A young child's face is visible in the upper right corner, peering through a hole in a brick wall. The wall is made of red bricks and is partially covered by a layer of white plaster or paint that is peeling and cracked. The child's eyes are looking directly at the camera.

Great Escapes Over the Berlin Wall

Echoes of Grace

March 2017 – Vol. 87 – Number 9

contents



ECHOES OF GRACE (USPS 167-180) is published monthly by Bible Truth Publishers, 59 Industrial Road, P.O. Box 649, Addison, Illinois 60101, USA. Periodical postage paid at Addison, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ECHOES OF GRACE, P.O. Box 649, Addison Illinois 60101.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Postage paid to one address within the United States \$10.50 per year (12 issues). Postage paid to one address outside the United States \$13.50 per year (12 issues). Special prices on quantities.

Printed in USA



Great Escapes Over the Berlin Wall

On November 9,
1989, the world
watched in fascinated
excitement as the Berlin

Wall was taken down, and thousands upon thousands of jubilant people celebrated and cheered the removal of this ugly landmark. For 28 years, this barrier of concrete, barbed wire and armed guards had divided neighborhoods, families and friends. In a desperate attempt to rejoin family and to find freedom from the restrictions of communism, many people risked their lives in crossing over the Berlin Wall to safety and a new life in the West.

All escapes were daring, but many of them were highly creative as well. These people saw an opportunity and used it to their full advantage. They did not let fears, doubts or “what ifs” hold them back.

Worth the Risk

Harry Deterling escaped with family and friends when he engineered a train at full throttle past the last station in East Germany into West Germany. He had noticed the unused train tracks that ran from East to West and quickly signed up for that route. He drained the air from the train's emergency brakes, so that no one could stop the train by pulling the emergency cord. This escape route was promptly blocked the next day.

As a young man, Heinz Meixner was an Austrian

With his mother-in-law in the tiny trunk and his wife-to-be hiding behind the front seat, he was able to step on the gas and fly under the 37½" high barrier to freedom in the West.

working in East Germany when he fell in love with a young lady who lived there. The authorities refused to give her permission to marry Heinz in his own country, so he devised a plan of

escape for his future wife and mother-in-law. He rented a small, low sports car that he could adapt to fit under the barrier between the two borders. First he removed the windshield, and then he let some air out of the tires to bring the car lower to the ground. With his mother-in-law in the tiny trunk and his wife-to-be hiding behind the front seat, he was able to step on the gas and fly under the 37½" high barrier to freedom in the West.

Ingo Bethke escaped on an air mattress across the River Elbe.

Then Ingo helped his brother Holger to escape. Holger took up archery and used the attic of a tall building overlooking the Berlin Wall to shoot a zip line over the wall with his bow and arrow. Ingo then tied this to his car. With a metal pulley, Holger rode the zip line high above the wall and so made his escape into West Berlin. Next, these two brothers took flying lessons. Then they painted two ultralight planes with Soviet-style red stars, dressed in military uniforms and flew into East Germany, where they picked up their brother Egbert and so made their final escape



into West Berlin. Such ingenuity and creativity is to be admired!

One clear night in September 1979, two families made a daring escape in a homemade hot air balloon. The engine was made from propane cylinders. A combination of taffeta, umbrella fabric, tent nylon and bed linens were sewn together for the balloon. After a failed attempt and knowing that the police were hot on their trail, they were finally able to soar over the Berlin Wall after 30 tension-filled minutes.

While some people escaped over the wall, others escaped under the wall. In 1962, an elderly group of senior citizens led by an 81-year-old man spent two weeks digging a tunnel that they could walk (not crawl) through to freedom. A dozen elderly East Germans escaped through what was later named the "Senior Citizens Tunnel." Following suit, in 1964, a group of students built a tunnel through which 57 people escaped — this became known as "Tunnel 57."

Reaching True Freedom

All of these people desired freedom and were willing to risk death to accomplish their goal. They all realized that their situation would not change unless they took action. But did you know that we have all lived as prisoners of sin? Because man rebelled against God, we are born with a sinful nature that cannot please a righteous, holy and just God. We have each sinned, and **"it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Hebrews 9:27). This



is why God warns us to **“flee from the wrath to come”** (Matthew 3:7). There is coming a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness—those who have not repented of their sins and accepted the

Lord Jesus as their Savior will face eternal judgment. **“Because He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man [Jesus] whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead”** (Acts 17:31).

The Bible says, **“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”** (Hebrews 2:3). God has provided a way of escape, a way of salvation from eternal punishment and separation from Him; it is through His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus. **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”** (Acts 4:12). So how do we accept this great salvation? Through faith in the Lord Jesus, **“for God so loved the world, that He [God] gave His only begotten Son [Jesus], that whosoever believeth in Him [the Lord Jesus], should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). We are either in Satan’s domain or in the Lord’s domain. We must all choose whom we are going to serve. Who are you serving today? Is it wealth, possessions, traditions, or a false belief in any other name than Jesus?

Escaping death became pretty urgent business for a few geology students. Learn their story in *Hidden River Cave*.



Hidden River Cave

A group of fifteen geology students from Clemson University, along with their university instructor and cave guide, George Russell, climbed down the long flights of stairs to the entrance of Hidden River Cave in Kentucky. Little did they know that their educational trip would end up as a race against death!

The entrance of the cave is at the bottom of a large sinkhole 150 feet below ground level. Before entering the cave at 10 a.m., the guide checked out the most recent weather forecast on his smartphone. It called for light showers to arrive later in the evening. He figured there was nothing to worry about. The group would be out of the cave by 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

The entrance of the cave was about the size of the side of a barn. When they passed through the entrance, they could hear running water, and after their eyes adjusted to the dim light, they could see the outlines of the underground river. Leaving this cavern for a side passage, they switched on their LED lights on the front of their helmets in order to see in the pitch darkness.

The Hidden River Cave has miles and miles of passageways that twist and turn through a bank of limestone. As they moved along, every once in a while the narrow passage would open up into a big cavern. Here and there they would also see a trickle of water coming out of the walls or falling from the ceiling. The floor of the cave



sloped gently upwards from

the entrance. They saw long stalactites and stalagmites which had been formed from dripping water, leaving minute sediments over many long centuries. The instructor would stop occasionally and point out interesting features of the cave, and the students would take notes as he talked.

Inside the cave, a hundred or more feet below the surface of the earth, the group seemed to be in a world of their own. Cell phones or radios don't function deep inside caves. They had no way to communicate with the outside world, even if they were so inclined.

After hiking for two hours into the interior of the cave, unknown to the hikers, the weather above them suddenly took a turn for the worse. A torrential rain

Inside the
hundred or
below the
the earth
seemed
world

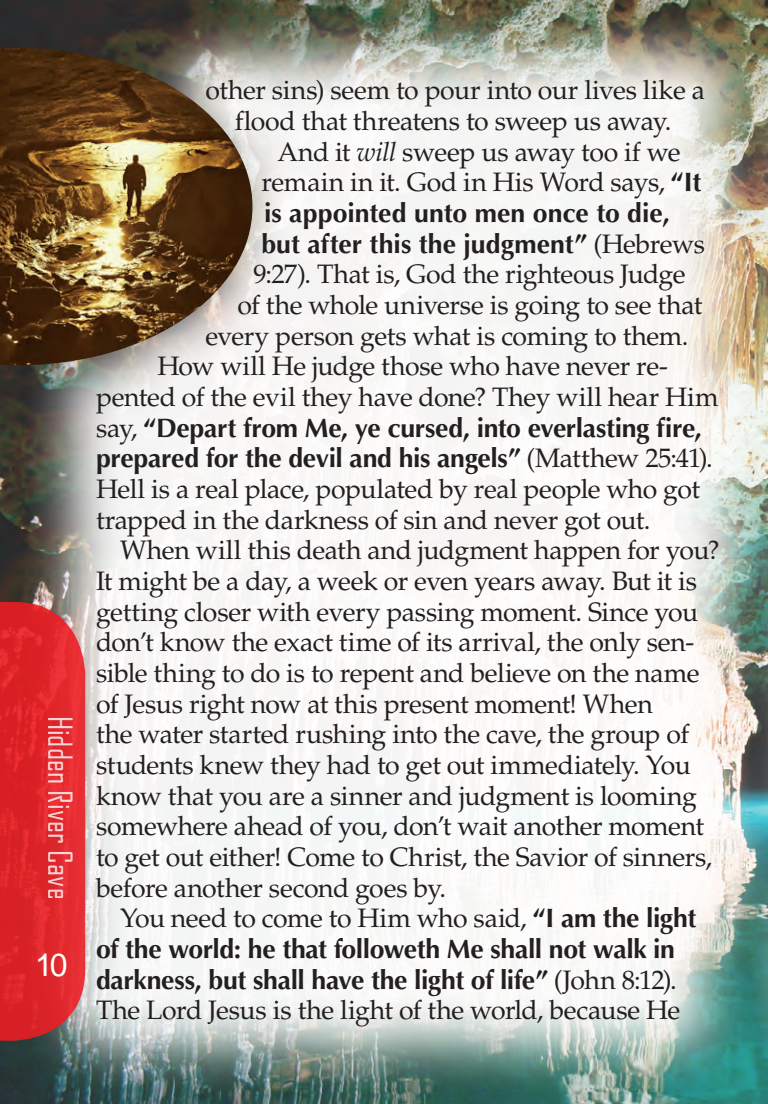
started falling. Without contact with the outside world, they had no idea what was going on. The unexpected deluge filled creeks and riverbeds. It began flowing in great amounts through the porous limestone and into the cave. Suddenly, the little trickles of water that seeped out of the cave walls grew into shooting waterfalls. Water seemed to come cascading out of the cave walls everywhere and flooded the passageways.

George Russell and his students realized they were in trouble and immediately began to retrace their steps. At times they walked through knee-deep water, and at other times the water came all the way up to their necks. With danger all around them, the lamps on their helmets seemed pitifully insufficient to light up the darkness. How easy it would be to turn down a wrong passageway and get lost!

the cave, a
or more feet
e surface of
ch, the group
d to be in a
of their own.

Our Rising Danger

You will probably never have to deal with getting trapped deep underground in the darkness of a cave, with water rising all around you, but there is a darkness even more foreboding and menacing that you will have to deal with. It is the darkness of sin. Sin brings people into spiritual darkness, because sin is opposed to God just as darkness is opposed to light. The darkness of sin, unfortunately, is all around us. Lying, hatred, violence, promiscuity, boasting, lack of respect, covetousness (as well as



other sins) seem to pour into our lives like a flood that threatens to sweep us away.

And it *will* sweep us away too if we remain in it. God in His Word says, **“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Hebrews 9:27). That is, God the righteous Judge of the whole universe is going to see that every person gets what is coming to them.

How will He judge those who have never repented of the evil they have done? They will hear Him say, **“Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”** (Matthew 25:41). Hell is a real place, populated by real people who got trapped in the darkness of sin and never got out.

When will this death and judgment happen for you? It might be a day, a week or even years away. But it is getting closer with every passing moment. Since you don’t know the exact time of its arrival, the only sensible thing to do is to repent and believe on the name of Jesus right now at this present moment! When the water started rushing into the cave, the group of students knew they had to get out immediately. You know that you are a sinner and judgment is looming somewhere ahead of you, don’t wait another moment to get out either! Come to Christ, the Savior of sinners, before another second goes by.

You need to come to Him who said, **“I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”** (John 8:12). The Lord Jesus is the light of the world, because He

was God and man in the same person. As a man, He fully revealed God His Father in all He did and said. While He walked the earth, He was perfect goodness (light), moving in the midst of evil (darkness). Those who follow Him by believing on His name and keeping His commandments leave the darkness of sin behind and enter into His marvelous light.

Is the guilt of your sin more than you can bear? On the cross Jesus suffered and died so His blood could wash that guilt away. Were your sins ten thousand times darker than they actually are, the blood of Jesus Christ could still wash them whiter than snow!

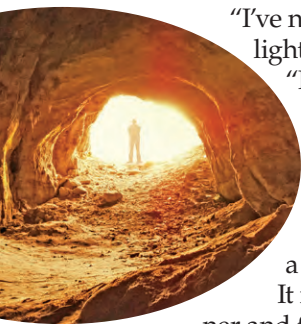
Are you afraid of death? He shed light brighter than the brightest day on the darkness of death when He arose from the grave. Those who believe on Christ will live with Him forever. Never, never, do they need to be afraid of death.

Does darkness seem to cover any part of your life? Come to Christ, and He who is the light of the world will dispel the darkness and drive it away.

Never Been Happier

After hiking into the cave for two hours and then another four hours of retracing their steps through the flooded passageways, the group rounded a bend in the cave and were flooded with relief by light shining from the entrance.

*When will
this death
and judgment
happen for
you?*



"I've never been happier to see the sunlight," a young man named Foster said.

"It was such a good feeling to have when you round the corner and see the light and know you're going to make it out. What a relief!"

Leaving sin's darkness by coming to the Lord Jesus who is the Light is a great relief too.

It is a relief to come to Christ as a sinner and find the forgiveness of sins!

It is a relief as a forgiven sinner to see sin for the parasitical thing it really is, renounce it, and then begin to follow God's direction. **"The entrance of Thy words giveth light"** (Psalm 119:130).

And it will be a great relief to leave this world completely behind and enter the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus Christ for all eternity! The light of glory will fully illuminate the hearts and minds of all those in heaven.

I want to go through life so that, rounding the last corner of my life, I see Jesus, the light of the world, waiting to welcome me into His eternal home. Heaven will be full of His wonderful light.

Won't you come to Him? Coming to the Lord Jesus is the *only way* to escape the darkness of sin, death and hell, and all those who follow Him will have the light of life.

Never shows how ignoring the way of escape can be pretty costly.





When the snow piled up to 10 feet deep on the northern plains, the people who run the nation's flood insurance program realized that the spring thaws would bring terrible flooding.

They appealed to the Federal Emergency Management

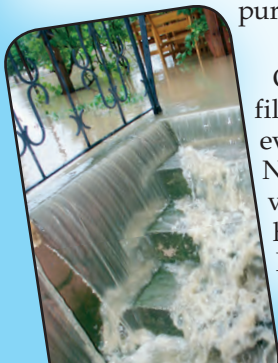
Agency for help. The

agency bought radio ads and ran a television spot for three weeks in March, covering the threatened states. They showed the Director imploring viewers in the predicted flood zones to get flood insurance "before it's too late."

But when the floods came to Grand Forks, North Dakota, one of the worst-hit cities, only 73 people had purchased policies.

Why?

One resident whose basement filled with water said, "We never, ever had water there before. Not even a trace of it." It is a very human reaction: "It never has happened—it never will." Human—natural—and fatal.



It is typical of those the Bible tells us of who will come in the last days, doing as they please and saying, **“Where is the promise of His [the Lord Jesus’] coming? ... All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”**

“We never, ever had water before.” But the water came.

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”

But—**“the Lord ... is long-suffering ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9). We have been warned; help is offered. Have we accepted it?



CHRIST YOUR GRIEFS HAS BORNE

Surely Christ your griefs has borne!
Weeping soul no longer mourn:
View Him bleeding on the tree,
Pouring out His life for thee.

Weary sinner, keep your eyes
On the atoning Sacrifice:
There the Lord upon the tree
Numbered with transgressors see.

Cast your guilty soul on Him;
Find Him mighty to redeem;
At His feet your burden lay—
Look your doubts and fears away.



ECHOES OF GRACE

59 Industrial Road, P. O. Box 649
Addison, Illinois 60101, U.S.A.

Periodical Postage
Paid at
Addison, Illinois

*"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust,
that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).*

Great Escapes Over the Berlin Wall

