

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

# Precious SEED

INTERNATIONAL



**FEBRUARY 2016**

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**'And from there  
they sailed  
to Cyprus',  
Acts 13. 4**



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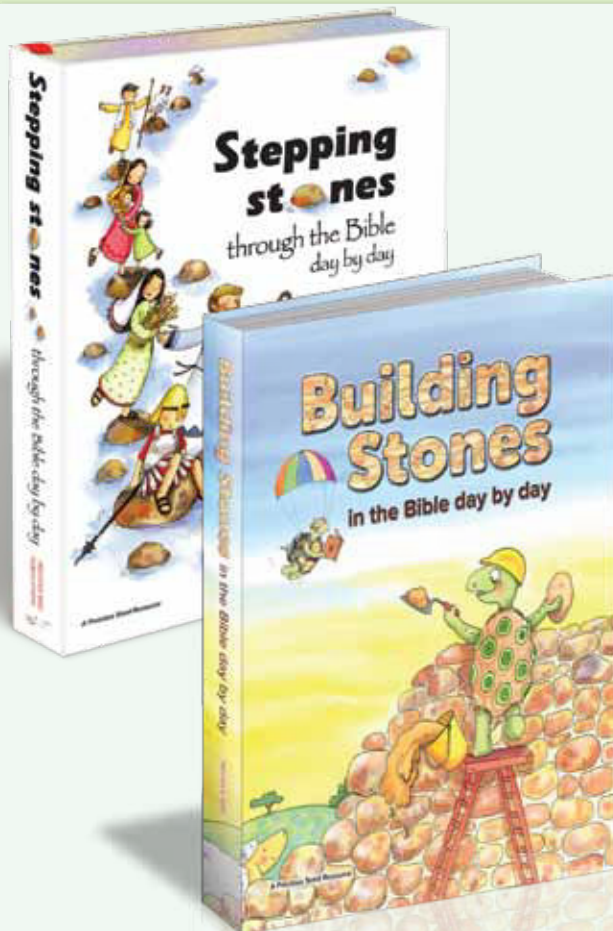
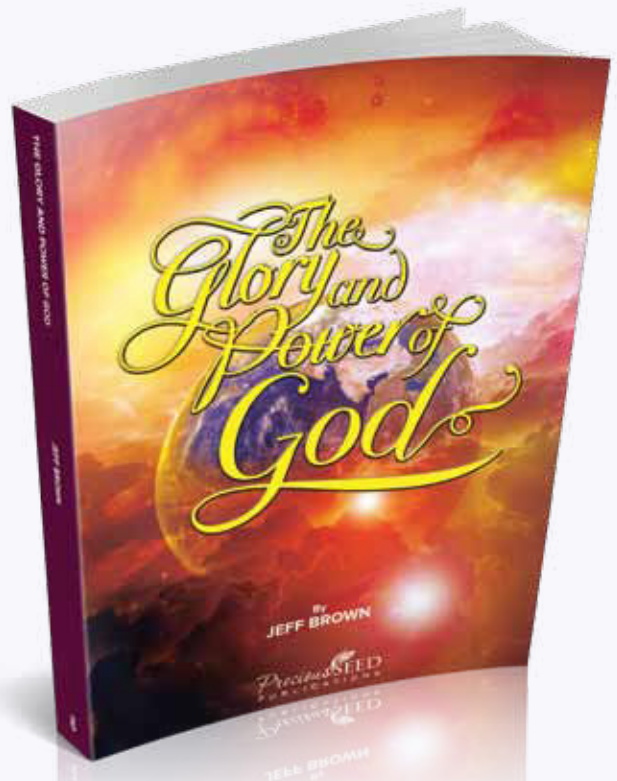
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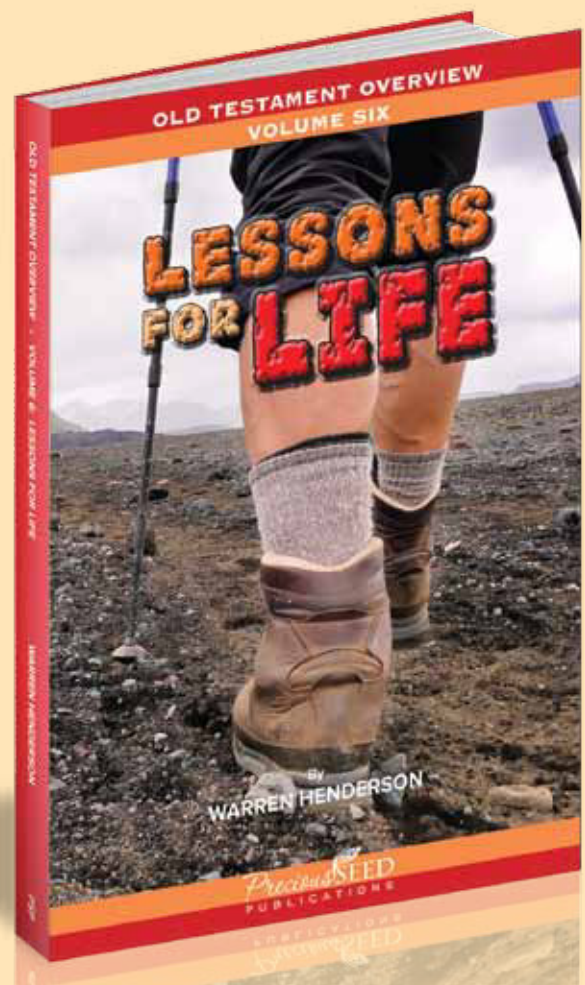
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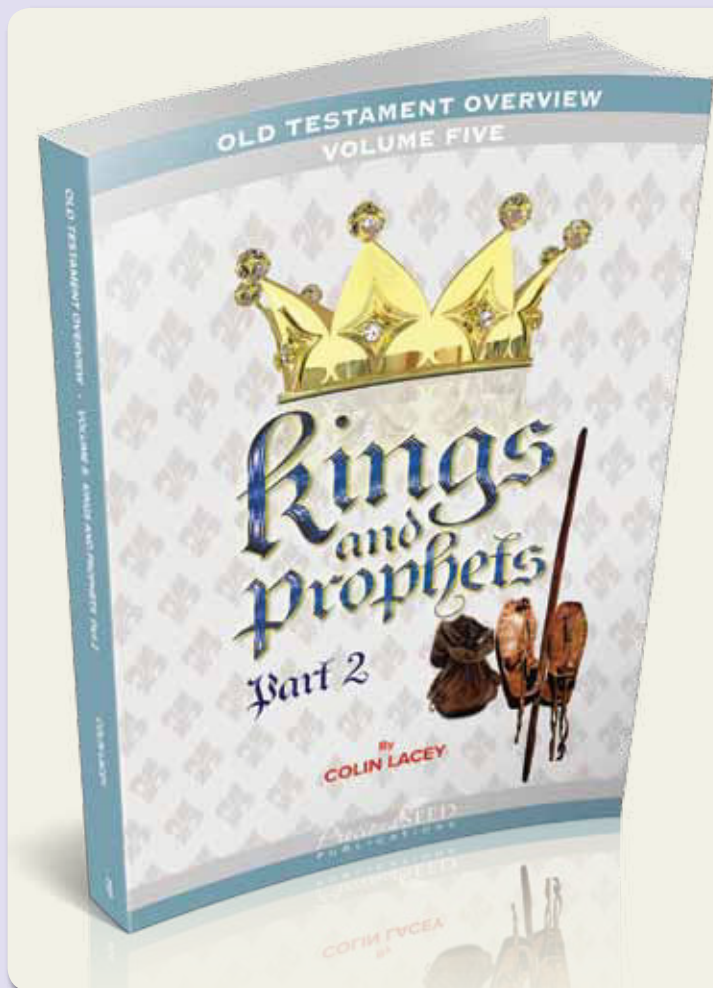
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# Editorial

## 'Submit yourselves therefore to God', James 4. 7.

I was never a very good swimmer. In fact, I would be reluctant to venture outside of the comparative safety of a swimming pool. However, one thing I noticed, as I watched my children grow into strong swimmers, was the difference made by tidal forces. It is difficult to swim against the tide, even for the strongest!

If that fact is true in the physical realm, it is just a true in the spiritual. Yet, that is what the believer is asked to do on a daily basis. The world trumpets the rights of the individual. Indeed, a numerically insignificant group has pressed its 'rights' to such an extent that it has moved governments, and is seeking to move societal opinion, to accept its practices as 'normal'. Against that background, the believer is commanded to be submissive. That attitude of submission applies across a range of contexts: to God, as in our verse; younger people to older people;<sup>1</sup> wives to husbands;<sup>2</sup> each of us to the elders in the assembly;<sup>3</sup> each of us to fellow workers;<sup>4</sup> and each of us to the governmental and legal authorities.<sup>5</sup>

I am sure we would all admit that this subjection does not come naturally. In contrast, we are more likely to defend our 'right' to be consulted, to have our say, than to accept that God has ordained 'the powers that be',<sup>6</sup> whether they be national governments or local elders. To rebel against such rule is to set ourselves in opposition to those whom God has established. Whilst scripture does tell us of a legitimate precedent,<sup>7</sup> it is dangerous territory – not an area to be ventured into lightly! Yet, many of us can foresee the time when what the government has legislated and established and society has accepted will bring believers into the spotlight of persecution. What, then, should be our decision?

We all need to remind ourselves of the responsibility that we have to live by the biblical pattern. In so doing, we bear testimony to our faith, and the God whom we serve. We also contribute to the harmony and fruitful testimony of local churches. In all these things, we bring honour and glory to our God. Submission will never be easy, but the value of such an attitude and behaviour is immeasurable!

As we enter the 71<sup>st</sup> year of the magazine, we are making some changes. Apart from one or two design changes, we are replacing the centre pages expository article with a new series of biblical charts. To accompany these we have an introduction to the book that features in the chart. Our histories and services pages will be replaced with an occasional section detailing the Lord's work in one area of mission work abroad. Conscious that we live in a world dominated with up-to-the-minute methods of communication, we are also making changes to the Reports Section. However, we continue to seek to provide that which will encourage and edify the Lord's people.

### Endnotes

- 1 1 Pet. 5. 5
- 2 Eph. 5. 22; Col. 3. 18
- 3 Heb. 13. 17
- 4 1 Cor. 16. 16
- 5 1 Pet. 2. 13
- 6 Rom. 13. 1
- 7 Acts 4. 19





There are five major discourses of the Lord Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, each concluding with a statement indicating that He had finished what He had been saying and was now moving on to other service. Clearly, these discourses indicate the subject matter of His preaching, which focuses on matters relating to the kingdom of heaven, the rule of heaven on earth. Elsewhere, He reveals truth regarding the church and the church age, but this is a relatively small part of His ministry: it was reserved to the apostle Paul to 'fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ' in his flesh 'for his body's sake, which is the church', Col. 1. 23, as through him the truth of the church was fully revealed, Eph. 3. 3.

### The Sermon on the Mount

Chapters 5 to 7

The first recorded preaching of our Saviour closely parallels that of John the Baptist, for He called for repentance in view of the fact that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, Matt. 4. 17. He is emphatically stating that entrance into that kingdom is ethically conditioned and that the behavioural changes being demanded result from true repentance and faith, which bring about a change of heart. This connects with truth regarding the new birth, without which Nicodemus was told he could neither see nor enter the kingdom of God.

There is repeated reference in these chapters to the fact that it is not what a person says but what he does that will prove whether he is genuine. And whilst the sermon is not specifically to do with the church, as is repeatedly made evident, we must recognize that behavioural standards for members of Christ's body are not any less than for those who are the subjects of the kingdom. In any event, those who form the church have been translated into the kingdom of His Son, Col. 1. 12, and therefore form part of the larger spiritual concept of the kingdom of God. Reality will be seen in being poor in spirit, mourning,

# The GOSPEL preached by the LORD JESUS

meekness, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, being merciful, being pure in heart, peacemaking, persecution, being reviled by those who are not saved and, in it all, rejoicing. Real believers will love their enemies and will bless, though they be cursed, will do good, though hated, and, though despitefully used and persecuted by them, will pray for them. The subjects of His kingdom will secretly give alms, pray and fast, and will have more regard for heavenly treasure than earthly riches, for it is impossible to serve two masters. True subjects will not be as the hypocrites who see the mote in their brother's eye but do not take account of the beam in their own. Above all, it is by their fruits that those who profess to be subject to Him will be known.

How pertinent and challenging is this ministry to our hearts! A profession to have entered the strait gate cannot be considered genuine if the professor is still walking as those who are on the broad and crowded road: no more will a bad tree bring forth good fruit, or a good tree bring forth evil fruit. A person may easily say, 'Lord, Lord' but find himself shut out, for only they who do the will of the Father in heaven enter. A house built on

sand will surely be destroyed by the storms.

Our Saviour thus stresses the need for reality. This should be a great challenge to my heart. Do I profess

By

**IAN JACKSON**  
Eastbourne,  
England

His name but have little or no interest in His word or the place of prayer? Do my words reflect my true heart condition? Do I truly live as one who is on the narrow road that leads to

life, disdaining what the broad road offers? Am I a worshipper? Is my heart towards the Lord? Let every reader consider this carefully in God's presence, for the eternal future of each depends on reality.

### The commissioning of the Twelve

Chapter 10

This commission was not primarily to preach but it was, nevertheless, an important element to that service to which the Lord sent the Twelve, 'And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand', v.

7. The commission was marked by conferring on the Twelve power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sicknesses and

disease. This was clear evidence that the King was among them. This relates to the 'powers of the world to



# ched by



come', Heb. 6. 5, whereby man will be healed of sickness, and the devil cast out.

This was a Jewish commission and is not to be understood in terms of the commission given to the disciples in John chapter 20. It is important to note this in view of charismatic mission theology. The Twelve (cp. 19. 28) were sent neither to Gentiles nor Samaritans but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is not until later in the Gospel, 28. 19, that they will be sent by Him to 'all nations'. In Acts, Luke records the sacred history of the spread of the gospel of the grace of God to Gentiles, but here the gospel of the kingdom is presented to Israel; and it is to be noted that the commission sees Israel in the land in possession of their cities and is, therefore, necessarily suspended when they are no longer in the land. This would follow the rejection of the King, as Daniel predicted, Dan. 9. 26, and the Lord prepares them from the very start for that rejection.

In an earlier article, we saw that the establishment of the kingdom in manifestation has been postponed. For careful readers of Matthew chapter 10 that truth is underlined by the clear division in the chapter. Verses 1 to 15 were fulfilled while our Lord was here, but verses 16 to 42 await a future fulfilment. How else can we explain the apparent failure in the predictions of the second part of the chapter and the clear difference between the language of verse 14 and that of the succeeding verses? This witness to the kingdom of heaven being at hand has been suspended, and will be resumed in Daniel's seventieth week, the tribulation period. Accordingly, between verses 15 and 16 there is an undefined period, one in which the gospel of the grace of God is being 'preached to every creature which is under heaven', Col. 1. 23.

## The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven

Chapter 13

It is of the greatest significance that

at the end of chapter 12 the symbolic act of refusing to see His mother and His brethren declared that His ministerial relationship with those to whom He had come was severed. They had refused Him. At the end of chapter 23, there is a fuller break with the nation, while He actually breaks with them at the cross. Similarly, at the beginning of chapter 13 it is of great significance that Jesus went 'out of the house', an action symbolic of His break with the nation.

In chapter 13, we learn that the manifested kingdom on earth is not to be set up imminently and that in the period between the rejection of the king and His coming in power and glory to establish His reign the kingdom will be 'in mystery'. Indeed, all 'mystery' truth belongs to this period of undefined duration, the majority of which is the church age. This was not revealed in Old Testament times; the Old Testament is silent as to the character of the kingdom in this period.

In this chapter, we learn that the kingdom of heaven in mystery is not the church, but rather the sphere where Christ's authority is outwardly professed. This profession might or might not be real but, where the profession is made, responsibility attaches beyond that which applies to the rest of the world. It is the sphere where the authority of the Lord in heaven is acknowledged on earth.

Space forbids full exposition of this really critical chapter but two of the parables make specific reference to the cross and what was accomplished. In verse 44, 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field'. Israel is the treasure: the field is the world. Jehovah has joy in that treasure. When our Saviour came, that treasure was hid in the world, the tail rather than the head



of the nations. And, when He left the world, He left that treasure where He had found it, because of the nation's rejection of Him. Our Lord's joy in Israel remains, however, but He is not able to share it with the nation at present. The field is the purchased possession of Ephesians chapter 1 verse 14 and when it is redeemed at His appearing and kingdom He will enjoy His treasure.

In verse 45, however, a merchant man seeking goodly pearls found one pearl of great price and to secure it to himself he sold all that he had. This is so touching. 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it', Eph. 5. 25. This one pearl taken out of the sea of the multitudes and peoples, see Acts 15. 14, in contrast to the treasure in the earth, links to the one flock, John 10. 16, the one new man, Eph. 2. 15 and the one body, Eph. 4. 4. Thus are Israel and the church distinguished at this present time.

## Conditions among the subjects of the kingdom

Chapter 18

We note only briefly that those who are the subjects of the kingdom are to be marked by humility, ruthlessness with self, interest in the welfare of others, subjection to the authority of heaven exercised on earth, and infinite forgiveness.

## The consummation of the age and the coming of the King

Chapters 24 and 25

Our Saviour clearly teaches that the setting up of the manifested kingdom on earth has not been abandoned. God will again resume dealings with Israel as a nation, gathering His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Covenants given to Abraham and David will have their fulfilment, in that a king shall reign in the land over the reunited nation. This will be considered in a future article. In the meantime, let us love His appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 9. In that day we shall 'appear with him in glory', Col. 3. 4, and shall reign with Him, and this demands the greatest carefulness in the way we now live.







**We learn from 1 Chronicles chapter 29, and from 2 Chronicles chapter 9, that Nathan the prophet recorded 'the acts of David' and 'the acts of Solomon, first and last'. No doubt it would have been interesting and instructive if these records had been preserved for us to read, and we would maybe have learned more about Nathan himself. However, the Spirit of God, in His wisdom, has left us just three brief incidents in the life of this prophet of God, sufficient to show us a man who moved with acceptance in the courts of kings, who, when occasion demanded, was fearless before David and faithful to Solomon.**

We are introduced to Nathan in 2 Samuel chapter 7. King David was well established in his kingdom, all his enemies had been subdued; the land had peace. It is then that David's thoughts turn to the situation of the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of the Lord's presence with His people. For twenty long years the ark had rested in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim after its return from the Philistines' land. David's attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem on a new cart had resulted in the untimely death of Uzzah, after which Obed-edom, a Gittite, a man from Gath, Philistine territory, gave sanctuary to the ark. Three months passed by and it was brought to David's attention that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-edom for his conscientious care of the ark. David realized that where the Lord's presence is appreciated there is blessing, so no time was lost in bringing the ark to Jerusalem; this time carried by Levites and accompanied by sacrifices, 'after the due order'.

Some 400 years had passed since the nation, under Joshua, had entered the Promised Land and still it would seem that the wilderness tabernacle was in use; as David expressed it, 'the ark dwelleth in curtains'. As he thought about it, the inconsistency of his own comfortable, even lavish, lifestyle compared with the apparently primitive resting place of the ark, his conscience was stirred. A later generation would be challenged

# NATHAN THE

By **JOHN SCARBROOK** Killamarsh, England

by the prophet Haggai for building their expensively veneered houses, while the house of God lay waste! We must remember that the scriptures have a voice to every succeeding generation.

Nathan, it would seem, had access, and a welcome, within the royal courts and David was happy to share his thoughts with the prophet. Nathan listened attentively and could not fault David's reasoning, so he gave him his blessing. We may forget sometimes that not only are our private conversations heard in heaven, but also the thoughts and intents of our heart are discerned! What follows is one of the many night scenes in 1 and 2 Samuel, as the Lord makes known His mind to Nathan on the matter of David's plans.

The message received by Nathan and relayed to David amounted to far more than a rebuke for his presumption. The reason given, but not revealed until 1 Chronicles chapter 28, was that David had been a man of war, involved in much bloodshed; the temple would be built by his son Solomon, whose reign of peace foreshadowed the Prince of Peace and the millennial reign of righteousness.

But Nathan's message did not end there. The word from the Lord revealed the terms of the Davidic Covenant, a place appointed for 'my people Israel', a throne established 'for ever'. Many years later, these same promises were confirmed to a young virgin in Nazareth concerning the Son she would bear, 'the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end', Luke 1. 32-33. How can any intelligent reader of scripture deny a future for a redeemed, restored and regathered Israel?

A few years pass before we again encounter Nathan. David consolidated his kingdom with crushing victories over any nation who would dare to raise a sword against him. Then, with his army in the capable hands of Joab, David chose to stay in his house rather than take the field against the Ammonites. What followed is well known, but for any who are not familiar with the tragic events involving Bath-sheba and her husband Uriah the Hittite, they can be read in 2 Samuel chapter 11.

Rumours may have circulated around the palace courts, yet only a few knew what had truly taken place. David, of course, and Bath-sheba, lived each day hoping that the guilt would lift and the shame would evaporate. 'For', David wrote, 'day and night thy hand was heavy upon me', Ps. 32. 4. Like the nagging pain of broken bones or a burning thirst, he longed to be cleansed, purged, washed.

Joab knew. Joab had sent a good and brave man to his death, breaking all the rules of comradeship in war, 'retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die'; that would be offensive to Joab, professional soldier that he was. But then, he would say, 'I was only following orders'. Joab's knowledge gave him a hold over David. It also meant that David had lost the moral right to pass judgement on Joab for his callous vendettas; it was left to Solomon after David's death to complete what David should have done himself.

Of course, above all, heaven knew. And it was by divine communication that Nathan was instructed to act. Several renaissance painters and later, have tried to portray the scene as Nathan exposed David's







# THE PROPHET

sin. Invariably they show a white bearded, cloak enveloped prophet, with blazing eyes and accusing finger, thundering forth, 'Thou art the man', to a cringing, cowering David, with courtiers recoiling in horror. Somehow, I don't see it like that.

I see the prophet, burdened with the message he bears, deeply conscious of the consequences communicated to him as, I judge, he seeks a private audience with the king.

Nathan's parable is a masterpiece of diplomacy and discretion. He

lowered to a restrained whisper, he pronounced in measured tones to his friend, 'Thou art the man'. But Nathan's word to David did not end there. He detailed God's gracious care and provision for David and the assurance that he could have asked for much more. Then came the revelation that every last detail of his sin was known and recorded; it would reap a bitter harvest for David.

Conviction smote the 'man after God's own heart'; confession quickly followed, 'I have sinned against the Lord'. Cleansing was at hand, 'the

verse 10, 'we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son'. For David, the first restoration of a fourfold sentence had been made, three more would follow.

Twenty more years pass by before we encounter Nathan for the last time in the narrative chapters, and David is now on his deathbed. Intrigue, plot and counterplot consume the palace population. Which of David's sons will ascend the throne? Two candidates take centre stage, Adonijah and Solomon. Adonijah had been fourth in line, but two older brothers, Amnon and Absalom, were now dead and, of Chileab, David's second son, we know nothing save his name. So Adonijah had a legitimate claim to the throne. However, the purpose of God, made known to David, 1 Chr. 22. 9-10, was for Solomon, the son of David and Bath-sheba, to ascend the throne; a remarkable token of the grace of God.

Both contenders had their supporting followers: for Adonijah, Joab and Abiathar the priest; for Solomon, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, a man whose support would be coveted in any confrontation, and Nathan the prophet. When Adonijah makes his move to gain further endorsement, it is Nathan who takes the initiative. Aware of the very real threat to Solomon and Bath-sheba should the following for Adonijah be allowed to gain momentum, Nathan engages in a piece of pure theatre with Bath-sheba to draw the attention of the ailing David to the critical situation, 1 Kgs. 1. 11-27. Their plan has the desired effect and David, even in his weakness, confirms the right of succession to Solomon.

So, as David passes off the scene and Solomon takes the throne, the nation is blessed with the king of God's choosing. Also, in Zadok, the priestly line reverted to the descendants of Eleazar as intended; the priesthood having become distorted somewhere in the chaotic days of the Judges, with Abiathar being a descendant of Ithamar. And, close to the throne was Nathan, a true prophet of God, as the nation moved towards the zenith of its years of monarchy.



touches David exactly where he knows the impact will be greatest: his shepherd heart. The response elicited from David is exactly what Nathan anticipated. It was, however, rather incongruous to issue a death penalty for sheep stealing, whereas hidden in David's heart was the guilt of adultery and murder by proxy. I see the faithful and fearless prophet, trembling with emotion as with voice

Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die'. One more thing was needed: reconciliation. If Nathan's task thus far had been burdensome, his last word was heartbreaking, 'the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die'. Solemn lesson, there could be no reconciliation without the death of the son! A keystone in Paul's masterful legal document to the Romans is found in chapter 5

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Strangers are those who no longer live in their homeland but seek to create a new life in a foreign land. There is a sense in which they have lost something – the personal support of their fellow countrymen – just like the widows who have lost their husbands, and the orphans who have lost their parents. Strangers often feel very much alone. In a new land they appear conspicuously different, at least at first, and their presence may be regarded as unsettling, and even threatening to the larger population. The biblical term is equivalent to those we refer to today as 'foreigners' or 'immigrants'.

### Jews and Gentiles

The national identity of the descendants of Abraham was always sharply defined. Their language, dress, and culture were distinct, and their religious belief in the one true God set them apart from the surrounding Gentile nations. And yet, the divine promise to Abraham and his seed was not exclusive. God was not saying that in choosing them He was rejecting everyone else, but that He was choosing them so that they would become a channel of blessing to all others: 'And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curses thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed', Gen. 12. 2-3. These words foreshadowed the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of Abraham, who would be the Saviour of the world.<sup>1</sup>

When the children of Israel made their exodus from Egyptian bondage, they were accompanied by others of diverse origin known as 'a mixed multitude'.<sup>2</sup> These non-Jews became permanent residents of Israel, sojourning among them.<sup>3</sup> Once the nation had traversed the wilderness and began conquering the land of Canaan, Joshua read the words of the law to the whole congregation of Israel, 'with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them', Josh. 8. 35. This confirms the abiding presence of other nationalities among the Jews. In

# WIDOWS, ORPHANS, AND S GOD LOVES THE S

By **CLARK LOGAN** Gaborone, Botswana

the time of Solomon they numbered over 150,000,<sup>4</sup> but, unfortunately, the king took to himself many foreign wives whom he allowed to turn his heart away from the one true God. In his old age he became an idolater.<sup>5</sup> In the later history of Israel, the word 'strangers' often refers to foreign invaders rather than internal residents.<sup>6</sup>

### Remember you too were strangers

It is true that many people have short memories, and often they choose to 'forget' their humble origins; with false pride they can pretend that they have always been something better than what they once were. God frequently reminded His earthly people that they too were once strangers; they were to be kind to the strangers in their midst. As noted in the other two studies concerning the widows and orphans, after the main harvest was reaped, the harvest gleanings of corn, olives, and grapes were to be left for these needy groups including the strangers.<sup>7</sup> Every third year a tithe was to be set aside for the same.<sup>8</sup>

Abraham called himself 'a stranger and sojourner' in Canaan, and Jacob was described as dwelling 'in the land wherein his father was a stranger'.<sup>9</sup> Moses also knew what it was to be a stranger when he lived in the land of Midian, and called his son, Gershom, meaning, 'I have been a stranger in a strange land'.<sup>10</sup> The people he subsequently delivered from bondage were told, 'Thou shalt neither vex

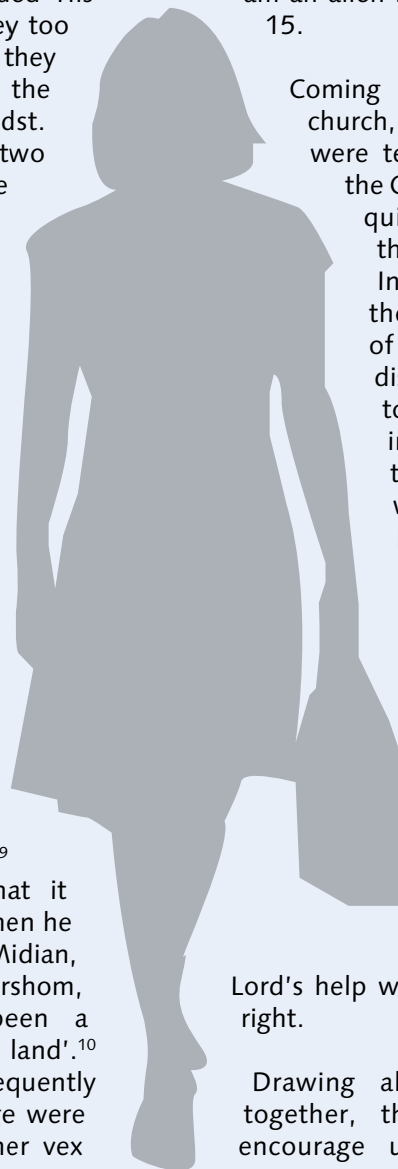
a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt', Exod. 22. 21.<sup>11</sup> On one occasion Moses' brother and sister foolishly complained about his marriage to a foreigner; the Lord was angry and judged them severely.<sup>12</sup>

Ruth, the Moabitess, was a stranger in Judah, but through her faith in the living God she became a recipient of divine blessing through Boaz, 'Why have I found grace in thine eyes . . . seeing I am a stranger?' Ruth 2. 10. Job was less well treated by his former acquaintances when multiple misfortunes flooded into his life, 'They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight', Job 19. 15.

Coming into the age of the church, we find that there were tensions created when the Gentile believers began quickly to outnumber their Jewish brethren. In the book of the Acts there are a number of examples of racial discrimination that had to be dealt with: the inferior treatment of the Greek-speaking widows in Jerusalem;<sup>13</sup> Peter's inconsistent behaviour;<sup>14</sup> the attempt by some Jewish men to impose circumcision on others;<sup>15</sup> the persecution of Paul because he had turned to the Gentiles.<sup>16</sup> We thank God that strong, godly men confronted these issues and with the

Lord's help were able to set things right.

Drawing all of these threads together, the scriptures would encourage us to be kind and







# STRANGERS (3) STRANGER

sympathetic to foreigners, and to remember the way in which God has bountifully blessed us, Gentiles, who once were aliens and strangers.<sup>17</sup>

## The heavenly stranger

The hymn writer, JAMES G. DECK, wrote of the Lord 'wandering as a homeless stranger, in the world . . . [His] hands had made'. The Lord Jesus Christ was never aimless in His movements, but often He must have felt unwelcome. We know that at His birth there was no room for Him in the inn at Bethlehem, and, in later life, the people of His home town, Nazareth, cast Him out. Finally, the people of Jerusalem delivered their decisive verdict, 'Away with him!' and took Him outside the city wall to crucify Him.

There were times when those who followed Him would retire of an evening to their own homes, but the Lord withdrew alone to the Mount of Olives.<sup>18</sup> He had left His family home in Nazareth behind, and, as He travelled from place to place, He could say, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head', Matt. 8. 20.

Of course, even more than the physical aspect of being treated as a stranger, there was the moral aspect – He was never at home in the midst of sin, even though He came for sinners, loved sinners, and lived among them. His holiness set Him apart, and often stirred up opposition and hatred. He was the man from heaven who was born to die. He came down from God to men, so that He might bring men back to God.<sup>19</sup> In a future time of millennial glory, He will recall every kindness shown to Him when He was here upon earth, 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in', Matt. 25. 35.

We who know and love Him are also to have the same heavenly focus and remember that this world is not our home. Peter says that we are 'strangers and pilgrims', 1 Pet. 2. 11. We are not at home here, but travelling to our home up there.

## Strangers among us

The growing pace of travel and immigration has meant that communities that were once insular have now to get used to sharing the street, the restaurant, the college, the workplace, with people of another race. This has also been reflected in local church life.

These facts present challenges to us all, whether we are receiving foreigners, or whether we ourselves are the foreigners seeking to make a new life in another land. The language barrier too is an obvious hindrance to communication and understanding. After the strangeness, there can arise suspicion. One thing can quickly lead to another: strangeness and suspicion, then insecurity and fear, and finally, intolerance and hatred.

What does it say to a jaded and cynical world when in a local assembly of Christians there is a real and visible unity, where believers of all cultures embrace one another warmly and linger to talk together afterwards, not in national cliques huddled in opposite corners, but mixing freely? In such close interaction we can learn so much from one another.

When we are prompted and controlled by the Spirit of God, and motivated by the love of Christ, these racial barriers can be overcome. Indeed, there can be great potential in diversity brought together in unity. This is all part of Christ's work in us and through us, for is it not true of more than the Jew and Gentile divide, that He is 'our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us', Eph. 2. 14? Christ is the great uniter of all His people, binding them together in love.

## Loving the stranger

Today we must rise above any feelings



of racial superiority in the church. We cannot speak to a man face to face if we are looking down on him. People of other cultures are just as sensitive to atmosphere and tone as we are, and just as easily offended, though sometimes too polite to show it. They pick up the non-verbal communication as quickly as we do: the tepid handshake, the half-hearted smile, and the awkward glance.

If you have any contact with foreigners, and if they join in the Christian fellowship of which you are a part, make sure that you greet them warmly, and be not just polite but *kind* to them. Consider inviting them to your home and getting to know them better, so that you come to appreciate how much you have in common.

In the local church, wherever found, and whatever its racial makeup, we should shower one another with the deepest love, and treat one another with the utmost respect. Nothing less is worthy of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Love ye therefore the stranger', Deut. 10. 19.

## Endnotes

- 1 1 John 4. 14.
- 2 Exod. 12. 38; Num. 11. 4.
- 3 Lev. 18. 26; Num. 15. 26.
- 4 2 Chr. 2. 17.
- 5 1 Kgs. 11. 1-6.
- 6 Jer. 51. 51; Lam. 5. 2; Ezek. 11. 9.
- 7 Deut. 24. 19-21.
- 8 Deut. 26. 12.
- 9 Gen. 23. 4; Gen. 37. 1.
- 10 Exod. 2. 22; Acts 7. 29.
- 11 'Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt', Exod. 23. 9.
- 12 Num. 12. 1, 9-11.
- 13 Acts 6. 1-8.
- 14 Gal. 2. 11-13.
- 15 Acts 15. 1-22.
- 16 Acts 13. 46-51; 18. 6.
- 17 Eph. 2. 12.
- 18 John 7. 53 – 8. 1.
- 19 'I came down from heaven', John 6. 38; 'I go unto my Father', John 14. 12.





Having looked at the section of chapter 2 which states that we are dead to God, we now proceed to the section that shows we are distant from God.

## PART 4

# Ephesians

By **NORMAN MELLISH**  
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Once again, Paul is taken up with the position that Gentiles were in before conversion. He is not now dealing with our moral state but with what we were religiously as Gentiles. These verses teach us how God has made provision to bring us into blessing, alongside the promises made to Israel. The section has two basic divisions:

- our position in Christ, vv. 11-18;
- the privileges we now enjoy in Christ, vv. 19-22.

In the former section we see how we who once had no place before God have now been made nigh.

In verses 11-13, we are made **nigh to blessing**. In verses 11-12, he recalls the past when there was definite national animosity, and the predicament that Gentiles faced. Our position as uncircumcised Gentiles was, as far as the Jew was concerned,

one of definite pollution. This also manifested the spiritual poverty we were in, for all that the nation of Israel meant to God could not be applied to Gentiles. We were without Christ – Christless! Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, we were homeless. As strangers from the covenants of promise, we were hopeless. Without God in the world, we were godless!

As Gentiles, we had no messianic hope; as aliens there was no privileged community to be part of. God never made any promised covenants to Gentiles, and we were, in fact, atheists, for the words 'without God' translate the word *atheos* from which comes our English word atheist. Thus, an atheist is not merely a man who does not believe in God, but one who is without God, and not saved.

How thankful we are in verse 13 for the transforming work of salvation! Now we are brought into those things that we did not have in our former lives. If, over verses 1-3, we write '**but God**', now it is '**but now in Christ Jesus**'.

We need to pay close attention in particular to the covenants of promise. We have not taken over Israel's blessings! However, what they will enjoy in a coming millennium has already become the portion of the saints today. Among those covenants of promise was new birth, Ezek. 36. 15-17. Another covenant of promise is the giving of the Holy Spirit, Joel 2. 28. Israel is promised a kingdom,

and, as those born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are now brought into the kingdom of His dear Son, Col.

1. 13. The new covenant of Jeremiah 31 will be enjoyed by Israel in the coming kingdom, but Paul declares he has been made a minister of the new covenant, see 2 Cor. 3; Heb. 10. 15-18. Genesis chapter 49 verse 10 relates to Israel's future expectation, 'unto Him shall the gathering of the peoples be', yet, in Matthew chapter 18 verse 20, is this not the honour we have as we gather to His name? Well might verse 13 state that we who were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

In verses 14-15 we are **made nigh to men**. The discord between Jew and Gentile has now been removed in the church, and we are both one. The Lord has demolished the wall that separated us. This was seen in the Temple to make the court of the Gentiles. Now, not only is the wall demolished but the enmity has been abolished. That is, the law with its dogmas and statutes was abolished in the flesh of the Lord Jesus, and He has made in Himself 'one new man' with Jew and Gentile. This is not a union with the old but something completely new. The word 'new', *kainos*, always relates to that which is new in character and constitution. None can advocate covenant theology without ignoring the present work of Christ to bring in something vastly different from what was seen in the Old Testament. The church has not taken over Jewish blessings, for the nation will still enjoy the promised covenants in the coming kingdom.

In verses 16-17, we now find that both parties, Jew and Gentile, are







**'made nigh to God'.** This is the third way in which we are made nigh, not now to blessing, nor to men, but made nigh to God. Though the Jewish nation had great privileges, sadly they were still far from God in heart. We see that both parties needed reconciliation. Having been brought nigh to blessing through the blood of Christ, and the means of our peace being His flesh, we see that reconciliation is by means of the cross. We are not reconciled personally, or individually, but 'in one body'. We find reconciliation on the ground of unification, and it is only made possible by the crucifixion of Christ. This has brought the execution of the enmity that marred any possibility of fellowship, either with man or God. The *Pulpit Commentary* expresses it as 'making emphatic the fact of reconciliation to God on the same footing, and by the same means, both were to be reconciled in one body and by the cross'.<sup>1</sup> The cross is the means God has used to reconcile opposing parties, and now establishes fellowship with Himself.

Thank God for the preaching of peace! The message of peace is, of course, a divine word and here it speaks of the Lord preaching peace, clearly by the Spirit through the disciples. This was carried out by those who heard the Lord, and brought the gospel to the 'far off' Gentile, and also to the privileged Jew. It is evident that the peace of God was needed by both!

Our access to the Father can only be by the Spirit, the Godhead is before us in this verse, and all parties of the Godhead are needed to bring us into the divine presence.

In the closing verses, we are now brought face to face with our privileges. In verse 19, we are brought into favour, and accepted into the family. What a transformation has taken place: as strangers we were deprived of any rights to a relationship with God, and as foreigners, sojourners, we had no privileges. Now we are 'fellow-citizens with the saints, and

of the household of God'. This gives us a national, and spiritual standing, as we are brought into the divine domain, and have rights as those who are part of the household of God. THAYER defines the household of God as 'belonging to one's household, related by blood, kindred'.<sup>2</sup> We are there in company with the saints, the holy ones of God, and with it there is the responsibility, as with any household, to maintain the honour and dignity of such a place.

We are not only brought into favour, and into the family, but we are also built into the framework of the temple that has been formed through the apostolic teaching.

The apostles and prophets are the foundation of the building, and were evidently the prime gifts in the early church. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 28 states that God has set them first in the church, and the word 'first' indicates 'first in rank'. They are seen here as being in the foundation and are foundation gifts; they do not exist throughout the church age. We have no apostles and prophets today. The ministry of these men was of God and none should despise their teaching. Sadly, some would deny the apostolic word that is left to us. As far as the building is concerned, the Lord Jesus has the supreme place, being the chief corner stone. This stone does two things: first, it unites both Jew and Gentile, not now into one body but into one building; second, all the lines of that building must run from the corner stone – He determines the character this building takes. It is the stone that binds the building together, and has the prime function in the building.

Every believer has a part in the structure of this building. In this lovely epistle, all is of God, the hand of man is not allowed to build this habitation of God. In the building of 1 Corinthians chapter 3, the local

assembly of God's children, we find that man has a prominent place to play in its well-being, and we are warned to be careful as to what we build, otherwise the judgement of God will fall upon us. In this building, God does not leave anything to man, and well may it be said to be 'fitly framed together'. No stone is out of place, and all work together as a cohesive unit to form a holy temple to the Lord. This is a place where the God of heaven has His habitation. If every believer forms a part of this temple, the Ephesian saints are encouraged to know that they also belong to it.

These saints would be very familiar with the great Temple to Diana, over which the uproar was made when Paul was in Ephesus. The people spoke of it as something not to be spoken against saying, 'the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised and her magnificence should be destroyed', as they saw the effect of the gospel in that city. But here is a far greater temple, not made with hands but as a result of the work of Calvary, and of which all believers have part in its structure. What an inspiration to these Ephesian saints!

All we have in this chapter is of *grace*, and it brings before us how we were when God took dealings with us as sinners. This does not negate the truths of chapter 1, where all is seen from the divine standpoint, but it does manifest the material that God took up to make us what we are, and to bestow such great blessings upon us. Understanding this chapter should bring forth great praise for the goodness of God toward us!

### Endnotes

- 1 H. D. M. SPENCE, JOSEPH S. EXELL, *Pulpit Commentary – Ephesians*, Funk and Wagnalls, pg. 66.
- 2 J. G. THAYER, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Harper and Brothers, 1889.



## Unrecognized Lordship

Mark's Gospel could justifiably be referred to as 'The Gospel of the unrecognized Lordship of Christ'. In this Gospel He is referred to as Lord on only eighteen occasions. Indeed, His disciples never call Him Lord, except when they are instructed so to do, Mark 11. 3. This is perhaps not surprising since Mark portrays Christ as the perfect Servant, 10. 43-45, and, naturally speaking, a servant cannot also be regarded as Lord. It was the most unlikely of people, therefore, who recognized His Lordship, e.g., a Syrophenician woman, 7. 28, a father of a boy with a dumb spirit, 9. 24, and the owner of an unbroken colt, 11. 3. Indeed, neither the colt nor its owner had any rights in the presence of Christ; therefore, their one desire was to be subject to, and of service to, Him.

## Lord in every aspect of His life

Sadly, Christ is so often the unrecognized Lord of our individual and assembly lives. However, whether we recognize it or not, He is still Lord! Even a cursory glance at the New Testament will impress upon us that He was Lord in every aspect of His life. First, the angels declared at His birth, 'For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ **the Lord**', Luke 2. 11. Second, during His public ministry He said to His disciples in the upper room, 'Ye

# LORDSHIP IN THE ASSEMBLY

By **COLIN LACEY** Bath, England

call me Master and **Lord**: and ye say well; for so I am', John 13. 13. Third, speaking of His death, Paul writes, 'But we speak the wisdom of God . . . which none of the princes of the world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the **Lord of glory**', 1 Cor. 2. 7-8. Fourth, the New Testament teems with references that firmly link His resurrection with His Lordship. Luke records, 'And they entered in and found not the body of the **Lord Jesus**', 24. 3. The angel at the tomb said, 'He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where **the Lord** lay', Matt. 28. 6. Paul wrote, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be **Lord** both

of the dead and living', Rom. 14. 9. This is not to imply that He was not Lord prior to His resurrection, but the full significance of His Lordship rests upon His resurrection.

## Lord in the future

If the scriptures attest to Christ's Lordship when He was here on earth, we would expect them to do the same as we look forward to coming events. They do not disappoint us! Paul, writing of His coming again for believers, says, 'For **the Lord** himself shall descend from heaven with a shout', 1 Thess. 4. 16. It ought to be a joy to our hearts to know that the world that rejected Him and cast Him out will one day confess that 'Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the glory of God the Father', Phil. 2. 11.

## Lord in every aspect of our lives

In the light of these things, we ought to join Peter and declare triumphantly in this godless world, 'Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)', Acts 10. 36. These are not simply doctrinal truths to give mental assent to, but they must be lived out in our individual and collective lives. Indeed, every aspect of our Christian life is linked to the Lordship of Christ in the New Testament. It begins at our conversion: 'The word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the **Lord Jesus** [lit. Jesus as **Lord**], and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved',







Rom. 10. 8, 9. A local assembly, of course, consists of such people. It is also important to note that the New Testament does not envisage unbaptized believers; therefore, it is no surprise to discover that the believers at Ephesus were 'baptized in the name of the **Lord Jesus**', Acts 19. 5. These are, of course, fundamental requirements for fellowship in a local assembly and elders need to take care today that they are upheld.

We must ensure that our preaching is sound if we wish to see sinners saved and acknowledging the Lordship of Christ by being obedient in the waters of baptism. A study of the Acts of the Apostles will clearly indicate that the Lordship of Christ was a central theme of the early believers' preaching; indeed, the word 'Lord' appears on 110 occasions in the book. Believers went to Antioch and preached 'the **Lord Jesus**', Acts 11. 20. The result was that the **Lord's hand** was with them, a great number believed and turned to **the Lord**. Later on, Barnabas continued the good work in this area and exhorted the converts to cleave to (continue with) **the Lord** and many people were added unto the **Lord**. Similarly, the assembly at Phillipi was built up on the sound basis of the recognition of Jesus as **Lord**, 16. 12-40. **The Lord** called Paul to preach the gospel there, v. 10. It is recorded of Lydia that **the Lord** opened her heart and she was faithful to **the Lord**, vv. 14-15. The keeper of the prison heard the message, 'Believe on the **Lord Jesus Christ** and thou shalt be saved', v. 31. It was little wonder therefore that after he believed, he was baptized and rejoiced. It is interesting to note

that, when Paul later wrote to the assembly of believers in Philippi, he used the title **Lord** on fifteen occasions. When speaking to the elders from Ephesus, he testified 'both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our **Lord Jesus Christ**', 20. 21.

### Lordship in our worship

Paul firmly roots our worship and remembrance of Christ in His Lordship. When dealing with the subject of the institution and observance of the Lord's Supper, he used the title, '**Lord**', on eight occasions, 1 Cor. 11. 20-34. Indeed, as he was not present when it was instituted, he acknowledges that he received his information about the Supper from the **Lord**, v. 23. He reminded the Corinthian believers that each time they came together to eat the bread and drink of the cup, they proclaimed the **Lord's** death, v. 26. The Supper does not belong to any special group of people – it is the **Lord's**. It is the glory of His presence that enriches these occasions when we meet together to remember Him. He is, indeed, the Host and we are the guests. *Lord Jesus Christ we seek Thy face, Within the veil we bow the knee; O let Thy glory fill the place, And bless us while we wait on Thee.*

### Lordship in service

Paul turns the spotlight on service, when he writes to the believers in the assembly at Colossae: 'And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the **Lord**, and not unto men; Knowing that of the **Lord** ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the **Lord Christ**', Col. 3. 23-24. When we are called to service for the Lord, there is no room for 'Lord suffer me

first', or 'Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go', Luke 9. 59, 61. The words of Mary at the wedding in Cana of Galilee are apposite, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it', John 2. 5, as are the words of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, '**Lord**, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 9. 6. We must learn that, as believers, we have no will of our own – we have been 'bought with a price', 1 Cor. 7. 23.

### Lordship in daily living

It has been rightly said that we will never rise in public above what we are in private. How we live our daily lives will determine the spiritual calibre of our various assemblies. In the planning of what we intend to do each day, 'If the **Lord** will' ought to be the precursor, not the suffix, to all our plans, Jas. 4. 15. If we are subject to the Lordship of Christ in every aspect of our daily living, we will bring this same spirit into the times when we meet together in our various assemblies.

In conclusion, recognizing the Lordship of Christ calls for unquestioning obedience and whole-hearted service on the part of all those in fellowship in a local assembly. May our response be like that of Saul of Tarsus, '**Lord**, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 9. 6.

### Appendix

There are two main words employed for **Lord** in the New Testament:

- *despotes* – the Lord who possesses supreme authority – it is used in relation to God but only on three occasions in relation to Christ, 2 Pet. 2. 1; Jude 4; 2 Tim. 2. 21;
- *kurios* – to have power or authority – it is used in every New Testament book, except for Titus and the Epistles of John. It was a common form of address to the Lord Jesus. It was drawn from the Septuagint, i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is the New Testament word for the Hebrew word, *Jehovah*. Indeed, many of the New Testament writers used the word *kurios* alike of God and the Lord Jesus.



Daniel, whose name means 'God is my Judge', had many fine hours, despite being a captive servant of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian kings for most of his life. Consider his firm resolve, even in teenage years, not to be defiled by the unclean royal diet, a resolve for which God honoured him greatly with the king's favour, Dan. 1. Then, when faced with Nebuchadnezzar's unreasonable demand for the disclosure and interpretation of his disturbing image dream, Daniel, supported by his three loyal friends, had convened a special prayer meeting, the first recorded in scripture, to seek the Lord's urgent help, and had received a swift and abundant answer, ch. 2. Thirdly, when called upon in chapters 4 and 5 to assist, first, Nebuchadnezzar again, then his wayward grandson, Belshazzar, Daniel had risen to both occasions magnificently, and seen his master Nebuchadnezzar soundly converted, but his blasphemous grandson overthrown by the Medo-Persians and eternally lost. Next, in chapter 6 he had shown remarkable courage in the face of his colleagues' plot against his life and Darius' blasphemous edict forbidding him to pray to the Lord. He had not flinched from the consequences of disobeying it, and had been completely vindicated by his miraculous deliverance from the den of lions.

Daniel's finest hours were those he spent on his knees in prayer. But his very finest single hour of prayer was probably that recorded in chapter 9 of his book, in which he prayed for the restoration of his sinful exiled people Israel. His whole prayer then, together with God's answer to it, the panoramic prophecy of Israel's Seventy Weeks' further discipline prior to their final restoration, is quite outstanding and unforgettable in its deep spirituality, a model for

# THEIR FINEST HOUR

# DANIEL

## Praying for the Restoration of Israel

By **MALCOLM C. DAVIS** Leeds, England

all of us today to follow. Let us, therefore, study its occasion and chief characteristics.

### His realization of the significance of Jeremiah's prophecies

During the first year of Darius the Mede's rule over Babylon, 538 BC, Daniel, who was then over eighty, but still at the height of his mental powers and spiritual character, suddenly realized, from his reading of the scriptures, the practical significance of Jeremiah's prophecies, in chapters 25 and 29 of his book, concerning the length of the then current Babylonian Captivity. God had predicted that it would last just seventy years. Since Daniel had been exiled in 605 BC, the end of the Captivity could be only a few years away. This realization spurred Daniel on to engage in earnest prayer for the speedy restoration of his exiled nation. Does our study of the scriptures have a similar practical effect on our lives today, as we see the events of the end times rapidly approaching with all that they will mean, both for us as New Testament Christians and also for our unsaved neighbours, who face not imminent rapture, but the imminent judgement of God?

### His reverent attitude in intercession

Daniel's prayer here is a model of reverence, utter sincerity, and transparent honesty with God. Before he approached God's presence, he first humbled himself by putting on

sackcloth and ashes, and exercised the self-discipline of fasting. When he did begin to pray, he first of all worshipped the Lord, Israel's covenant-keeping God, for His eternal greatness and faithfulness in true godly fear. We, too, need to remember that the eternal God already knows perfectly what we intend to say to Him, and will not be hurried into listening to puny and sinful mortals like us. He is always much more concerned that we become like Him in holy character than in our detailed prayer requests; for true prayer springs from, and results in, full conformity with His mind and will. Only then can He answer us. It is not surprising, therefore, that Daniel's prayer was heard and answered immediately in such a wonderful way; for his soul and spirit were in perfect harmony with his God as enlightened by the Old Testament scriptures. Are we, likewise, in tune with the mind and will of heaven? We certainly can be!

### His heartfelt confession of Israel's sins

In his prayer Daniel was acting consciously on the Lord's promise through Moses, in Deuteronomy chapter 30, that when and if Israel repented of their disobedience to Him, confessed their sins, and returned to Him, he would deliver them from captivity in their enemies' lands. The Lord's prophecy of Israel's history of backsliding and rebellion against Him had all been fulfilled in the captivities in Assyria and Babylon.







But now repentance would bring freedom from Babylon at least. Daniel humbly confessed his people's sins as his very own, fully identifying himself with them. Are we prepared to do this when things go wrong in our local assemblies, or in our various nations? Or do we take a 'holier than thou' attitude towards the offenders? Remember, we are no better by nature than any of them. Let us have the mind of Christ, who made Himself answerable for all our sins. Daniel fully accepted that his people had deserved their punishment, because they had seriously offended against the Lord's holy character, and spurned all His grace and longsuffering with them. He was mortified that Israel had brought the Lord's name into such disgrace, and fully justified Him in having judged them so severely.

### **His powerful plea for Israel's restoration**

When Daniel did finally begin to intercede for Israel, he made no plea for Israel's sake, but rather was concerned that the Lord's own name and glory be protected and upheld; for these were both inseparably bound up with Israel's fate as the Lord's chosen earthly people. Like Moses before him, Daniel argued that, if Israel were finally lost, then the Lord's name and glory would suffer dishonour and reproach from His enemies, because He had made Israel and the Patriarchs many unconditional covenant promises of blessing. On that basis alone he pleaded that the Lord would forgive Israel's sins now and restore them to their Promised Land. Daniel is a good example of how we should intercede for one another when things go wrong. Always consider what will most advance the Lord's glory, rather than our own, or others', blessing.

### **God's swift response to his prayer**

Sometimes God allows there to be a considerable delay before we receive answers to even our most earnest prayers. Daniel discovered this later in chapter 10. There he prayed for three whole weeks before God's answer

reached him. Then God revealed to him that his prayer had been heard from the very beginning, but the answer to it had been held up all that time by evil angelic princes of the nations, who opposed God and His people Israel. This is a glimpse into the celestial conflict between God's angels and Satan's demons in which all believers are constantly involved, Eph. 6. But, here in chapter 9, God sent Gabriel at once to assure Daniel that his prayer had been heard, and to give him a wonderful answer. Gabriel told him that, as 'a man greatly beloved' by God, he was to receive a special revelation of His purposes for his beloved people Israel. Truly, 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him', Ps. 25. 14. We today are also highly privileged, and therefore most responsible, because we possess God's whole prophetic plan in the now completed scriptures. We should use our prior knowledge to encourage fellow-believers and to warn unbelievers around us concerning 'things to come'.

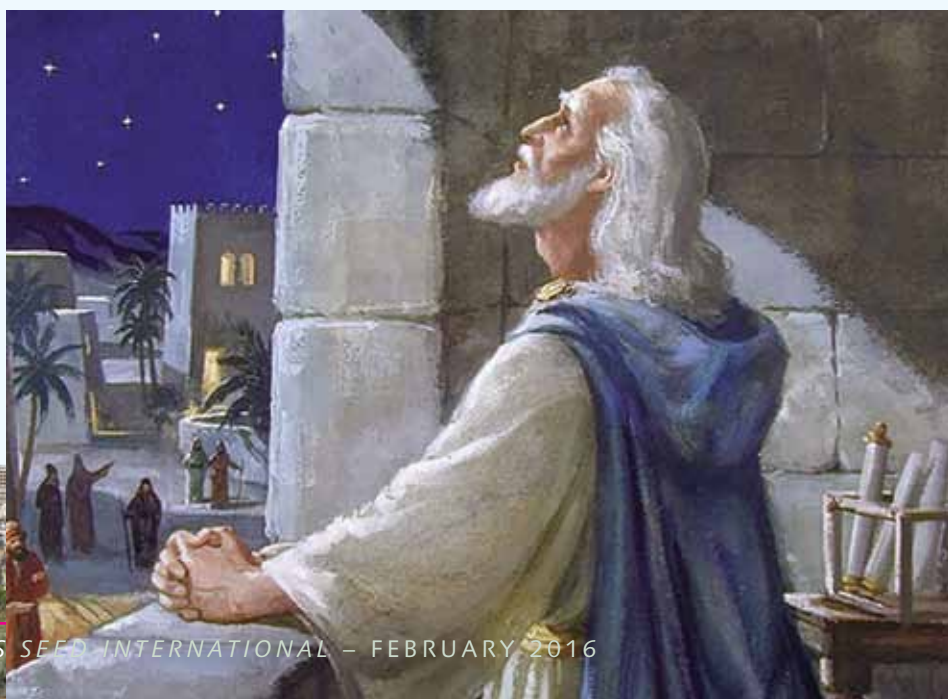
### **God's revelation of Israel's future path to restoration**

In verses 24 to 27 Gabriel revealed to God's beloved servant that another much longer period of seventy times seven years must elapse before Israel's spiritual restoration would be complete, so serious was their sin. These 490 years would run from Artaxerxes II's edict in 445 BC to rebuild Jerusalem's city walls until the Second Coming of Christ, with an indefinitely long interval between the end of the 69th and the beginning of the 70th week. The 69th week would see the first coming of Christ

and end just prior to His wrongful, but foreordained, crucifixion. The undefined interval would see the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 and continual warfare until the end times. All this is now history. The 70th week would constitute the end times, the seven-year tribulation described in Revelation chapters 6 to 19, started by Israel signing a covenant with the coming evil Roman prince, the first Beast of Revelation chapter 13, for their national protection. After three-and-a-half years he would break this covenant, set up an image of himself in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and demand universal worship. Consequent worldwide persecution would be halted by Christ's intervention at His second coming to reign. Only then would Israel's full restoration be completed and their sin finally purged on the basis of Christ's vicarious sacrifice.

### **Concluding challenge**

Daniel was the favoured recipient of a panoramic prophecy which forms the backbone of prophetic chronology, especially that of the Book of Revelation. The aged prophet, as a result of his deeply spiritual intercessory prayer, was privileged to understand much more of God's purposes of grace and judgement than most other Old Testament believers. But Christians today who live as close to the Lord as Daniel did may also enjoy a similar privileged understanding of Divine truth and purpose from the inspired scriptures. Yes, Daniel is definitely a role model for us to follow! So, who will 'Dare to be a Daniel'?







# CHRIST – A GREATER THAN SOLOMON (3)

## (6) As to His Supplication

By **JOHN GRIFFITHS** Port Talbot, Wales

Solomon appears to be a man of prayer. Certainly two of his prayers stand out: that at the commencement of his reign, and his prayers at the dedication of the temple. When we say that prayer changes things, this was actually the case in young Solomon's life. At twenty years of age he has greatness thrust upon him. He was not the first in the line of David's sons to be considered for the throne, but God chose him and speaks to him, 'Ask what I shall give thee'. Solomon seeks an understanding heart to discern judgement. The Lord is impressed, and grants him wisdom, with the additional promise of riches and honour. His wisdom was God-given

It was tested, as two harlots were brought before him disputing over the remaining living child. The result was that 'all Israel . . . feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him'. His wisdom was seen in his 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs, the outstanding one of which is the Song of Songs. His wisdom is seen in his writings of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the Psalms. His wisdom was recognized far and wide, 'and there came of all the people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom', 1 Kgs. 4. 34. Amongst those was the Queen of the South, the Queen of Sheba. From Solomon's prayer came the wisdom imparted by God. From the wisdom of Solomon there followed his fame. As the Queen of Sheba remarked, 'thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard'. 'For the price of wisdom is above rubies', Job 28. 18.

Nevertheless, Solomon's wisdom gave place to wantonness. A salutary warning to us!

The prayer life of our Lord Jesus Christ is well documented, especially by Luke. Every evening was spent in communion with His Father. No event took place but our Lord had first prayed about it. Think of His prayers upon the cross. Think of His prayers in Gethsemane's garden, prostrate with strong cryings, and tears. Think of His prayer in John 17, praying before the experience of the cross, He prays as if it were an accomplished fact. As Great High Priest He upholds His own before the throne of God, and prays that they may be kept in this world, before being with Him for all eternity to behold His glory.

The wisdom of Christ is not imparted, as was the wisdom granted to Solomon. It is His intrinsically, 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge', Col. 2. 3. The eighth chapter of Proverbs is a master-class on wisdom, yet one can see that it is wisdom personified, and that person can only be our Lord. The Queen of Sheba asked Solomon hard questions. At twelve years of age the Saviour was found sitting in the midst of doctors, 'and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers'. 'No man spake like this man', was the verdict of the soldiers sent to arrest Christ. 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' queried the Jews at the temple. His sermon on the mount led to the conclusion, 'he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes'. Look how He parried the questions of Matthew chapter 22 from all-comers, so that 'no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions'. What wisdom! What understanding! Absolutely brilliant!

All this led to Jesus' fame; 'and the fame hereof went abroad into all that land'. 'At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of



Jesus'. Isaiah records, 'So shall he sprinkle (*startle*) many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider', Isa. 52. 15. The Pharisees said, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him', John 12. 19.

The fame of Jesus grows and spreads. His name is daily on a million tongues. Every hour of every day and night He is extolled and worshipped somewhere on our globe. His universal acceptance is yet to come. Every eye shall see Him, every knee bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

A greater than Solomon is here and our hearts well up in praise;  
'Then sings my soul, my Saviour  
God to Thee  
How great Thou art! How great  
Thou art!'

'Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen', Ps. 72. 19.





# GENESIS

By **RICHARD CATCHPOLE** South Norwood, England

## Introduction

This book has been rightly called 'The seed plot of the Bible'. Here we have recorded the origin of the universe, the creation of man, the institution of marriage, the entrance of sin, the first murder, the confounding of language, the resultant division of mankind into nations, and the calling out of a man through whom God would carry forward His counsel and purpose.

Not only is Genesis important as the opening book of the Bible, it is equally significant as the first of that distinct section of the Old Testament, known to the Jews as the Torah or 'The law of Moses', embracing the first five books of the Bible, 'The Pentateuch', Genesis to Deuteronomy. The five books form a literary unit in subject matter and historical sequence, each commencing at the point the preceding one concluded, and tracing the history and movements of God's people from the call of Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees to the arrival of the children of Israel at Kadesh Barnea, prior to their entrance into the promised land of Canaan.

Being the first book of the Bible an understanding of Genesis is essential to a right understanding of the remainder of the scriptures. Since it is foundational in the unfolding of Divine truth, it is surely no surprise that, over the years, the historicity and reliability of the book has been a particular subject of attack by both atheists and modernists. But every attempt to dismiss the historical veracity of Genesis is refuted by the way the Lord Jesus Himself referred to key events and people in Genesis.<sup>1</sup> To these few references we could add many others, as well as the testimony of the apostles.<sup>2</sup>

## The title of the book

The Hebrew title is *Bereshith* and it is taken from the opening words of the book 'In the beginning'. The name 'Genesis' is derived from its title in the Septuagint (LXX) version of the Old Testament, the transliteration of a Greek word meaning 'origin, lineage,

birth'. The two titles indicate the content and character of the book, Genesis being a book of beginnings and generations.

## The purpose of the book

- To record the origin of all things.
- To reveal the glory and sovereignty of God, His power manifest in the act of creation, His providence seen in His control of and intervention in world events, and His purpose in redemption.
- To reveal the position of man in creation, his responsibility before God, his subsequent fall and total depravity.
- To record the origin of the nation of Israel and their place in divine purpose.

The book readily divides into two major sections.

Chapters 1 to 11 concern primeval history

- The beginning of human history
- The key person is Adam
- The chapters focus attention upon four major events: Creation, The Fall, The Flood, The Tower of Babel.

Chapters 12 to 50 concern patriarchal history

- The beginning of Hebrew history
- The key person is Abraham
- The section focuses attention upon four major persons: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Being a book of 'beginnings' a particular feature of Genesis is the references to ten distinct 'generations':

- Five in chapters 1 to 11: 'the generations of the heavens and of the earth', 2. 4; 'the generations of Adam', 5. 1; 'the generations of Noah', 6. 9; 'the generations of the sons of Noah', 10. 1, and 'the generations of Shem', 11. 10.
- Five in chapters 12 to 50: 'the generations of Terah', 11. 27; 'the generations of Ishmael', 25. 12; 'the generations of Isaac', 25. 19; 'the generations of Esau', 36. 1; 'the generations of Jacob', 37. 1.

A reminder, that our God is the God of all generations, Ps. 90. 1.

## The author and date of the book

'All scripture is given by inspiration of God', 2 Tim. 3. 16, but as to the human instrument used to write Genesis, the book itself gives no indication. There are, however, several verses in the Pentateuch that refer to Moses 'writing'.<sup>3</sup> In both the Old and New Testaments, Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch is clearly asserted.<sup>4</sup> In John chapter 5 verse 46 the Lord Jesus said, 'Moses . . . wrote of me', and when the Lord in Luke chapter 24 verse 27, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets . . . expounded . . . in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' would we really think the reference to 'Moses' did not include the book of Genesis?

Some feel that the mention in Genesis chapter 5 verse 1 of the 'book of the generations of Adam' indicates that Adam himself wrote a book regarding the earliest events, a record that was handed down to Moses, and embraced in the opening chapters of Genesis.

As to when Moses wrote Genesis, it could have been during the forty years he spent in Midian, or equally during the thirty-eight years of the children of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness.

## Some important themes in the book

### 1. Key Bible doctrines:

- The doctrine of God. Within Genesis, God is revealed to be the Creator God, 1. 1; the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, 14. 18; the Almighty God, 17. 1; the Judge of all the earth, 18. 25; the everlasting God, 21. 33; the God of heaven and the God of the earth, 24. 3.
- The doctrine of man. His origin, as created by God, and his nature, as made in the image and likeness of God, 1. 26-27; his fall and alienation from God, ch. 3; his danger of the judgement of God,



# CHARTING THE SCRIPTURES GENESIS

by Jonathan Black

In the beginning was the Word...

The lamb verily foreordained before the foundation of the world...



The heavens declare

CREA

'All things were created by h

## CHARACTERS

## EVENTS

## COVENANTS

## DISPENSATIONS

## TYPES

**1 ADAM**

Sin

offended God

**CREATION**

living souls

Word study - 'covenant' Heb. 'bereth' - alliance or pledge - so called from the idea of cutting 1st mentioned Gen. 6. 18 and generally relating to God's agreements with man after the fall.

Innocence  
Gen. 2. 25

The last Adam  
1 Cor. 15. 45

**2 ABEL**

Sacrifice

accepted by God

**FALL**

sinful souls

Conscience  
Gen. 3. 22

The precious blood  
Heb. 12. 24

**3 ENOCH**

Faith

pleased God

**FLOOD**

saved souls

The Lord's return to air  
Heb. 11

**4 NOAH**

Grace

walked with God

**NATIONS**

scattered souls

**NOAHIC Covenant**

Government  
Gen. 8. 20

Jewish remnant saved out of Tribulation  
Matt. 24

Adam can tell Lamech who can tell

**ABRAHAM**  
friend of God

'a father of many nations'  
Gen. 17. 4

**ABRAHAMIC Covenant**

Promise  
Gen. 11. 10

the believer walking in  
Rom. 4. 11  
Meets Melchizedek - The King of Salem  
Gen. 14. 18

**Mt. Moriah**  
God will provide him

'JEHOVAH - I AM'

ONE GOD E

**EDEN**

Adam - sin enters world  
Dominion lost

The 1st marriage/family

**CITY of ENOCH**

**BANK OF NOD**

**Babel**

**Mt. Ararat**  
The 1st burnt offering

*The Seed of the woman*

Ch. 1-11 *The beginning of the human race*

The history of **Civilisation**

*A tale of 4 Events*

**Creation - the soulful man**

1 God's creative work  
The origin of life  
The generations of Earth  
2 God's bridal work  
The order of marriage

**Civilisation - the sinful man**

3 The downfall of all men  
The origin of sin and death  
4 Cain's descendants  
The outcome of sin and death  
5 The generations of Adam  
The order from Adam to Noah

**The Flood - the saved man**

6 Walking with God - Noah  
The gopher ark  
7 Shut in with God  
The global flood  
8 Souls saved by God  
The great sacrifice  
9 Secure covenant of God  
The glory of the rainbow  
10 The generations of the Sons of Noah  
The origin of the nations

**The Nations - the scattered man**

11 Building against God  
The origin of languages

**Abraham - the separated man**

11 The generations of Abraham  
12 From Ur to Egypt  
Faith to obey the call  
13 From Egypt to Hebron  
Friction separates the family  
14 From Sodom to Salem  
Fitness to fight for Lot  
15 From Egypt to the Euphrates  
Faith and a covenant made  
16 From Hebron to Shur  
Failure at the fountain - Ishmael  
17 A Covenant of circumcision  
Father of many nations  
18 Unexpected visitors  
Faith for the promised son  
19 From Sodom to Safety  
Fire, brimstone and a pillar of salt  
20 Abraham & Abimelech  
Fear and failure

The biography of **Abraham**

The biography of **Isaac**

The biography of **Jacob**

The biography of **Moses**

The biography of **David**

The biography of **Jesus**

The biography of **John**

The biography of **Paul**

The biography of **Revelation**

The biography of **Apocalypse**

The biography of **Prophecy**

The biography of **History**

The biography of **Science**

The biography of **Art**

The biography of **Music**

The biography of **Dance**

The biography of **Games**

The biography of **Sports**

The biography of **War**

The biography of **Peace**

The biography of **Love**

The biography of **Hate**

The biography of **Kindness**

The biography of **Cruelty**

The biography of **Humility**

The biography of **Pride**

The biography of **Modesty**

The biography of **Immodesty**

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The biography of **Unreason**



Key words - beginning / generations / seed **Writer** - Moses

the glory of God

TION

him, and for him', Col. 1. 16

El-ohim - Creator  
Jehovah - LORD, the existing One  
El Shaddai - God Almighty  
Adonai - Lord

'It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in', Isa. 40. 23

4 AM/PM SOLAR LIGHT DAY 5 AM/PM FISH / FOWL DAY 6 AM/PM MAN / ANIMALS DAY 7 AM/PM REST

the light as he  
light', 1 John 1. 7

'Follow me, and I will make you  
fishers of men', Matt. 4. 19

'Ye shall also bear the image of the heavenly',  
1 Cor. 15. 49

'I will give you rest',  
Matt. 11. 28

the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it', Exod. 20. 11

all Shem who can tell:

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God

y nations'

MIC  
t

ng by faith

the King Priest

6  
ISAAC

Rebekah  
blessed by God

7  
JACOB

Rachael  
worshipped God

8  
JOSEPH

Asenath  
feared God

Israel

Hebrew

Jew

Reuben,  
Simeon, Levi, **Judah**,  
Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar,  
Zebulun Joseph, Benjamin

The God of Abraham,  
The God of Isaac,  
The God of Jacob,

The spiritual seed

The new man in Christ

Christ our Saviour

Jesus Christ spoke of Genesis in the four Gospels.

Matt. 24. 37 'But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be',  
Mark 10. 6 'From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female',  
Luke 17. 32 'Remember Lot's wife',  
John 8. 58 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am',

EGYPT

Joseph - ruler of the world  
Dominion restored

SUN  
GOD  
Ra

lot of all truth

Ch. 12-50 *The beginning of the Hebrew race*

ny of Isaac  
4 Wells

The biography of Jacob  
*A tale of 4 Pillars*

The biography of Joseph  
*A tale of 4 Houses & 4 coats*

Finding a bride  
25 The generations of Isaac  
25 The generations of Ishmael

Jacob - the struggling man  
25 Mourning in Machpelah  
Abraham's death / Esau sells birthright  
26 Gear to Beersheba  
Isaac digs the wells  
27 Deceiving a father  
Struggle for blessing  
28 Beersheba to Bethel  
Salvation at Bethel - Cov. confirmed  
29 Bethel to Haran  
Seeking his bride  
30 Bethel to Haran  
Striving with Laban  
31 Padanaram to Mt Gilead  
Searched by Laban  
32 Mahanaim to Peniel  
A Struggle with God  
33 Peniel to Shechem  
A Settlement with Esau  
34 Shechem  
A Shameful slaughter  
35 Shechem to Bethel  
Death of Rachael and Isaac  
36 Esau to Edom  
The generations of Esau

Joseph - the spiritual man  
The generations of Jacob  
37 Canaan to Egypt  
The Son leaves the father's house  
38 Judah in Egypt  
Judah's sin - Tamar' scheme  
39 Joseph in Egypt  
The servant in Potiphar's house  
40 In Egypt  
A young man in the prison house  
41 In Egypt  
Exalted in Pharaoh's house  
42 Canaan to Egypt  
Brothers leave Jacob's house  
43 In Egypt  
Love shown in Joseph's house  
44 In Egypt  
Looking in Benjamin's sack  
45 Egypt to Canaan  
Leaving for the father's house  
46 Egypt to Goshen  
Father united with the son  
47 Goshen to Rameses  
Family looked after by the son  
48 In Egypt  
Lads blessed by the father  
49 In Egypt  
Life ends for Jacob  
50 A coffin in Egypt  
Joseph looks beyond - carry up my bones

1635 BC

The book of Exodus



ch. 6; his justification by faith in God, 15. 6; and the blessing of walking with God, 5. 21-24.

- The doctrine of redemption. The promise of God, 3. 15; the provision of God, 3. 21; the ground of approach and acceptance with God by way of a sacrifice, 8. 20.

## 2. The dispensations:

There are seven dispensations in the Bible, each relating to God's way with men and each one introducing a new principle on which God tests men. Four dispensations are embraced in Genesis:

- The dispensation of 'Innocence', Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The dispensation ended with the fall of man and their expulsion from the garden, chs. 1-3.
- The dispensation of 'Conscience', man responsible to govern himself in light of the knowledge he had now acquired of good and evil. The dispensation ended with the earth 'corrupt before God' and divine intervention in the Flood, chs. 4-8.
- The dispensation of 'Civil Government', men invested with the authority to execute judgement. The dispensation ended with the Tower of Babel, and God intervening to confound their language, chs. 9-11.
- The dispensation of 'Promise', which began with the call of Abraham but concluded with Israel in bondage in Egypt, and God's intervention to judge the Egyptians and to deliver the children of Israel, Gen. 12 – Exod. 18.

The remaining three dispensations are 'Law', 'Grace' and 'The (Millennial) Kingdom'.

## 3. The covenants

There are several different kinds of covenant mentioned in the Bible,

but our primary concern here is with 'Divine Covenants'. While 'dispensations' describe the various ways in which God deals with and tests men through the ages, 'as He progressively works out His purpose for world history',<sup>5</sup> 'covenants' describe the terms on which men can continue in fellowship with God. The first time the word 'covenant' is found in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 6 verse 18. There are basically two kinds of covenants in the Bible, conditional and unconditional. In a conditional covenant, all parties to the covenant are responsible to fulfil their side of the promises when entering into the covenant. In human affairs, the covenant of marriage, or covenants between nations are of this character. In an unconditional covenant, its fulfilment rests on one party alone fulfilling all the promises, the other becoming the recipient of the benefits. In human affairs, an unconditional covenant is more akin to a will. There are primarily five 'Divine Covenants', the first two are found in Genesis, and both are unconditional. First, there is the covenant with Noah, 9. 1-17, and, second, the covenant with Abraham, introduced in chapter 12, ratified by blood in chapter 15, and confirmed with an oath in chapter 22. The remaining three covenants are the Mosaic, the Davidic, and the New Covenant.

## 4. Examples of typical teaching

Within the book, a number of men can be viewed as foreshadowing aspects of the person and work of Christ, amongst the most notable are Adam, Melchizedec, Isaac, and Joseph, whilst Eve, in her relationship to Adam, can be viewed as a type of the church in its relationship to Christ. Amongst others that have a 'typical significance' in regard to coming events are Enoch, Noah, and Nimrod.

## 5. Links to the book of Revelation

The comparisons between the first

and last books of the Bible are too numerous to fully mention, but here are a few simple examples:

- The creation of the heavens and earth, Gen. 1. 1.  
John saw a new heaven and a new earth, Rev. 21. 1.
- A river went out of Eden to water the garden, Gen. 2. 10.  
A river, 'proceeding out of the throne of God', Rev. 22. 1.
- The first divine 'I will' concerns a bride, Gen. 2. 18.  
The last divine 'I will' also concerns a bride, Rev. 21. 9.
- The tree of life and access denied, Gen. 2. 9; 3. 22-24.  
The tree of life and access granted, Rev. 2. 7; 22. 2, 14.
- The curse pronounced, Gen. 3. 14, 17-19.  
The curse removed, Rev. 22. 3

[Extracted from *Beginnings*, volume 1 of the Old Testament Overview series to be published by *Precious Seed Publications* later in 2016 DV.]

## Endnotes

- 1 See, for example, the creation of Adam and Eve, Matt. 19. 4-6; the Devil being a murderer from the beginning, John 8. 11; the days of Noah, Matt. 24. 7-38; the days of Lot, Luke 17. 28-32; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Matt. 8. 11.
- 2 For example: 1 Cor. 11. 8-9; 2 Cor. 11. 3; 1 Tim. 2. 13-14.
- 3 See Exod. 17. 14; 24. 4; 34. 27; Num. 33. 2; Deut. 31. 19, 24-26.
- 4 See Josh. 1. 7; 1 Kgs. 2. 3; Luke 16. 29, 31; 24. 44; 1 Cor. 9. 9.
- 5 R. E. SHOWERS, *There is a difference*, Friends of Israel Gospel Ministries, 1990, p. 30.

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# CHAPLAINCY AT LONDON'S HEATHROW AIRPORT

**London Heathrow is one of the busiest airports in the world. With 1,300 flights each day, it is a constant bustle of humanity. The numbers are huge: over 70 million passengers per year, around 140,000 staff, many 'meeters and greeters' dropping off or picking up passengers, and others who are passing through for hotels or transport links.**

While some passengers are on a routine business trip or glad to be off on holiday, for many it is a time of heightened stress as they cope with unfamiliar surroundings, time pressures, jet lag and body clock changes. Some are travelling because of bereavement, and others are refugees fleeing conflict. Flights are sometimes disrupted, bags occasionally don't arrive, passports or medication can be forgotten, and 34,000 items arrive in lost property each year. For a few of the local homeless, the airport is a warm place they hope they might be able to sleep for the night.

Beyond the human need there is also the spiritual. Wherever people are heading, they are also on life's journey. Many are rushing – concerned for their arrival somewhere on earth without giving much thought to where they will be eternally.

There has been a chaplaincy team at Heathrow for several decades, with representatives from a range of religious backgrounds. Steve currently volunteers 1-2 days per week across the five terminals and Judi (his wife) expects to become more permanently involved in the work during 2015.

The work gives the following opportunities to serve the Lord:

## Weekly Bible teaching

Each Wednesday lunchtime a group of staff from a variety of Christian backgrounds meets for prayer, fellowship and Bible study. This is often an excellent opportunity to give help from the scriptures, in keeping with 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 4 that 'God would have all . . . to come unto the knowledge of the truth'.

## Doing good

The Lord Jesus 'went about doing

By **STEPHEN BUCKERIDGE** Datchet, England

good', Acts 10. 38, and Christians are to be 'zealous of good works', Titus 2. 14. There are endless opportunities to show someone the way, identify lost items, help with awkward baggage, be an extra pair of hands for those with children, and explain what to do next for the many who are unfamiliar with a large airport. This sometimes opens the door to conversations – with those helped, or, on other occasions, with those who have been watching.

## The bereaved and suffering

Every day there are those flying to funerals, to be with dying relatives, or to receive medical treatment who can be shown sensitivity and care. People in these situations sometimes want to talk about eternal things.

## Deaths and emergencies

There is always a chaplain on call to attend sudden deaths that take place during a flight or at the airport. Chaplains mingle with passengers and relatives on the rare occasions that major emergencies take place.

## Staff support

Staff facing redundancy, stressful situations, bereavement, or domestic crisis appreciate a caring conversation. With believers, who often find shift work interferes with regular fellowship, there is an opportunity to encourage them in their personal walk with God, and to discuss workplace issues from a biblical perspective.

## Christian fellowship

Whether it is accompanying a missionary through the airport or a 'coincidental' meeting of a fellow believer, fellowship in Christ is always

precious. 'Let us not be weary in well doing . . . as we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men especially them of the household of faith', Gal. 6. 10.

The following are a few examples of the above in practice.

- I spoke with a man by one of the various prayer rooms located around the airport who asked if he could take a New Testament with him to read on his long-haul flight.
- A young lady who was going abroad to do some charity work was noticed reading her Bible. She asked for help as to how to go about reading the Bible systematically.
- Having sat down in arrivals for a short rest, I was approached by a Christian – who had an hour to wait for a passenger they were meeting – asking for help in dealing with sin in their life.
- A lady asked to be prayed with as she journeyed to be with her dying mother.
- One bank holiday I met a man with a complicated domestic situation and a history of suicide attempts. He said, 'I'm not sure what would have happened if I hadn't met you'. He was very grateful for a cup of tea and a Bible to read while arrangements were made for a homeless charity to collect him.
- A lady arriving off a long-haul flight, undertaken to say goodbye to a terminally ill aunt, received a phone call to say her father would not be collecting her as he had died. Time was spent with her while she informed relatives and made alternative travel arrangements. During a discussion on spiritual things, she remarked that a Christian in her workplace had recently said similar things.

The work is about being in the right place at the right time and saying the right thing – for which we are completely dependent on the Lord. Please pray that it would be for the lasting good of souls and for the glory of God. If anyone would like help, or hospitality, in connection with flying from or passing through Heathrow, Judi & Steve can be contacted on 07770 939478 or at [judisteve@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:judisteve@yahoo.co.uk).





## Introduction

In the previous two articles we looked at those earthquakes that were of major scriptural importance in the past – at the Flood, at Sinai with the giving of the law, at the crucifixion, and finally at the resurrection. This article focuses on those earthquakes still future, associated with the tribulation period, and the coming of Christ the King in power and great glory to Olivet.

The earthquakes under consideration are those associated with:

- the sixth seal, Rev. 6. 12-15;
- the seventh seal, Rev. 8. 5;
- the sixth trumpet, the resurrection of the two witnesses, and the slaying of the seven thousand men, Rev. 11. 13;
- the seventh trumpet Rev. 11. 19; the seventh bowl, the greatest earthquake ever to be experienced on Earth, Rev. 16. 18.

These five earthquakes take place in the tribulation period or Daniel's seventieth week. Three of them are termed 'great' earthquakes.<sup>1</sup>

- the coming of the King to Olivet in power and great glory and *after* the five earthquakes listed above, Zech. 14. 4-6.

## Literal or symbolic?

The earthquakes studied so far were obviously real, physical, literal events. What about those earthquakes

prophesied for coming days? Are they literal earthquakes or are they to be interpreted symbolically of some political or moral event, or upheaval on Earth? The present writer believes that they are real, literal earthquakes, for the following reasons:

- 1 When studying scripture, a sound principle to adopt is that if the literal interpretation makes sense then accept it as literal. We can apply this principle from Genesis chapter 1 regarding the literal twenty-four hour days of creation.
- 2 When symbolic language is used, it is normally obvious, e.g., 'a lamb as it had been slain', Rev. 5. 6 – referring to the Lord Jesus.
- 3 Elsewhere in scripture,<sup>2</sup> earthquakes are obviously literal by the accompanying description. They are never used other than in the literal sense. Similarly, scriptural references to sun, moon, and stars are invariably mentioned in the literal sense, except again where it is obvious, e.g., Mal. 4. 2.
- 4 Symbolic interpretation of earthquakes weakens the context, and is against the plain language of what is intended to be conveyed to the reader.

## Tribulation earthquakes

- **The earthquake associated with the sixth seal, Rev. 6. 12-16;**

In the tribulation period God will again intervene on Earth via direct physical manifestations. Haggai had prophesied of future earthquakes for this period,<sup>3</sup> and the Lord in the Olivet discourse had clearly indicated their association with future events.<sup>4</sup> We notice in verses 14-15 the worldwide effects of this earthquake: 'every mountain and

# EARTHQUAKE

By **JEFF BROWN** Cardiff, Wales

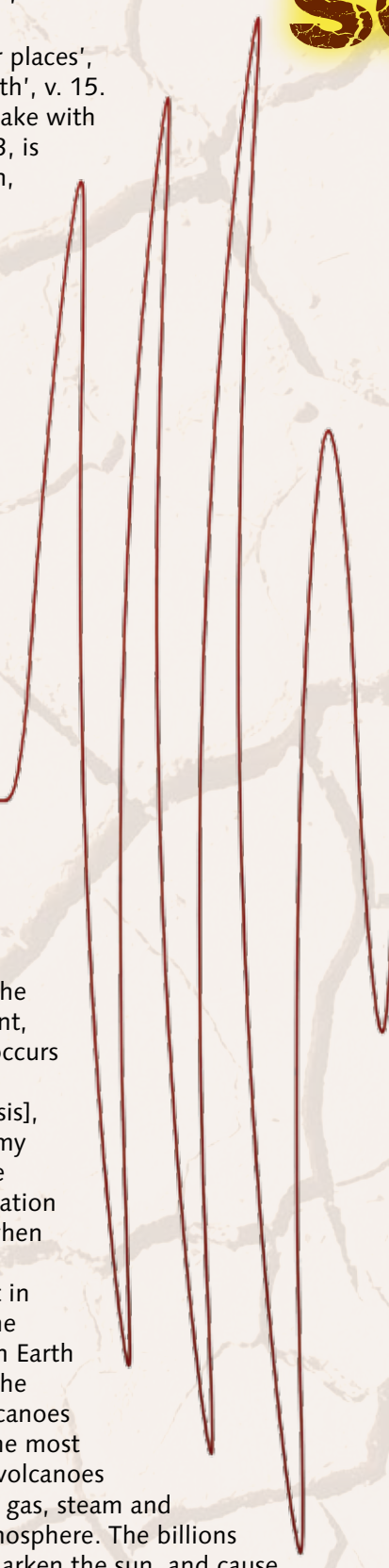
island were moved out of their places', v. 14; 'and the kings of the Earth', v. 15. The association of this earthquake with sun, moon, and stars, vv. 12-13, is interesting – the blackened sun, the moon becoming as blood, the stars falling, etc.

Bible expositors are divided as to whether the tribulation earthquakes are literal or symbolic. However, when it comes to 'the sun became black as sackcloth of hair', and 'the moon became as blood', then most commentators think that the language is figurative or metaphorical here – the sun and the moon are not actually changed, but *appear* to be changed. This may well be the case, but we cannot rule out literal, actual darkness, and literal,

actual blood. Both viewpoints need to be looked at in a little more detail.

## Figurative

Looking at verses 12-14 from the figurative (non-literal) viewpoint, we notice the expression 'as' occurs four times – 'the sun became black as sackcloth' [my emphasis], 'the moon became as blood' [my emphasis]. The inclusion of the word 'as' can mean 'the application of a description to an object when it is not literally applicable' or, alternatively, 'what the subject in view looks like to the eye of the observer'. Present processes on Earth could help us in this respect. The most violent and powerful volcanoes on Earth are associated with the most powerful earthquakes – these volcanoes ejecting billions of tons of ash, gas, steam and pyroclasts<sup>5</sup> into the Earth's atmosphere. The billions of ash particles ejected often darken the sun, and cause discolouration (a deep red) of the moon. Mount St. Helens in Washington state, USA, erupted in May 1980; the resultant ash cloud took three days to cover vast areas of the country, and then a further twelve days to encircle the entire Earth. For a time after the blast, daylight was turned into darkness in parts of Washington state. Later, bright purple-red sunsets were experienced. Total lunar







# WAKES OF CRIPTURE (3)

eclipses or 'blood moons', when the moon is fully covered by the Earth's shadow, can have the same effect.

## Literal

Looking at verses 12-14 from the literal viewpoint, we make the following observations. The events before us in Revelation chapter 6 seem to be the ultimate fulfilment of Joel's prophesy, Joel 2. 30-31, and are quoted by Peter in Acts, 2. 19-20. Both Joel and Peter state clearly, 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood' – not as darkness and not as blood. This could suggest literal darkness, and literal blood. The sun had been controlled before,<sup>6</sup> and God had also caused water to be turned into literal blood.<sup>7</sup> Other passages show that God will do it again, Rev. 8. 8, 11. 6, and note the physical results, Rev. 8. 9, with the third part of the creatures in the sea that had life, dying – surely not the result of an appearance of blood. Thus, both a figurative or a literal interpretation is possible for the verses under consideration. We can seek to explain these events by acknowledging that God can use any natural phenomena to achieve His purposes. However, God does not need to use anything other than

His own power. He has done it before and He can do it again. He needs no aid, or 'natural' processes.

## Resultant effects

The other associated events in verses 13-14, the falling stars and the heaven departing in a scroll, are clearly a mirror of Isaiah's description referring to the day of the Lord, 31. 4. How will this great earthquake impact on the population of the day? Surely sackcloth, darkening and blood would imply mourning and death. Earth's population at this time will be terrified as death looms before them, yet, later, we read of them continuing to harden their hearts, Rev. 9. 20-21. As we consider these soon-coming prophetic events, what effect does it have upon us as believers? Surely this should cement our absolute confidence in the omniscient, omnipotent God, and bow our hearts in thankfulness that we, because of divine grace, will never experience what is under consideration here – we will have already been raptured!

## ● The earthquake associated with the seventh seal, Rev. 8. 5.

This second tribulation earthquake is associated with voices, thundering, and lightning. These three phenomena were, incidentally, seen in Exodus chapter 19, with the great earthquake at Sinai! They were also seen together marking the opening of the seals, Rev. 4. 5, but now, at the opening of the seventh and final seal, an earthquake is added! The universal disorder which the thundering, voices, lightning, and the earthquake describe is only a foreshadowing of what is to come.

The sounding of the trumpets by the angels in what follows in chapters 8-11, shows the development in more detail of what is to take place on Earth. Actually, the blowing of these trumpets will herald the most shattering, physical, literal upheavals on planet Earth since the time of the Flood! Men will imagine that the end of all things has come! Surely things can't get worse? They can, and they will.

As we look at each of these earthquake events and what's associated with them, whether famines, diseases, pestilences, plagues, weather changes, etc., we see that men will still be duped into 'believing the lie'. Reasonable and well-argued explanations will be put forward by men of academic and intellectual standing to account for what is happening. Scientific explanations and historical parallels, 'these things have always occurred in history', will abound. Yet, as we continue through our study, by the time we come to the greatest earthquake ever to be recorded on Earth, Rev. 16. 18, men will be in no doubt – the omnipotent God is behind it all, and He is in control.

## ● The earthquake associated with the sixth trumpet, Rev. 11. 13.

This is the third tribulation earthquake mentioned, and is very closely connected with the resurrected two witnesses and the slaying of the seven thousand men. The combination of all these events at the same time, 'the same hour', v. 13, and the mention of specific details, such as 'tenth part of the city', and 'seven thousand

men', is further evidence of their literal nature. Just as the earthquake at Calvary only opened the graves of the saints, and no other graves, so this earthquake also had a specific and measured effect, in that those slaughtered were specifically known, lit. 'seven thousand names of men'. What we have before us is a testimony not only to the immeasurable power of God, but also to His controlling every detail and every specific effect.

The seven thousand men that were slain stand in obvious contrast with the seven thousand witnesses at the time of Elijah, 1 Kgs. 19. 18. In that Old Testament day God's witnesses were preserved, even though Elijah thought he was alone. In this coming tribulation day, these evil men will be destroyed. Be assured, fellow believer, our God knows those who are His own, Nahum 1. 7, and those who are not! This thought should be both a great comfort, and a great challenge to us all. Men were affected by this earthquake, and there now seems to be a recognition that God is behind all these happenings. Recognition and repentance, however, are two entirely different things!

## Endnotes

- 1 Rev. 6. 12; 11. 13; 16. 18.
- 2 1 Kgs. 19. 11; Isa. 29. 6; Amos 1. 1; Zech. 14. 4-5.
- 3 Hag. 2. 6.
- 4 Matt. 24. 7.
- 5 Dense clouds of superheated gases and volcanic fragments, moving at about 100km/hr.
- 6 Matt. 27. 45; Josh. 10. 10-14; 2 Kgs. 20. 9-11; Hab. 3. 11.
- 7 Exod. 4. 9, and especially Exod. 7. 17-21.





The word of God can be wonderfully dismissive. In Luke chapter 3 we have a long list of very impressive names and titles which ends with 'Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests'. One would have thought the word of God would have come to these high priests, but it passed them by. We do not read a great deal of Annas in scripture, but his son-in-law, Caiaphas, leaves behind him a record of wickedness and intrigue. His *position* was to share the high priest's office with his father-in-law, Annas, who was popular with the Jews but not with the Romans. His *power* over the people was virtually absolute, the high priest's authority extending into every aspect of their lives. His *privilege* was to be high priest during the life of our Lord. Caiaphas had an unprecedented opportunity to hear, evaluate, believe and accept the Son of God.

### He prophesied

The religious authorities of our Lord's day did not like Him. He undermined their authority, He exposed their hypocrisy, and they were jealous of His popularity. The last straw was the spectacular miracle of raising Lazarus from the grave. The Sanhedrin gathered together. 'What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation', John 11. 47-48. The Council feared the people rising up in rebellion against Rome, with this Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. It is at this point that Caiaphas intervened. 'You know nothing at all', said he, dismissively. He then put to them a solution that, until he uttered it, had been unthinkable: 'It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not', v. 50. Caiaphas was prepared to contemplate executing Jesus of Nazareth so that He did not become a political figurehead.

# CHARACTERS AROUND THE Caiaphas who sa

He had failed to pick up on our Lord's insistence that 'My kingdom is not of this world', 18. 36. Plans had now to be put into place to arrest and eliminate this 'imposter'. Caiaphas' words, however, are described by the Holy Spirit as being prophetic. 'This spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad', 11. 52-53. This is yet another instance of the Spirit of God prompting an unbeliever to speak words the implication of which he did not understand. Our Lord was not going to be made a political sacrifice for the Jewish nation, but rather a spiritual one for both Jews and Gentiles, so that all 'the children of God' should be gathered together to God and by God.

### He plotted

The direct result of Caiaphas' words was that 'from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death'. The chief priests immediately sent out the message, 'if any man knew where he [Jesus] were, he should show it, that they might take him', v. 57. The command had already been given that any who believed in Jesus would be put out of the synagogue, 9. 22; 12. 42. Knowing Jesus would be in Jerusalem for the Passover, the chief priests sought again how they might put Him to death. Yet still they feared the people. 'Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him [Jesus] unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money', Luke 22. 3-5. Caiaphas had, at last, the breakthrough he wanted.

It was, therefore, in the darkness and loneliness of the Garden of Gethsemane that our Lord was arrested, as though He were a common thief. With great dignity, He said to them, 'When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness', v. 53. Our Lord was initially taken to the house of Annas and then to Caiaphas, John 18. 14. Our Lord is now in vicious and unscrupulous hands.

Caiaphas proceeds to show supreme contempt for Jewish law in his attempt to lay upon our Lord the charge of blasphemy. Rogues had already been assembled, who were prepared to lie about this Jesus of Nazareth. This seems to be the only nod Caiaphas made to Jewish law, which insisted a man could be condemned only in the mouth of two or three witnesses. The tragedy is not that they found rogues prepared to do this, but that the chief priests were prepared to undermine justice by bribing witnesses. When they failed to get these witnesses to agree, Caiaphas put our Lord upon oath in order to make Him condemn Himself. Caiaphas then tore his clothes, something the high priest should never have done, Lev. 21. 10. He permitted the prisoner to be mocked, spat upon, and struck by his own guard. All this took place at night, in secrecy, though the law of the Jews did not permit a man to be tried at night. Their law was also insistent that a man could not be condemned to death in the same sitting of the court that found him guilty. Yet Caiaphas condemned our Lord the very same night in which







# CRUCIFIXION 2

## crucified him

this unlawful trial took place. Then, to add injustice to injustice, Caiaphas knew that Pilate would not execute a Jew on a charge of blasphemy, so the charge was changed. When Pilate asked, 'What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor [an evil-doer], we would not have delivered him up unto thee', John 18. 29-30. 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar', Luke 23. 2. When Pilate says, 'I find no fault in this man', the chief priests were the more fierce saying, 'He stirreth up the people', v. 5, and when Pilate is determined to let Jesus go their response is this, 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend', John 19. 12. Caiaphas has had his way. Jesus of Nazareth is going to be crucified by Roman authorities. All this intrigue, deceit, flouting of Jewish law, and political pressure was planned and plotted by one who should have been a man of God before the people.

### He persisted

There can be little doubt that Caiaphas was delighted to see Jesus of Nazareth dead and on a cross, for 'cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree', Gal. 3. 13. No doubt he felt that the existing followers of Jesus of Nazareth would disappear, and now He would gain no new ones. Yet Caiaphas remembered what our Lord's disciples had not. 'The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead', Matt. 27. 62-64. On the first day of the week, the report came to Caiaphas that there had been a disturbance at the tomb, that the guards claimed to have seen angels, and the body of Jesus Christ had disappeared. 'When they were

assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they [these elders] gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught', 28. 12-15. Once again, Caiaphas, the high priest, bribes witnesses to tell lies. He is still determined that he will not believe on this Jesus of Nazareth.

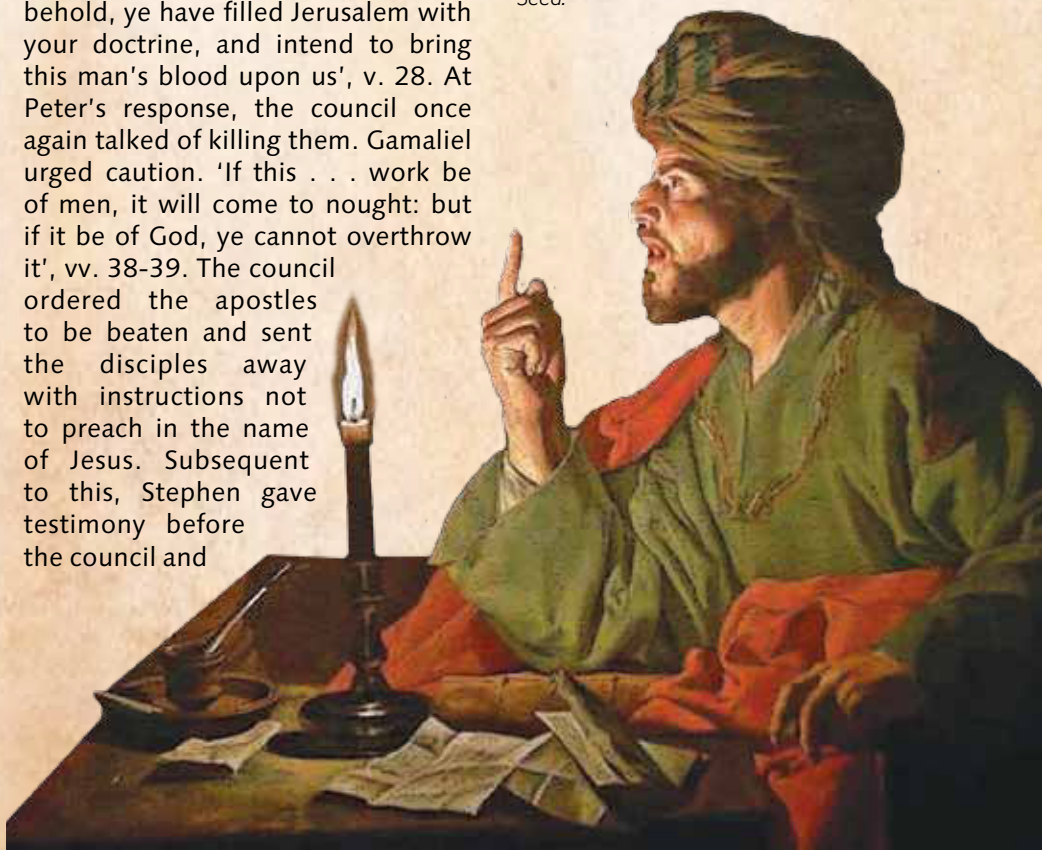
### He persecuted

One would have thought the resurrection would have made Caiaphas and his band of priests to think. Not a bit of it! When the disciples started preaching in the name of Jesus Christ, they were arrested. 'Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him . . . and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison', Acts 5. 17-18. The following day, the 'high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought', v. 21. The apostles were brought before the council, and 'the high priest [Caiaphas] asked them saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us', v. 28. At Peter's response, the council once again talked of killing them. Gamaliel urged caution. 'If this . . . work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it', vv. 38-39. The council ordered the apostles to be beaten and sent the disciples away with instructions not to preach in the name of Jesus. Subsequent to this, Stephen gave testimony before the council and

was promptly stoned to death. Then, Saul of Tarsus sought and was given letters from the high priest, Caiaphas himself, giving him authority to go to Damascus and arrest disciples of Jesus to bring them bound to Jerusalem. Caiaphas is as determined as ever that he will not believe in Jesus of Nazareth.

We can but grieve for our Lord that he should have faced such a wicked man as Caiaphas, who was in what was supposedly such a spiritual position. Oh what contradiction of sinners against Himself our Lord had to endure! It also reminds us of a common, yet very true expression, that there are none so blind as those that *will not* see. Here was a man who was given every opportunity to hear the teachings of Jesus Christ, witness His divine authority, His power in working miracles, His astonishing death that even moved a hardened centurion, and His resurrection from the dead. Let us thank God for the privileges we have of hearing and reading the word of God, let us be careful that we do not easily dismiss Jesus Christ ourselves, and that what we have heard and learned of Him is, indeed, mixed with faith. It never seemed to be with Caiaphas.

**IAN REES** is a publications editor of *Precious Seed*.







This article is part of an ongoing study in which the writer's intention is to look at each phrase and statement in the letter and to glean a simple understanding of what Paul was writing to Titus about. There will not be a lengthy introduction to each article so it would be advantageous to read the previous article, either in the printed edition of the magazine or online via [www.preciousseed.org](http://www.preciousseed.org).

### **'In hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began', v. 2.**

The truth of this verse is tremendous. The first thing that grabs my attention is this: God cannot lie. Paul is writing to a man who is working for God on an island among people who have the reputation for being habitual liars. You could not believe a word they said, at times. Local residents would always be watching their backs, wondering if they could really trust someone; where did the truth really lie in any statement? Paul, however, had come with a message from the true and living God who was incapable of lying. He is truth; He speaks truth; His promises never fail, and He is to be trusted, full stop, no further discussion, 2 Cor. 1. 18. It is so important to really understand that part of the character of God because, if we don't, we will have no foundation for our faith, as it all depends on the word of God, i.e., on what God says!

In the modern world, the word 'hope' indicates the possibility that something might, or might not, happen. As a biblical phrase, it means some event or action, still in the future, which will *definitely* take place. Here are some examples from other passages in scripture where the idea of hope is expressed:

- In Romans chapter 8 verses 23-25 Paul describes the hope of the Christian as we wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus. In that day there will be no more suffering. This 'hope' is something we wait for patiently and have a taste of through the



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work of the Spirit in our lives today.

- 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 describes a similar idea. Peter says that we have been born again 'to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'. So our new birth not only brought about the salvation of our souls, 1 Pet. 1. 9, but it gave us a living hope. Here, again, hope is not just a vague possibility, but, on the basis that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, all saints have the hope of being physically in His presence and enjoying the fullness of salvation.

Eternal life is, therefore, described in this letter to Titus as a hope. It was promised before the world began and Paul has been called to preach about this hope, to live with the knowledge that it was promised, it has been provided in Christ, and it will come to its ultimate fulfilment in a day still to come.

### **'But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed to me according to the commandment of God our Saviour', v. 3.**

We have in verses 2 and 3 of this chapter a triplet of past, present, and future. The promise of eternal life was made in the past, the complete fulfilment and application of eternal life will be fully seen in the future, and the announcement of the availability of salvation is being made in the present.

### **God's timing**

The timing of the commencement of gospel preaching was not accidental but at just the right time in God's calendar. Our God is very precise when it comes to His timing. Galatians chapter 4 verse 4 states, 'when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son'.

When the Lord Jesus started to preach the gospel of the Kingdom in Galilee, Mark records that He said, 'the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand'. It is an interesting study to look at the precise timing of biblical events and to notice the divine attention to detail.

### **'God's communication of the message'**

When someone is communicating a message, they would be wise to decide how they will communicate, i.e., the terms they will use to communicate effectively, to fix the time when the information is to be made public, and to define the method of communication that will be used to get the message out. As the message of salvation belongs to God, it is appropriate that He was very particular about all of the details that I have described above. Among other passages, Romans chapter 1 verse 1 describes the message of salvation as 'the gospel of God'. The terms of the gospel message are very clearly defined in many of the New Testament writings, but, in particular, in the Epistle to the Romans. The Lord Jesus commissioned His disciples to evangelize and spread the message of the gospel personally.<sup>1</sup> So, in this verse, Paul is saying that God carefully chose His time to launch the message of 'eternal life' to a godless world. As the announcement was so important, God handpicked specific men to spread the word. Indeed, Paul looks on his calling to this task as a commission; he was being entrusted with the message of 'the Almighty' so that mankind would clearly understand that God is a saving God.

### **'To Titus, mine own son after the common faith', v. 4a**

This is not the first time we come across Titus in the scriptures.





# Greeting from Titus

(2)

Although he is not specifically mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, it would appear that he was a travelling companion of the apostle and that he had been sent to work for Paul on a number of occasions.<sup>2</sup> This verse could be better translated 'my genuine child in our common faith', which would possibly indicate that Paul played a part in pointing Titus to the Lord. It definitely teaches us that Titus was showing by his life that he was a child of God.

**A vital truth:** It is important that believers show clear evidence of their salvation by the way that they live.

The other vital truth in this verse is that the common thread that links all believers is their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that this word has been translated in some places 'unclean' or 'unholy', the thought here is not of a derogatory term but the idea that we all share in this faith, it is the mutual experience of all true believers. Jude makes a similar point when he talks about 'common salvation', Jude 3. In Acts, Luke uses the same word when he describes the fact that believers shared their possessions.

**Key principle for Bible study –** When trying to work out what a word means, take into account the setting (context), as well as the literal meaning of the word.

**'Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour', v. 4b**

This method of opening a letter is a lot more formal than we would be used to currently. When we take time to consider the implications of the greeting, the truth of them should really thrill

us. Paul is reminding Titus that he (like every saved individual) is the recipient of the grace of God, the mercy of God, and the peace of God. Reread this verse: 'to Titus . . . grace, mercy and peace'. It's a personal wish list from the apostle to Titus. He knows that this is the happy privilege of every believer but he wants Titus to know it, to

experience it, to enjoy it, to rejoice in these spiritual blessings.

**Grace** – showering on Titus the good things of God. A limitless resource of spiritual blessings to be enjoyed in a limited sense now (the limit being due to our ability to grasp what is going on). However, Titus can soak up the prospect of eternally basking in the grace of God while, at the moment, he can hardly imagine the wonders of what is in store for him (with all of us).

**Mercy** – to never face what we really deserved. To be free

from guilt! To be acceptable in the sight of the Father and the Son! What a glorious truth! This mercy is effective because we are acceptable to the Father because of the saving work of the Son. The mercy is 'from God the Father' (just as the grace is) because we had transgressed the laws of God and had no standing with Him. But the work of the Son is to make us accepted in 'the beloved', Eph. 1. 6. What a term mercy is!

**Peace** – the ultimate outcome of the preceding truths.

The grace and mercy of the Father and the Son has resulted in peace for us.

Peace personally, but, more importantly, peace in a legal sense. We were at a distance from God, and had no open lines of communication. In a real sense, we were at war with God; but the blood of the cross made peace and we, at the point of salvation, entered into the good of it.

We now have a relationship with God; we can call Him Father. The danger has passed; we have a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not skim over these expressions; they are rich in truths that describe the essence of what happened when we trusted Christ.

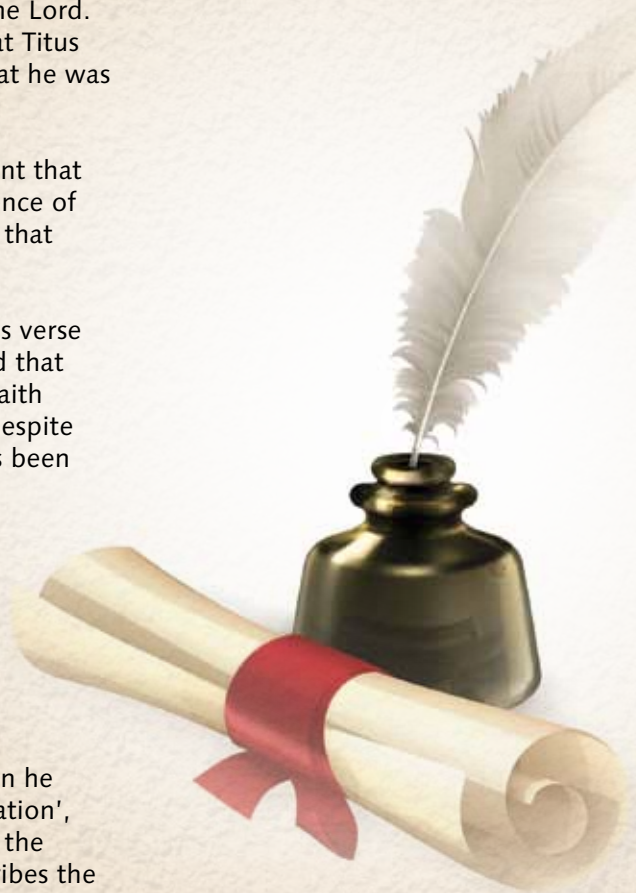
In these early verses of the Epistle Paul has bared his heart by telling us what God has called him to do – preach the gospel for 'the faith of God's elect', and teach the word so that believers will be godly in their behaviour. He has traced the purposes of God back to before 'the world began' and demonstrated the perfect timing of God in 'manifesting his word through preaching'. The apostle has confirmed that faith is common to all believers, just as salvation is common to all believers in Jude verse 3.

I hope that the truth of the early verses of this letter will thrill you as much as they have thrilled me.

## Endnotes

1 Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 15.

2 From the references to him in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and 2 Timothy.







As we consider the Lord's 'farewell ministry' to His own, we note that first He talked to *them* about many subjects, including the truth about His Father, chapters 13-16, before, in chapter 17, He speaks to the Father *about them* and all who will come to believe on Him.

Farewell addresses are not easy.<sup>1</sup> The great difference between all others and our Lord's is that He not only *spoke* of certain truths, but He actually *demonstrated* the truth to them. His words and actions harmonized.

Chapter 12 closed with a reference to the Lord from the 'servant passage' of Isaiah chapter 53, where God said, 'Behold my servant'. When we step into John chapter 13, the first thing we observe is Jesus doing the lowly work of 'a servant' – washing the feet of His disciples. So we will consider the sovereignty of the servant and His service.

First, in an overview of verses 1-35, the Lord is seen in a four-fold relationship to:

- 1 His Father: here we learn the lesson of humility, vv. 1-5;
- 2 Simon Peter: here we discover the secret of holiness, vv. 6-11;
- 3 The other disciples: here we find the key to happiness, vv. 12-17;
- 4 Judas Iscariot: here we view the awful fact of hypocrisy, vv. 18-30.

In these thirty verses, three men are prominent: John, Peter, and Judas. Three conditions are seen: pride, presumption and perversion. The Lord, in addition to His words, demonstrates three actions: laying aside of His garments, washing the disciples' feet, passing the sop to Judas.

The details of our Lord's movements in the last week are not quite clear. We know He arrived in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and cleansed the Temple on the Monday. Tuesday appears to have been a day of conflict and controversy with the religious leaders as they sought to trip Him up and so get evidence to arrest Him. Wednesday was a problem day, some

# The Lord's Upper

By **DAVID J. WILLIAMS** Penycraig, Wales

telling us it was a day of rest, and others believing that He met with His own in the Upper-Room. On Thursday He was taken to Calvary to die.

We shall focus first on the discourse at the table.

## Jesus' relationship to his Father – humility, vv. 1-5

The context makes clear that Jesus and the disciples are together in the upper-room, and were seated, reclining, at the table. The first three verses form the background to all that follows.



## Jesus and His future

The main thought in this opening section is what Jesus knew. The very first words are: 'Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father'. This chapter speaks three times of the perfect knowledge of Christ. John, more than any other, speaks of 'His hour', emphasizing the fact that Jesus lived by a 'heavenly timetable' as He did the Father's will.<sup>2</sup>

That hour had been present in His thoughts, not only from eternity, but from the very beginning of His ministry. He spoke of it first to His mother, 'mine hour is not yet come', 2. 4. As Calvary loomed closer He said: 'what shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour', 12. 27. Jesus was the only man in all history that was never taken by surprise! He knew the precise moment of each event.

That dreadful hour had now come in which He would, through death, resurrection and ascension, return to the Father, and leave 'this world'. He was going home, and, like a dove returning to its nest, He would return to the Father's home. He knew that suffering lay ahead for Him, suffering on a scale that no other ever knew, but, instead of thinking of Himself, Jesus thought of others, especially these favoured men. Before He did anything for them, we are told just how much He thought of them.

## Jesus and His feelings

Two precious thoughts are here: (a) 'His own'; (b) 'which were in the world'. Consider the second thought first: (b) soon He would be out of this world, with His Father, but they would be left in the world. He knew the world in which they would be left was a wicked, hostile place, and the days ahead were going to be extremely hard. Soon the world would show its true colours, and they would experience its hatred. Yet, from His place in the Father's presence, they would be assured of His love to sustain and strengthen them. (a) Whatever faults they had, and they had many, and however many times they had been faithless, He still called them 'His own'. They would never be anything else – they belonged to Him.<sup>3</sup> We all know the joy and delight of calling something or someone our own. That joy belonged also to our Lord.

We are also told that 'having loved . . . he loved them unto the end'. The RV states 'unto the uttermost', suggesting 'to the furthest extent of their need', to the very end in time. In terms of His willingness, readiness, and ability to save and serve them, His love knew no bounds. None will ever be able to plumb the depth, or measure the immensity, of His love. There is no reason why He should have ever set His love upon us, but He did, and He did so when we were so utterly unlovely and unlovable.





# Room Ministry (1)

The wonder of His love for us is that before Him lay the cross with its unspeakable suffering and pain and its unimaginable horrors. Beyond that was the exquisite joy and bliss of going back to His Father – yet nothing turned His thoughts away from 'His own'. They took pride of place in His heart. It was for them, and us, that He came into the world, and now He was going to Calvary to die. His love for them is an everlasting love. Equally, there will never be a time when we will not be able to say 'the Son of God who loved me'.

## Jesus and His foe, v 2

At this point John inserts a word about Judas Iscariot. The words of verse 2 really read 'supper being', i.e., it was still going on, it had not ended. Here, John tells us 'the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him'. The KJV is not really strong enough – the devil had already come and entered into the heart of Judas, and originated the whole plan of handing over the Lord Jesus, Luke 22. 3. It was not just the thought or desire; the devil took possession of the man.

How it must have grieved the Lord to have a traitor at the table, pretending to the others that he was one of them, while all the while plotting the betrayal of God's Son.

## Jesus and His fullness, v. 3

What amazing words in this verse! Our Lord was conscious of His destiny and greatness, yet soon He will condescend to do the menial work of a common household slave.

Jesus knew where He was going, and what He had been entrusted with, yet not one of those disciples was humble enough to wash his Master's feet. One has rightly said that 'knowledge determines actions' and that is certainly the case here: what Jesus knew, vv. 1-3, determined what Jesus did, vv. 4-5.

When we read, 'He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garment; and took a towel, and girded himself', the whole emphasis is on 'He', i.e., Jesus in the full consciousness of His greatness, majesty and relationship to God His Father, performed this menial task. He had watched and waited, and, knowing that the feet of His guests had not been washed, He assumed the guise of a household slave and moved to do that lowly work.

Luke and John give an account of the Upper-Room ministry of the Lord Jesus. Both give emphasis to a particular feature of the Lord's life, e.g., Luke speaks of the Lord's



moral and spiritual greatness, Luke 22 – no-one is greater than He. John, however, speaks of the Lord's moral and spiritual humility, and, in chapter 13, he shows just how Jesus demonstrated humility.

## What lessons can we learn?

His action was reminiscent of His coming into the world. 'He laid aside His garment'. What amazing condescension, reminding us beautifully, and so graphically, of that stoop He took when He came into this world, Phil. 2. 5-8. He came from the throne of heaven to a woman's womb, from the pinnacle of glory to a poor man's home, from the worship and service of untold millions of angelic beings to a despised village with an evil reputation, to be rejected, vilified, and shamed and then crucified by the very creatures He had made. The hymn-writer expresses it so beautifully:

*Meekness and majesty  
– manhood and deity,  
In perfect harmony  
– the man who is God:  
Lord of eternity – dwells in humanity,  
Kneels in humility  
– and washes our feet.*

His action rebuked the selfishness and pride of the disciples. They were disputing about which of them should be the greatest, Luke 22. 24-30. They had their sights set on position, pride of place, and greatness, so they failed to see the basin and towel. Jesus must have shocked them as they watched Him rise from the supper-table and attire Himself like a slave. Sadly, among the Lord's people, even today, there still exists the desire to be 'the greatest' – and we forget, the greatest of all has been here on earth and became the lowly slave.

His action is a reminder of our responsibility. This action by our Lord was not just an example of spiritual humility, it was an exposition of practical humility shown in service. The ministry of 'feet-washing' has become a phrase that stands for all kinds of Christ-like acts of love and kindness that we do for other believers, unbelievers not excluded. The only other reference to this is in 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 10, where Paul speaks of the godly, spiritual character of certain widows, who practically helped fellow saints.

What Jesus did that night in serving His own, was not a 'one off' action. The girding for service speaks of a work that He still continues to do for us in the heavenly sanctuary. How precious to know that He, our blessed Lord, is going to minister to our eternal happiness and enjoyment. May the Lord help us to be more like Him in our treatment of fellow believers! No task too menial, no service too great, no saint too unworthy!

## Endnotes

- 1 There are a few of them in scripture, e.g., Moses, Deut. 31-33; Joshua, Josh. 23-24; Paul, Acts 20.
- 2 See 2. 4; 7. 30; 8. 20; 12. 23; 13. 1; 17. 1.
- 3 Paul wrote: 'ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price', 1 Cor. 6. 19.



Although the words of Psalm 68 verse 31 may have a prophetic application, God is blessing Ethiopia today as never before. This is all the more significant when one contemplates the position of Ethiopia in North East Africa. It has been rightly called 'an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam' and this has become more apparent with the increase of militant Islam in the region.

Assembly work in Ethiopia began when John and Martie Flynn arrived there in 1952, and, after a short time learning the Amharic language in Addis Ababa, they commenced a work in a town called Batie, about 400 kilometres north of the capital in a province called Wollo almost completely controlled by Islam. Conditions at that time were very primitive, but the Lord blessed the work and some souls were converted. In time, others joined them in the work, including Bert and Mary Lightbody, Monica Ramsay, Willie and Nan Milliken, John and Valerie McQuoid, Dick and Jan Hayward, Ron and Marie Cunningham, Bill and Kath Taylor, and some others who helped in a variety of ways to commence a clinic and a school. The history of the work and its present day circumstances are outlined in the following paragraphs, which have been collated into time periods, each with its own challenges and blessings. The hand of God has been evident here in a particular way, as seen in the significant growth in the assembly movement in the country.

### 1969-1978

Robert and Sheena Revie arrived in Ethiopia in 1969 and were initially involved in learning Amharic under the expert teaching of John McQuoid. They then moved to Addis Ababa with the McQuoids, who felt exercised to commence a work in the capital. Soon, a number of people started coming to the home that the McQuoids had rented, and some were converted and a small assembly was formed. After completing language study, the Revies remained in Addis when the McQuoids returned to the UK on furlough. Robert was involved in Bible studies with nurses in two hospitals and also in outreach work, until returning to the UK on furlough in June 1973.

On returning to Ethiopia in 1974

# 'Ethiopia will quickly stretch

the Revies joined Ron and Maria Cunningham, who had just commenced a new work in a village called Dagan about 20 kilometres from Batie. They became involved with them in medical work, and in this way sought to build bridges with the community that was almost 98% Muslim. Soon afterward, Mary Breeze joined the group and established a six grade school in Dagan and, at about the same time, Eileen Semple joined the Flynns in Batie to help in the school there.

In 1973 a serious famine affected Wollo province. Bill and Kath Taylor were involved extensively in helping those who had been placed in camps set up in different parts of the province. At about the same time, there was a coup when Emperor Haile Selassie, who had been in power since 1930, was deposed. This introduced a reign of terror from a new communist government and they made missionary work almost impossible until, in 1978, all the missionaries had to leave the country.

At that time there were three small struggling assemblies in Addis, Batie, and Dagan with about 100 believers in total. Shortly after the missionaries left Ethiopia all the halls were taken over and the believers went underground, meeting in secret in one of the believer's homes. They were only able to meet in groups of five as any more would have been classed as an unlawful assembly.

During this time there was very little contact with the believers but it became clear later that some of them had been badly treated, with some being imprisoned. However, the communist regime was short-lived and, as a result of the fall of communism in Russia in 1989, there was a domino effect in other countries and the Ethiopian communist government was overthrown in 1991.

Robert and Sheena returned to Ethiopia in 1993 to find that the small assembly in Addis Ababa of around thirty believers which they left in 1978 had grown to ten times its size, and they had to have two services on the Lord's day in their relatively small hall, which was one of the first church buildings to be returned to the assembly in the capital. This was followed by the return of the Batie hall a

year later, although it was in a very poor state of repair. Sadly, the assembly at Dagan had ceased to function and the hall was never returned.

### 1993-2014

The Revies have visited Ethiopia for three months every year during the last twenty years, mainly to give Bible teaching to the first generation church. During this period they have seen an encouraging development in the Lord's work there. In 1993 there were eight assemblies and six evangelists, all locally supported. This process has been maintained over the past twenty years, and there are now over 200 assemblies and over 200 evangelists who are supported by their commending assemblies. Many of them are 'tent evangelists', as Paul was, supplementing their income through work on small plots of land, particularly in the countryside. We thank God for the many who have come to Christ and for the many assemblies that have been planted during this time.

### Children's work

Around 1996, God raised up among the assemblies an evangelist with a great burden for work among children. At this time, unlike the earlier years, the assemblies had little in the way of Sunday Schools. Digafe spoke to his home assembly in Akaki and said he would like to engage solely in work among children. Although this was new to them, they finally agreed to his request. Soon there were Sunday Schools in all the assemblies in the capital and in the countryside.

One Saturday morning Digafe decided to bring all the children from the various Sunday Schools in the capital together into one large hall, and around 500 attended. Digafe was thrilled at this! He thought how wonderful it would be if they could have the children together for a longer period.

This formulated in the minds of a few brethren the idea of having a campsite. The best site would be in a place called Ginchi, about 100 km west of Addis. The brethren had received a large piece of land to build a kindergarten, but because of limited funds had been unable to do so, and this ground proved to be ideal for a campsite. Soon the





# Stretch out her hands to God', Ps. 68. 31 NKJV

building work commenced and when it was completed they were able to have 250 children at the camp for a week, followed by a week for teenagers.

The camp work continued until about four years ago. By this time the Sunday Schools had grown so much that the brethren felt that it would be better to hold Daily Vocational Bible Studies (DVBS) for a week in each assembly, and this has continued annually since then. This was beneficial as the children from the Addis area speak Amharic whereas in the countryside the children speak Oromiffa. It meant that both DVBS lessons could be undertaken in their respective areas at the same time. As a result of this, very many children have been taught the scriptures in their own areas.

In one sense the communists did God's work a favour. Believers, particularly teachers, were transferred to new areas, and they took with them the message of the gospel. Soon they were working in areas that the missionaries had never been to, so that the work to the west of Addis began to develop and many assemblies were planted in this new area.

## Bible School

Many of the evangelists had been converted from animism<sup>1</sup> and spirit worship. They had little or no knowledge of the Bible, and some of the more mature brethren in Addis, who had a reasonable knowledge of the scriptures, wanted to help in this matter. Because the work had developed so quickly in the countryside, the brethren decided to hold a small Bible school in a place called Chobi.

They decided on six weeks of intensive teaching each year, and when an evangelist had completed the course over three years, they would be given a certificate to show they had completed the course. In this programme during this year alone they were given an overview of Hebrews, Jeremiah, the Minor prophets, Romans chapters 1 to 3, and the First Epistle of John.

One of the teaching brethren from Addis would go to Chobi for a week and then be replaced by another Bible

teacher. The evangelists who attend the course bring their own food and are supported by their commending assemblies. This little self-supporting Bible school has worked very effectively for a good number of years. There is now accommodation for about thirty-five evangelists at Chobi.

## Translation

Over the years, there has been a need for the translation of suitable books for Ethiopia, and initially three concordances were translated. The first concordance in Amharic was similar to a Cruden's concordance, and some time later a more detailed one was added. There was also a concordance translated into Oromiffa. This was followed by A. J. CLARKE'S book *New Testament Church Principles*, JOHN CAMPBELL'S book *Future Events*, JOHN MCQUOID'S book *Knowing and Doing*, and many other smaller booklets. All of these have been translated into both Amharic and Oromiffa. The brethren are now in the process of translating the five books which give an overview of the New Testament, compiled by various authors and printed by *Precious Seed*.

## Compassion

The work in Batie has always been difficult as this is a predominately Muslim area. Over the years, some have been converted, but have had to move to other towns to find work. For some time, the brethren have been working with a support group called **Compassion**, which has decided to support the believers in Batie. As a result, a kindergarten was commenced and, at the moment, 250 children are being helped in various ways, in addition to being taught the Bible. This has brought quite a change in the community, and it is felt that barriers are being broken down. The believers are praying that the end result will produce blessing and salvation.

## New areas

Many young people have trusted Christ in their local villages, and, when they reach university age, many have to leave home. To help support them, assemblies have been formed in Ambo which is relatively near where they live. However, a good number have been given places in Jimma and Awassa universities which

are about 600 kilometres from their homes. The work in these areas is being developed and already new places are opening up for the spread of the gospel south of the capital.

As all this work is developing the believers are very conscious that things can change very quickly in Africa. On the borders of Ethiopia there are major worries from South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and parts of Eastern Kenya. Please pray that the current liberty in Ethiopia for the spread of the gospel will be maintained, and that many will still 'quickly stretch out their hands to God'.

## Conclusions

A contemplation of the last twenty years of the work in Ethiopia presents some interesting lessons:

- The missionary is not indispensable and, as Paul discovered when he was taken out of the way, the work of God continues to grow, energized and driven by local believers.
- Local evangelists are often more effective in reaching their own people with the gospel, and in Ethiopia they have taken the great commission seriously and have reached into many new areas which had not previously heard the gospel.
- A structured approach to Bible teaching and the establishment of the Bible school has been very effective in ensuring that local evangelists are well grounded in the fundamentals of the faith.
- Left to themselves, and in total dependence on the Lord, local believers have taken to the work with a spirit of maturity and real enthusiasm.

[This article has been compiled by Robert Revie who, with his wife Sheena, has been involved in the work in Ethiopia since 1969. They are in fellowship in the assembly in Tarbolton, Ayrshire, Scotland and Robert continues to visit the assemblies in Ethiopia on a regular basis.]

## Endnotes

- 1 Animism: 'the attribution of a living soul to inanimate objects and to natural phenomena', *Cassell Concise Dictionary*, pg. 53.



## The problem of justification

In Old Testament times, two men had this problem. Job raised the question, 'How should man be just with God?' Job 9. 2. Bildad the Shuhite asked, 'How then can man be justified with God?' 25. 4.

Having declared, I 'will by no means clear the guilty', Exod. 34. 7, God seems to leave the question without answer. Solomon added to the problem when he wrote, 'he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord', Prov. 17. 15.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul provides the answer to the questions raised by Job and Bildad in his Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. There is an important difference of teaching in these Epistles on the matter of justification. In Romans it is established that there is no substitute for faith in the matter of being justified; in the Epistle to the Galatians it is equally asserted that nothing can be added to faith. In Romans, Paul in a masterly way shows how a just God can justify the guilty. Paul declares that we are 'justified by faith', thereby showing that works are opposed to faith. In Galatians, Paul declares that nothing of works can be added to faith. God is 'just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus', Rom. 3. 26. In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul frequently uses the words 'righteous' and 'justify'. In the Greek language the two words, 'righteous' and 'justify', are derived from the same root word, so when the apostle speaks of righteousness and justification he is speaking more or less of the same thing.

It is important to observe that justification does not change a person morally, but it does change his position, giving him a new standing before God in a position of perfect righteousness, cleared of every charge.

Justification is an integral part of God's great plan of salvation, part of the divine counsel for our blessing. God's magnificent purpose in salvation is highlighted particularly in the letter to the Romans: 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate . . . whom he did

# THE DOCTRINE OF

predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called . . . them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified', 8. 29-30.

All three persons of the Godhead are involved in providing the blessing of justification for man. God Himself is the justifier. God is 'just and the justifier', 3. 26. It is, 'through Christ' and 'in Christ' that we are justified: 'if . . . we seek to be justified by Christ', Gal. 2. 17, and He 'was raised again for our justification', Rom. 4. 25. Justification was provided by Christ, and is secured to us in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the divine agent in justification, 'but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God', 1 Cor. 6. 11.

## The background to justification

The apostle Paul in Romans chapter 3 describes a law court scene. God is the judge and man is the criminal in the dock. Witnesses for the prosecution are assembled. For the Jew, there is the witness of the commandments, which testify against him. For both the pagan and enlightened Gentile, there is the witness of creation and of conscience. The apostle Paul is the prosecutor, and fourteen charges are

brought before the court, until the sentence is passed: all the world brought in guilty before God, Rom. 1-3.

## The meaning of justification

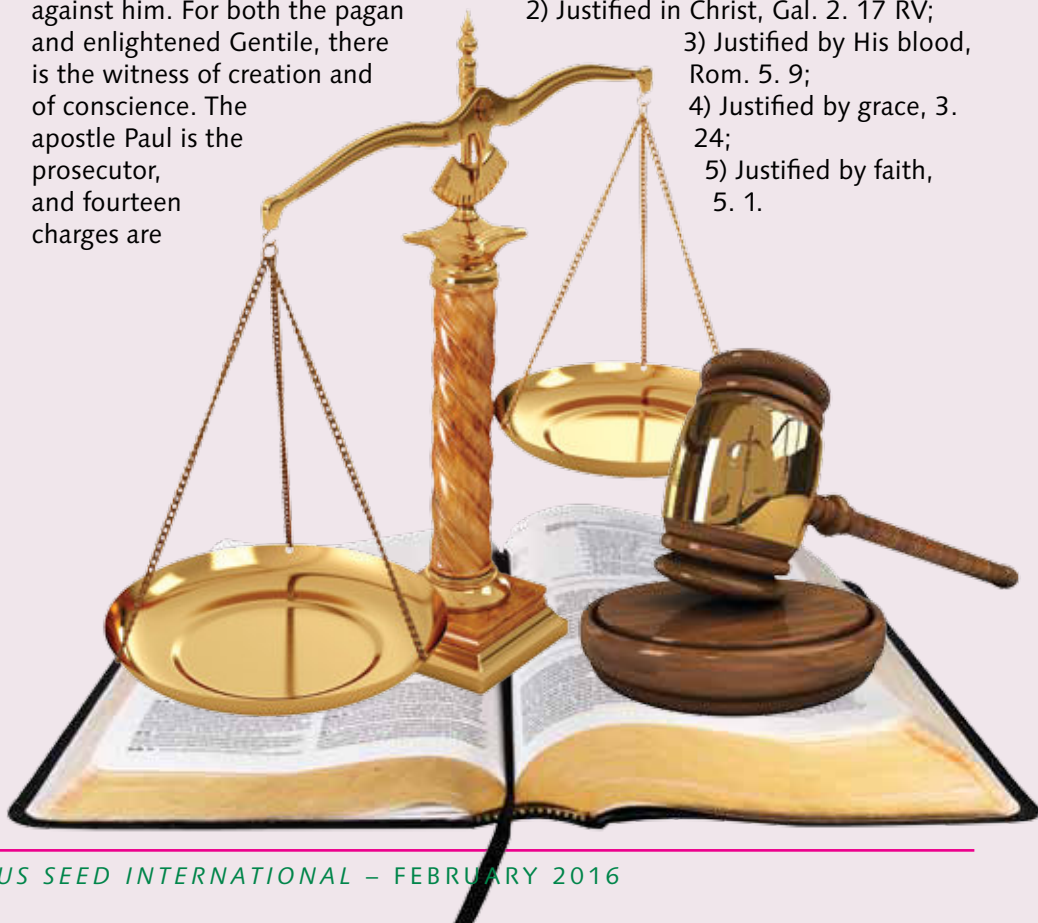
How can justification be defined? In simple terms, we can say that to purify is to make pure, to sanctify is to make holy, and to justify is to make just.<sup>1</sup> Justify is a well-known word for those who use a word-processor, as by the click of a button we can bring all the lines of a manuscript into line.

This is what God does in justifying the person who believes in Jesus. He brings everything into line with His own character.

Justification is a legal term to which there are two sides: negatively, it means to clear entirely and eternally all the guilt of all our sins; on the positive side, it means to declare us eternally just and right before God who is Himself essentially just and righteous.

Justification in the New Testament is explained in a fivefold way:

- 1) Justified by God, Rom. 3. 30;
- 2) Justified in Christ, Gal. 2. 17 RV;
- 3) Justified by His blood, Rom. 5. 9;
- 4) Justified by grace, 3. 24;
- 5) Justified by faith, 5. 1.







# F JUSTIFICATION

## Justified by God

God is the justifier: 'Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith', 3. 30. When Paul speaks of 'now' and 'at this time', 3. 21, 26, he is indicating the character of the present church age, compared with God's dealings with man in Old Testament times before the cross. God in His forbearance and in response to their offering and exercise of faith, remitted sins that are past, not the past sins of a believer, but sins committed in a past age. The Greek word translated 'remission' means 'passing over', the righteousness of God is now declared in so acting because Christ Jesus has been 'set forth a propitiation'.

Now that the death of Christ is an accomplished fact, God 'now' and 'at this time' is not only declared righteous but, as a just God, He justifies the guilty sinner who believes in Jesus, acquitting that person of the guilt of all their sins, and declares them just and right forever. In doing this, justice is honoured and God's righteousness is established.

## Justified by Christ

The question may be raised, 'how can we be justified by God and by Christ?' In Galatians chapter 2 verse 17 we read, 'Now if in seeking to be justified in Christ' JND. The apostle is here teaching the sphere of our justification, i.e., where justification can be found. If guilty sinners are to be justified today, there is only one place where that can be found and that is *in* Christ. God is the source of justification, and Christ is the sphere of justification.

## Justified by His blood

In Romans chapter 5 verse 9, Paul underscores the foundation of justification, which is the blood of Christ, the evidence of the accomplished sacrifice of Christ at Calvary.

'Bearing shame and scoffing rude  
In our place condemned He stood',  
[P. P. BLISS]  
On the cross, the Lord Jesus was

the object of human ridicule, the spectacle of angels and demons. The Son of God was put to death, and so He bore the sentence on our account. In verse 19, the apostle writes, 'as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous'. Again, Christ was 'made sin', not sinful, nor a sinner, but sin; He was made 'sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him', 2 Cor. 5. 21. On the cross God made His Son to be sin for us and dealt with Him as He must deal with sin. It could be put this way: God made Christ to be what by no process He could have become that we might be made in Him what by no process we could personally have become.

The apostle puts emphasis on the blood of Christ shed sacrificially on the cross, Rom. 5. 9. This has satisfied the claims of divine justice against sin. Paul makes the point that justification is a present possession. The expression 'being now justified' does not suggest a process, but refers to all who in this day of God's grace are justified. Darby translates 'having been now justified'. The sinner who believes in Jesus is immediately justified, declared righteous by God.

The ground of justification is established in the following statement, 'by the obedience of one', meaning by that one act of obedience on the cross when Christ handed himself over to God's holy judgement against sin, the result is 'many . . . made righteous', v. 19.

## Justified by grace

In Romans chapter 3 verse 24, the apostle describes justification as bestowed by grace. It was freely given, without cause and without any merit on our part. God took the initiative and, in grace and at infinite cost, He procured and bestowed justification on us who believe in Jesus. God might have righteously left us in all our guilt and without hope, but the disposition of His heart was such that, in grace, He freely

bestowed justification upon all who have believed in Jesus.

## Justified by faith

The apostle will now establish faith as the means by which we obtain justification, Rom. 5. 1. If grace is God's side of justification, then faith is our side. Paul concludes 'a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law', Rom. 3. 28. The requirement of God is faith in Jesus, in His person and in His accomplished sacrifice at Calvary; where this faith is in evidence, it enables God to reckon to that person the value of the precious blood of Christ and declare him righteous.

Paul writes, 'what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it [his faith] was counted unto him for righteousness', Rom. 4. 3. Similarly, the evidence of both Abraham's faith and the harlot Rahab's was in their works, Jas. 2. 21, 25. The two-fold blessing of justification is 'peace with God', Rom. 5. 1, and 'the peace of God', Phil. 4. 7.

## The permanence of justification

There can be no accusation raised against the justified. No voice in heaven or in earth or under the earth can ever be raised in condemnation. Who can condemn us now? It is God that justifies and it was Christ who died, and is risen again and is at the right hand of God making intercession for us, Rom. 8. 33-39.

The practical outworking of having been declared righteous by God is that we should now demonstrate it before men by living righteously.

## Summary

Since Christ died for our sins, God can treat the sinner who believes on Him as a righteous person should be treated. In view of this, Paul asked the question 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' Rom. 8. 33. The sinner is justified solely because Christ in His vicarious death endured what was due to sin. Justice having no further claim upon him, God is now justified in justifying the believing sinner.

## Endnotes

- 1 To justify means to make righteous in the sense that God imputes righteousness to those who exercise faith in Christ.





# REPORTS AND NEWS

## GOSPEL WORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Compiled by SANDY JACK

### Editorial Note

*You may note that this issue of the magazine has only one page of Reports. This is part of a planned review being undertaken in response to a decreasing number of contributions being submitted from local assemblies and the way in which digital and new media are making news much more accessible in a quicker timeframe than we can do with a quarterly magazine.*

I would also like to point out that in our August issue the report of the Lord's work in Nepal was wrongly attributed to our brother Charles Davidson. Although it was kindly submitted by Charles, it was written by a local brother, Jiwan Rai. We are thankful for and encouraged by all those who faithfully serve their local fellow saints and are able to share something of the Lord's work in which they are involved.

### SCOTLAND

Joe Baxter and Martin Hunter held gospel meetings in **Musselburgh** for three weeks. There are around twelve saints in fellowship in the assembly. They faithfully preach the gospel each Sunday and always have unsaved present at these meetings. A minibus brings a number of souls from a local care home at Carberry. During the three weeks of meetings held by Joe and Martin, around twenty-seven people attended and there was a real sense of the Lord's help and presence. Charlie was an elderly man who was contacted through door-to-door work. He attended on eight occasions and with whom very good conversations were had. Madeline was brought by a young sister on six occasions and spent hours discussing spiritual matters with her afterwards. Alex came along on four evenings with his mother-in-law. He trusted the Saviour the night after the meetings finished. Mike was brought by saints from another assembly and put his faith in Christ the Saturday after the meetings finished.

Support from saints in Mayfield and Port Seaton was an encouragement too.

In October, the assembly at Bannockburn held two weeks of gospel meetings with Joe Baxter and Martin Hunter and the response was encouraging. Six souls came to listen to the gospel, including one Jehovah's Witness.

Please pray for Jim, a contact from door-to-door work, with whom Joe has been corresponding for around a year. He came along on the first Sunday evening. A Christadelphian gentleman came on one evening and did not return. The Jehovah's Witness was a lady from Bridge of Allan and brought by her son – he was saved three years ago during meetings being held at Harley Street Gospel Hall and is now in fellowship with the assembly at Linwood. On one wet day, Joe and Martin went into a newly opened coffee shop in the town and had a good conversation with the owner. It transpired that the man knew one of the believers from another assembly in Lanarkshire who had worked with his father in Cardowan Colliery and described him as a 'real Christian man'. As a result he promised to come along to the meetings and did. It was also an encouragement to see Senga come along too. This lady has been coming along to the meetings since contact was made with her last year through door-to-door work.

### IRELAND

In September, the outreach work at the National Ploughing Championships, Ireland, took place and, this year, as well as having a stall with literature the saints also included some open-air preaching with John Stanfield using a sketch board. 28,000 'John 3:16' bags were handed out and a large number of excellent conversations were held with individuals. Frank was one of those individuals who received one of the bags. He asked, 'Can you tell me how I can be born again?' He had heard a preacher some time before talking about the need to be born again and knew that this was what he needed in order to be sure of eternal life. Twenty postal or email enquiries have been received from people who received shopping bags, requesting some of the gospel literature advertised on the reply card.

### ARMENIA

Toros and Virginia Pilibosian write from Armenia: 'We praise the Lord for enabling us to conduct the summer children's outreach. As in other years we had three different age groups with us for ten days. Most children who came had never heard the gospel before and were happy to hear Bible stories, commit to memory Bible verses and

sing gospel choruses, many of which we have translated from English into Armenian. In the mornings they were taught from the life and experience of Jacob and in the evening a brother taught from the life of Saul of Tarsus. For the teenagers, we presented the gospel by reference to the "I am" statements of John's Gospel and also through the practical experiences in the life of Abraham'.

'Many of the children came from an orphanage in Gyumri and while with us experienced love and care and, most importantly, heard of the love of God for them. Seventeen-year-old Isabella trusted the Lord after hearing the gospel a few times. She comes from a broken home and her mum is serving time in prison'.

'Following the children's camp we had five days with the believers from Gyumri, Yerevan and Tvin and were blessed with good ministry, studying the character of God and getting practical lessons for a Christ-like life'.

### INDIA

The assembly in Gangtok, India, held a long weekend of ministry – five meetings – and three nights of gospel meetings, with Howard Barnes. The visit also included an open-air baptism, taking place in the local river at which about forty people gathered and Howard was able to give an explanation of baptism. Two believers were baptized: brother Kunal, a computer teacher, and sister Sujata, a dentist. Two girls from near-by Nepal came with others to the gospel meetings. They professed salvation during the meetings, which was a great answer to prayer, since both of them were known for their previous hard-heartedness with respect to the gospel, and, although they had attended previous gospel meetings, showed little real spiritual interest.

After this visit to Gangtok, Howard returned south to Salabri, a suburb of Siliguri where, for the third year, Howard was able to help at a boys' camp. Sixty-five boys attended the camp and half had never been to camp before. Many were Hindus and a number were from nominal Christian homes. At the parents' evening at the end of the week, about thirty adults heard the gospel.





# A WORD FOR TODAY

Καὶνὰμ, ὁ, (Cainam, Cainan)  
 καινός, -ή, ὄν (new, fresh,  
 unused, novel)  
 καινότης, -ητος, ἡ (novelty,  
 freshness, newness)

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY**  
 Newton Abbot, England

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that human beings have an insatiable appetite for new things. We seem to be obsessed about new products, and people will often queue for hours on end to be the first to acquire a new computer game or a new smartphone. And the craze is not just confined to modern technology, as people are just as likely to queue into the early hours of the morning to acquire a new publication by a popular writer or even a book from a deceased writer, published posthumously. In all these instances, the fickleness of the human heart is evident, demonstrated by a constant desire for that which is new and novel. What a contrast to the immutability of the God that we serve, Mal. 3. 6! Yet the Greek word *kainos*, meaning new or fresh, that occurs on a number of occasions in the New Testament often relates more to the intrinsic quality of something new rather than simply being novel or unused. As STEPHEN RENN points out, *kainos* is found in passages of distinctive theological significance in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

In the Septuagint (LXX) the word *kainos* is used to translate the Hebrew word *hadash*, meaning new or different. It is a well-worked word with the writer of Ecclesiastes who constantly reminds us that although we think that what we have in our generation is unprecedented, 'Is there a thing of which it is said, "See this is new"? 'It has been already in the ages before us', Eccles. 1. 10 ESV! The prophet Ezekiel, in chapter 11 verse 19, uses the word *kainos* when he describes the action of God in putting a new spirit within His people. This takes up the theme that Jeremiah articulates in chapter 31 verses 33-34 of his prophecy, relating to a new covenant that God seals with His people by writing His law indelibly upon their hearts. Occasionally, the word *kainos* can simply refer to the process of succession, as in Exodus chapter 1 verse 8, where a new king in time assumes the throne of Egypt. But, even in this same context, the word may also be interpreted as meaning a new kind of king to that of his immediate predecessor, and how quickly Israel discovered that reality, Exod. 1. 9ff. One of the most famous texts in the Old Testament reminds us that God's

steadfast love and His mercies are not only eternal, but, equally, they are renewed on a daily basis, i.e., they are constantly fresh, Lam. 3. 22-23. They remind us of the freshness of the manna that fell daily from heaven, Exod. 16. 4ff. In Isaiah chapter 65 verse 17 *kainos* is used in connection with the renewal of creation. ALEC MOTYER states that this will be 'a total newness without anything even promoting a recollection of what used to be', cp. 2 Pet. 3. 13.2 Another meaning of the word *kainos* suggests that something has never been tested before. For example, part of the Gibeonite strategy to deceive Joshua was to feign that new – in the sense of untested – wineskins had burst when filled, even though, in reality, they were worn-out wineskins, Josh. 9. 4, 13. A similar meaning is also attached to *kainos* in Judges chapter 16 verse 11 of the new (untested) ropes, which Samson tells Delilah could be used to restrain him and restrict his strength. These various shades of meaning of *kainos* found in the Septuagint (LXX) also occur later in early papyrus usage, and other non-literary sources prior to the New Testament. But, by the time that we come to the New Testament, *kainos* has developed almost into a Christian word, highlighting the quality of something new that will not fade or grow old in time.

Moving then to the New Testament, we find that when *kainos* is used by writers their intention is to emphasize something unusual, or unheard-of, or even unprecedented. Mark chapter 1 verse 27 records the outburst of those in the synagogue at Capernaum who had witnessed our Lord exorcizing a demon from a member of the congregation. Not only did they find it an amazing spectacle to watch, but considered the Lord's teaching as completely unprecedented. Paul had the same sort of effect on the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers of Athens who, having heard him preach 'Jesus and the resurrection', wanted to learn more about this unusual or unheard-of teaching, Acts. 17. 19. In our Lord's upper room discourse, recorded in John chapters 13 to 17, He gives a new (*kainos*) commandment to his disciples that they should love one another, John 13. 34, which is expanded for them in John chapter 15 verses 12 to 17. KINGSLEY BARRETT points out that the commandment was not 'new', in the sense that it had never previously

been promulgated, cf. Lev. 19. 18, but it was new because it corresponded to the command that regulated the relation between Jesus and the Father, and thereby revealed the Father and the Son, cp. John 15. 10.<sup>3</sup> It would be the principle of the new order that would be effected through the death of Christ, John 13. 31-32. A secondary meaning of *kainos* is by way of contrast to that which is old, or become obsolete and needs to be replaced. Hence, the new covenant, Heb. 8. 8, a new creation, 2 Cor. 5. 17a, and a new self in place of the old self, Eph. 4. 24. And we are told that those disciplined scribes are able to bring out of their experience of the kingdom of God things that are of a new quality, Matt. 13. 52.

The word *kainos* is often distinguished from its synonym *neos* in the New Testament. When the word *neos* is used for 'new' it suggests new in time, or recently come into existence or youthful. Examples of these uses can be seen in Matthew chapter 9 verse 17 of new wine, and in Titus chapter 2 verse 4 of young women. But the distinction between *neos* and *kainos* is sometimes blurred, as they are, on occasions, used interchangeably, as in the parallel text to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 24, where Paul uses the synonym *neos* and not *kainos* to describe the new self, Col. 3. 10. Notwithstanding a number of such instances, and there are few in the New Testament, the words can be clearly distinguished. In what better way can we highlight this distinction when we contemplate that day when we will sing 'a new (*kainos*) song', Rev. 5. 9, in heaven. New, not simply because it is fresh (*neos*), but because, for us, it will herald an unprecedented state, i.e., redemption finally accomplished! Until this hope is realized, may we continue to depend on God so that we might be faithful 'ministers of the new covenant', 2 Cor. 3. 6 NKJV.

## For further reading/study

### Introductory

HAROLD K. MOULTON, *The Challenge of the Concordance – Some New Testament Words Studied in Depth* by – 'Newness', Bagster, 1977, pp. 73-76.

### Advanced

GEOFFREY W. BROMILEY, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume – Kainos*, Eerdmans, 1979, pp. 388-389.

### Endnotes

- 1 STEPHEN RENN, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Hendricksen, 2005, pg. 674.
- 2 J. ALEC MOTYER, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, IVP Academic, 1993, pg. 529.
- 3 KINGSLEY BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St John*, SPCK, 1962, pg. 452.



# Book Reviews

Compiled by **JOHN SCARBROOK**

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



## **Gleanings from the book of Ruth** Alex Dryburgh

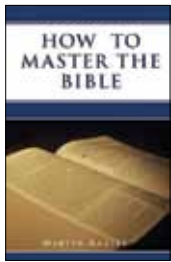
Paperback, 104 pages, Published by Gospel Folio Press, 304 Killaly St. W. Port Colborne, ON L3K 6A6. ISBN 978-1927-5216-18.

A book review is, by its very nature, a subjective exercise. The style and format of a book, though brief and merely suggestive in character, will appeal to some; others favour a more detailed and systematic exposition. The preface of this book makes it plain that the four chapters are essentially 'gleanings', a word which frequently seems to be considered appropriate when reflecting on the book of Ruth.

The stated intention of the author is to provide 'bare bones for others to flesh out according to their needs and exercise'. This he does throughout the book, and it would be fair to say that the 'bare bones' are not 'dry bones'. Having briefly considered the whole book in the opening chapter, the writer then focuses the reader's attention on each individual chapter of the book. By use of word association, comparison, linking of thoughts and subjects, the author brings to light a variety of concise reflections, devotional and practical. In many instances he reaches out to other portions of scripture to enhance and support his considerations.

The author of this book is not alone among writers of Christian books in his belief that an excess of alliteration enhances and clarifies a subject or chapter. There are undoubtedly times when this approach can be used as an aid to memory, or to summarize a subject. However, the risk is that the alliterated headings can become forced in order to fit the desired primary letter and the impact can be lost.

For those who wish to undertake a detailed study in the four chapters of Ruth, this book is not intended for you. There will, however, undoubtedly be others who will enjoy and appreciate this author's approach and find encouragement in his 'gleanings'.



## **How to Master the Bible** Martin Anstey

Paperback, 138 pages, Published by Scripture Teaching Library, Cookstown, NI. ISBN 978-1-909789-16-6.

This is a revised reprint of a book first published in 1931. In view of this, I imagine that the author is now in the glory and will not be too concerned if comment is made on the title of his book. When the apostle John closed his Gospel, he ventured the thought that the whole world could not contain the books that could be written about the three-and-a-half years of the Lord's public ministry. Brother Anstey presumes to give advice on how to master the whole Bible in 138 pages – some claim! The present reviewer has known many well-read Bible students who freely admit that the more they have learned in a lifetime of study, the more they realize that they are barely scratching the surface, let alone dare to suggest that they have mastered the Bible.

However, if given a less egotistical title, this brief book has a great deal to commend it, particularly for a believer young in the faith or someone coming to the scriptures with little or no background knowledge. The author sets out, in a very readable style, a clear and concise line of reasoning for the inspiration of scripture, its historical accuracy, and the failure of all academic and scientific discoveries to effectively challenge the plain statements of the word of God.

The chapters which follow give, in outline, a number of different approaches to studying the scriptures. Some will appeal more than others, and Bible study, in the final analysis, is a personal matter. The point is well made that the most important thing for any believer is to consistently read the Bible, with an open mind and an open heart, prayerfully desiring to be taught by the Spirit of God. To quote one servant of God, 'Everything God wants us to know is in this book'.



## **The Land and People of Israel, what does the future hold?** Drew Craig

Paperback, 63 pages, Published by Gospel Folio Press, 304 Killaly St. W. Port Colborne, ON L3K 6A6. ISBN 978-1897-1178-11.

To many in the secular and political world, the modern state of Israel is considered a pariah nation. It is seen as aggressive, territorially ambitious, insensitive to UN resolutions, and indifferent to critical opinion. In this little booklet, Drew Craig demonstrates from the scriptures that, in spite of man's estimation, there is a divine plan and purpose for both the nation and the people of Israel.

The book is written to counteract the increasingly pervasive teaching that Israel no longer features in God's plan, they have been rejected, and the church has now become the beneficiary of covenants and promises made long ago to Abraham and his descendants.

Beginning with the divine claim to the land and Jehovah's acknowledgement of a people for Himself, the writer touches upon the covenants made to Abraham, and promised to Isaac and Jacob, with particular reference to the land and the seed. The importance of Genesis chapter 15 is rightly emphasized, where Jehovah alone passed through the divided pieces, binding Himself to keep the covenant made with Abraham. This chapter, apart from any others, should be sufficient to assure every student of scripture that the promises made to Israel cannot fail.

Attention is drawn in Part 2 to the importance and centrality of Jerusalem in the divine purpose, and prophetic scriptures are chosen in support of this. Parts 3 and 4 take the reader to a future day to consider the Lord's return in glory and the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ. The writer's clear acceptance of a literal interpretation of prophetic scripture is evident throughout, challenging the allegorical and spiritualized analysis preferred by many expositors today.

Although this handling of the subject matter is brief, important principles of truth are outlined which will provide a basis for deeper consideration of the interpretation and understanding of prophetic scripture.

## QUESTION

**Will the church go through the great tribulation?**

## ANSWER

Before offering an answer to this question there are a couple of points that need to be clarified. Firstly, I assume that when the questioner asks, 'Will the church go through the tribulation?' they really mean 'will some of the church go through the tribulation?' I make this assumption because countless myriads of believers down the centuries have already finished their course and are absent from the body and 'present with the Lord'. Secondly, we know that throughout the church age Christians have endured tribulation. There may even be some readers of this magazine who live in countries where persecution and severe opposition to Christianity is a constant threat, and they know experientially what the Lord meant when He said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation', John 16. 33. However, as difficult as their circumstances are, we must distinguish between such trials and that to which the Lord referred in the Olivet discourse, 'For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be', Matt. 24. 21.

Based on the prophecy recorded in Daniel chapter 9, and other scriptures, we learn that there is coming a period of seven years that will be divided into two equal parts. Those seven years commence when the man of sin confirms a covenant with the unbelieving Jews, a covenant that is described in Isaiah as being a 'covenant with death'. Although we often refer to the whole seven years as being the tribulation, it is the latter half which the Lord has in mind in the verse quoted from Matthew's Gospel; it is those final three-and-a-half years that are 'the great tribulation'.

The critical event that ensures that not one single Christian will experience any of the tribulation is the rapture of the church, a truth that links several scriptures together. To begin, let's examine Paul's final words in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come'. Not only will none of us go through the tribulation, we shall not even go into it. The

wrath that Paul refers to is a descriptive term for the tribulation, and the apostle tells us that we shall be saved 'from' it, i.e., away from it, not out of it. How is that deliverance achieved? It is achieved by God's Son coming out of heaven at the event we commonly call 'the rapture'.

At the beginning and ending of Revelation, there are numerous references, either directly or metaphorically, to the church. However, from chapter 6 through to the end of chapter 19 the focus is on events on the earth, and, in particular, on the judgement of God. Those chapters cover the seven years of Daniel's prophecy, and, thus, they include the three-and-a-half years of the great tribulation. They record for us what will happen during the 'day of vengeance of our God', Isa. 61. 2. What is significant is that there is not a single mention of the church being on earth during that time – and for good reason, for she will not be there, having been caught up to meet God's Son who had come out of heaven to deliver her from the wrath to come.

As already stated, the tribulation will commence when the man of sin confirms a covenant with the many of apostate Israel. I believe that in his Second Letter to the Thessalonians, chapter 2, Paul teaches that the man of sin cannot be revealed until after the church has been removed at the rapture; the presence of Christians on earth prevents his revelation.

Unquestionably, the tribulation era will be a time of unparalleled affliction which will put massive strains upon God's people who will be on earth during that time. If there was any possibility that Christians would have to face those dark days, I would expect to find some very clear guidance in the church epistles of Paul, and the writings of Peter, as to how they should conduct themselves in such circumstances, but there is absolutely none. We rejoice in the knowledge that 'God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ', 1 Thess. 5. 9.



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## FACTS AND FIGURES

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Precious Seed International

## Front Cover Illustration

### 'And from there they sailed to Cyprus', Acts 13. 4

The island of Cyprus is located in the eastern Mediterranean close to the coast lines of both Turkey and Syria. For this reason, therefore, it is considered to be a strategic jumping-off point for incursions into the Middle East. In the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the island is referred to as Elishah in Ezekiel chapter 27 verse 7. Some scholars suggest that the island was named after the descendant of Javan, Gen. 10. 4, and inhabited by people known as the Kittim. It was later colonized by the Phoenicians, the great sea traders of the Mediterranean who provided Solomon with their naval expertise when he created his own fleet of ships at Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Eilat, 1 Kgs. 9. 26-27. Various kingdoms have ruled over Cyprus including the Syrians, Egyptians, Persians and Greeks. In New Testament times it was a Roman province under the control of a proconsul, Acts 13. 7. The gospel seems to have reached Cyprus as a consequence of the persecution of believers that arose after Stephen's death, Acts 11. 19-20. Cyprus was the birth place of Barnabas, Acts 4. 36, who laboured with Paul during his first missionary journey, which started with a visit to Cyprus. They preached across the island from Salamis in the east to Paphos in the west, Acts 13. 4-6, and were accompanied by Barnabas' cousin, John Mark, Col. 4. 10, who seems to have provided them with practical support, Acts 13. 5. Later, however, for no recorded reason, he returned to Jerusalem after Paul and Barnabas had left Cyprus and moved to Perga in Pamphylia on the mainland, Acts 13. 13. John Mark's decision seems to have led to some friction between Paul and Barnabas, Acts 15. 38, as evident from Paul's later decision to take Silas with him on his second missionary journey rather than Barnabas, who had again nominated John Mark, Acts 15. 37, 40. Whatever the dispute was between them over John Mark's conduct, it is clear from Colossians chapter 4 verse 10 and Philemon verse 24 that a reconciliation was later effected. One should not lose sight of the fact though that the short time spent by Paul and his companions on the island of Cyprus bore significant fruit, especially in the conversion of the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus, Acts 13. 12. Others would follow in his wake, but his conversion reminds us that not many mighty are called by God, 1 Cor. 1. 26, nevertheless, it is still imperative that we preach Christ to all kinds of individuals, Mark 16. 15.

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