



Living and Sharing the Gospel

Weekly bulletin
February 14, 2021

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week.. Please let Mr. Vautour know if you would like to be added to the weekly email list. See the bottom of the bulletin for the contact information

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

Please note that audio and video sermons and other material are also available on our local website at www.gcine Brunswick.org

Session 11-15 on the study of the book of Acts by Mr. Gary Deddo is now available on our local website under "Members Only". It is an excellent Bible Study. You are encouraged to take the time to study it.

Prayer meeting: Thursday, February 25 at 7:30 PM

Thursday February 18 at 7:30 p.m. – town hall meeting with Halifax congregation.

Please note that on February 28, 2021, services will be from head office at 1 PM Atlantic time.

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to www.gcine Brunswick.org – under "Members Only" and type the password. If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

- Let us pray for the Church to put first things first which is **to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our mind.** The secondary commandment and flowing from the first is **to love our neighbour as ourselves.**
- Because Jesus lives in us and he is our life, let us pray that his life be manifested in ours by being loving servants.
- Let us pray according to God's will as per his instructions: **"1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)**
- Let us pray that God will strengthen his people with faith, perseverance, and love during this difficult pandemic period and that the good news of the Gospel will be spread widely.
- Please pray for the leadership of GCI as they seek to lead us in the will of God to help all of us participate in what Jesus is doing now.
- Please thank God for his church and pray for God's universal church as Jesus is directing it and helping all of us to grow in his grace and knowledge of Him by the Holy Spirit.
- Please pray for all people in Canada and elsewhere who are increasingly suffering from various kinds of mental and emotional problems sometimes leading to increasing violence in families, overwhelming the health care system and damaging so many lives.
- Please pray for the children who are negatively affected by this pandemic and for their parents who are too oftentimes feeling overwhelmed juggling work responsibilities, distant learning, etc.
- Let us pray that God will call more and more people at this time to participate and share the good news of the Gospel.

- Let us pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven”. (Matt. 6:9-10)

Offerings: (Paraphrase of some information given by Mr. Hall, GCI Canadian Director): Just a reminder that any donations we receive via either Credit Card or Canada Helps are subject to about a 3-3.5% fee which means any donations we receive for your congregation, are reduced by that amount. Direct Debit (Pre-authorized Payment) or E-Transfers have much lower transaction fees, that we do not back charge to the local congregation. (Cheques do not have a transaction fee). A person can send E-transfers to khonwood@gcicanada.ca if their bank uses INTERACT. In the subject or message line, write the name of your church and your member number. If your bank permits, you can also write your name and address. If you do not know your member number, please write to Mr. Vautour at the email address below. You can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5**. If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705**. You can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using **the donate button** on our website at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/7735>. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend.”

T4 FYI some may ask about donations they gave via Canada Helps. As a registered Canada Helps issues tax receipts for donations to the church given through their portal. (From Mr. Bill Hall, Canadian Director Feb. 6, 2021)

Important Notice: if you have and are giving your offerings directly to GCI either by regular post, telephone or automatic withdrawal from your bank account or credit card, you will receive a tax receipt directly from the GCI head office in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Mr. Hall, Canadian Dir., has sent a letter which we should all receive shortly to help us choose which way we prefer to give.

Readiness

(From the President - February 10, 2021)



Greg and Susan Williams



Dear GCI Family and Friends,

I came across an intriguing quote that says, “When the student is ready the teacher will appear” (unknown origin)

Good organizational structures and systems accompanied with good ministry tools and practices cannot accomplish what we hope for unless we start with a spirit of humility and teachability. As the wise saying suggests, there needs to be “readiness” within the spirit of our would-be leaders. We define readiness as a

stage when a person displays the willingness and capacity to receive instruction and then to engage and act in fresh, Christ-like ways.

We find both of these spirits evident in the great story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

On the heels of the martyrdom of Stephen in the early church, followers of Christ scattered from Jerusalem to avoid persecution. Philip “the evangelist” was one of those followers (he was one of the original seven deacons described in Acts 6).

Philip was directed by an angel of God ([Acts 8:26](#)) to go to Gaza, where he would encounter a eunuch from the court of the queen of Ethiopia in Africa. (This eunuch was apparently either following or at least exploring Judaism). The eunuch was returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, traveling south to his home country, Ethiopia.

The eunuch was reading from the writings of the prophet Isaiah—specifically a passage about the suffering of the promised Messiah. The eunuch did not know how to interpret what he was reading. He was a ready and willing student in need of a teacher. Philip, the able teacher and preacher, explained to him how the prophecy had been fulfilled by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who was the Messiah talked about in the ancient writings.

As they rode together in the eunuch’s chariot, they came upon a body of water, and in response to the gospel, the eunuch professed his faith in Christ, and requested Philip to baptize him. Philip obliged, and then was immediately carried away by the Holy Spirit to another location. The eunuch continued homeward rejoicing in the salvation and new life that he had received in Jesus.

This account in the book of Acts leaves us hanging regarding the rest of the eunuch’s story. It is reasonable to infer that the eunuch would have been the first to bring and share the gospel message to Ethiopia and the continent of

Africa—thus, fulfilling Christ’s proclamation in [Acts 1:8](#) for the spreading of the gospel from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the world.

Why the eunuch? Why this marvelous encounter with Philip? Undoubtedly a divine appointment was at play—the angel instructing Philip to pursue the eunuch, the interaction with the scriptures and its fulfilled meaning in Jesus, the regeneration symbolized in the act of baptism, and even the Spirit redirecting Philip to his next excursion. For the eunuch, he was finally seeing something clearly for the first time, even though it had always been there; the Old Testament puzzle pieces had finally been joined to display the magnificent picture that is Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. The light came on and changed his life forever!

This Bible story is about this state of readiness. When I say “readiness,” the posture of the eunuch is a great illustration. He was open and teachable with a desire to learn. When the light came on about Jesus being the fulfillment of the prophecies, he embraced the truth and displayed his surrender and allegiance through the act of baptism. In Paul’s correspondence to the church at Ephesus, he explains why we have teachers in the church like Philip the evangelist.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13 NRSVA)

Paul wants all believers to come to the same understanding about Jesus that the eunuch displayed. It is crucial for the community of the church to have a thorough and unified knowledge of Jesus and to live out a unified faith. But get this, the journey of faith is a process of maturity—growth and movement away from childish behavior and toward Christ-likeness. In other words, toward a life overflowing with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Readiness is embracing this growth process with the assurance that the Holy Spirit is continuing a good work in us, moving us closer to and more like Jesus. This is not a clever behavioral modification program, but rather a dynamic work of the Spirit. Please understand that the Spirit is constantly at work, not just showing up in times of crisis and only working part-time hours.

My good friend and one of our Regional Directors, Anthony Mullins, gave me permission to share this story with you to emphasize the meaning I am trying to convey. Anthony, who serves as RD, local church pastor, moderator of a GCI podcast (Gospel Reverb), and coordinator of our GCI coaches, came to me and confessed that he was in a dry season and felt void of joy. Instead of enumerating the multiple circumstances and situations in his busy life that may be obstacles blocking the joy, he simply wanted me to join him in prayer to entreat the Holy Spirit to freely restore the spiritual fruit of joy to his life.

Please understand that Anthony was open to discussing his life circumstances and challenges, and quite honest about areas that needed attention and fresh responses from him. However, the inner joy that abides in a believer regardless of ups and downs was not going to come by fixing a schedule, or much worse, trying to fix other people or himself. Rather a humility that led to submission and reliance on the Spirit was the game-changer. I see a kinship with Anthony and Philip—servants who are fully sold out for Jesus, going about their days freely sharing the good news about the Savior, and are open and receptive to the lead of the Spirit with an ever-forward trajectory of growth toward the stature and fullness of Jesus.

Growing with Jesus and aspiring to be more like him day by day! Greg Williams

REVELATION: 1,900 YEARS OF REVELATION

The mark of the beast. Armageddon. The Four Horsemen.

666. Babylon the great. The seven last plagues.

The bottomless pit. The lake of fire.

These images of terror and catastrophe from the book of Revelation have greatly influenced the popular psyche. Even the secular press uses images such as “armageddon” and “four horsemen of the apocalypse” to describe calamities in our world.

Misunderstood book

Despite almost 1,900 years of fascination with the book of Revelation – A.D. 96 is often suggested as a date for the book – John’s letter to the churches in his care continues to be misunderstood. And badly misinterpreted. One popular misconception is that Revelation has nothing of importance to say to us. It’s considered to be merely a bizarre piece of first-century writing with no relevance for today. Another wrong idea is that Revelation is a codebook describing a specific outline of history written in advance. Countless interpreters have tried to “decode” the book as a handbook for predicting the end of the world.

This is not new. About the middle of the second century, a newly baptized Christian named Montanus claimed to have charismatic gifts. He taught that the church had entered the final age. Montanus and his followers predicted that the end of the world was near. The new Jerusalem was about to descend upon the nearby village of Pepuza, in what is now Turkey.

Montanus and his followers drew support for such ideas in large part from the book of Revelation. Montanus’ influence spread rapidly and widely among Christians throughout the Roman world. But the prophecy of Montanus failed. By misinterpreting Revelation, he tarnished the book’s reputation to the point that some Christians thought it shouldn’t be in the Bible.

The claims of Christian groups from Montanus to the present – that Revelation pinpoints the events, personalities and time period of “the end” – have all failed. This should be a caution for Christians against using the book of Revelation as a predictive handbook.

For the church

We miss a lot by not reading carefully the first chapter of this magnificent vision. It is a message from Jesus Christ to his apostle John to pass on to seven churches in Asia Minor, in what is today western Turkey: **“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea’”** ([Revelation 1:10-11](#)).

Many people forget that Revelation is written by a church pastor to his churches – to Christians, to those who believe in and accept Jesus Christ and to those who are suffering because of their faith. John is their companion in suffering (**verse 9**). Revelation had life-and-death meaning for its first hearers because it was written specifically to them. It addressed John’s brothers and sisters about dire problems. Some were being persecuted, tortured and even beheaded, as clearly indicated in [Revelation 20:4](#). These believers needed to be reminded that ultimate victory in this world belongs to those who pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ, not the emperor in Rome.

So Revelation is written to Christians who live in an often brutal world. In that sense, its message applies to all of us. Essentially, Revelation says we must overcome the world rather than allow it to overcome us ([Revelation 3:21](#)). By using seven church congregations – the number seven often depicted completion to the ancients – John suggests that the spiritual problems and emergencies facing these churches were to be considered representative of Christians throughout the Roman Empire. And by extension, these problems can be seen as threats that Christians in all places and ages must confront.

An urgent appeal

The message to the churches was simple but urgent. Christians in Asia were being challenged to walk through life as witnesses to the truth, even to the point of death. The church members, though, were experiencing their own internal crises, as chapters 2 and 3 make clear. Internal problems besetting the seven churches paralleled the spiritual state of a world in the grip of evil.

John’s vision illustrates the consequences of the world’s spiritual failing, through judgments such as the seven last plagues. But Christians warned about these judgments as well ([Revelation 18:4-5](#)). Revelation tells the church how to escape God’s judgment on the world. The church must be in the world and deal with it, but it must not be of the world.

The message of Revelation is that the church must clean up its own spiritual house, do something about its weak spiritual state and take a stand against state persecution. The church must confront the evil in the world pictured by the beast and Babylon. When the church successfully resists the world’s evil allure (and the devil behind it), it witnesses to the truth that God exists and that he rules over all.

One of the earliest Christian confessions of faith was, **“Jesus is Lord”** ([Romans 10:9](#)). Revelation was written to bolster that conviction. It pointed in visionary and symbolic language to the “unseen hand” of God. It is God, the book insists, who decides the fate of nations and history. The beast and Babylon attain significance only as opponents of what Jesus Christ is doing. History revolves around him, not the woman who rides the scarlet-colored beast.

Jesus Christ rules

When John was inspired to depict the future judgment of the beast and the tormentors of the church, it was his way of saying: God is in charge. Jesus Christ is Lord and he will, ultimately, bring his presence to bear on the world. This world of politics and powers is only a stage for the acting out of God's work of redemption.

Revelation's symbolic portrayal of judgment on the world is meant to be a word to the wise as well as a tremendous encouragement. The daily struggles and setbacks of Christians, their battles with faith and temptations to despair – all of this must be understood in terms of the cosmic conflict being fought in the heavenly realm.

Calling all Christians

Revelation answers the question: Who is Lord? The churches John wrote to suffered under evil rulers ([Revelation 2:12-13](#)) and from their own human failings ([Revelation 3:17](#)). The wicked seemed to flourish. Why? Where was God and why hadn't he rescued his people? Why be a Christian in such a world?

These are the uncertainties Revelation deals with. They are issues we wonder about as well. Revelation answers these questions for us today as it did for the church in the first century. The book insists that, despite appearances to the contrary, God rules. He will ultimately end the evil that seems to hold sway in our world. The church is to stay focused on the almighty God, who is the ruler of the universe, and to the Lamb, who has saved them.

The church may seem powerless on earth – and it is, of itself. But the slain Jesus was glorified, and is at the right hand of the Father, controlling the world's destiny. This Christ is not only Lord of the world but also Lord and Savior of the church.

Faith in God's sovereignty over all things – including evil – is the decisive theme and emphasis of Revelation. After 1,900 years, it is still ahead of its time.

Paul Kroll

Listen to the Music

By Paul Kroll & Neil Earle

Revelation has its roots sunk deep in the powerful rhythms of ancient Near Eastern language and life. R.H. Charles, in his two-volume work, *Revelation*, in the International Critical Commentary, enjoyed Revelation 1 on its own terms. He listened to the music. In so doing, he noted the important repetitive pattern of "threes," a pattern that symbolizes, to the Hebrew mind, certainty and confirmation.

Charles knew that in the ancient Near East, literary form was almost as important as content. The form was a key to the meaning. Imaginative speech of the kind we inadequately label "poetry" in English, attractive rhyme schemes and repetition, and colorful symbolism – these features of Hebrew writing send us verbal cues about how we should read the book.

The creativity is obvious. For example, God uses "the tree of life" from Genesis 2 as the motif for [Revelation 22:2](#). Also, the victorious saints in heaven sing "the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb" ([Revelation 15:3](#)). This is why Hebrew thought structures pervade the book. The 404 verses in Revelation contain several hundred references to the Old Testament.

Patterns of threes

In Revelation, the patterns are set up starting in verse 1. The Revelation is 1) from God 2) through Christ 3) to his servants. Christ (1) in turn sent it by 2) an angel to 3) his servant John – a double pattern of threes.

Most modern translations, except the New International Version and the New English Bible, follow the King James Version in presenting a threefold rhythm in verse 2, referring to John's witness to "the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to all things that he saw."

Blessed, John continues in verse 3, is

1. the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and
2. blessed are those who hear it and
3. take to heart what is written in it.

In verse 4, John sends greetings

1. from him who is, and who was, and who is to come (three!), and
2. from the seven spirits before his throne, and
3. from Jesus Christ, who is
 1. the faithful witness,
 2. the firstborn from the dead, and
 3. the ruler of the kings of the earth.

In verses 5 and 6, Jesus Christ is exalted because he

1. loves us and
2. has freed us from our sins by his blood, and
3. has made us to be a kingdom and priests.

In verse 7, we encounter a form of Hebrew poetry whereby subsequent phrases fill out the meaning of the leading thought. For example, the point “Look, he is coming with the clouds” is amplified thus:

1. and every eye will see him,
2. even those who pierced him; and
3. all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.

In verse 8, we again meet a triple declaration of Jesus Christ as the Alpha and the Omega. He is described as he “who is, and who was, and who is to come.”

John makes a threefold declaration in describing the “suffering and kingdom and patient endurance” that are ours in Jesus Christ (**verse 9**).

Observing these threefold repetitions in Revelation helps us to appreciate the music of the book as well as its message. It deepens our understanding of the force and power of the inspired Scripture. Revelation is not only authoritative and inspired; it is beautiful. Let’s enjoy it in all its rich dimensions.

This article was written by Paul Kroll in 1996 and updated in 2013. Copyright Grace Communion International.

Author: Paul Kroll and Neil Earle

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—a) www.gci.org, b) www.gcinewbrunswick.org, c) www.gcicanada.ca; d) www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton ;

For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace, and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. Contact Information: Pastor’s contact information: email—evatour47@outlook.com