



Living and Sharing the Gospel

Weekly bulletin
February 21, 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

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

History of the Halifax congregation (note from Mr. Vern Conrad elder in Halifax GCI) **"It is interesting to note that the first WCG church service in Atlantic Canada was held on Feb 20, 1971 (just 50 years ago today) Gary Antion and Steve Botha officiating. We met in Grosvenor Park School in Rockingham, 58 people in attendance."**

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 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)

Prayers of Thanksgiving

- That Jesus is the head of his universal church and that we have been called to be members of his body, the Church.
- That God the Father so loved us that He gave us His Son not to condemn but to save all those who would place their faith in His faithfulness.
- That we, and all humanity, have been forgiven by the shedding of the blood of Jesus as he died on a Roman cross counted among the criminals, even if he was guiltless.
- That we have been given the grace and revelation to accept that gift.
- That Jesus is our life (**Col. 3:4**). Abiding in him by faith, and he, abiding in us, we are never left alone in our Christian walk towards eternity whatever our circumstances maybe.
- That God has given us spiritual brothers and sisters who are united to Jesus, to love, as he commands us. Let us thank God for one another as we are united in Christ.
- That he gives us the strength to love our enemies.

- Let us be thankful that God corrects and disciplines us in love, as we need, to mold us in the likeness of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.
- Let us thank God for the Halifax congregation for all those who have stayed faithful to Jesus over many years!
- Let us thank God and worship him for who He is!

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 khorwood@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.

Devotional: Signs of the Messiah (from gci.org)



Mr. Ted Johnston
(GCI Minister)



During this season of Epiphany, we've seen in our readings in Mark's Gospel the unfolding of a primary Epiphany theme—the revealing of Jesus' identity. In **1:1-11**, **Mark** declares Jesus to be the Messiah, God's Son, by offering testimonies from John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit and God the Father. In **1:12-45**, **Mark** then offers tangible proof of Jesus' identity in several mighty acts (signs) performed by Jesus—ones that befit God's Messiah. The first sign involves conquering Satan in the wilderness (**v. 12**).

This is followed by multiple signs in which Jesus conquers Satan in everyday life: driving out an evil spirit (**vv. 21-18**); healing Peter's mother-in-law (**vv. 29-34**); and healing a leper (**vv. 40-45**).

In **2:1-12**, **Mark** adds the sign of Jesus healing a paralytic. Not only does Jesus heal the man of his disability, but seeing the man's faith declares that *his sins are forgiven*. To the Jewish religious authorities, this is blasphemy. Nevertheless, Jesus declares that **"the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"** (**v.10**), thus declaring himself equal with God.

To this list of messianic signs, **Mark** adds in **2:13-17** the calling of Levi (Matthew). Not only does Jesus cast out demons and heal sick bodies, but he also heals sick souls—even the soul of a tax collector, a person despised by Jews as traitorous, greedy, dishonest and immoral. Not only does Jesus call Levi to follow him—he has the audacity to go to *dinner* at Levi's home where the guests include multiple tax collectors and assorted other *sinner*s. To the religious authorities, Jesus has gone way too far! They ask his disciples why Jesus is behaving this way. Jesus overhears and answers by saying that just as it is expected that a doctor will associate with sick people, so it is appropriate (even necessary) for him to associate with *sinner*s. After all, the whole purpose of his coming, in accordance with his true identity, is to call sinners to a new life with him (**v. 17**).

In this short, power-packed section of Mark we find multiple signs of the kingdom of God evident in Jesus' person, words and actions. We might ask, are these signs seen in our churches? Do cheats, prostitutes and the lame flock

to our churches and there find Jesus' healing touch? Or do we react like the teachers of the law and shun such folks? Something to think about.

Prayer:

Our Father, today we proclaim again that Jesus is the Messiah, he is the Son of God our Savior. We are reminded of our calling to follow him—to be with him, sharing in what he is doing in his ongoing ministry of healing, restoring, blessing. We know that he is Messiah, not us, nevertheless, we are mindful that we are his disciples. Help us look to Jesus, follow where he leads, share in what he is doing in the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**REVELATION: REVELATION: A VISION OF VICTORY
(from gci.org)**

In a time of declining faith, we need the Revelation message
Living faith in God is one of the burning issues of our time. That's because for all practical purposes God is dead to many Christians. They may profess to believe in God, but they think and live as if he did not exist.

Such a crisis of faith among Christians is not new. The first-century church also had its own problems of faith. Like today, some Christians of that time were dying spiritually. Many Christians were pressured to compromise with the pagan society they lived in. Many in the church were enticed by the alluring immoral world to break faith with God.

The church was small, persecuted and hated. At times violent persecution tried the church's faith. With the passage of time, expectations that Jesus would return soon gradually diminished. With uncertainty and evil abounding, the church was asking two faith-related questions: Why hasn't Jesus returned as promised ([2 Peter 3:4](#))? How long must the suffering go on ([Revelation 6:10](#))?

False teachers, meanwhile, advised accommodation with pagan beliefs and Roman politics. They led many converts away from Christ and back into the world.

Then a book we know as Revelation or the Apocalypse was written to encourage the church and to restore the faith of the members. Most conservative scholars believe the book of Revelation was written about A.D. 96.

Seven short, stylized letters in chapters 2 and 3 graphically describe the major faith-destroying ideas gripping the church. These letters, written to seven churches in what is now western Turkey, address problems symptomatic of the church as a whole.

We don't know whether most of the members in the first-century churches accepted the urging of Revelation to become rejuvenated in their faith. But those Christians who took the book to heart would have experienced the power of renewed faith.

Although Revelation was written to the late first-century church, its message speaks to us as well. The book can help stir us to a powerful faith in God. The message of Revelation helps us understand that Christ is the foundation of our faith.

Timeless Themes

Many see Revelation mainly as a forecast of specific events that can be pinpointed in our day. But Revelation does not offer — nor has it ever offered — a blueprint of future events.

Revelation was originally written to help the first-century church with its spiritual concerns. However, its message is applicable to all Christians at all times.

Revelation explains God's purpose and the causes of the world's problems, giving assurance and hope to those who follow God's will. Its main themes include:

1. God is Supreme Ruler.
2. Jesus is the Lamb of God who was slain to redeem his people.
3. Jesus is worthy of worship
4. Jesus is the Judge of the living and the dead. His final judgment of the nations will take place after his second coming.
5. God's faithful people must live in a spiritually corrupt world until Jesus returns. In spite of trials, his people remain spiritually secure.
6. Christians must remain faithful in their trials and not give their allegiance to the corrupt world characterized by "Babylon the Great."
7. The patience and faithfulness of the suffering saints will result in their receiving a glorious inheritance at the return of Jesus Christ.

Vital message

Revelation's main concern is with spiritual survival. It reveals how the church can survive in a hostile world. The book proclaims the wonderful, faith-building news that, despite appearances to the contrary, God is in charge of history, the world and our lives.

Revelation assures us of a future in which evil will end, even though we may not personally live to see it. The book tells us that the many adversities and sufferings Christians endure are not in vain. Christians may suffer in this life, but in the end the returning Christ will judge the world and save his people.

The final message of Revelation is that God will intervene in human history through Christ and forever eliminate evil and reward the faithful. It tells us the future belongs to those who put their faith in the crucified and glorified Savior of humanity — Jesus Christ.

J. Ramsey Michaels, professor of religious studies at Southwest Missouri State University, puts it well: *“At the heart of the Book of Revelation is a story, the same gospel story that echoes throughout the entire New Testament, about a slain Lamb victorious over death and evil and a God who makes everything new”* (*Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, page 147).

Lord of history

Revelation encourages persecuted and suffering Christians to find strength and hope in God's power, love and justice. To this end, in the book's fourth chapter, God is picture figuratively as sitting on the throne of the universe ([Revelation 4:1-11](#)).

In the fifth chapter, we see Jesus Christ, the Lamb, who has made salvation possible ([Revelation 5:1-14](#)). He is the key to the book of Revelation and safeguards the destiny of the church. Chapter 5 closes with a chorus of praise for the glorified Christ: **“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”** (verse 12).

Revelation tells us Jesus Christ has won the victory over every evil. Through every trial, even death, his people are spiritually safe and secure through faith in him. Thus, the book of Revelation answers the question every Christian has asked: Where is God, and why are we suffering?

The book of Revelation reaches across the centuries to lift the hopes of those who trust in Christ the Lamb, and exhorts them to persevere. It has provided hope for many generations of Christians.

Victory proclaimed

That same message motivates those who follow Jesus Christ today. No matter what happens to the church, God knows the needs of his people. Even though some are killed for their faith, he will vindicate the cause of the righteous. Despite appearances to the contrary, God rules in human affairs, and he will bring his people through every trial. Revelation proclaims the joy of salvation in the midst of a turbulent and corrupt world. It focuses on the reality of the eternal kingdom of God — the new Jerusalem — in which **“there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain”** ([Revelation 21:4](#)).

God will then be with all his people in a final way when the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of Jesus Christ ([Revelation 11:15](#)). Until then, as members of the body of Christ, the church, we must be patient — follow God — keep the faith — trust him to work out his wonderful plan — and **“wait a little longer”** ([Revelation 6:11](#)).

Worthy Is the Lamb

One of the most paradoxical parts of Revelation is John's vision of the lion followed immediately by a slain lamb. As the vision opens in [Revelation 5:1-5](#), John is told that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the scroll sealed with seven seals.

But as John looks for a lion, he sees a lamb instead (verse 6). It is a grisly sight, for the lamb appears to have been slaughtered. This is the first occurrence of lamb imagery in Revelation. It's as though the image has been kept for its dramatic entrance precisely until this point.

The Lamb is Revelation's defining title for Christ. This lamb imagery, in turn, is connected to the Old Testament book of Isaiah. The imagery is central to the prophecy of the suffering servant in [Isaiah 53](#). There the future sacrifice for sin is pictured as a lamb being led to the slaughter. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy, for he was the Lamb of God sacrificed for the sins of the world.

In the book of Revelation, this lamb metaphor has a double image. It tells us the slaughtered Lamb is coming a second time as the Word of God's wrath to deal with all who oppose him ([Revelation 6:16](#); [19:7, 9, 11-16](#)).

But Jesus Christ, the Lamb, first shed his own blood. That is what makes him worthy to open the scroll and reveal the message of the book of Revelation. The angelic hosts of heaven praise the Lamb, saying he is worthy to open the book's meaning because he was killed. With his blood he purchased people for God **“from every tribe and language and people and nation”** ([Revelation 5:9](#)).

Thus, there is a paradox about the picture in Revelation 5. Though its central figure has triumphed (the Lion), he appears to have been conquered and killed (the Lamb). Jesus overcame the world by sacrificing himself. His supreme act of triumph was accomplished by shedding his own blood ([Revelation 1:5](#); [5:9](#); [7:14](#); [12:11](#)).

Jesus' death as the Lamb of God gained a victory over the cosmic powers in opposition to God. The Lamb of God defeated Satan, sin and the power of the grave. That is the message of Revelation 5: Jesus has won the victory over his enemies by sacrificing his life as the Lamb. Through this act he is worthy to return as the "Lion" to rule the nations. Thus, Jesus as Lamb tells Christians — his lambs — that they are to suffer the outrageous darts of their oppression in patience. They must be submissive to God and place their unswerving allegiance with him. He will vindicate the cause of those whose faith remains in him.

Author: Paul Kroll, 1995, 2013



GCI headquarters minister

Stopping the spin

(From Word of Life Devotional – GCI)

The saying "the truth lies somewhere in the middle" is often used to explain how we each bring our own perspective about reality to any situation. If you have kids, you know this. A fight starts between siblings, and each one says, "He started it." or, "She started it." As a parent you know the truth is somewhere in the middle of those accusations.

Our interpretation of reality is partially defined by our unique life experiences and our temperament, and we find this is also true in how we think about our Christian lives.

We know that being human has its highs and lows. This is the reality of all of humanity and the Bible shares this reality. The Psalms, for example, are filled with hope and joy and encouragement, but they also sometimes have lots of anger and vengefulness. This is part of our human experience. These highs and lows can affect how we see God.

If we look at Psalm 105, we can see the psalmist is giving God glory for wonderful blessings poured out on the nation of Israel, but then the psalmist puts his own spin on Israel's history:

The Lord made his people very fruitful; he made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to conspire against his servants. Psalm 105:24-25 (NIV)

Notice how the psalmist blames God for the anger of the Israelites' foes, saying "whose hearts he turned to hate his people". Does a God of love really want people to hate each other? We can see that in passages like this one, the writer is playing on the human drama of the situation rather than speaking literally about how God behaves. If we think about this in human terms, we parents can say that we would much prefer our children get along rather than fight. Noticing our very human tendency to put our own spin on what we experience can help us when we start telling ourselves unhelpful and untrue stories about God. For example, when we're faced with a job loss or a financial setback, do we think we're being punished by God? If we face a serious illness, do we assume that we have sinned in some way, and this illness is our payback?

Noticing our tendency to interpret events as if God is against us can help us stop and gain perspective. We can consider what we know about God's character, which is based on grace, and goodness. We can remember the kindness and love of Jesus in his dealings with people, and how Jesus said, "**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.**" ([John 14:9, NIV](#)). We can think about the times that we felt God's nearness and blessing, recalling those memories in all their detail. Positive actions like these can help us overcome the negative spin we sometimes put on difficult events in our lives.

Being human is hard, and challenges often crop up in our lives. Recognizing our tendency to blame God or others when we're hurting can help us make different choices. We can "stop the spin" by remembering God's love and kindness to us in our past.

Let us recognize and rest in the truth about God's love for us today.

Presented by Heber Ticas

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—evautour47@outlook.com