's people or also to the unconverted, I would ask: why mention this distinction? Sin is sin and needs to be punished on account of God's justice and holiness. The only difference here, perhaps, would be that those who sin against grace glorified would be doubly guilty. However, in my opinion, to sin against better knowledge is the same.

In conclusion, I would hope that this interesting question will **bring us into the guilt** before God for the first time or by renewal. In true conviction of sin, also after receiving grace, sin is never minimized but always maximized. Whether we be singly, doubly, or threefold guilty, may it drive us out to what we read in 1 Timothy 1:14-16: "*And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*" □

Send your questions to: Rev. H. Hofman, 2339 Deer Trail Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, or hofman@premieronline.net.

There is a danger of being a Pharisee when you cease being a publican. —Anthony Burgess (1600-1664)



Current Events

Young Ethiopian Christian Struggles

Since she converted to Christianity in 2025, a fifteen-year-old Ethiopian girl has lost her education and the comfort of her home. She could also lose her life. Born into a Muslim family in a town near Ethiopia's border with Sudan, she now lives under constant threats from her family and community. She recalls how her family became very hostile when they found out about her Christianity. "They said I had brought shame to the family; others told me I had betrayed my family and my community. They warned me that I would be killed if I did not go back to Islam," she said. The persecution soon became life-threatening. Armed men were reportedly placed near her home with plans to kill her. Because of threats, she was forced to leave her home and school. "I live in fear every day," she said, "I never thought my family would hate me because of my faith. Sometimes I cry and feel alone, especially after losing my family's support, but I still believe God is with me even in this suffering." Although Christians worship freely and openly in Ethiopia, Christian converts from Islam in Muslim-majority areas often face violence and even death threats.

—Persecution.org

Persecution Persists in the DRC

Hundreds of Christians are killed every month in the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), where Islamic State-linked militants continue to target believers with brutal attacks. The latest violence included the beheading of fourteen Christians by Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), the Islamic State affiliate active in the DRC. ISCAP claimed responsibility for killing six Christians on June 3 and another eight on June 24. An expert explains that the group's extreme violence is intentional, wanting to inspire fear and that this is why the attacks are so gruesome. Beyond killing believers, the militants seek to terrorize entire communities. The group's long-term goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate in areas under its control. Once the Islamists control the territory, the Christians are given the choice to convert and become Muslims. Those who refuse often face severe persecution or death. One of the defining characteristics of persecution in the DRC is how suddenly it can strike. The expert said, "They have to be ready at any given moment to stand strong in their faith, even in the face of death." Such attacks leave deep trauma and fear throughout Christian communities. Yet they also reveal the remarkable endurance of believers.

—MMNOnline.org

Another Church in India Attacked

On May 31, over 25 Christians were injured in a church attack in a town in Chhattisgarh state, India. Thirteen of them were hospitalized with severe injuries, and when they were discharged from the hospital and returned to their village on June 14, they found that their homes had been looted. Nine suspects arrested in connection with the attack were released on bail a day later. More details have emerged about the attack and the severe injuries suffered by the thirteen Christians, who were among a congregation of around seventy gathered for Sunday morning worship. Their meeting was disrupted by a group of forty to fifty villagers, followers of a traditional tribal religion. These attackers beat many members of the congregation. Seven Christians sustained serious head

injuries, three had fractured hands and two sustained severe leg injuries, including one who is awaiting surgery for a broken leg. One woman fractured her shoulder blade and has been in severe pain, while others sustained internal injuries and bruising. The pastor said, "Many lost consciousness while being beaten. All thirteen are still on medication and recovering from serious injuries." The mob also looted money from the prayer hall, tore apart Bibles in which offerings had been kept between the pages, and scattered them across the floor. One person escaped and ran to the police station eight km away to report the attack. The pastor commented, "It was only when the police arrived that the assault stopped, otherwise we would have been beaten to death."

—ChurchInChains.ie

Assisted Suicide Coming Close to Great Britain

The British Isle of Jersey is set to become the first jurisdiction in the British Isles to legalize assisted suicide for terminally ill adults, prompting warnings from opponents that vulnerable people will be put at risk. The Assisted Dying (Jersey) Law 2026 received Royal Assent in July, after being approved by Jersey's States Assembly in February. It is expected to become law a few days later when it is officially registered in the Royal Court. Assisted suicides are expected to be available from September 2027. To be eligible, terminally ill adults must have lived in Jersey for at least twelve months, be suffering unbearably, have a life expectancy of six months, and must receive approval from two independent doctors before they can go ahead. Care Not Killing, a UK-based campaign group opposing the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia, said it was "deeply disappointed" by the development. The group argues that the law breaches the UK's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), citing potential conflicts with a number of articles. They further argue that the law is not robust enough in protecting vulnerable people, particularly those with disabilities, from coercion. The nearby British Isle of Man was the first part of the British Isles to approve assisted suicide, but the Assisted Dying Bill 2023 still needs to receive Royal Assent, meaning it is not yet in force. It has been held up after the U.K. Ministry of Justice refused to grant Royal Assent on the grounds that it did not comply with the ECHR.

—ChristianityToday.com

Victory for Biological Norms

The U.S. Supreme Court has established a new nationwide precedent that allows states to protect women's sports. The justices ruled in favor of West Virginia and Idaho against men athletes who sued to gain access to girls' sports. The states were backed by the law firm Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), while the trans athletes were represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Cooley Legal. In the highly anticipated rulings, the highest court upheld state laws requiring student-athletes to compete on sports teams that correspond with their biological sex at birth rather than their gender identity. The Supreme Court ruled 6-3. The justices ruled: "we hold that the States may maintain women's and girls' sports for biological females. They may determine eligibility for women's and girls' sports based on biological sex."

—FoxNews.com

Christ keeps His people from final ruin; He does not allow His chosen to end their days by their own hands.

—John Flavel (1627-1691)



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

A Boy from Stavenisse (15)

C. Visser-Sluis

(Reprinted with permission from the book, *Leen Potappel, A Boy from Stavenisse*)

A Warning Sermon

After two years Leen is permitted to go home. He won't miss life as a soldier. He really longs for Stavenisse. God's people are there, and there he can again attend services at the little church every Sunday. He had a difficult time in the military service among the rough soldiers. Yet, it was also a good time. The Lord helped him through all the difficulties and Leen lived close to the Lord.

Leen becomes older. His sisters and brother marry. He continues to live alone with his father in the little house along the Molendijk. One time he asks the Lord for his own place, where he can pray and read undisturbed. The Lord Himself points out a place for him. He builds a house on the Molenpad which is large enough for Sien, her husband, their two daughters and himself. Leen lives in a separate part of the house. A new church is also built in the village. Leen is an elder and takes turns with the second elder reading sermons on Sunday.

Two wars pass by. During the last war all the villagers in Zeeland have to leave their villages. The Germans occupy their islands. Then this war also passes by.

Leen lives close to the Lord. He cannot and dare not start the day without prayer. He needs the Lord's blessing and support in all things. This is how he lives as an example to the village. Everyone knows him and respects him. One can feel that Leen really fears the Lord and doesn't just pretend. He warns the children that they must be converted. He points out the dangers of sin to young and old. He has the courage to take the Lord's side when the Sunday is misused. He always says something about it when he hears cursing.

He loves walking by himself on the long sea dike from Stavenisse to friends in Saint Maartensdijk. Then he reads in a little book that he always has in his pocket: *Pearls of Luther*.

Now Leen has become old. He is seventy-one years of age. During this year something terrible happens in Zeeland. Leen always felt that the Lord's judgments would come upon the sinful country. He could never understand precisely how the Lord would let His voice be heard. He did know that the Lord would take him Home after many tribulations.

It is Saturday, January 31, 1953. It is storming fiercely this afternoon. Stavenisse is located on the island Tholen. The water from the North Sea roars toward the island along the Eastern Schelde River. The water climbs higher and higher. High tide and low tide always alternate, but today there is no low tide. The ships in the harbor protrude high above the dike.

Leen is drinking coffee at the home of the other elder, Johannes Slager, who later becomes a minister. "I still do not know which sermon I have to read tomorrow," says Leen.

"Oh," says Slager, "it isn't Sunday yet. You'll surely find one."

"Last week was so extraordinary," says Leen. "You read the sermon on Psalm 119:120 by Reverend Smijtegelt."

"Yes, yes, Potappel, it was strange; I still do not know why I had to read about the judgment. The text was: 'My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee; and I am afraid of Thy judgments.' It was a Prayer Day sermon by Smijtegelt which doesn't fit at this time of the year. We are so close to Christmas, and then to have a Prayer Day sermon. The congregation had expected something about Anna or Simeon in the temple, didn't they? But I had to read this one, I couldn't do otherwise."

Leen looks at the elder pensively. "Later on we might understand why the Lord wanted that warning sermon read; and also why you had to address the congregation so earnestly. I do not know; I do not know anything. Everything is shut up. We must yield the matter to the Lord."

"But something is threatening. We all felt that in church."

"Yes, I have heard many talking about it this week yet. The sermon made the people uneasy. Would the Lord come with His judgments on the sins? How? When?"

Both men quietly sit together for a while. Then Leen gets up. Deep in thought, Leen walks to his house. It is next to that of Elder Slager. Something is very strange about that sermon. It seems as if something is closed in his head and in his heart. No matter how much he seeks for a sermon in his books, he cannot find a single one suitable to read in church tomorrow morning. How is it going to go?

Outside, the wind is increasing in strength. It becomes a hurricane. The water had never risen that high. It becomes time for high tide again, but there had been no low tide that Saturday afternoon. High tide brings even more water. It runs in all directions. The storm batters the coasts.

In the middle of the night, the siren wails. Leen

and Slager and many others hurry to the dike to see how high the water has come. Everyone is shocked by the sea. Enormous waves, meters high, come rolling in, threateningly topped by angry white caps. They break up on the dike in the harbor. Men are lugging sand bags and struggle with the storm. How long will the dikes hold against this hurricane?

Leen and Slager look at each other. What should they do in this great distress?

"I am going to my wife!" shouts Slager.

Leen barely hears him because of the howling of the wind. But he understands. "Yes, I'm going to Sien."

Slager comes home and there finds his worried wife. Together they bow their knees. "I do not know, but something is going to happen this night," says Slager.

"Yes," nods his wife, "we have to get some things together and go upstairs."

The dike at the harbor doesn't hold. The waters flow into the polders where the people live. They are caught by surprise while they sleep.

(To be continued)



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Benhadad

(Based on 1 Kings 20)

In the time when Ahab was king in Israel, there was a king of Syria named Benhadad. He was a very wicked man. One day, he gathered together thirty-two other kings and their armies and came against Ahab. They had many horses and chariots in their army, and they surrounded Samaria. Benhadad then sent a message to Ahab, informing him that his servants would come the next day to search the city and take whatever they desired. The elders of the city and all the people said, "We must not permit this," and they told this to the messenger. So Benhadad prepared to do battle against the city.

God was not with the wicked Syrians and the other kings and their armies. He sent a prophet to Ahab to tell him that this great army would be delivered into their hands. The Lord would show that He is God. Ahab made his soldiers ready for the battle, and God helped the Israelites and gave them the victory.

Many in the Syrian army were killed, others fled away, and King Benhadad also escaped on a horse with other horsemen.

The prophet came again to King Ahab and told him that Benhadad would return the following year with another large army, so he should prepare for this.

It was God who gave Israel power to win the battle, but the Syrians would not believe this. They knew nothing about the true God, the God of Israel. So they said, "The gods of the Israelites are the gods of the hills. They had power over us because we fought on the hills. If we fight in the valleys and on the flat land, they cannot conquer us there. We will be stronger than they, and we will soon conquer them."

The next year, the Syrians came back again to fight against Israel, and they made ready for the battle in the valley of Aphek. They thought they would surely win if they fought in the valleys. The Syrian army

filled the countryside, while the army of the children of Israel was like two little flocks of goats in comparison. Did the Syrians conquer? No! God was angry with them for not believing in His power, and He said to Ahab, "I will give all this great army into thy hand. You shall know that I am the Lord."

For six days, the armies pitched their camps opposite each other, and on the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites again conquered the Syrians, killing one hundred thousand soldiers of the Syrian army in one day. Thus, God showed His people, but also taught Benhadad and his soldiers, that He is God everywhere.

God reigns over all the earth. He is everywhere. The hills and the valleys are all alike to Him. We cannot hide from Him; He sees what is done in every place, and He rules over all things as He pleases. He could give power to Israel's little army, and He could take away power from the great army of Syria.

Benhadad escaped to Aphek and hid himself there. He now wanted to make peace with Ahab, for he saw he could not conquer Israel. Benhadad sent his servants to Ahab with a very humble message and begged Ahab to let him live.

Ahab listened to what the messengers said. He sent

for Benhadad and spoke kindly to him and made peace with him. Was this right? No! God did not wish Israel to be friendly with the wicked Syrians. It was wrong of Ahab to make peace with Benhadad, and God was displeased with Ahab for doing so. Ahab was punished for what he had done. God again sent a prophet to Ahab to tell him that he and many of his people would die while fighting with the king of Syria.

Ahab went home to his house in Samaria, angry and displeased. Why was he displeased? He was angry because he did not like God's message. Ahab very often displeased God; he had many times disobeyed Him and brought punishment on himself. Still Ahab was not humbled and sorry for his sins. He did not ask for forgiveness. No, he was sullen and angry.

When God punishes us for our sins, what should we do? We should confess our sins, repent of them, and pray for forgiveness. You might ask, "How can God forgive sin, for the Bible says that He will by no means clear the guilty? However, God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, to be born, to suffer, and to die, that the sins of His people may be forgiven. Proverbs 28:13 tells us we must not hide our sins, but confess and forsake them. Those that do so shall have mercy for Jesus' sake.



Bible Quiz

Needy

Dear Boys and Girls,

Some time ago, I was watching a small flock of sheep in a field. It was still cold and would be another month until spring, but already, several little lambs had been born. They were tiny, and their little faces sweet and innocent.

The sun peeped out from behind the clouds, and the sheep lay down to chew their cud in the warm spot the sun was creating. The lambs cuddled close to their mothers. The sheep lifted their heads to the sunshine one by one, eyes half closed, jaws chewing steadily. Without making a sound, they made their needs and desires very plain—they wanted to soak up every bit of light and warmth from that sunshine while it lasted.

When one sheep rose to her feet, two little lambs were immediately beside her. The woolly twins' tails began to twirl happily as they thrust their heads beneath their mother's belly, searching eagerly for the nourishment that would make them grow strong. It was plain to see what their need and desire was—they needed milk to still their hunger.

Several lambs began to whimper restlessly, and other sheep were soon on their feet, their peace disturbed. One little lamb hopped close to an older sheep, but the sheep was not his mother. I suppose the sheep had no way of telling the lamb so, and so she shoved the lamb away with a butt of her head. The poor little lamb went tumbling into the mud. Scrambling to his feet, he bleated shrilly, his high-

pitched little voice rising clearly above the others in loud protest. “Mommy, help me!” he seemed to cry in his little baby voice. It was plain to hear what his need and desire was—he needed protection and comfort.

The Bible often speaks of needy ones. These needy ones also need light, warmth, nourishment, protection, and comfort, just like the lambs. They are God’s people and belong to the King of kings.

Psalms 72 speaks of a king and a kingdom. This psalm refers to King Solomon, but in a greater sense, this psalm speaks of the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. In His kingdom, there are needy ones. They need the Lord for everything. They are often oppressed by sin and Satan. They are helpless to defend themselves. They throw themselves on the King’s mercy, because He has promised to help them in their need.

What is a sign that these people are needy? Well, those needy ones are *crying*.... Why are they crying? It is because they *sense* their misery and danger... They know it and feel it. These needy ones the Lord hears and delivers. The Lord has a kind and tender regard for these poor and helpless ones. His compassion is great, and He is touched with a feeling of His people’s infirmities and troubles.

In a kingdom, it is especially those that are needy who are taken under the king’s special protection. Often, these needy ones look up; sometimes, they only sigh, but it is plain that their only hope is in the King of kings. It is much like the lambs that are in the field: a needy one needs light and warmth—to know that the Lord knows of him. A needy one needs milk—to go to God’s House and have God’s Word speak to his heart. A needy one needs protection and a listening ear—he has so many enemies and is so weak.

The Lord sees their looks and hears their sighs, and He knows *what* they need. Those needy ones want to be grateful subjects to this King, whom they love and whom they worship with deep reverence.

* * * * *

Unscramble the word to complete the verses.

- 1. “For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a _____ (feergu) from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.”
- 2. “The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the _____ (sspte) of the needy.”
- 3. “The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to _____ (yderost) the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.”

4. “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their _____ (gonute) faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”

5. “The _____ (kiewdc) have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.”

Find a prayer for the needy in each of these psalms. Write them in the blanks.

- 6. Psalm 40: _____
- 7. Psalm 70: _____
- 8. Psalm 74: _____
- 9. Psalm 82: _____
- 10. Psalm 86: _____

Take the missing word from the word bank. Then find it in the curvy words puzzle on next page. Letters may go in any direction.

SOULS POOR FORGOTTEN
JUDGE DUNGHILL

- 11. “He shall _____ the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.”
- 12. “For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the _____ also, and him that hath no helper.”
- 13. “He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the _____ of the needy.”
- 14. “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the _____.”
- 15. “For the needy shall not always be _____: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.”

D	S	R	P	H	U	O	P
R	T	L	L	G	T	H	O
D	E	N	U	O	F	N	R
E	D	L	S	O	D	G	S
R	O	U	R	U	F	F	E
F	T	G	O	T	J	O	G
P	N	U	T	E	N	G	D
D	F	L	L	I	H	N	U

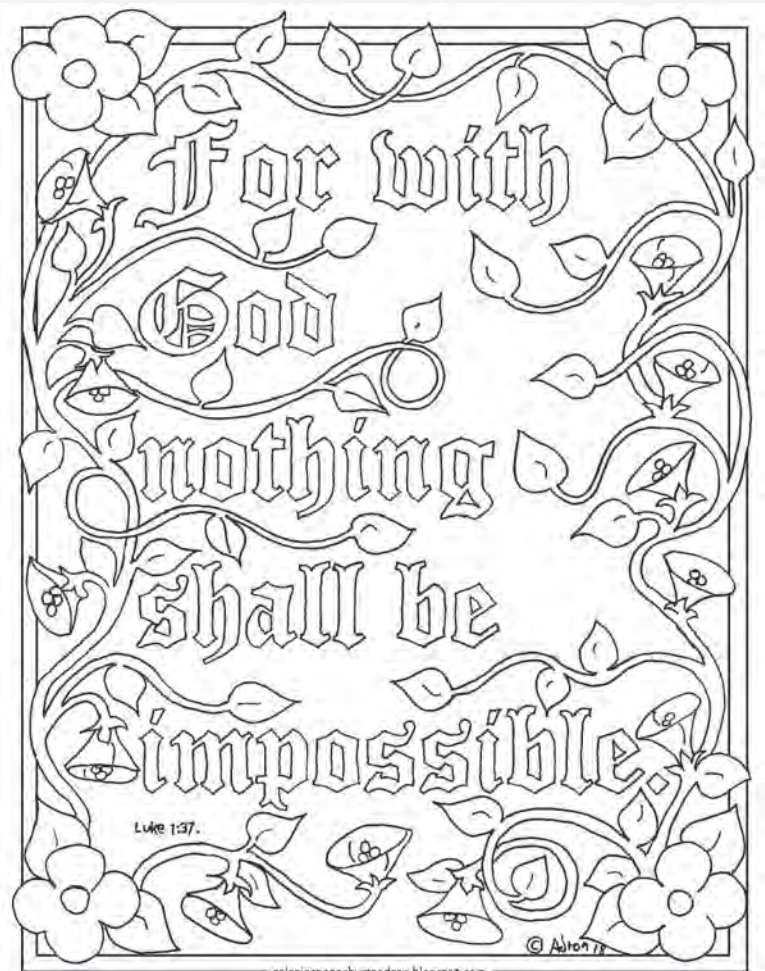
For the Older Children

16. Which one of the following verses speaks of the Lord delivering the needy from the oppression of the Philistines (Palestine)? _____

17. Which one of the following verses speaks of how a virtuous woman helps those who are poor and needy (in a practical sense)? _____

*Proverbs 30:14 Proverbs 31:9 Proverbs 31:20
Isaiah 10:2 Isaiah 14:30*

Color the verse at right, cut it out, paste it to a white piece of paper, and use it as a postcard to send to someone you love.



For the Younger Children

Look up these verses. Match the verse to the correct statement.

- 18. Psalm 109:22 ____
- 19. Psalm 12:5 ____
- 20. Psalm 35:10 ____

- A) The psalmist exclaims that his heart is very needy
- B) The psalmist praises the Lord for delivering the needy
- C) The Lord says He will arise to help the needy

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth
180 Jacobs Road
Newfoundland, NJ 07435
E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com

* * * * *

Answers to July's "Soldiers" quiz:

- 1-24: Saved, soldiers, spearmen
Out, our, offering
Left, legs, large
Door, delivered, dissension
I, into, into
Escape, endure, entangleth
Robe, ropes, raiment
Stir, seam, stairs

25. 100

26. 4

27. 16

28. 36,000 & 17,200

29. 3000

30. 1

- 31. The people: share with those who have nothing
Publicans: only ask the people for the taxes they owe, and no more;
Soldiers: be content with your pay, and don't be violent or accusing

Answers to previous quizzes were received
in June from:

Bailee Bakker
Blaire Bakker
Clay Bakker
Ember Bakker
Paige Bakker
Ashlynn Blom
Emily Blom
Tiffany Blom
Aryanna Breeweg (2)
Julian Breeweg (2)
Carly Brouwer (2)
Leanna de Jong
Ethan Driesen
Alyssa Driesse
Jordan Driesse
Kailyn Driesse
Lindsey Driesse
Allison Ekema (2)
Eleanor Ekema
Kaylynn Ekema (2)
Jacob Ekema
Jordan Ekema (2)

Allison Fluit
Andrea Fluit
Willard Groenendyk (4)
Rylan Knibbe
Shanelle Korevaar
Abe Mol
Teddy Mol
Andrew Murphy (2)
John Murphy (2)
Carter Neels
Blake Pannekoek
Cassadee Pannekoek
Lauren Pannekoek
Lynne Ruissen
Lydia Ruissen
Collin Rus (3)
Kaela Rus (3)
Lakia Rus (3)
Emma Spaans
Sierra Spaans
Tessa Spaans (2)
Trysta Spaans

Brandon Ten Hove
Hannah-Jo Ten Hove
Ava Van Manen
Alana van Manen
Evan Van Manen
Aziynn Van Ravenswaay (2)
Kiela Van Ravenswaay (2)
Lydia Van Ravenswaay
Winston Van Ravenswaay (2)
Hanna Van Wyk
Esther Vande Stroet
Eli Vande Waerdt
Joelle Vande Waerdt (2)
Wyatt Vande Waerdt (2)
Levi Vander Waal
Sara Vander Waal
Helen Verhoef (2)
Caleb Vogelaar
Matthew Vogelaar
Nathan Wesdyk
Samuel Weststrate



News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Declined:

By Rev. M.H. Schot of Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Chilliwack, British Columbia.

Obituaries

DAVELAAR, Bonnie (nee Van Otterloo) – Age 71, June 14, 2026; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Robert (Bob); Children – Stacia Schulze, Shane & Tamara, Craig & Sara; Son-in-law – Kelly & Gina Rozeboom; 16 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Rhonda Klarenbeek, Cheryl & Glenn Lange, Don & Josie Van Otterloo, Lorri & Jerry Schlotfeldt, Rick Van Otterloo, Lisa Groeneweg, John & Marlys Van Otterloo; In-laws – Wayne & Janice, Doug & Helen, Gretta & Daryl Van Maanen; predeceased by daughter Shawn Rozeboom, parents Richard and Lyda Van Otterloo, parents-in-law Willie and Henrietta, and Bob's infant sibling Kevin Davelaar. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Psalm 39:4-7.)

KOEDAM, Sam – Age 87, June 19, 2026; Rock Valley, Iowa; Wife – Reva (nee Van Beek); Children – Tammy & Craig Fluit, Todd & Judy; 13 grandchildren, 59 great-grandchildren; Sisters-in-law – Sally, Kathleen; Brother-in-law – Leonard Zoeller; survived by members

In Memoriam

Mr. John Van Ginkel

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:14b).

On June 28, 2026, it pleased the Lord to remove from the midst of his family, Mr. John Van Ginkel, at the age of ninety-seven years. Mr. Van Ginkel faithfully served the congregation of Rock Valley as an elder for thirty-four years (1970-1997 & 2004-2009). He was buried with the above text on July 1. May the Lord graciously remember the mourners and sanctify this calling to his family.

— The Rock Valley NRC Consistory

of Reva's family; predeceased by 5 brothers, and 5 sisters. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Ecclesiastes 1:4.)

NYDAM, Dick – Age 84, June 14, 2026; Lynden, Washington; Wife – Geraldine; Children – Frank & Sue, Ben & Sheri; Sister – Geri Kerr; Sister-in-law – Winnie Schilder; 4 grandchildren, numerous great-grandchildren; predeceased by 4 siblings, and a brother-in-law. (Rev. J. den Hoed, Mark 10:27.)

SCHEP, Henry – Age 95, June 29, 2026; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Gerry

(nee Vanden Heuvel, deceased); Children – Rita & Dan Bruniski, Wilma & Clarence Bisschop, Veronica Korotkov, Gord & Viola; 9 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren. (Elder J. Maljaars, Isaiah 40:6-8.)

VAN GINKEL, John – Age 97, June 28, 2026; Rock Valley, Iowa; Wife – Jeanette (nee Van Voorst, deceased); Children – Henry, Rallyn & Deborah, James & Bonnie, Timothy & Kelly, Daniel & Michele, Ellen & Vern Van Beek, Jelaine & Kent Schelling, Laura & Harlen Van Beek, Karen & Randall Van Beek, LeAnn & Mark Wynia; 54 grandchildren, 110 great-grandchildren; Brother-in-law – John Van Beek Jr.; 7 sisters-in-law and 3 brothers-in-law from the Van Voorst family; predeceased by infant daughter Leah, son Glenn, granddaughters Julie and Marissa, great-grandson Levi, 4 siblings, 4 brothers-in-law, and 3 sisters-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Job 14:14&15.)

VAN SURKSUM, John – Age 88, June 6, 2026; Doon, Iowa; Wife – Jeanette ("Nettie," nee Vlastuin, deceased); Daughters – Susan & Steve Hoekstra, Dawn & Lane Munson; 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren; Sisters-in-law – Tillie Blom, Ann Vlastuin, Emma Vlastuin, Mary Van Surksum; Brother-in-law – Elmer Vlastuin; predeceased by daughter Debra, great-grandson Andrew Juffer, and 6 siblings. (Rev. H. Hofman, Luke 10:42a.)

■ Lethbridge NRC's 75th Anniversary

May 27, 2026

Rev. P. Kleijer opened the service with the request to sing Psalter 440:4. Confession of Faith, Article 27 was read, followed by Scripture from Psalm 102:1-28. After Rev. Kleijer opened with prayer, the congregation sang Psalter 275:1-4.

Elder William Grisnich shared the following memories:

- The church building in Coalhurst;
- Elder B. Ouwerkerk teaching catechism classes in the old church;
- The new building on 7th Street in Lethbridge;
- Rev. A.W. Verhoef, pastor in this building for a few years;
- Rev. M. Heerschap, who served the congregation for many years in this building;
- Rev. G.M. de Leeuw, who was called in one evening and accepted the next morning;
- Rev. C. Sonneveld with his boundless energy, love for Israel;
- Rev. A.A. Brugge, who labored diligently here to learn English.

Elder Grisnich then quoted Lamentations 3:22 and requested the congregation to sing Psalter 425:1&3 (standing).

Rev. Kleijer's text for the sermon was Psalm 102:18: "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD." With the help of the Lord, he spoke of a remembrance of the years gone by using three thoughts: first, written in a book; second, written with a purpose; and third, written for God's honor.

1) *Written in a book*: The heading above this psalm reads: A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord. The author of this psalm was likely deeply burdened with the church in captivity in Babylon. The Lord's mercy upon our congregation may be remembered and written in a book, including both the sad tidings and the glad tidings. This is not a book to remember the deeds of man, but the faithfulness of the Lord. 2) *Written with a purpose*: It is written for the generation to come. Church history reveals periods of darkness, as in the Middle Ages, when the question arose whether there was still a church. The Church is not in the hands of man. The Lord has overshadowed us during the trials that came in the past seventy-five years. The Church lies secure in the hands of Him, as we read in Isaiah 32, who is a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest. May we be given to experience, also in the future, that He will hide us from the wind and cover us from the tempest as rivers of water in a dry place, and shadow us as a great rock in a weary land. 3) *Written for God's honor*: The people who shall be created shall praise the Lord. The word "praise" can also be

translated as "boasting"—not boasting in self but boasting in the Lord. The Lord has sent His servants, elders, and deacons, who have labored for seventy-five years. Not one will dare to say that he has labored in a good or perfect way. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise" (Isaiah 43:21). There will also be those who may be given to labor who have not received an office. "For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death; To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem" (Psalm 102:19-21).

After singing Psalter 308:1,3,5 at the close of the sermon, Rev. E.C. Adams spoke as moderator and on behalf of the churches in Southern Alberta and Classis Far West. He reminded us of the seventy-five years of the unfailing faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God. The Lord requires not only a confession with our mouth, but also that we may be given to experience with Job, that the Lord makes our hearts soft. There is the essential need for repentance and remission of our sins, made possible through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord also grant the blessing of refreshment.

Rev. den Hollander could not attend because of the serious circumstances in his family. The service ended with closing prayer and singing of Psalter 195:3&4 as the doxology (standing).

■ Thank You from the Congregation of Rosthern

On behalf of the members of the congregation of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, we would like to express hearty thanks for the generous donations received toward the purchase of our own church building. A total of \$261,344.00 was received. It is both humbling and encouraging that the gifts were enough to pay for the building in full!

It is our wish and prayer that this building will be richly used for the extension of God's Kingdom; also, that we may be a blessing in the community where we have received a place. Above all, may the Lord receive all the honor! Thank you.

—The Congregation of Rosthern, Saskatchewan

■ Synod Meeting 2026

The 2026 Synod is scheduled to take place in the Covell Avenue NRC of Grand Rapids, Michigan, on September 16&17, 2026. A prayer service will be conducted by Rev. E. Hakvoort on September 15, D.V. We ask the consistories to please remember the Synod in public prayer on the Lord's Day prior to the meeting.

—The Lethbridge NRC Consistory (Calling Church)

■ Nobleford NRC Clerk Update

Due to Elder Marinus Slingerland's illness, the consistory has appointed Elder Marco De Wilde as temporary clerk.

Marco de Wilde
Box 3 Monarch, AB T0L 1M0
clerk@nrcnobleford.ca
403-634-4026

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on August 19, 2026, our dear parents and grandparents,

Pieter & Susan Velthove
(*nee dePater*)

hope to commemorate their
50th wedding anniversary.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee"
(Job 22:21).

773427 Oxford Road 59
RR3 Norwich, ON N0J 1P0

Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.

—Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646)

■ The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles appearing in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3s are produced by a committee in Norwich, with the support of the Norwich consistory, who make the MP3s available to your consistory. Consistories distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost. You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or to discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

Anniversary and other announcements will be placed upon request. A donation for their placement would be appreciated. Please follow directions for check payment, shown in gray area at bottom of inside front cover. For consistency, copy size is limited. Send requests to James Okken, managing editor (see contact information at bottom of inside front cover.) Requests should be made **by the first of the month prior to the month of publication.**

Dear reader, the need is great. If you have an education background, please take a moment to consider the many positions available across our congregations.

■ Administrators

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY. (*Although this position has been filled on an interim basis, we are still in need of a permanent candidate.*) The school administrator will strive to direct the school according to the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, the Constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, the policies of the NRC School Board, and the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education. The primary duty of the administrator is to maintain productive relations with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents and community.

Relocation expenses and financial incentives will be discussed upon inquiry. For more information or to apply, please contact Tom Van Vugt (education chairman) at 973-703-1511 or email tomv@plainviewgrowers.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 or email nrcs_office@nrcsnj.org

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is seeking a dedicated and people-focused elementary vice principal to join our leadership team next school year. This is a unique opportunity to make a daily difference in the lives of children in a positive environment, prayerfully seeking guidance from God's Word. We are looking for an NRC, RCNA, or ORC member in good standing who shares this vision and who will serve as a dedicated presence in our school community. If you have a heart for children, a gift for leadership, and a desire to serve, we would love to hear from you. Training and mentoring will be provided for the right candidate. Questions can be directed to Andrew Korevaar at elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-495-6629. Interested applicants are invited to submit a resumé and brief letter of interest to hr@rcsnorwich.com

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, is seeking a principal as our principal prepares for retirement. We seek a leader with a calling to oversee the school in faithful submission to God's Word. One will provide spiritual, academic, and organizational leadership; cultivate strong relationships with board, faculty, students, and parents; and preserve/strengthen the culture of TCS. The successful applicant should be:

- Member of the NRC
- Eligible for a BC teaching certificate
- Demonstrate proven educational leadership

Applicants who are still completing qualifications are welcome to inquire, as a mentored transition may be considered. Direct your inquiries to the principal, Doug Stam, at dstam@timothychristian.ca or school board president, Kevin Romeyn, at kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca. Submit applications to the school board president.

■ Teachers/Assistants

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications for elementary or secondary teachers to begin in August 2026. Applicants must be members of the NRC, or a closely-related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. Any inquiries should be directed to the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or inquiries@ccschool.ca. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter and resumé with references to inquiries@ccschool.ca

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applications for elementary and middle school teaching positions. We would be gladdened by an inquiry and application of someone who is versatile and dedicated, who also loves the doctrine according to godliness. For more information on this position, please contact Mr. Arthur Verhoef, at principal@ecschool.ca or call 905-563-3077.

Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1372 Gregory Road N., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9. Email: gerry@ecschool.ca

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, has an opening for a full- or part-time teacher or coordinator to monitor, oversee, and assist the students with their homeschool curriculums. We have a range of students from grades K-7. For more questions regarding this position, please contact Andrew Van Stelle at 920-452-1967 or email amtrees@excel.net

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, LYNDEN, WASHINGTON, is accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year. We welcome applicants at the elementary, middle, or high school level. To apply or request more information, please contact the administrator, Ms. Beth Bleeker, at 616-826-7663 or email bbleeker@nrcslynden.org or the school board president, Mr. Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901 or email jdebruin3797@gmail.com

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, anticipates an URGENT NEED for the next school years with multiple openings for teachers in elementary and secondary grades. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca. Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the board secretary, Mr. Jacob Kerkhoff, at jkerkhoff@mccs.ca. See also www.mccs.ca

NERIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CALGARY, ALBERTA, has a unique opportunity for a full-time teacher to join our small school. While all applications are welcome, we are in most need of a teacher for our students in middle and high school. We are seeking an organized individual who is willing to learn, a team player, and able to transition between grade levels during a school day. While a certified teacher is preferred, we welcome all applicants who are passionate about teaching. For more information, please contact the principal, Darlene Dekker, at darlene.dekker@neriahcs.ca or school board president, Mr. Daniel Visser, at 403-554-1097 or by email visser.daniel@outlook.com

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is seeking to fill teaching positions in elementary, 7-12 math, and other secondary subjects. These positions are part-time or full-time and can be combined depending on qualifications and experience. For further information, please visit www.nrcsia.com or contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at dan.breuer@nrcsia.org or call 712-476-2821.

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN invites qualified candidates to apply for elementary and middle school positions that may be open. For more information regarding possible openings or for application forms, please contact the administrator, Mr. Tom Kwekel, at tkwekel@pcskzoo.com or call 616-644-2661.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, invites applications for several positions for the coming school year, including:

- Part-time middle school music teacher
- Two high school teachers (areas of particular need are math, science, business and art, though flexibility exists based on candidate strengths)
- Education Assistants (EA), Personal Support Workers (PSW), and Developmental Support Workers (DSW)

For information about elementary opportunities, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar at elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-495-6629. For information about secondary opportunities, contact Mr. Gerrit Ten Hove at secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-536-3689. We also invite inquiries about our locally developed teacher training program, which offers a blend of paid teaching, mentorship, and training. Cover letters and resumé should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed, and applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is in need of a middle/high school teacher. We are looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and are dedicated to nurturing the hearts of young people. We have a definite need in middle/high school for the upcoming school year but would encourage secondary and intermediate grade-level applicants. If you

are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For information and/or an application form, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Doug Stam, principal, at dstam@timothychristian.ca, or Mr. Kevin Romeyn, school board president, at kevinromeyn@timothychristian.ca

Thinking About Teaching?

Visit advertising.nrcea.education for an up-to-date listing of job openings in NRCEA schools. To access the job bank on NRCEA SharePoint, please use the following:

Name: advertising@nrcea.education
Password: **Schooljobs!**

Minutes of Classis Far West 2026 Meeting (Summary)

Office Bearers' Conference and Prayer Service

The Office Bearers' Conference was held on March 17. Rev. P. Kleijer presented a topic entitled, "What Does the Church Order Say?"

The Classis prayer service held the same evening was led by Rev. H.D. den Hollander. The text was from 2 Chronicles 33:19a. The theme, "God Entreated Upon the Prayer of Manasseh," was explained in two points: 1) His prayer; 2) How God was entreated of him.

Article 1—Opening

The classis convened on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, in Sunnyside, with Chilliwack as the calling church. Rev. E.C. Adams opened by requesting to sing Psalter 122:1-3, followed by reading 1 Samuel 6:19 and 7:12. All were welcomed, with a special welcome extended to Rev. van Nieuw Amerongen, who recently accepted the call to Nobleford. Rev. Adams meditated on the portion from 1 Samuel where the ark was returned from Beth-shemesh to Kirjath-jearim into the house of Abinadab.

Significant events: Elder Sam Wisse has served for twenty-five years. Elder Ken denBok, Deacon Henk Rozendaal, and Deacon Dick van Harberden have laid down their offices after serving different lengths of time. Deacon Ed Vandenberg and his wife, and Elder Matt Grisnich and his wife, commemorated their 40th wedding anniversaries. Former Deacon Harry Oudshoorn passed away on March 12; he served Lethbridge from 1978-2007. Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen accepted the call to Nobleford. On January 31, 2026, Picture Butte purchased a church for Rosthern; the inaugural service was held on February 8.

Article 2—Credentials

Eight congregations were represented by three ministers, twelve Elders, and one Deacon.

Article 3—Moderamen

President – Rev. P. Kleijer (by rotation)

Vice President – Rev. H.D. den Hollander (by rotation)

Clerk – Elder Roy Vanden Brink (by election)

Treasurer – Elder Arie Van Wingerden (by appointment)

Article 4—Minutes

The minutes of the October 1, 2025, classis meeting were approved by the moderamen.

Article 5—Correspondence

The calling letter, letter of acceptance, certificate of release from Nijkerk, and certificate of release from the classis of Barneveld for Rev. van Nieuw Amerongen were found to be in good order. The release will be effective on the day Rev. van Nieuw Amerongen is united with the congregation of Nobleford.

Article 6—Reports

No reports were received. A church visitation schedule will be drafted.

Article 7—Classis Points

Chilliwack – submitted four points: 1) That Synod develop a website for our denomination similar to our sister denomination in

the Netherlands; 2) That Synod consider editing the Blue Books;

3) That Synod encourage ministers in the denomination to make available more sermons for elders of the vacant congregations to read;

4) That Synod request *The Banner of Truth* editors to include more practical articles of instruction.

Classis response: 1) Classis Far West asks Synod to consider appointing a committee mandated to officially receive and consolidate information from our congregations for distribution to other congregations and to the Church Office of the Gereformeerde Gemeenten in the Netherlands, as well as to consider how this information should be published in digital form. 2) The Blue Books are scheduled to be reprinted. The Book & Publishing is making a beginning. This point will not be forwarded. 3) This point has been forwarded on a number of occasions, but it will be forwarded by renewal. 4) *The Banner of Truth* editors discuss content on a regular basis and strongly feel that they would like to continue with doctrinal issues and meditations. This point will not be forwarded.

Fort Macleod – The Fort Macleod consistory asks Classis to request Synod to consider whether it is consistent with the intent of Scriptural doctrine concerning the church that a confessing member of one of our congregations be a member of another congregation/denomination at the same time. Context: Mr. C. Bredeweg has been sent out as a mission worker to Bolivia from the Fort Macleod congregation. The Mission Board has placed him in Tarija and requires him to be a confessing member of the Santa Cruz Bazan Congregation in the Iglesia Reformada de Bolivia (IRB) denomination, in order for him to serve there.

Classis response: Rev. den Hollander and Rev. Adams have communicated previously about this matter and came to the conclusion that it would be best to discuss this at Synod. The dual membership attempts to solve a practical problem; however, from a disciplinary standpoint, it does not seem possible to be a member in two congregations at the same time. This point will be forwarded to Synod.

Article 12—Next Classis Meeting

The following dates were set: fall classis (if needed), October 21, 2026; spring classis, March 17, 2027. The calling church will be Nobleford, and the host church is Fort Macleod.

President – Rev. H.D. den Hollander

Vice President – Rev. E.C. Adams

Prayer Service – Rev. E.C. Adams

Office Bearers' Conference – Rev. G.P. van Nieuw Amerongen

Article 14—Closing

Rev. P. Kleijer made a few concluding remarks to close the meeting. Rev. H.D. den Hollander closed with thanking the chairman, the host church for the orderly way in which we could meet and requesting to sing Psalter 246:1-3 followed by prayer.

*For brevity in *The Banner of Truth*, some articles in the full meeting minutes have been omitted.

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
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He Will Guide You into All Truth

Holy Comforter, descend,
Testify of Christ, the Lamb;
From the foe our hearts defend,
And with zeal our hearts inflame.

Send a spark of heavenly fire,
Quick as lightning to the soul:
This shall melt and bring us nigher,
Raise us up and make us whole.

Teach us truly how to pray,
Carnal else will be our cries;
Turn us, Lord, from self away,
And from Jesus send supplies.

Every burdened soul relieve,
Wipe away the mourner's tears;
Help them fully to believe,
And on Thee to cast their cares.

—Henry Fowler (1779-1838)

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