

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day. (Acts 17:11)

["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—liftedup@lockportalliance.org—with questions or comments.]



Pictures--of DJ Cole and Jesus--taught me a lot this week. I saw DJ's picture online, in the "Akron (Ohio) Beacon." I saw pictures of Jesus in Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Psalms.

A big contingent from LAC went to Ohio for the REACH work camp. Shelley, Frankie, and Eddy were there, so every night when I got home, after I fed Chip and Mo (my dog and goldfish, respectively) I went to the REACH website, hoping for a glimpse of my family. Pathetic, I know.

That's when I saw DJ Cole: ripping off a roof, his face coated with grime, a black bandanna fashioned into a sweatband. "That's it," I yelled to Chip and Mo. "DJ is advancing the Kingdom by force! With a hammer and a crowbar!" With that, Chip got up, stretched, and left the room--leaving Mo behind, stuck in his tank.

You see, DJ on the roof had brought to mind a Bible scene--the all-time photo-op! There's Jesus, teaching in a house so crowded that four guys couldn't get their paralyzed friend in to see Him. So they tore off the roof and lowered their friend inside! (1) That image of the four friends had brought sudden clarity to a previously bewildering verse: *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* (2)

As a Bible teacher, I thought, I want to be like DJ and the four guys on the roof. I want to *tear down strongholds* (3) in order to get a friend or two into the presence of God.

"No more waiting for the critical moment to arrive. I'm gonna carry the moment to its crisis. Sometimes, the reckless thing is the right thing," I told Mo, my captive audience, who then swam as far as he could into the furthest corner of his tank, cowering behind the filter.

'Epistemology' is a big word that is not found in the Bible. It's the philosophy of cognition. 'What is knowable, and how the knowable comes to be known' is about as succinctly as 'epistemology' can be defined.

Does anybody completely understand how we learn things? God does. And He knows that pictures teach. By painting a picture on the broadest canvas--the universe--He has declared His glory, His power, His exquisite artistry, and His 'fearful symmetry':

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim his handiwork.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (4)

Pictures talk and teach! No matter which version of the Bible you have, it's a Picture Bible. Scripture is held together by repeated images, technically called "types," which are pictures of Christ to come, foreshadowing some aspect of His heart, His cross, His kingdom: *These things were like a shadow of what was to come. But what is true and real has come and is found in Christ.* (5)

Loosely defined, types can be objects, persons, actions, patterns, parallels...anything that is typ-ical of the King and Kingdom conditions. They are the Bible's most sophisticated and far-reaching prophecies. They constitute the primary teaching method of the Holy Spirit.

So the Master Teacher's premise--that pictures teach-- will be the premise of "Cross Ties," a 9-month Bible course beginning September 14th.

Here's a sneak-peak preview. Open your Picture Bible to the very first page. The view is cinematic--showing and telling, in breathtaking audio and video. At first seen in monochrome, it erupts into a full-color lightshow. And the whole show tells us about Jesus. The darkness dominates, but the Spirit is hatching a plan (6). Then we hear a Word. Then, Light/sight! And so begins the process of shaping what had been formless, and filling what had been empty.

See those underlined words in the preceding paragraph? There He is! He's the Word of God who creates something out of nothing, even good out of bad (7). He's the plan--the means of salvaging that which had been ruined, wasted, lost. He can bring form and light to the dark chaos of our lives; rhyme and reason where there had been pointlessness; a friend where loneliness and desolation had prevailed. He can fill-to-bursting an empty heart. He filled mine; He can fill yours.

"Cross Ties" begins September 14th at 9:45. The course is designed to teach anyone, at any level of Bible experience or Christian commitment. Just bring a Bible and a pencil. And if you've got a friend you're burdened for, do the right thing, the reckless thing if need be. Carry her in.

Scripture cited: (1) Luke 5:18ff; (2) Matthew 11:12; (3) 2 Corinthians 10:4; (4) Psalm 19:1-4; (5) Colossians 2:17; (6) see 1 Peter 1:18-20 and Acts 2:23; (7) Genesis 50:20

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —
"Cross Ties"--Sunday at 9:45