

A MAGAZINE TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY  
OF THE SCRIPTURES, THE PRACTICE OF  
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH PRINCIPLES  
AND INTEREST IN GOSPEL WORK

# Precious SEED

INTERNATIONAL



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**'But Jonah rose  
up to flee unto  
Tarshish from the  
presence of the  
Lord, and went  
down to Joppa'.  
Jonah 1. 3.**



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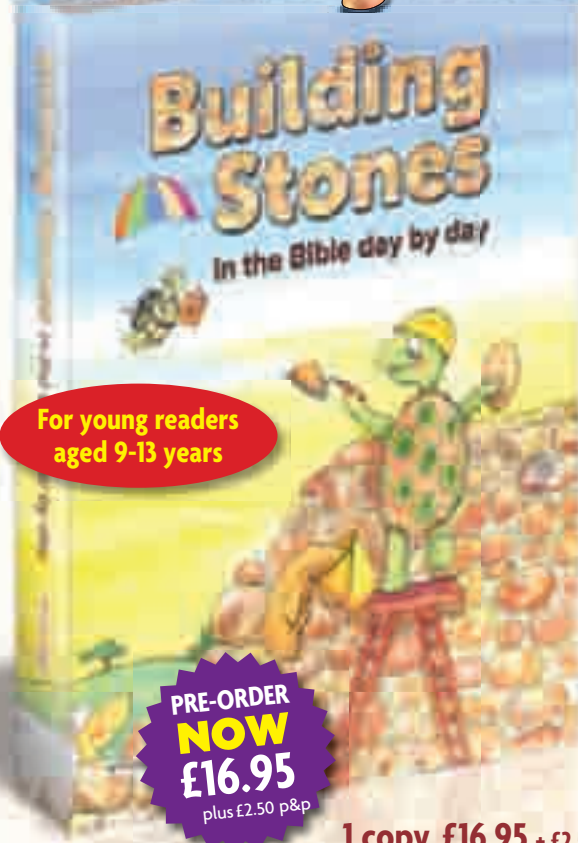
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*Compiled and edited by IAN REES, with superb illustrations by Honor Ayres.*

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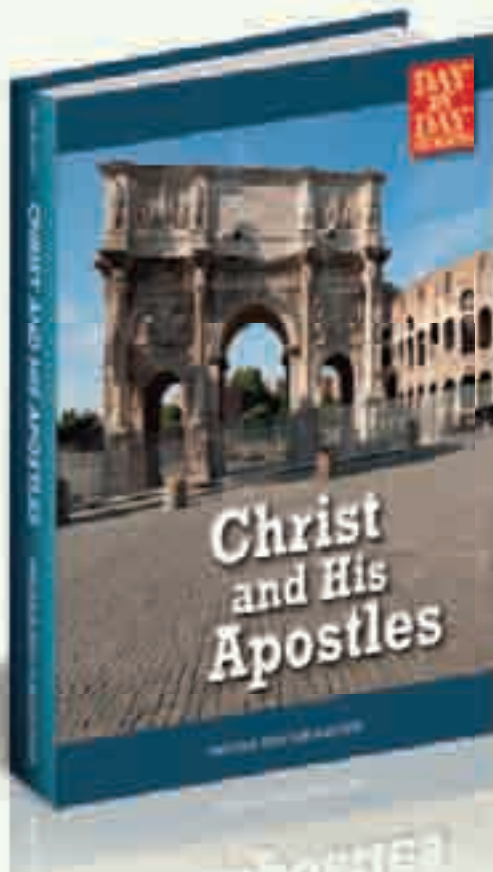
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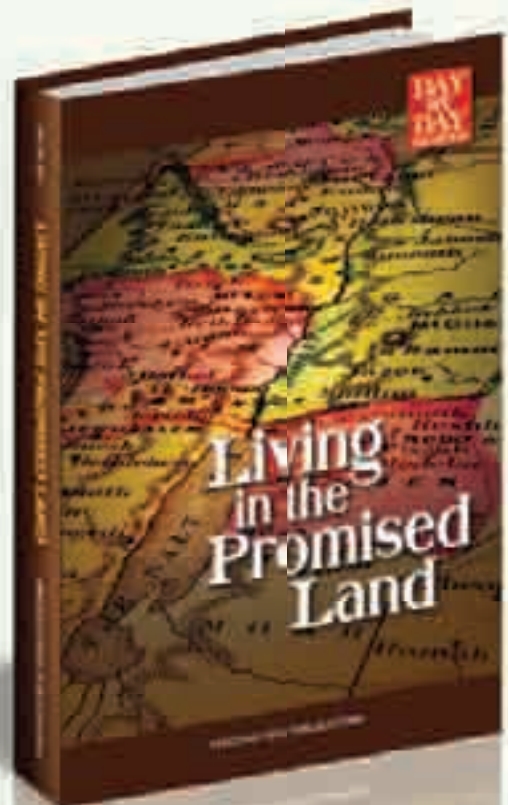


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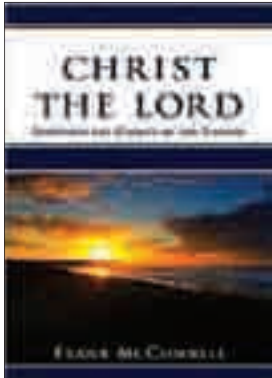




# Book Reviews

Compiled by **JOHN BENNETT**

Books are available from the publishers shown (or from John Ritchie in the UK, or Gospel Folio Press in Canada), and **NOT** from Precious Seed Publications



## Christ the Lord – surveying the glories of the Saviour

Frank McConnell

Paperback, 254 pages, Published by Scripture Teaching Library, Lisburn, Northern Ireland, ISBN 978-1-909789-05-0.

This book was originally published in 1971. It is an excellent devotional book of the same style and quality as H. C. HEWLETT's *The Glories of our Lord*. The tone of both is warm and devotional. Both can be highly recommended, and may be read and re-read with profit.

The writer begins with the Incarnation, works through the Lord's life, proceeds to His glories, and finishes with His triumphant reign. Each chapter usually has three to five sub-headings; e.g., chapter 4 'The Character of the Lowly Servant' has: 'the manner of the ministry'; 'the ministry of the Spirit'; 'the ministry of deeds'; 'the ministry of words'; and 'a rejected ministry'. This breakdown of the material is very helpful. Satan's temptation of

the Lord is soundly interpreted, the distinction between temptation and testing is clearly set forth, and its practical application for us is very helpfully expounded. The comparison between the Lord's baptism and ours is also finely done. He carefully examines some key verses, such as John chapter 10 verse 30 and Matthew chapter 27 verse 46; indeed, the writer ranges over all the scriptures, finding the most relevant verses for his meditation on his glorious theme. The writer gives full weight not only to the deity of the Lord Jesus, including His eternal Sonship, but also equal weight to His humanity, including His mental development, and the succour and strength He found in prayer. This balance is a particularly notable feature of the book and one the reviewer finds to be rather rare.

The author considers the Lord's return, and we have exposition of parts of 1 Thessalonians and Revelation; here the tone becomes less devotional and the approach more interpretative (e.g., when will the Old Testament saints be raised?); three chapters tend towards this approach out of sixteen in total. Inevitably an odd sentence may cause a dissenting response, though not from everyone, such as 'the blood of the sacrifice (of Christ) has been sprinkled on the gold of the throne (in heaven)'. However, the chapters entitled 'The Revelation of the Conqueror' and 'The Righteous Rule of the King', which conclude the book, are some of the best.

The publishers have done us a service by reprinting this book and produced a fine foreword. However, I would suggest that when reprinted the print should be bolder.

[Our thanks to Bryan Charles, Appledore, Devon, England, for this review]



## Making Disciples – The Thessalonian Way

Tim Mather

Paperback, 190 pages, Published by Gospel Folio Press, 304 Killaly St. West, Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, L3K 6A6. ISBN 978-1-926765-99-0.

The notes on the back cover of this book provide a helpful outline: 'This book has been written primarily for the benefit of those who have the wonderful privilege and responsibility of helping to bring up some of God's children; for anyone who has the opportunity of coming alongside new or growing believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and helping them mature in the Christian faith'. This book is not another detailed commentary on the two Epistles to the Thessalonians. It is not for the student of theology. If the reader is looking for a detailed analysis of prophecy, a topic that is covered in the Epistles, they are likely to be unsatisfied, although there is material that would be most helpful in the context of understanding the teaching of the Epistles and prophecy. MATHER's

style throughout is to engage the heart and challenge each of us, young and old, regarding our Christian life and testimony. There are many points that are made that will challenge and a few quotations may enable us to get a glimpse of the value of this book: 'If we feel little towards those who we are instructing, then we urgently need to stop and take stock'; 'While he was with them, Paul laboured night and day with his hands for the Thessalonians (2:9). Now that he is apart from them, he labours night and day for them on his knees'; 'Sadly, in these days, the greatest moral dangers often come not from the world, but from the church'.

What makes MATHER's book both an easy and informative read is the way he breaks up his chapters with headings which ably summarize sections, and by the use of apt illustrations which help to make the truth taught understandable and practical. Although prophecy is fraught with difficulties of interpretation, MATHER is orthodox in his dealings with 1 Thessalonians chapters 4 and 5, and 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Some readers might have liked a more detailed justification in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, but the overall aim of the book is to consider 'Making Disciples'. Overall, this is a very helpful volume and a worthy addition to a believer's library.





## **Biblical Principles of Leadership** Dr. Alexander Kurian

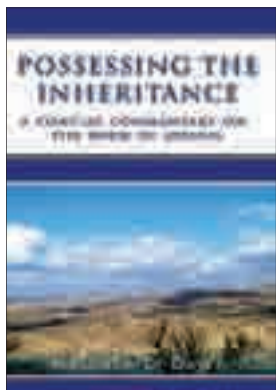
Paperback, 120 pages, Published by GLS Publishing, Udyog Bhavan, 250D, Worli Colony, Mumbai, 400030, India. ISBN 978-81-78203-49-2.

This is a valuable book on a most important aspect of the corporate life of every believer. As DR. KURIAN states, 'A healthy relationship between the elders and the congregation is tremendously important. It is the prerequisite for the growth and progress of the church'. If we are to see spiritual growth in every believer, and in every local assembly, leadership is vital. In pursuing scriptural simplicity, it is important that we do not reject one-man leadership in favour of any-man leadership. Both are equally unsound.

Although this is not a long book, it is pithy. From the outset, the author establishes that 'the Christian leader is . . . a feeder and nourisher . . . a comforter . . . a corrector . . . a protector of the sheep under his care'. As he goes on to state, 'Christian leadership is a position of humble,

loving and caring service. It is ministry, not management'. In an equally succinct point on motivation, KURIAN writes, 'Christian leadership is motivated by love and concern, not power and position'. These quotations provide an indication of the scope of the book as well as its spiritual emphasis.

For those who are already active in leadership amongst God's people this book will serve to challenge. Does what we do essentially express what we are? For those seeking such service, the chapter entitled 'A Calling, Not a Career' will be essential reading. If we are to lead people to where God wants them to be, it is imperative that we see spiritual leadership as a ministry by divine calling and appointment.



## **Possessing the Inheritance – a Concise Commentary on the Book of Joshua** Malcolm C. Davis

Paperback, 125 pages, Published by Scripture Teaching Library, Cookstown, Northern Ireland. ISBN 978-1-909789-12-8.

What exactly is a 'concise commentary'? This seems to be a key question in reviewing this book. Clearly, one should not expect a detailed verse-by-verse, or even section-by-section, exposition of the book. The author rightly avoids the detailed and technical. Similarly, an overview of the book, with an emphasis upon analysis and outline, would not be expected. What, then, does the book provide?

Davis' concise commentary seeks to provide a summary of the narrative, coupled with practical application. It opens up lines of study, without developing any of them in detail, and it provides helpful insights into aspects of the text, particularly geographical, that will enable the reader to

appreciate what is happening in, or meant by, the narrative.

Overall, this is a helpful book that will provide the student with enough to understand the development of the scripture text and appreciate some of the points of significance in practical terms. It is also hoped that in reading it there will be a desire to find out more, thus encouraging a more detailed study of Joshua.



## **Replacement Theology** David Dunlap

Paperback, 141 pages, Published by Gospel Folio Press, 304 Killaly St. West, Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, L3K 6A6. ISBN 978-1-926765-87-7.

In many places, 'Replacement Theology' is gaining ground. Professing evangelicals are turning away from dispensational eschatology and embracing the view that there is no future for Israel. Replacement theologians argue that the church has replaced Israel in the purposes of God. DAVID DUNLAP is to be commended for writing a book that deals with this subject in a manner that is accessible for the general reader.

DUNLAP traces the history of this view, touching upon the writings of Origen, Marcion, and Clement of Alexandria. He also makes reference to Luther and more modern writers such as Rushdoony, DeMar, Berkhof, Mathison, and Chilton. It is clear that DUNLAP has done his research! However, he does not allow that research to make his book a heavy read.

Having established the background and beliefs of Replacement Theology, DUNLAP tackles certain so-called 'proof' texts and passages to show where a more literal interpretation makes better sense. As one might expect, Romans features heavily in this chapter. Following on from this, the writer then examines the new Covenant and its impact upon what God promised to Israel.

The greater part of the book explores the establishment of the nation of Israel and its claims to the land. However, there are also some short papers at the end of the book covering such topics as the church and the Tribulation, Preterism, and Muslim conversions.

This book is to be welcomed as another simple but helpful addition to the works that challenge the allegorical approach to biblical study and interpretation, particularly in the area of prophecy. Replacement Theology is a growing problem and one that should exercise believers to study the scriptures to see what they actually teach.



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By RICHARD COLLINGS

# Editorial

## ‘Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting’, John 2. 13-14.

Although the major supermarkets appear to have a stranglehold on the grocery shopping habits of many, it would seem that there is still a place for the smaller retailer. Indeed, some retailers are making a success of the last-minute, convenience market. In the hectic round of life many are thankful for someone who provides what they need, close by, and until late at night. However, this editorial is not a forum for the discussion of the shopping habits of the British public, but what it does indicate is the type of thinking that made the situation described in our text a reality. Instead of preparing, examining, and then bringing your sacrificial animal to the temple for your offering, wouldn't it be better if there were animals already there? Wouldn't it be much more convenient if someone else could do all the checking so that all you needed to do was arrive, purchase, and then hand over your animal to the priest? Convenience marketing was just as significant in 1st century Jerusalem as in 21st century Britain!

Sadly, it is all too possible to adopt a similar approach to church life. We turn up occasionally, at the last minute, occupy a seat, and then leave as soon as we can. We might call it 'convenience Christianity'. We bring nothing, offer nothing, and expect to receive everything. If these comments seem rather harsh, we need to look around the mega-church phenomenon, and ask what makes it successful in attracting vast numbers. One aspect seems to be that such groups have successfully switched the focus of church life. They seek to offer everything that the busy Christian might want. All that is needed is to turn up, enjoy the experience, and leave when you want.

In contrast, the Bible places significant emphasis upon corporate Christian testimony, and what it means to God – a company where God's word is revered, God's will is done, and God's name is honoured. New Testament Christianity is demanding. It is not what I get out of church but what I contribute to the corporate worship of God through my own private preparation and study. The challenges are great. The commitment needed is total. The cost is significant. Is this possible in 2014? Let us all measure what God asks of us, and compare it with what He has done for us!

In this magazine, we conclude the centre page articles in Daniel chapter 9. We thank Andrew Wilson for his detailed study, comparing and contrasting the different views of this passage which is critical to an understanding of prophetic truth. We also have some writers who are providing their first article for us. We express our sincere thanks to all our authors, new and old, and trust that in this magazine, as in each of them, there will be food for all the Lord's people.



# THE HEALTH, WEALTH, A

**We are living in a time when a confusing Christian doctrine is being popularized by some preachers, and many radio and TV 'evangelists'. Some, claiming to teach the truth, mislead their followers into believing that if they fulfil certain conditions, they will receive great wealth. But their promises are false. While these so-called 'prosperity preachers' seem to be using the Bible to validate their claims, in reality they are taking verses out of context. In short, their prosperity doctrine will not hold up in the light of scripture.**

The discerning believer must recognize these false teachers who say, among other things, that generous tithing will assure God's giving back 'over and above all that you can ask or think'. This is a misleading statement, and those who use it lead earnest givers to send their money to prosperity preachers who are, in reality, merely building a financial empire for themselves. This kind of religious deception is widespread, and what we hear being broadcast is just the 'tip of the iceberg' worldwide.

## What they preach

The prosperity preachers tell us that God actually *wills* financial prosperity for His children. Their claim is based on the misapplication of some Old Testament passages, as well as the misuse of some New Testament verses. In Deuteronomy chapter 11 verses 13 to 28, God *did* promise the nation of Israel that if they obeyed His commandments, loved Him with all their hearts, and avoided idolatry they would be satisfied, blessed, and prosperous. But this promise of prosperity was made to the nation of Israel and not to believers in the church age. God also promised to Israel curses, droughts, and oppression if they did not keep their side of the bargain. Why do the prosperity preachers overlook those verses? We need to understand that many promises of God in the Old Testament are not directly applicable to the church today.

By **IAN TAYLOR** Kenosha, Wisconsin, USA

*[All references are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible]*

For instance, God promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation, inherit the land of Israel, and be a blessing to all people of the earth, Gen. 12. 2; 15. 18. These promises do not apply to anyone in the church today. They were meant specifically for Abraham and his descendants, and they particularly refer to earthly, not heavenly, blessings that are assured to believers in the church age, past and present. However, from these promises we need to learn to appreciate just how much God cares for those who love Him.

There are many promises regarding God's care and provision in the New Testament which are there for every believer to claim. For example, we read in John chapter 15 verse 7, 'Ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you'. When this verse is taken out of context, as it often is by prosperity preachers, it certainly appears to give licence to ask for anything that we want. However, in context, it teaches us the need to abide in the Lord Jesus so that we can *bear fruit* in our lives. Early verses in the chapter speak about our remaining in the Lord and His words remaining in us *before* we can ask. In other words, as we fellowship with the Lord Jesus and allow His word to direct us, our requests will be for fruit that glorifies God, rather than riches that take us away from the Lord!

## What God says

The Lord Jesus actually stated that riches are a hindrance to salvation: 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God', Luke 18. 24. In fact, He often asked those who wished to be His disciples to *give up* their worldly wealth to follow Him! The disciples didn't follow the Lord Jesus to *gain* wealth: 'Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all, and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"' Matt. 19. 27.

If the Lord did not esteem riches as

important or even necessary, then His followers should not have a desire for wealth. This is not to say that wealth is a sin, nor should we be irresponsible in earning our wages to feed and clothe our families. In fact, the Bible teaches otherwise, 1 Tim. 5. 8. We should not allow materialism to dominate our lives. Preaching, therefore, that God actually wills financial prosperity for God's children is contrary to scripture.

What then *does* the Bible teach about prosperity? The Lord told the story of the rich man who thought he would make bigger barns to store his growing wealth, and who thought of his future in terms of prosperity and ease. He depicted this man as a fool. 'And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness: for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses"', Luke 12. 15. When prosperity preachers misuse the Bible to persuade listeners that God intends riches for them, they are appealing to their fleshly greed.

## The conflict

These men teach that if we give to them, we are giving to God, who is then obligated to give back more than what was given. They say our gift to them is a 'heavenly investment' which will pay rich dividends here on earth. God's word never says *He is required* to return more than we give. His word does say, however, 'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God . . . And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus', Phil. 4. 6, 19.







# ND PROSPERITY GOSPEL

By allowing God to use all that we have and are – including our material possessions – we lay up treasure in heaven, which cannot be taken away or destroyed. He does not want us to store up wealth here on earth, because that would take our eyes off Him: 'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also', Matt. 6. 19-21. Again, Paul states that, 'Not that I speak in regard to need for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me', Phil. 4. 11-13. Paul had spiritual prosperity which did not depend on material possessions. This is the emphasis we find throughout the New Testament. 'Now godliness with contentment is great gain', 1 Tim. 6. 6. This is God's view of prosperity!

Those who desire riches show a lack of contentment with what God has given, and open themselves to the snare of the devil who wants to take their eyes off the Lord. 'And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a

root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows', 1 Tim. 6. 8-10. This is a warning for us!

## The warning

We should not be taken in by appealing messages. They may sound good, but they have no sound scriptural basis. Some say, 'If we pray with faith, God *has* to answer'. While this thought seems to have some support in the Bible, error soon results from a wrong application of this line of thinking. In the first place, this premise turns the Creator of man into his servant who must do *what we ask*. Preachers of such a false gospel make themselves more important than God Himself. This blasphemy was precisely Satan's downfall!

The prosperity gospel is akin to the so-called New Age Movement, which teaches that man himself is a god who can exert his mental power to control not only his own destiny, but God Himself. Ignored are the many verses which tell us that the person who loves the Lord will abide in Him, keep His commandments, and seek only God's will for his life. This being the case, he would not be asking for material wealth, but would have Christ-centred rather than self-centred desires, see 1 John 5. 14; John 15. 7.

## What we should do

When it comes to the prosperity gospel (or any other doctrine for that matter), we should study scripture with the view of *getting from* scripture what God has for us, Gk. *exegesis*,

while making sure that we do not read *our ideas into* what is there (*eisegesis*). To get the true meaning out of the text, we should read the whole portion to see what God said to the people to whom it was written. This may also require some study of the background, customs, and culture of Bible times.

We should never read our own ideas into the text. Let scripture speak for itself: 'knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit', 2 Pet. 1. 20-21. We should never take one verse out of the Bible and formulate a doctrine or teaching around it. We need to always diligently compare scripture with scripture allowing the Bible to interpret itself to us: 'And these things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned', 1 Cor. 2. 13-14. If we do this consistently, we will not be easily misled by false teachers who are simply after their own gain.

**IAN TAYLOR**, originally from Australia, was commended to missionary work in Colombia by three Sydney assemblies. He is currently an elder in the Kenosha assembly, Wisconsin, and commended worker involved in ministering the word and on occasional visits to Latin America.





The wise man in the book of Proverbs refers no fewer than fourteen times to 'the fear of the Lord'. Among other benefits, it is 'the beginning of wisdom', 9. 10; it 'prolongeth days', 10. 27, and is 'a fountain of life', 14. 27. It was this same 'fear of the Lord' which had such a devastating effect upon the young Josiah on hearing the word of God read for the first time. His counsellors must have been astonished when, summoned to Josiah's presence, they found the king in tears, with rent garments, holding the ancient scroll with trembling hands. His instructions were simple and precise, 'Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book', 2 Kgs. 22. 13. And so it was to Huldah, the prophetess, the servants of Josiah came with their concerns.

Huldah dwelt in Jerusalem. She was of the faithful remnant that lived close enough to the Lord for His word to be revealed to her; the servants sent by the king knew where to find one who could tell them the mind of God. Her husband's family were also marked by fidelity. He was 'keeper of the wardrobe', those priestly garments which spoke of Christ, sadly neglected by the nation, yet faithfully preserved by a family during the ravages of Manasseh's reign, awaiting Josiah's reforms and the restoration of temple worship.

What then was Huldah's message to Josiah? Quite simply, it was this: the nation was doomed, and the king would die! The dire warnings recorded long before, and in anticipation of, the nation's idolatry would be soon brought to fruition. The righteous character of God could no longer bear with the excesses of sin; judgement was unavoidable. For Josiah, however, Huldah had a personal message. Because his 'heart was tender', because of his humility and tears in response to the discovery of God's word, the judgement would not fall until after his death. We are reminded of the Lord's words through the prophet Isaiah, 'to this man will I look, even to him that is . . . of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word', Isa. 66. 2.

# JOSIAH (2)

Many years later, the apostle Paul would write, 'by the law is the knowledge of sin', Rom. 3. 20. In the spirit of that statement, the king gathered together the elders, the priests, the prophets and the people, and he 'read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord', 2 Kgs. 23. 2. Taking the lead, Josiah then 'stood by a pillar as the manner was', 11. 14, and bound himself to a covenant before the Lord. The response must have been an encouragement to the young king as 'all the people stood to the covenant'.

It is characteristic of the historical records of the nation's kingdom years, that the second book of Kings records in some detail the moral, social, and religious reforms of Josiah, 23. 4-20, whereas only three verses are devoted to the Passover, vv. 21-23. By way of contrast, in the Chronicles record, which emphasizes the spiritual condition of the monarchy and the nation, the Passover is described precisely, 2 Chr. 35. 1-19, while the reformation throughout the land is dealt with in one verse, 34. 33.

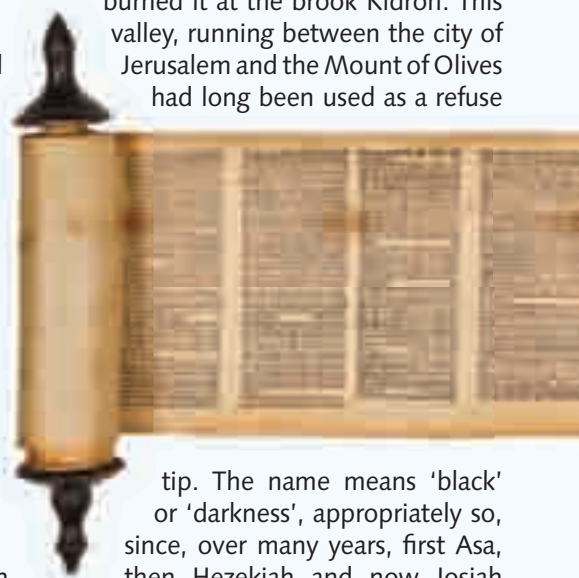
Any recollection of Hezekiah's reign would be a dim and distant memory in the minds of only the very aged of Josiah's day. The intervening years of idolatrous excess during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon had scarred and damaged both the land and the people; no one under seventy years of age would remember better days. Such a consideration brings into focus the formidable task undertaken by Josiah as he commenced his programme of reforms.

It is always important when reading the narrative books of scripture to make constant reference to the writings of men raised up to prophesy during each period of history. What they provide is heaven's perspective on the behaviour of kings and nations. In Josiah's

day, Jeremiah and Zephaniah both denounced without compromise the underlying malaise which continued to contaminate the people, in spite of the king's best efforts to encourage obedience to the revealed word of God.

By  
**JOHN  
SCARBROOK**  
Killamarsh,  
England

The apostle Peter writes of judgement beginning at, or from, the house of God, 1 Pet. 4. 17, and that is where Josiah began. Summoning the priests and the doorkeepers, he ordered the removal of all the paraphernalia associated with Baal worship and burned it at the brook Kidron. This valley, running between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives had long been used as a refuse



tip. The name means 'black' or 'darkness', appropriately so, since, over many years, first Asa, then Hezekiah and now Josiah destroyed and disposed of idols, images, and groves in its waters in their attempts to reform the nation; dark associations indeed!

Josiah then turned his attention to the idolatrous priests, those who burned incense 'to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets (only mention in scripture), and to all the host of heaven', 2 Kgs. 23. 5. Close by the temple were the houses of the sodomites, and the weaving looms where women made curtains to adorn the grove, and to ornament the immoral rituals associated with idolatry. Josiah destroyed them all.

The next stage of Josiah's reforms took him out of Jerusalem and into the surrounding countryside from where







he removed all the priests who had officiated at the many high places, from Geba in the north, to Beersheba in the south. These priests were not 'put down' as those who served the idols in Jerusalem; maybe they served out of ignorance or coercion. Josiah brought them to Jerusalem and made provision for them. However, they were not permitted to engage in the temple service in view of their association with idolatry. Cleanliness has always been a prerequisite to service. Isaiah wrote in anticipation of those who would return from exile, 'Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord', Isa. 52. 11. Better to be a 'vessel of clay' and clean, than a 'vessel of gold' and defiled, 2 Tim. 2. 20-21.

Josiah's work continued. Not only did he destroy and defile the abominations left from the days of Manasseh and Amon, but also rendered unusable the remnants of idolatry built by Solomon for his wives almost four hundred years earlier! These had been constructed on one of the high ridges of the Olivet range

having zealously applied fire and sword throughout the cities of Samaria, Josiah returned to Jerusalem.

The narrative of Josiah's reign is then taken up in 2 Chronicles chapter 35, where the keeping of the Passover is recorded in detail. The Passover, from its inception in Egypt, was intended to be a focal point on Israel's calendar. It would seem, however, that over the years of their national history it had become for many of the people little more than an arbitrary ritual and there were, no doubt, periods when it was forgotten by some, especially after the division of the tribes. There are, nevertheless, seven significant Passovers recorded in scripture. The first was in Egypt on the night of Israel's exodus. A further occasion was in the wilderness, noted in Numbers chapter 9. On entering the land,

come again out of captivity' in Ezra's day, kept the Passover, and 'the feast of unleavened bread', Ezra 6. 19-22. The seventh and final Passover, toward which all others pointed, is recorded in the Gospels, as the Lord Jesus, on that night in which He was betrayed, would say to His disciples, 'With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer', Luke 22. 15.

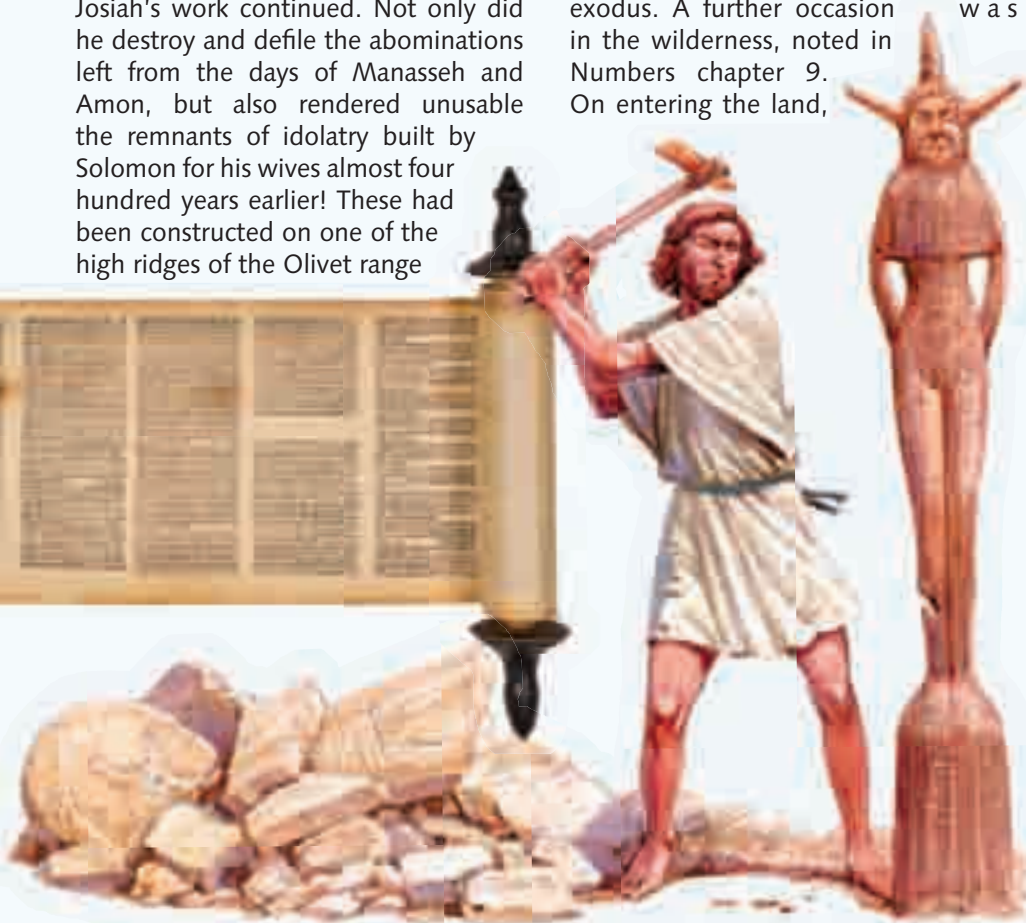
Josiah ensured that the ark, long neglected, was restored to its rightful place; the priests and Levites stood in their due order. The singers and doorkeepers were in their places and all was prepared by the fourteenth day of the first month. Josiah generously provided 30,000 lambs and kids, together with 3000 bullocks from his own flocks and herds. This inspired others to make provision as well, and the last national acknowledgement of their Redeemer God was observed before the dark clouds began to descend on the kingdom years of the chosen people.

For we read, 'after all this', when all seemed set fair for a progressive revival in the land, with Josiah still only a young man of thirty-nine years, events took a dramatic turn; Egypt's Pharaoh Necho embarked on a military adventure. His objective was Assyria; he had no quarrel with Josiah, but had to move his army through Israel's territory to reach his intended adversary; Josiah chose to oppose him. Pharaoh did his best to discourage him, claiming divine guidance, which may well have been true! He also had no desire to risk losing men and time before facing Assyria. Josiah would not desist, but disguised himself, never a wise option in scripture, and paid the price for his folly at the hands of Necho's archers.

It seems a sad end for one who 'did that which was right in the sight of the Lord'; however, God's purposes were moving on, and no army or nation would obstruct their completion. Jeremiah, and all the singing men and women, mourned for Josiah, as well they might; the monarchy had only twenty-two years, six months, and ten days to run before the throne of Israel was finally vacated, awaiting yet the coming of One, 'whose right it is', Ezek. 21. 27.

which became known as 'the Mount of Corruption', for obvious reasons. Moving on to Bethel, once revered as the house of God, yet for many years a centre of idol worship at the altar raised by Jeroboam, Josiah broke down, stamped on, and burned the offending tokens of evil. The ultimate act which finally desecrated the altar beyond even pagan use was the cremation on it of 'dead men's bones' in fulfilment of the words spoken some three hundred and fifty years before by 'the man of God out of Judah', 1 Kgs. 13. 1-3. So,

the Passover was again kept at Gilgal, as recorded in Joshua chapter 5. Then, although reference is retrospectively made to the feast in the days of Samuel, David and Solomon, no detail is recorded until Hezekiah's reign, 2 Chr. 30. 15ff. The fifth occasion of note was that kept by Josiah after the barren years of his immediate forefathers, and such was the order, the magnitude, and the celebration of it that no likeness had been seen for almost five hundred years, 2 Chr. 35. 18. Then, 'the children of Israel, which were





When King Ahaz of Judah was offered a sign by the Lord, he rejected it. Nevertheless, the Lord promised the house of David a sign, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel', Isa. 7. 14; the sign of the virgin birth!

By contrast, in Matthew, chapter 12, an evil and adulterous generation requested a sign of our Lord. Reluctantly, they were given the sign of the prophet Jonah. Christ compares Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the great fish to His three days and nights in the heart of the earth. Implicit in this sign is resurrection, pictured by Jonah, but fulfilled by Christ. He is a risen, living Saviour, 'but now is Christ risen from the dead'. Hallelujah! What a sign, and what a Saviour!

Jonah is spoken of twice by Matthew and once by Luke in the New Testament, Matt. 12. 38-41; 16. 4; Luke 11. 29-32. The Lord gives both personal authentication and historical credence to Jonah in these passages. He gives us grounds to speak of Jonah as a prophet, and as a type of Himself in relation to death and resurrection.

The correlation between Jonah and Jesus Christ is seen both by way of comparison and contrast. That Christ is greater than Jonah may be seen in respect of His:

# A GREATER TH

## 1. SERVICE

(i) *Consider what they were called:*  
Jonah: 'a dove'; Jesus: 'Jehovah the Saviour'.

Doubtless his parents had high hopes for their son, and wished to see dove-like characteristics in their boy. Instead, he grew talons, and was more of a hawk than a dove! He was the son of Amittai whose name suggests faithfulness to God. Jonah failed to display faithfulness to God and failed to live up to his own name.

Our Lord, on the other hand, was true to His name, Jesus: Jehovah the Saviour. He also brought satisfaction to the heart of God, for He was the true Son of the Father. Indeed, the features of the dove, absent from Jonah, are found in our blessed Lord. The dove-like features of Christ match the description of our great high priest, 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens', Heb. 7. 26.

In the Song of Solomon chapter 5 verse 2 the dove is a

symbol of purity. This reminds us of the impeccable Christ of God. He is **holy**.

When the disciples were instructed as to preaching the gospel of the kingdom, two traits were to mark them: 'as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves'. He is **harmless**.

By  
**JOHN GRIFFITHS**  
Port Talbot,  
Wales

When we think of the birds sent out from Noah's ark, the raven could happily feed on the rotting carcasses that surrounded it. The dove, so totally different in its nature, returned to the ark with

the olive twig. So our blessed Saviour was uncontaminated by His time in this world, before returning to His Father. He was **undefiled**.

The dove, or pigeon, was categorized as clean and, therefore, fit for sacrifice. Joseph and Mary offered two turtle doves or young pigeons, Luke 2. 24. If we think upon the fitness of our Lord for sacrifice, we remember that He was 'clean' and **separate from sinners**.

The dove or pigeon is known for its 'homing instinct'. Pigeon fanciers take their birds great distances before releasing them. They fly home and are soon found back in their cote. So our Lord and Saviour returned to His Father, and the glory of heaven. He was **made higher than the heavens**.

(ii) *Consider where they came from*  
Gath-hepher in Galilee; Nazareth in Galilee.

Our Lord 'originated' from a neighbouring town, Nazareth, the place of His boyhood. Both were Galileans. The councillors of the Sanhedrin cried, 'Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet', John 7. 52. How wrong they were in relation to Jesus and Jonah, and possibly, Nahum! But then they probably discounted Jonah because his mission was to the Gentiles.

(iii) *Consider their commission:* to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.







# AN JONAH Part 1

Jonah began his ministry to Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, 2 Kgs. 14. 25, before his commission by God, 'Arise go to Nineveh . . . and cry against it', Jonah 1. 2. Nineveh was a great city, the capital of the Assyrian empire; its ruins are in the present day country of Iraq.

Jesus was on a mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt. 15. 24, before He engaged in His wider ministry to the world, 1 John 4. 14. James quotes Peter, Acts 15. 14, 'God . . . did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name'.

So both were commissioned by God, and their ministries began with Israel but embraced Gentiles subsequently: Jonah sent to a great Gentile city, and Jesus to a great Gentile world. Both were sent in response to wickedness and sin, Jonah 1. 2; 1 John 3. 5.

## (iv) *Consider their character*

Jonah was a fickle servant. Because of his political outlook as a nationalistic Israelite, he refused to go to Nineveh, choosing rather to flee the presence of God, and move in a diametrically opposite direction towards Tarshish, Spain.

In contrast, Jesus was the flawless servant. He was totally absorbed with the will of God. 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me', John 4. 34, and, again, 'Not my will but thine be done', Luke 22. 42. Three times we are reminded of the Lord's obedience.

*In His life*, 'Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered', Heb. 5. 8.

*When faced with Calvary*, He was 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross', Phil. 2. 8.

*Following His death and resurrection*, 'by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous', Rom. 5. 19.

Notice Jonah's four steps down in declension . . . the disobedient one, Jonah 1. 3, 5; 2. 6.

Contrast Jesus' seven in condescension . . . the obedient One, Phil. 2. 6-8.

Jonah paid the price of his disobedience.

Jesus, though obedient, paid the price of our sinfulness . . . crucifixion.

Men's lives were endangered because of the disobedience of one man . . . Jonah, Jonah 1. 12.

Men's lives were declared righteous because of the obedience of one Man . . . Jesus, Rom. 5. 19.

## 2. SACRIFICE AND SAVIOURHOOD

Jonah enlightened the crew of the ship and told them that he must be cast out of the ship.

Jesus was treated as an outcast when He was led out through the Sheep Gate of the city of Jerusalem. They cried, 'Away with him'. They did not want Him in their temple or in their capital city. He was regarded as the off-scouring of the earth, labelled with malefactors and criminals. Finally, at the cross they treated Him as an outcast of humanity and crucified Him.

Jonah became the victim for all those in the ship. 'For I know that for my sake this great tempest is come upon you', Jonah 1. 12. We can reverse Jonah's language as we consider Christ, 'For we know that for our sakes that great tempest is come upon Thee'. Jesus became the victim for all in this world of ours. When we see Thee as the Victim, Bound to the accursed tree, For our guilt and folly stricken, All our judgement borne by Thee'. {JAMES G. DECK}

Jonah's act of self-sacrifice saved those on board ship.

Jesus' act of self-sacrifice has provided salvation for the 'whosoever'.

The moment Jonah entered the stormy waters of the Mediterranean the raging sea became calm. When Jesus entered the waters of

divine judgement during the three hours of darkness upon the cross, He made peace by the blood of His cross.

Jonah became the saviour of the seafarers on the ship. Christ became the Saviour of the world.

Two elements were at work in the experience of Jonah. What God did. What men did.

'For thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee', Jonah 1. 14, with 1. 4. 'So they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the sea', Jonah 1. 15, with 1. 11.

Similarly, divine sovereignty and human responsibility are both seen to be active in relation to the Christ of Calvary. Acts chapter 2 verse 23 relates to Christ: 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain'.

Although not always chronologically helpful, there is a remarkable coincidence of language between the incident with the seafarers and those involved in the trial and execution of Christ.

Jonah and the seafarers . . . they cast lots as to his complicity, Jonah 1. 7. Jesus and the soldiers . . . they cast lots for His seamless cloak, John 19. 24.

Jonah and the seafarers: 'Whence comest thou? What is thy country?' Jonah 1. 8.

Jesus and Pilate: 'Whence art thou?' John 19. 9. 'If my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight . . . but now is my kingdom not from hence', John 18. 36.

Jonah and the seafarers: 'lay not upon us innocent blood', Jonah 1. 14. Jesus and Judas, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood', Matt. 27. 4.

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The digital age has spawned an amazing spread of knowledge, and the younger generations in particular are drinking it up. Lots of people have written about this from a secular perspective, but a question that seems largely unexplored is: 'What impact is this having on the local church?' As we might expect, there are both opportunities and challenges. This article takes a preliminary look at some of these issues, mainly as they pertain to younger believers, to prompt church leadership and those believers who work closely with young people.

# REGULATING TH

By **LLOYD STOCK** Bury St. Edmunds, England

is that by assessing and applying the information incorrectly you may be far worse off. What's more, the underlying dynamics hint at a simultaneous demise of the authority figure, and a rise of self-importance, particularly of the up-and-coming generation. This is actually a systemic issue; we can only consider a very limited scope of its implications here.

## Something for everyone, from anyone, any which way

Another aspect of the increased access to knowledge has to do with the range of different media. The Internet is a key driver, facilitating new media but also accelerating the proliferation of physical media such as books which have come into a whole new world of their own. The Internet is awash with digital content in the form of websites, audio and video, and other multimedia, all of which can be authored and consumed by anyone, anywhere.

Yet another facet is the ease with which one can share knowledge. Everyone is encouraged to share everything, even if it is not appropriate, or the means of sharing is not an ideal means. All the normal care taken to share knowledge is discarded in the spur-of-the-moment world we live in.

For our purposes, we will have to limit ourselves to one further observation, which is pivotal, that of policing or control. The primary medium, the Internet, is not policed, and that has deep implications on the knowledge-sharing process, but that is unlikely to change, so we have to unpick this subject in the light of that.

## The renaissance outside the pulpit

What impact is all this having on the local church? God has gifted the local church with teachers who can expound the truth of scripture, and a plurality of elders whose several and joint responsibilities include oversight of sound doctrine. However, outside of corporate gatherings, the believer has access to a range of Bible teaching and helps which amount to the same

variety and enormity available in the secular world. The explosion of available content is being met by an equally high demand of thirsty believers who, in some cases, sense a vacuum of Bible teaching in their local context. What we are seeing could arguably be termed a 'renaissance', because the underlying significance of this explosion of knowledge, coupled with a generation hungry for it, is really quite huge. On the one hand, it is very refreshing, and the long-term effects could transform local churches for the better. But, if the doctor is only consulted now for a 'second' opinion, are our local elders and Bible teachers regarded with the same level of preference? Are there similar dangers involved if I incorrectly assess and apply the information available to me? Is the autonomy of the local church in demise whilst individual believers, especially young ones, become ever more self-directing? These are the provocative questions which we must be prepared to answer in order to ensure that the local church continues to fulfil its role as the 'pillar and ground of truth'.

## Trying the spirits

It is now possible to access Bible teaching from teachers who have a completely different hermeneutic to the one held by our local church. Recall that this new world is not policed. This offers us the opportunity to verse ourselves with an endless list of different ideas about biblical history, doctrine, and principle that can empower believers to defend their beliefs and/or challenge their understanding. Of course, a challenge to our understanding may be a profitable thing, if our own hermeneutic is askew in some way, and whose isn't at some point? This being the case, it is essential for those choosing to tap into Bible teachers outside of the local church that they properly assess and apply

## The new landscape

First, we have to be clear on the lay of the land that we are dealing with. The conforming effect of the world is subtle, and whilst we should avoid getting bogged down in over-analysis of human behaviour, a broad-brush grasp will help us obtain some perspective on how significant an inroad it may have made into the local church.

Older generations are not slow to concede that they are generally out of touch with the digital age, while younger generations may lack the necessary perspective to even know that anything is going on around them. If you grew up in the eighties, you have a good vantage point. Having seen the rise of the digital age you can provide some context on its transformative effect. We are looking at one piece of that transformation. There is nothing short of a deluge of information that is now accessible to each one of us. What was locked up in the minds of experts is now freely available, knowledge has been democratized. You can either view this as something empowering, or dangerous. For instance, in this new world, if you feel ill, in many cases your first thought will be to try and self-diagnose, and this offers you the chance of remedy within the convenience of your own home. This would have been far less likely just thirty years ago. To an ever lesser extent we consult a doctor now for a 'second' opinion. This may sound overstated to many, but it is definitely the developing trend. The problem





# THE RENAISSANCE

the teaching, and this in turn requires the informed development of a sound hermeneutic. But this is exactly what most younger people do not have. They are the ones with the access to this new world; they have a great thirst but they are the very ones who do not, in general, have a developed sense of how to interpret scripture. Some are still child-like in their faith and will readily assimilate anything. How it behoves the local church to meet this thirst with sound teaching as much as possible, and to raise awareness of how to effectively study God's word for oneself!

## Hook-line-and-sinker

Even if young people are empowered with an ability to filter false doctrine, there is such a plethora of voices out there that it is very easy to find one voice that you particularly get along with, his hermeneutic, his style, his gift even, that you may hardly ever consult or listen to anyone else. It is not that this is a new problem just that

it is made more prevalent. Your local church may not suffer from a 'one man ministry', but it's possible that some of the flock are near enough experiencing a 'one man ministry' through his commentaries, topical books, audio ministry, even a daily devotional. As we have already reminded ourselves, one of the hallmarks of the local church, a plurality of elders, is in part a safeguard against false doctrine. History tells us that listening and reading the thoughts of one man 'hook-line-and-sinker' is unwise, and this is true in this new world just as much as it has ever been.

## Re-instating Bible teaching

Finally, opinion and discussion about biblical truth is going on outside of the local church in every form possible, and, as with every other facet of this subject, on the surface



this should only be a good thing. But scripture shows that Bible teaching is ideally done, even if not corporately, at least in a formal context, which allows those that are so gifted and called to be able to expound scripture. What is at stake here is quite simply the deference given to the gift of Bible teaching itself. This is somewhat ironic because the cause of the problem in some cases is the lack of Bible teaching, and the solution young people have found is to find that teaching elsewhere. But history is littered with examples like this where a solution has a semblance of hope and promise, only to be acknowledged later that it just ended up compounding the problem. We must once again give sound Bible teaching its proper place in the local church. Not to fill heads, but to allow the sound exposition of the quick and powerful word of God to transform believers and revive communities.

In conclusion, then, the enduring calling to 'feed the flock' has a particularly urgent relevance in our present day, and it is hoped that this broad-brush discussion will have encouraged church leadership accordingly. Failure to do so will leave open a vacuum which may be filled with things not helpful to individual believers or beneficial to the local church as a whole in the long term.

But we must also enable believers to understand the importance of, and the mechanisms by which, Bible teaching can be validated. With this in hand, the local church will be well placed to maintain its standing as 'the pillar and the ground of truth' amidst what we should pray will be a time of renewal and, perhaps in God's grace, even revival.

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In Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 2, the Lord instructs the prophet, 'Write the vision, and make it plain on tablets, that he who reads it may run'. In 1964, the Lord burdened the heart of Dr. R. E. Harlow, co-founder of Emmaus Bible College and Emmaus Correspondence Schools, and his wife Gertrud about a great need that existed among the peoples of Africa, and other third-world nations. These were people, some of limited educational background, who spoke and read English as a second, third, or even a fourth language. Christian literature, particularly books about the Bible and Christian doctrine, written by British or North American authors, had been written at a level able to be understood by the educated Westerner, but beyond the abilities of the non-native English speaker. The need was for the message of the word of God, to be made plain, with that audience in mind, so that the readers could more easily understand and apply it, and to be equipped to run the race that was before them.

The Harlows had both been missionaries in the Belgian Congo, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo. With Dr. Harlow's skill as an educator, and Gertrud's skill as a linguist, they were well suited to the task of producing Bible study materials that were both doctrinally sound yet easy to read. Dr. Harlow adapted a method of writing called 'Everyday English'. His first book written in 'Everyday English' was a small commentary on the book of Genesis, called *Start of the Race*. At once, Gertrud translated it into the Congo Swahili language. From that single title the work grew to include a complete set of commentaries on the entire Bible, most as separate volumes, in 'Everyday English' as well as more than 250 titles in standard English, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Swahili.

'Everyday English' is easy to understand because it has a smaller vocabulary and seeks to express thoughts in short, concise sentences that quickly

# EVERYDAY PUBLI

## Making the Message Plain for Fifty

and clearly define and explain the message of the author. Another unique advantage of it is that its 'common language' method of construction makes it easier for missionaries to translate into other languages.

The result of the Harlow's exercise was the founding of *Everyday Publications* (EPI). Now located in the small town of Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada on the northern shore of Lake Erie, EPI is just two hours drive from Toronto, and just forty-five minutes away from the world-famous Niagara Falls.

This year, 2014, we are joyfully celebrating our fifty year jubilee of the Lord's faithfulness, with the theme 'Ebenezer' and 'Jehovah Jireh'. This theme was inspired by the life and testimony of the late James Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, now known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Hudson Taylor had two small texts in Chinese characters hanging on his wall, 'Ebenezer' and 'Jehovah Jireh' as a constant reminder that, as concerning the past, thus far the Lord has helped us, and, concerning the future, the Lord will provide.

The Lord has shown Himself to be our Ebenezer in many ways, including, but definitely not limited to:

- The development of the Bible Study

Series – The simple commentaries written by the Harlows and other Everyday English qualified authors are available with optional 'test booklets' enabling them to be used also as correspondence courses, in prison ministries or to supplement and/or complement existing correspondence school curricula. Millions of these books have gone out to every corner of the globe in the past fifty years. Books on doctrine, the church, daily Bible reading, and other topics are also available.

- The provision of a state of the art print shop – The Lord has graciously provided two, modern digital presses which allow us to Print-On-Demand (POD) with incredible efficiency. This exciting printing technology allows EPI to format and typeset books in an electronic format, store that format as computer files, and then send a file to one of our digital printers with instructions to print only the quantity that is needed at the moment. Books printed on conventional printing equipment require print runs of many thousands to be economically viable whereas POD allows us to print just a few cost-efficiently without tying up large sums of money in inventory.

- Providing the right people at the right time – As one who has been intimately involved with the ministry of *Everyday Publications* from the







# CATIONS

## Years!

By **MARK BEACH**

beginning, Gertrud Harlow testifies to the Lord's provision of the necessary human resources, 'Another thing that has amazed me again and again throughout the years is how the Lord Himself called others to share in this ministry. Almost no one was formally invited. They just came, called by the Lord and commended by their assemblies. Even after Ed's graduation, when it looked as if this ministry would fold, the Lord sent more, and younger and very well-equipped, workers to join the team. And so the blessing continues to spread and increase in other language areas as well, with the most valuable help being the volunteers who assist in the print shop, and the faithful prayers and support of God's people. Amazing! Only our wonderful Lord can do it'.

- Enabling the supply of free books – since its inception, *Everyday Publications* has been committed to producing the highest quality books it can at the lowest possible price to its readers. Books cannot be read unless they are first made available to those who need them. And they cannot be made available unless those who wish to distribute them can afford to obtain them. EPI books are made available to believers, assemblies, and commended workers in North America and Europe, including prison ministries, at the deepest possible discount. Assembly-commended missionaries, and national commended workers ministering in third-world countries, are encouraged to request as many books as they believe the Lord will enable them to use. Since 1991, it has been our privilege and practice to supply these requests at no charge, including shipping. Untold thousands of books have gone out under this policy, with not a single request being denied for lack of funds.

- Projects – Thus far in 2014 the Lord has enabled EPI to send the following large orders:



- Chile – 7,570 books and test booklets
- Emmaus Kenya – 5,150 books and test booklets
- Emmaus Haiti – 10,100 books and test booklets
- Emmaus Zimbabwe – 6,950 books and test booklets
- Zambia – 993 books and test booklets
- Angola (via Medical Missionary News) – 22,000 books and test booklets

With joyous confidence we look to the future as we anticipate that Jehovah Jireh will:

- Enable us to continue to send free books – those who receive free books from *Everyday Publications* are asked to do two things. First, to join us in thanking the Lord for His financial provision to print and ship the books, and, second, to join with us in prayer to the Lord for the necessary finance to continue to print and ship.
- Enable us to complete the special projects we have on the go including:
- Over the past eight years, the Lord has enabled us to send a total of seven 20-foot shipping containers and numerous skids filled with Bibles, hymnbooks, commentaries, and EPI books in Congo Swahili and French to the assemblies in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As the assemblies in Congo are growing at a fantastic

rate, we have been asked to print and ship 118,700 EPI books in Congo Swahili and French, as well as 46,500 Congo Swahili Emmaus Correspondence Courses (revised and updated by Gertrud Harlow)!

- Gertrud Harlow's current, 'retirement' project has been the translation of WILLIAM MACDONALD'S *Believers Bible Commentary – New Testament* into Congo Swahili. Volume 1 (Matthew – Acts) was completed in 2013 and three skids (3,000 commentaries) were safely shipped to Congo. Now 89 years old, she has almost completed Volume 2 (Romans – Colossians).

- Enable our books to be purchased by an ever-widening circle of constituents who the Lord leads into contact with us.

- Enable us to take full advantage of the opportunities in electronic publishing (e-books) and distribution that will fulfil His purpose and plans for *Everyday Publications*.

Our prayer for the future is that we would be continually found in the centre of God's will, that He would bring us into contact with every assembly missionary and national worker who He would desire to use our books, and that He would be glorified to the maximum in all of His desired will for the ministry and the people of *Everyday Publications*. To state it more simply, I would quote an old Puritan prayer, 'I am well pleased with Thy will, whatever it is, or should be in all respects. And if thou bidst me decide for myself in any affair I would choose to refer all to Thee, for thou art infinitely wise and cannot do amiss, as I am in danger of doing. I rejoice to think that all things are at thy disposal, and it delights me to leave them there. Then prayer turns wholly to praise, and all I can do is to adore and bless Thee'.



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The divine record of the life of Abraham begins in Mesopotamia, where his family 'served other gods'.<sup>1</sup> It was 'the Lord God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him the name Abraham'.<sup>2</sup> It was at that meeting in Mesopotamia that 'the God of glory appeared' to him. That is, He was visibly seen by Abraham.<sup>3</sup> Though this is recorded in the New Testament, the event of which it speaks took place during the period that closes Genesis chapter 11. Thus, it becomes the first mention in scripture, chronologically, of the pre-incarnate Son of God in human form visiting a person. What a meeting that was! What effect it was to have on Abraham! So we want to trace his life to see the impact that the ongoing revelation of the God of glory had on him.

We start with the fact that it was the Lord who spoke with Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, Gen. 12. 1.<sup>4</sup> This One who was Lord was also the God of glory! No wonder Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken to him, vv. 1-4. This is the evidence of faith in Abraham – that is, to act because of who God is and because of His word to him.<sup>5</sup> That response by Abraham led to the second pre-incarnate experience, as the Lord appeared to him at Shechem, Gen. 12. 7, this time with a promise concerning the future for Abraham's seed. This, too, produced worship in Abraham, and would remind us of what the Lord Jesus said, 'For to the one who has, more will be given . . . and he will have an abundance'.<sup>6</sup>

About seven years later, Melchizedek introduced Abraham to another of God's names, 'God Most High', Gen. 14. 18-20.<sup>7</sup> It is quite evident that

# Abraham and th

*All scripture quotations are taken from the NKJV*

this name that Abraham heard from Melchizedek had a profound impact on him at that time. In verses 22 to 23 he spoke out of a heart and mind that rested on God, and His character as the mighty One who is supreme, over all. He was learning that he could count on God to take care of him, and he also knew, by God's revelation to him, that Christ would someday reign over this earth as possessor of it.<sup>8</sup>

In response to what Abraham said to the king of Sodom at the end of chapter 14, the Lord revealed to Abraham that He was Abraham's 'shield, your exceedingly great reward', Gen. 15. 1. The children of God lose nothing but gain so much when they respond by faith to what God reveals to them. Upon hearing what the Lord said to him, Abraham spoke to God as Lord God, thereby acknowledging Him as his Master as well as the One who is always available to help, vv. 2-3.<sup>9</sup> Abraham asked about a very personal matter which concerned him and the future, but about which he saw no satisfactory way of accomplishment. But the future is all known to the One who is in complete control, and Abraham got a promise which went far beyond his and everyone else's greatest hopes, vv. 4-5. What a response from Abraham, v. 6! And what a response, then, from God to all of us, for we read, elsewhere, His Spirit-led commentary about this, letting us know that this has been written not only for Abraham 'but also for us'.<sup>10</sup> How are we responding to God's revelations?

Fifteen years later, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared for a third time, Gen. 17.

1. On this occasion, God introduced another of His names to him,<sup>11</sup> 'Almighty God', for God wanted him to know that He was not only the first great Cause of all, but also 'all-sufficient' for all of Abraham's needs.

What grace! The Lord made an unconditional, everlasting covenant with him and, at this time, changed his name from Abram, 'exalted father', to Abraham, 'father of a multitude'. This, too, resulted in Abraham falling on his face in worship, and having further communion with God, v. 3. But, alas, as Abraham, we too 'have this treasure in earthen vessels' and do not always live in the enjoyment of that communion.<sup>12</sup> Abraham responded in unbelief, vv. 17-18, which God had to correct. What compassion on His part! God then finished talking with him and went up from him, and a restored-to-fellowship Abraham then did what God told him to do.

Several years later the Lord appeared for the fourth time to Abraham in Mamre, a place where he had lived several times. It was associated with Hebron which means 'communion', and this time it was to be a very momentous occasion, 18. 1. Once again, Abraham was a worshipper, addressing God as his Master, Lord, v. 3.<sup>13</sup> Notice that the four appearances of the pre-incarnate Son of God marked Him out as 'God', the 'Lord', Jehovah, 'Almighty God', El Shaddai, and 'Lord', Adonahy. All are names of Him who is our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

By

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EL SHADDAI , EL ELYON , ADONAI , YAH  
JEHOVAH RAPHA , JEHOVAH SHAMMAH  
JEHOVAH MEKODDISHKEM , EL OLAM ,





# e Names of God

Not only did Abraham get a renewed promise of a son by his wife Sarah, cf. Gen. 17. 21, but he was also privileged to discuss with the Lord His plans concerning Sodom. Abraham knew the Lord's character, 'not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance',<sup>14</sup> and therefore he asked Him six times to spare the city on behalf of his nephew Lot. It is here that we learn of Abraham's wonderful assurance in his expression 'shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Gen. 18. 25. So, while we ought to be earnestly praying for souls, we also need to keep in mind God's sovereignty and righteousness in all that He does.

Some years after this, Abraham witnessed God's fulfilment of His promise to give him a son through his wife Sarah. This was followed by his encounter with Abimelech at Beersheba, Gen. 21. It was then that Abraham called on the name of 'the Lord, the Everlasting God', v. 33. This was yet another name for God, and this one does not appear anywhere else in scripture. The word 'everlasting' in this verse means 'concealed, what is hidden' – that is, the beginning or the end not defined. Abraham had learned that God has more in store for him than what he had experienced so far in his life, though he did not know what that might be, and he needed to wait on God's time to tell him. We, too, have God's word to remind us that 'now [we] know in part, but then [we] shall know just as [we] also [are] known'.<sup>15</sup>

This name becomes the introduction to that marvellous and momentous chapter, 22, in which we read for the first time in scripture of the

word 'love', and that in connection with the father and the son, v. 2. What Abraham learned there was that 'God will provide for Himself the lamb', v. 8. This is another descriptive name of God.<sup>16</sup> He is the One who will provide in one of the greatest events in Abraham's life! Later, Abraham called the place 'the Lord will provide', v. 14.<sup>17</sup> Abraham knew that the One who is *Elohim* is also *Jehovah*! We see Abraham's spiritual growth, as he learned these names of God and their meanings. All of this matters to God. Are we learning and growing too? For example, do we only pray 'in Jesus' name', or have we learned that 'God has made this Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ'?<sup>18</sup>

Fittingly, this ends the revelation of the names of God in the life of Abraham. One part of the truth of God in the Old Testament is that of the love of a father for his son, and here it is pictured as a reference to God the Father and His Son. The Father was the One who sent His Son as Saviour. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, was and is 'the Lamb' who brought infinite delight to His Father by willingly laying down His life.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to these names, God also revealed to Abraham truth beyond that which pertained to his personal life on earth, such as we read in Hebrews chapter 11 verses 13-16. This, too, should be our attitude, for our place and privilege now is to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.<sup>20</sup> As to Abraham, God was pleased to call him 'the friend of God'. How He delights to make Himself known to His people! How we ought to be seen by others as those who love Him!

These are but a few of the many names or titles of God in the Old Testament, revealing His person and His character. How fitting that we fear and honour His name, give Him the glory as we worship Him, and trust in Him,<sup>21</sup> for God's name is at the heart of every blessing.<sup>22</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Acts 7. 2; Josh. 24. 2.
- 2 Gen. 17. 5; Neh. 9. 7.
- 3 The word 'appeared' means 'visibly seen' in all of the referenced occasions of His appearing.
- 4 Lord = *Jehovah* – He who is to come, who always is, and who always was – emphasizing His continuous existence.
- 5 John 3. 33.
- 6 Matt. 13. 12 ESV.
- 7 Most High = *Heleyon* – God's supremacy over all.
- 8 John 8. 56; Ps. 83. 18; Rev. 10. 1-2.
- 9 Lord = *Adonahy* – Master, Lord. GOD = *Jehovah* – as note 4 above.
- 10 Rom. 4. 16-24.
- 11 Almighty = *Shadday* – All-sufficient; God = *El* – as note 6 above.
- 12 2 Cor. 4. 7.
- 13 Lord = *Adonahy* – as note 9 above.
- 14 2 Peter 3. 9.
- 15 1 Cor. 13. 12; Eph. 2. 7.
- 16 God = *Elohim* – Creator, the plural of majesty - trinity acting in unity. 'Will provide' = *jireh* – He will see, provide.
- 17 Lord = *Jehovah* – as note 4 above. 'Will provide' = *jireh* – as note 16 above.
- 18 Acts 2. 36.
- 19 1 John 4. 14; John 10. 17.
- 20 Phil. 3. 20; Eph. 2. 6.
- 21 Deut. 28. 58; Pss. 29. 2; 9. 10.
- 22 Num. 6. 27; Ezek. 39. 7.

**ROBERT MACY** was in fellowship with the Greenwood Hills assembly in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, USA. This, his first article for *Precious Seed International*, was received on the 13th March 2014. It was some two weeks later that brother Bob, as he was affectionately known, was called home to glory.

WEH › JEHOVAH NISSI › JEHOVAH-RAAH  
› JEHOVAH JIREH › JEHOVAH TSIDKENU  
JEHOVAH SHALOM › JEHOVAH SABAOOTH



# EDWARD DENNETT

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY** Newton Abbot, England

Not long after the start of the First World War in 1914, the biblical scholar Edward Dennett died after a short illness. He was 83 years of age and had spent a considerable part of his life teaching the word of God. He was born at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight in 1831, and, with his family, attended a local Anglican church. It was here that he came into contact with a godly clergyman, and, through his ministry, was soundly converted to Christ. Later he graduated from London University, and subsequently became a Baptist minister in Greenwich.

In a famous collection of nine letters, entitled *The Steps I Have Taken*, Dennett, writing from Blackheath in January 1875 to a close friend, set out the reasons why he joined assembly fellowship. Paradoxically, some years earlier he had written a pamphlet against 'Brethren'! How unsearchable are God's judgements, and how inscrutable His ways, Rom. 11. 33! In his second letter, he states that, although he very soon regretted publishing the pamphlet, it was not because he didn't believe all that he had written, but that he had a great esteem for the 'Brethren' that he knew. He could not fail to admire their separateness of walk, their simplicity of life, and their love for the word of God and the person of the Lord. Thus, he deliberately stopped the pamphlet being advertised and then determined that it should be discontinued. He also wrote a brief letter to William Kelly stating what he had done, and expressing his sorrow that he had written and published the pamphlet. This, in fact, was some time before he actually seceded from the Baptist ministry. He freely confessed before his congregation on a number of occasions that he largely agreed with the doctrines usually associated with 'Brethren'. Dennett only regarded himself nominally as a Baptist minister, and, in writing to his friend, he stated that 'in spirit, and also in practice, we were outside of the Baptist denomination altogether, so much so that we not only disliked, but we very often refused, the appellation of Baptist ministers'.<sup>1</sup>

His life took a completely different direction when, in 1873, he went to Switzerland to recover from a very serious illness. He stayed in the municipality of Veytaux, near the Chateau of Chillon. Here, in these idyllic surroundings, Dennett came into contact with other Christians who were staying at the same boarding house. Through searching the scriptures together with these believers, Dennett changed his mind in respect of the coming of Christ. Up to this point he had maintained that the Lord's coming would be premillennial, but 'that the Church would have to



pass through the final tribulation, and be therefore on earth during the power and sway of Antichrist'.<sup>2</sup> He now arrived at the conclusion that the Church would not be in the tribulation, and that Matthew 24 did not apply to the Church. This revised view of prophecy acted as a catalyst in other areas of biblical truth. He found it more and more difficult to defend the 'church' practices that he had been associated with for so long. Even so, he still clung tenaciously to his position, and admitted that 'the only fear I had was, whether, though I was much better, my health was sufficiently restored to enable me to resume my long-interrupted work'.<sup>3</sup>

But Dennett, like many others before him, soon realized that his

fresh understanding of biblical truth, especially New Testament church principles, was now incompatible with his earlier views.<sup>4</sup> On his return to England, he preached to his Baptist congregation for the last time on the 29th of September 1873, closing the morning sermon with the following words, 'I could not now with a conscience void of offence toward God remain; for since the evening on which I announced my retirement, I had gone afresh to the word of God, and I felt compelled to say that I could no longer uphold our practices as to ministry and worship'.<sup>5</sup> He then left and went for a short time to Scotland to try to come to terms with his decision, and what he would do in future. Though possibly shorter in duration, this may well have been his Arabian experience, Gal. 1. 16-17. Soon afterwards, he made contact with William Kelly, and took the decisive step to break bread with a local assembly of (connexional/exclusive) brethren. His association with these assemblies lasted until his death in October 1914.

Dennett was a prolific writer of books, booklets, articles, and expository notes and jottings. His commentaries on the Old and New Testaments were limited, but easy to read and provide a wealth of spiritual insight especially for younger believers, and for those who may not want to engage too critically with the biblical text. His commentaries on Nehemiah and Second Timothy are excellent examples of his clarity. He also wrote books on more general biblical topics such as the classic work *The Three Marys*.

## Endnotes

- 1 *The Steps I have Taken* – Letter 1.
- 2 *The Steps I have Taken* – Letter 2.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 See particularly *The Steps I have Taken* – Letters 4-8, in which Dennett sets out his theological arguments for New Testament Church principles.
- 5 *The Steps I have Taken* – Letter 6.

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## Daniel chapter 9, verses 24-27

### Appendix: The Chronology of Daniel 9

One of the most fascinating elements in Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9 verses 24-27 is its chronology of events. Thus, the prophecy is set to a schedule by five time-markers: seventy sevens, v. 24, consisting of seven sevens, v. 25, sixty-two sevens, vv. 25, 26, and one seven, v. 27, which is itself divided into half a seven.

Daniel's chronology must be approached with three basic presuppositions: (1) it has to be taken seriously as an integral part of the prophecy, not dismissed as unintelligible or irrelevant; (2) it has to be taken with the Lord Jesus Christ as its focus and fulfilment; and (3) it has to be interpreted in the light of Christ's words in the New Testament, which point to a yet-future fulfilment of the final seven. In this article, we will evaluate seven approaches to the chronology.

#### 1. The liberal/critical view

Liberal scholars see the fulfillment of the prophecy in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. Thus, the seventy sevens start with Jeremiah's prophecies of a return from exile (606 BC) or the destruction of the city (587 BC). The seven sevens are fulfilled in the appearance of an 'anointed Prince', either Cyrus, Isa. 45. 1, or Jeshua/Joshua at the time of the return from exile. After the sixty-two sevens is a second 'anointed One', v. 26, Onias the High Priest, who was murdered in 171 BC. The seventy sevens are completed with the rededication of the Temple (164 BC), after the three years of atrocities. The problem here, of course, is that the figures do not add up: there are only 442 years between the start and finish dates. Critical scholars dismiss this discrepancy by blaming the author of Daniel with making a chronological miscalculation!<sup>1</sup> Ironically, this epitomizes the entire critical approach; as with numerous other parts of the scheme, it just does not add up.

#### 2. An alternative punctuation

A variant form of the critical view is based on a different punctuation of verse 25 (see the RV, and ANDERSON's treatment of the issue, who calls it 'schoolboy translation'<sup>2</sup>). The starting point of the seventy sevens is

Jeremiah's message in 605 BC about a return of the exiles, the fulfilment of the seven sevens Cyrus' accession to the Persian throne (not dated precisely) and the end of the sixty-two sevens as Onias' murder in 171 BC (434 years after 605 BC). Finally, the rededication of the temple in 164 BC completes the last seven. To make this all fit, however, it is argued that the sixty-two sevens started afresh at the same point as the seven sevens; the two periods were co-extensive rather than consecutive. Apart from the dubious punctuation, however, the different sevens must add up cumulatively to seventy. KEIL AND DELITZSCH also follow the same punctuation (although they view our Lord Jesus Christ as the centre of the prophecy) and their chronological scheme is even more confused.

#### 3. A chronography

Other critical commentators argue that the passage does not present us with a chronology of events, but rather a chronography, that is, 'a stylized scheme of history' (GOLDINGAY,<sup>3</sup> so also F. F. BRUCE<sup>4</sup>). That is, the numbers are not meant to be counted literally, but present symbolic messages. As divergences in interpreting the numbers show, the symbolic meanings are only limited by the interpreter's imagination. However, 'that the present number is to be taken literally appears from its division, not into symbolical aliquot parts, e.g., 7x70, but into an irregular series, 7+62+1'.<sup>5</sup> Baldwin exemplifies the problem with this approach, arguing that because one number, seventy, has symbolic significance, it is better to 'be consistent and to keep to a symbolic interpretation'<sup>6</sup> rather than to take the numbers literally. However, BALDWIN applies the symbolism selectively (not consistently), not telling us what sixty-two or 'half a seven' mean. By cavalierly glossing over such details in a fast-and-loose fashion, the chronology is once again dismissed as irrelevant.

#### 4. Jewish approaches

Jewish commentators fall into two camps. Some modern commentators take the prophecy to refer to Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabean epoch. Others have followed Josephus' lead in finding the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy in the time of the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the seventy sevens are taken to refer to the time period 'from the

destruction of the First Temple in the days of Zedekiah to the end of the Second Temple – 70 years of the Babylonian exile and 420 years during which the Second Temple existed'.<sup>8</sup> Again, of course, the chronology requires some creative accountancy, for there were 655 years between 586 BC and AD 70.

## 5. Amillennial approaches

For the amillennialist, the starting point of the seventy sevens is taken to be Cyrus' decree in 536 BC (CALVIN, MATTHEW HENRY, YOUNG), the seven sevens are fulfilled either in the work of rebuilding the Temple (CALVIN) or in the work of Ezra and Nehemiah (YOUNG), and the sixty-two sevens are fulfilled in Christ's baptism (CALVIN, and apparently YOUNG). The actual numbers (which don't fit) are dismissed as irrelevant and of little worth, for we must not 'place our emphasis . . . upon dates and mathematical calculations, but upon that central Figure'.<sup>9</sup> Space forbids us rehearsing the 'extravagant fancies' that amillennialist expositors resort to in verse 27, arguing that the covenant confirmed at the start of the final seven is not temporary at all, but the everlasting New Covenant. Finally, some expositors are evasive about an end-point for the seventy sevens altogether.

## 6. A 490 year chronology

One common way that the chronology has been interpreted is by equating the seventy sevens as years. This would seem natural enough in view of the fact that the prophecy was set against the background of the captivity of seventy years.

Many commentators (including amillennialists like PUSEY and premillennialists like ARCHER<sup>10</sup>) argue for a 490-year chronology starting with the decree issued by Artaxerxes to Ezra in 457 BC, Ezra 7. Adding 483 years, we are brought to AD 27 and the start of Christ's ministry. With a three-and-a-half-year ministry, this gives us a date for Christ's death in AD 30. Amillennialist commentators taking this approach argue that Christ died at the half-way point of the final seven, and that the chronology finished with Stephen's death or the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius in about AD 33. Premillennialists take the final seven (or, perhaps, the final three-and-a-half years) as still future.

However, there are serious problems. Firstly, the decree in Ezra chapter 7 is an unlikely starting-point, for there is no word about rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, nor did any

rebuilding work begin as a result. Secondly, it is unlikely that Christ's ministry began in AD 27, for John's ministry began in the 'fifteenth year of Tiberius', Luke 3. 1, and this was AD 29. Some claim that Tiberius' reign was counted from his co-regency with Augustus a year or two before Augustus' death, but this is baseless, 'this method is to be rejected because there is no evidence, either from historical documents or coins, for its employment, whereas there is abundant evidence that Tiberius reckoned his first year after the death of Augustus'.<sup>11</sup> Lastly, to argue that any event in Acts ended the seventy sevens is pure speculation, 'There is no hint of this in the texts of Daniel 9. 27 and Acts 8-9 to denote the fulfillment of the seventieth week'.<sup>12</sup>

## 7. The 'prophetic-year' chronology

Although SIR ROBERT ANDERSON is commonly credited with this idea, the commentator JOHN GILL mentioned it over a century before, and quoted BISHOP CHANDLER who calculated the period from Nehemiah to Christ in 'Chaldee years'. ANDERSON wrote, 'What then was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of "Messiah the Prince" – between 14th March, BC 445 and the 6th April AD 32? The interval contained exactly and to the very day 173,880 days, or seven times sixty-nine prophetic years of 360 days, the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy'.<sup>13</sup>

More recently, H. W. HOEHNER has modified ANDERSON'S calculations, showing: (1) that the twentieth year of Artaxerxes was 444 BC, not 445 BC; and (2) that AD 33 is a more likely date for the death of Christ than AD 32. HOEHNER made four arguments for this AD 33 date: (1) Christ's ministry began in the summer or autumn of AD 29; (2) Christ's ministry lasted over three years, including four Passovers, that is, until spring AD 33; (3) Nisan 14 (the day of Christ's death) fell on a Friday in AD 30 and AD 33, but not AD 32; and (4) Pilate's ingratiating attitude to the Jews at the time of Christ's trial (in contrast with his earlier ruthless treatment of them) is best explained as a result of the fall from power of Sejanus, Pilate's patron in Rome, and a virulent anti-Semite, in AD 31.

## Chronological issues

There are several problems with ANDERSON'S and HOEHNER'S chronologies. Perhaps the most immediate is that a 360-day year seems somewhat contrived. However, just as Nebuchadnezzar was driven out for seven



(unspecified) 'times' in chapter 4, Daniel's prophecy does not actually state what units the seventy sevens are to be counted in, whether years, months, days, or combinations thereof. Further, both ANDERSON and HOEHNER provide documentation to substantiate the claim that 'when one investigates the calendars of ancient India, Persia, Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt, Central and South America, and China, it is interesting to notice that they uniformly had twelve thirty-day months . . . although it may be strange to present-day thinking, it was common in those days to think of a 360-day year'.<sup>14</sup>

Even more significantly, Daniel chapter 7 verse 25 refers to a period of persecution lasting three-and-a-half times ('time and times and half a time'), which appears to refer to the same period mentioned in chapter 12 verse 7, as well as similar three-and-a-half year periods: Rev. 11. 3, 1260 days; 12. 6, 1260 days; 11. 2, 42 months; and 13. 5, 42 months. These all appear to refer to the same period of persecution, the great tribulation, spoken of in Daniel chapter 9 verse 27 as 'half a seven'. This would appear to show that the last 'half a seven' involves a 360-day year with twelve thirty-day months. This, in turn, would suggest that the entire period of the seventy sevens do too.

Secondly, if Christ began his ministry around AD 28 or 29, we must explain the comment in John chapter 2 verse 20 that 'it has taken forty-six years to build this temple'. Herod began the rebuilding of the temple in his 18th year (according to JOSEPHUS): 20 BC. Forty-six years later would place Christ's first visit to Jerusalem in AD 27, too early for ANDERSON'S and HOEHNER'S chronology.

HOEHNER replies that the word used here is *naos*, the inner shrine of the temple, as opposed to *hieros*, the temple precincts generally, and because the word 'built' here is in the aorist tense, he argues that the Jews were saying that the inner shrine was built (i.e. finished) forty-six years previously. As the first stage of the building project, the inner shrine was finished in eighteen months (by 18 BC), this would bring us to AD 28 or 29 in John chapter 2. HOEHNER'S argument has three problems. First, the verse makes more sense if the Jews were emphasizing the lengthy building process rather than the durability of the building (for which 46 years is not long). Second, the word *naos* appears to be used sometimes for more than the inner shrine, e.g., Matt. 27. 5. Third, MOULE argues

that the aorist is summarizing a continuing process here,<sup>15</sup> while the word 'built' is used in the aorist for an ongoing building work in Ezra chapter 5 verse 16 (LXX).

ANDERSON'S answer is more satisfying: Herod did not actually begin rebuilding the Temple in 20 BC. Instead, JOSEPHUS says that Herod made a speech in 20 BC proposing to rebuild the Temple, as well as promising to make elaborate preparations before the actual rebuilding work began.<sup>16</sup> ANDERSON argues that the preparations were not the work of a few weeks or months and therefore it is obvious that the rebuilding of the Temple itself did not begin in 20 BC but some time afterwards. Therefore, the Passover in John chapter 2 was not in AD 26 but some time later.

The most serious problem with ANDERSON'S chronology (as he himself appears to be aware) is that the 14th day of Nisan (full moon) did not fall on a Thursday or Friday in AD 32. In fact, an AD 32 date for the crucifixion would mean that Christ died on Sunday or Monday.<sup>17</sup> ANDERSON tries to get around this problem,<sup>18</sup> arguing firstly, that cloudy skies and intercalations meant that a new month might be declared up to four days late and, secondly, the fact that Judas and those with him carried torches means that it must not have been full moon when Christ was taken. These arguments, and especially the second (which sounds rather desperate), amount to special pleading. HOEHNER'S dating seems more dependable and less forced: Christ died on Passover Friday in AD 33.

### A parenthesis?

Many commentators dismiss the idea that there is a gap in the chronology, arguing that the seventieth seven must follow on directly from the sixty-ninth. However, there are at least three proofs from within Daniel's prophecy itself of a 'parenthesis': (1) the destruction of Jerusalem, not within the seventieth seven, but in AD 70, nearly forty years after the sixty-ninth seven; (2) the expression 'wars until the end', v. 26, which specifies an indeterminate period of time (now nearly 2000 years long) of wars over the city of Jerusalem; and (3) the gap between Daniel himself and the start point of the seventy sevens, about 100 years later. MATTHEW HENRY (favouring a start point with Cyrus' decree) says that 'it looks very graceful that the seventy weeks should begin immediately upon the expiration of the seventy years'. Graceful or not, as we have seen, the wording of the prophecy requires that the start

point was not until Nehemiah's day. This being so, there is, of necessity, another gap in the chronology, right at its beginning.

Thus, the 'parenthesis' is not an idea imposed upon the text to suit an eschatological viewpoint; rather it is the inevitable result of the exegesis of the text itself. Further, Christ's words in Matthew chapter 24 show that the events of the final seven have a yet-future fulfilment. There Christ promised His coming would occur 'immediately after' a period of 'great tribulation' ushered in by the 'abomination of desolation'. These words were plainly not fulfilled in the events of AD 70.

Why there should be such a parenthesis is not explained in Daniel's prophecy, but three reasons suggest themselves. Firstly, the exile provides both an example and a foreshadowing of God suspending His dealings with the Jewish nation because of their sins, in keeping with the terms of the Mosaic covenant, Lev. 26; Deut. 28. Secondly, for God to recognize His people no longer is righteous, for as Messiah was rejected, 'cut off' and left 'with nothing', so, in consequence, the Jewish people were cut off by God and left without city or temple. Nor will they be reconciled until their future worship of the Antichrist is finished. Thirdly, from a New Testament perspective, the fact that the gospel message is preached to all nations necessarily entails not simply the equality of Jew and Gentile, but the invalidation of Jewish 'special-nation' status at the present time. This implies, too, that the resumption of God's purposes for the Jewish nation in a future day similarly entails the removal out of this scene of the Church. 'The fulfillment of this uniquely Jewish prophecy is suspended while the gospel is preached to the Gentiles . . . then after the members of the church are fully gathered, the prophecy will begin to unfold once more with a final week of acute suffering and persecution for the Jewish nation'.<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

Believing that the chronological notes in Daniel's prophecy were intended to be taken seriously, and that God Himself saw to it that they were perfectly fulfilled, we may: (a) eliminate all schemes which treat the figures selectively, mystically, or imprecisely; (b) eliminate all start points except for Nehemiah's (on the basis of the wording of Daniel chapter 9 verse 25; and (c) eliminate any other 'Messiah the Prince' than our Lord Jesus Christ. This leaves us with only one chronology: the so-called 'prophetic-

year' scheme, a scheme 'occasionally sneered at, but never answered', MCCLAIN. The fact that the 360-day year finds support from within the prophetic scriptures relating to the final 'half a seven' gives us confidence that the 69 sevens were precisely and perfectly fulfilled. The final seven is yet to come.

## Endnotes

- 1 J. A. MONTGOMERY, *Daniel*, ICC, T & T Clark, 1926, pg. 393
- 2 SIR R. ANDERSON, *Daniel in the Critics Den*, Nisbet, 1909, pgs. 167-170
- 3 J. E. GOLDINGAY, *Daniel*, WBC, Word, 1989, pg. 257
- 4 F. F. BRUCE, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, Tyndale Press, 1960, pgs. 67-74
- 5 MONTGOMERY, pg. 391
- 6 J. G. BALDWIN, *Daniel*, TOTC, IVP, 1978, pg. 196
- 7 *The Antiquities of the Jews*, X.11.7
- 8 J. J. SLOTKI, The Soncino Press, 1951, pg. 77
- 9 E. J. YOUNG, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Eerdmans, 1949, pg. 221
- 10 G. L. ARCHER, *Daniel*, Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, Zondervan, 1985, pgs. 113-116
- 11 H. W. HOEHNER, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Zondervan, 1977, pg. 31-2. See also Sir R. Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, Kregel Publications, 1984, pg. 96
- 12 HOEHNER, pg. 126
- 13 *The Coming Prince*, pg. 127-8, emphasis in the original
- 14 HOEHNER, pgs. 135-6
- 15 C. F. D. MOULE, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, Cambridge University Press, 1953, pg. 11
- 16 *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 15, Chapter 11
- 17 See HOEHNER, pgs. 99-100 (n.34) and pg. 137
- 18 *The Coming Prince*, pgs. 99-105
- 19 J. M. BOICE, *Daniel*, Baker Books, 1989, pg. 101

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# WILLIAM RHODES LEWIS 1877-1964

By **JOHN BENNETT** Kirkby-in-Ashfield, England

As one of the editors wrote of Lewis, 'His . . . unfailing grace, his old-world courtesy and his devotion to his work, to his wife and to his Lord would be hard to match anywhere'.<sup>1</sup> For a man who was an editor of *Echoes of Service* for forty-six years, this is a fitting tribute.

William Lewis was born in 1877 in Hereford. Saved in early years, he was baptized and received into fellowship at the assembly that met in Barton Room, Hereford in 1895, a place of deep affection in his life from that point onwards. Perhaps it was of significance that the assembly at Hereford first met in the home of Lewis' father, also William Lewis.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it was to be in Barton Room that William Lewis Senior passed away in August 1900 during a church meeting!

Although he had early aspirations to be a doctor, William junior was judged to be too weak physically to undergo the rigours of the training and practice of medicine. Based upon that assessment, particularly by his headmaster, he took up law. It was this sphere of study that was to be an asset in his many areas of service for his Lord. In 1907, still only 30 years of age, he took over most of the work of the Stewards Company Limited. In 1917 he became an editor of *Echoes of Service*, and, in the same year, a trustee of Muller's Homes, eventually becoming chairman of the trustees. Throughout these times he continued to practise as a solicitor.

It is difficult to appreciate just how remarkable Lewis' service was, but certain factors might be borne in mind. Whilst still in his early twenties, and studying for his law exams, he suffered a severe haemorrhage of one lung, a condition that was to affect him the rest of his life. As Stunt, *et al.*,

record, 'He did not allow it to defeat him, but completed his studies and, in July 1901, took his final examinations in bed – and passed!'<sup>3</sup> Another factor was the death of his father in 1900. Apart from the obvious shock associated with a sudden death, William felt his responsibility to his mother and his siblings.

Throughout the early years of the Twentieth Century, he gave himself to systematic and diligent Bible study. He led a Bible class for young men in his home assembly. He supplied numerous answers to questions at the request of the editor of *The Witness Magazine*. Indeed, that editor, J. R. Caldwell, wrote to acknowledge his surprise at the depth of answers coming from the pen of a relatively young man.<sup>4</sup> In 1908 C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine asked him to join them in sharing responsibility for their Bible Correspondence Course, but he declined. However, he did contribute to various pamphlets written either jointly with Vine, Hogg, or both.

As well as balancing the demands upon his time from his own assembly and his contributions to a wider ministry, William Lewis was approached on a number of occasions to become involved in *Echoes of Service*. The first occasion was in 1907. The editors, William Bennet, and Robert Sparks, wrote to him from a deep exercise.<sup>5</sup> However, it was not until June 1917 that he began work at *Echoes*. This was the start of what was to become the most significant contribution of any editor from its inception.

Although one who was always happier away from the limelight, William Lewis was also a man of resolve and principle. There were many critics of *Echoes*, seeing it as a vehicle for centralization, and denominationalism. Some of those

critics came from outside of the organization and some from within.<sup>6</sup> However, in defending the work of the organization Lewis was firm but gracious, exhibiting the characteristics of the One he sought to serve.<sup>7</sup>

William Rhodes Lewis died in March 1964. He had lived with severe illness all his life yet he served unstintingly and graciously, carrying significant responsibilities unassumingly, and ever keeping his eye upon the Master.

## Endnotes

- 1 STUNT, W. T., PULLENG, A., PICKERING, A., SIMMONS, G. P., BOAK, D. K., WARREN, S. F. (Editors), *Turning the world upside down, Echoes of Service*, 1972, pg. 63.
- 2 BEATTIE records, 'The first meeting for the breaking of bread was held in the drawing-room of WILLIAM LEWIS, when seven sat down to remember the Lord's death. In the following year [1862] a few more having been added to the number, the assembly was removed to a building which had been used as a school-room', BEATTIE, D. J., *Brethren, the story of a great recovery*, John Ritchie Ltd., 1944, pp. 171-172.
- 3 STUNT, W. T., PULLENG, A., PICKERING, A., SIMMONS, G. P., BOAK, D. K., WARREN, S. F. (Editors), *Turning the world upside down, Echoes of Service*, 1972, pg. 58.
- 4 'I have somehow been under the impression that you were as old a man as myself – I having qualified for the Old Age Pension last year!', *ibid*, pg. 60.
- 5 BENNET wrote, 'You are the only one I have thought of from the beginning of MR SPARKS and myself being left without DR MACLEAN', *ibid*, pg. 59.
- 6 See, for example, GRASS, T., *Gathering to His name*, Paternoster, 2006, pp. 346-350.
- 7 E. H. BROADBENT wrote of VINE and LEWIS, 'Although this is the end of a long period of fellowship in service it has in no way tarnished our brotherly affection and esteem for each other', *ibid*, pg. 347.

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It has been suggested that the second Epistles, as we have them in scripture, have a distinct character of their own. The importance and significance of the second Epistles are not always sufficiently appreciated without taking care to study them in their proper setting and background.

It is generally thought that these Epistles were written just because there arose another opportunity of writing after the first, or to convey something which the apostles had missed or omitted in the first. They did not pen them to supplement the first, with later thoughts that came to the writers. To consider them just from this angle, although this may be partially true, would, however, not be in keeping with the character of the inspiration of the scriptures.

A closer survey of these second Epistles will reveal that there is a distinctive character for these sections of the word of God. Generally speaking, they, as distinct from the first ones, are largely dealing with the 'last days' and the work of the enemy, particularly in the context of the truths of the first Epistles. It could also be said that they are the truths enshrined in the first Epistles and presented in their peculiar application to the walk of the believers in the last days. They are, therefore, warnings as well as exhortations for the saints today. We are to take care of ourselves and of the truths presented to us in these second Epistles. A survey of the second Epistles to Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Timothy (and of Peter and John, including his third Epistle), will all show this design, while in some these thoughts are implicit and in others explicit.

In First Corinthians, we have the local assembly, with instructions on its scriptural order and ministry. In the second we have the references to false apostles, deceitful workers

# NEW TESTAMENT

transforming themselves into apostles of Christ, e.g., 2 Cor. 11. 13. Twice over, we are warned that the ministers of unrighteousness will handle the word of God deceitfully. In all the second Epistles we find similar warnings. We are also warned that the devil will appear as 'an angel of light', v. 14, making it almost impossible to distinguish him from his real appearance, and many simple believers, untaught in the word of God, will be easily deceived.

With regard to the Thessalonians, in the first Epistle we are pointed to the coming of the Lord. The Epistle also corrects some errors into which the saints had fallen with regard to the 'day of the Lord', and enlightens them concerning the blessed portion of the saints at the coming of the Lord. This point is not touched or instructed earlier. In the second, there is a progress over the thoughts found in the first. The apostle is warning us of that which would be manifest in the world at the approach of the last days, namely the Antichrist. While, in the first, we are pointed to the coming of the Lord, in the second Epistle the apostle goes further, saying that before the 'day of the Lord' arrives the spirit of Antichrist will be more in evidence; the church being removed before the lawless one is revealed.

In First Peter, there is the repeated reference to the Christian's sufferings. In the second, the Christian is seen as tempted. In the first, the devil is viewed as a roaring lion, but in the second like an unseen serpent, subtle and deceptive. Again, hollow professions, apostasies of ecclesiastical and secular forms are also introduced. The epistle is written with the seducers in view, pointing out the characteristic features of the false teachers,

denouncing them with utmost severity, and announcing God's fitting judgement on them. It is not difficult to see that the Second Epistle of Peter refers to the last days.

In the Second Epistle of John, as also in the third, we have additional instructions on the teachings of the first, with a view to balancing the truths of the first, particularly in the context of the last days. The stress is on the truth. The popular theology today is 'love one another', 1 John 3. 11, never mind the differences, or just agree to differ. Even perversions of truth are to be tolerated. However, the Holy Spirit never permits the co-existence of truth and error, espoused in an 'agree to differ' philosophy.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the word given is, 'be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (opinion)', 1 Cor. 1. 10. The word of God and its teachings are not to become casualties against the background of the theme of 'love one another'. The cardinal thought, therefore, in the Second and Third Epistles of John, the very apostle of love, is emphasizing 'the truth'. If we look at the references to truth in these two single chapter Epistles we will notice the stress on that word.

By  
**JOHN  
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In John's second Epistle:

- 'Whom I love in the *truth*', v. 1
- 'They that have known the *truth*', v. 1
- 'For the *truth's* sake', v. 2
- 'In *truth* and love', v. 3
- 'Thy children walking in *truth*', v. 4
- 'We walk after His *commandments* and this is the *commandment*', v. 6
- 'Whosoever transgressed and abideth not in the *doctrine* of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the *doctrine* of





# SECOND EPISTLES

Christ hath both the Father and the Son', v. 9

- 'If there come any unto you and bring not this *doctrine* receive him not', vv. 10, 11

A love which is mere emotion can become sentimental.

In the third Epistle:

- 'Whom I love in the *truth*', v. 1.
- 'I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the *truth* that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the *truth*', v. 3.
- 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in *truth*', v. 4.

- 'Fellow helpers to the *truth*', v. 8.

- 'Demetrius hath good report of all men and of the *truth* itself', v. 12.

Thus, we are to follow the *truth* in love.

The Second Epistle to Timothy clearly illustrates the principle already referred to. It is designed by the Holy Spirit to guide the true children of God in the last days. Anyone who really wants to walk with God and live a careful and holy life in these last days should go to this second Epistle, for there it is expressed how we should walk during the end times. The explicit

and distinct instructions are prominent! It is the Divine chart for those who desire to live a life that is pleasing to God, eschewing (avoiding?) the evil that is so evident around us.

In this connection, there is one important reference. In the first Epistle we have 'the house of God', which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of *truth* and how to behave in it, 1 Tim. 3. 15. In the second the reference is to the 'the great house', 2 Tim. 2. 20. A mixture of vessels of honour and dishonour speaking of the features of the last days, the perilous times.

The unity of the assembly is so precious. It has such authority over the hearts of men, that there are dangers when failure sets in. The principle of individual faithfulness and of individual responsibility to God is established and set above all other considerations, for it has to do with the very nature of God Himself. In spite of himself the believer is called a Christian, and he is looked at here as a great house. But he cleanses himself, personally, from every vessel which is not to the Lord's honour. This is the rule of Christian faithfulness, and, thus, personal avoidance of fellowship with evil. Only then will he become a vessel unto honour fit for the Master's use. Whoever will bear His name should *separate* himself from all kinds of unclean things, 1 Thess. 5. 22, and not bring dishonour to Christ the Lord.

May we give heed to the specific message of the second Epistles!

## Endnotes

- 1 This statement should be seen in the context of the present dispensation.

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# What does it mean to die with C

## i. The Cost of His words – 'let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'

It is a very searching question we ought to ask ourselves. Would we still have confessed Christ as Lord and Saviour had we known for certain it would mean being turned out of home and society, being beaten, imprisoned or even killed? Yet we learn that many dear believers in other lands still face all this when He is owned. What of us? Only as He captures our hearts and lives is it possible at all. We see something of this in Paul's experience. Ananias was sent to him at Damascus to 'shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake', Acts 9. 16. He knew the cost from the start of his experience. In the passage before us, so do the twelve, and so do we, if we would 'come after Him'. It has never changed, nor will it do so in the days of His rejection.

In Philippians chapter 3, the apostle reflects on some of the costs, but considers them nothing in the light of His person. To have Christ for his gain compensated every loss and suffering. We, too, should have these deep spiritual desires to know Him, to come after Him, and to face up to what this will cost.

It is at once evident that it is a contest between self and Christ. 'Let him deny himself', Luke 9. 23. If self-interest orders our lives, we cannot experience a Christ-centred life. Will all our abilities, powers and faculties, possessions and opportunities be used for self, or for Him? This is the great issue which so many avoid, and go on through life professing Him to be Lord, but in reality denying Him that place. Surely, most of us must say that this is so. Even Christian service can be taken up in this spirit of self-pleasing and, should it not suit us, given up for the same reason. How contrary all this is to human thinking! Every part of education today is geared up to self-improvement, self-reliance, self-expression, self-advancement, self-promotion. All must be **unlearned** to follow Christ – 'let him deny himself'!

Only One is to be promoted, honoured, glorified, not self at all. Elijah in 1 Kings chapter 17 enunciated a principle for blessing which applies in all ages: 'make me first'. As God's representative his needs stood prior to those of the widow and her son. Put Him first and true blessing follows. Self clamours to be first, but no one ever had true blessing in their lives on that principle. Him first! But this involves cost and sacrifice. I am going to a cross – He who follows after Me must go that way! In natural things death follows life, but in spiritual things death precedes life. This is the principle of this age; life which comes out of death and resurrection.

The disciples would understand in all its stark reality the meaning of a man taking up his cross. Such a sight was not uncommon. When a man passed down the road carrying a cross it was certain he would not return. It ended for good every relationship as to this world. He was being judicially reckoned as unfit to be here in the world and was thus cast

out of it. It was to such a pathway the Lord was calling them (and us) to follow, an absolute and final separation from everything here. The cross was man's final insult to God, his answer to Divine love, the fixed attitude of the natural heart to God, which nothing can alter. That is how men are, this is how we were, and this is how the world remains unless touched by the Spirit of God in infinite grace. The cross has made an unbridgeable gulf between God and man after the flesh. The old nature of man has been proved incurably evil, and death is the only answer to all that man is as 'in Adam'. Yet it is wonderful to know that this same cross is God's answer to men, a demonstration of infinite love, the means of redemption, and resurrection life.

So then, the fact of death, of a daily dying, must be taken up by all who desire to come after Him. Essentially, here it is spiritual but, of course, it is literally true for some. This being so we must pursue this idea in New Testament terms, and, in doing so, we shall discover how it is stamped upon doctrine as the normal and essential part of the believer's life – a willingness to part with everything, if so required, for Him.

We can only live the true and proper Christian life if we learn the lesson of death and resurrection. Religion will teach us to live better lives, but Christian discipleship is to 'take up one's cross daily'.

We will find a two-fold aspect to this truth: (a) a past fact; (b) a continual reality.

## 1. It is patent in the gospel – 2 Corinthians chapter 5

The very message we profess to believe will tell us of this fact in no uncertain terms. Since One died for all, then were all dead (all died). The death of one on behalf of all is, in God's eyes, the death of all. It is God's judicial sentence upon all of Adam's race. The cross is all it was fit for, and Christ took that place on our behalf. 'He died for all, that they which live' should not henceforth, from that point forward, 'live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again', v. 15. This will give the sense that *only* those that are a 'new creation' in Christ are living before God, and that to live only for Him.

What kind of gospel did we believe, and what kind do we preach? If we believe He died for us, as we profess, then He has absolute rights over us. The terms of forgiveness and salvation are to confess Him Lord and bow our stubborn wills to him. If that is not so, where do we stand? This is the first lesson of this fact: I have died judicially before God.

## 2. It is testified to in my baptism – we died to sin, Romans chapter 6

Baptism by immersion was the

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# Christ? Luke 9. 18-27 (Part 2)

expected, normal, condition. Again, we are taken back to the cross which effectively ended my career as a child of Adam's race. It is to that fact that we gave testimony in baptism. Romans chapter 6 makes this clear, 'our old man is crucified with him' – a final and settled act, as far as God is concerned. Faith links us with a dead and risen Saviour and we give evidence to that work of grace in baptism. In chapters 6 and 7, the apostle pursues this fact, that as those that have died neither sin nor the law have any power over one who has already, in the person of his Substitute, died as to sin's penalty and the law's condemnation. In Christ we are in bondage to neither and, being free, can willingly yield our members to God for righteous living.

### 3. It must be effective in my experience – Galatians chapter 6, verse 14

Here we find that the child of God should be characterized by his attitude of detachment and separation, not only from the world and the things which make up the world, but essentially from its spirit, motives and ways, controlled as they are by the flesh working in unregenerate men. The Galatian letter deals with the error of legalism in contrast to the free grace of God in Christ. Not only is it impossible for any to be saved by the keeping of the law, as all Jewish history proves, but it renders the work of the cross both ineffective and unnecessary. Christ died unnecessarily if we could be saved by rites, ceremonies and law-keeping. But in chapters 5 and 6 he traces this error to its source, the working of the flesh, desiring to be something, to have something to boast about in themselves. 'Far be it from me', says the apostle, 'that I should glory', v. 14. Why? Because he kept the cross and its meaning before his heart. The offence of the cross is still there, not in ungodly men, but in those who professed to be Christ's. Men still want what the world wants. For the apostle, and it should be so for us, the cross meant that he had passed out from the world: it was all dead to him, and he to it.

### 4. It is essential for my knowledge of Christ – Galatians chapter 2, verse 20

'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'. We know these words yet how little we aspire to their reality in life. We can never fully enjoy Christ in the soul until we learn this great lesson; I must be dead and Christ living in me. The apostle saw it as a past accomplished fact and this is what it is. That is the true meaning of the cross and the words of Luke chapter 9 tell us that it should be our daily reckoning as dead to self, dead to sin, dead to the world. We must mortify our members, Col. 3. 5. It is a doctrine which cuts us off from everything pertaining to the natural man. If that sounds totally negative then we must go on to consider that the cross opens the door to a whole new world beyond death of spiritual and heavenly glory.

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# Bright and Morning Star

By **PHIL COULSON** Forres, Scotland

If the title by which the Lord would assure Israel of the certainty of a glorious future is 'the root and offspring of David', the promise to the Church for which He died is encapsulated in the delightful title, 'the bright and morning star'. What better description could there be of the hope that has cheered the hearts of countless saints who, to one degree or another, have longed for the dark night of sorrow, trial and tears to come to an end? The natural man is a lover of darkness, John 3. 19, and for that reason sought to extinguish 'the light of the world'. But the promise of the Saviour still stands, 'he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life', John 8. 12. Hence, as believers in the Lord Jesus, we are identified with those of whom Peter said 'ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light', 1 Pet. 2. 9.

True though it is that we now walk in spiritual light, the scenes of earth are so often shrouded in deep darkness for the child of God. Is there to be no end to the long night of the pain and loss of those who stand for Christ in a hostile world? Will the sighs and the tears of the broken heart never cease? Are the blasphemies and the impiety of godless men to prevail? No, dear saint, a thousand times 'No!' The night is in its final watch, the darkest hours are about to be dispelled. Why keep your eyes on the impenetrable shadows and gloom of a world ripe for the judgement of God? Look up! Look to the east, towards the sunrise, for very soon, against the backdrop of a dark sky, will the splendid bright and morning star appear. Lovely in its pure radiance, the morning star signals the dawn of a new day. Within moments the sky will be bright with the beauty of a dawn that will never again give way to a night season. True, upon earth Israel must pass through the deep darkness of the valley of terrible tribulation days but, at the end of that time, 'shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings', Mal. 4. 2.

Do you feel, beloved, like those in the ship, that 'it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them', John 6. 17? Watch for the bright and morning star! 'Maranatha' – 'our Lord cometh'!

Extracted from *Day by Day Divine Titles*, published by Precious Seed



Continuing our study in Isaiah chapter 53, in verses 7-9 Israel confesses the mock trial and death of the Servant.

# The Servant Songs

By **ADAM THROPAY** Downey, California, USA

## Verse 7

**He was oppressed:** (*nigas*) could mean either or both of the following:

- 1 To be hard pressed; driven, hunted, plagued or urged. He was hunted and persecuted by man.
- 2 To be exacted from, demanded or required by authority. Sin's punishment was exacted from Him. He had to experience the full consequence of sin.

**and he was afflicted** (*onoh*) could mean either or both of these:

- 1 To bow down; to humble oneself; suffer voluntarily – When hunted down by men to Gethsemane, the Lord volunteered Himself to them for arrest, Matt. 26. 47-49.
- 2 To become answerable – The consequences of sin had to be faced as each point was exacted by the Father. It was Christ His Son, the sinless One, who became answerable for our sins.

**yet he opened not his mouth:** This caused Pilate, who presided as judge at that time, to marvel. Every other prisoner would plead his innocence, but the Son of Man answered to none of their charges, Matt. 27. 12-14.

**he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter:** The lamb accompanies his guide to the slaughter house willingly and silently. The cow weeps at the slaughter house, and the pig squeals.

**and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so** (in the same way) **he openeth not his mouth.** When they plucked the hair out of His cheek He was silent like a sheep when sheared. He gave His back to the smiters. He did not hide His face from shame and spitting.<sup>1</sup>

## Verse 8

**He was taken:** (*luggach*) snatched, hurried away.

**from prison and from judgment:** (*mishpat*) the administration of justice. Usually, an accused person

will be imprisoned while the defence attorney studies the case. They bypassed this part of the process. He was hurried through the legal proceedings before the High Priest and Pilate. He had no defence lawyer/attorney.

## Who shall declare his generation?

There are various possible interpretations of this question:

- (a) Adam's generations have been declared in Genesis chapter 5, but who shall declare His? Where is His offspring that shall carry on His line, and His title to the throne of David? His claim dies with Him. His disciples were shattered, for they trusted that He would deliver Israel, Luke 24. 21.
- (b) 'Who could have imagined such a generation?'<sup>2</sup> Who can discern the true significance of those sufferings and that life that was so soon cut off?
- (c) 'Who by meditation discerns the true?' 'And of His generation, who doth meditate that he hath been cut off from the land of the living?'<sup>3</sup>
- (d) 'as for his generation who considered'.<sup>4</sup> 'Who of his generation considered' NIV margin.
- (e) 'But his generation – who could tell'.<sup>5</sup>
- (f) 'Who shall declare His manner of life?' This question was answered by the robber who died with Him, when he said, 'This man hath done nothing amiss', Luke 23. 41.

**for he was cut off:** (*gazar*) torn away, snatched **out of the land of the living:** His life came to an abrupt end, Ps. 102. 23-28,

**for** (because of) **the transgression of my people was He stricken:** as verse 4 – stroke, blow, calamities from God.

## Verse 9

J. N. DARBY provides a helpful translation: **And [men] appointed his**

**grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was there guile in his mouth.** This rendering shows one way that God used His determinate ('to set limits') counsel to affect the proceedings of His Servant's arrest and punishment, Acts 2. 23. The Jewish leaders would have been glad to see Him thrown by the authorities into a common burying pit, with a heap of criminals' corpses. Instead, the Servant was given a dignified burial in a rich man's new tomb, Mark 15. 43-59.

The word '**death**' here is actually plural – deaths. 'It is applied to a violent death, the very pain of which makes it like dying again and again' KEIL AND DELITZSCH.

**He hath done no violence** refers to acting violently to oppress or damage someone in thought, word, or deed. **Neither was there any deceit in his mouth** – He spoke no fraud nor deception. This phrase is quoted in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 22.

In the last section of this song, verses 10 to 12, Israel confesses that it was really the suffering Servant, not Israel, who was the bearer of other men's sins.

## Verse 10

**Yet:** That is, in spite of His perfection in thought, word, and deed,

**it pleased:** (*chaphets*) denotes 'To will or purpose that in which a person has a great pleasure or delight when accomplished'.

**the Lord:** YHVH, Jehovah

**to bruise** (*dachah*, as verse 5) **Him.** The unthinkable ordeal of incessant piercing and crushing was necessary in order for God to fulfil the plan in which He found great delight – to provide forgiveness for His sinful creatures.

**He hath put Him to grief:** (*chalah*) to be weak, pained, become sick;





# of Isaiah <sup>[5]</sup>

Jehovah, looking at the anticipated results of this sacrifice, willingly caused His beloved Son undeserved pain and grief on the cross.

**When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin:** (*asham*) the technical word used for the trespass offering – one depiction of the Saviour in His character and work, Lev. 5. 5, 6.

**He shall see his seed:** (*zera*) physical descendants, offspring, posterity. The One who died young without any children to carry on His name shall enjoy more offspring than anyone. This phrase answers the question, 'Who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living'.

The modern Jewish interpretation about this song is fraught with difficulties, one of which is this verse. If the Servant is Israel as a nation, who is the seed that is referred to? The seed cannot be the Servant himself.

Viewing the Servant Messiah as God manifest in flesh, the 'seed' refers to the literal physical and literal spiritual seed of Abraham. Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 27, 'Behold days are coming, says Jehovah, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast, and it shall come to pass that . . . I will watch over them to build and to plant, says Jehovah'. In other words, the Servant will see the seed of Israel flourish in the Land. The seed is sown by Jehovah, and thus it is His seed, not by physical procreation, but by His creative agency in man, as He did with Abraham and Sarah.

Again, the Messiah Servant is representative of Israel. It is due to His atoning suffering and death that all Israel will one day be restored to the land, and that people from all nations can become Abraham's spiritual seed.

**He shall prolong:** (*awrak*) to continue, lengthen

**His days:** The One who was cut off will live forever, Ps. 102. 23-28.

If, as modern Jews claim, the Servant is Israel as a whole, Israel's prolonged life would commence at her national resurrection from death, not before. As of now she is dead before God, Ezek. 37. 11.

The Lord Jesus has already passed through death and resurrection as the representative of Israel. When, as a nation, Israel turns to their Messiah, He will lead them on to national resurrection as taught in Ezekiel chapter 37. By its context, Ezekiel chapter 37 is one of Ezekiel's Messianic visions.

**and the pleasure:** (*khayfets*) That which is precious as an object of delight and thus a person's desire

**of the Lord:** God's pleasure is the salvation of mankind through the Servant, His Messiah. See 42. 1-8

**shall prosper:** (*tsalach*) primarily, 'to advance incessantly, pressing on to the final goal; to accomplish successfully'.<sup>6</sup> 'To advance, prosper, to make successful'<sup>7</sup> **in His hand.**

## Verse 11

**He shall see of:** or, as a consequence of **the travail:** (*amal*) labour, toil; a wearing effort; trouble, vexation, sorrow

**of his soul:** Christ suffered not only bodily, but in the innermost recesses of His soul

**and shall be satisfied:** (*sava*) fill to satisfaction, fill to contentment, a satisfying abundance. The word is used of contented persons with plenty to eat. This first phrase of the verse may also be rendered, 'As a consequence of the trouble of His soul, He will enjoy a satisfying or pleasing sight'.

**by his knowledge:** (*yadah*) to know with perception, understanding, affection, and wisdom. It is a knowledge gained from experience.

**shall my righteous servant justify:** (*yatsdiyq*) to make to be accounted righteous, to vindicate, to turn to righteousness

**many.**

This sentence may have various meanings:

- (a) His knowledge (or wisdom) will result in the justification of many. The wisdom of Christ is the preaching of the gospel which is foolishness to the world, 1 Cor. 1. 18.
- (b) Knowledge of Him shall justify many.
- (c) By His knowledge shall my righteous Servant instruct many (i.e., in practical righteousness).

The death of the Lord Jesus and His resurrection provide the means by which a person may be justified. However, it is by His knowledge that a person receives this justification. The Lord Jesus knows the thoughts and heart of each individual, seeing his genuine faith, and He justifies him based on this knowledge. See Matt. 9. 2 and Luke 7. 47-50.

His knowledge of our hearts at the present time gives Him the authority to justify all those who repent of their sins, turning to God in truth.

**for He shall bear:** (*sahval*) as verse 4 – to carry or bear a heavy load with pain and suffering. Compare Gen. 49. 15 and 2 Chr. 2. 2.

**their iniquities:** as verse 5 – to turn aside or go the wrong way.

## Endnotes

- 1 Isa. 50. 6; Matt. 27. 26-31.
- 2 ARTSCROLL TANACH translation
- 3 Robert Young's Literal Translation
- 4 JOHN JOSEPH OWENS, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; Isaiah, Alec Motyer.
- 5 ISAAC LEESER translation, The Holy Scriptures.
- 6 KEIL AND DELITZSCH.
- 7 BROWN, DRIVER, BRIGGS, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, pg. 852

**DR. ADAM THROPAY** resides in the city of Downey, California, where an assembly meets in his chiropractic and nutrition office. He and his wife Heather have three grown children and one grandchild.



# A RIGHT THING IN A WRONG

In the Bible there are several instances in which God Himself struck men dead, and, in practically every case, the offence seemed trivial, that is, compared with what we regard as gross sin. On the other hand, certain men in the Bible were guilty of great sin, but they were forgiven and raised to a position of great honour and usefulness. For instance, Abraham lied, willing to sacrifice the honour of his wife to save his own skin. Later, he repented and was greatly used by God, who honoured him with the title, 'friend of God'. Moses, a murderer and a fugitive from justice, was restored by God and became the man through whom the Lord led His people from bondage to freedom. David was guilty of adultery and murder, yet God forgave him, called him a man after His own heart, and promised that the Messiah would descend from him. Peter denied the Lord Jesus Christ for fear of a servant girl, yet the risen Lord restored him, commissioned him to preach to the Jews at Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. He also wrote two books of the New Testament.

We come now to the sobering record of one of those instances where God struck a man dead for a seemingly trivial thing.

## **The Desire of David, 1 Chr. 13. 1-8**

### **The Consultation, vv. 1-3**

We read in verse 1 that 'David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with

every leader'. His first concern after his coronation at Hebron was the ark of God, mentioned no less than forty-six times in 1 and 2 Chronicles. After the interlude of being introduced to some of David's mighty men and his being crowned king at Hebron, this chapter picks up the history from chapter 11 verses 4-9. David wanted a strong capital city, but, above and beyond this, he wanted God to be the centre of it. The ark was the most sacred symbol in the ritual of the tabernacle, a symbol of the presence of God Himself.<sup>1</sup>

However, Israel came to believe in an inherent association that the ark had with the divine presence of God, a sort of talisman culture, so God cured them of this superstitious notion by allowing the ark to be captured by the Philistines at the disastrous first battle of Ebenezer, circa 1090 BC, 1 Sam. 4. 10-11. For over eighty years it had been at Kirjath-jearim, some nine miles west of Jerusalem, totally neglected.<sup>2</sup>

It is noteworthy that David did not seek to reign in an absolute manner, v. 1, and he referred to the common people as 'brethren', v. 2, thereby manifesting personal condescension and humility. He wanted all the people present for the occasion of the ark's return to the Holy City that they might be blessed and edified as a result, taking care that the priests and Levites be called to attend the ark, v. 2.

## **The Jubilation, vv. 4-8**

The expression of David's desire before the captains was pleasing to them, and the scene of these verses is one of true religious enthusiasm, coupled with a deep concern to carry out the will of the Lord. Yet, for some reason, amidst this great scene of human rejoicing, David did not conform to Jehovah's ways.

## **The Death of Uzzah, 1 Chr. 13. 9-14**

### **The Reason for it, vv. 9-10**

Uzzah may have been appointed to arrange for the actual transfer of the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. At any rate, the ark was placed on a new cart drawn by a pair of oxen. It may be that Uzzah was quite proud of his task and was out to make a big impression on the capital city, but as the procession moved toward Jerusalem the oxen stumbled, causing the cart to wobble. Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, and God struck him dead. Why? It was not merely because he touched the ark that he was struck dead, for did he not touch it in order to set it on the cart?

Uzzah's sin was threefold:

1. He did not follow God's prescribed method for transporting the ark,<sup>3</sup> but followed the example of the Philistines when they sent back the ark.<sup>4</sup>
2. He was not of the priestly tribe,<sup>5</sup> but was of the tribe of Judah, v. 6.







3. He also touched the ark, thus disobeying God's specific command that only the priests should handle it.

God briefly describes the nature of Uzzah's sin, 'And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God', 2 Sam. 6. 7. The Hebrew word for 'error' is, literally, 'rashness', and this aptly describes Uzzah's attitude. He not only disregarded God's precepts governing the transporting of the ark, but he had no regard for the consequences of his disobedience. Thus God struck Uzzah dead, not out of petty anger, but in order to teach His people that God's work must be done in God's way. Uzzah substituted his human wisdom in place of the Holy Spirit's directions. As a result, his service was not accepted, and swift, severe judgement followed. Today, we must all too often cry, 'Ichabod! The glory of the Lord has departed!', simply because God's work is not carried out according to His way and will. It may well be that God does not strike people dead today, but much of today's fruitless work, carried on in the name of the Lord, may simply attest to the fact that the ways of the world, and not the ways of God, are being employed.

## The Result of it, vv. 11-14

The result of this tragedy

which caused such a profound sensation throughout Israel was that the progress of the ark was stopped, and David himself was 'displeased', v. 11, and 'afraid', v. 12. For three months the ark rested in the house of Obed-edom, a Levite, and God blessed him and all that he had. In the long run, the tragedy had a healthy effect on David. God grant that we may ever beware of flippancy.<sup>6</sup>

'Arm me with jealous care,  
As in Thy sight to live.  
And oh, Thy servant, Lord, prepare  
A strict account to give!

To serve the present age.  
My calling to fulfill;  
O may it all my powers engage  
To do my Master's will!'  
[CHARLES WESLEY]

### Endnotes

- 1 See v. 6; Exod. 25. 22; 1 Sam. 4. 7.
- 2 The one possible exception to the words of verse 3 being the incident of 1 Samuel chapter 14 verse 18. It is probable that on that particular occasion the ark was simply asked for, not actually employed.
- 3 See Num. 4. 15; 1 Chr. 15. 13, 15.
- 4 See 1 Sam. 6. 7ff.
- 5 Num. 4; 1 Chr. 15. 2.
- 6 See Ps. 24. 3-4; Isa. 52. 11; Phil. 2. 13-14; Heb. 12. 28-29.

**ROSS RAINEY** is in fellowship with the assembly in Dearborn, Michigan, and is a commended full-time worker of over fifty years. A former editor of *Food for the Flock* magazine, he is a contributor to other assembly publications and continues to minister throughout the USA and Canada.



## Art Thou He that should come?

Matthew 11

We might have expected that the Lord would have been guarded in His endorsement of John in light of this seeming lapse, but rather, the Lord Jesus takes occasion to give John the highest of accolades. He describes him as 'more than a prophet', v. 9; 'the greatest born of women', v. 11; 'Elias, which was for to come', v. 14. The Lord then goes on to say that Israel had not responded to the strict asceticism of John, nor the sociability of His own ministry, but had condemned the one as having 'a devil', v. 18, and the other as 'a friend of publicans and sinners', v. 19. The Lord showed that rejection of God's overtures will lead to the most catastrophic of judgements, even as Sodom, with eternal consequences.

Some of God's greatest servants have had seasons of doubt and depression as their ministry comes to its close, and as adverse circumstances overtake them in the form of old age, ill-health, isolation, and loneliness. However, this does not depreciate the value of their ministry to His people over the years. Just as the Lord gave honour to John, He also has taken note of all that has been done by His servants, and the day of accolades is coming, when their service will be seen in its true light, and heaven's awards will be given. Meanwhile, the closing verses of the chapter could be applied to wearied servants like John, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest', Matt. 11. 28.

[Extracted from *Day by Day – Christ and His Apostles*, Precious Seed Publications]





# Why does God allow Evil Men to Rule? (2)

## Man's evil rule can strengthen Christians

The Second Epistle to Timothy, written by Paul as he is contemplating execution under Nero, gives us a mature believer's perspective on evil rulers. First of all, Nero is not even mentioned; however, the Lord is mentioned three times more in 2 Timothy than in 1 Timothy. The focus is not on Nero in any way! Paul considers it the time to be 'offered', 2 Tim. 4. 6. It becomes a time to teach Timothy about suffering affliction out of love for Christ. The apostle in 2 Timothy teaches his son in the faith endurance and good soldiering for Christ. Ezekiel, in his first chapter, first sees the 'whirlwind' of Nebuchadnezzar's violent and destructive forces. In the vision he sees an upcoming final whirlwind of ravaging destruction from Babylon's army. Then, Ezekiel recognizes the celestial ordination of Babylon's actions via the cherubim. Finally, he looks even higher and sees a Man of glory seated on the sapphire throne. It is not until he sees the Lord on the throne that Jehovah can speak to him again in chapter 2 and verse 1. It is man's evil rule that causes the destructive whirlwinds of change; this causes the Lord's people to look up and see their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with more clarity. Man's evil rule often leads to the restoration of God's people to Himself. The trials of a Christian's faith under man's evil rule is more precious than gold that perisheth and can lead to praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 7. The immediate spiritual response of faith is to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

## Man's evil rule can lead to the further spread of the gospel

The evil rule in Israel that led to the crucifixion of Christ later proceeded to the martyrdom of Stephen. The result is that the believers went everywhere preaching the gospel. The assembly at Antioch was established from the persecution that arose because of Stephen, Acts 11. 19. It was nurtured by Barnabas, taught by Paul, and resulted in the believers being called Christians, Acts 11. 19-26. Stephen's death was used by God to multiply the testimony of Christ and to give an identity to His church.

By **JOHN THROPAY**  
Los Angeles, USA

Paul and Peter led the way for hundreds of martyrs that would be thrown to the lions and burned by Nero in the stadia before hundreds of thousands of people. This time of intense suffering of the church resulted in an even greater dissemination of the gospel. Some of the spectators in the stadia would be touched by the Christians who 'offered' themselves to God with joy.

Thus, ultimately Nero's evil rule is used by God to spread the gospel even more. Paul prophesies what the end result of his martyrdom will be, 2 Tim. 2. 10. It would lead to the salvation of many, and give them an ultimate 'eternal glory' with Christ. Paul did not think of his own glory, but the glory of future believers whom he did not know. His inspired prophecy continues to be fulfilled even today. In a similar vein, Peter notes that evil men will pass, but that the gospel will continue. Succeeding generations will have believers that will continue to preach the gospel, and therefore the gospel, with its 'scarlet thread', will endure forever, 1 Pet. 1. 25.

It is noted by many that the wide ranging conquests of Alexander the Great enabled the diffusion of the Greek language throughout many lands and cultures. This, in turn, facilitated the rapid expansion of the gospel in the early centuries after Christ's resurrection.

The apostle Paul, under the hardships of man's evil rule, could say, 'but I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places', Phil. 1. 12-13.

## At the culmination of the age, God's purposes are fulfilled

God, by granting the privilege of freewill to his sinful creatures, allows mankind to continue to have evil rulers. The word of God gives us glimpses of God's providence in the midst of man's evil rule. Many times we are not privy to how the blessings of God are being multiplied, in

spite of the evil we suffer daily. We may be like Job who never knew the real cause of his sufferings but who, like Ezekiel and Paul, obtained a clearer vision of God's greatness. Christ could say, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof', Matt. 6. 34, and yet He is indefatigable in healing and sharing His blessings with others; His vision is always perfect. Therefore, He is unperturbed by Herod's idle threats, or Pilate's presumption of final authority over His immediate destiny, or the desperate 'kangaroo court' of Caiaphas. In the midst of evil, it is God that is shaping history for the ultimate blessing of mankind and the glorification of Christ. In His infinite wisdom, God handles an infinite combination of different possibilities with the concluding result being the furtherance of His will for mankind, despite their evil. Wherever we find ourselves in this complex process, it is for the purpose of glorifying Him by leading a holy life. We may see only a small portion of the overall picture during our short lives and therefore not understand how our experience of suffering contributes to the whole. We are, however, informed by scripture that the glorification of Christ is inevitable as the grand result of all of our sufferings as the church of Christ. We, like Christ, Paul, Ezekiel, Peter, and Moses, never need to blame the rulers of the day; our relationship is with the Supreme One! Our decisions are based on a spiritual paradigm through Christ, and not on a passing political scene. Paul lived by what he taught in Romans chapter 13 and verse 1, 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God'. We may confidently offer our bodies and lives to our Lord, each and every moment of our short pilgrimage, irrespective of the evil ruler of the day. As Paul faced his execution, he confidently said, 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain', Phil. 1. 21. We already know that the recompense will be an eternal weight of glory in and with Christ, that will be shared with Him forever.

**Dr JOHN THROPAY** is an elder in the East Los Angeles Gospel Hall, a Spanish-speaking assembly, where he has been in fellowship for over 30 years. He helped see the establishment of two more Spanish-speaking assemblies in Panorama City and Montebello, California.





# Views from the News

COMPILED BY SANDY JACK

## Richard Dawkins apologizes for causing storm with Down's syndrome tweet

Richard Dawkins has apologized for the 'feeding frenzy' triggered by his tweet claiming it would be immoral to carry on with a pregnancy if the mother knew the foetus had Down's syndrome.

A Twitter row broke out after he responded to another user who said she would be faced with 'a real ethical dilemma' if she became pregnant with a baby with Down's syndrome.

Dawkins tweeted, 'Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have the choice'.

In a fuller explanation on his website, entitled *Abortion & Down Syndrome: Apology for Letting Slip the Dogs of Twitterwar*, the author tried to set the record straight. He wrote: 'To conclude, what I was saying simply follows logically from the ordinary pro-choice stance that most of us, I presume, espouse. My phraseology may have been tactlessly vulnerable to misunderstanding, but I can't help feeling that at least half the problem lies in a wanton eagerness to misunderstand'.

The backlash for his comment had included one mother, who has a child with the genetic condition, saying, 'I would fight until my last breath for the life of my son. No dilemma', while Dawkins said accusations of 'Nazism, vile, monstrous fascistic callousness' and 'fireballs of hatred' had been hurled his way.

He wrote, 'If your morality is based, as mine is, on a desire to increase the sum of happiness and reduce suffering, the decision to deliberately give birth to a Down's baby, when you have the choice to abort it early in the pregnancy, might actually be immoral from the point of view of the child's own welfare'.

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/aug/21/richard-dawkins-apologises-downs-syndrome-tweet>



## Almost 400,000 kids not living with both parents, stats reveal

Hundreds of thousands of children are having to split their time between parents in different homes, figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have shown.

The ONS said it is 'increasingly likely that dependent children will be sharing their time between two different parental addresses' because of an increase in cohabitation and divorce.

Children aged ten to fourteen were the age group most affected, with toddlers least affected.

In April, Sir Paul Coleridge, who at the time was a senior family judge, spoke out against family breakdown. He said, 'Family judges have a unique experience of this and therefore a unique contribution to make. We should not be afraid to speak out'.

Sir Paul, who has been reprimanded because of his support for traditional marriage, said, 'I know how consoling and good a good marriage can be and how it gets better over the years and also how ghastly family breakdown can be'.

<http://www.christian.org.uk/news/almost-400000-kids-not-living-with-both-parents-stats-reveal/>



## Revealed: Islamic State's 'banker' was director of a private Muslim primary school in Birmingham

One of the Islamic State terror group's key financiers was director of a Muslim faith school in Birmingham, it was claimed today.

Prominent Islamic cleric Dr Nabil al-Awadi, a naturalized Kuwaiti, was partly resident in the UK until last year, living in Brixton, south London. Until February 2013, the Sunni was a director of the independent Al-Birr school in Birmingham, which was founded seven years ago. He is believed to have close links to the Islamic State group. Now he is president of the Kuwait Scholars' Union, which has reportedly channelled tens of millions of dollars to the Islamic State and other jihadi groups in Iraq and Syria.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2738933/Revealed-Islamic-State-s-banker-director-private-Muslim-primary-school-Birmingham.html>



## Bits & Bobs

### The Amazing Jewel Beetle



Scientists made a startling discovery in the world of insects. It involved a common beetle called the jewel beetle, which is designed with the uncanny ability to detect flames of a forest fire approximately 50 miles away. Not only that, but it can also hear the cracking of the wood, and even sense combustion products in very small amounts using supersensitive receptors.

The jewel beetle was first discovered and superficially described in 1960 by Canadian entomologist William George Evans. Dr. Evans insisted that the tiny pits of this curious beetle contained infrared receptors. The more research entomologists have conducted on this little creature the more amazed they become. For example, it requires special conditions in which to breed. It needs burnt wood from a blazing forest fire! But how does it find such conditions? It has been designed with special sensors in tiny pits on its underside that can actually pick up infrared radiation from the flames of a fire. This capability is quite amazing and has no evolutionary mechanism of development.

Not surprisingly, with this capacity, jewel beetles are the first creatures to move into such an inhospitable environment. Because they are the first arrivals, there are no jewel beetle predators to worry about, and they can proliferate in large numbers. The female flies to the still smouldering bark of a tree to lay her eggs. The young hatch, and are safe inside the dead wood. The usual defence mechanism of a living tree to such insect predation is halted. She finds these trees with the incredible infrared detector/feelers God has given her. Secular scientists state these feelers are just 'modified mechano-sensors', but the creation scientist would say these are tools created for the job.

Jewel beetle research has been long and detailed, involving not just entomologists, but also chemical ecologists, physiologists, and a physicist. Scientists at the University of Bonn (Germany) are currently trying to mimic the features of the infrared feelers to see if they can cheaply manufacture thousands of these sensing devices. If they can, the devices could be mounted around forests, ready to register and alert foresters of a fire. The military is also interested in such capabilities. But, as is often the case with man's attempts to mimic God's creative work, the first prototype sensor is large, cumbersome, and not nearly as accurate as the tiny jewel beetle.

Let's remember that random genetic mistakes, called mutations, cannot make all of the special apparatus described above. This is not the result of evolution, but the fingerprint of the Master Designer.

<http://www.icr.org/articles/view/3268/233/>



# REPORTS REPORTS REPORTS

GOSPEL WORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES Compiled by SANDY JACK



## ENGLAND

### Northumberland

The **Red Row** assembly, in Northumberland, had a visit from the small Church of England school in Acklington, a neighbouring village, where they have an opportunity to take school assemblies.

The children and two teachers listened well to a 'history' lesson, as to how Hebron Hall began, and were also told of the beliefs and practices of the New Testament assembly. They were shown the baptismal tank, and the table set to remember the Lord.

Each child took away a 'goody' bag containing a small New Testament, puzzle book, ruler, pencil, and bookmark. One boy said it was the best Church he had been to. The believers were encouraged, and the school have expressed their thanks for the visit, and posted pictures on their school website: <http://154-northumberland.eschools.co.uk/site/510-galleries/page-109985-places-of-worship-trip-july-2014>.



### Nottingham

The assembly at **Kirkby-in-Ashfield** held the first of their evangelism days in late June. A fine day and a number of interested young people enabled a profitable day of outreach activities.

The monthly market stall in the Idlewells Shopping Centre, Sutton-in-Ashfield, was staffed throughout the day and a number of good contacts were made. On this occasion, the tract work branched out into a new



area, the village of Selston, to the south-west of Kirkby, and separated from it by the M1 motorway. During the day, around 2,500 tracts were distributed around the homes of the village, the first assembly-based literature distribution there in over forty years.

The assembly were encouraged by the help they received, and for the overall desire amongst helpers to reach the lost with the word of God.

### Northampton

At the end of another school year, saints at **Spencer Bridge Road**, Northampton, give thanks for another year of numerical growth in the work in primary schools through their CSALT (Christian Schools Assembly Link Team) activity. From the small beginnings in 1999 with three schools, following the first visit of the Ayrshire Bible Exhibition, there are now sixty-four schools which are visited regularly. Visits are usually once per six-week week term, to take assemblies, and, occasionally, RE Lessons. There is always a warm reception from staff and pupils alike. In addition to the visits, through the generosity of certain saints, a free gospel calendar, 14,000 last year, has been given to every child in almost every school visited, and also various Christian resources provided, again free of charge, to ten schools each year. These resources are highly valued by the schools.



At a time when it is reported that the number of children regularly reading or hearing Bible stories has halved over the last twenty years, it is a great privilege to be allowed into schools with the gospel, while the opportunity is available.

This year was also tinged with sadness as our dear brother Denis Morley, who had been a faithful supporter of the work from its inception, was called home. He is still greatly missed by schools, where his very presence spoke well of his Lord and Master.

Please pray for this outreach and that doors will continue to be open, and new ones open up. Please pray also that others might consider, and use, this type of outreach opportunity in their own locality.

More information is available at <http://www.thegospelhall.org.uk/csalt/csalt.htm>

### Newcastle

**A Centenary to be celebrated!** Last autumn, when one of the elders cleared out a cupboard in the Gospel Hall in **Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne**, he unearthed much interesting material relating to the history of the testimony there – including documents relating to the opening of the building in 1914. Consequently, attention was drawn to the fact that 2014 was the centenary of this assembly in its present venue and it was felt that this could not be allowed to pass without considerable giving of thanks, and acknowledgement of God's grace, over all those years.

To this end, an Open Day was held on the 10th May, so that all who wished could look around at a collection of photographs, and memorabilia from the early times up until the present day, and also enjoy some refreshments.

The local Christians were overwhelmed by the support given by other assemblies in the North East, and delighted that quite a number of people, who had come





to know the Lord in the hall many years previously, returned to have fellowship with them.

## Berkshire

The assembly at **Bracknell** Gospel Hall has experienced much blessing over past months. Unwanted food is currently collected once a week from a local wholesaler and distributed from the hall on a Wednesday. Many parents and carers from the primary school opposite gratefully receive this, and a large number of contacts have been made as a result. In July, this resulted in sixty unsaved of all ages under the sound of the gospel, after which some good conversations were held over a bite to eat.

Children of believers in the assembly also attend this local primary school, establishing a number of further contacts. A Monday coffee morning sees some of these in the hall, holding good conversations about spiritual things. They were delighted to see two mothers profess salvation in Christ in recent months; they are presently attending some of the gatherings, and undertaking a regular Bible study with two sisters in the meeting. It is hoped that the work in this school and others can be developed further through gifting children's Bibles, and taking assemblies in the future. Please pray for these opportunities.

The assembly are very pleased to announce that they fully recognize and support the Lord's calling of Daniel and Elisabeth Rudge to His work in a full time capacity. This calling will take the form of teaching the scriptures and preaching the gospel, both locally and more widely as from the end of 2014. The assembly would value the prayerful interest and encouragement of other believers in this matter, as would Daniel and Elisabeth.



## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

### County Wexford

The annual Easter camp for the Youthclub and YouthClub Xtra

young people from **Gorey** was held at Ovoca Manor. Stephen Walls was responsible for the Bible teaching sessions, and while the usual activities and lack of sleep meant everyone left exhausted, this was soon forgotten when news came that one young man had trusted Christ as his Saviour on his return from camp. Please pray for him in these early days as a Christian. At the final Youthclub before summer, Scott Degroff had the opportunity to challenge over forty teenagers with their need of salvation, and the importance of living a life for God.

The World Sheep Shearing Championships were also held in Gorey in May, and the assembly used Gospel Literature Ireland's (GLI) exhibition unit for the four days of the Championships. Four thousand specifically designed gospel leaflets were distributed. Four requests for further material were later received.

At this year's Gorey Agricultural Show in June, the GLI unit was used. Sunny weather brought many local families along, and around 900 received a copy of John 3. 16.

## Limerick

The believers at **Newcastle West** have been having good times visiting door-to-door in Foynes and Ardagh. They have had many good talks with the townsfolk, and have been invited for tea in three homes. It is truly a privilege to bring the gospel to those in need of salvation.

Another encouraging outreach has been the market stall every other Saturday. Although it is not a busy market, again many good conversations have been had with those passing by.

One young man, who the saints have been helping, is showing good signs of growth, although there is a long way to go. After burning all his demon books, he also came to the conclusion that the games he plays are bad, as well as wasting huge amounts of time, so he burned all of them as well; he also gave up his smart phone to keep temptation out of his way. Colin Burnett has started meeting with him weekly for a Bible study, which seems to be going well.



## OVERSEAS

### Venezuela

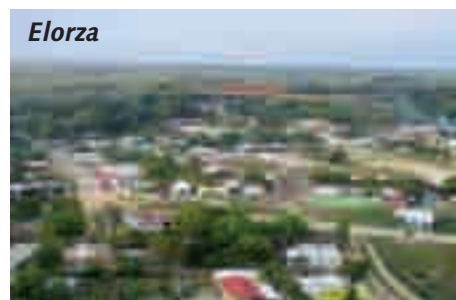
There was a good interest, and support from other nearby assemblies, in a series of Bible Readings conducted by Kenneth Turkington on 1st Corinthians chapters 11-14 in **Los Puertos de Payara** Assembly.



*Los Puertos de Payara*

Kenneth's brother, Allan, has been working hard on the expansion of the conference hall in **Colorados**. When complete, it will be twice as big as the original hall, roughly 800 square metres of floor space.

Progress in **Elorza** is slow, but it is encouraging to see the faithfulness of the little company of believers, eleven of whom are now in fellowship, and a few others await baptism. The three weekly Sunday schools are also well attended and give hope for the future of the work.



*Elorza*

Preaching continues in Ciudad de Nutrias and Puerto Nutrias on Wednesdays.

### Romania

Paul and Sue Williams report that, over the past year, teaching materials given for Sunday Schools and work amongst children, have been a great help in different parts of the country. Tens of thousands of gospel calendars were distributed by believers over the New Year, and they were well received. These calendars were also



used by Romanians living in London, Austria, Italy, and Spain. A good quantity of Romanian Bibles have also been distributed, where and when needed.

Fellowship was enjoyed with believers in Romanian speaking assemblies in Vienna, London, and Italy. In May of this year, Paul was invited to the national youth conference in Rome, for the Romanian speaking assemblies in Italy, and visited seven Romanian speaking assemblies, where a keen interest was shown in Bible teaching. It was good to encourage and build up these assemblies through series of ministry meetings and, on return to Romania, they were able to send out a large quantity of Bible teaching materials, and gospel literature that had been requested.

In the literature and Bible correspondence course work, many books have been reprinted to replenish stocks, and the Bible correspondence course work continues steadily, mainly amongst prisoners. Recently, there was a request for twenty-five copies of all the courses for a study group in the County of Timis.

**Timisora**



A large supply of gospel tracts, booklets, and John's Gospels arrived in the Spring, and have been widely distributed throughout the country. They have also been given out in connection with the tent work and the Bible Exhibition. Some believers have been contacted by post as a result of the distribution of gospel literature which has been an encouragement to them.

Recently, 5,000 copies of ROBERT CARGILL's book *Tell me more about the Lord* were printed, and a gospel booklet by C. LAW for the tent work. Sue continues to check manuscripts that have been translated, as well as teaching English to a few pupils.

In early January, in the town of



**Giurgiu**

Giurgiu, on the Bulgarian border, an art gallery was rented for the Exhibition. In fellowship with believers from the **Giurgiu** assembly, contact was made with over three hundred people.

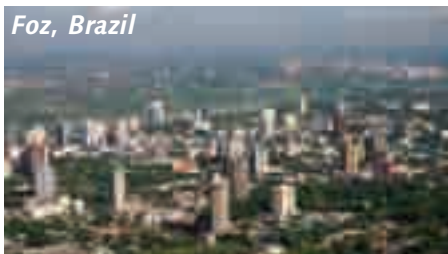
The Exhibition has been used in some infant schools in Ploiesti and Plopeni, where both teachers and children were very enthusiastic about what they saw and heard.

During March the Bible Exhibition was in a high school in Suceava which has six-hundred students. The teachers were most appreciative. Whilst in Suceava with the Bible Exhibition, Paul also visited six assemblies for Bible teaching, and large numbers were present.

In March, Paul travelled to the Counties of Satu Mare and Maramures, and spent four days with an evangelist. There were ministry meetings in six assemblies in Satu Mare, Sighet, Odorheiu, Sugatag, Petin and Adrian, and also gospel preaching in two new outreach works in Ruscov and Petea. This devoted evangelist has planted new assemblies in these two counties, and has a gospel work in a number of villages.

## **Brazil**

It is now ten years since the opening of the hall in **Foz** and, as Jeff and Denise Watson report, there have been blessings and sadness, but they are thankful to have known the Lord's presence through it all, and the support of fellow believers. Recently, they have had two mothers



**Foz, Brazil**

with babies coming to the Sunday evening meetings and both are doing, or have done, the Bible course *What the Bible teaches* (Emmaus). Please pray that they will establish their lives firmly on our Lord Jesus, for salvation and forgiveness of sin. Claudia, the mother of Tiago, and Ana Lucia, brother Zedir's wife, are also doing this course with Denise.

Denise has also restarted the ladies meeting, that meets every second Thursday evening, and there are at least two unsaved present every time. The men's study evening goes on well, every Thursday evening. Luka, Tiago's younger brother, comes with him, now and then, but unfortunately does not draw others along. A man named Davi has been coming to the gospel meetings recently; he is apparently a back-slider from another group. Wisdom is needed in how to handle him. One Lord's Day he arrived with the whole family, three youngsters, nine to seventeen, and his wife. We also had the pleasure of our brother Zedir's wife and granddaughter with us. Please pray for them.

In **Sapiranga**, James Armstrong held five weeks of gospel meetings in the Gospel Hall, and was accompanied by John McCann for the first three weeks, Crawford Brown for one week and a local brother, Rosmelio, for the final week. Attendance was good most nights, but it proved very difficult to get any from the district to come.

One young man of sixteen, whose grandparents are in fellowship, professed to be saved, so we trust that time will prove that he is real. Please continue to pray for Sapiranga. In recent weeks, two Brazilian brethren have been commended to full time service for the Lord. One is Joel Matos, the son of José Matos, who has served the Lord faithfully for many years. Joel and his wife Aline, with their two little girls, live in Sombrio, in the State of Santa Catarina. The other is Claudio Fraga dos Santos who, with his wife Cintia, has been commended by Cachoeirinha Assembly. For some time, Claudio has shown a real interest in the furtherance of the gospel, and has helped in quite a few series of meetings in various places.





# A WORD FOR TODAY

**Hakam = wise, sage, fit, skilled, experienced**

**Hokmah = wisdom, skill, aptitude**

**Hokmot = wisdom**

The story is told that on one occasion a prayer was delivered in Crathie Kirk, near Balmoral (to Queen Victoria's amusement) 'that the Almighty would send down His wisdom on the Queen's Ministers, who sorely need it!' All of us, of course, need God's wisdom, not just ministers of state, but the sentiment of the prayer reflects the fact that real wisdom can only be obtained from God, Prov. 2. 6; Jas. 3. 17.

The Hebrew word for wisdom *hokmah* is used in the Old Testament to refer to 'knowledge coupled with an inner quality that embodies a heart and life in conformity with the purposes and character of God', Prov. 1. 2-6.<sup>1</sup> Wisdom is not simply a theoretical concept or an intellectual pursuit, but underpins an individual's behaviour and conduct. As WHYBRAY states on the book of Proverbs, 'But in Proverbs *hokmah* is always life-skill: the ability of the individual to conduct his life in the best possible way and to the best possible effect'.<sup>2</sup> On some occasions, the word *hokmah* can simply describe a particular talent or gift given to an individual by God, as, for example, to Bezaleel *et al.*, who are endowed by God with special skill to enable them to build the tabernacle, Exod. 31. 1-5. Similarly, of sailors and shipbuilders in Ezekiel chapter 27 verses 8-9. And just to square our original circle, it is also applied to political pragmatism in 1 Kings chapter 2 verse 6, where David advises Solomon on how to secure his throne by eliminating Joab and Shimei.<sup>3</sup> Later, we read that 'Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt', 1 Kgs. 4. 30 ESV.

There are three books in the Old Testament (Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes) where the different forms of the Hebrew lexeme<sup>4</sup> *hkm*, which includes the word *hokmah*, occur more frequently than anywhere else. Hence, these texts are normally viewed together as wisdom literature.<sup>5</sup> In Job chapter 28, the writer explains how

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY**  
Newton Abbot, England

human beings extract precious minerals from the earth, even though these are invariably hidden, and difficult to find. Since wisdom is far more precious than any of these minerals, the question then arises as to where wisdom ultimately is to be found, Job. 28. 12, 20? It is not found in the material world, or in distant places, and even death has no knowledge of its whereabouts, vv. 12-22. The answer is beyond doubt as far as Job is concerned. Only the Creator of the universe knows its source, and He gives it to those who fear Him, vv. 23-28. Wisdom is personified in Proverbs chapters 1 to 9, where *hokmah* expresses the attractiveness of wisdom, and the need to embrace it for oneself. It is available without restraint, cp. Jas. 1. 5, and, unlike a written text, it speaks powerfully to individuals, cp. Luke 11. 49. Proverbs chapter 8 is the classic commentary on such wisdom. Ecclesiastes flags up the futility of seeking after wisdom by human means, Eccles. 1. 12-18, and 'However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it', 8. 17 ESV. The wisdom in this particular context is the wisdom necessary to understand divine activity in the world.

In the Septuagint (LXX), *hokmah* is translated mainly by the Greek word *sofia*. Greek culture revelled in the idea of wisdom, cp. 1 Cor. 1. 22, hence the impact that Hellenistic literature had on the LXX translators. For example, in Daniel chapter 1 verse 17 LXX, we read that as far as the four children were concerned, 'God gave them understanding (*sunesin*) and prudence (*phronesin*) in all learning and wisdom (*sofia*). Notice the clear distinction being made here between three forms of (Greek) discipline. Understanding, which has to do with general intelligence, prudence, which has to do with sound judgment, and wisdom, which Augustine once said 'pertains to the knowledge of eternal things'.<sup>6</sup>

Again, this Greek cultural influence is more than evident in the New Testament where *sofia* is used extensively to describe both human and divine wisdom. Human wisdom

is often set in juxtaposition with the wisdom of God. Paul highlights the fact that human wisdom is seen as folly in God's eyes, because it could not reveal God, 1 Cor. 1. 20-21. God demonstrates His wisdom, however, turning human wisdom on its head by choosing those things that in the world's eyes are foolish to put to shame those who profess themselves to be wise, v. 27. Preaching that is effective, according to Paul, does not fit with human wisdom, but is fixed in wisdom that has been revealed by God in Christ, 2. 1-8. During our Lord's ministry, He claimed, by implication, that He possessed greater wisdom than that of Solomon, Matt. 12. 42, and Paul describes Him as the repository of the treasures of wisdom – the Greek word literally meaning 'a place of safe keeping' – cp. English 'thesaurus' – in Colossians chapter 2 verse 3. Since it is only God, the Creator of the universe, who knows the source of all true wisdom, then our Lord is, unequivocally, the wisdom of God incarnate. How then do we respond to His majesty? How can we continue to be wise? By asking God for wisdom to enable us to live before men, 4. 5, and by totally embracing that wisdom from above, which is 'pure . . . peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy', Jas. 3. 17 NRSV.

## For further reading/study Introductory

ERNEST LUCAS, *Wisdom and Wisdom Literature – Chapter 3 Exploring the Old Testament*.

## ADVANCED

JOHN DAY, ROBERT P. GORDON, H. G. M. WILLIAMSON, (Eds.), *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*.

## Endnotes

- STEPHEN D. RENN, (Ed), *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, pg. 1050.
- R. N. WHYBRAY, *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*, pg. 4.
- Joab and Shimei are both later assassinated by Benaiah on the orders of Solomon, 1 Kgs. 2. 29-34, 39-46.
- 'A lexeme is a unit of lexical meaning, which exists regardless of any inflectional endings it may have or the number of words it may contain. Thus, *fibrillate*, *rain cats and dogs*, and *come in* are all lexemes, as are *elephant*, *jog*, *cholesterol*, *happiness*, *put up with*, *face the music*, and hundreds of thousands of other meaningful items in English. The headwords in a dictionary are all lexemes', DAVID CRYSTAL, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- The theme of wisdom is not, however, restricted to these three books.
- De Div. Quaest.* 2.2.

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## QUESTION

**Why are people leaving assemblies and meeting elsewhere?**

## ANSWER

It has to be recognized that the situation described in the question does not apply everywhere, for in some countries, and possibly in some localities of the UK, there are believers who have been added to assemblies who formerly met with other Christian fellowships. However, the questioner is probably referring to trends that are evident in many places, and which have increased significantly over the last twenty to thirty years.

As each case would have to be considered individually, it is not possible to give a response that will explain what has motivated every decision. It would be most unwise, as well as being incorrect, to assume that on each occasion the fault lies wholly with those who leave. Equally, it would not be right to think that every time someone leaves an assembly it is because the assembly is to blame. For these reasons, I can only make some general observations, but one thing is sure: we all ought to be deeply concerned about what is happening. If everyone who has left were to return, some halls might not be large enough to cope with the increased numbers, yet all too often we can seem unconcerned about it.

In many instances those who leave do so because they have little appreciation as to what an assembly really is. They have a limited understanding of the primary purpose for the existence of a church of God, and they do not value what it means to God. However, whose fault is that? Maybe they paid little attention when such things were being taught; maybe they came into fellowship because it was expected of them because of family connections. In reality, there was minimal conviction about what they were doing. Although they may have begun well, for a variety of reasons they lost interest, or were reluctant to accept the responsibilities that being in fellowship brings. On the other hand, were these saints ever systematically taught? Were such truths set out in a positive and gracious manner, such that it ignited within them a clear understanding of

church doctrine and practice? To be told 'this is the way we have always done it' is both inadequate and unsatisfactory, and may explain why some have finally chosen to go elsewhere.

Others have left because they have been frustrated by the prevailing situation in the assembly. Without being unkind, it cannot be denied that in many places assemblies 'run on autopilot'. Slavish adherence to practices that once worked well but which have long since become irrelevant, coupled with a disregard to any appeals to reappraise what we do and why we do it, have become too much for some to bear and, rather than stagnate, they have chosen to join with others who are willing to assess and revise as necessary. To be balanced, it has to be said that some may wish to change things just to be different, or to adopt methods that would be unscriptural, and if they can't have their own way they leave. Whilst it is sad to see them go we cannot subjugate biblical principles simply to maintain numbers; God's work must be done in God's way!

Alas, some have left because of a lack of care being shown by the elders, or because they have been treated harshly or inadvisedly by others in the fellowship. Unkind things have been said; divisions often caused by personality clashes have generated a disharmony, and, instead of there being mutual love, there has been friction and tension, Gal. 5. 15. Others are tetchy and easily offended; they take offence at the slightest things, cannot see any alternative view to their own limited perspective, and, having taken umbrage, they leave in a huff.

It is evident from my response that there is no one reason as to why people leave assemblies. Instead of trying to justify ourselves and relegating those that leave to a lower tier of Christianity, may we long to see their return, and to ensure that it will not be through any failure on our part that others may leave.

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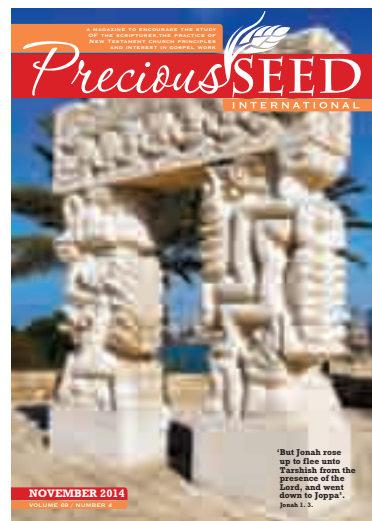
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## Front Cover Illustration

The ancient seaport of Joppa, the modern city of Jaffa, was founded by the Phoenicians, and later captured by Israel in the sixth century B.C. It formed part of the tribal distribution given to Dan, Josh. 19. 46, which probably accounts for the somewhat obscure reference to Dan dwelling or remaining in ships in Judges chapter 5 verse 17. In Old Testament times, Joppa was the only natural harbour between the Bay of Acco and the Egyptian border. Thus, it became an important place for the movement of goods in and out of Israel. During Solomon's reign, timber from Lebanon was floated down the coast on rafts, and then imported at Joppa to build the first temple in Jerusalem, 2 Chr. 2. 15, similarly, to facilitate the building of the second temple, Ezra 3. 7. The picture on the front cover is that of a modern sculpture known as the Statue of Faith, located in a park overlooking Joppa. It depicts the gate of an ancient city, and reflects the way in which goods would have entered and left the seaport. The right column depicts Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac, Gen. 22, and the dream of Jacob is depicted on the left column, Gen. 28. The carvings on the lintel represent Israel's stunning victory at Jericho, Josh. 6. But our text points us to another significant reference to Joppa in the Old Testament. Jonah's disobedience, and foolish attempt to flee from the presence of God, reminds us that irrespective of the seemingly radical independence of men, God is still sovereign, and His purposes in grace cannot be thwarted, Jonah 2. 9. A greater than Jonah provides us with divine certainty on this matter, Matt. 12. 41.



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