

News Story Summary

Dr. Kent Brantly and his family were on a two-year assignment in Liberia, working with Samaritan's Purse. When the Ebola virus began in their West African country in March of 2014, the medical team there began preparing for the worst. By June and July of this year, the virus was rampant. The medical team took every possible precaution to protect themselves while ministering to the needs of the patients with Ebola.

Dr. Brantly sent his family back to the United States but within three days, he began displaying symptoms of dreaded disease. After nine days, this critically ill doctor was flown to Emory Hospital in Atlanta and placed in isolation. His care from the staff was outstanding and his treatment was experimental. Miraculously, only three weeks later, Dr. Brantly participated in a press conference on the day of his release from the hospital.

Among his comments on August 21, he said, "Through the care of the Samaritan's Purse and SIM missionary team in Liberia, the use of an experimental drug, and the expertise and resources of the health care team at Emory University Hospital, God saved my life — a direct answer to thousands and thousands of prayers."

(For more on this story including a video of the press conference, search the Internet using the term "Kent Brantly August 21 press conference.")

Focus Attention

As group members arrive, begin a brief discussion of the situation surrounding Dr. Kent Brantly and the Ebola outbreak. Emphasize the extreme dangers associated with this disease. Update group members on the current situation in Liberia and other countries in West Africa.

Option: Show the video of Dr. Brantly's press conference.

Ask: When a disease such as Ebola strikes, where do we typically go for help? State that medical treatment is a vital step in combatting this and other diseases. But note Dr. Brantly's statement from the press conference (included in the third paragraph above). Explain that he did not overlook the expertise of the hospital, doctors, and other caregivers who treated him; however, he gave ultimate credit for his healing to God.

Note that the writer of Hebrews recognized the value of the prophets in the Old Testament but he pointed to Jesus as the ultimate expression and revelation of God.

Challenge

Refer back to the press conference with Kent Brantly. State: *Rather than dismiss the value of the prophets and the numerous ways God chose to speak to His people throughout the Old Testament, the writer of Hebrews began by pointing to Jesus. Jesus is the full revelation of God to humanity. Through Him, we can know and grasp the character of God Himself.*

Ask: *How was Dr. Brantly's statement from the press conference an expression of his belief in God? How did he avoid dismissing the work of the medical team while giving full credit to God?*

Remind group members that the revelation of God in the Old Testament is true but incomplete.

State: *The writers of the New Testament could write about God with a fuller comprehension because they experienced His full identity in Christ. Believers today can experience that same understanding because of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.*