



**Sugar Land Bible Church**  
"Bringing the Bible to Life for  
37 years"



**The Cornerstone**

**December 2019**

# 2019 Christmas Celebration at SLBC

Ladies Ministry Soup and Salad—December 1st,

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm



Children's Christmas Program—December 8th

6:00 pm



Gingerbread House Decoration Contest— December 8th 6 pm



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service—

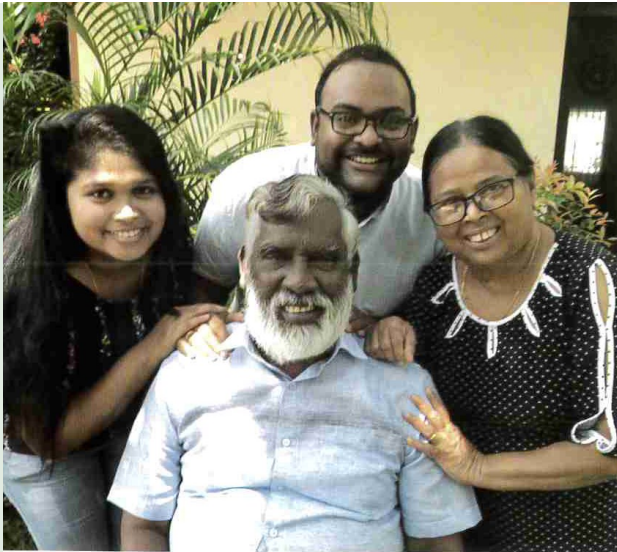
December 24th 6:00 pm



## Missions for the Month



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

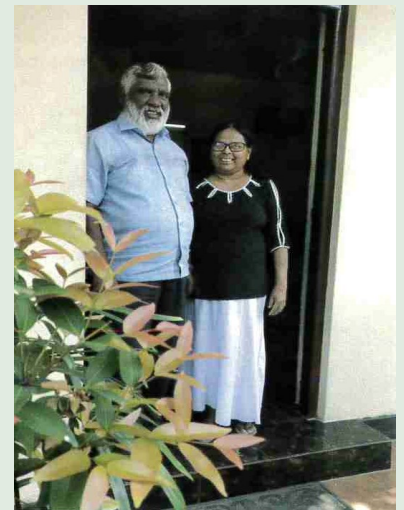


### Big Task

As the son of a daily laborer of a tea plantation born in rural Sri Lanka, I grew up a Hindu and was strong in my religion until I met Jesus at the age of 22. By the grace of God, I became a Christian and God called me to ministry in 1973 and I continue in this calling today teaching the Bible, planting churches and training pastors. Immediately after receiving the call to ministry, I started witnessing to Hindu people. After that I joined in a Christian organization and worked as an evangelist for fourteen years. By faith, in 1986 I went to the Philippines to attend seminary. God provided the support needed for my studies. After seminary, I returned to Sri Lanka in 1990 and started this ministry. God directed me to reach out among Hindus and Buddhists in the rural areas. There are many Hindu and Buddhist temples in those areas and I believe God took me to these places because of my previous

experience with such a life. Little has been done to change the lives of these people and poverty is a great problem. It is hard for the laborers to earn enough to provide for essentials. Our small rural churches continually struggle to pay expenses and conduct ministry as the members are very poor although they give what they can. VMI has been helping us to carry out the ministry in Sri Lanka for twenty-four years and with your support we have 11 pastors working in the rural villages. The population of the rural areas is 99 % non-Christians. We have a big task but little resources but now with your generous gift of the bi-vocational projects for our pastors, we know as these projects are implemented the financial load on the ministry will ease and will ultimately help the people of the churches. The Lord blessed me and my wife, Susi, with one son, Pivi who was recently married to Nadeeka. Pivi and Nadeeka live on the second floor of our home and although they both work, they also both help Susi and I in our ministry and with caring for us as things are more difficult as we age and have medical complications from diabetes. Pivi works at Back to the Bible Broadcast and Nadeeka works for a micro finance company. Their earnings contribute to the household so we are all working together in life and ministry. We are grateful for all the support of VMI which has, among other things, provided a vehicle for the ministry and bi-vocational projects for our pastors. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Hebrews 6:10 In Christ,

Masi, Sri Lanka L



Continued on Page 5



Andy Woods—Pastor

## Twenty-Four Church and Israel Distinctions

(Part 17)

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 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. Moreover, 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. Also, not only will Israel and the Church be resurrected at different times, but they will also be judged at different times and places as well. Moreover, Israel and the Church are different in the sense that both will comprise different features of the New Jerusalem, and initial membership is granted on a different basis. Membership to Israel is granted based on physical ethnicity while membership to the universal Church takes place only through regeneration or the new birth that is the result of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. In addition, Israel and the Church are different in the sense that each is governed by a different source of Scriptural authority. While Israel receives her primary cues from the Mosaic Law, New Testament revelation in general and the epistolary material are directly binding upon the Church. Moreover, Israel and the Church enjoy different relationships with the same Holy Spirit. Also, Israel and the Church have completely different farewell addresses. In addition, the Church and Israel are designated differently. Finally, while information concerning Israel is found in both the Old and New Testaments, information about the Church is found only in the New Testament. In the prior and this installment, we will examine *one* further distinction.

### Distinction Number 22: Evangelism

#### *The Church's Divinely Given Evangelistic Strategy*

In the prior installment, we noted that God gave the nation of Israel a "come and see" evangelistic strategy. Let us now compare all this to the Church. The Church is also evangelistic, but the whole strategy is completely different than Israel's. The Church has a "go and proclaim" strategy.

#### **The Parable of the Sower**

That is why, if we are careful Bible students when we read Matthew 13 where Jesus is disclosing the new truths of the coming Church Age, He starts to say things that were completely foreign to what we find in

the Old Testament. For instance, in Matthew 13:3 Jesus said, "Behold, the sower went out to sow." To us in the twenty-first century we are used to outreach missionary activity and we say, "so what?" But if you were an Old Testament Hebrew and all you knew was a "come and see" strategy, this was completely new and radical idea. Jesus radically changed the playbook right here in Matthew 13. Arthur Pink did a good job early in his ministry dealing with these Matthew 13 parables. Pink writes, "The words 'went forth to sow,' or as Mark's Gospel puts it 'went out' were indicative of the great dispensational change."

What does dispensation mean? It is a big sounding scare word, but it has a very simple definition. The word translated as dispensation in the King James Version comes from the Greek word *oikonomia*, as found in Ephesians 1:10; 3:2, 9. This Greek word is a compound word, meaning it is two words making up a single word: *oikos* means house, and *nomos* means rules, or law. Therefore, a dispensation is simply a system of house rules. In other words, what happened in Matthew 13 is Jesus just changed the house rules. Under Israel the rules used to be "come and see" to accomplish evangelism, but then with the parable of the sower the rules changed to a "go and proclaim" model. There are similarities in the sense that God always wants to reach the whole world, but He has given a completely different strategy to Israel than He has given to the Church.

The words "went forth to sow," or as Mark's Gospel puts it "went out," were indicative of the great dispensational change which was soon to be introduced. There was no longer to be a planting of vines or fig-trees in Israel, but a going out unto the Gentiles. Therefore, what we have now is the broadcast sowing of the seed in the field at large, and as Matthew 13:38 tells us, "and the field is the world." Thus, now it is go out into the world. The world is not going to come to us as the church to see our beautiful temple. *We* are the temple. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now you go out and sow.

### **The Great Commission**

We see this in the Great Commission. Recall, the Great Commission is Christ's instructions to the Church. The end of the Gospels, whether it is Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, has the recounting of the Great Commission and it is what the Church is supposed to be doing in terms of evangelism and missionary work. Jesus put it this way in Matthew 28:18-20, "<sup>18</sup>All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." The time where God's strategy is "come and see" is over, and during this interim of the Church Age it is now "Go" and proclaim.

All this to say, the rules have changed and that is what Pink meant by a dispensational change. Mark's rendition of the Great Commission in Mark 16:15 is to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." That is the Church's world-wide evangelistic purpose. That is one of the reasons why at Sugar Land Bible Church, the Church that I am privileged to pastor, we give 20% of our budget to missionary work. Although not all of us are called to be missionaries, all of us are called to at least financially support and pray for missionaries.

### **My Witnesses in Samaria**

As Jesus was instructing His disciples in Acts 1:8, He said, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and *Samaria* and even to the remotest part of the earth." You will notice how Jesus just expanded the outreach program to include "even to the remotest parts of the earth." Regarding the strategy of come to Jerusalem and see the temple, those days are over for now. The calling of the Church out of Jerusalem and into Samaria well illustrates the alteration in evangelistic strategies that had now been ushered in. However, this transition will remain under

Rene and Mark Perkins were in French Polynesia until November 7.

Below were their goals. Please continue to pray for their ministry there as we await their report.

- 1. Good fellowship and Bible study with Tahitian friends.
- 2. Meeting with new people, especially in the Protestant and Maohi (Independent Anglican) churches.
- 3. New opportunities with churches that have previously closed their doors to us.



4.  
assist-  
heal-  
ken  
tians  
love.  
5.  
with  
or  
wants  
more  
ble



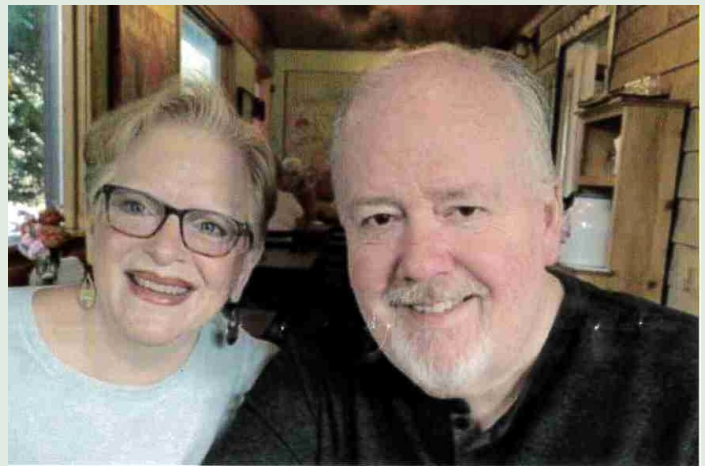
Success in  
ing with the  
ing of bro-  
relationships  
among Tah-  
through  
Christ's

Connecting  
any church  
pastor that  
to engage in  
in-depth Bi-  
study train-

ing. We are seeking now to expand to regular Bible study events and pastoral training in Bible study meth-ods.

## Fixing My Eyes on Jesus

Beginning late spring, I began having a recurrence of a vision problem in my right eye. This was particularly serious because I am already blind in my left eye. We returned to the U.S, recently, in part, to try to see if there was a treatment for this problem. I expected to find that there was no solution for my condition; however,



the doctor offered the possibility of some improvement with a new treatment using monodonal antibodies. I received three injections before we returned to Nicaragua. So far, the treatment restored some, but not all of the vision lost over the last several months. Whether the effect of these treatments will be temporary or permanent is not yet known. I have been asked by some if this problem will bring an end to our involvement in God's ministry in Nicaragua. My answer is that there is nothing that I have experienced with regard to my vision which will cause us to leave the work God is given to us in Nicaragua. It is very clear that God has brought us here and provided for us and His ministry here. I have been teaching our materials for Nearly 15 years and know it well. In addition we have formed many relationships with people here. Finally, we have a team that is very supportive and already knowledgeable about what we do. As a result, I feel very confident that we can continue regardless of my eyesight problems. There is a sense in which even talking about my problems seems a little bit insignificant. The simple reason is that many of you are facing even bigger problems than any problems I face today. Also, we rest in the fact that scripture teaches us that our problems have great potential for our spiritual good and growth. The bad things in life are often the things that God uses for the greatest good of building us up in spiritual strength and relationship with Him. The irony of God working in our suffering should never be forgotten. It is in difficulty and testing that most of us find a deeper sense of intimacy with God and His plan and His purpose for our lives. So, regardless of the outcome of my testing or yours, we know that God is at work to reveal Himself to us, to bring a greater maturity and confidence in Him and in His plan for our lives. Finally, we want to thank each of you for your prayers and support for us over these many years. Finally we are now beginning our 15th year of ministry in Nicaragua and we pray and hope that we have another 15 years or more ahead of us - teaching the Word of God to others.

By His grace,

Mark & Rusti, Nicaragua

## VMI Praises & Prayer Requests

**We are thankful for... Please pray for.**

- \* improvement in Mark's eyesight.
- + Pivi and Nadeeka's help with ministry and parents.
- \* bi-vocational projects in Sri Lanka.
- \* lasting impact of summer camp ministry.
- \* November mission teams in progress.
- \* health and safety of our missionaries.
- \* project proposals and team trips for 2020.
- \* General Fund support to return to normal levels.



Assisting students as 2019 school term ends.

Hosting mission team this month.



appreciated unless some background on the Samaritan-Jewish conflict is not first provided.

When Jesus mentioned Samaria in Acts 1:8 that no doubt dumbfounded minds of the Jewish people because if you study in the Scripture and the Jewish-Samaritan conflict, you will discover two races of people that hated each other. The Samaritans were a half-breed race that were put into the land of Israel by an Assyrian king after he had kicked out the northern kingdom. To repopulate the land of Israel he brought in a Babylonian group who then intermarried with some Jews in the land and thus they were a different race, a half-breed race, and they did not go to Jerusalem like they were supposed to. They essentially said we are going to start our own religion on Mt. Gerizim. Do you remember when Moses died, prior to Israel entering the land, he was told about the two mountains, Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim? Mt. Ebal was where the curses of the Law would be read and Mt. Gerizim was where the blessings of the Law would be read. The Samaritans established a rival religious center to Jerusalem on Mt. Gerizim, the mountain of blessing. Thus, for over 700 years the Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews, on both racial and religious grounds. That is why when Jesus went into a Samaritan village which would not respond to His message, the “sons of thunder,” James and John, said in Luke 9:54, “<sup>54</sup> Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” What was the root of this animosity? They hated the Samaritans, but how did Jesus respond in Luke 9:55-56? “But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; <sup>56</sup> for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’ And they went on to another village.”

Interestingly, John is the same man who became known as the love apostle. This should give us hope, right? If God could change John from a racist into the love apostle, then He can change any one of us in any area of our lives. When Jesus was talking in John 4 to, not just a woman, but a Samaritan woman, what were His disciples saying? What is He talking to her for? First, she is the wrong gender. Now, gender discrimination is not something that God created. God does not hate women. The disrespectfulness of women is part of the fallen culture. Just like racism is not something God created; the racial issue is part of the fallen culture. So, the Samaritan woman was a person who was the wrong gender, race, and religion, and, beyond that, she was immoral. But when you study John 4 very carefully what you will discover is that Jesus went out of His way to find where she was. What was Jesus doing? He was transcending gender, racial, and religious barriers created by man. Why? He came into the world for everybody, “even to the remotest part of the earth.” Thus, when Jesus says, “you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and *Samaria*” (Acts 1:8), that totally blew their minds.

Additionally, that is the reason why the Holy Spirit was delayed in indwelling the believers in Acts 8. Some Samaritans got saved, but the Holy Spirit did not come upon them right away. What is normative in the Church Age is that when you believe in Christ, you immediately receive the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9). What happened in Acts 8 is the Jerusalem apostles had to travel to Samaria to lay hands on the Samaritans, and Simon the Sorcerer saw this transfer of power and lusted after it. He wanted this power for himself and even wanted to buy it. But why did the Holy Spirit not come immediately on the Samaritans? It is very simple. It is because of the 700-year hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. If the Holy Spirit had not been delayed there would have been two separate Churches. You would have had a Samaritan Church and a Jerusalem Church. But as the Jerusalem apostles laid hands on the Samaritans, they began to understand that they now belonged to Samaria. Conversely, the new believers at Samaria that hated the Jews had to also understand that they now belonged to Jerusalem. Why? Because Paul would later explain in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” As such, when you read over these words, “you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and *Samaria*” (Acts 1:8), we need to realize that in this statement there is an overcoming of a tense racial issue that dated back 700-years. Incidentally, I think all of this is very significant be-



cause we are living in a society that is always talking about racial reconciliation. The fact of the matter is, we have the greatest book in the world on racial reconciliation.

## **The Church's Purpose**

Therefore, when we talk about the differences between Israel and the Church, we must understand that while both are called to reach the world with the truth, Israel's strategy was "come and see" and the Church's strategy is "go and proclaim." This distinction is vitally important for us as Bible believing Christians to recognize because a lot of people think that the sum of spirituality is to go to church and learn the Bible. Yes, I believe that that is important, but that is not the final product. The final product rather is to equip the saints so we can be ministers and missionaries in our workplaces where we have access to unbelievers. If you have unbelievers in your family, then they too are your mission field. Our goal is not just to sit, soak, and sour. We are supposed to be equipped in the Church to "go and proclaim." However, what I am discovering is that there are a lot of the mega churches that are confused on this. When you get into mega church literature and into the mega church mentality, sadly they are going back to the old "come and see" strategy. Why are they doing that? Some have a mentality of "if we build it, they will come." We have got to build this beautiful edifice with this massive budget, and we have got to have all these attractions. My goodness, it is almost like a religious amusement park.

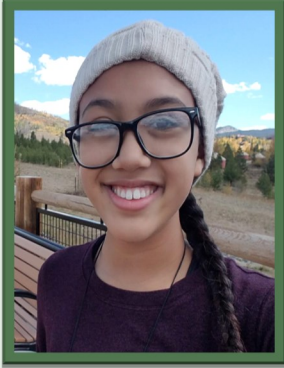
Beloved, there is not any New Testament authority for the idea that "if we build it, they will come." That is not the strategy that God gave to the Church. I am not against Church buildings, budgets, and growth, but we have got to understand that God gave us Churches for the primary focus of the pastor-teacher equipping the saints, and as a result the saints, in our own individual spheres of influence, then become ministers and missionaries. If an unsaved person happens to come into Church, we are delighted and we share the gospel with them, but that is not the primary focus of a New Testament Church. We must be careful simply because it is very easy to lose our missionary emphasis and calling. Israel's strategy is "come and see," but the Church's strategy is "go and proclaim."

## **Conclusion**

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 Israel fought physical battles, the Church fights spiritual battles. Moreover, although Israel is characterized by time texts and calendars, the Church has no similar characteristics. In addition, while Israel had a priesthood, the Church is a priesthood. Furthermore, 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 addition, not only will Israel and the Church be resurrected at different times, but they will also be judged at different times and places as well. Moreover, Israel and the Church are different in the sense that both will comprise different features of the New Jerusalem, and initial membership is granted on a different basis. Membership to Israel is granted based on physical ethnicity while membership to the universal Church takes place only through regeneration or the new birth that is the result of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. Furthermore, Israel and the Church are different in the sense that each is governed by a different source of Scriptural authority. While Israel receives her primary cues from the Mosaic Law, New Testament revelation in general and the epistolary material are directly binding upon the Church. Also, Israel and the Church

## “WHO’s Who at SLBC”

by Ashlynn Morris



Before moving to sugar Land from Wisconsin 9 months ago, Dennis and Karen Riberdy were faithful attenders of St. Paul Catholic Church for over 20 years, where they served regularly, helping out with annual church events, as well as ushering for mass. Dennis also volunteered as a counter for the collection from mass and in the past had been on the parish council.

It is not surprise that they jumped in wholeheartedly as soon as they began attending SLBC this pasts Spring. Dennis and Karen were regulars at our VBS workdays and were an integral part of bringing our ROAR VBS set to life this year. Behind the scenes, they’ve also have been sprucing up some of the children’s ministry classrooms with fresh coats of paint. Dennis is also a member of SLBC’s newly formed safety team. And those are just a few of their contributions. Their heart to serve and their willingness to help wherever needed is a great blessing to our church.

It was not be chance that the Riberdys ended up at SLBC. They had planned to find a Catholic church as soon as they got to Texas, but God orchestrated things differently. Their daughter, Janet Wrenn, a member and part of the staff, started bringing her parents to church with her before they ever had a chance to check out a Catholic church.

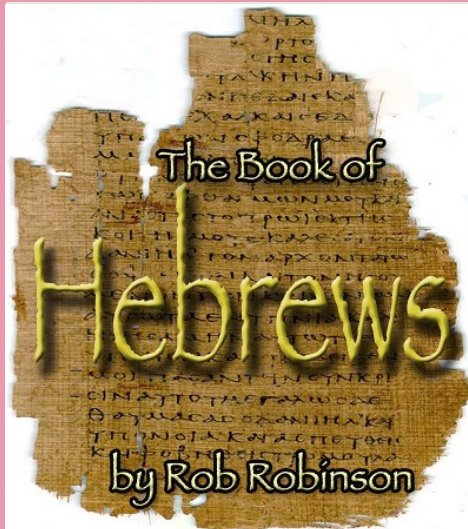
“Our daughter kept on bringing us to SLBC,” Dennis remembers. “We really liked what we were hearing from Pastor Andy, which was never happening at the Catholic church. After about the third time, we kind of knew this is what we wanted.”

In October, the Riberdys took a big step; they got baptized. Dennis says, “after learning about baptism, I was all for it.” The decision wasn’t as easy for Karen, who struggled at first with the distinction between her baptism as an infant and water baptism as an adult. After talking to Pastor Jim a couple times, Karen was able to understand the differences.

There is a lot the Riberdys have been learning. Karen says, “there were many, many things the Catholic church did not teach, one being the Bible.” The Riberdys want all the Bible teaching they can get. “Too bad Pastor Andy does not talk longer on Sundays,” Dennis bemoaned. “We could listen to him for hours.”

As for how they like it here, they say it feels like home and almost like they’ve been attending for years. We are so blessed and honored to have them as a part of our church family and to see them grow in the Lord.





## SLBC's Ladies Ministry Bible Study on Hebrews will begin again on January 7th- "Jesus, Our High Priest"

The second part of this study picks up with Hebrews 4:14 and goes to Hebrews 10:39. Betty Cooke will be teaching the morning and evening classes. We will continue this study to the end of May and pick up again in the fall session to finish out Hebrews Chapters 10—13. We look forward to seeing you in January.

Morning Class—9:00 am to 11:00 am

Evening Class—7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

There will be a sign-up sheet in the foyer.

## Scripture of the Month



### Matthew 2: 1-4 NKJV

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.



**2 Timothy 2:15** --

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling*

*the word of truth.*

**Our Library is growing again. We have been given many books from the late Gus Henry's Personal Library which are so appropriate for the Bible Student. Please stop by and check them out.**

1. He That is Spiritual – A Classical Study of the Doctrine of Spirituality – Lewis Sperry Chafer
2. The Hope of Christ's Return – Dr. Mal Couch
3. M. R. DeHaan – The Man and His Ministry – James R. Adair
4. Christian Apologetics – Norman L. Geisler
5. Christian Ethics – Options and Issues – Norman L. Geisler
6. Chosen But Free - A Balanced View of Divine Election (Second Edition) – Norman Geisler
7. Chosen But Free - A Balanced View of God's Sovereignty & Free Will (Third Edition) – Norman Geisler
8. Introduction to Philosophy – Norman Geisler and Paul D. Feinberg
9. Is Man the Measure? An Evaluation of Contemporary Humanism – Norman L. Geisler
10. Introduction to Philosophy – A Christian Perspective – Norman L. Geisler & Paul D. Feinberg
11. Systematic Theology – Norman L. Geisler
12. Unshakable Foundations – Contemporary Answers to Crucial Questions About The Christian Faith – Norman L. Geisler & Peter Bocchino
13. One Blood – The Biblical Answer to Racism – Ken Ham, Carl Wieland, Don Batten
14. Revelation – Unlocking the Future – Edward Hinson
15. The End – A Complete Overview of Bible Prophecy and the End of Days – Mark Hitchcock
16. What in the World Is Going On – Dr. David Jeremiah
17. The End Times Controversy – Tim LaHaye & Thomas Ice
18. Rapture Under Attack – Tim LaHaye
19. Jerusalem in Prophecy – Randall Price
20. The Tapestry – The Life and Times of Francis & Edith Schaeffer – Edith Schaeffer
21. Isaiah – Prophecies, Promises and Warnings – W. E. Vine
22. Major Bible Prophecies – 37 Crucial Prophecies That Affect You Today – John F. Walvoord
23. The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Commentary – John F. Walvoord
24. Prophecy book - John F.



Knowledge Handbook - Walvoord