



SUGAR LAND BIBLE CHURCH  
"BRINGING THE BIBLE TO LIFE FOR 37 YEARS"  
1982– 2019



## THE CORNERSTONE

MAY 2019

Pssst!

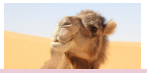


Sugar Land Bible Church—is getting ready for VBS—You will be hearing a lot about it in the coming weeks!

At Roar VBS, kids discover that even though life gets wild, *God is good*. Roar is filled with incredible Bible-learning experiences kids see, hear, touch, and even taste! Scency-Fun Gizmos™, team-building games, cool Bible songs, and tasty treats are just a few of the standout activities that help faith flow into real life. (Since everything is hands-on, kids might get a little messy. Be sure to send them in play clothes and safe shoes.) Plus, we'll help kids discover how to see evidence of God in everyday life—something we call God Sightings®. Get ready to hear that phrase a lot!

# VBS—July 22-26, 2019





## Missions for the Month



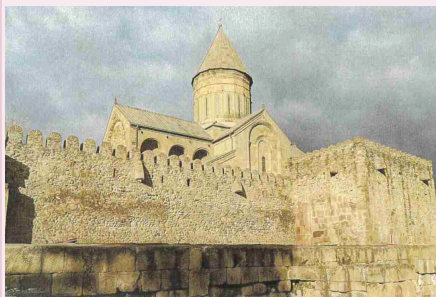
VILLAGE MINISTRIES  
INTERNATIONAL  
508 West Vandament, Suite 305  
Yukon, OK 73099

Off the beautiful coast of Tanzania in the crystal blue waters of the Indian Ocean sits a couple of picturesque islands. These enchanting islands, though immense in grandeur, are overwhelmingly dark spiritually with only a sliver of bright light. It is reported that 98% of the islands are Muslim leaving fewer than 20% who are con-

sidered Christian. In the rural areas of the islands there are roughly 100 village pastors working and living with their families in a very difficult environment. Interestingly, the practice of Islam on these islands incorporates a form of witchcraft, using the casting of spells to intimidate Christians. Needless to say, all forms of harassment and abuse are continually used on Christians living on the islands. Just across the bay on the mainland, religious beliefs are slightly more diverse and the persecution of Christians is less intense. Christian persecution is mainly along the coastal areas and two additional areas: the far northwest and the capitol city, Dodoma, in the central region. Prior to his death, former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi wanted to spread Islam in east Africa including Tanzania, so he constructed the Gaddafi Mosque in Dodoma. It is the largest in Tanzania and second only to the Gaddafi Mosque in Uganda, the



largest Mosque in east Africa. Since its completion in 2010, Islam has spread throughout the capitol city and surrounding regions with the largest growth of Islam being along the coast. Unfortunately, this growth has also been heavily influenced by Al-Shabaab, a Muslim terrorist organization. With the stronghold of Somalia, Al-Shabaab has spread all directions in east Africa with a major southern push along the east coast of Kenya and Tanzania. Although the overall country of Tanzania is still considered to be about 60% Christian and about 35% Muslim, clearly Islam is getting a stranglehold on the country through these key areas. It is our



prayer that late this year or first of 2020 the Lord will continue to expand the work VMI has been doing in 2018 and 2019 in northwest Tanzania to allow us to reach the village pastors along the east coast and some islands across the bay. We are praying that the Lord will use VMI to provide training and encouragement to these pastors who are in desperate need. Please pray for guidance, wisdom and resources to serve these brave and bold servants of our Lord.

Dan Hawkins, CEO



From the moment I arrived, we were surrounded with warmth, generosity of spirit, and a desire for God and His word from our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Republic of Georgia and Belarus. Our mission this trip was two-fold: to assist the leadership of the youth at their retreat by teaching several classes (The Bible is the word of God, God's solution for Addictions, and God's solution for Discrimination) and to partner with the sponsoring church in each location in a Ladies' Conference for the women of the church and surrounding areas.

The youth retreat was held at Bakuriani Ski Resort, an incredibly



**Andy Woods—Pastor**

## Twenty-Four Church and Israel Distinctions (Part 10)

One of the most rudimentary distinctions that the child of God needs to learn to rightly divide God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15) is the basic distinction between Israel and the Church. A common mistake in Bible interpretation is to take God's promises that are aimed at national Israel and instead to indiscriminately apply them to the Church and consequently the Church Age believer. There are, at a bare minimum, at least *twenty-four* differences between the Church and Israel. The purpose of this series is to highlight these basic differences. In prior installments, we saw the following distinctions: while Israel is the wife of Jehovah, the Church is the bride of Christ. Moreover, Israel birthed Christ whereas Christ birthed the Church. In addition, Christ will return for the Church in the Rapture while Christ will return for Israel at the end of the Tribulation period. Furthermore, while Jesus is the King of Israel, He is the groom and head of the Church. While eighty percent of the Bible relates to Israel, a mere twenty percent of it relates to the Church. Also, while Israel was a party to the Biblical covenants, the Church is a mere third-party beneficiary to them. In addition, another very significant difference between Israel and the Church is that the two entities have different birthdays. While Israel started in Genesis 12, the Church began in Acts 2. Moreover, while Israel is a political nation, the Church is a spiritual organism. Also, while the Israel fought physical battles, the Church fights spiritual battles. Furthermore, although Israel is characterized by time texts and calendars, the Church has no similar timing characteristics. In addition, while Israel had a priesthood, the Church is a priesthood. Finally, although Israel had a physical structure called the temple, today the temple of God consists of not only the believer's individual body but also the corporate gathering of God's people. In this installment, we will examine *two* further distinctions.

### Distinction Number 13: The Resurrection

What about resurrection? When are you planning on being resurrected? Daniel 12:2 predicts *two* great resurrections. There will be a resurrection unto life for the believer *and* a resurrection unto condemnation for the unbeliever. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt." You can see how a typical Jew demonstrated their understanding regarding this prophecy in John 11:23-24. "Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.'" Here, Martha is referring to what Daniel predicted concerning the resurrection unto life back in Daniel 12:2.

Revelation 20:4-6 also refers to these same two resurrections. "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." Thus, in between these two resurrections, the resurrection unto life for the believer and the resurrection unto damnation for the unbeliever, will occur a time period of a thousand years. This was the Old Testament understanding of the two resurrections, as its repeated in the Book of Revelation with the addition of the intervening time period of a thousand years.

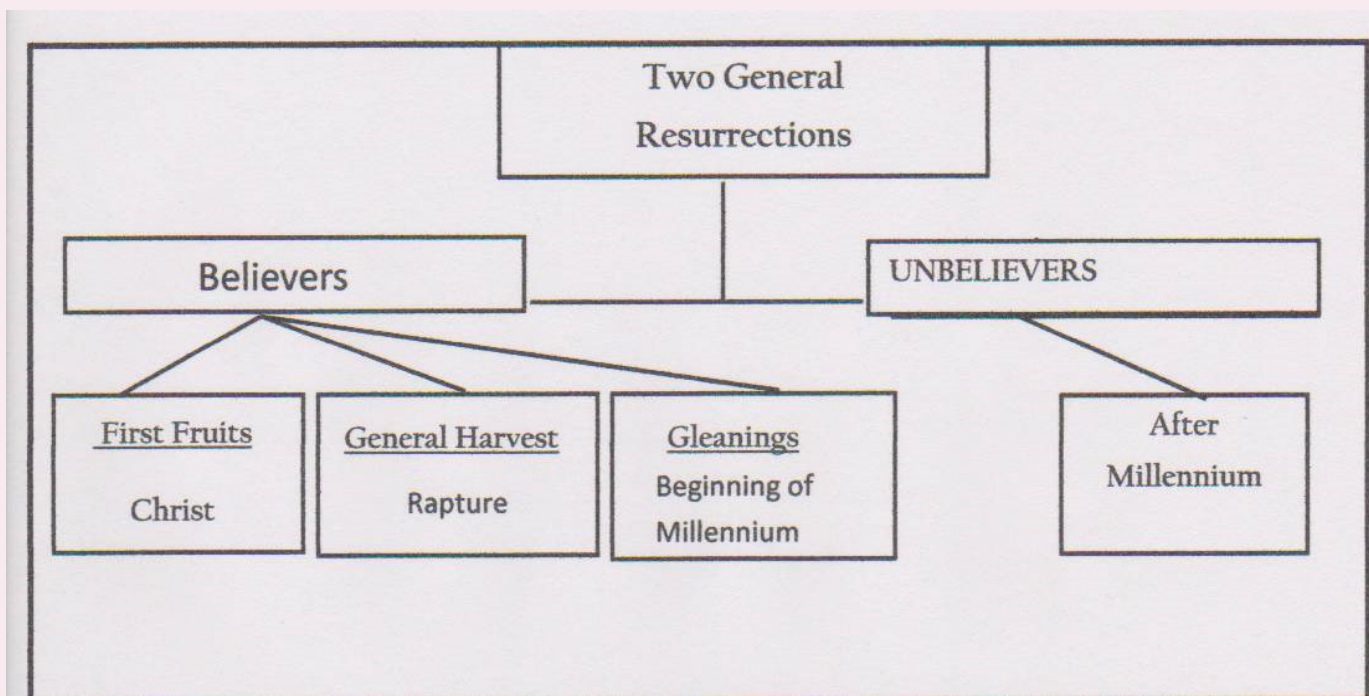
However, the New Testament indicates that the resurrection unto life for the believer will have *three* separate phases to it. The *first* part is Christ's resurrection, that is called First Fruits (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). First Fruits in this harvest imagery guaranteed the rest of the harvest. In other words, Christ's resurrection guarantees everyone else's resurrection in the chain. The *second* part of the resurrection unto life is the General Harvest, otherwise known as the Rapture. This is when *all* Church Age believers will receive their resurrected bodies. This will happen instantly at the point of the Rapture. Everyone who has trusted in Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the rapture, or during the Church Age, will be resurrected at that point. Paul talks about this in First Thessalonians 4:13-18. <sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from

heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

Paul again speaks of the rapture in First Corinthians 15:50-58. “<sup>50</sup> Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. <sup>55</sup> O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’ <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; <sup>57</sup> but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

Then comes part *three* of the resurrection unto life. What about those who were believers *before* the Church Age started? What about those in the Tribulation period who will become believers after the Church Age is over? These are going to be resurrected at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4-5). All of this to say, that the resurrection unto life for the believer has *three* separate parts to it.

Then a thousand years will pass and then there will be a terrible resurrection of all unsaved people as they are taken out of Hades and placed in resurrected bodies. They will stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment. At this point, as their names are not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, they are found guilty and then transferred from Hades into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever in their resurrected bodies. This is a doctrine that I did not invent. I would not have invented something like this given its frightening content. Rather, you see it clearly taught in Revelation 20:11-15. “<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”





beautiful area, formerly used as a training ground for the Russian ski patrol and as a place that Russian elites went for vacation. There were approximately 50 youth attending the retreat. \X/hat a delight to see the leadership of the camp with such Jevu led hearts for the youth and their walk in Christ! We were also impressed with the youth leadership at the camp-young people motivated in their life in Christ.



One of the young women I got to know was Salome, a bright young woman in her early 20's, studying business administration at the university. So positive in her walk with the Lord, she expressed a desire to be put in leadership roles. She translated (for the first time) for me (my first time to work with a translator as well). She did an awesome job! During one of my sessions she also assisted in telling the complete story of Joseph. Serving as a part of the music ministry as well, Salome stands out as salt and light for the upcoming generation!

The theme of our Ladies' Conferences was "There is Hope" from Romans 15:13. "Now may the God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit." \X/e were able to share there is ALWAYS HOPE because of Jesus Christ - and because of God's grace plan for us. My teaching sessions were on Saving Grace, Living Grace/Ministry of the Holy Spirit, Growing Grace and Suffering Grace.

Although impressed with all the ladies of Georgia with whom we had the privilege of meeting and being with, I was especially impacted by the group of older ladies, 70ish and up. \X/arm and loving with ready smiles, they were so quick to focus on the Word of God in our teaching sessions. In our session on Suffering Grace, I could tell many had lived through difficult times-but had found their heavenly Father FAITHFUL! It was expressed through their glowing faces and the light in their eyes!



After a 3-hour plane trip, we were on to our next ladies' Conference in Belarus. Like the conference in Georgia, women attended from the sponsoring church and from 5-6 other churches. It is striking to me that ladies everywhere-sisters in Christ-have the same needs, desires and passions-a desire to know God intimately, be loved by Him, and fulfill the destiny He has for them. \X/e shared that because of God's grace plan, we are all women of destiny and loved with an everlasting love! I came to know a young lady named Flora, age 21, as a part of this wonderful group of Believers. Quiet, but very bright, she is an OB nurse in a small village, working to make sure ladies are healthy during their pregnancies. Flora's Mom lives in Lisbon, Portugal, and her Dad in Moscow. Although separated from

her family, she lives God's plan, a day at a time, depending on Him for her needs and God's direction in her life. \X/hat a special young woman Flora is! \X/hat an incredible opportunity this trip was for me to see the plan of God at work in the lives of Believers in Jesus Christ in the Republic of Georgia and Belarus, and to share the eternal truths of God's \X/ord with them. Although this was only my second overseas mission trip, I am so thankful to my Heavenly Father to have been given this opportunity. It was wonderful to be a small part of strengthening and encouraging the body of Christ around the world! "a' 14

Jackie Broadhead

## Investing In Lives

In addition to the formal ministry opportunities with the youth camp and women's conferences, we also had informal times of ministry with various individuals. Between events in Georgia, we traveled by car two and a half hours out of the capitol city to the small village of Apeni which is near the border of Russia and the Chechen Republic. We met in a small, one-room church with the Believers who were able to gather on this workday. They meet together twice a week with about fifteen men and women gathering on Sunday and about eight women gathering in mid-week to read Scripture and pray together. On this day, they had gathered to meet us and to hear a small taste of what we had shared at the conference. These seven beautiful women and one man were so gracious and hospitable and invited us to come back and teach for an entire day. During our time with these Believers one woman, Zina, shared a story of a lesson she had learned just



## “WHO’s Who at SLBC”

by Ashlynn Morris

### Youth Garage Sale

Many of you heard about the Garage Sale the youth group hosted to raise money for the Ark Encounter trip this June. The garage sale was extremely successful thanks to our donors and volunteers.

Many of you reading this contributed by volunteering, donating or helping out. For that, the SLBC Youth Group is extremely grateful. We had many volunteers (shout out to you guys!!!) that helped with pricing the items, being the cashiers, helping customers, lifting large items, and biggest of all: ORGANIZING. We got so many donations, it took us a while to organize all of it. The whole entire foyer was filled with knick knacks, housewares and clothes. We also had books, frames, blankets, shoes, bags, and a lot more. On the first morning of the garage sale, the volunteers got to the church at about seven in the morning to start setting up, and people were there already wanting to browse! So we put them to work! They helped roll things out and put things on the racks. As a thank you, we gave them a discount on their purchases. The first day was extremely successful, and we hadn't even put out all the stuff! We still had some items in the fellowship hall. The second day was busy and just as successful. We had some left over clothes and things, so we donated them to Goodwill. The volunteers packed all the leftovers in the back of a big U-haul truck and took it to Goodwill. After all the work was cleaned up and done, the volunteers had a little ice cream treat. In the end, we made over \$4000! God is so good. We were extremely grateful for all the hard work, prayers, and support that was put into this event. The youth group is very excited to be going to Kentucky this June to visit the Ark Encounter. I look forward to writing an article about it after the trip! I can't wait to tell you all about it.



# Congratulations



## Sugar Land Bible Church—High School Graduates-2019

Sabrina Chapman  
Justin Compton  
Gabriel Herrera  
Kaitlynn Pierson  
Daniel Robinson

To each of the 2019 High School Graduates we give our sincere congratulations for a job well done. You have put in the time, the energy and your heart to make this day happen. We praise the Lord for your well earned degree and we pray that you will continue on in your education and your spiritual growth. May the Lord bless you and be with you as you grow in His grace. Remember His Word in Proverbs 3:5-6—Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Dear SLBC Church Family,  
We are scheduling our Summer Baptism Classes now.

If you or a family member desire to be baptized, please respond to this email with **THE FULL NAME OF YOUR CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM** as it should appear on their Baptismal Certificate. Please note that all candidates for baptism are required to attend “one” scheduled baptism class prior to being baptized.



As soon as we have an idea of how many candidates we have, we will send out another informational email with class details. Please contact the SLBC office at 281-491-7773 if you desire to be baptized. Thank you!

SLBC Office 281-491-7773



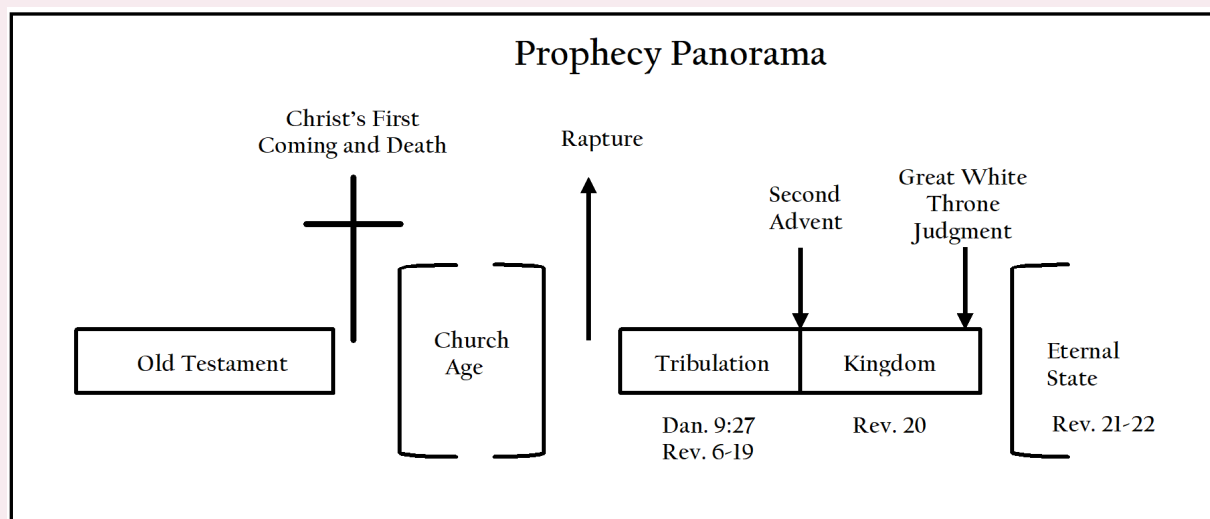
# Scripture of the Month



## I Peter 1:19-21

So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

According to this chronology, our resurrection, as members of the Church, will be at the Rapture, which will transpire at least seven years before the Tribulation period ends. On the other hand, Israel's resurrection will be at the end of the Tribulation period and at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4-5). Thus, the divine programs for Israel and the Church are so distinct in the mind of God that members of each program will receive their resurrected bodies at a different times. I am reminded of an instance when I was with some Jewish Christians and they were trying to convince me that as Jewish Christians they were a part of this unbroken chain going back to the Old Testament and into the future, or what they called "remnant theology." They thought they were a part of some special remnant that stretched across the past and distant future. Finally, I asked them, "when are you planning on being resurrected?" They looked at me dumbfounded and wondered why I was asking this question. I went on to say, "you're going to be resurrected at the Rapture, aren't you?" "Well, yeah," they responded. I proceeded to ask, "when is Israel going to be resurrected?" "At the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom," they answered. My point was simply this: you are not a part of some remnant that stretches across history. Rather, you are a part of the Church! Why? Because you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in between the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Rapture. Thus, you are a part of the Church, whether Jew or Gentile. Since you are a part of the body of Christ, or this new man, your resurrection program is such that you are going to be resurrected at the point of the Rapture.



Again, Israel will be resurrected at the first resurrection that is described at the *beginning* of the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4-5). The Church, on the other hand, will be resurrected at the Rapture which *precedes* the tribulation period.

### Distinction Number 14: The Judgment

How about judgment? When is the nation of Israel going to be judged? The only judgment that we know of for the nation of Israel is the judgment in the wilderness after the Tribulation period is over. You will find a vivid description of this judgement in Ezekiel 20:33-44.

Backing up for just a moment in order to provide greater context, what is going to happen at the end of the Tribulation period is that there will be a judgment for both Jews and Gentiles that survive the Tribulation period. Among these survivors, the Lord will have to determine which from among these people are saved and which ones are unsaved. The unsaved will be cast off the earth into Hades while the saved will enter the newly inaugurated Millennial Kingdom. Of the surviving Gentiles at the end of the Tribulation period there will be a judgment called the Sheep and Goat Judgment. We read about this judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 where Christ determines which Tribulation surviving Gentiles are believers and which ones are unbelievers



that week....

Zina (seated on the far right in the photo above) has two adult children, Tia, who played the keyboard for the worship at the women's conference, and Tamazi (standing next to his mother), who works with troubled young men and boys in the village. Tamazi had taken two boys to the youth camp over the weekend traveling three hours by bus each way. Zina was displeased that Tamazi would take time off work and spend some of their limited funds to take these boys to the youth camp. On the way home from the camp, one of these young men called his mother to acknowledge his bad behavior and to ask her forgiveness. Zina, hearing this from Tamazi was herself convicted by the impact that her son has in the life of this boy and was convicted of her own selfishness and worries for provision. Zina told us how grateful she was that Tamzai was serving the Lord by investing in the lives of the young men from their village and had listened to the Lord's call and not the complaints of his mother.



Blessings, \X/in Noren. Director of Operations

## Flight 7 Now Boarding



\X/e are seeking to put together two teams to return to Georgia - one to serve at the youth camp this summer (July) and another for a weekend women's retreat. The youth camp offers great opportunities for young people to serve the Lord and see the world-wide body of Christ at work. \X/omen (young and not so-young) are welcome for the women's retreat.

Please contact our office for more details (405-634-4373 or [VMI@VillageMinistries.org](mailto:VMI@VillageMinistries.org)).

{This article was adapted from the April 2019 Newsletter}



## New Bible Study for Young Mothers

A Young Mother's Bible Study began on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and every Thursday until sometime in May.

Betty Cooke & Kim Pierson will co-teach the class. Lunch will be provided and while they are eating, someone will give the recipe and tips on how to make the food.

The model for the Bible study will be from Titus 2:4-5. The first class is about "Love Your Husband".

The second class, and each following, will be from "**Shepherding a Child's Heart.**" For the last 30 minutes, there will be mini-classes about being a keeper of the home, such as simple sewing.

Since food is provided, the mothers must sign up for the class. Childcare is provided and each mother will need to bring a lunch for her children.

based on how they treated Christ's brethren during the Tribulation period. Matthew 25:31-46 says, "<sup>31</sup> But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; <sup>36</sup> naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' <sup>41</sup> Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' <sup>44</sup> Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' <sup>45</sup> Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' <sup>46</sup> These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

In this context, who would Christ's "brethren" be? "My brethren" represent the Jewish nation because they are ethnically related to Christ. They will be heavily persecuted by the Antichrist during the Tribulation period. If a Gentile steps out in faith during that period and helps the Jews, then that Gentile will demonstrate that they really are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, they will pass through the Sheep and Goat judgment as a sheep (or a surviving Tribulation believer) and thus enter the kingdom.

While this Gentile judgment is happening, there will be a parallel judgment just for the surviving Jews, which is described in Ezekiel 20:33-44. "<sup>33</sup> 'As I live,' declares the Lord GOD, 'surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. <sup>34</sup> I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; <sup>35</sup> and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. <sup>36</sup> As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you,' declares the Lord GOD. <sup>37</sup> 'I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; <sup>38</sup> and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus, you will know that I am the LORD. <sup>39</sup> As for you, O house of Israel,' thus says the Lord GOD, 'Go, serve everyone his idols; but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols. <sup>40</sup> For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel,' declares the Lord GOD, 'there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. <sup>41</sup> As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. <sup>42</sup> And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. <sup>43</sup> There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done. <sup>44</sup> Then you will know that I am the LORD when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel,' declares the Lord GOD."

The believing Jews that also survive the Tribulation period are going to pass under the shepherd's rod and they will also the kingdom, along with the Gentile sheep. In other words, the living Jews and Gentiles who survived the Great Tribulation will enter the Millennial Kingdom in their *mortal* bodies and will ultimately

repopulate the earth. This becomes the only knowledge that we have concerning any sort of future judgment for Israel.

However, when is the Church going to be judged? Did you know as a Christian you are going to be judged? You are not going to be judged to determine heaven or hell because that issue has already been settled the moment you trusted in Christ for personal salvation (John 5:24; 6:47). The Church's judgment is a judgment to determine rewards and it is called the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ. When will this judgment take place? It will take place just after the Lord comes for the Church at the Rapture. Paul connects our judgment as members of the Church with the coming of the Lord for His Church at the Rapture. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 4:5, "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."

Paul very clearly, while talking to the Church, tells us that the Church is destined for a judgment, but this is not a judgment on the earth like what we see for the nation of Israel in Ezekiel 20. Rather, it is a judgment that takes place immediately after the Rapture when the Lord comes for us to catch us up. Where will we be when we are caught up? Not on the earth but rather in heaven. In other words, we are God's heavenly people and the nation of Israel is God's earthly people. Whenever the prophets reveal Israel's judgment, they always reference it as happening on the earth following the events of the Tribulation period. Therefore, since we are God's heavenly people, we are going to be in the Father's house for those seven years while the events of the Tribulation period are transpiring on the earth below. It is during this time that we, as Christians, will either be given or not given rewards based on how we allowed God to use us during our earthly pilgrimage.

This judgment for the Church-Age believer is something that Paul dearly wants us all to know about. A knowledge of it should not lead to insecurity regarding one's salvation. That is not the point of this judgment. Rather, it is simply a judgment to give or not give rewards. Some Church Age believers will be fully rewarded (2 John 8) while others will look back with regret and suffer a loss of reward (1 Cor. 3:15) but will still rejoice that they are in heaven, even if they are not fully rewarded. This is what is called the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ, which will take place in heaven after the Rapture while Israel's judgment will take place on the earth following the Tribulation period. This difference in the timing and place of the judgments therefore represents yet another critical distinction between Israel and the Church.

What have we seen thus far in our series? Israel is different than the Church in the sense that Israel is the wife of Jehovah and the Church is the bride of Christ. Furthermore, Israel birthed Christ whereas Christ birthed the Church. In addition, Christ will return for the Church in the Rapture while Christ will return for Israel at the end of the Tribulation period. Moreover, while Jesus is the King of Israel, He is the groom and head of the Church. While eighty percent of the Bible relates to Israel, a mere twenty percent of it relates to the Church. Also, while Israel was a party to the Biblical covenants, the Church is a mere third-party beneficiary to them. In addition, while Israel began in Genesis 12, the Church began in Acts 2. Furthermore, while Israel is a political nation, the Church is a spiritual organism. Also, while the Israel fought physical battles, the Church fights spiritual battles. Moreover, although Israel is characterized by time texts and calendars, the Church has no similar characteristic. In addition, while Israel had a priesthood, the Church is a priesthood. In addition, although Israel had a physical structure called the temple, today the temple of God consists of not only the believer's individual body but also the corporate gathering of God's people. Finally, not only will Israel and the Church be resurrected at different times, but they will be judged at different times and places as well. These major distinctions constitute the first *fourteen* of the *twenty-four* differences between Israel and the Church that will be highlighted in this series.

(To Be Continued...)