

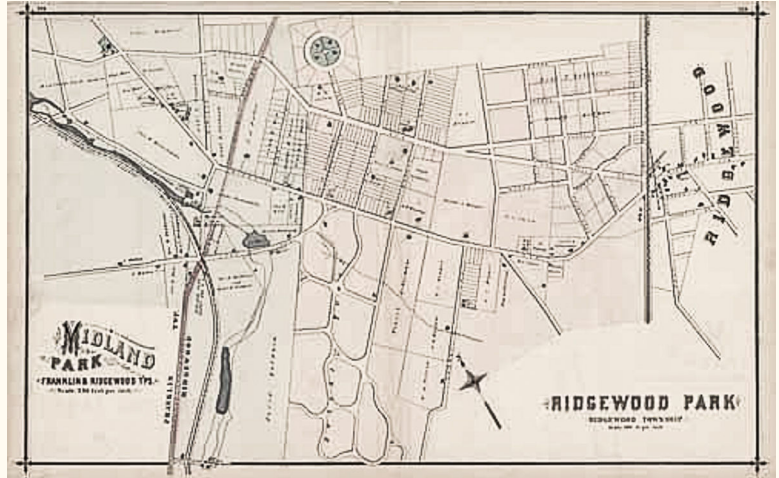
# Looking Back

*The early years of testimony in Midland Park*



The Borough of Midland Park, New Jersey, almost two square miles in size, was incorporated in 1895, and comprised 1,250 people of predominantly Dutch descent. Many of these settlers worked in a woolen mill, which over the years expanded to include cotton and silk manufacturing. As one would expect in a Dutch area, many were of the Reformed faith. While some of these may have been true believers, there were many for whom religion was cultural, and who had never had a time in their lives when they saw their lost condition before God, and Christ's provision for their sin at Calvary.

The nearest assembly was the Ellison Street assembly in Paterson, now Valley Bible Chapel in Washington Township. This was an era of extensive gospel work in the New York metropolitan area. There were believers in fellowship in the Paterson assembly who lived near Midland Park.



### *Plowing, Seeding, and Reaping*

The Paterson believers were exercised about the need of surrounding area, and gospel efforts were made in these areas. Their first gospel effort in the town was in 1921, when Sam Rea and Alfred Hazelton (an uncle of Alister Symon) pitched a tent on the corner of Vreeland and Franklin Avenues.



*Alfred Hazelton*

One young local woman, Julia Schaper (mother of Mary Greene and Martha Carmichael), thought, “whoever these people are, they have a lot of nerve to come into a town that already has six churches.” It was rumored that the group behind the tent were Russellites (*i.e.*, Jehovah’s Witnesses), but she knew Russellites would not have displayed the text that hung outside the tent, “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” She told her friends she would go to the tent to find out who they were. She was impressed by the preachers’ statement that they were preaching the word of God. They threw



*Sam Rea*

out a challenge: if they said anything that was not in accordance with scripture, they wanted to be corrected. Listeners were encouraged to bring their Bibles to the meetings. Julia, an active church-goer, took up the challenge. She came with her Bible. However, instead of calling out the preachers, the preaching, by the Holy Spirit, called out her; and one night, as the gospel was being preached from John 3:14 and 15, she trusted Christ.

Seven professed salvation in those tent meetings. Mr. Rea’s diary refers to some of his activities in that year:



A little diary of what took place since I gave myself to the "Work of the Lord" July 1921.

28<sup>th</sup> Wrote to Mr. J. Marshall who was operating a tent in Bloomfield, East Orange, stating my desire to give my time to preaching the Gospel and asking if the way was clear, to assist him for some time.

I had a reply dated 1<sup>st</sup> August telling me to come along at once, but not altogether encouraging.

I left my sisters, Mrs. Hoy, 1818 Cumberland St Phila following Thursday and arrived at 23 Linwood place, East Orange that afternoon. At prayer meeting the previous evening I mentioned

August.

to the brethren, in Breacher Hall my intention.

That night Thursday Aug I helped Mr Marshall in the tent.

The following night Fri. I also took first part of the meeting.

On Lord-day morning went to meeting in Hall in East Orange and took the meeting there at night.

On Monday I went to visit Clair to visit list operated by Johnson & Vothage and took a little opening part.

Tues. I went to Midland Park and took first part of meeting in tent there and continued about five weeks.

Julia Schaper, Mrs Myers, Mr. Van Hoff and Mr De Young proposed to be saved. A Hazelton & I conducted these meetings.

On Sun Mr. McEwen and I preached in hall in Paterson after which four were baptized. All who professed to be saved were baptized except the little girl named . . .

Also Mrs De Young who was already saved. Paterson assembly gave me \$30.

A Hazelton and I had two weeks meetings in . . . but saw no results. for the hall we paid \$20 weekly.

I then visited Bob and family in New York and came on to Minnie 3345 Ellis St Philadelphia arriving Wed at prayer meeting saw Mr. H. G. McEwen who asked me to assist him in meetings.

That same year, 1921, James Marshall had tent meetings on Glen Avenue, in Ridgewood (then called Harrison Avenue), two miles away. There were also two weeks of meetings in the Red Man Hall in Waldwick, a mile north of Midland Park. The speakers in those meetings are unknown. In his diary for August, 1921, Rea mentions two weeks' meetings with Hazelton, but only a blank line for where they were held. Perhaps they were the ones in Waldwick.

The following year, 1922, Hugh McEwen and Ben Bradford held tent meetings in Emerson, six miles east of Midland Park. They followed up the Emerson meetings with a tent on Prospect Street in Midland Park. This was the primary season of ingathering in Midland Park. About twenty-five professed faith in Christ in those meetings. Many of the new believers left their churches to gather to the Lord's Name in Paterson. Among those saved were David Zuidema and his wife, Fannie; Sadie Nauta, Mr. Zuidema's third wife and the mother of David Zuidema Jr; and Lester Greene. Two baptisms were held that year in a pond at the corner of Goffle Road and Rock Road, with as many as five hundred present to witness.

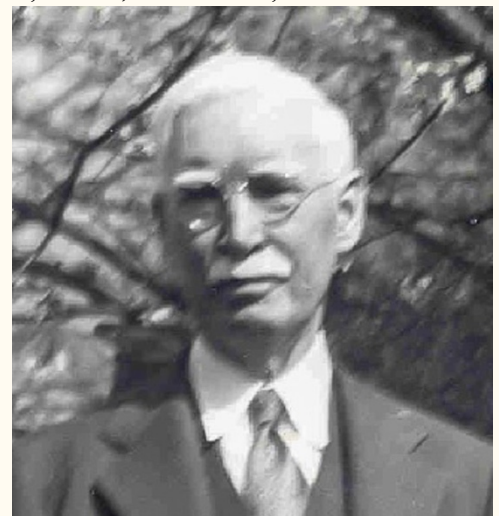


Hugh McEwen

In 1923, Bradford and McEwen pitched their tent in Hawthorne, two towns south of Midland Park, where they saw a number saved. There was no follow-up work with the converts from those

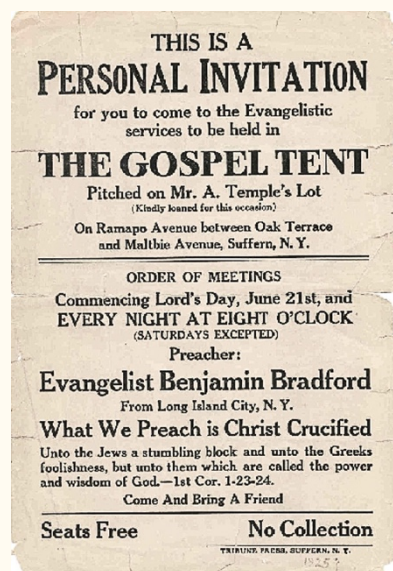
meetings. However, a year later, a group of believers began meeting in the Lafayette Avenue Fire Hall, leading to the formation of the Hawthorne Gospel Church. It is not known if any the converts from the 1923 meetings were part of that company, although it seems likely they were.

While the Hawthorne meetings were in progress, several brethren, including David Zuidema, Ben McLeod, Alfred Hazelton, and the three Greene brothers, Norman, Lester, and Harvey preached in a tent in Butler, in Passaic County.



Ben Bradford

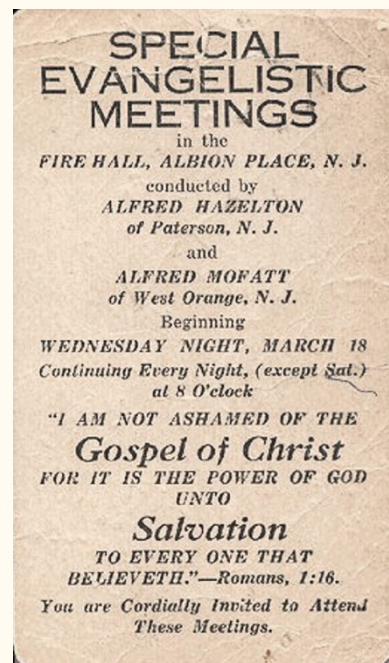
There was a gospel effort in Westwood in 1924, near where the tent was in Emerson had been two years earlier, and two more tents were in Passaic County that year, in Prospect Park and in Bloomingdale. Both efforts finished in September.



In 1925 there were again two tents, one in Boonton, where Alfred Hazelton and Harvey Greene preached for thirteen weeks, and concluding with a baptism of eight who had professed; and one in Suffern, New York, where Ben Bradford, David Zuidema, and William Glasgow preached.

That same year, Alfred Hazelton and Alfred Mofatt held gospel meetings in the Fire Hall in Albion (a section of Clifton, near Garrett Mountain).

The summer of 1926 saw a second tent series in Boonton with Alfred Hazelton and Peter Hoogendam, and a third tent in Midland Park, on the corner of Godwin and Franklin Avenues, where the Midland Park Library now stands.



### *Gathering*

On January 23, 1927, an assembly was formed in Midland Park, with about thirty-five in fellowship. Some had been in fellowship in Paterson. They were uncertain whether it was appropriate to abandon the Paterson assembly to meet at Midland Park, but Ben Bradford showed from the scriptures that when a work of grace is done in an area, with numbers turning to Christ, it is God's intention that a testimony to the Lord's Name be established there.

Most of those who formed that initial company had been saved in the three series of tent meetings there. The assembly met at 197 Godwin Avenue, in a store front. Ben Bradford held an opening series of gospel meetings.

In the summer of 1927, Ben Bradford, Hugh McEwen, and John Knox McEwen preached the gospel again from a tent on the lot where the hall now stands on Prospect Street. The assembly meant to erect a building on the lot. Work progressed rapidly, and in February, 1929, two years after its founding, the assembly moved from the store at 197 Godwin Avenue to the present hall. The first wedding in the new hall was that year, with Nellie McCabe marrying Norman Greene. The mortgage on the hall was cancelled in July, 1939.

Throughout the 1930s, the assembly continued to be active in gospel work in the open air and in rented buildings in Fair Lawn, Paterson, Prospect Park, Allendale, Pompton Lakes, and Sussex, and in Suffern and Hillburn, New York. One series was in Allamuchy and was bi-lingual, half in English and half in Dutch, spoken by John VanElswyk.





The order of meetings on the Lord's Day until the 1940s was:

- Breaking of Bread, 10:30 AM – Noon
- Bible Reading and Sunday School, 3:00 PM
- Gospel, 8:00 PM
- Prayer Meeting, Thursday, 8:00 PM

When gas rationing was imposed in 1941 during World War II, the Sunday School was changed from 3:00 PM to 9:00 AM so there would be one less trip to and from the hall, and Sunday School was followed by the Breaking of Bread.



*A hymn sing, circa 1940*

In an era before widespread air travel, many missionaries passed through New York City on their way to or from their fields of labor. The Midland Park assembly developed a special relationship with those who labored in Venezuela. William Williams and his fellow missionaries in Venezuela had made it a matter of prayer that the Lord would direct them to an assembly in the New York City area where they could stop over and be brought forward on their journey. The Lord answered, and for many years the Midland Park assembly and the laborers in Venezuela had a strong bond.

When Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Fairfield and their daughter Elizabeth were traveling from Venezuela to Ireland during World War II, they were denied passage from New York. So Midland Park had, for a time, a “resident missionary.” A doctor who was neighbor to one of the believers had an empty cottage on his property, which he graciously offered



*Sunday School children, looking unhappy*



for their use. These were happy times. Mr. Fairfield was able to visit other North American assemblies, but while with the Midland Park assembly labored as one with it.

Most of the foreign missionaries in Venezuela from Ireland and Canada traveled via New York, and spent time in Midland Park. Travel by freighter from New York was economical in that period, and allowed for taking supplies which could not be obtained in South America.

The first Sunday School Treat was on New Year's Day, 1933. The hall was packed with children, and they were unruly, with a food fight ensuing in the auditorium. There was ice cream on the walls, the chairs, and the floor. James McCullough spoke at the Treat and, evidently not dismayed by the pandemonium, returned to speak at Treats for several years following. Today's Treats are more sedate affairs.

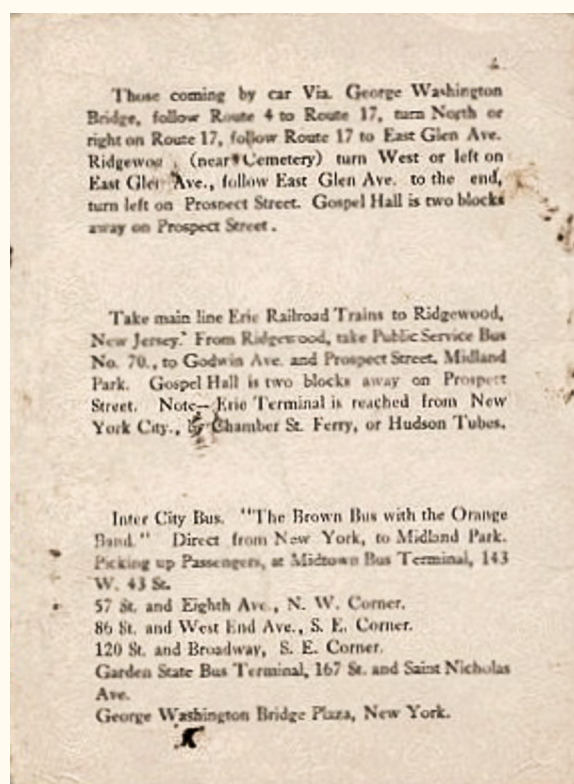
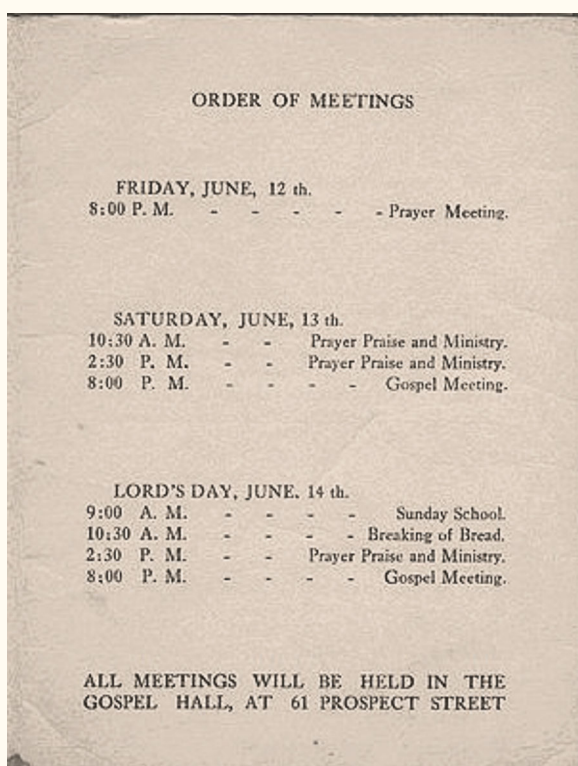
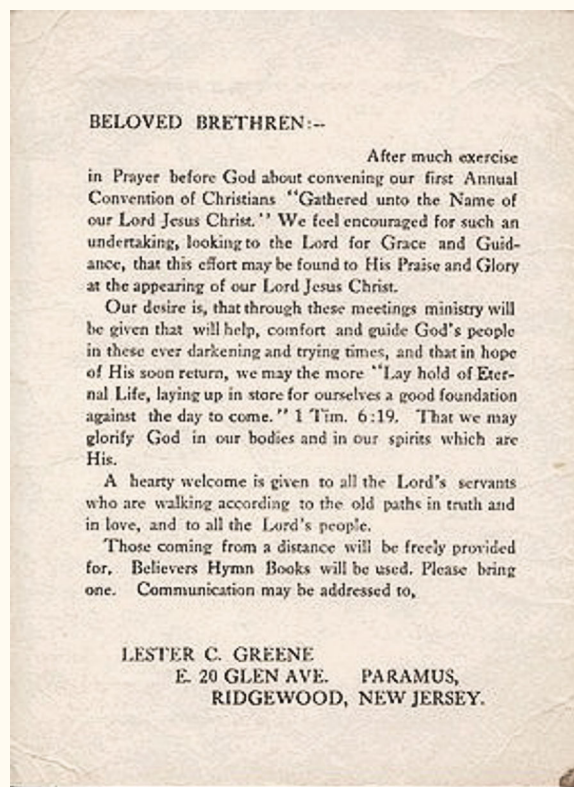
The annual Sunday School Picnic was held on the Fourth of July at Ringwood Manor State Park. This continued until around 1950, at which point it became impossible to reserve space in state parks, and the venue was changed.



*Sunday School Picnic at Ringwood Manor*

The first annual Bible conference was held on June 13 and 14, 1942. The believers sacrificed to hold the conference. Because of the war, many foods were rationed, but the Christians gave their stamps to purchase food for the conference. Some who attended the first conference never forgot the stifling heat. The basement floor became wet with humidity, and slippery. It was not pleasant. Because of this, the conference date was changed in 1944 to the last full weekend in September.





### *Passing the Torch*

In 1994, the last of the believers who comprised the initial company, Harvey Greene, went to be with the Lord. Ninety years after its formation, much about the assembly is the same. What has changed is the composition of the



company. A company of saints drawn mostly from western Europe has been replaced by a cosmopolitan company drawn from around the globe.

### *Testimonies*

We are fortunate in having available to us the testimonies of some of the early believers, which follow.

### *Colophon*

Norman Greene did printing as a hobby, using a Kelsey Excelsior tabletop letterpress machine. The announcements shown here are likely his work.

## Julia Schaper Greene

What a change since Jesus brought me  
Out of darkness into light,  
And for all His love and mercy  
I will praise Him day and night.

Once I lived to Him a stranger  
In my folly and my pride,  
Never did I think of danger  
That might in my pathway hide.

For I was a good church member,  
Teacher of the Sunday School,  
In the eyes of men was perfect;  
In the eyes of God a fool.

I was building a fine mansion,  
I myself had drawn the plan,  
Yet, alas! without foundation,  
I was building upon sand.

Yes, my friends, 'tis sad to say it,  
But while I did others tell  
To become and be like Jesus,  
I was on my way to hell.

But God sent a Gospel message,  
And the words were clear and plain,  
That no one can enter heaven  
Unless he is born again.

Yes, God in His love and mercy  
Sent His servants to our town,  
And they went to work in breaking  
My whole precious building down.

All my working and my toiling,  
It had all been done in vain,  
There was one thing lacking,  
I had not been born again.

And although I wore a garment  
That looked spotless, clean and white,  
Yet within my bosom hiding  
Was the blackness of midnight.

Every night I would be going  
To a canvas Gospel tent,  
And through words I there heard spoken  
Many restless nights I spent.

There I saw my sins before me,  
And cried out, "Oh can it be  
That God sent His Own Beloved  
To save such a one like me?"

Then one night I heard them speaking  
Out of John and chapter three,  
Where all those that look believing  
From their sins shall ransomed be.

I, too, saw my Savior bleeding,  
Dying on Mount Calvary,  
There I heard Him cry, "It is finished!"  
And He finished it for me.

Now the Savior is my Shepherd,  
And He leads me day by day,  
With His loving arms around me,  
He will guide me all the way.

I am no more under bondage,  
I said farewell to my creed;  
And I am no more a teacher,  
But I learn at Jesus' feet.

Now I have a Rock to build on,  
It is Jesus Christ, my Lord;  
And I have a plan to go by,  
Which is God's own precious Word.



And I want to live for Jesus,  
Who has done so much for me;  
And my aim will be to please Him,  
Who has died on Calvary.

Yes, without the camp He suffered  
It was there He made me free,  
And I want to follow Jesus,  
So that is the place for me.

Soon a blessed day is coming,  
When I'll meet Him face to face;  
Not as a religious sinner,  
But as a sinner saved by grace.

Jesus said , I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.  
(John 14:6)

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. (Titus 3:5)

By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8)

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Romans 10:4)

## David Zuidema

We'll read, please, in Hebrews 9:27: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." That's all that I wish to read.

My name is David Zuidema, and I'm going to heaven. I read this scripture because of a great experience I had, and what I went through when this scripture came to my ears.

I was born in Holland, raised in New Jersey, and I moved to Iowa to farm. I loved the world, and I loved pleasure. But I didn't know where I was going. I came into a condition I had never been in before. I found trouble and sorrow. I had a wife and two children. My wife and I talked about religion, what place we should go to, and whether we should we join up with some church. We wondered if we should have the children christened. My wife's folks wanted me to talk to a minister, and they invited him to the house. But her folks were more interested in having our children christened, than in me being saved or being brought into the congregation.

This gentleman paid us a visit. I had a Bible on the living room table. I didn't put it there just for his visit; I read the Bible, but I didn't know much about it. I didn't know there was an old testament and a new testament. If you had asked me to turn to the new testament I couldn't have done it. But I read it; and I thought more than once, if I really got interested in it, it must be a wonderful book to read. I was taught to read the Bible, but I when I did, people criticized me, saying I was getting religious. I wasn't getting religious; it was a book, and I thought I should read it, since I had heard it was the word of God.

When the man arrived, I laid the Bible on the table, and we sat on two chairs near the table. He said, "I've come to see you. Someone has asked me to speak to you about some different things." He talked to me about joining his congregation. I lived with people who were members of his congregation, and they lived like I did, and did what I did, so I didn't see what value there would be joining his congregation. I said to him, "What good would it do for me to become a member of your congregation?"

"Well," he said, "If you don't do it for yourself, do it for your wife and children."

Then he began to talk about the children being christened. I said to him, "My wife and I have talked about that quite a bit. What do you have to say about these children? They tell me if these children aren't christened, they'll go to hell." I was facing the children, who were off in a corner in the same room where we were sitting. "Do you mean if they aren't christened, have a little water put on their head, they'll go to hell?"

"No, they wouldn't go to hell."

"Well, where would they go? Would they go to heaven?"

He said, "No, they wouldn't go to heaven either".

I said, "That's strange; where would they go? Is there another place for them?"

He replied, "Oh yes, they'd be in the atmosphere, they would never have rest."

"Now look; we have a Bible here. Can you show me from the Bible what you're saying?"

"I can give it to you indirectly."

"What do you mean by indirectly?"

"Well, we have a little church book, a formula, it's in there."

"Where did you get it from to put it in there?"

He answered, "We got it out of the Bible."

"Here's a Bible. If you got it out of the Bible to put it in this book, show it to me out of the Bible." That was fair.

But he couldn't show it to me out of the Bible; and after a while, he admitted to me it wasn't in the Bible.

So of course, we had quite a conversation about becoming a church member. I said, "If I ever see or hear the right thing, I'll accept it, but I haven't heard it yet." He put his arm on my shoulder and



said, "Dave, bear that in mind, hold unto that and you'll be all right." I thought that was a rather strange thing for him to say, to tell me that after trying to get me to become a member of his church. With that we separated; he went his way, and I went mine.

I was under conviction of sin, but I didn't know what was the matter with me. We had an organ, and my wife played the organ, and we sang some beautiful hymns, but I never knew what God had done for me in giving his son to die for me upon the cross.

The question always came up before me, "I've got to meet God, I don't know if there's a heaven or a hell." I knew I had to go into eternity someday. There's not a soul in this meeting who can deny that you're on your way to eternity. No matter where I went, I was troubled about my sin, and meeting God. I was afraid to go anywhere. It haunted me; where ever I went I thought about meeting God.

One afternoon I came in from the field after harvesting some of the crops, and I had four horses abreast, alongside each another; and as I picked up the reins (I had a great big gate to open up to get the horses into the barnyard), and got the horses through, a verse came to me, almost as if someone had spoken it aloud, "Dave, it's appointed unto you once to die, and after this the judgment." There was no one with me or around me except my little boy, who was there by me in the barnyard. I didn't remember reading or hearing that verse, and I didn't realize it was in the Bible.

I had a nice wife, a very good woman, but she wasn't saved either. I thought that if anyone had a chance of getting to heaven, it would be my wife. So I went into the house after I had gotten the horses into the barn and I said to her, "I would like to ask you a question. Where are you going when you die?" You can imagine how she looked at me. To my surprise, she said, "I believe I'm going to hell." I said, "If that's the case—if you're going to hell—there's no chance of me getting to heaven."

We had many talks, and we used to say, "We ought to do something about this, and go somewhere, join up with some church." But we never did, because the people who went to these places were no different from me. One thing didn't leave me; the Holy Spirit was convicting me of my sin, and this thought was always with me, "You have to meet God—you must meet God." And I thought, what will happen to me, when I do meet God? For months this went on.

Things were not going well in Iowa, and I finally decided I had to get away from that part of the country. I had a crop failure once with water, I got washed out, and I lost a lot of money. I went to another farm and had a good crop, but it was the first world war, and when the war ended, prices dropped and I lost money. I made up my mind to move from Iowa to Minnesota. I had family there who were into dairying. I thought if I moved there, I might get rid of this feeling. I didn't know God, and I asked him to take the feeling away, because I was tormented with it, always thinking about eternity, dying, and meeting God.

I made my preparations, and sold things. I went to the bank and to my creditors and told them I was going to move. They said, "If you move away from here, we'll never get our money." I replied, "I think you will. If I get it, you'll get it." But they didn't get it.

I got everything together, hired a box car, put all that I had into it, and traveled three hundred fifty miles north. I got to my father's farm, and got the box car unloaded. I had some horses and hogs and a few pieces of machinery.

But the feeling didn't go away. I still had that terrible feeling: sin, death, meeting God. I had no rest. I was there only a week or two when I said to my wife, "I'm going to sell what I have and I'm going back to New Jersey." She said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "I believe I'm going to die, and if I do, I want you to be where your folks and relatives are. I don't want you to be here in Minnesota, all alone."

I gathered what I had, called an auctioneer, and had him make out sale bills. We had to go to a town called Princeton to have those bills made out. While we were there we saw a man named Otto, and the two men who were with me asked, "Otto, what are you doing here?" He said, "I'm going to die at two o'clock." I looked at him; he didn't seem to have any hesitation at all in saying he was going to die at two o'clock. They said, "What's the matter? What makes you say you're going to die?" He said, "I have to be operated on for appendicitis."

That brought to my mind something that had happened to me. A good friend of mine had been operated on for appendicitis, and I had an attack of appendicitis myself once. I thought of Otto, and thought if I were to be operated on and die, where would I go? I remembered that attack. I had such pain in my side, and I got out of bed doubled up, and prayed to God. I asked God for mercy, and I

asked him to take the pain away from me; and I walked, doubled-up, up and down the floor, and the pain did leave me. I stood up and thanked God that the pain had left me. I stood with my back against the wall and I saw my wife with the two little children and I just cried out, "Oh God, show me what to do and I'll do it." I was looking for something, but I didn't know how to obtain it.

We finished our business in Princeton, and the three of us went home in the sled. I never knew until after I got saved and wrote to these boys, that they were both saved. Think of it, me going to the town, me telling them some of my experiences, yet they never talked to me about my soul. Later, when I asked them the reason why, they said they were afraid of me. They said, "You were so big, and we were so small and we were afraid to tell you of your condition."

Well we got everything sold, and returned to New Jersey. But I had this before me all the time; I didn't know I was being convicted of sin by the Spirit of God, and that I was a sinner going to hell.

When we got to New Jersey we rented a little flat. I remember sitting by the window on Sunday mornings and seeing the people walking up and down the street, and I said to my wife, "It must be wonderful to know where you're going. These people just keep going back and forth every Lord's Day." But I couldn't find anything in it to satisfy me.

We moved to a town called Midland Park. That's where I had been raised. I was three years old when we moved there from Holland, and I lived there all my life, except for the seven years I lived in Iowa.

That summer there was a gospel tent pitched in Emerson. That was quite a few miles from Midland Park. There was a man who we had lived with in Iowa, and he and I used to talk things over. He was interested in my soul, I think. He came to me and said, "I want you to come with me to these gospel meetings because these men say they are going to heaven and they know it."

I said, "That's going too far. I don't think anyone can know they are going to heaven when they're on this scene."

He said, "They'll convince you."

Those meetings went on for a couple of weeks, but I was building a house. The devil does everything he can to keep the unconverted occupied with something, and I was occupied with building this home. Yet at the same time, my sins were troubling me, and the thought of meeting God troubled me.

After a while the tent was moved from Emerson to Midland Park on Prospect Street. On Lord's Day afternoon I sat by the table reading my Bible, and it was as if a voice said to me, "Dave, get up and go to the tent." It had already been there a week or so. So I went. I closed the Bible and went to the tent. This was a Sunday afternoon, and there was a ministry meeting in the afternoon, ministering the word of God to believers.

I stopped on my way at the house of the man who was interested in getting me to the tent and he asked me where I was going. So I said, "I'm going to the tent." He said he was glad I was going.

I didn't know what a ministry meeting was, and I didn't know what a gospel meeting was. I went into the tent, dressed in a blue work shirt and clean blue overalls, and I sat down in the back seat.

Ben Bradford and Hugh McEwen were preaching in the tent.

Mr. McEwen spoke first, but what he said I couldn't tell you. But I know one thing he did say, he spoke about infant sprinkling. He said that afternoon, "if anyone in this tent can get up and show me from the word of God where there is anything about infant sprinkling, I would like him to do it." I sat in the back seat with a man who I knew had his children baptized, and I thought he might get up and challenge Mr. McEwen and show him where it was. But he kept his seat.

Next, Mr. Bradford got up, and what he said I couldn't tell you either. But I knew I was interested. There was one thing I do remember. He said that present meeting was for Christians, for those who are saved, who know their sins forgiven, who are born again. He also said he was glad to see all who had come. While he was speaking, there were things he said that made me wonder if someone had told him about me. He said there would be a gospel meeting that night for people not saved, who don't know they are going to heaven; and he gave all a hearty invitation to come back.

So the meeting was over. I went out and walked up the road with the man I had sat next to in the back. I asked him, "Bill, why didn't you get up and challenge the man when he asked you or anyone else to get up and show him from the word of God where infant sprinkling is? You had it done to



your children.” He said to me, “It’s not there.” I asked, “Why did you have it done?” I was interested in that because I was interested in my children. He told me, “It’s not in the Bible at all.”

When I got home, my wife said to me, “What did you think of the meeting?”

I replied, “I never heard anything like it in my life. They say have to be born again, need to be saved, that you need Christ as your savior.” I continued, “I can’t tell you all they said, but I do remember that. I’m anxious to get back tonight, because they’re going to have a gospel meeting. I know we can’t both go. Now you wash tomorrow” (Monday was washday), “so you go tonight, and I’ll go tomorrow night.”

When she returned home from the meeting on Sunday night, I asked her what she thought of the meeting. She said, “I never heard anything like it before. You know, we’re going to hell, we’re not saved. We need to be born again. I was glad to be in that meeting and I can’t wait till I can go again.”

I couldn’t wait for Monday night to come. My wife went Sunday and Tuesday, I went Monday and Wednesday.

During that week I was working at a certain place, and some men came with gospel tracts. One man handed me some tracts. I had put my lunchbox and my jacket by a tree and they put some tracts by them. I said, “Those belong to me; I guess you’ll try to get me some way.” He said, “I hope we do.” I read one of the tracts and I said to the young man working with me, “Who are those men?” He said, “I don’t know, but I know they’re connected with the people who are having gospel meetings in a tent on Prospect Street. They surely preach the truth.” He was a church man. I asked him if he had gone to the tent, and he said, “Not yet. But they speak the truth.”

On Monday night I went to the meeting. On Tuesday, my wife went, and on Wednesday I went again, and invited the preachers to come to our house. I wanted this thing settled.

So they came to the house. It was 2:45 when they came, and they stayed till 5:45. Mr. Bradford had a well-marked Bible and he read many verses from the scriptures, but I couldn’t tell you any of the verses he read. But on my mind was, “How am I going to get this thing settled?”

Before he left, he said, “Young man, are you saved?” I said, “No, I’m not saved.” “Are you lost?” I said, “I can’t say I’m lost either.” He said, “That’s strange. People say they aren’t saved and they aren’t lost.” Then he gave this illustration.

“Suppose there’s a ship on the ocean and there are a lot of people on that vessel, and everything is going nice and smoothly with nothing to be alarmed about. All at once, the captain gives the cry that the ship is going down. Of those who had been on that ship, were some saved and were some lost?” I said, “Yes, those who were rescued were saved, the others perished, or were lost.” He asked, “Was there no third class of people?” I said, “No, only two.” He said, “That’s the same way it is with sinners, either they are going to heaven, or they are going to hell.” So I said “I would like to have that question settled.” I told him a little of my experience, and he left. And we went to another week of meetings.

The second week I invited the preachers to the house again, and Mr. Bradford read and quoted scripture to me. Then he asked again, “Young man, are you saved?” I said, “No, I’m not saved.” “Are you lost?” I said, “Yes, I believe I’m a lost sinner according to what you have been reading from the word of God.” And he asked, “Would you like to be saved?” I said, “I’d give anything to be saved, to know my sins forgiven, and to have peace with God.”

“Well,” he said, “you can’t give anything. It’s all been given. You can’t buy salvation, it’s all paid for by the atoning work of Christ. God’s son died on the cross for your sins and God says if you believe that, you go free.”

Yet with all the Scriptures that he read, I wasn’t saved. As he got up to leave, he said, “I’m going to give you an illustration. Suppose you committed a crime and are to receive fifty lashes over your back. But I love you, and I say to the judge, ‘Judge, I love this man, but he committed this crime and is due to get fifty lashes over his back. I love him and I’ll take his place.’ If I take your place and receive the fifty lashes, what happens to you?”

I said, “I go free.”

He asked, “Why?”

“Because you took my place.”

“Could they hold you anymore?”

“No, because you suffered in my place.”

“Well,” he continued, “you deserved to go to hell because of your sins, but God loved you so much he sent his son into the world to go to the cross. Your sins were laid upon him. He bore the wrath and curse of God for your sins; and now God says if you believe that, you’ll go free.”

So he got up with that and walked toward the door, and asked, “Are you saved, young man?” And I said, “Yes, I am saved. Thank God, I am saved. I believe what God says concerning his son.”

I was saved right there at my kitchen door at a quarter to six on a Thursday afternoon in 1922.

My wife got up from her chair as these men were going out the door and I just turned around and I met my wife face to face. She said, “So you’re saved?” I said, “Yes, I’m saved. I believe that Jesus died for me.” She said, “I got saved at the same time when he told the story of how God loved us and sent His son to die on that cross that we might be saved.” We both trusted Christ and were saved. About three and a half years later, it pleased God to take my dear wife home to heaven, and she left this scene.

The night after I was saved there was an announcement made that if anyone wanted to be baptized, there was going to be a baptism on Saturday afternoon. So I went to Mr. Bradford and asked what a man would need in the way of clothes to be baptized. He said, “A pair of socks, pants, and a shirt.” I was saved on Thursday, baptized on Saturday, and received into the fellowship of the Pater-son assembly on the Lord’s Day, where I remained until the meeting started in Midland Park in 1927.

I would like to tell you this, too. When I left the west, I left a lot of debt. My creditors thought they would never get their money, and I didn’t have it to pay.

One day a man came into my yard to talk to me. He had heard that I had gotten saved. “Yes, I got saved. I never heard a story like it before.”

The man said, “I went down to the tent but I can’t understand the English language too well. So you are saved.”

“Yes,” I said, “I know my sins are forgiven, I have peace with God, and that whole burden rolled away. What peace and joy I have, to think that God loved me, and gave his son to die on a cross for me.”

Now this man knew me when I was in Iowa, when I was going through my financial troubles. He said, “Dave, you’re a Christian now you say.”

“Yes,” I said, “I am. I’m a sinner saved by the grace of God, that makes me a Christian.”

“You know,” he said, “you left a lot of debt in Iowa.”

He didn’t have to remind me. I knew it. But it was the best thing he could have told me, after I’d preached to him. I said, “If God gives me the money, I’ll pay my debts.” And you know, God did, and I’m glad of it. I started a little business, and nine years after God saved me, I went out to Iowa and paid every cent I owed. The people were astonished. They didn’t know what to make of it. I told every one of them how God saved me, and that was the reason I had gone back there, to pay my debts.

I went to one old man. I had given him a note, just a piece of paper. I had no money so he took a note. I owed him for a horse and some seed corn, totaling a hundred twenty dollars. I went to the door and a woman answered, so I asked if the man lived there that I was looking for. She said he did. It was more than ten years since I had seen him. I told her my name, but she didn’t know me. I asked if I could see the old gentleman. She took me into the bedroom to see him. He lay there, this poor old man, unshaven. I spoke to him in Dutch, “Do you know who I am?” He said, “No, I don’t know you.” I said, “You know me all right, but it’s been awhile since you saw me. Do you remember a man who bought a horse and some seed corn from you? It amounted to a hundred twenty dollars?” He was pretty old, but he finally did. “Yes”, he said, “I remember that.”

He said, “I just got rid of that note not too long ago. I carried it in my pocket, in my wallet, and you know how paper gets worn from folding and unfolding it, and by and by it broke all to pieces, and I said, ‘I’ll never get this.’”

“Remember how much it was?” I told him and he agreed on the amount. “Well here’s your check for a hundred twenty dollars, and if there’s any more I owe you, let me know.” He was so surprised, I thought he would die of heart failure.

I went to another man; I owed him eighty dollars. He came to the door after I knocked, and said, “Who are you?”

“My name is Zuidema.”

“Where are you from?”

“I’m from New Jersey. I used to farm out here. Remember a man who bought a wagon box of seed oats that cost eighty dollars?”

He thought awhile, and said, “Yes, I do.” So I told him I was there to pay him the money. The man said, “I never thought of you again; I said, ‘It’s gone, I’ll never see it.’”

“Well here’s the money. The reason I’m here is not only because I got the money, but I want to tell you how God saved me.” He didn’t know anything about that. I told him how God saved me, and how I had told people if I got the money, I’d return to pay it.

He said, “I’ve never seen anything like this in my life.” There was a paper published out there, and he said, “I’m going to put this in the paper, how a man came back after so many years to pay his debt.”

I repaid not only these two, I did it to all I owed money to.

That’s what God did for me. God did so much for me. God was so good to me that I could go back and pay the debt I owed. The word of God says, “Go home, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee.” And God surely couldn’t do anything greater. He saved my soul. He got me out of all my trouble, and I don’t have to worry about where I’m going, because I’m going to heaven.

**Delivered in the Bryn Mawr Gospel Hall**



## Norman Greene

My early training was like that of a typical American boy, and at the end of it one could say of me, I was not very good and not very bad. As a small boy I was sent to Sunday School, but what they taught there, I do not remember. All that I remember of my early life is that somewhere I gained a knowledge of a God who I supposed to be just, and a knowledge of a heaven and a hell. I cannot remember a day in my life that I did not pray. I also had a great fear of God; and this, of course, kept me from open sin with my companions.

There was in my life something which I could not define. When it was morning, I wished it were evening, and when it was evening I wished it were morning. There always seemed to be something just ahead which would give rest and satisfaction; but what that something was, I did not know. This continued for twenty-eight years of my life. I recall sitting in the living room of our home reading a magazine, my feet resting on the family Bible, wishing I knew what it contained, but not reading it for fear my family would laugh at me if I did.

One evening, while living at a YMCA, I received a letter in my mail asking me to come down to the office and inquire for a Mr. S. Not knowing anyone by that name, or why he should ask me to come and see him instead of his coming to see me, I was in no hurry to answer his request. When I finally did, I was directed to what they called the religious department. When I met Mr. S, he asked, "Are you a Christian?" Believing I was, I answered, "Yes". His next question was, "Do you pray?" I replied, what sort of Christian one would be if he didn't pray? "Do you read the Bible?" I answered, "No". Taking a small new testament from his desk, he opened it. The inside front cover page had a form to be filled in pledging the recipient to read a chapter every day; reading the form to me, he offered to give it to me if I would agree to the terms and sign my name.

Knowing I might not keep the pledge, I did not want to sign it. I offered to buy it, or if he would give it to me without signing the pledge, I would accept it. This he refused to do. At last I thought the best thing I could do to get away from the man was to sign the pledge and get the testament. Taking it to my room, I began reading it; and as I read it through, I learned many things. Some things I understood and some I did not; some things I believed and some I did not; some things made me afraid and some things I thought were very good. These latter things impressed me most, especially the "exceeding great and precious promises." I wrote these down on a piece of paper, thinking they might be useful in the future.

One evening I opened my new testament at John's gospel, chapter ten and verse one, reading these words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." For the first time I came face to face with the kingdom of God or hell for eternity. I understood the sheepfold to represent the kingdom of God, and Christ the door or way of entrance, and all outside that kingdom as thieves and robbers. This, of course, left me standing outside. Prayers, morality, and good works that I was trusting in as a means of acceptance with God would gain me no entrance. It was by these means that I was trying to climb up into God's favor. I was like the thief. I did not understand how to enter by that door. I realized that every step I took was one step nearer hell. This state of things continued for three months.

I still continued reading the scriptures, and wondering how I could be saved. One afternoon, as I walked the street, despairing, these words flashed through my mind, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Not being sure they were words of scripture I went to my new testament, and searched for two evenings until I found them. They were the words of the thief. I read the story of how the Lord Jesus was crucified with a thief on either side, and one railed on him, but the other answered him saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." And he said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

After reading these scriptures I came to the conclusion that it was easy to be saved. The thief believed Christ was dying for him, and by calling upon him, he was saved. With this thought in my

heart, I am on my way to hell and have tried almost everything to be saved, and have no rest because of my sins, I thought, why cannot I be saved in just the same way? For I already believed that God had raised Christ from the dead. So I called upon him, and passed from death unto life that moment. I was a thief and a robber. Hell would have been my due reward, but Jesus died for me.

The dying thief rejoiced to see,  
That fountain in his day,  
And there have I, though vile as he,  
Washed all my sins away.

## Sadie Nauta Zuidema

I was brought up going to Sunday School and church every week, but was never told that I was a sinner and needed to be born again if I was to go to heaven. I was never told I was lost, and needed a savior.

In 1921 a gospel tent was pitched about a block from our home. Sam Rea and Alfred Hazelton preached the gospel there every night. I attended a few of the meetings with a girlfriend. I was not impressed with the gospel messages, but I did enjoy the singing.

The following year, 1922, another gospel tent was pitched on Prospect Street, near where the Gospel Hall is now. Hugh McEwen and Ben Bradford preached the gospel that year.

I started attending the meetings every night, and soon found out I was a sinner and needed a savior, and that good works would not get me to heaven.

During the meetings my mother would tell me to “stay home tonight,” as there were things she wanted me to do around the house. I said I would stay home and do them, but when 7:30 came, nothing could hold me; I just had to go to the meeting. I didn’t realize at that time that the Spirit of God was striving with me. I now knew I was lost and on my way to hell. I continued to attend the meetings, waiting for a feeling of some kind, which never came. This went on for a while. On Friday night, September 8, I stayed after the meeting, Mr. McEwen came over and sat beside me. I told him I would like to be saved, and know for sure that I was on my way to heaven. He read many Scriptures, then turned to John 3:16. When he read it, he said “whosoever feeleth” instead of “whosoever believeth.” He asked, “Is that what it says?” I said, “No, it says believeth.” He read it several times. My eyes were opened to see that salvation depended, not on what I felt, but on believing what God says.

I got up to go out, and as I was walking to the door I saw that the Lord Jesus bore my sins in his body on the cross, and if I believed it, I would be saved. Right there, I accepted him as my savior.

That was sixty years ago. I have never regretted it. I am happy that this very important matter was settled, and am waiting for the Lord’s return.



## Harvey Greene

My first serious thoughts of eternal matters began when one of my brothers, who had just been saved, told me about his conversion. He told me he was saved, and as sure of being in heaven as if he were there already. This was strange to me. I could not understand how anyone could have such confidence. He showed me in the scriptures that his confidence was founded upon the word of God, which is forever settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89, Proverbs 30:5)

Sometime later two other scriptures came to my attention. One of these was John 3:3, which reads, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The other was Romans 3:23, which says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." I had never experienced the first, but I recognized the truth of the second, because of my own sin.

Shortly after this I was taken to gospel meetings. The first impression they made was the unity of a few Christians, comprising different nationalities and classes of people, gathered around the scriptures and having a common interest. I considered that in Europe in the great war, which was then going on, these people were fighting among themselves. I saw the truth of John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

I continued going to gospel meetings. I became anxious as I learned from the word of God that I was not saved. I realized the fact that I was traveling what the Bible calls the broad road that leads to hell and the lake of fire. When, sometime later, I attended a meeting in New York City, and the preacher spoke of the coming of the Lord from the book of Revelation chapter three, and from the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the power of the spirit was so real to me that it would not have surprised me if the Lord had come before the close of the meeting (I Thessalonians 4:17). Had this happened, I knew the judgment of God awaited me.

I became greatly burdened about my sins. One night I was suddenly awakened by the ringing of the fire bells of our village. This was during the war, and the police and firemen had agreed that if anything unusual happened, they were to be called together by the ringing of the fire bells. My first thought was that the Lord had come for his people, and they were ringing the bells to let the people know. I was distressed and anguished as I thought that I had missed God's salvation, and must spend eternity in the everlasting burnings. My fears were removed when I determined that my brother was in his room, and not been taken to heaven, as I supposed. I continued in this state of soul until one night when I finally found peace.

On this particular night, I set out to attend a gospel meeting in Paterson. I walked to the Ridgewood train station, and waited for a train, which soon arrived. But instead of getting aboard, I stood on the platform and allowed it to depart without me. I do not know why I did that.

Convicted of my folly, I returned home. Arriving home, I began reading some gospel tracts with a deep desire to be saved and have peace with God. Among the tracts there was one entitled, "How Can I be Sure of Salvation?" This was exactly what I wanted to know. I read it eagerly.

The tract referred to a commandment in Exodus 13:13 which said, "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem." The tract told of an Israelite coming to the priest with a firstborn ass. He asked the priest if there could not be an exception to the commandment of the Lord. He said, "I am a poor man, and I cannot afford to lose this little colt." The priest answered, "The law of the Lord is unmistakable: 'every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck.' Where is your lamb?" "I have no lamb," said the poor man. "Then go and purchase one and return, or the ass's neck must be broken." The man replied, "I am far too poor to buy a lamb."

As the conversation proceeded, a third person joined it. Hearing the poor man's complaint, he said, "I can meet your need. We have in our home on the hill one little lamb without spot or blemish. I'll bring this lamb." Soon the lamb and the ass were standing side by side. The priest bound the lamb to the altar, its blood was shed and the fire consumed it. The priest turned to the Israelite and said, "You can take your colt home. Its neck will not be broken. The lamb has died in the ass's place, and the colt goes free."

After reading this account, the way of salvation was plain. God in His word declares that “man (is) born as a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12). The ass was born condemned. Scripture says, “He that believeth not is condemned already” (John 3:18). I was in the same condition as the ass. But just as there was redemption for the ass, so there was redemption for me. In the case of the ass, the lamb died as the substitute; it died in the place of the ass, and the ass went free. So in my case, there was a substitute for me, one to die in my place. My substitute was the Lord Jesus Christ. The scripture says of him, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). Romans says, he “was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”

Through this simple story and these scriptures, I came to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. John the Baptist spoke of Christ as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

I understood that Christ on the cross was the sacrifice for sin. When he suffered, he bore the judgment of my sin and stood in my place, the same as the lamb did for the ass. The work of the cross was plain. I trusted my soul to Christ and was saved for time and eternity. I believed the report that God gave of his son, that He died for my sin. As I look back to that night when I trusted Christ, I can say with the people of Israel, when they were redeemed from Egypt that “it is a night to be much observed” (Exodus 12:42).

I am able to say with the apostle Paul, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). Friend, are you saved? If not, flee from the wrath to come.





