

International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby



International Bible Teaching Ministry Update 2010 Issue 4 -- Chicago, New York, Shabbat, & Vampires

"Challenging men and women of faith to think"

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Dear Friends,

Hello from the windy city, Chicago! This is the middle of the busy period in my travel year. I've been in Illinois for a few days (Bloomington and Chicago). It's been energizing to fellowship with many I deeply respect, both for their love for God and their perseverance through thick and thin. I refer to people like the Nearingers, Eastmans, Weidners, Ivys, Dawsons, Cornelys, Arnesons, Gauthiers, Lambs, my brother Steve and his wife, and *many* more... It was certainly good to see Tricia and Steve Staten again.

Steve has been a true comrade in the teaching ministry since at least 1988, when we began to collaborate, and it was he who invited me to present a full day of PowerPoint lessons on church history. The point: we have much to learn from the past, and such study is not only interesting and informative, but *crucial*, if we are going to *go forward* as individuals and churches.

I've also had recent opportunities to speak in Gainesville (UF), Atlanta (local preachers), Georgia Tech (evidences), Habitat for Humanity (several morning devotionals), and of course in our local church, North River (special series with one of our elders, Bob Keen). In a few weeks, I'll rejoin John Oakes (California) in his vital (and growing) ministry, for the 2010 evidences seminar. Yet now I'd like to tell you a little about my recent visit to New York, where I enjoyed the hospitality of another teacher and friend (and other Steve), Steve Kinnard.

New York, New York

It was fun. The energy level of the crowd was high. Far more stayed for the final segment of the weekend program than I had imagined (some 1200). I was privileged to teach for an afternoon with Steve Kinnard, of the New York City Church of Christ. Though we met nearly 30 years ago, it was in the mid-90s that we really drew close. He persuaded me to join him in pursuing a doctorate. Together we spent countless hours at Drew University, having our thinking challenged, and striving to challenge the thinking of others. It was also with Steve that I made my first trip to Israel. Two weeks ago, we took turns at the pulpit presenting a series of 6 short lessons from the [Sermon on the Mount](#) (Mathew 5-7). Regardless of how familiar this section of scripture may be to you, we

urge you to click on the link and listen to the lessons from the recent Bible Jubilee.

(Shabbat) Dinner with the Rabbi

Another colorful part of the New York weekend was Shabbat with Rabbi Shmuley. He and his wife Debbie had invited me up at our last debate in Manhattan, and I decided to take him up on his offer. I had no idea what this would be like (my first Shabbat), and prayed for wisdom, the right words, and for good to come out of this special Friday evening dinner. Thanks to many of you for your prayers, which I solicited several months ago in the [2009 update](#).

I arrived to their home on the early side, and was surprised that an (orthodox) prayer service was underway in one of their rooms. The parlor was divided in two by a screen, the women on the right, the men on the left. The rabbi saw me and walked out with a solemn look. "Hello, Doug. We're praying for all the Christians to become Jews," he quipped, and then turned and walked back into the parlor, beckoning me to come. Yarmolke donned, I joined and tried my best to follow along, as they flew through the Hebrew/English prayer book, stood and sat, clapped and danced. The rabbi introduced me to the group. This only intensified my feeling that I was a fish out of water. Things changed, however, when dinner was served.

There were 30 of us seated around the Sabbath table, including 10 rabbis-in-training (students at Yeshivah University, who were staying the night at Shmuley's house); the rabbi, his wife, and 9 children; and a host of others. These included a holocaust survivor, a Goldman Sachs fellow, television and play producers, a student of Richard Dawkins (the famous biologist and atheist), and a few more. We talked and ate till after midnight, discussing everything from financial scandal to the papacy (Shmuley is visiting the pope in a few days) to the judgment day! The woman who sat to my left is a radio producer, and our provisional plan is to create a program (with Shmuley and me) on a topic like *tolerance* or perhaps *gay marriage*. Shmuley also suggested that he and I team up (!) in a debate against a couple of atheists, Richard Dawkins included. Who knows where this will lead, so please say a prayer that the radio show will turn out to be an open door for effective work (1 Corinthians 16:9).

Speaking of doors opening, another man I have debated twice, Michael Shermer (president of the Skeptic Society), has invited me to be his guest at a special presentation at CalTech. We will have dinner and, presumably, continue our conversation from where we left off after the last debate and subsequent emails. I'm grateful to have had my 5 public debates, and the chance to meet not only Shermer and Shmuley, but also my other opponents, Shabir and Price. All required a lot of preparation (a real learning opportunity in itself) and the interactions have been intellectually -- and even spiritually -- stimulating. Perhaps another debate is in the wings...

Biblical Study Tour

The 2010 BST to London/Oxford is just weeks away. 82 have signed up, with many from the UK (England, Ireland, Scotland), and continental Europe, though also a handful of participants from the US. We will meet daily for prayer and lessons to prepare us for all the archaeological artifacts (ancient Egypt, Assyria, Israel, etc), biblical manuscripts, museums, and more. During the tour I will also catch the train up to Cambridge, for lunch with the head of [Tyndale House](#), Dr. Peter Williams, who is an expert in Old Testament, Hebrew, Greek, and Syriac. I expect to learn a lot! Our tour will also take us to Stratford, home of William Shakespeare, whose many plays allude extensively to the Bible. Participants hail from 9 nations. Next year's tour will probably be in somewhere in the Middle East or Turkey.

High Season

Here's the slate for the next two months. Your prayers are needed: for wisdom, strength, perseverance, and empathy.

- Jacksonville - May 2

- Pepperdine University, Malibu - May 6-7
- AIM (Preaching & Teaching) - May 14-16
- Campus Internship, Atlanta - May 18
- London, England - May 22-23
- Glasgow, Scotland - May 24
- Dublin, Ireland - May 26
- London/Oxford Biblical Study Tour - May 28-Jun 2
- Geneva, Switzerland - June 4-5
- International Evidences Seminar, Irvine CA - 12 June
- Missions Report, Orange County CA - 13 June
- St Thomas, V.I. - 20-23 June
- North River Teaching Day, Marietta - 27 June

Vampires

Whether the teacher is on the road or not, face-to-face lessons are ideal, yet modern technology allows many other methods of sharing God's word. One example is the podcast, which people listen to online, or else download onto computers or iPods. I've recorded about 75 podcasts since embracing the new technology last year. In April I recorded four new podcasts:

- Aliens and the Bible
- Original Sin
- The Angelic Beings
- [Vampires](#)

If you'd like to hear last week's lesson, click on the "Vampires" link above. Reactions (emails and FaceBook) have been interesting. Some think this is an odd (or frivolous) choice of subject, while others have thanked me for tackling an area of such interest, especially for younger folks. Through a 13-point comparison of Jesus Christ and the vampire ("the dark Christ"), I've tried to get people thinking about the gospel. Actually this lesson is "morphing," and soon I'll give a class for the North River Teen Ministry entitled "Werewolves, Vampires, Mummies, & Ghosts."

Last, I continue to research, consult, work on new books, bring people to the group Bible Discussion in our home (this week's topic is *Belief & Unbelief*), and give out lots of copies of my new book, [Compelling Evidence](#). This is an evangelistic tool, and I give the book away in our neighborhood, at the gym, at the bank, and so forth. I'll end this month in Florida, the same place I was when newsletter 3 was sent. This time, however, the purpose of the visit is to see our son graduate from college.

Till May

Take care and expect another update sometime in May. Thanks for reading and even more for your prayers.

Yours in Him,

Douglas Jacoby
International Bible Teaching Ministry