



# The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

*Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word*

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The Ryburn Christian Clarion, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552, U. S. A.;  
[ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net); [www.godslivingroom.com](http://www.godslivingroom.com)

Unless otherwise stated, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [ ].

## Why The CLARION?

### A RETROSPECTIVE

**F**IVE YEARS AGO, in the fall of 2003, my life was somewhat different than it is now, but, unknown to me, I was about to embark on an exciting adventure that would both challenge me and enrich my relationship with God. Of course, these things were not unknown to the Heavenly Father, Who, as I look back, was teaching me things I would need to know in the years ahead.

At that time, I was sharing the Word of God several times a month in a small chapel in the basement of my apartment complex. A year or so earlier, my building had been purchased by a Christian minister, who allowed his maintenance crew to put together this place of worship right where I lived. It was a tremendous opportunity to share some of God's wonderful Word, and very quickly the so-called Ryburn Chapel (for we lived on Ryburn Avenue) began attracting people from the neighborhood.

By the spring of 2003, it was not unusual to find guest teachers and preachers sharing the Scriptures at the chapel, while the whole fellowship was being videotaped for television. In fact, a 30-minute show called *The Ryburn Chapel* was already airing twice a week on Dayton, Ohio's public access channel,

*continued on next page...*

#### INSIDE AT A GLANCE

*AS WE MOVE INTO* our sixth year of sharing the great integrity and accuracy of God's Word, we stand in amazement at the doors of utterance He has opened for us. May the clear knowledge of our God be spread far and wide!

**"WHY THE CLARION?"** looks back at the past five years, exploring how we got started, and observing many of the great things God brought to pass to bring us to where we are today. It's been an interesting journey.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1*

**"GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD"** examines the protection promised to those who make the Almighty their hiding place. In **"God: Our Refuge"**, we see just how willing and able our Father is to watch over His children.

*by Rev. Kevin P. Guigou.....3*

**"FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT"** delves into the weighty subject of rendering the Scriptures in other languages. In **"The Two Approaches To Biblical Translation"**, we look at the major techniques used in this critical work.

*by Robert A. Lightfoot.....4*

**"FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT"** dares to take an insightful look at Satan himself. In a juxtaposition comparing traditional beliefs with God's Word, **"The Devil, You Say?"** shines the light of truth on the Adversary.

*by Keith Jamison, Columnist.....6*

**"GOD AND COUNTRY"** has been presenting the tragedy that befell The Church only centuries after the earthly ministry of Christ. The article, **"Blood On The Mountainsides"**, should make us thankful for The Word that is ours today.

*by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....8*

augmented occasionally by hour-long specials called *Truth vs. Tradition*. In these longer programs, we compared what is commonly taught as tenets of Christianity with the actual testimony of the Word of God itself. The difference was often staggering.

It was during this time that I had the idea for producing a newsletter for the chapel that would be distributed throughout the neighborhoods in our area of north Dayton. Interest in the chapel had been falling off, and we believed a newsletter informing folks of upcoming guest speakers and outreach activities would stir up more interest. Besides, at the time, I was taking computer training, and I reasoned that I could outline and format the newsletter at school as part of my training. As such, the first issue of *The Ryburn Chapel Clarion* came out on September 30, 2003.

That's right! At first, it was called *The Ryburn Chapel Clarion*, and it announced to anyone who cared to listen our approach to God's Word and to Christianity in general.

**Seeing that the outreach of the Ryburn Chapel is non-denominational in nature, it is only right and proper that our teaching of God's Word is based upon an accurate understanding of the Scriptures, rather than the theological bias of any particular group, no matter how sincere or well-meaning it may be. Since the Word of God is of no private interpretation (II Pet. 1:20), it is only through continual, detailed study of The Word that we can be reasonably certain that what we teach and believe is correct. With Biblical accuracy as our foundation, we move forward in our quest to walk more closely with our Heavenly Father. We invite you to join us.**

(The Ryburn Chapel Clarion: *Fall, 2003; Vol. I, No. 1*)

That's quite a brash pronouncement for such a tiny outreach but, perhaps, this kind of adamancy is what has helped to move the *Clarion* out of its original environs. That, and faithfulness to what we'd started, began to open doors for the newsletter, even while the chapel itself was starting to come apart.

Disunity among the believers overseeing the chapel, and declining community interest, eventually caused the chapel to close its doors early in 2005. It is interesting to note, however, that *The Ryburn Chapel* television program continued to enjoy popularity through the summer of 2006, when it was finally taken off the air. In the midst of what

appeared to be a lack of interest in the great integrity of God's Word, it is the *Clarion* that was emerging as the real success story.

Due to a lack of harmony, some of the chapel's founding members departed, pursuing other interests. Seeing what was happening, I decided to disassociate the newsletter from the chapel, and by the fourth issue (Summer, 2004), I changed its name to *The Ryburn Christian Clarion*, determining, with God's grace and aid, to build it into something that would be a blessing to the whole Body of Christ.

Several months earlier, in the Spring, 2004 issue (Vol. I, No. 3), I had already introduced the "**God's Matchless Word**" column, envisioning the possibility of transforming the *Clarion* from a neighborhood newsletter into a periodical with actual departments and features. The "**Antiquity Speaks**" column was also introduced in that issue, thereafter to appear occasionally, dealing with the intrigues of Biblical archaeology. By the next edition (Summer, 2004; Vol. I, No. 4), we had added the "**From The Research Department**" column, establishing regular departments, and expanding from one page to six. God was opening doors.

The Winter, 2005 installment (Vol. II, No. 2) saw the *Clarion* grow to its current 8-page size. With the Spring, 2005 edition (Vol. II, No. 3) and the Summer, 2005 issue (Vol. II, No. 4), we added the "**Investigating Creation Science**" and the "**GOD And Country**" columns, which alternate from issue to issue. During this time, our website was set up by a brother in Christ in Idaho, and the *Clarion's* mailing list soon began to reach out across the country. We started receiving our first article submissions, as well.

Two major moves forward took place in 2007. In July, we went international, shipping *Clarions* out of the country for the first time. It wasn't long after those first packages to Ireland that God made it possible for us to produce a version of the *Clarion* in Spanish, which we inaugurated during September of 2007. *El Clarion Cristiano de Ryburn* now reaches believers in much of Latin America, as well as Spanish-speaking saints in Los Angeles, San Diego, Denver, El Paso, southern Florida, and other regions of the United States.

Since then, we have grown to the point at which we find ourselves today, servicing God's people in 28 states and a dozen foreign lands, and in two languages. The *Clarion*, of course, is sent out to individuals on our mailing list, but is also delivered or shipped in multiple-copy bundles to libraries,

coffee shops, community centers, hospitals, doctors' offices, churches, in-home fellowships, and many other kinds of places.

Naturally, the assistance of God's people in many places plays an important role in our efforts. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to our faithful financial supporters, and to all those wonderful believers who have taken it upon themselves to place the *Clarion* in their local libraries, or share it with their Bible study groups.

Of course, the deepest appreciation and praise is reserved for God, Who not only furthers our work

by His gracious influences, but is, Himself, the sole reason for our labors. It is for Him and His glorification that we put our energies into this little publication. It is one way by which some may come to know and love the God Who has reached into our lives and put our feet on a better path. It is for Him, and His wonderful Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we have made the choice to send abroad our printed pages, trusting in His grace and mercy to direct them to the seeking hearts that are out there.

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

## **GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:** *A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life*

*(This column features a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)*

### **“God: Our Refuge”**

*by Rev. Kevin P. Guigou*

**A**S A YOUNGER BELIEVER, at times I would subconsciously avoid reading scripture that suggested that life may not always be smooth, effortless, and trouble-free. The older I get, however, the more I appreciate reading how God provides the sheltering strength that successfully leads us through difficult situations.

In this regard, Psalms 46:10a has always been a passage of great comfort to me: “Be still [cease our efforts], and know that I *am* God...” Reading the whole psalm adds richness to the meaning of verse 10. The psalm begins by telling us what God does for us when we are in trouble and are tempted to fear.

#### **Psalms 46:1-3**

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

*Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

Sometimes it seems that our lives are falling out from under us, that our typically “quiet seas”

are a deafening roar, and that the mountain peaks of our lives are violently quaking. Yet, amidst it all, God is our refuge, strength, and ever-present helper. In truth, this psalm confirms for us in three different verses that God is “our refuge.”

Verse 1 notes, “God *is* our refuge and strength...,” while verses 7 and 11 declare, “...the God of Jacob *is* our refuge.” In verse 1, the Hebrew word rendered “refuge” refers to “a shelter to which one flees.” Verses 7 and 11 use a different Hebrew term that refers to a refuge that is “a high tower or fortress that is an inaccessible and impregnable place.” Oh, how often we need, not only a *shelter to which we can run*, but also, a *high place* where His protection is secure and beyond the reach of our enemies! God is willing to receive us into His sheltering care, and to offer the impenetrable protection of His “higher ground.”

Each of these three verses, which promises His sheltering *protection* (refuge), also promises His *presence*. Verse 1 tells us that He is “...very present [found near]...,” and verses 7 and 11 (which share identical wording) promise that *Jehovah* of hosts (mighty armies) is with us. Isn't it great to have the God of mighty, heavenly armies (hosts) on our side in all of life's battles? This psalm teaches that in the high, sheltering refuge

that God has provided for us, He will magnify and energize His presence and strength to us. That's the place where we can "be still [cease our efforts], and know..." that He is God. When we are *still*, then, we *know*.

In a similar way, amidst the challenges and difficulties we face during our walk in this world, Jesus, Himself, promises that *His yoke* is one of rest and relief.

**Matthew 11:28-30** (The Amplified Bible)

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls].*

*Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls.*

*For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good--not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.*

No matter what we are faced with during our life-journey, as we claim the *rest* provided by Christ and the *protection* and *presence* of God's high tower, let us courageously proclaim, "Therefore, we will not fear..." (Psalms 46:2a; New International Version) These ideas establish the context and heart of our Father's exhortation, "Be still, and know that I am God..."\*

(Rev. Kevin P. Guigou serves with the **Christian Family Fellowship Ministry**, a teaching and fellowship association of families and home churches. He presently serves on CFFM's board of trustees, and oversees a home fellowship with his wife, Sara, in Vandalia, Ohio. Kevin may be reached by e-mail at [kguigou@woh.rr.com](mailto:kguigou@woh.rr.com). To learn more about CFFM, please visit [www.cffm.org](http://www.cffm.org).)

## **FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT**

### *Essay*

(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this "grab-bag," appearing from time to time, you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, compositions, letters, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God's people.)

## **"The Two Approaches To Biblical Translation"**

*by Robert A. Lightfoot*

**T**HE BIBLE WAS NOT originally written in English. Most of the books of the Old Testament were first composed in Hebrew (with a few portions in Aramaic), while the entire New Testament, it is believed, was originally written in Greek (although some books may also incorporate Aramaic sources). What most people today read are not the original texts, but other people's translations of the Biblical books: copies of copies of copies. Most of the older translations of the Bible in English have recently been revised to accommodate our ever-changing language.

When it comes to English Bibles, there are two basic philosophies or styles of translation: *formal correspondence* and *dynamic equivalence*. The first, formal correspondence, includes translations like the King James Version (KJV), the New King James Version (NKJV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the New International Version (NIV), Today's New

International Version (TNIV), and the Douay-Rheims Bibles (DRB). These are mostly accurate in maintaining the original wording and word order of the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Dynamic equivalence translations, which include the Good News Bible (GNB), the New English and Revised English Bibles (NEB/REB), The Contemporary English and Today's English versions (CEV/TEV), and the Jerusalem and New Jerusalem Bibles (JB/NJB), use modern English, and remain close to the original expressions of ideas, but do not always follow the exact wording or word order of the original texts.

In considering the many translations (and versions) we have available today, it is important to note some key points. The first is that there are no original manuscripts available today. The extant manuscripts that are available for viewing have many textual differences, such as minor spelling variations. Some have major sections included or not included.

(A good example is I John 5:7 and 8.) Since the ancient languages used in the originals are very different from modern English, some meanings of the Biblical texts are unknown or uncertain. This is an important point to remember when studying and using basic principles of Biblical research.

Recent discoveries of older manuscripts, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Codex Sinaiticus, have allowed scholars to get *closer* to the original text of the Bible, so modern translations can be more accurate than medieval ones. Since our English language is ever evolving and much different than the language employed by the translators of the King James Version (KJV), there are spelling variations, grammatical substance changes, and idioms foreign to English that any student of The Word must recognize and discern.

In formal correspondence, translations of the Bible seem to employ a literal approach, which can be more accurate, but often requires detailed explanations to avoid any misinterpretations by modern readers. These are done in commentaries, footnotes, center references, etc. These Bibles, this writer contends, are best suited to in-depth study for the accuracy of The Word. They may, however, be less suitable for public readings, if presented without explanations. People who do not study the Bible may find these translations difficult to understand. An example of this type of translation may be found in Genesis 4 of the King James Version (KJV).

**Genesis 4:1a** (KJV-formal correspondence)

*And Adam **knew** Eve his wife; and she conceived,...*

Wow! What could that mean? For the best renderings for public readings, translators have used dynamic equivalence. These translations are less literal than the formal correspondence method, but they can be just as faithful to the original texts' intent. These are well suited to public proclamations or liturgical usages. (Paraphrases, like The Living Bible (TLB), would not fall into this scope, as **they are not genuine translations** at all. These not only condense and/or omit much material, but **they freely change the wording** of the Biblical texts to make the accounts more "relevant" to their intended readers.) Now, let's look at our verse from Genesis 4, using the Good News Bible (GNB), a dynamic equivalence translation.

**Genesis 4:1a** (GNB-dynamic equivalence)

*Then Adam **had intercourse** with his wife and she became pregnant,...*

Now, that makes sense! Another good example of the difference between formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence translations may be found in their methods of describing the time of day. Ancient Israel counted twelve hours from sunrise to sundown, and divided the night into four "watches." A formal correspondence rendering of 5:00 P.M. would be "the eleventh hour," while dynamic equivalence would translate the same as "five o'clock in the afternoon." Let us again examine another scripture with both methods employed to see the differences.

**I Samuel 24:3** (KJV-formal correspondence)

*And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and **Saul went in to cover his feet**; and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.*

**I Samuel 24:3** (CEV-dynamic equivalence)

*There were some sheep pens along the side of the road, and one of them was built around the entrance to a cave. **Saul went into the cave to relieve himself**. David and his men were hiding at the back of the cave.*

Do we conclude that these verses contradict each other, or realize that the formal correspondence method is employing a euphemism (from the culture of the place and times)? By comparing and contrasting the verses, we know the language employed by the translators of the formal correspondence version used a pleasant expression ("...to cover his feet...") for one that may be considered offensive or unpleasant ("...to relieve himself...").

Acts 1:12, in the Revised Standard Version (RSV), contains the phrase, "...a Sabbath day's journey away," while the Good News Bible (GNB), concerning the same phrase, says, "...about a kilometer away from the city." Anyone familiar with ancient Jewish culture will understand that a Sabbath day's journey is not a one-day journey, but only a short distance of about a kilometer, or about 5/8 of a mile. To this person, a formal correspondence translation is not hard to understand. The new Bible reader, however, who does not even have an inkling concerning Jewish culture, will most likely believe that it is a one-day journey. A meaning-based translation, like the GNB, may be best for the new Bible reader, until he becomes more acquainted with manners and customs, and other Orientalisms of the Bible.

As we all know, there are many different kinds of readers. You should decide what kind of reader

you are, and estimate your reading level. Are you seeking a literal translation, or one that provides a thought-for-thought presentation? Do you prefer the historic dignity of the King James Version (KJV), the widely accepted and respected New International Version (NIV), or, perhaps, the very readable and contemporary New Living Translation (NLT)? For academic study of the Bible by those who do not know Hebrew or Greek, it is good to compare at least three or four different modern translations. It can also be interesting, and helpful, to use at least one dynamic equivalence and one formal correspondence translation. Each translation has its own strengths and weaknesses. Although the cadence and the terminology may differ, The Word itself, according to II Peter 1:20, is not "...of any private [or "one's own"] interpretation." Now, consider the Contemporary English Version (CEV) rendering of this verse.

#### **II Peter 1:20** (CEV-dynamic equivalence)

*But you need to realize that no one alone can understand any of the prophecies in the Scriptures.*

What? What about God's will and desire that we "...come unto the knowledge of the truth..."? (I Tim. 2:4) This is definitely a weak translation. It certainly

does not follow the accuracy portrayed in the formal correspondence method. A Bible translation is very good if it is **1)** faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts, **2)** is easy to understand, and **3)** has no doctrinal comment. That being said, we should always be careful when using Bibles that have commentaries.

The question that remains is, "How will you respond to God's voice as He speaks to you from the pages of His Word?" It is a blessing that the Word of God is available to anyone who needs it, in an accurate translation, and in almost any language. The different versions, however, may cause controversy and problems in Bible study groups and teaching situations. The differences in translations can also be a subject of great division within The Church. This is why we are exhorted, in II Timothy 2:15, to "...shew **thys**elf approved unto God..." \*

*(Mr. Robert A. Lightfoot was brought up in a Christian home, and is presently involved in fellowships, classes, and many other events in northern California. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Akribos Theological Seminary, and serves in the ministry full time with Christian Family Fellowship of Northern California. Robert may be contacted by e-mail at [robertlightfoot@theexcellentway.com](mailto:robertlightfoot@theexcellentway.com), or you may telephone him at (209) 537-6776. For additional information, feel free to visit [www.theexcellentway.com](http://www.theexcellentway.com).)*

## **FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT**

*(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department, examines God's Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)*

### **“ ‘The Devil, You Say?’ ”**

**[Editor's Note:** *The accompanying illustration is an original rendering by Joshua Shaffer of Dayton, Ohio.]*

**I**MAGES SHAPE OUR thinking. The image we hold of someone or something influences the way we think of him, or her, or it. Of course, this also applies to our image of the Devil. Let's take a look at our contemporary view of the Devil, in the light of God's Word. We shall soon uncover the truth and the lies of that image.

The traditional image of the Devil is one of a man with horns protruding from his forehead, while he wags a pointy tail. He is usually dressed in red, carrying a pitchfork, and often wearing a cape and sporting a goatee. At times he has cloven goats' feet, but is always presented as a very sinister character. He is seen as the ruler of a fiery domain, where the wicked are even now being punished. This is the predominant image of the Devil in Western cultures.

Let's first consider the horns, tail, goatee, and hooves. In antiquity, idols of various gods were often a combination of human and animal aspects. We know of the gods of Egypt, but this practice of attributing human

and animal characteristics to false gods was observed throughout the Middle East. After the Crusades, the Knights Templars were accused of many heretical crimes, one of them supposedly being the worship of a goat-headed idol, that is to say, Devil worship. The goat aspect was originally linked to fertility, but has since become representative of bestial lusts. Even the satyrs of Greek mythology, supposedly half man and half goat, epitomized this notion, spending their days seeking carnal pleasures. All these elements have played a part in fostering our modern image of the Devil.

This association between goats and idols can be seen in Leviticus 17:7a, where The Word says, "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils,..." The Hebrew word *sair* is rendered here as the word "devils." It means, "hairy one, kid, or goat," and is also translated "satyrs" in a few places. While the link between idolatry and the Devil is undeniable, he is not limited to this goat image.

The pitchfork (his scepter) and the color red, representative of fire and blood, are symbolic of the Devil's alleged reign in Hell. In this underworld, he is said

to torment souls in eternal fires, which are fed by the endless labors of the damned. All the while, the Devil, roaring with maniacal laughter, uses his pitchfork to prod and torment the lost souls.



We have seen, however, in a previous article in this column entitled “**‘Hel’ And The Bible**” (Fall, 2004; Vol. II, No. 1), that the English word “hell” derives from Norse mythology, being depicted therein as a realm of torment. Furthermore, Dante’s *Inferno* (from his *Divine Comedy*) is the source of many popular images of Hell. Although the Bible clearly speaks of the “lake of fire” in the Book of Revelation, Hell, in the traditional, theological sense, is an invention of the Devil himself, a stick to go with his enticing carrots.

The final aspect of the modern image is that the Devil wanders the world trying to buy or barter for men’s souls. Why would he? According to Ephesians 2:1-3, before salvation, we were all “...dead in trespasses and sins...,” walking according to “...the course of this world...,” and lusting after the desires “...of the flesh and of the mind...” As the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), he runs the systems of this age, blinding “...the minds of them which believe not...,” and orchestrating much of the affairs of this life. As such, he doesn’t need to buy souls, for the unsaved are already his. We were once a part of his world, but when we accepted the atoning work of Jesus Christ, our lives were redeemed (Rom. 10:9).

We have examined the image the Devil has largely crafted for himself, but what does God have to say? The Scriptures teach, in II Corinthians 11:14 and 15, that it is nothing special for the Devil to masquerade as something Godly, as an “...angel of light.” Indeed, often those serving him present themselves as “...ministers of righteousness...,” which is a far cry from the dark persona we’ve come to associate with him. Instead, through that which appears pleasing, he often tempts and tries to ensnare us. Using our traditional image of him as a decoy, so we won’t recognize him, he seeks to entice us to take the carrot he offers.

Jesus Christ, in John 10:10, cut right through the deception, calling the Devil the “thief,” whose aim is to “...steal, and to kill, and to destroy...” What does he steal? If unchecked, he will rob God of glory that is due Him. He will certainly try to rob us of our knowledge of the truth, our understanding of our salvation, and even our peace of mind. I Peter 5:8 bluntly declares, “...the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour...” He may approach in subtlety and beauty, but, underneath, he is like a “...roaring lion...” He is a con artist, and does not bargain; he tricks.

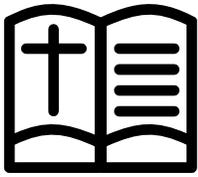
A play in which Dr. Faust makes a deal with the Devil is the primary source for the belief that Satan bargains for men’s souls. Why would the Devil bargain? As we have noted, until we are saved, we are all under his authority (Eph. 2:1-3), albeit ignorantly. Salvation is by God’s grace (Eph. 2:5 and 8), and once a person has received it, the Devil has nothing to bargain with, for his “coin” is valueless by comparison.

Does he try to approach us directly? No. He is too sly for that. Revelation 12:9 identifies him as, “...the great dragon..., that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...” It is believed that Eve and Jesus Christ are the only two individuals who were personally confronted by the Devil. With Eve, as the serpent, he approached with craftiness, for she held the authority at that time (Gen. 3:1-6). With Jesus Christ, as one having dominion over this world, he showed himself openly as the Devil, in direct opposition to the purposes of God (Luke 4:1-7). Most of his influence upon humanity, however, is indirect, coming through people, things, and events.

At times, he is called Satan, and sometimes the Devil. What are these names? *Satan* itself is a Hebrew word, which means, “accuser” or “adversary.” “Devil” comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, which means, “slanderer,” and is the source of the English word “diabolical.” The Hebrew word *satan* is either left as “Satan” or is translated as “adversary.” “Satan” and “Devil” are not names as much as they are labels that describe what our enemy truly is. Biblically, each name is used in a specific manner. “Satan” is used of him when he acts indirectly, as presented in the Book of Job, perhaps the clearest Biblical record of the Adversary working through a person’s surroundings. “Devil,” on the other hand, is employed to denote his direct involvement.

The Devil has worked on his image over the years, in order to hide himself and his true methods of operating. He is a liar (John 8:44), manipulating his image so as to hide his true nature and intent. He uses camouflage and misdirection, cloaking himself behind decoys, but God’s Word reveals to us who and what he truly is. Because of this, we “...are not ignorant of his devices.” (II Cor. 2:11)\*

(Mr. Keith Jamison is presently the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion’s Research Department, regularly developing material for the “From The Research Department” and the “Investigating Creation Science” columns.)



**GOD**

And

**Country**



*(In this column, appearing in every spring and fall issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, our editor-in-chief, Rick Heeter, will explore the Judeo-Christian heritage of America and her social and political institutions. Through this running commentary, we will discover where we came from as a people, and how we can preserve our unique, cultural identity and the liberties it fosters.)*

## “Blood On The Mountainsides”

by Rick Heeter

**E**VEN BEFORE THE REFORMATION and the Renaissance, men of conscience had become weary of the strictures imposed by what seemed to be a soulless institution claiming to represent the God of the Bible. That men who supposedly walked with the Almighty could govern the lives of others with an iron fist seemed, to them, to be far removed from the teachings of Christ. Such incongruity often led questioning men to remove themselves from the established order, and earned for them the charge of heresy. Such were the Waldensians.

Sketchy evidence supports the notion that the Waldensians traced their lineage and beliefs to the First Century saints of the Middle East. This, and the fact that they lived in the high valleys and recesses of the Cottian Alps of northern Italy, earned for them the ire of the religious authorities in Rome. Branded as heretics, they were relentlessly persecuted for years. It is especially appalling that men, who presumed to oversee the affairs of God upon Earth, would take it upon themselves to take the lives of others who named the name of Christ, but that's precisely what happened.

What galled Church authorities was not the fact that the Waldensians could trace their bloodlines to early Christians of the Middle East, nor their close proximity in the Italian Alps, but their beliefs, which challenged the well-entrenched doctrines of The Church. From the times of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, in the Fourth Century, they maintained their spiritual independence from what was then solidifying in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Among their beliefs was the recognition of “Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the church,” the placing of no value on “meritorious works,” the acknowledging of “faith alone as securing salvation,” the rejection of “prayers made for the dead,” and opposition to “the worship of images,” which they deemed to be “absolute idolatry.” For these beliefs, their churches were burned, their children were slain, and their lives were spent on the run.<sup>2</sup>

From the 1180s through the 1600s, they were threatened, tricked, pillaged, robbed, tortured, exiled, and slaughtered. Agents of The Church, professing to be carrying out God's will, ripped limbs from live victims, dashed the heads of children against stones, marched

fathers to their deaths while the heads of their sons hung around their necks, raped children, and cast women off high peaks to be broken on the rocks below. For some 450 years, the Waldensians were hunted and slain, and all in the name of Christ.

There have been few persecutions in which the victims have been so “completely dehumanized,” and where the types of suffering have been so “monstrously disgusting, so unutterably cruel and revolting.” Needless to say, the countless “fiendish...atrocities” against the Waldensians are considered by many historians to be utterly unparalleled.<sup>3</sup>

In blatant opposition to the “new commandment” issued by the Lord Jesus in John 13:34, that His disciples should “...love one another...,” professing Christians persecuted their brethren to the death. The legacy of the Waldensians, and others like them, who hazarded their lives because of a love of the Scriptures and the God Who authored them, helped pave the way for the spiritual revolution that we know as the Reformation. Because of saints who refused to deny the Word of God, a foundation was laid and events were put in motion that would lead to and influence the character of the modern age.\*

### Endnotes:

- 1) Stephens, Capt. R. M.; *The Burning Bush*; privately published (1975); p. 15.
- 2) Muston, Alexis; *The Israel Of The Alps: A Complete History Of The Waldenses And Their Colonies, Prepared In Great Part From Unpublished Documents*; translated by Rev. John Montgomery; Blackie And Son; London, England (1875); Vol. I, pp. 8 and 9.
- 3) Wylie, J. A., Rev.; *The History Of Protestantism*; republished by Mourne Missionary Trust; Kilkeel, Northern Ireland (1985); Vol. II, p. 485.

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*(Mr. Rick Heeter is the editor-in-chief of The Ryburn Christian Clarion.)*

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