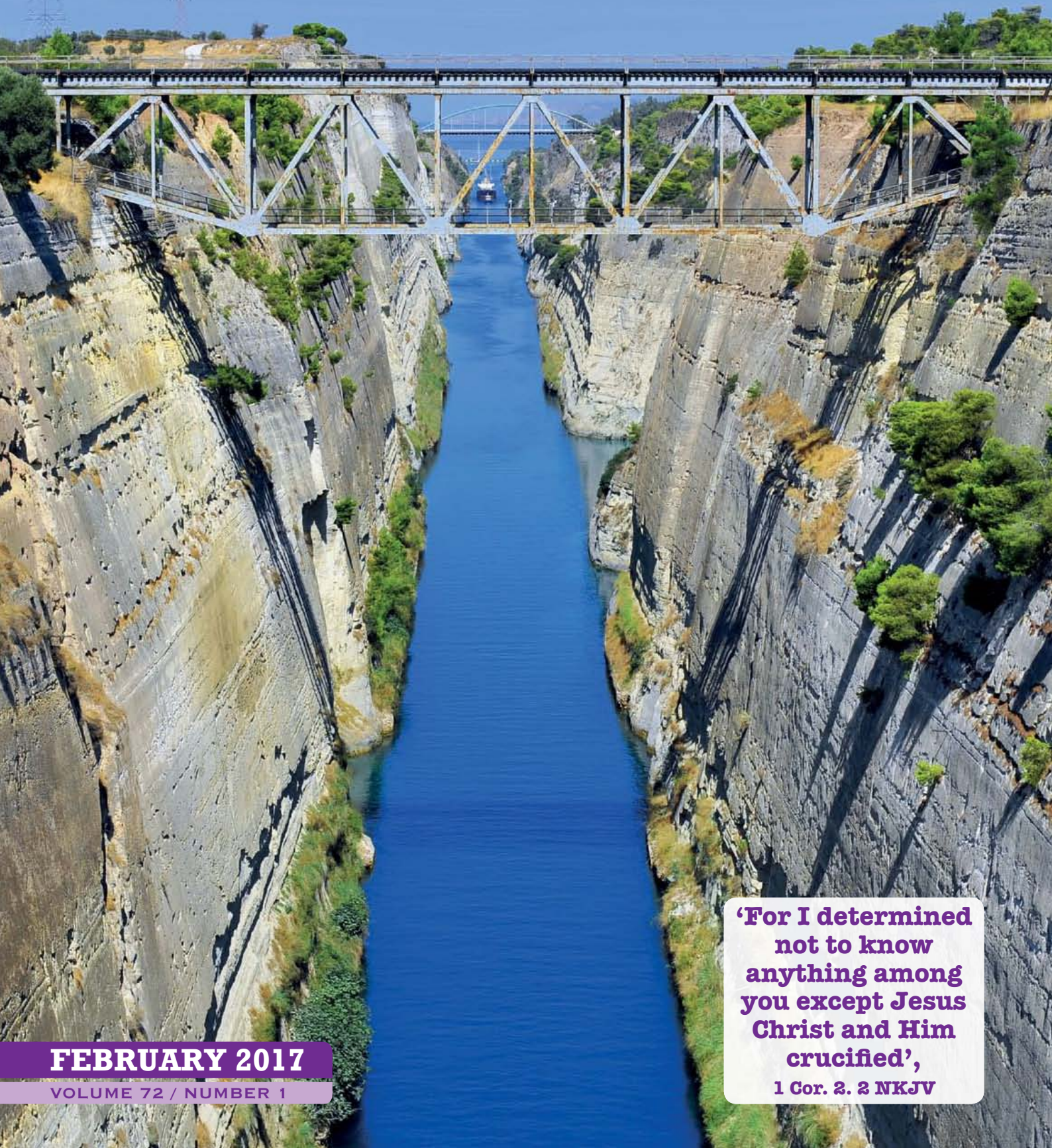


A MAGAZINE TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY
OF THE SCRIPTURE, THE PRACTICE OF
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH PRINCIPLES
AND INTEREST IN GOSPEL WORK



Precious SEED

INTERNATIONAL



FEBRUARY 2017

VOLUME 72 / NUMBER 1

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not to know
anything among
you except Jesus
Christ and Him
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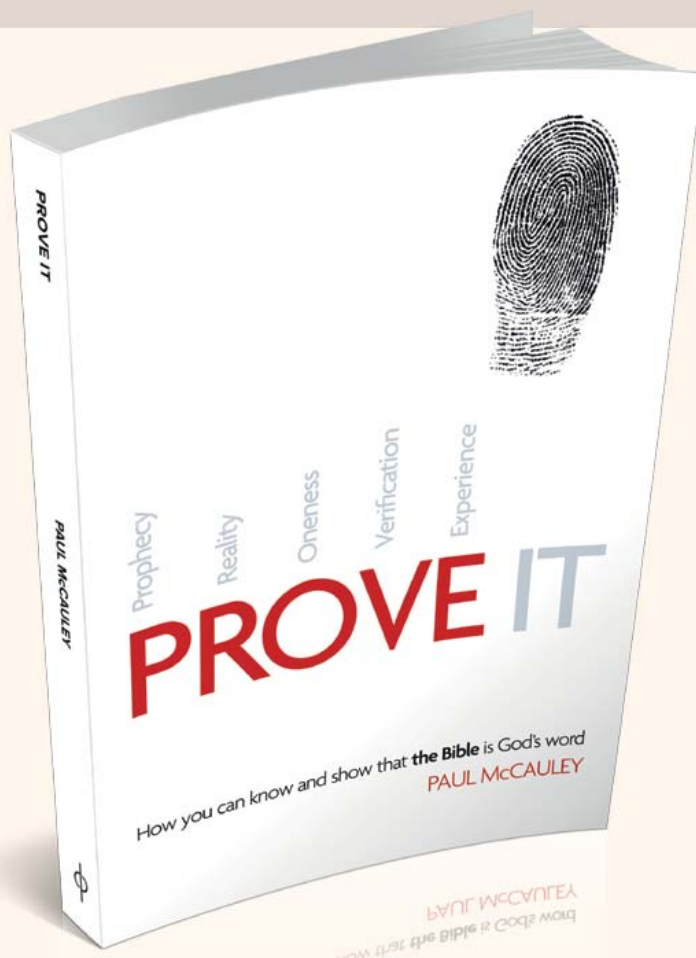
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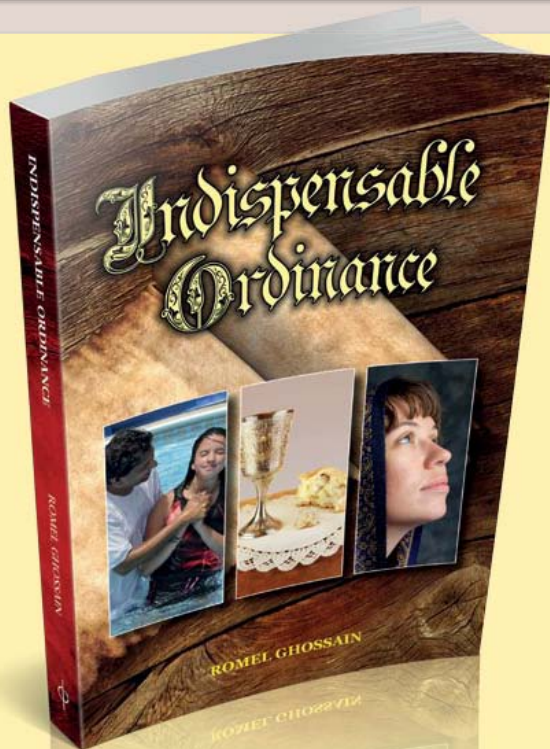
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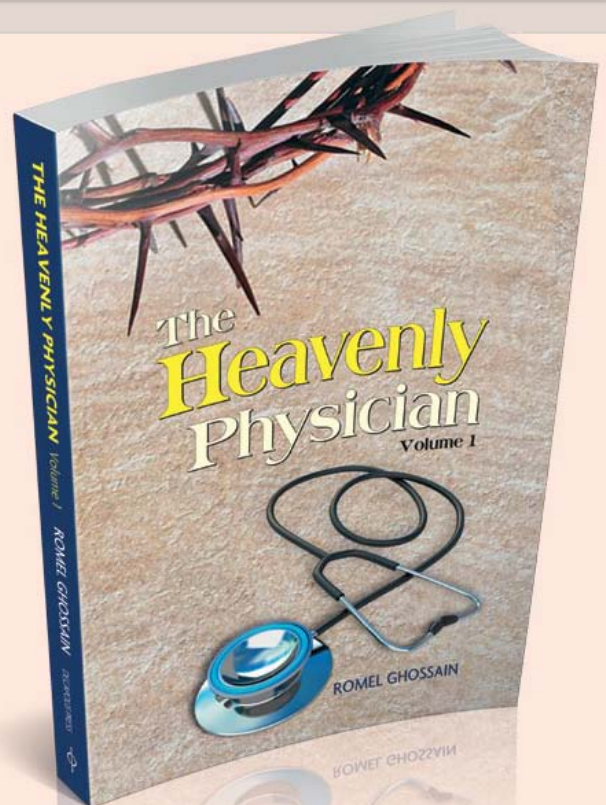
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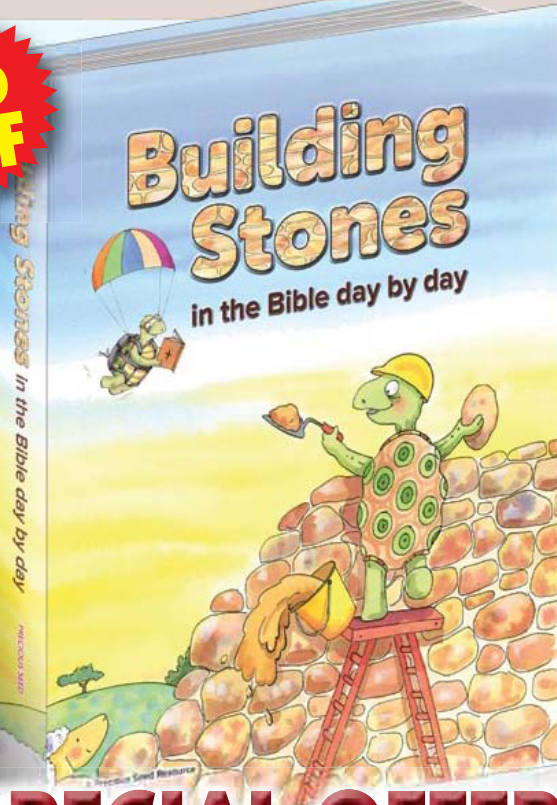
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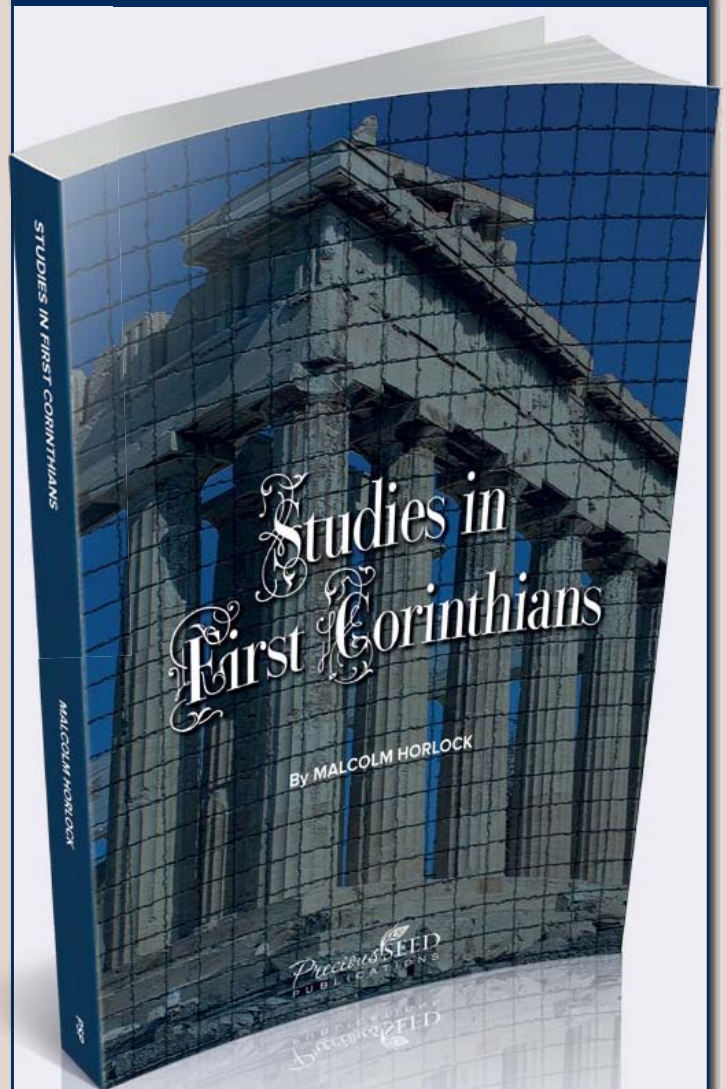
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Editorial

'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham', Matt. 1. 1.

First words are often waited on with expectation. These first words, laid down at the threshold of the inspired first-century writings, carry an important lesson that we do well to consider.

It is clear that, for his reader, Matthew was keen to establish the legal credentials of the Lord Jesus that linked Him to the two stand-out characters of Jewish national history. It is equally clear to my mind that it is the intention of the divine author to bring to the forefront of the reader's attention – as He always will do – the Lord Jesus. In an age of ever-increasing celebrity culture, we do well to remember that Heaven is not in the business of promoting human writers – after all they are merely His servants doing His bidding. God has only One upon whom we should be focused. It is the One who sits at the centre of all divine purpose, Col. 1. 15-18, and the same One who we can be sure will complete it too, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25.

In all endeavours to explore the scriptures, our primary objective must be to seek Him out and learn from Him, Luke 24. 27; Matt. 11. 29.

Aside from the legal claims this genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ sets out, the mention of these two characters in particular should prompt us to look and see in what way they can remind us of the Saviour.

We might think of the gentleness of the shepherd lad, who became the sweet psalmist of Israel, and yet David was a warrior. Perhaps the greatest point in David's life was his victory over the seemingly invincible Goliath, who held the people of God in fear. With total confidence in his God, David slew him in the valley of Elah. No wonder the women came out of all the cities of Israel with his praise on their lips. I am sure that a deeper appreciation of the victory secured by the Saviour at Calvary will stimulate a similar response from us.

If David was a warrior and his high-point was reached in a valley, Abraham as a pilgrim was a worshipper who built altars, and perhaps his high-point is in Genesis chapter 22, where, on a mountain, his dependence on God was examined, and found to be unstinting and unshakeable. In Abraham, we see a man who walked to the place of sacrifice with a full knowledge of what lay ahead and with full confidence in his God that He had the power to raise Isaac from the dead. Psalm 16 is the psalm of the dependent man. Prophetically, it shows the confidence of the One who, as a man down here, even as He entered into the deepest examination of His obedience, confidently declares, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption', v. 10. If the Saviour rested in His God, then surely we can too.

It is the prayer of all the committee that as this issue of the magazine is read, the work and person of 'the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' will be our foremost consideration.



Amongst the various groupings that expositors tend to divide the psalms into according to their literary content and character, the sixteen that are referred to as the 'Messianic Psalms' are perhaps amongst the best known, Psalms that anticipated the coming of the Messiah.¹

The Messianic Psalms and the Spirit of God

As to their human penmen, ten of the sixteen Psalms are directly attributed to David.² It seems likely that he was also the author of Psalm 72, the title to the psalm being 'A psalm, written for Solomon' and which concludes with the words 'The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended'. Psalm 89 is attributed to 'Ethan the Ezrahite', a man famous for his great wisdom, of whom little else is known apart from references to him in 1 Kings chapter 4 verse 31 and 1 Chronicles chapter 2 verses 6 and 8. Psalm 91 is frequently attributed to Moses on account of its general content and its similarity to the Psalm that precedes it, 'A prayer of Moses the man of God'. The title to Psalm 45 might indicate that it was composed by the sons of Korah.³ The authors of the remaining two psalms, i.e., Psalms 102 and 118, are uncertain. But whether known or unknown each penman belonged to that noble band of 'Holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost'.⁴ So, in Acts chapter 2 verse 30, Peter, in quoting from Psalm 16, described its author, David, to be 'a prophet'. In Acts chapter 1 verse 16, in connection with a quotation from Psalm 69, Peter said, 'this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake'. The Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 22 verse 43, quoting from Psalm 110, says, regarding David's Son, 'how then doth David in spirit ['in Spirit' JND] call him Lord?' These references remind us that the Holy Spirit ever delights to speak of Christ, and also of the prominent and

INTRODUCTION T

By **RICHARD CATCHPOLE** South Norwood, London, England

important place these Psalms have in the Holy Spirit's testimony to 'the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow'.⁵

The Messianic Psalms and the Lord Jesus Christ

It is frequently asserted that the distinguishing mark of any Messianic Psalm is seen in it being specifically quoted in the New Testament in reference to Christ. That, however, is only a general guide, for three of the sixteen Psalms, though not quoted in the New Testament, are nevertheless clearly Messianic in character, namely Psalms 24, 72 and 89.

A. The Messianic Psalms and their testimony to Christ

Behind each Messianic Psalm, though Psalm 110 is a notable exception, there is an historical setting. As J. FLANIGAN observes, 'It may describe the experience of the psalmist at that time, or be associated with some great event or circumstance, but when it is read and studied it becomes obvious that the contents go beyond the writer and his experiences, and that it is necessary to see the Messiah in the Psalm for its true fulfilment'.⁶ By way of example, Psalm 2 can be profitably considered in that light. Identified in Acts chapter 4 verse 25 as being a Psalm of David, we can trace within it an echo of the early experiences of David himself, his defeat of Goliath and his establishment by God upon the throne.⁷ Then, thinking of the historical background to Psalm 24, it is generally accepted that it is found in the joyful occasion when David brought the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion, as recorded in 2 Samuel chapter 6 and 1 Chronicles chapter 15.

FRANZ DELITZSCH divides the Messianic Psalms into five groups,⁸ which we might expand as follows:

1. The purely prophetic – which predict that a future Davidic king would be the Lord, as in Psalm 110. The Psalm giving to us a panoramic view of His glory as King, Priest and Judge.
2. The eschatological – predicting the coming of Messiah and the consummation of His kingdom as in Psalms 68 and 118. Although both Psalms review events or experiences in the history of the Jewish people, each one concludes with the kingdom being the Lord's. Psalm 68 culminates with reference to Messiah's kingdom and its earthly centre at Jerusalem, and all kings subject to Him, vv. 29-32. In Psalm 118 the Stone rejected by the builders becomes the headstone of the corner, v. 22, and the Psalm ends with Messiah's coming and Israel's national conversion and rejoicing, vv. 24-29.
3. The typological, prophetic – in which the writer describes his own experience but goes beyond that to describe what became true of the Messiah, e.g., Psalms 22 and 102. Both Psalms touch upon His sufferings and glory. In Psalm 22, in His suffering as forsaken of God, but, in His glory, the governor among the nations. In Psalm 102, in His sufferings as the lonely Man of sorrows, but, in His glory, the immutable Lord.
4. The indirectly Messianic – composed for a contemporary king, but having ultimate fulfilment in the Messiah, e.g., Psalms 45 and 72. In Psalm 45, a Bridegroom and His wedding; in Psalm 72, a King and His rule.
5. The typically Messianic – in which the writer was in some way typical of Messiah, but all he wrote in the psalm did not describe the Saviour Himself, e.g., Psalm 41, in which only verse 9 is directly applied to the Lord, cf. John. 13. 18.



OF THE MESSIANIC PSALMS 1

Surely, no careful reader of the scriptures can fail to be impressed with the wide spectrum of truths the sixteen Psalms embrace in regard to the person, pathway, passion and pre-eminence of Christ. Though these comments are by their very nature only introductory, consider:

1. Aspects of His person:

As the Eternal Son: 'Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee', Ps. 2. 7.

As the last Adam: 'Thou hast put all things under his feet', 8. 6.

As the Priest, after the order of Melchizedec: 'Thou art a priest forever', 110. 4.

As the King of glory: 'Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle', 24. 8.

As the eternal God: 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre', 45. 6.

As the unchangeable One: 'thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end', 102. 27.

2. Aspects of His pathway:

His incarnation and obedience: 'Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart', 40. 7-8.

His temptation in the wilderness: 'he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways', 91. 11.

His betrayal by Judas: 'mine own familiar friend . . . which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me', 41. 9.

His rejection and crucifixion: 'they pierced my hands and my feet', 22. 16.

His death and resurrection: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life', 16. 10-11.

His ascension and victory: 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men', 68. 18.

3. Aspects of His passion:

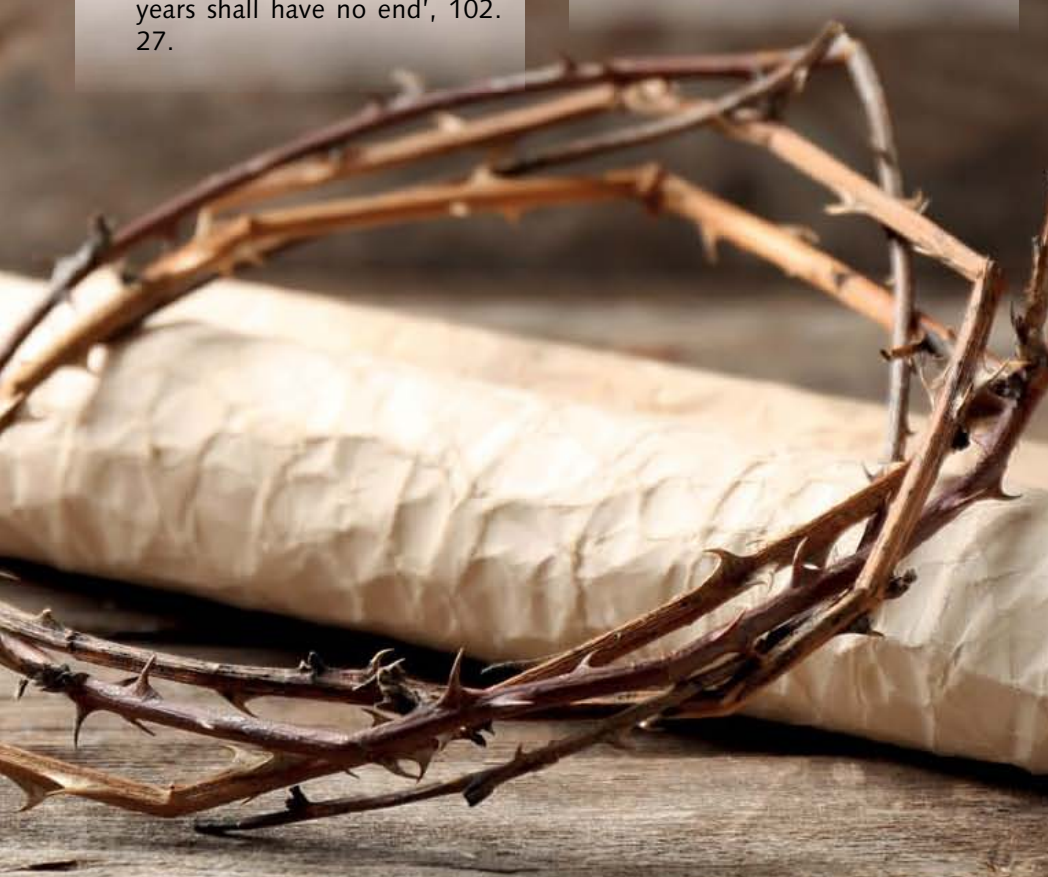
Following the order in which the Levitical offerings are described in the opening chapters of Leviticus, we can suggest that: in Psalm 40 we see the burnt offering; in Psalm 16 the meal offering; in Psalm 118 the peace offering; in Psalm 22 the sin offering; and in Psalm 69 the trespass offering.

4. Aspects of His pre-eminence:

His manifestation in glory in Psalm 24: 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . and the King of glory shall come in', v. 7; His exaltation upon the throne of David in Psalm 89: 'I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth', v. 27; and His millennial reign in Psalm 72: 'He shall have dominion . . . from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth', v. 8.⁹

Endnotes

- 1 The sixteen psalms are: Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 72, 89, 91, 102, 110, 118.
- 2 See Acts 4. 25 for Psalm 2, then the titles to Psalms 8, 16, 22, 24, 40, 41, 68, 69, 110.
- 3 The KJV has 'For the sons of Korah'; J. N. DARBY reads 'Of the sons of Korah'. There are eleven such Psalms by, or for, this Levitical family choir.
- 4 2 Pet. 1. 21.
- 5 1 Pet. 1. 11.
- 6 J. FLANIGAN, *What the Bible Teaches: Psalms*, John Ritchie, pg. 16.
- 7 The Hebrew word translated 'set themselves' in Psalm 2 verse 2 is used of Goliath and translated 'presented himself', 1 Sam. 17. 16. Viewed in this way the 'heathen' raging and imagining a 'vain thing' are well illustrated in the proud boasting of the Philistines and their champion Goliath; the Lord's 'anointed' would be a reference to king Saul; while 'my son' is David himself, cf. Acts 13. 21-22.
- 8 FRANZ DELITZSCH, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 1, T & T Clarke, pp. 68-71.
- 9 For a helpful list of the Psalms in a suggestive chronological order see T. E. WILSON, *The Messianic Psalms*, pg. 5.





It is important to establish some important principles before studying this unusual chapter. First, the incident is not stand-alone, but follows on from the events described in the previous chapter. Second, the incident is not primarily about the man of God from Judah, v. 1, and the old prophet in Bethel, v. 11. The writer's spotlight is trained predominantly on Jeroboam and his false religion. Third, the writer's key theme is the centrality and importance of God's word. The expression, 'the word of the Lord', appears on nine occasions in the chapter.

Sent by the word of the Lord, v. 1

It was an indictment of Jeroboam's false religious system that there were no prophets in Israel at this time through whom the Lord could speak and, therefore, He had to turn to Judah to find such a man, v. 1.

Declaring the word of the Lord, vv. 1-2

The man of God had been entrusted with a clear message that held out the prospect of nothing but judgement, v. 2. He would, no doubt, have preferred to deliver a more palatable message; nevertheless, he proved to be faithful and delivered it courageously as the Lord had given it to him. He did not address his words directly to Jeroboam, but to the altar, i.e., to the corrupt religious system that it typified.

Confirming the word of the Lord, v. 3

A study of miracles in the scriptures will reveal that God did not use them indiscriminately. They stood at the beginning of a work in order to establish it and to confirm that it was of God. The man of God stood at the beginning of Israel's descent into idolatry; therefore, his message was confirmed by an immediate sign, v. 3.

Defying the word of the Lord, vv. 4-5

Jeroboam was accustomed to giving the orders. However, on this particular occasion, the Lord taught him an important lesson. His

MAN OF GOD OUT

hand that was erroneously raised to apprehend the man of God, suddenly and dramatically lost its power, v. 4. He learned that even the word of a king has no power if the Lord decrees otherwise. He was reminded, in dramatic fashion, that the Lord was in control, v. 5.

By
COLIN LACEY
Bath, England

Presuming upon the word of the Lord, v. 6

Miracles do not of themselves produce faith. Jeroboam's response to the withering of his arm and the rending of the altar was entirely predictable, v. 6. There was no sign of repentance and his request was centred entirely upon self. He was more concerned about the condition of his hand than the state of the kingdom. His spiritual condition was such that he had to ask another to pray on his behalf.

Jeroboam had witnessed the power of the word of the Lord. When it suited him, he would presume upon it and ask for it to work in His favour. Yet, it was truly amazing that in the midst of judgement, the grace and mercy of the Lord were seen. It says much about the man of God that, having been abused by Jeroboam, he graciously 'besought the Lord', v. 6, on his behalf.

Obeying the word of the Lord, vv. 7-10

Jeroboam's invitation to the man of God appeared to be irresistible: 'Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward', v. 7. Self-interest would have been at the heart of this invitation, and not the welfare of the man of God. Once again, the writer takes the reader to his central focus of the word of the Lord. Jeroboam discovered that he was confronted by a man who refused to consider any compromise as far as God's word was concerned, vv. 8-9. The latter understood that eating with the king would have been a sign of close fellowship with him and tantamount to supporting the evil system that he represented. All

the ground that he had won in the confrontation at Bethel would have been lost in a moment. The word of the Lord commanded him to avoid such a disastrous course of action and he obeyed, v. 10. It is not clear why he returned home another way. It might well have been to avoid anyone following him and bringing him back to do something inconsistent with what the Lord had given him to do.

Discrediting the word of the Lord, vv. 11-18

As the man of God went on his way, 'an old prophet in Bethel' appeared on the scene, v. 11. It is not clear whether he was a genuine prophet or not. Whether his motives for pursuing after the man of God and inviting him home were worthy or not is not stated. Once again, the historian's main focus was on the word of the Lord. The old prophet rode upon an ass and found the man of God 'sitting under an oak', vv. 13-14. The word 'oak' means 'strength'. Sadly, it proved to be a place of weakness for the man of God. The delay in his journey allowed the prophet to catch up with him. His invitation did not hold out the same attraction of a reward as the one Jeroboam had issued, v. 15. However, he responded in similar fashion: 'I may not return with thee' v.16. Once again, he showed his commitment to obeying God's word.

The old prophet's response was a total abuse of God's word, v. 18. Whatever his motives might have been, his lie ruined the testimony of the man of God and led to his death. It is almost unbelievable that, if he were a genuine prophet, he would have paraded a lie as the word of the Lord. Yet, this is precisely what Jeroboam had done. He managed to deceive the people into believing that his counterfeit religious system was acceptable to God; however, it could equally have been said of him, 'But he lied unto them'.



OF JUDAH | Kings 13

Disobeying the word of the Lord, vv. 19-25

The statement is simple, but tragic: 'So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water', v. 19. After withstanding the overtures of Jeroboam, the man of God fell to the lie of an old discredited prophet. All that he had gained in Bethel, he lost as he returned there and sat at table in the prophet's house, v. 20. He ought to have known that the word of a prophet who was still living in Bethel could not be trusted. He ought also to have appreciated that the word of God never contradicts itself. His experience warns believers that it does not matter who a person is or whom they claim has spoken to them; if what they say does not match up to the word of God, it is a lie and must be rejected. The message to him from the Lord was unequivocal: 'Thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers', vv. 21-22.

One of the most remarkable features about this message of judgement is that it came from the lips of the old prophet, vv. 20-21. It mattered not whether he were a true or false prophet, the sovereign Lord can speak through whom He chooses, cp. Num. 22. 9-12. Nevertheless, it emphasized the tragedy of the situation that the Lord used the man through whom He could not speak to Jeroboam at Bethel to denounce the disobedience of the one through whom He did speak.

Many find it hard to justify the harsh judgement meted out to the man of God, whereas the old prophet appears to have escaped unscathed; however, it must be viewed in its context to gain a true understanding. The man of God had been sent by the Lord to pronounce judgement upon Jeroboam for his disobedience to the word of the Lord. He had discharged that great responsibility faithfully, but now he stood guilty of the same charge. There was more at stake than

one personal act of disobedience. By so doing he had besmirched the testimony, discredited the word of the Lord, and nullified the impact of His message on Jeroboam. Jeroboam could have concluded that if a man of God had disregarded God's word, then he was perfectly justified in doing the same thing. However, the swift discipline meted out to the man of God was a warning to him that God is no respecter of persons when dealing with those who disobey Him.

It must have had a great impact upon the old prophet as he saddled the ass that took the man of God out to his death, v. 23. The historian records the outcome of the final journey: 'And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase', v. 24. This miraculous scene was proof that God was in control. The departure of the man of God was a powerful witness to all in the city of the consequences of disobeying the word of the Lord. If events had been permitted to take their natural course, the lion would have devoured both the man of God and the ass. Far from this being the case, the people were able to relate a scene that would have captured the interests of the inhabitants of Bethel, reached the king's ears and, hopefully, pricked consciences.

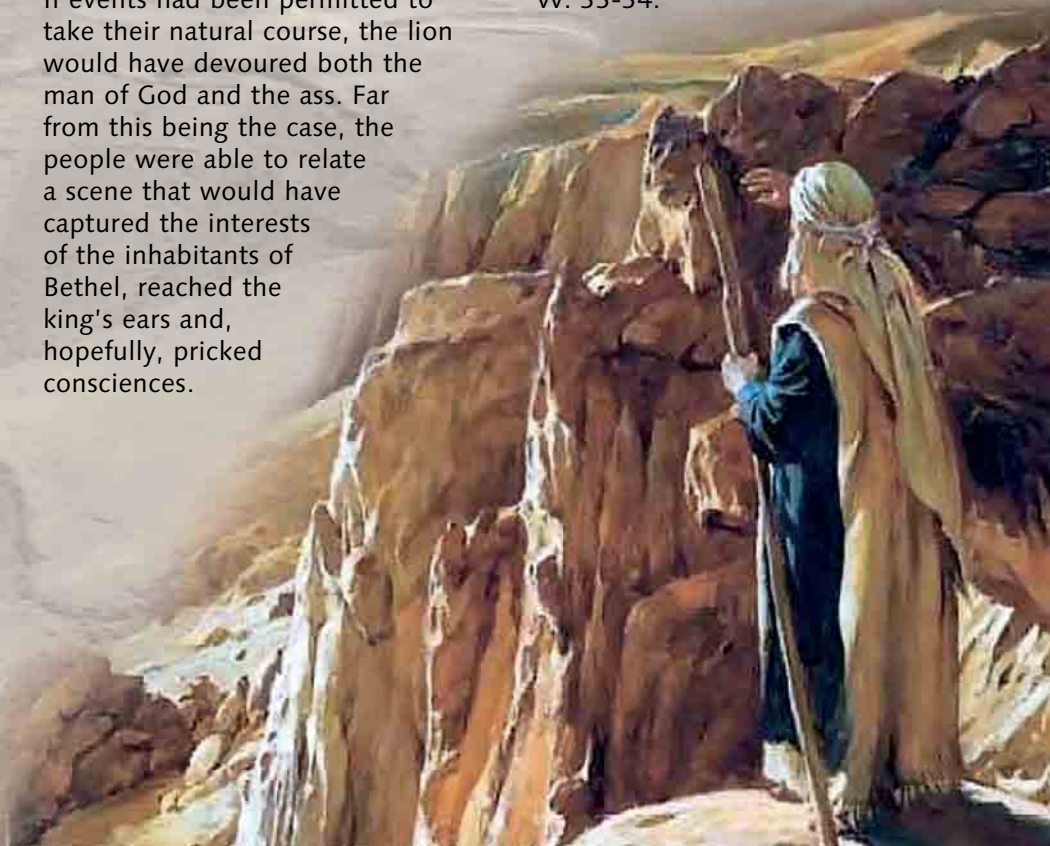
Returning to the word of the Lord, vv. 26-32

There are strong indications that the old prophet's conscience was genuinely stirred by what had happened and that he had respect for the man of God. When he heard news of the strange sight outside the city, he was not slow to give the correct interpretation of events, v. 26. His encounter with the man of God in life had been brief, but his desire now was to be united with him in death. Once his sons had saddled him an ass, v. 27, 'he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass', v. 28. Miraculously, the lion did not prevent him from removing the carcase, vv. 29!

It is touching to note that when King Josiah arrived at Bethel three hundred years later to fulfil the prophecy, he saw the sepulchre where the two men were buried and said, 'Let no man move his bones', 2 Kgs. 23. 18.

Rejecting the word of the Lord, vv. 33-34

Sadly, the events recounted in the chapter did not move Jeroboam to repentance before the Lord, vv. 33-34.





JOTTINGS ON JABEZ 1 Chr. 4. 9-10

By **JOHN TINKLER** Red Row, Northumberland, England

In our reading of Holy Scripture we must confess that we may bypass the reading of genealogies. There are many in the Old Testament and only two in the New Testament.

Upon reading the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it is not long before we encounter a genealogy, chapter 4 verses 16 to 26 and again in the next chapter. To ignore these parts of scripture would leave us bereft of reading the lovely features of Enoch in chapter 5. Equally, First Chronicles chapters 1 to 9 are mainly genealogies. We could so easily 'skip' these chapters where, for many characters, little comment is made concerning them and we may be tongue-tied as to the correct pronunciation! It may be monotonous to read them, yet God in His wisdom presents different characters to make us stop and think, and be challenged. Jabez is one such person. As quickly as he appears in the sacred text he then 'vanishes'.

The chapter records the names of the sons of Judah, of which there are forty-four. Judah means praise.

The revelation of God's thoughts about him, v. 9

Scripture reveals that Jabez was 'more honourable than his brethren'. An expression recorded five times in the Old Testament.¹ Could it be in respect of his wealth or his character? One thing is certain, he rose above his circumstances. He stood out in his day and certainly in this passage of scripture. It is interesting to note that this feature of his life comes before the reason why he was so named Jabez.

The reason why his mother gave him his name, v. 9

His mother bore him 'with sorrow'. There is a play on his name in his prayer 'that it may not grieve me', which literally means, 'that I may have no more sorrow'. By naming him 'Jabez', was it because of the personal or spiritual circumstances of his mother? We cannot be dogmatic but, for whatever reason, he was to carry that name for all his life and, despite this, he was more honourable than his brethren in the character he

displayed before God and men and in his communion with God.

The record of his only prayer in scripture, v. 10

Only thirty-three words in the King James Version text. Thus, his prayer is marked out by its shortness, its simplicity, its sincerity and its spirituality.

a) His communion with the living God

The way Jabez is introduced is very different to what has gone before and what follows after. There is the repetition of 'the son of' or 'sons of' or 'the firstborn', or 'the father of' but none is recorded of Jabez. What he lacked in human companionship he made up for by communion with his God – the God of Israel.

b) His call

The tenses imply that this was a continuous prayer. It was a prayer from the heart in line with God's desire in relation to the nation as a whole and the Davidic kingdom in particular. Yet, for us, James reminds us that 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much', Jas. 5. 16.

c) His conciseness

Jabez recognized the privilege of prayer, as the hymn writer urges us, 'Take it to the Lord in prayer'. Elihu said to Job of one who had been delivered from sin, 'he shall pray unto God and he will be favourable unto him', Job 33. 26. Notice his positive action – he prayed.

His prayer suggests that there is nothing wrong with requesting God to bless us specifically. God delights to bless His people and 'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich and he addeth no sorrow with it', Prov. 10. 22. Jabez requested that God might 'enlarge his coast', to widen his vision and for his boundaries to be extended. He sought God's provision of the geographical and territorial. There is the challenge for us to pray for divine provision that God might enlarge our spiritual boundaries! He was not content with his spiritual condition. Are we content with ours?

d) His concern

Apart from divine provision, Jabez sought for a sense of the divine presence, 'that thine hand might be with me'. He demonstrated complete dependence upon God. He may have sought bounties from the Lord but there is nothing greater than to enjoy fellowship with the living God. David acknowledged it when he wrote, 'Thou art with me', Ps. 23. 4.

That he might continue to enjoy the divine presence, Jabez also prayed for divine preservation and protection, 'that thou wouldest keep me from evil'; 'that it may not grieve me'. He recognized his need. 'Beloved, follow not that which is evil but that which is good', 3 John 11.

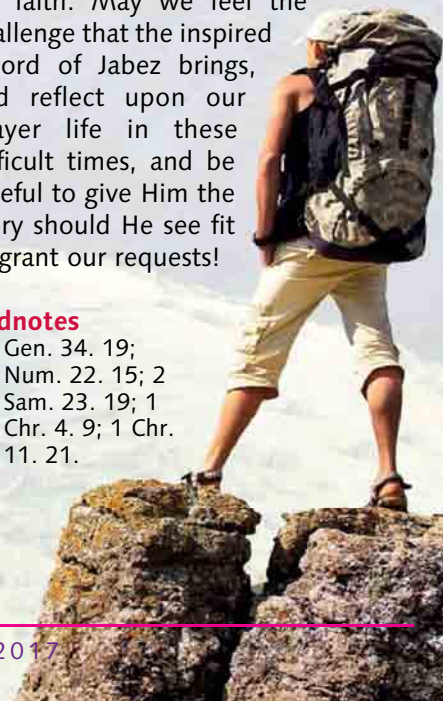
The response of God to his prayer, v. 10

As Jabez was specific in the expression of his need, it would be good to take note, that our prayers might have specific requests. Remember the principles taught by the Lord when the disciples asked, 'Lord teach us to pray', Luke 11. 1, and, in what Christendom calls 'the Lord's prayer', it should be noted, 'Thy will', 'Give us', 'forgive us', 'lead us', and 'deliver us', mirroring something of Jabez's prayer.

Our God has not changed. God hears and answers prayer. Eternity will reveal in what ways Jabez's prayer was answered. God is willing to hear our prayers and answer according to His will and purpose. God honoured his faith. May we feel the challenge that the inspired record of Jabez brings, and reflect upon our prayer life in these difficult times, and be careful to give Him the glory should He see fit to grant our requests!

Endnotes

- 1 Gen. 34. 19; Num. 22. 15; 2 Sam. 23. 19; 1 Chr. 4. 9; 1 Chr. 11. 21.





CHRIST in ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY

By JOHN GRIFFITHS
Port Talbot, Wales

(3)

(VI) THE APPROACH OF THE LORD to Jerusalem, 9. 9, 10.

(i) Christ's first advent – the character of the coming one, v. 9

The historic fulfilment of this prophecy, recorded in all four gospels, shows the people's rejoicing and exultation turning to rejection and enmity. Furthermore, their expectation of a rampant lion-king turned to exasperation as this rather lowly king came riding into Jerusalem. They dreamt of majesty not meekness.

Israel had had no king since their captivity. When God presented them with their prophesied Messiah they rejected Him. He failed to measure up to their mental image of Him; no beauty, no form, no comeliness, Isa. 53. 2. They were looking for an Alexander the Great kind of Messiah, 9. 1-8, not the atoning type, 'having salvation'.

A large multitude of the common people rejoiced and shouted as their King commenced His 'triumphal entry' into Jerusalem. They strewed their garments and palm branches along His pathway and hailed Him, 'Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest', Matt. 21. 9. All the inhabitants of Jerusalem could manage was 'Who is this?' The chief priests and scribes were 'sore displeased' at the children in the temple chusing, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'. Soon their chanting would resound, 'Away with him, crucify him'. 'We will not have this man to reign over us'.

How unique the description of their King. Most kings were corrupt but He is just and righteous, not only intrinsically but practically. He was accompanied by salvation. In context, this would have been Israel's deliverance but, because they spurned their King, they will have to wait until 'he appear

the second time unto salvation', Heb. 9. 28. His position is one of lowliness, of meekness and humility. His chosen method of transport underscores His lowly disposition. At His second advent, it will be the great white war steed, Rev. 19. 11. Is it not amazing that all creation and every creature were subject to Him, even the ass, but not Israel, not mankind! The hymn-writer concluded, 'Only man is vile'!

Israel, in apostasy, unlike the ass, refused the authority and control of its Messiah.¹ How sad! Israel, 'my firstborn' were akin to the ass of Exodus chapter 13 verse 13. The firstborn was set apart for God. The ass, however, being unclean could only be set apart for the Lord if a sacrificial lamb was offered for its cleansing. If no lamb was offered the ass's neck was broken. Israel rejected the One who came, having salvation, and fell under the judgement of God in AD 70 when Jerusalem was sacked and burnt. They lost their land, they have no king, they are 'not my people', their house is left unto them desolate until the fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness, 13. 1.

The posture of Christ is literally 'sitting' rather than 'riding'. The seated position speaks of authority. People stood to read but sat to teach. Revelation chapters 14-20 depict Christ sitting on a white cloud, horse and throne, emphasizing His authority. This scene is a fulfilment of the prophetic word; the wild ass was subject to Christ; the disciples and onlookers with the temple children all declared that He was the Son of David and acknowledged their King. The leaders of the nation disapproved as predicted.

Between verses 9 and 10 we have to fit in this present church age; for verse 10 takes us forward to events following the second advent.

(ii) Christ's second advent – the consequences of His coming, v. 10

(a) *The Invincibility of the King, 'I will cut off'*

Ephraim represents the ten tribes and Jerusalem the two-and-a-half tribes into which the nation was divided after the demise of Solomon. In this connection, Ezekiel takes the sceptres of Ephraim and Judah and holds them together as one to illustrate the reunion of the divided nation, Ezek. 37. 19. Contextually, Christ will disarm the whole of a reunited nation.

(b) *The Imposition of Peace, 'He shall speak peace unto the heathen'.* His speaking is with the voice of authority. He is not negotiating peace, He is demanding peace. Armaments of war are converted into agricultural implements. Peace reigns for 1000 years. The heathen, Gentile nations, are subject to Christ's sovereignty as much as Israel.

(c) *The Imperiousness of Messiah, 'His dominion shall be . . .'*

The extent of the fifth and final world empire is established. The quote is from Psalm 72 verse 8. The river is indubitably the Euphrates which figures in Bible prophecy. The devil, in the temptation in the wilderness, offered all the kingdoms of this world to Christ. But Christ had a much better offer from Jehovah, Ps. 2. 8.

'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;

His kingdom stretch
from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax
and wane no more',

ISAAC WATTS.

The division of the Nation into two kingdoms will be reversed. The sorrows of the tribulation will be swallowed up in peace. The sway of Antichrist will be terminated as the King of kings reigns. The scattering of the Jews to the four quarters of the earth will be reversed, 'Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of (the) hope', 9. 12.

Endnotes

¹ Earlier in scripture we learn of an ass that had greater foresight than the 'prophet' Balaam. Here, an ass that had greater sensitivity than the chosen nation.



Having seen that chapter 4 brings before us the desire of the Lord for unity among the saints and having provided what is necessary to see that unity carried out among us, we now see verses that manifest how we should live to make a display of that unity among us.

Ephesians

Chapter 4 verses 17-34

By **NORMAN MELLISH** Stoke-on-Trent, England

The final verses of the chapter bring before us three major thoughts:

1. Our Past Condition – Degeneration, 4. 17-19;
2. Our Present Change – Regeneration, 4. 20-24;
3. Our Future Conduct – Transformation, 4. 25-32.

1) Our past condition – degeneration

We are reminded of our origins in verse 17 as the apostle has a word in season from the Lord regarding our walk. This must not be characterized by how we lived in a former day as Gentiles. It is to be noticed that we are not seen as Gentiles now; the word 'other' is not in the text, v. 17. Therefore, he instructs us not to walk like them in the vanity of their mind.

Gentiles are in mental darkness and spiritual death as they are alienated from the life of God. The rejection of the divine revelation has brought about this condition. This is put succinctly in Romans chapter 1 verse 21, 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened'. If the mental condition is seen in verse 18, their moral corruption is exposed in verse 19.

The fallen condition of man is emphasized by his physical depravity; having no sense of shame, which is openly manifested in our day, they are 'past feeling', v. 19. This carries the thought of being beyond pain. I recall a number of years ago when I fell and broke my ankle. I never forget the initial pain, but soon that pain subsided as the senses were numbed; such are the feelings of men.

Not only have men no sense of shame but they give themselves over to abandoned sensuality, as

they give themselves to all forms of immorality. This is characterized by uncleanness and an insatiable appetite for their unbridled lust. Notice that it is said, 'to work all', v. 19; every effort and energy is put into the activities they desire. How sad is such reading, expressing as it does what we were before divine intervention transformed us?

2) Our present change – regeneration

I write regeneration for whereas new birth is new life, regeneration is a new state of things.¹ The transformation begins when we have an appreciation of Christ, as verse 20 reveals.

Though we came to know Him as a glorified man, the truth was displayed in His life among us, hence the expression 'as the truth is in Jesus', v. 21. It would seem that the truth desired is that of living a practical and holy Christian life, the kind of life that was displayed in the Lord Jesus as He passed through this world. The Lord is looking for a life of purity, such as that seen in the movements of the Lord on earth. Our former life of verses 18-19 was far removed from that of the Lord in His humanity.

Abolish the Old Man, 4. 22

As the chapter has the thought of unity running through it, we come to features in a Christian's life that can mar the unity of the body. That is when features of the old man are seen in us. It is for this reason that Paul declares that 'ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man', v. 22. The primary thought is that this is something already done, 'having put off'; this happened at conversion. The former character of life being dealt with through the death of Christ, it is a fact done. Our conversation is simply our manner of life, how we

lived. This is transformed through salvation, and its features should not be seen again. The old man refers to all I was in Adam. In Romans chapter 6 verse 6 we have his death, and in Colossians chapter 3 verse 9 his deeds. Now, we see his desires and all must be dealt with.

Activity of the mind, 4. 23

The transformation for the believer begins in the mind. How different the thought life of the believer has to be from his former days! As we saw in verse 17, the vanity of the mind controlled our actions then; we are now called to realize how the mind has a great effect on our Christian living.

Abound in the new man, 4. 24

When the verse bids us to 'put on the new man', the thought is the same as in verse 22. In both cases it is an act done, 'having put off', v. 22, and now, 'having put on' JND. This was done on conversion's day when we became new creatures in Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. 5. 17. This new man is divine in origin and is new in character and constitution (*kainos*). The features of the new man will be seen and developed in verses 25-32, and will be displayed in the life of those transformed by salvation. We see that the very nature of the new man is 'after God', that is, in God's image. As the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we have another work of creation that brings us into conformity with Him who created us in righteousness and true holiness.

To maintain unity the tongue is the first member dealt with, v. 25. How much strife and division has been caused by believers not controlling the tongue! As God cannot lie, so, as believers, we must follow His character and not seek to deceive



our neighbour, fellow-believers, as seen in the third expression in the verse, 'for we are members one of another'. The word 'member' is 'limb or part of the body' STRONG, indicating that Paul is carrying on the thought of unity in this verse.

It is evident why the apostle would speak of the control of our temper in verse 26. Many a Christian community has been badly damaged because of the lack of control of the temper. Even though we must not sin when provoked, we must not sleep on injury done, for if we carry our passion to bed with us, we will find the devil beneath the covers! What was anger will turn to seething, and seething to enmity, and enmity will soon become hatred.

The tyrant is introduced, v. 27, teaching us that we must not leave room for the devil to put division between the saints by our tongue or our temper.

Now our trade is introduced: Christianity transforms a man's character. The person before us seems to be one who made a habit of providing for his needs by theft. He is called, in Darby's translation, 'the stealer'. Such practice must cease when one is born of God. He must use his hands in a very positive way. Rather than for stealing, by hard work, for such is the thought of 'labour', putting energy into his activities, he now has the means, not to take, but to give to him that has need. Generally, a thief is an idle man who only

exerts himself when on his nefarious business of making an easy living. A Christian ought to seek active employment that is compatible with his position in Christ. Not every kind of work is suitable for a believer; it must be 'that which is good', v. 28. The word 'good' indicates that it must be good in disposition and quality, something excellent. His work is with a view to being able to give to others and not take from them. The purpose of his life is 'that he may have to give to him that needeth', v. 28. Giving is akin to the heart of God who is ever giving. Some have confused Christianity with communism, saying they are both the same. There is a vast difference between the two! Communism says, 'What's yours is mine'. Christianity says, 'What's mine is yours'. Communism takes, Christianity gives.

Our teaching, the utterances we make, must be that which is good. This is the same word as in the previous verse, that which is good in principle and ethical.² In chapter 4 verse 28, it is 'good ways' that produce our earnings, as we help those in need. Now it is 'good words' that must proceed out of our mouths.

The use of the tongue is emphasized in these practical verses in the epistle. We have seen how we must put away lying in verse 25, how the tongue must be used for edifying our fellow believers. The tongue must not be used for foolish jesting in chapter 5 verse 4, but rather to thank God with, and, in chapter 5 verse 12,

it is in relation to the world when we do not speak lightly of the secret things of iniquity, as this is a shame upon us.

If our lives are not consistent with the holy calling that we have, we find that this is a grief to the Holy Spirit within. It is, literally, a trial for the Spirit of God to bear with the misdemeanours of the saints, hence the appeal not to bring grief to Him by allowing the features of the old man to control us. We have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and this is the guarantee of our future salvation and a proof that we cannot be lost.

Our traits are now manifested and we are confronted with vices that arise from disputes and enmity between people. They are caused by an evil disposition that lies within, and, invariably, rise because we would want our own way in our affairs with one another.

It is easy to see how wrath and anger will lead to clamour, which is a shouting down of those we are opposed to. All this will lead to 'evil speaking', v. 31, literally to blaspheme the name of an opponent, seeking to run down their character to all who will give ear.

Finally, there should be tenderness seen by all. This is followed by a pleasant, caring nature, tender-hearted. No bitterness here, and no malice; rather, to be sympathetic and full of compassion. These are Christian graces that should be seen in every believer. We are to have a pardonable spirit, as we may have to cover a multitude of sins, 1 Peter 4. 8. We should have a forgiving nature, not holding a grudge. We must have kind and tender-heartedness, for love cares.

Endnotes

- 1 The word is found in Matthew chapter 19 verse 28 and Titus chapter 3 verse 5, both bringing before us the new state of things.
- 2 It is found also in chapter 2 verse 10 where we must produce 'good works'.



It is quite clear from the passages referenced that it was the practice of the early church to give letters of commendation to those who were either moving permanently from one area to another or when they were visiting on a temporary basis. I take it that in Acts chapter 18 it was the mind of Apollos to reside in the region of Achaia for some time and thus the brethren wrote a letter commending him to that area. In Romans chapter 16, it would appear that Phoebe was only visiting Rome from Cenchrea and, therefore, the commendation was temporary. The same would apply to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, as he would only be visiting Corinth on a temporary basis. However, we see that letters of commendation were used for both permanent and temporary circumstances.

Are letters of commendation necessary?

As they are found in the scriptures in the practice of the early church, then it would seem appropriate that they should be used today. From what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 1 and 2, he was recognizing the principle that others, when they visited Corinth from elsewhere, needed to bring with them letters of commendation. However, because Paul had been used of God to found the assembly at Corinth, he did not require such a letter to them.

Who does the commending?

In normal circumstances the answer to the question is 'the assembly' to which the person being commended belongs. It is not the overseers who commend but the assembly or local church. The elders may write and sign the letter but they are doing so on behalf of the whole assembly, which is normally made clear at the end of the letter. It may be noted that in Acts chapter 18 it was not Aquila and Priscilla who commended Apollos but 'the brethren' who wrote 'exhorting

Letters of Commendation

By **ALAN MAUNDER** Cardiff, Wales

The references

the disciples to receive him', v. 27. It would be wise practice for responsible elders to write the letter and for at least two of them to sign it on behalf of the whole assembly. When the letter is for a permanent commendation then the assembly should be informed that such a letter is being given. The principle should always be 'let all things be done decently and in order', 1 Cor. 14. 40.

There were times when an individual commended another. For example,

Paul wrote in Romans chapter 16 verse 1, 'I commend unto you Phebe'. It should be said that here was one with apostolic authority and such authority is not vested in anyone today. We do, however, find another individual speaking for someone who was seeking to be received into fellowship – Saul of Tarsus in Acts chapter 9, when he tried to join himself to the assembly at Jerusalem. Clearly, the assembly was not happy to receive him on his own commendation, but Barnabas





Commendation

for this article are: Acts 18. 24-28; Romans 16. 1-2; 2 Corinthians 3. 1-3

vouched for his genuineness. If, for some reason, it has been impossible for a letter of commendation to be obtained, there should be no reason why an individual should not vouch for the one seeking fellowship. This assumes that the individual giving assurance is either in fellowship, or is well-known to the receiving assembly and knows the individual and his or her circumstances well.

What should the letter of commendation include?

It is evident from Romans chapter 16 that Phebe's letter was very personal to her. Paul mentions things about her that would not have been true of others. The example set before us in scripture is that each letter should commend the person or persons in a personal way, stating something of their spiritual experience and exercise of gift. A letter of commendation on these lines would give the receiving assembly confidence to give a believer every opportunity for the exercise of their gift.

A letter of commendation also provides an opportunity for sending the greetings of the saints in the commending assembly to those in the receiving assembly. On a very practical note, because letters of commendation have been known to be misused, it is a wise practice to date every letter that is written.

Does one always need a letter of commendation?

Although we have sought to show the value of letters of commendation, it is important to avoid legality, particularly when it comes to a temporary commendation. Although it could be said that it saves much trouble and embarrassment if a letter of commendation is always taken, there will be times when a letter is not essential. For example, if I visit another assembly this coming weekend and, four weeks later, I have occasion to visit again, I would not think it necessary to take a

second letter of commendation. However, if I were visiting that same assembly again in twelve months' time, I would think it right and proper to take another letter, because my circumstances could have changed during that time. Similarly, if, as a speaker, I was invited by an assembly to be with them for a weekend, I think it would be legal for that assembly to insist on a letter. After all, they should have verified my credentials before they invited me to speak in the first place!

There is also the instance when a believer may have suddenly been called to an area in an emergency (for example, to visit a relative who was seriously ill) and so had no time to obtain a letter before they left. In such a situation, it would be unwise and uncaring for an assembly to take a legal stand and always insist on a letter in every circumstance. Again, if there is an individual in the receiving assembly who knows the believer concerned, there should be no reason for excluding that individual from the fellowship because they do not have a letter of commendation. If one is a complete stranger to the assembly and has been unable to obtain a letter, it is important not to generate concern in the receiving assembly who have a responsibility to protect it from danger. In such instances, a gracious response would be to not participate in whatever gathering is attended.

Should a letter of commendation always be accepted on face value?

A letter of commendation should always be accepted for what it is. It would be wrong not to accept it unless someone in the receiving assembly makes it known that they are aware of moral or doctrinal problems. Sadly today, I think the answer to our question may well be 'no'. We are living in strange days when some assemblies have grown lax in relation to doctrine and morality. As a result, many

now make it their practice, when receiving letters of commendation regarding believers who are seeking to settle in an area permanently, to say to those bringing them that they are happy for them to be received initially, but that some of the overseers would like to visit them in their home in order to enquire further. This will overcome many problems and save much embarrassment. By taking a letter at face value and receiving a person or persons who are carrying it, we may unwittingly receive into fellowship someone who holds serious doctrinal error.

This may seem legal or harsh. However, we must remember that the elders in the receiving assembly have a responsibility before the Lord in respect to their own company. To fail to exercise that responsibility properly would be to displease the Lord and put at risk fellow believers in Christ. After all, those received are, in effect, given all the privileges of assembly fellowship and, for the brethren, opportunity to teach the saints. Such a privilege should be given wisely and exercised wisely!

When should letters of commendation be read to the assembly?

It should be said initially that there is no point in the commending assembly going to the trouble of writing a letter and sending their greetings if the letter is not read out to the gathered company by the receiving assembly.

There is a very simple answer to this question but it may not be the one that most people would expect: at the first meeting the person bringing the letter attends, whether that be the prayer meeting, the Bible-teaching meeting, or the breaking of bread. Most people would expect the answer to be 'the breaking of bread' meeting, because that is standard practice amongst many companies. Why is that? Because the letter of commendation is looked upon as being 'a passport' to break bread! This is not the case, because you cannot be received to an ordinance. Therefore, as the letter is commending an individual to the full fellowship of the assembly the letter can be read at any of the gatherings.



The example of Christ to follow

Philip of Bethsaida is one of the privileged few who had the opportunity to live in close proximity to our Lord Jesus Christ during his years of public ministry. We so easily underestimate this privilege of viewing, day by day, in every possible circumstance of life, one who lived in full obedience to, and full dependence on His God and Father, one who in every situation displayed with full clarity that He is from above and above all – not of the earth – but truly the Lord from Heaven, John 3. 31.

- Philip **observed** the Lord, who, despite being omniscient, opened His ear morning by morning to hear as the instructed one, Isa. 50. 4.
- Philip **listened** to the Lord, who, despite being omnipotent, could say, 'I have not spoken of myself; but the father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak', John 12. 49. In total obedience, our Lord Jesus did only the works His Father gave Him to do and only moved in obedience to His Father's desire.
- Philip **witnessed** the Lord in all circumstances of life. Even in times of public acclaim, when the crowds welcomed Him into Jerusalem crying 'Hosanna', and would have made Him King, He never wavered in his full obedience to and dependence on God His Father.

As opposition arose and the leaders plotted the Saviour's downfall, they came again and again to try Him with hard questions and to find fault – but His obedience and dependence is unfaltering. Philip may not have witnessed Christ in the Garden lying prostrate on the ground as He cried 'Not my will, but thine be done', yet still the perfect example was laid down consistently in every moment of the Lord's life on earth. What an example laid down for Philip and all His disciples.

Philip did have the privilege of being in the Upper Room as our Lord Jesus signified in such a clear way that it was His delight to be obedient to the Father. Taking the emblems, speaking of His body to be broken, and blood to be shed, He freely gives thanks to

THEIR FINEST HOUR PHILIP

God before so willingly distributing to the disciples with the words 'Given for you', Luke 22. 19.

The purpose of such privileges in the life of Philip was to teach him the importance of Christ-like obedience and dependence on God in the changing circumstances of life. While he would not have appreciated the significance of them all at the time, they would be a treasury of learning to call upon at the required time. I believe the specific recorded incidences in the life of Philip show how he develops from the Lord's example, bringing him to his finest hour in Christ-like behaviour.

The time of training

Philip appears on the scene at the beginning of John's gospel with the simple request of Christ to 'Follow me', John 1. 43 – the start of a life of learning at the feet of Christ. A first, simple instruction from the lips of Christ must be followed without question before further guidance is given. Although we know little of his life before this, his reaction gives insight into the mind of Philip prior to the call of Christ. With deep understanding and evangelistic instinct, he quickly finds Nathanael and declares to him, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write', John 1. 45. This is suggestive of an intimate knowledge of the word of God, leading to an understanding of the One who was coming. It is also

suggestive of a life seeking after the promised One.

Nathanael is another who seems to have been seeking. In response to the question of Nathanael, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip believes a meeting with Christ will be the evidence required to the genuine seeker, as he declares, 'come and see'. Whatever Nathanael's experience alone with God under the fig tree, he was totally convinced he was in the presence of the Christ as the Lord Jesus makes mention of it.

The next mention of Philip follows a time of learning for the twelve. They are sent out two-by-two, with the clear instruction to take nothing with them, but that they should preach and heal, Luke 9. 2. This gives them the opportunity to build, through experience, their ability to depend upon God in simple obedience. They returned rejoicing in what God had done through them, sharing with the Lord Jesus all that was accomplished.

The Lord then takes them apart from the multitude to be alone with Himself, but a great multitude of five thousand men beside women and children follow Him. It is John's Gospel that highlights the fact that Jesus uses this opportunity to 'prove' Philip, John 6. 6. Seeing the great multitude approach, He asks Philip, 'whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?' Philip's response

By
**STUART
McGAHIE**
Tayport,
Scotland





is that two hundred pennyworth of bread is not enough that every one of them **may take a little**. Luke reminds us that the desert place belonged unto the city of Bethsaida. Philip, coming from the area, would have had the knowledge of what resources were available in the city. I believe the Lord was testing how dependent they were upon God to provide following their experience in being sent forth. This is the first of two lessons that Philip had to learn. Dependence on God will not be limited by natural resource. At this stage in his development, his immediate response still considers natural resources, and limits the provision to all receiving a little. Our Lord Jesus never leaves anyone partially satisfied, but fully meets every need. The second lesson quickly comes as the time of testing is not yet finished. What follows is a challenge of obedience to all the disciples as the Lord commands, 'Give ye them to eat', Mark 6. 37. This is the simple test of obedience, believing that Christ will never command the impossible but always provide the power and means to those who seek to obey. None of the disciples, Philip included, have yet realized the importance of obeying every request of Christ.

Later, as the Lord begins to prepare His disciples for His departure, He promises that 'if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself', John 14. 3. Thomas is the first to respond that they don't know where He is going. The Lord's response highlights that He is the only way to the Father, and that knowledge of the Father is knowledge of Him. At this point Philip interjects with the simple request, 'Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us'. I believe this is an important point in the development and progress of Philip's dependence and obedience,

an understanding of the one they are expected to depend on with simple obedience. The greater his appreciation of the person of Christ, the stronger will be his desire to obey every command.

The finest hour

The Lord's departure brings a time of real persecution for the church. Yet through the difficult circumstances, the gospel flourishes, souls are saved, baptized and added daily. Acts chapter 8 begins with the evidence of great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, resulting in the believers being 'scattered' abroad. Interestingly, the origin of the word used for scattering, is closely associated with being 'sown'. Therefore, we can see the purpose of God being fulfilled through the difficulties with individuals being sown by God to further the spread of the gospel.

Following the scattering, Philip goes down into Samaria preaching Christ. What follows is a time of real blessing, with the evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit being shown in many miracles through the hands of Philip. Demons are cast out, those who are sick know healing and there is great joy through the city. News of the blessing reaches the ears of the apostles at Jerusalem and they send Peter and John down to Samaria, who, through prayer and laying on of hands, are involved in the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the believers in Samaria.

Humanly speaking, this must be considered as a finest hour experience: seeing the blessing of the gospel preached with such strong evidences of God using Philip in His purpose; the church being developed; God's power displayed in such a real way; and a whole city filled with the joy of

the Lord. However, I believe Philip's finest hour is found further down the chapter. 'And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went', Acts 8. 26-27.

What an opportunity for Philip's training at the feet of Christ to come to fruition. Acknowledging the truth of 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 7, 'So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase', he willingly moved on from such a scene of blessing, knowing it was a work of God and not dependent on him, to show simple obedience to the call of the Lord. Notice the nature of the call:

1. 'Arise' – requiring immediate obedience in response.
2. 'Go toward the south' – requiring dependence on God for further direction.
3. 'Which is desert' – requiring dependence on God for provision and sustenance.

Without knowledge of what was required of him, or the purpose of God in his going, Philip arose and went. Leaving behind scenes of blessing, where the work of God was flourishing, this simple step of immediate obedience is the evidence of a life fully given over to Christ. The nature of the call gives specific direction, but no final destination or purpose. Philip doesn't seem to delay, but immediately responds by heading south to the desert place, with full dependence on God to direct and provide. We know that God uses his simple response to reach out to a seeking soul, ensuring there is one who can carry the gospel into the continent of Africa. However, the finest hour of Philip will never be measured by the souls that were saved, but rather his obedience and dependence on Christ. It seems that the training of Christ is all leading up to this moment in the life of Philip. What a reminder to us that God expects us to be attentive to His call, expecting us to be fully obedient with a dependent spirit. May God help us to be Christ-like as displayed in the life of Philip!

STUART MCGAHIE is in fellowship with the assembly at Tayport, Scotland. This is his first article for *Precious Seed International*.



SYSTEMATIC TRACT WORK

Plodding around the streets of any town or city can be a dispiriting affair. Whether you choose to knock on each door and try and speak to the occupants before offering them a gospel leaflet, or merely post it through the letterbox, the process is time consuming and energy sapping. However, the purpose of this article is to stimulate continued effort to reach lost souls with the only message of salvation.

How

If we are to be effective in this particular aspect of gospel outreach it is important that we plan the activity. Some different approaches include:

1. Drawing a circle working out from the hall/building in which the assembly meets, to define an area to be covered;
2. Within a village explore the distribution of tracts in neighbouring villages, or, in a town, covering estates that might not be covered by the approach in (1) above;
3. Some specific event that occurs within the local community that draws people into the locality of the hall.

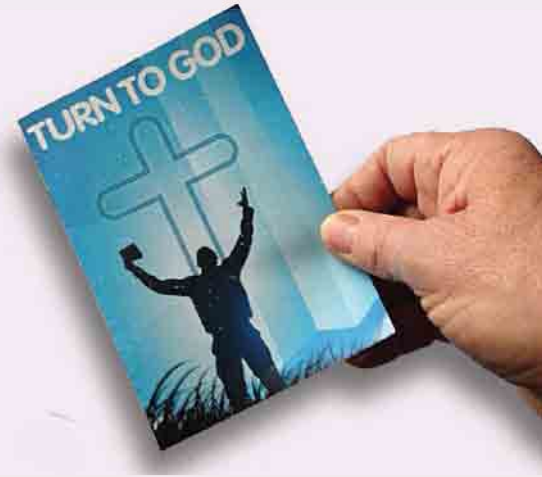
One of the advantages of online mapping sites is that an area that you plan to cover with tracts can be explored and the number of houses to be covered determined beforehand. In that way an accurate figure for how many tracts will be needed, as well as how long a particular area might take to cover can be determined. If those who are giving out literature work in pairs it is possible to cover between 200 and 300 houses in an hour, depending on the density of the housing and the methodology of distribution. When saints are already busy, it can be helpful if they know how long it will take to do what is asked!

If the work is being done in a relatively small community it can be helpful for those we are trying to reach to be able to identify with the distributor because it is a face they see on a reasonably regular basis, or because the distributor lives in that community.

What

Deciding what piece of literature to use for distribution is important. Looking through the items that we receive through our doors would indicate that considerable thought is given to their design and colourfulness. On that basis alone, it is vital that we seek to present the gospel message in a tract that attracts. It can be easy for our material to be discarded as just another piece of 'junk mail'. Equally, combating the barriers that are now on the inside of letterboxes can mean that the tract ends up on the floor as a crumpled and torn mess, ripped apart by the flaps and brushes meant to exclude a draught! A tract that is reasonably robust is desirable.

As there are various forms of literature available, we should also give thought to what outcome we desire from the distribution of the tracts. Are we inviting people to a specific meeting or a series of meetings? Are we, perhaps, focussing upon children's meetings, or a holiday Bible club? Are we pointing them to a website to listen to a message which they can download? Are we indicating that following the receipt of the tract someone may visit them to speak about eternal things? Are we inviting them to respond and request follow-up literature? As most people are no longer regular church-goers, inviting them to meetings may prove a fruitless exercise, unless it is a 'one-off' or something special. However, we must remember that our measure of 'success' is not how many people come to meetings as a consequence of the effort but how many have received the gospel in their homes!



When

For a regular tract work that covers a specific patch of a village, town, or city, it is easy to specify a day of the week or month, or a specific deadline by which each team must cover their area.

If the intention is to cover a village or estate not normally covered, some assemblies have found that organizing an 'evangelism day' can be a productive tool in accomplishing the task. When an assembly has become small, working with believers from other local assemblies can be a great encouragement. With the right planning and co-operation, those who may only be able to give an hour or two can get involved and benefit from the fellowship of a work in the gospel. Equally, it is a great impetus to the development of younger believers to get involved in this type of work.

Some assemblies have focused upon tract work associated with a major event in their community. For example, there are those who have opened up their hall and stood outside it with literature to reach those on the way to a match, whether football or rugby. Provided appropriate by-laws are observed, and wisdom is exercised as to the position of workers on the route into the stadium, such events have proved fruitful in terms of the number of people reached.

In every aspect of what has been described above, it is essential to leave the outcome of the work to God alone. He is sovereign and we may never see the fruits of the labours expended in His name. Let us not be 'weary in well doing', 2 Thess. 3. 13.



DEUTERONOMY

By **KEITH KEYSER** Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania, USA

Introduction

The name of the book: like the other parts of the Pentateuch, the title 'Deuteronomy' originates from the ancient Greek translation known as the Septuagint.¹ In Jewish tradition the book bears various names, including 'These are the words', 'Book of admonitions', 'This Law', 'The words of the covenant', and 'This commandment'.² Modern Jews refer to it simply as 'Debarim' – that is, 'Words'. All of these titles emphasize that this book is a direct communication from the Lord to His people Israel. He is giving His law – the Hebrew word 'Torah' also means 'Instruction'³ – to them in carefully chosen words.

The Purpose of the Book

As the fifth and final book of the Pentateuch, this book is an important transition from Israel's early history looking forward to their conquest of the land under Joshua. The book is a recapitulation of God's law with particular application to their impending occupation of Canaan. It emphasizes the oneness of the true and living God in contrast to the false deities of the nations that they were going to fight. It also holds forth the exalted ethics of the legal system that the Almighty designed to govern their individual and national lives.

Deuteronomy takes place over the course of one month and is Moses' farewell message to his people.⁴ He recounts the Lord's faithfulness in the past, charges them to obey Him in the present, and both warns and encourages them regarding the future. SHEARMAN offers this explanation of the book: 'Deuteronomy is a proclamation of Israel's laws. Moses spelt out the statutes and ordinances, and amplified them, that as the nation entered the new sphere of the Promised Land they would have no doubts as to the Lord's requirements. Some of the details now may seem trivial and irrelevant, yet they speak one message, "Holy laws for a holy

people!" Well-being for them and satisfaction for a holy God would be the result of their obedience'.⁵

The Lord Jesus quotes it more often than any other Old Testament book, and Paul regularly cites it to support his arguments for salvation and Christian living.⁶ KALLAND adds this: 'The theological value of Deuteronomy can hardly be exaggerated. It stands as the wellspring of biblical historical revelation. It is a prime source for both OT and NT theology. Whether the covenant, the holiness of God, or the concept of the people of God is the unifying factor of OT theology, each finds emphasis and remarkable definition in Deuteronomy'.⁷ The frequent citations of the book in the New Testament attest to its lasting value for God's people in all ages.⁸ Others compare it to the Gospel of John as a digest of the preceding forty years of history. Whereas Deuteronomy summarizes the Pentateuch's key doctrines, John brings together the key truths of the Gospels. Theologically, its systematic presentation of doctrine makes it the Old Testament equivalent of Romans. As a commentator remarks: '[L]ike the gospel of John, the book of Deuteronomy functions as a theological manifesto, calling on Israel to respond to God's grace with unreserved loyalty and love'.⁹

The Plan of the Book

Many Bible students notice that Deuteronomy uses the literary structure of an ancient suzerainty treaty – a covenant where a suppliant nation enters into an agreement with a more powerful nation. The book may be divided according to Moses' exhortations to the nation:

Moses' first sermon, Deut. 1 – 4;
Moses' second sermon, Deut. 5 – 28;
Moses' third sermon, Deut. 29 – 30;
The Conclusion of Moses' Life, Deut. 31 – 34.

FARSTAD and MACDONALD give a more detailed outline along similar lines.¹⁰

Others observe the parallelism of its chiastic structure:

- 'A. The Outer Frame: A Look Backward, Deut. 1–3
- B. The Inner Frame: The Great Peroration, Deut. 4–11
- C. The Central Core: Covenant Stipulations, Deut. 12–26
- B1. The Inner Frame: The Covenant Ceremony, Deut. 27–30
- A1. The Outer Frame: A Look Forward, Deut. 31–34'.¹¹

The Author and Date of the Book

Like the other books of the Pentateuch, Moses is identified throughout the Old and New Testaments as the author used by the Spirit of God's inspiration – see the sections on 'Author and Date' in Leviticus and Numbers. The celebrated historian PHILIP SCHAFF sums up the matter this way: 'There is no man in the whole subsequent history of Israel, as far as we know, who could at all account for the peculiarities of the Pentateuch near so well as the great lawgiver, who is the central figure of the book. Ezra, for instance, to whom some ultra-critics assign the authorship, never was in Egypt nor in the wilderness, and lived in the reproductive period of reconstruction or restoration of the theocracy founded by Jehovah through Moses centuries before. Thus from various sides we are led to feel not only that Moses has written the Pentateuch, but also that he was the only one who could have written it: and the objections have so much the less power, as a Mosaic authorship by no means excludes either the use of earlier documents or the addition of later notes'.¹²

Important Themes in the Book

- a) God's oneness and uniqueness.
- b) The Lord's covenant loyalty to His people – divine faithfulness.
- c) The exclusivity of the true and living God against idolatry.
- d) Compassion and justice in the land.
- e) Obedience leading to blessing,



CHARTING THE SCRIPTURES DEUTERONOMY by Jonathan

Deuteronomy - In Greek it is called *Deuteronomion* which means 'the second statement of the law'. In Hebrew it is called *Elle haddabharim*. It means, 'These are the words', taken from chapter 1 verse 1.



Mezuzah (Hebrew - doorpost). Today in many Jewish homes this is fixed to the door of the home containing a small scroll inscribed with the words:

'And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates'.
Deut. 6. 6-9; 11. 18-20.

Egypt > Kadesh = 2 years
Kadesh > Moab = 38 years
Total Journey = 40 years

God will raise up a prophet
Deut. 18. 15 / Acts 3. 22

Christ in Deuteronomy

Cursed is everyone that
hangeeth on a tree
Deut. 21. 23 / Acts 3. 22

Remember!

What you were in Egypt, 5. 15
God brought you out!

Remember!

What God did to Pharaoh, 7. 18
Don't fear the enemy

Remember!

The way the Lord led you, 8. 2
Walk in His ways

Remember!

You provoked the Lord to wrath,
It is God who goes before you

'As **obedient** children, not fashioning yourselves according to

'remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt', Deut. 15. 15

38 YEARS!

'There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea', Deut. 1. 2

'And the space in which we came from Kadesh barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years', Deut. 2. 14

Discourse 1

1-3 Retracing their course

Memories that count for God - 'at that time'

- 1 Retelling - the way from Horeb to Kadesh
- 2 Retracing - a wasted generation 38 years
- 3 Requesting - a wish Moses was refused

Discourse 2

4-11 Remembering the covenant

Moving according to the word of God 'this day'

- 4 Recalling - the conference at Mt. Horeb
- 5 Remembering the covenant from Horeb
- 6 Repeating the commandments to our children
- 7 Relying upon God for victory little by little
- 8 Remembering the way God has provided
- 9 Remembering how they provoked God
- 10 Requiring obedience to God
- 11 Realizing the blessing from God

12-28 Responding to the charge

Meeting in the place chosen by God 'this place'

- 12 Place of His name chosen
- 13 Price of departure
- 14 Purity of diet and paying of tithes
- 15 Principles of forgiveness and freedom
- 16 Passover kept and the feasts observed
- 17 Putting away & preparing the throne
- 18 Provision for the priests and the prophet
- 19 Preparing the place of refuge

*Remembering
Responding*

'And thou shalt eat bread
in the place which he shall choose'
Deut. 16. 16

Jesus Christ spoke of Deut.

Matt. 18. 16 'that in the mouth of two or three

Mark 12. 29 'The first of all the commandments is,

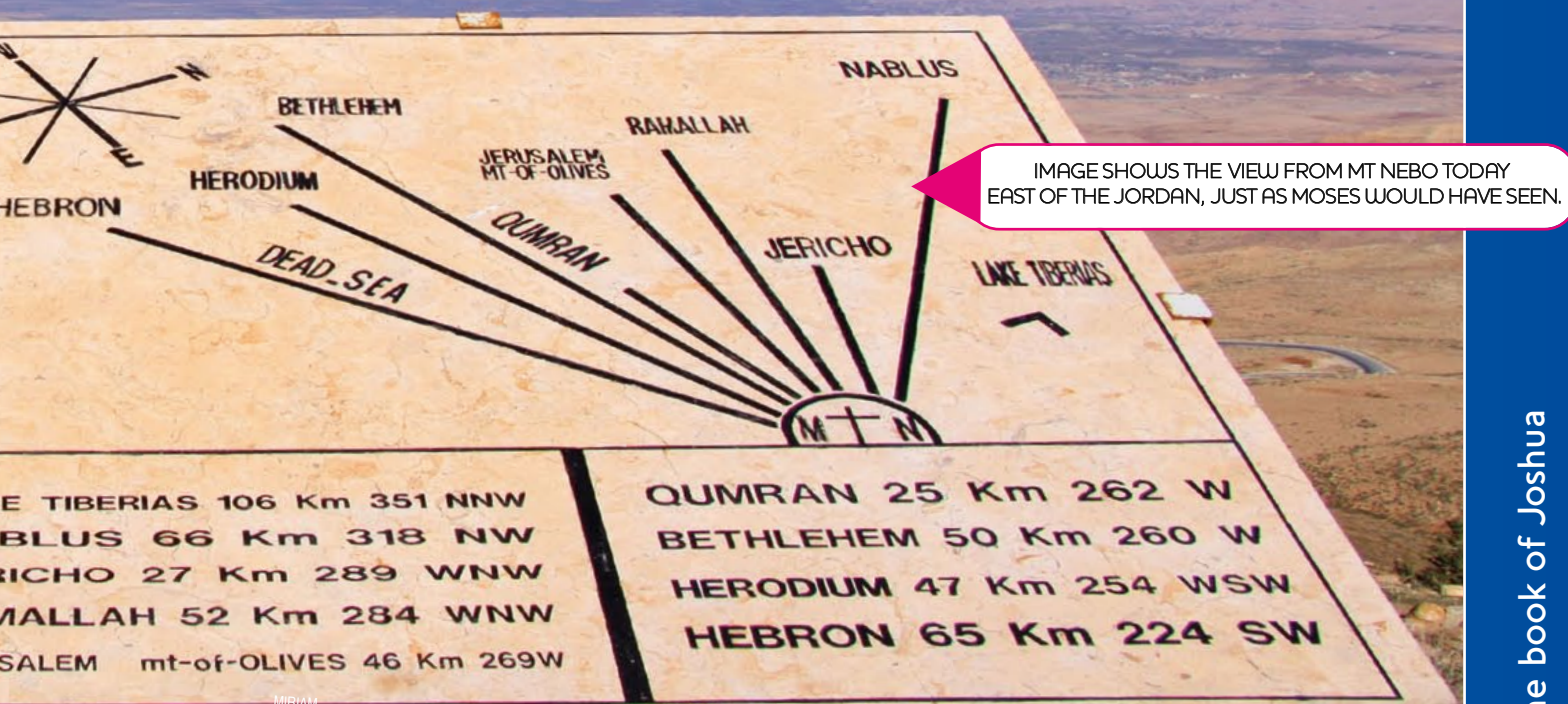
Luke 4. 12 'Thou shalt not tempt

John 19. 31 'that the bodies should not remain

By Nebo's lonely mountain, On this side Jordan's wave, In a vale in the land of Moab, There lies a lonely grave; But...
Cecil Frances

And he gave Joshua the son of Nun in charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee',
Deut. 31. 23

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither',
Deut. 34. 1. 4



Remember!
9. 7 The day you came forth, 16. 3
Eat no leavened bread
According to the former lusts in your ignorance', 1 Pet. 1. 14

Remember!
What God did to Miriam, 24. 9
Do all that the priests teach

Remember!
What Amalek did to you, 25. 17
Live righteously not dangerously

Remember!
The days of old, 32. 7
His work is perfect

Retelling
ending

'go in and possess the land', Deut. 11. 8

'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ', Eph. 4. 13

before the LORD thy God,
choose to place his name there'.
Deut. 14. 23

Deuteronomy in the Gospels:

'...witnesses every word may be established'. Deut. 19. 15
Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord'. Deut. 6. 4-5
Obedient to the Lord thy God'. Deut. 6. 16
Keep upon the cross on the sabbath day'. Deut. 21. 22

- 20 Preparing for war and attacks
- 21 Problems with people & prisoners
- 22 Moral prohibitions
- 23 Congregational purity
- 24 Marriage relations protected
- 25 Lawful traditions practiced
- 26 Firstfruits must be presented

Discourse 3

Making progress: 'this altar'

- 27 An altar for the people - to sacrifice
- 28 A prophecy for the nation - to serve

29-30 Ratifying the covenant

Mission complete for a man of God 'this book'

- 29 The charter for a generation to come
- 30 The compassion for today - life and death

Conclusion

31-34 Renewing the charge 'this people'

- 31 The charge to Joshua - The leader ahead
- 32 The challenge of Moses song - The land ahead
- 33 The children blessed - The love of Moses
- 34 The chapter ends - The last look by Moses

no man built that sepulchre, And no man saw it e'er; For the angels of God upturned the sod, And laid the dead man there.
Alexander



and disobedience leading to cursing.

- f) Remembering God's law.
- g) God's sovereignty and grace demonstrated through Israel's history.
- h) Moses' role as preacher, shepherd, and mediator.
- i) Israel as an example of God's goodness on display to the nations.
- j) Holiness based on a relationship with the Lord.

KALLAND'S summary of Deuteronomy's portrayal of God is worth remembering:

'God in Deuteronomy is personal, eternal, omnipotent, sovereign, purposeful, loving, holy, and righteous. The knowledge of his person and will is communicated by propositional, directive, exhortative, informative, and predictive revelation. No other God exists, though cognizance is taken of the gods believed in by other nations. The most important element of subjective theology in Deuteronomy is that of the absolutely unqualified, total commitment of the people to the Lord. Nothing less is acceptable. No dissimulation, no assimilation, no syncretism with other gods or religions or religious practices are to be tolerated. The people belong to the Lord alone. He is the absolute—though benevolent—sovereign, whose people uniquely and completely belong to him'.¹³

Endnotes

- 1 J. A. THOMPSON, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Vol. 5, InterVarsity Press, 1974, pg. 16.
- 2 GEORGE ADAM SMITH, *The Book of Deuteronomy in the Revised Version With Introduction and Notes*, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Cambridge University Press, 1918, pp. ix-x; and Thompson, pg. 16.
- 3 FRANCIS BROWN, SAMUEL ROLLES DRIVER, and CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Logos Research Systems, 2000, pg. 435.
- 4 'In fact, Moses' death is not recorded until chapter 34, so that the whole book of Deuteronomy is framed between the announcement of Moses' impending death and the announcement of his actual death. The book is thus, in a sense, the spiritual testament of Moses, Israel's great Lawgiver', THOMPSON, pg.

117. HALL asserts Moses' Spirit-led eloquence in these words: 'Its language is the lively exhortation of a master preacher and teacher whose admonitions transcend time and culture'. GARY HARLAN HALL, *Deuteronomy*, The College Press NIV Commentary, College Press Publishing Co., 2000, pg. 13.
- 5 A. T. SHEARMAN, 'Mar. 31st: Laws for a Holy People, Deut. 22. 1-8; 24. 10-22; 25. 1-3; 26. 16-19', in *Day by Day through the Old Testament*, C. E. HOCKING AND M. HORLOCK (Ed.), Precious Seed, 1982, pg. 106. Another writer elucidates the theme further: 'The real understanding of Deuteronomy lies in the fact that God is to be feared, followed, loved, served, and obeyed, Deut. 10. 12-13. So the personal God's will is law in the revealing of himself in love. The mere adherence to a constitutional law or the acceptance of a creed is not sufficient to fulfill even the first command of God. The first command is to establish a real covenant'. JOHN JOSEPH OWENS, 'Law and Love in Deuteronomy', *Review & Expositor* 61:3 (Summer 1964), pg. 278.
- 6 See Rom. 10. 6-8, 19; 11. 8; 12. 19; 1 Cor. 5. 13; 8. 6; 9. 9; Gal. 3. 13; Eph. 6. 2-3. Also DANIEL I. BLOCK, *THE NIV Application Commentary: Deuteronomy*, Ed. TERRY MUCK, Zondervan, 2012, pg. 26.
- 7 EARL S. KALLAND, *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, ed. Frank Gaebelin, Zondervan, 1999, electronic edition, no pagination.
- 8 'Deuteronomy is one of the greatest books of the Old Testament. Its influence on the domestic and personal religion of all ages has not been surpassed by any other book in the Bible. It is quoted over eighty times in the New Testament¹ and thus it belongs to a small group of four Old Testament books² to which the early Christians made frequent reference'. [Fn. 1: 'References occur in all but six books of the New Testament, namely John, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy, and 1 and 2 Peter'. Fn. 2: 'Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah'.] THOMPSON, pg. 16.
- 9 BLOCK, PG. 25.
- 10 WILLIAM MACDONALD, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, Ed. ARTHUR FARSTAD, Thomas Nelson, 1995, pp. 202-203.
- 11 DUANE L. CHRISTENSEN, *Word Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy 1-21*. 9, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 6A, Word Inc., 2002, pg. xli; quoted in Hall, pg. 23.
- 12 PHILIP SCHAFF, ed., *A Dictionary of the Bible: Including Biography, Natural History, Geography, Topography, Archæology, and Literature*, American Sunday-School Union, 1880, pg. 670.
- 13 KALLAND, *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, no pagination.



Absent from the body – Present with the Lord

The title of this article is taken from 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 8, where we read, 'We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord'.

Having seen his family decimated over the last few years, and many dear friends and fellow believers taken to be with the Lord, the writer has taken great comfort from the above verse. However, he is also aware that some believers have shadows of doubt, and have, at least, unclear and muddled thoughts as to the state and place of believers during the interval which divides death from the resurrection.

Now it is true that the scriptures, in the main, look towards the goal, and focus the mind and heart upon the return of Christ. They do not focus upon death, but upon resurrection and transformation. Indeed, it is true to state that redemption's work will not be fully completed in us until these have taken place, for no part of the redeemed ones can be allowed to remain in death; the ultimate is the redemption of the body. Only then will death be swallowed up in victory, 1 Cor. 15. 54.

Having stated the above, it remains a fact that the vast majority of the Lord's dear saints have passed over by way of the grave. We know not whether we shall be among those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, or be among those who 'sleep in Jesus', 1 Thess. 4. 14. So what about the intervening period? Is there some mystery, or a little uncertainty? While the Bible is mainly taken up with the glorious meaning of resurrection, it does not leave us in any doubt with regard to the waiting time, and the position of those who have gone before.

The Saviour's words to the dying thief upon the cross were, 'Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise', Luke 23. 43. It was the same prospect of going to be with Christ at death which

By **GORDON BECK**
Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland



encouraged the martyr Stephen in his last hour, calling upon God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit', Acts 7. 59. The same blessed expectation moved the apostle Paul to write, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better', Phil. 1. 23. Paul described this as 'absent from the body . . . present with the Lord', 2 Cor. 5. 8.

Unfortunately, Satan desires to rob the saints of God of their belief in this blessed prospect. The word of God clearly teaches that the moment a sinner believes he or she is made 'meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light', Col. 1. 12. 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified', Heb. 10. 14. Our title, as well as our fitness for Christ's presence, rests solely upon the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. In

Him, the saints of God are safe forever:

'Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on His gentle breast,
Then by His love o'ershadowed,
Sweetly my soul shall rest',
[FRANCES VAN ALSTYNE].

Christ said, concerning the safety and security of His own, 'My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand', John 10. 29. Here is the ground of the believer's confidence: nothing can touch the spirit of the saint of God which is held by the hand of omnipotence.

The child of God may be beset with many fears as death approaches, for, indeed, it is the last enemy. Other questions might be asked. How should we prepare for death? As the Lord Jesus has appointed the moment, He will prepare us. He has promised, 'when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee', Isa. 43. 2. Death indeed may be the 'king of terrors' to the mortal mind, but, to the Christian, it is the door into the very presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, consciously, and in a state which is far better than anything we have known as yet, Phil. 1. 23.

However, if we die before the Lord comes, for a while the body will rest in the dust, from whence it was taken, awaiting the shout of resurrection, 1 Thess. 4. 16. Then comes the transforming miracle by which the dust is formed into glorious bodies, free forever from sickness, pain and death, all this taking place in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. 15. 52.

'On that day of resurrection,
When the dead in Christ shall rise,
And the saints of all the ages,
Rise to meet Him in the skies.

We shall see Thee at the Rapture,
When the Lord shall burst the sky,
And the trump of God is sounded,
In the twinkling of an eye',
[MANDY BECK].



In a previous article¹ we explored the problem of pain and suffering, mainly from the believer's standpoint. However, Christians also face the charge from unbelievers that the presence of suffering in the world proves that God is indifferent to it and/or powerless to do anything about it. They suggest that He does not care about our world and that He is always missing when He is most needed. It is important, therefore, that we are able to make a reasoned defence against such charges if we are to maintain the credibility of our faith in an increasingly sceptical society. There are a number of key foundation stones upon which we can build this defence.

First, it is important to stress that God is not the author of pain and suffering. The world is not as He intended it to be when He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They made the wrong choice and sin came into the world, Gen. 3. 6, and, from that point onward, Adam's descendants have lived in a 'broken' world. Sin brought with it suffering, pain, sorrow and tears, Gen. 3. 16-19. Mankind has, therefore, struggled to understand, and cope with, these consequences of Adam's sin ever since the fall. JOHN BLANCHARD writes, 'The word suffering would not exist if man had not shaken his fist in his Creator's face'.²

Second, and following on from this, it is vital for Christians to emphasize that it is a pointless exercise for men to look around for someone to blame for the pain and suffering in the world. The Lord Jesus made it clear that the evil that is the cause of so much sorrow and tears, finds its origin within, i.e., in the hearts of men: 'There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man . . . For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness',

the problem of

Mark 7. 15, 21-22. The heart is, indeed, 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked', Jer. 17. 9. Each man and woman is responsible for his/her own actions, no matter how much pressure they might face from external factors to act in an unacceptable manner and cause suffering to others. However, this does not explain all forms of suffering in the world.

Third, we need to point out to unbelievers that the whole of creation was affected by Adam's fall. They point frequently to earthquakes, floods and famines as evidences of an uncaring and powerless God. Paul writes, 'For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now', Rom. 8. 22. God's words to Adam following the fall underline this fact: 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground', Gen. 3. 17-19. Paul reminds us that, as far as the believer and creation are concerned, this is not for ever: 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation – NKJV] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God', Rom. 8. 18-19. When we appear in glory with Christ in a coming day, Col. 3. 4, all creation will be released from its present bondage and groaning.

Fourth, we must encourage unbelievers to ask the right question when they are faced with pain and suffering. The natural tendency for them is to ask the question, 'Why?' It would be more profitable for them were they to ask the question, 'What?' Hopefully, this might lead them to God and cause them to ask, 'What is God seeking to say to us through our suffering?' C. S. LEWIS

suggested that 'pain is His [God's] megaphone to rouse a deaf world'.³

By
**COLIN
LACEY**
Bath,
England

Fifth, and arguably the most important foundation stone upon which to build is the cross of Christ. All too often unbelievers turn on God and charge Him with indifference to their pain. They claim that He is remote from men and cannot possibly understand how they feel. Nothing could be further from the truth; indeed, this charge gives the believer the opportunity to 'preach Christ crucified', 1 Cor. 1. 23. The

message of the gospel teaches us that God has stepped into this broken world and experienced the greatest suffering of all: 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God', 1 Pet. 3. 18; and again, 'Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh', 4. 1. We hear His voice in the prophetic psalm: 'I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax', Ps. 22. 14. God has come so near to us, in the person of His Son, that He could not have come nearer. The lament of the city of Jerusalem in the Old Testament can be applied to Christ: 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger', Lam. 1. 12.

Sixth, the sovereignty of God is a key foundation stone that must be laid, and built upon, in our defence of the Christian faith. Even if we cannot always understand His ways, or answer every difficult question raised by unbelievers in relation to pain and suffering, we rest in the fact that He is always in control. We can use the words of Abraham, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Gen. 18. 25. We can confront them with God's question to Job: 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding', Job 38. 4. Paul's challenge is also applicable:



pain and suffering²

'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' Rom. 9. 20. The words of a blind Christian, who had both of his legs amputated, are truly remarkable and inspiring: 'I have no complaint against God. These legs belonged to Him anyway. He is entitled to do what He likes with them'.

Seventh, and finally, we can conclude our defence of the Christian faith by affirming, with confidence, our belief that there is life after death, i.e., that suffering and pain are not for ever and they will not have the last word: 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new', Rev. 21. 4-5.

It is vital that we build upon these foundation stones in a humble, caring, and sensitive manner. A cold, hard and formal approach will only increase unbelievers' hostility toward divine things and fail to have the impact we ought to desire, i.e., for them to turn in 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ', Acts 20. 21. Paul's words to Timothy are apposite: 'And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth', 2 Tim. 2. 24-25. We must guard against the temptation to give glib answers, or to become involved scoring points off others, when dealing with such a sensitive issue as pain and suffering. However, we ought not to feel weak and insecure in the face of the hostility of men toward divine truth. We can have confidence in the fact that we have

all we need, with the scriptures and the indwelling Holy Spirit, 'to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear', 1 Pet. 3. 15. HERBERT CARSON writes, 'There are many whose tragic reaction to suffering is bitterness and hatred to God. There are others in the darkness of their tears who see a light . . . the

light is God's mercy'.⁴ Let us pray that the Lord will help us to see this light and share it with others.

Endnotes

- 1 See *Precious Seed* Volume 71 Number 2.
- 2 JOHN BLANCHARD, *Does God Believe in Atheists?* Evangelical Press, 2013.
- 3 C. S. LEWIS, *The Problem of Pain*, Centenary Press, 1940.
- 4 HERBERT CARSON, *Facing Suffering: A Christian Response*, Evangelical Press, 1978.





Of the many characters who were involved in some way or other with the crucifixion of our Lord, Simon of Cyrene was one of the few who helped Him. Admittedly this help was forced upon him, but he is mentioned in three of the four gospels so his assistance has not gone unnoticed by the Holy Spirit. What do we know of him?

He was an African man

Well, this may be to stretch a point. The gospels identify him as 'a man of Cyrene, Simon by name', Matt. 27. 32; 'Simon, a Cyrenian', Mark 15. 21; Luke 23. 26. Cyrene was a place in North Africa, in the country we now call Libya. Tradition has it that he was an African man, who had been born a Gentile (a non-Jew), and that he had been a pagan, but he had been converted to the Jewish faith. We must be careful not to push this point too far. Although Simon was from Cyrene, the apostle Paul before his conversion was known as 'Saul of Tarsus', which was a place in what we now call Turkey, but Saul was evidently Jewish by birth, a 'Pharisee of the Pharisees', etc. It could be that Simon of Cyrene was no Gentile African, but of Jewish birth himself, yet living in Cyrene. There was, indeed, a large Jewish settlement in Cyrene at this time, and all Jewish males were supposed to go up to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, which would explain Simon's presence in Jerusalem at this time. History tells us the Cyrenian Jews had their own synagogue in Jerusalem, and some Cyrenians are mentioned as being present to hear Peter's sermon in their own language on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2. 10. Does his name, 'Simon', help us to identify whether he was Jewish by birth? No, not particularly. Simon was a popular name at the time, cf. Acts 8. 9-24, and was not given to Jews only. Still, popular opinion has it that he was one of the few from the African continent mentioned in the scriptures, as was Ebed-melech in Jeremiah's time and the Ethiopian eunuch in New Testament times.

CHARACTERS AROUND THE SIMON WHO HE

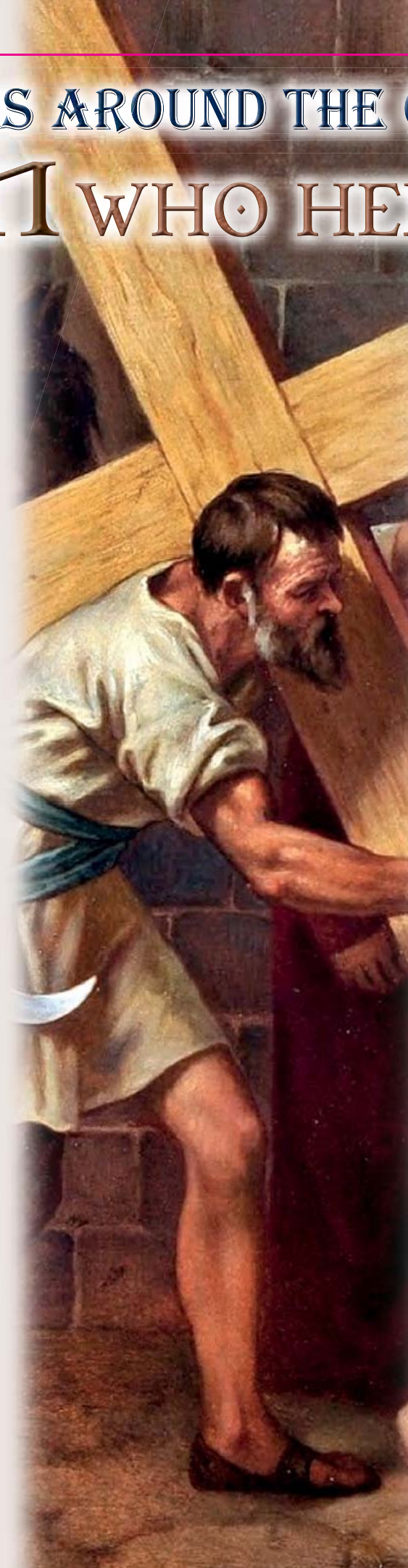
By **IAN REES** Tenby, Wales

He was an ordinary man

Jerusalem at this time, the feast of the Passover, would have been bursting at the seams with residents of Jerusalem itself, pilgrims from the whole of the nation visiting for the feast and either staying with relatives in the city or filling the inns, pilgrims from around the world – 'Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites and the dwellers of Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians', 2. 9-11.¹ One can well imagine the huge expense of staying in the city at such a time as this. It would appear as though Simon had managed to find lodgings outside the city, for the scripture records he was 'coming out of the country', Mark 15. 21. This may indicate comparative poverty or just lack of good contacts in the city. We would not be too far wrong in suggesting he was just an ordinary pilgrim come to do his duty to God in attending the feast, having found lodgings in a village in the country, travelling into the city every day of the feast.

He was a surprised man

Coming in from the country on this particular day and, no doubt, minding his own business, perhaps trying to make his way to the temple through the crowds of pilgrims, he was suddenly accosted by Roman soldiers and dragged out of the crowd to stand in the middle of the street. Can we doubt the fear and consternation that went through his mind? 'What have I done wrong?' What ordinary, country man would not have been afraid of the Roman soldiers at that time? Why had he been arrested like this? Suddenly, he is brought face to face with a man who has drawn compassion from





CRUCIFIXION 6

HELPED HIM

the crowd standing around him. This man is evidently on his way to be crucified. As Simon observes him, he sees a man whose face has been torn to ribbons where men had tried to pull the beard from His face; a man whose head was surrounded with a crown of thorns, huge sharp spikes piercing the skin and flesh of his face; a man whose back looked as though it were a ploughed field, the flesh torn and ripped from it, blood oozing everywhere; a man who, though evidently strong and muscular in body, was now unable to carry, perhaps even to drag, the cross upon which he was to die, so severe were his wounds and so savage the treatment he had received. Despite his reluctance to be drawn into the situation, and, no doubt, also with the revulsion of having to follow a man to his appalling execution, Simon was forced to pick up the cross of this stranger and carry it behind him to the place called Golgotha.

He was a privileged man

It was customary for the Romans to take pleasure in humiliating a victim by making him drag the means of his death behind him. John actually records that our Lord had done much of this carrying of His cross already. 'He bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull', John 19. 17. Yet Matthew, Mark and Luke all indicate that our Lord was not able to carry it all the way and the Romans, refusing to be involved in this spectacle, compelled this innocent bystander, perhaps strong and tall in himself, to carry the cross for our Lord. No doubt Simon felt this to be neither an honour nor a privilege, yet, by virtue of the fact that he was dragged out of obscurity to do this for His Son in His hour of need, the Father, through the Holy Spirit, has recorded Simon's service in scripture and he has been made famous. Yet what a wonder for any man to be given such a privilege as to walk

behind the Son of God Himself, and to give Him some assistance, some relief, some kindness, on the way to His death! The kindness of certain rich women of Jerusalem is also recorded in scripture by the Holy Spirit. They 'bewailed and lamented Him', Luke 23. 27-29; they grieved for Him, and this act of kindness drew sympathy from our Lord to them. Yet let us not forget the relief this simple act of carrying His cross for Him gave to our Lord.

He was a family man

One other surprising touch is added to this record of service. Mark records that Simon was 'the father of Alexander and Rufus', 15. 21. Now I am convinced that this seemingly pointless comment is, in fact, significant. There would have been no point in naming the children of Simon of Cyrene were they unknown to believers in the early church. The very mention of the names of his children indicate that something else happened to bring Simon's family to the notice of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, not just his forced assistance to our Lord. Again, we speculate, but it is interesting to note that a Rufus is mentioned in Romans chapter 16 and verse 13 as 'chosen in the Lord' and also mentioned is Rufus' mother 'and mine', indicating to us, if the identification is correct, that Simon's wife as well as his sons have become followers of our Lord. There does seem little point in identifying Simon's family if they were unknown. Some have suggested that his contact with our Lord in the carrying of His cross brought Simon to hear Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, and that he witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit on that day; remember, there were Cyrenians mentioned as being amongst those who heard the message in their own language, Acts 2. 10. Some have gone so far as to suggest that Simon was one of those who preached the gospel to the Greeks in Antioch, mention of whom is made in chapter 11 verse 20, and that he is the one who is identified as 'Simeon that was called Niger' (black) in the assembly in chapter 13 verse 1. Be that as it may, eternity will tell us what impact,

if any, this contact with the Christ had upon Simon and his family.

What are we to make of all this? Some may say that Simon was in the wrong place at the wrong time, that he was unfortunate to be made a public spectacle in being forced to carry a man's cross to the place of his execution, when he was doing nothing but passing by going from the country to the city to do his business. But, as believers, we do not, or at any rate we should not, believe in luck, either good or bad, neither should we believe in fortune. Nothing happens by blind chance. God is in everything, even in the very placing of this man from Cyrene. Let us remember, too, that things that disrupt our day, inconveniences and annoyances, can be a means, under the hand of God, of blessing to others and to us. This act of kindness to His Son was duly noted by the Father and the Holy Spirit, as is any act of kindness you and I do to His people today.

And, then again, though we will never be able to carry our Lord's cross and follow Him, as Simon did, we are called upon to pick up our own cross and follow Him. 'And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels', Mark 8. 34-38. Simon of Cyrene carried our Lord's cross for Him as he followed Him. We are to carry our own crosses as we also follow Him. Dying to sin and self, let us, therefore, follow our Lord every day and all the way.

Endnote

- 1 Although Acts chapter 2 refers to it, it would also be true of other main feast times.



This article is part of an ongoing study. 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 articles either in the printed edition of the magazine or online via www.preciousseed.org.

The elder's task – the people and the problem (cont.), vv. 10-16.

We ended the last article by stating that we would discuss the action that needed to be taken to deal with these false teachers and by suggesting that we shouldn't be tempted to think that we don't have to deal with false teachers today. So let me pose some questions before we look at the scriptural way to deal with people who teach false doctrine.

1. How does this relate to us today?
2. What type of false teachers do we face?
3. Are they as aggressive and against the truth as those we are reading about in this passage?

I used to think that we did not face many of these types of issues! I am not so sure now. Across the so-called Christian world there is a major attempt to water down the gospel message. Many preach a false gospel that promises success and prosperity but fails to teach that 'in this world we will have tribulation'. Many people who claim to be Christians malign the character of the Lord Jesus Christ by teaching false things about His sinlessness, His humanity, His deity etc. Some very persuasive teachers in charismatic circles are adamant that all Christians should practise early church-age gifts and signs and, as a result, classify Christians who don't as less spiritual in some way. I could go on! There is a lot of false teaching still around and one of the responsibilities of an elder is to protect the people of God from this.

The question is, 'how should they handle it?'

Handling the opposition, v. 11.

First, Paul speaks plainly about what



By **STEPHEN G. BAKER** Liverpool, England

needs to be done. These false teachers must be silenced. He then states the effect of the false teaching – it is destroying families, indeed whole households. This probably covers more than just a family but, in some cases, the people who worked for them as well. Paul also expresses the fallacy of what they are doing – 'teaching things which they ought not', and he ends with their motivation – they do it for financial gain.

Here is an important point that we must consider. Error and wrong teaching are extremely damaging. The apostle is warning Titus that this wrong teaching is disruptive, it is misleading people, it is ruining lives and it is extremely upsetting to all who are involved. It might be that the teaching was being given in the homes of the Lord's people, which would explain how these men were undermining the authority of the leaders of the local church and managing to deceive the people. When Peter writes his second letter he reminds us that false teaching often appears acceptable and plausible because the person who is giving it is nice and seems trustworthy, 2 Pet. 2. 2. Paul, when he warned the elders from Ephesus about future trouble, stated that one of the two sources of the problems will be men they know and trust becoming 'personality preachers' and drawing a 'celebrity following' after themselves, Acts 20. 30. As always the Bible is absolutely up to date!

Back to the problem! These men had no authority to teach what they were teaching as it was not from God. We are also given an insight into what motivated these men. Their aim was to make money. We have already discovered from verse 10 that they were driven by the need for power (they rejected authority), and now we discover that they were driven by greed. These are characteristics that are normal in unsaved men.

As these verses are written in the context of elders, I would like to make

a few observations that, hopefully, will be helpful about the work of an elder:

1. Elders need to be aware of what is being taught in a local assembly/church.
2. Elders, as shepherds, have the God-given responsibility to control who does the teaching and what is taught in the local church.
3. Elders should at least be aware of what is being discussed and taught outside of regular church gatherings. This is meant to be done with a shepherd's heart and not to dominate or lord it over the local believers, 1 Pet. 5. 3.

Another general observation before we leave this verse: it is not just important to have good teaching, but to have trustworthy teachers who are free of corruption, not self-seeking, not in it for the money, and men of high integrity.

Confirmation of national character from a native of Crete, v. 12.

Paul is here addressing the sensitive issue of national character. It is a brave man who addresses these issues without courtesy and tact. Paul does not address it directly but quotes a local 'prophet' to confirm the reputation of the Cretans. Paul quotes a prophet called Epimenides. He was a native of Gnosus in Crete and lived around 600 BC. The Cretans recognized him as a prophet, and so Paul quotes him without disputing or discussing his claim. The description that Epimenides gives of his own people is not very flattering, but Paul, nevertheless, confirms that it was a truthful description.

Cretans were, sadly, habitual liars, evil beasts, gluttonous and lazy!

Habitual liars

One can hardly imagine what it was like to live in Crete. You couldn't trust what people said. Truth telling was unusual. You would never know whom to trust. The norm was to tell lies! But the gospel had an amazing effect



from Titus

(6)

when it came to Crete! It transformed lives and was contrary to the norms of society. The words of the Spirit of God in Romans 12 verse 2 ring so true, 'be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'. It is the will of God that these changes take effect when souls are saved; 'this is the will of God, even your sanctification', 1 Thess. 4. 3. It is noteworthy that this small epistle is packed full of references to truth, sound doctrine and sound speech. This is the effect of the gospel.

Evil beasts

There is no polite way to explain what these words mean. The people of Crete were savage, animalistic, cruel, worthless, depraved and wicked. The sad reality is that there have been people like this in every society and there are still people like this today. There are no depths to which human beings will not go when God and His word is jettisoned. Many years ago, Hosea wrote, 'my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge', Hos. 4. 6. When people reject truth, the depth to which they can fall is unlimited. It is significant that this letter is saturated with statements about peace, non-violence and godliness.

Lazy gluttons

Many societies have been noted for their decadence and self-indulgence. This was part of the lifestyle in Crete – pleasure seeking and pleasure loving. They loved to eat, feast and indulge themselves. We would be wise to note that this is a characteristic of last days. Paul, when writing to Timothy, warned that humanity in last days would default to being, among many things, 'lovers of their own selves . . . without self control . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God', 2 Tim. 3. 2-4. A long time before this, Ezekiel had been given a commentary on the moral state of Sodom. When their iniquity is described, some characteristics are highlighted which might surprise us. 'Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, **fulness of bread,**

and **abundance of idleness** was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good', Ezek. 16. 49-50. Did you notice that two of the problems in Sodom were the same as in Crete – fullness of bread and abundance of idleness? As with the other two sad national traits, this epistle is full of teaching to counteract this sin; teaching about self-control and good works.

God is going to preserve the new believers in Crete through this letter to Titus. The false teachers will seek to take advantage of these natural, debased features and Paul is warning against it. The teachers themselves have displayed the same characteristics as the Cretans – they lie as they deceive, v. 10, they are unruly just as the people of Crete are evil beasts, v. 10, and they are lazy and self-indulgent as they sought to profit from their teaching, v. 11.

False

True

The description and treatment of the false teachers, vv. 13-16.

Paul concurs with this description of the Cretans and gives his Spirit-inspired advice, 'Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith'. We must note here that the false teachers have to be rebuked so that the believers will be sound in the faith. I know some feel that the pronouns 'them' and 'they' relate to the same people but I feel that the context does not

support this view. Everything about these false teachers turns people from the truth, v. 14. The emphasis of their teaching promoted fables and man-made rules, v. 14. They are described in verse 15 as being defiled and unbelieving. They made pure things impure, much like the men Jude described as 'turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness', Jude 3, with the added disgrace that both 'their mind and conscience is defiled', v. 15. In verse 16 it states that they professed the knowledge of God, but, in practice, they denied Him, plus the way they behaved demonstrated that they were reprobate, worthless and not saved. These terms do not describe genuine Bible teachers who have unintentionally misled the people of God, but unregenerate men whom God describes as abominable (detestable or idolatrous), and disobedient (they had wilfully disobeyed God), and who had to be dealt with severely to protect and preserve the people of God. Sound (healthy) doctrine, v. 9, and the truth, v. 14, produces Christians who are sound in the faith. They are healthy when it comes to their understanding of and practice of the truth of God in His word.

The false teachers needed to be rebuked in order that they would stop their false teaching. In verse 11 Paul stated that, 'their mouths must be stopped', this, literally, means that it was necessary to silence them. The silence was the result of the sharp rebuke, v. 13. The word 'sharp' here is interesting. It has the idea of the surgeon using a scalpel to skilfully remove what is diseased. God deals gently with His people but He deals severely with evil doctrine and those who teach it.

The result of this sharp rebuke will mean that godly teachers such as Titus could then feed the believers. Their good, healthy teaching will ensure that the believers are 'sound in the faith'.

May the Lord help us to be discerning and decisive when we are faced with error and those who openly teach it!



The importance of the subject

Many believers today do not fully understand that the ministry of God's Holy Spirit in Old Testament times was in many ways somewhat different from His ministry in the present age of grace and the church. They tend to assume that it must always have been the same as it is now. The truth is that Christians today enjoy far greater blessing than most believers did in Old Testament times. Ever since the Holy Spirit came down on the Day of Pentecost to unite all believers in one body in Christ, He has permanently indwelt their bodies and blessed them with spiritual gifts to use for the upbuilding of the church in a way that was not known in the Old Testament. Truly, we are far more privileged than were Old Testament saints. For this fact we should be eternally grateful to our gracious God and Father.

THE MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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

would, henceforth, be *in* them, and that forever, 14. 16-17. Acts chapter 2 records the remarkable events of that day, when the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to exercise the miraculous sign gifts. The apostle Paul explains this event further, when he says, 'For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and were all made to drink of one Spirit', 1 Cor. 12. 13 ESV. The New Testament church was formed then of all true believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit, so that it is true to say today, in the words of Romans chapter 8 verse 9, 'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his'. The permanent

particularly in the historical books of Judges and 1 Samuel.¹ Samson's strength was produced by the Holy Spirit coming upon him. When David was anointed king by Samuel, 'the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward'. The idea of the Holy Spirit coming upon particular people seems to imply the temporary and limited character of His relationship to Old Testament believers.

Third, the Holy Spirit is said to have *filled* some Old Testament believers in order to accomplish a particular task. Exodus chapter 31 verse 3 and chapter 35 verse 31 record this concerning Bezaleel in relation to his

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In this article we shall aim to explain the various ways in which the Holy Spirit operated during the days covered by the Old Testament record. From this study we shall be able to understand just how His ministry then differed from that which He exercises today. Yet we shall also come to understand that in a few significant respects His ministry has not completely changed since Pentecost.

The proof of the uniqueness of the Holy Spirit's present ministry

John's inspired explanation of the words of the Lord Jesus is helpful here. He says: 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified', 7. 39, which is a clear reference to the day of Pentecost. In His Upper Room ministry to the disciples, the Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit who had been *with* them

possession of the Holy Spirit is an essential mark of a Christian. This was not always so in Old Testament days, or David, the saint who was called 'the man after God's own heart', could not have meaningfully prayed after his great sin in 'the matter of Uriah the Hittite', 'take not thy Holy Spirit from me', Ps. 51. 11.

The limitations of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Old Testament

First, there was only selective indwelling of particular individuals in Old Testament times. Pharaoh recognized that the Holy Spirit was indwelling Joseph, Gen. 41. 38. The Holy Spirit was clearly said to be in Joshua, and this was why God chose him for special service, Num. 27. 18. Again, the Spirit of God was said to be in Daniel several times, see Dan. 4. 8; 5. 11-14; 6. 3. In all these verses the preposition used is '*in*'.

Second, the Holy Spirit is said to have come *upon* some Old Testament people. This is found

leadership of the craftsmen working on the tabernacle. This supernatural ability did not exclude or replace his natural ability, but was in addition to it.

The Holy Spirit's ministry towards Old Testament believers could sometimes be limited in its duration, not forever, as in New Testament times. He could be withdrawn from men, as He was from Samson after he had revealed the secret of his strength to Delilah and she had cut off his long hair. Again, the Holy Spirit came upon Saul mightily in 1 Samuel chapter 10 verse 10, but after he had disobeyed the Lord's commands twice, chapter 16 verse 14 says that the Spirit departed from him. Furthermore, David would not have pleaded with God not to take His Holy Spirit from him if that had not been a possibility in those days.² This prayer is never found in the New Testament.

There was no ministry of the Holy Spirit guaranteed universally to all individual Israelites, but all Israel



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benefitted from His ministry in a general way.³ Gentile nations around Israel did not enjoy such a general ministry.

Ministries of the Holy Spirit common to both Testaments

Creation. Not a great deal is said in either Testament concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit in creation, but He was evidently involved as part of the Godhead. Genesis chapter 1 verse 2 states that, 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters', on the unformed and unfinished earth. Job chapter 26 verse 13 says that He 'garnished the heavens', that is, He adorned them. In Job chapter 33 verse 4, Elihu asserts that, 'the Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of

upon the writing prophets: 'Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of God, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven'. The Old Testament prophets were not as privileged or enlightened as the New Testament preachers of the gospel since the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but the same Spirit of God used them in His service. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy that all scripture is 'God-breathed',⁴ that

Regeneration. Finally, the Holy Spirit has been instrumental throughout both Testaments in bringing believers to new birth. This was not very clearly revealed before the days of the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth, but He confirmed in His conversation with Nicodemus that this had always been the case.⁶ Speaking nearly three years before His crucifixion took place, Christ said that the Spirit's work in the Old Testament was to bring men to a new birth, to a regeneration. This aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry did not change after Pentecost. Every believer in the family of God has always been born of the Spirit through faith in God's inspired word.

Conclusion

Although the present age of grace is pre-eminently the age of the

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the Almighty hath given me life'. Further, Psalm 104 verse 30 says that, 'Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth'. The Holy Spirit has an essential part in the maintenance of life on earth. What was true in Old Testament days must also be true in New Testament days.

Revelation and inspiration. The Holy Spirit had an essential part to play in God's self-revelation in both Testaments, and in the formation of the record of that self-revelation in the verbally inspired scriptures of truth. 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21 declares concerning Old Testament prophecy, 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost'. The word 'moved' means that the Holy Spirit carried the human writers along, like a sailing ship by the wind, as He directed and controlled their writings. The latter are, therefore, without error. 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 10-12 further explains the effect of this

is, breathed out to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore profitable for all spiritual purposes. In his day, this referred primarily to the Old Testament scriptures. Now they have been supplemented by the New Testament scriptures with similar power and authority.

Restraint of sin. One of the Holy Spirit's ministries in both Testaments is the restraint of the development of sin in the world. Genesis chapter 6 verse 3 reveals that the Holy Spirit had been striving with men to restrain them from sinning before the judgement of the flood became inevitable. In a similar way, in the present age of grace, Paul reveals that there is both a restraint upon the development of the mystery of iniquity, and a Restrainer, before He is taken out of the way.⁵ The most plausible explanation of these verses is that the Holy Spirit is the Restrainer acting through the members of Christ's body on earth, the New Testament church, until the rapture takes place, when the church will be translated to heaven.

Holy Spirit's gracious workings, we should not forget that He has been operating in this world from the beginning of creation, and will continue to do so after the church has been called home to heaven. Like God the Father and God the Son, God the Holy Spirit has always been at work in men's hearts, leading them to Christ, and sanctifying those who have believed in God. We should not underestimate the enormous contribution which the Spirit of God has made in accomplishing the plan of redemption. Therefore, as the risen Lord Jesus said to the church of the Laodiceans, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches', Rev. 3. 22. We ignore His 'still small voice' at our peril!

Endnotes

- 1 Judg. 3. 10; 6. 34; 11. 29; 13. 25; 1 Sam. 10. 9-10; 16. 13
- 2 Ps. 51. 11.
- 3 Neh. 9. 20; Isa. 63. 10-11 and 14.
- 4 2 Tim. 3. 16.
- 5 2 Thess. 2. 6-7.
- 6 John 3. 5-6.



John Caldwell was born in Dublin on the 26th May, 1839. As a child of five years old he came with his parents to reside in Glasgow. His father being a leader in connection with the Independent Church, John was brought up in 'the nurture and admonition of the Lord'. Being brought up in a church-attending home and with knowledge of the scriptures, he joined the Church, taught in the Sunday school, was a member of the Young Men's Christian Association, and passed for a Christian by all who knew him.

It was not until 1860 when Gordon Forlong, a well-known evangelist, was invited by the godly elders of Ewing Place Church to have a series of meetings in the Church, that John Caldwell was saved. He described that event with clarity: 'I felt I had not experienced the great change, and at the close of one meeting I waited as an anxious one among many, and heard from John 5. 24 that "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life". This was indeed good news to me. I heard, I believed, and I had everlasting life. From this time the Bible became a new Book to me, my constant and loved companion. I read it with opened eyes, and beheld in it wondrous things'.¹

But apart from being a momentous time in the personal experience of John Caldwell, this was also a time of significant change. The 1859 revival in the North of Ireland was having an effect in Scotland. As laymen occupied more and more pulpits and platforms to preach the gospel, pressure on the existing church systems and government became intense. The Ewing Place Church was no different. In the zeal of a work for the Lord, those that were born-again utilised the basement of the Church for Sunday school work. Then, using the school-room, they launched out into an Evening Service to preach the gospel. This burgeoning work became too much for the minister. He decided it must be stopped at once.

JOHN R. CALD

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

At the same time, the Caldwells, father and son, came into contact with men taking a lead in a meeting emerging from Scottish Baptist lines. Bible readings were held in the home of William Caldwell and various doctrines were discussed, and the scriptures were examined. It was at this point that John Caldwell, and his friend George Young, were baptized by immersion. Over the next few months they severed their links with the Congregational denomination, and began to meet in simplicity, according to the scriptures. He later wrote, 'I found there those with whom I had true fellowship, to whom the word of the Lord was precious, and the name of Jesus sweet'.

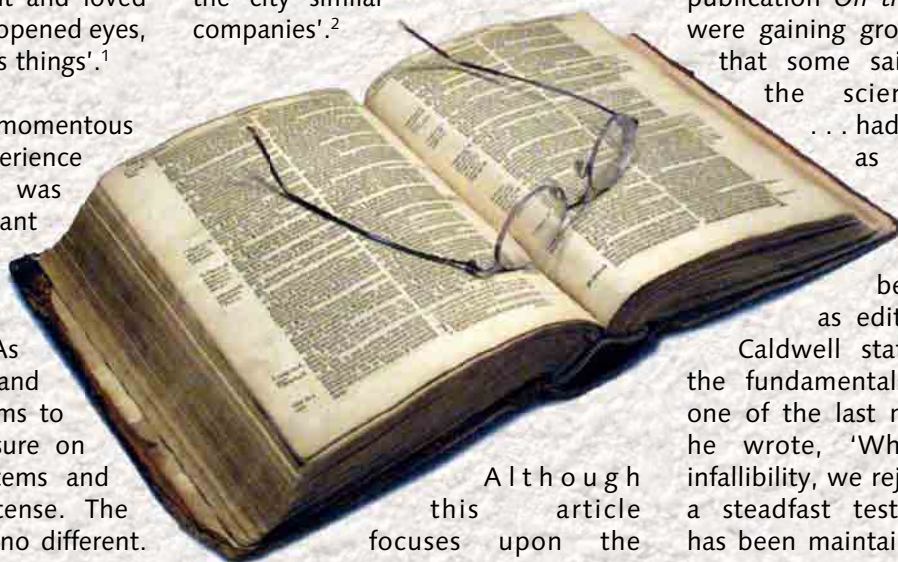
This was the start of a movement that was soon to spread across the city. As DAVID BEATTIE states, 'It was decided, after much prayer and exercise of heart, that the meeting-place for worship and the breaking of bread should be at the Marble Hall. From this humble gathering, composed of believers who were at the time feeling the bondage and spiritual dearth in sectarianism, there sprang up in many parts of the city similar companies'.²

both in oral and written ministry. His business success enabled him to give generously. Although he strictly followed the scriptural injunction, 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth', Matt. 6. 3, he was a strong advocate of 'systematic giving'. He was characterized by a liberality considerably above what most would judge appropriate.

In ecclesiastical circles, Caldwell lived in a period of significant turmoil. Apart from those periods of revival that led to the salvation of many and radical change in the way in which believers met together, this was also a time when advocates of the so-called Higher Criticism were gaining adherents. Indeed, in 1860 seven liberal Anglican theologians began the process of incorporating this historical criticism into Christian doctrine in *Essays and Reviews*. This caused an ongoing controversy, which resulted in two of the authors being indicted for heresy and, ultimately, losing their jobs, although, in 1864, they had the judgement overturned on appeal.³ At the same time the arguments over Darwin's 1859 publication *On the Origin of Species* were gaining ground, to the extent that some said, 'By the 1870s the scientific community

... had accepted evolution as a fact'.⁴ This was a time for loyal adherents to the truth to become active and, as editor of *The Witness*,

Caldwell stated and defended the fundamentals of the faith. In one of the last magazines for 1910 he wrote, 'Whilst not claiming infallibility, we rejoice to believe that a steadfast testimony throughout has been maintained concerning the fundamentals of the faith, including the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the perfect humanity, essential Deity, glorious work and worth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the utter ruin of man, necessity and sufficiency of the atonement, present possession of eternal life by the believer, the priesthood of all saints,



Although this article focuses upon the spiritual life of John Caldwell, it is important to appreciate the secular background against which he laboured for the Lord. He had a very successful business life as head of Caldwell, Young and Co., Silk Manufacturers. The demands of that business were significant and yet he remained active in his service,



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the oneness of the Body of Christ, the immersion of believers as being the Christian baptism of the New Testament, the weekly 'breaking of bread' as the privilege of all the children of God, separation from the world and its associations, gathering together in the Name of the Lord apart from sectarian titles and clerical assumption, the personal and pre-millennial Coming of the Lord as the "blessed hope" for which we wait, the eternal conscious punishment of the impenitent, and the eternal blessing and glory of the saved'. These truths are still under attack today and Caldwell's statement is every bit as relevant now as it was then.

In the ministry of the word of God, Caldwell travelled widely. He particularly enjoyed the exposition of a book, Leviticus, Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Hebrews being his favourites. However, he was also at home giving addresses on the offerings, Old Testament characters, God's chosen people, or similar themes. His notes were merely small slips of paper with the headings and, as he kept scant record, he felt quite free in repeating a message if suited to the hearers. Of the value of John Caldwell's ministry, DAVID BEATTIE records the comments of an aged brother, 'Looking back, the writer sees three outstanding men whose personality and ministry were markedly used of God in supplying spiritual food for edifying babes in Christ, as well as those of more mature experience. These were: John R. Caldwell, Alexander Stewart, and Thomas Cochrane. The ministry of these brethren was most edifying and uplifting. But there was a something about their demeanour and movements which impressed one even more than their addresses – a fact which indicates that a man is more than his message'.⁵

It was Caldwell's writing that took up the greater part of his time when not occupied with his business. One of his earliest books was *Things to Come*, regarded at the time as one of the best books on the signs of the times.⁶ His other books included: *The Cross to the Kingdom*, *God's Chosen*

People, *Shadows of Christ*, *Christ in the Levitical Offerings*, *Earthly Relationships*, *Because Ye Belong to Christ*. His best known work will probably be his volumes of exposition of the first epistle to the Corinthians, which was published under the title of *The Charter of the Church*.⁷ Apart from the books, Caldwell was editor of *The Witness*, an assembly-based periodical, from 1876 to 1914. He used that periodical to demonstrate his adherence to and defence of the fundamentals of the faith. He produced smaller books and pamphlets, gospel tracts, and many



magazine articles, and in all of them he manifested 'care in preparation, [and] moderation in statement',⁸ his desire being the definite spiritual profit of the readers.

It was in 1905 that the first real signs of Caldwell's declining health became noticed. Before Caldwell left for France, fifty-two brethren met him in a room of the Christian Institute on Monday, 20th November. Thinking they might not have another occasion, they desired to confirm their love and return thanks for the help he had given. His response was: 'It has pleased the Lord in the most gentle manner possible to hinder my service in the way of public speaking, otherwise I have suffered very little. At the present time there is one thing I would like you to remember in prayer. That is that I might learn the intended lesson in the Lord's

dealing with me in this way. I do not know that I have apprehended it, but I desire that I might know what the Lord's intended lesson for me is, and I think also that all the brethren should seek to know what His lesson may be for them as well as for me. I have made it my aim so to act that I might be done without, for I believe the more closely we follow God's lines and methods the more will this be the case. Things will not be dependent upon one or two. For myself, I feel utterly unworthy of this testimony. I feel like the words, "less than the least of all saints". I feel that the words, "chief of sinners" belong to me, but sovereign grace o'er sin abounded, and surely at this moment a number of us to-day can praise God for the abundant grace that has borne with us and carried us to hoar hairs and given us the assurance that He will never leave us'.⁹

Although Caldwell made somewhat of a recovery from this early setback, in the latter part of his life he deteriorated rapidly, losing many of his faculties. After many months of pain and weakness, he died on Lord's day morning, 14th January, 1917. He had been a liberal giver, a wise counsellor, a devoted servant, and a fearless minister of the truth and defender of the faith. 'Remember them . . . who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow', Heb. 13. 7.

Endnotes

1. A quote from Henry Pickering's tribute to the work of John Caldwell. Taken from *Assembly Writer's Library, Volume 8, The writings of J. R. Caldwell*. [This is virtually a reprint of a similar article in H. PICKERING, *Chief men among the brethren*, Pickering and Inglis]. The author acknowledges the help of this tribute in the compilation of this article.
2. DAVID J. BEATTIE, *Brethren. The story of a great recovery*, John Ritchie Ltd. 1944, pg. 240.
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_criticism
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Darwin
5. DAVID J. BEATTIE, *Brethren. The story of a great recovery*, John Ritchie Ltd. 1944, pg. 257.
6. Stated as such by Dr. Torrey, of Los Angeles, California. Cited by Henry Pickering.
7. Recently re-published by Crimond House Publications, ISBN 978-1-908618-00-9.
8. See Endnote 1 above.
9. Ibid.



Definition

Although the word 'substitution' is not one that appears in holy scripture, the truth of it is often found. One of the first things that the believer appreciates is the glorious and wonderfully assuring truth that Christ took his place under divine judgement, bearing his sins and their penalty instead of him. The believer may sing with gladness of heart,

'No other hope, no other plea,
He took my place and died for me',
[ELIZA E. HEWITT].

It is helpful to consider the paschal lamb. On the Passover night the lamb was slain and its blood collected in a basin. In the time after the lamb was slain, but before its blood was applied to the lintel and posts of the door, the most that could be said by the firstborn was, 'Provision has been

SUBSTITU

with His blood, relates to the God-ward aspect of the death of Christ, whereas substitution, particularly connected with His body, is man-ward. Man is not propitiated and God is not substituted. Propitiation is in His blood, Rom. 3. 25, and in it we are reminded that our Saviour met every claim of divine righteousness in respect of sins. By that blood, the demands of the throne of God in respect of sins are satisfied. Accordingly, we are justified by His blood; it has answered for all our guilt, and the truth of it is expressed in the opening section of the Roman Epistle. In His entering into death, however, we see the great truth that the man in whose place He stood was brought to an end before God in the death of Christ.

this is of great importance, for there is never any thought that the work of Christ in propitiation was ever limited in any way. An infinite Person offered an infinite sacrifice to God to satisfy the infinite demands of infinite justice. Nothing less than the blood of Christ could have satisfied the demands of God's throne in respect of sins, however many there were.

However, as the scapegoat was led away by the hand of a fit man, never to be seen again, he bore the confessed sins of that people; he was in their place, so to speak, bearing for them what was really theirs to bear. The scapegoat was a substitute in a way that the other goat never was. Blood on the mercy seat represents that which was God-ward, whilst the scapegoat represents what is man-ward in the death of Christ.

His blood and His body. Each Lord's day at the Lord's Supper we note a distinction between our Lord's body and His blood. 'This is my body' is never confused, even by the newest believer, with 'This cup is the new testament in my blood', Luke 22. 19, 20. This distinction is often overlooked, however, in our consideration of the doctrine of the cross.

Consider Hebrews chapter 10, in which there are those who are sanctified by His body, v. 10, and others are sanctified by His blood, v. 29. Those who are sanctified vitally by His body are 'perfected for ever'; substitution is involved. However, those who are sanctified, relatively, or by association, by His blood are apostates who have never exercised saving faith and now count that blood an unholy thing.

This distinction is again made in verses 19 and 20 of Hebrews chapter 10. We have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, for by His blood, His once for all sacrifice to God on the cross, He has dealt with all that we have done. Our sins and iniquities are judicially remembered no more by God. There was, however, another impediment to my entering the holiest, namely myself, and this He dealt with in His flesh given in



made for me; the lamb has been slain on my behalf'. The lamb had died and yet the firstborn was still under judgement. At that stage, therefore, the firstborn could not speak of the slain lamb in substitutionary terms. It was not until the blood was applied to the door frame, in an act that speaks of the obedience of faith, that the firstborn could say, 'The lamb has died instead of me'. He had the word of God that he would be shielded from the destroyer, for He had said, 'when I see the blood, I will pass over you', Exod. 12. 13. What assurance must have filled the heart that day when the firstborn was able to look on the lamb, even as God looked on the blood, and realize with rejoicing that it had died instead of him!

The goat on which the Lord's lot fell and the scapegoat. The Israelite, on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16, knowing that the blood of the goat had been acceptably sprinkled on and before the mercy seat, watched as the high priest confessed sins, transgressions, and iniquities over the head of the scapegoat. That scapegoat was then led away by the hand of a fit man into a land uninhabited, bearing all those sins, and was never seen again. The believing Israelite saw his sins borne away by another.

These two goats constitute one sin offering. The goat that was slain, and whose blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat, is not depicted as being a substitute for anyone. Care should be taken to note that the hands of the high priest were never laid on that goat; there was no transference of guilt. In terms of typical teaching,

Distinctions

Substitution and propitiation. Propitiation, particularly connected



TION

By **IAN JACKSON**
Eastbourne, England

death. By that means He inaugurated the new and living way by which we enter. It is no wonder that in Hebrews chapter 2 the writer has taught us that our Lord took part of flesh and blood.

Again, consider Colossians chapter 1 in which believers have been reconciled 'in the body of his flesh through death'. However, the creation, unable to exercise faith as it can have no will to do so, is reconciled as a result of Christ 'having made peace through the blood of His cross'. Reference may be made to other chapters, such as Ephesians chapter 2, where His blood and His body given in death are distinguished.

'All' and 'many'. It should be noted that scripture carefully distinguishes between 'all' and 'many' when speaking of Christ's sacrifice. 'All' means absolutely everybody. We may stand at the cross and look out in every direction of time and say that no one is excluded from the provision that was made; and we may preach this without reserve, and should do so, as we make known the gospel. 'Many', however, refers only to those who by faith are, ultimately, among the redeemed. These will look back to Calvary and recognize that Christ died in their stead, bearing their sins in His body on the tree. Accordingly, just as there is no 'limited atonement' in scripture so there is no universal substitution.

There is an important distinction between 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 6, 'himself a ransom for all', and Matthew chapter 20 verse 28, 'his life a ransom for many'. In the first of these verses propitiation is in view, answering to the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell on the Day of Atonement; the ransom paid was of a sufficient value **on behalf of** 'all' without exception. In the other verse, however, there is the truth of substitution, for it was an **instead of** ransom with 'many' being in the good of it. The difference between these two verses is, however, greater than the difference between the prepositions employed. In 1

Timothy He 'gave himself', whereas in Matthew He 'gave his life', with the clear thought of His actually entering into death. The distinction is exactly that which is noted in Romans chapter 5 verses 9 and 10 where the apostle indicates that justification is by His blood – propitiation has been made – but reconciliation is by His death – there was brought to an end in death the man in whose place He stood in His death.

The clear distinction between 'all' and 'many' is to be carefully noted again in Romans chapter 5 verses 18-19. The Holy Spirit does not use words haphazardly and, accordingly, we may expect there to be a reason why verse 18 refers to 'all' whilst

'many' rather than 'all' the result would be that not all who were born of Adam's race were similarly affected by his offence. If it said that the one accomplished righteousness was towards 'many' men and not 'all men' the verse would explicitly teach a limited atonement. This shows the importance of understanding *eis* as having the significance of 'towards'; it relates to the direction of the effect of the action of the one man in each case.

In verse 19, however, the word is 'many'. One man's act resulted in many being constituted sinners. This clearly refers to a definite and final outcome rather than a bearing towards. Similarly, the obedience of one has a definite and final outcome, for by it many are constituted righteous. If verse 19 stated that 'by the obedience of one shall all men



the next verse refers to 'many'. This extends to every 'all' and 'many' passage regarding the cross-work of the Lord Jesus.

The force of the preposition *eis* in verse 18 is 'unto' or 'towards'. As the result of one offence, condemnation, which is eternal, came 'towards all' men; thank God it is not upon all eternally. Similarly, as the result of one accomplished righteousness, the work of Calvary in all its accomplishment, justification is 'towards all' men. Condemnation is not 'upon' all, for salvation has been provided; accordingly, not all will be condemned. Justification is not 'upon' all men for that would result in universalism, but in the grace of God it is towards all men without exception.

If it said that the offence was towards

be constituted righteous' it would be teaching universalism. Accordingly, there is in this verse the thought of grace that is offered and either accepted or refused.

In the preaching of the gospel, we gladly proclaim a provision for all. Paul preached the gospel to the whole creation, Col. 1. 23. But to tell sinners that Christ bore their sins and all their judgement at Calvary, only for those people, or some of them, to be sent to the lake of fire, is evidently misleading. Substitution is a truth known only to faith.

Devotion. There can be only one proper response to 'himself for me', Gal. 2. 20, and that is, 'me for Himself'. May we all willingly yield ourselves as eternal debtors to the Man who stood in our place under divine judgement at Calvary!



AMON

FIFTEENTH KING OF JUDAH

'So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead', 2 Chr. 33. 20.

By **GEOFF GORDGE**
Bynea, Llanelli, Wales

Amon learned nothing from his godly grandfather and everything from his ungodly father.

Although individuals in the nation were responsible to Jehovah as to how they worshipped Him, it was the king who ruled who seemed to have considerable influence upon how, and to whom, that worship was given. It is with great regret that the work of Hezekiah in the restoration of the worship of Jehovah had no effect on either Manasseh or Amon. We know from Second Chronicles chapter 33 verse 6, that Manasseh had other sons,⁶ but it seems that they may well have been sacrificed to the idol Molech. This was one of a list of evil things that Manasseh did, leaving Amon as his only surviving son.

However, when Manasseh was carried away to Babylon and 'he was in affliction',⁷ God heard his cry of repentance and brought him again to Jerusalem. After a long life of idolatry and evil practices, Manasseh saw the error of his ways. Sadly, though he had seen his father change at the end of his life, Amon did not do the same. We read that Amon was the most evil of all the kings of Judah.⁸ It is not without significance that he lived a very short life, and divine justice brought him to a speedy end. Some of his own servants must have recognized

his evil ways and a conspiracy brought an end of both his reign and his life. There is nothing God hates more than idolatry. The more idol worship took place the less the people honoured God. CAMMAERTS once wrote, 'When men choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything'.⁹

Are there any lessons that we can learn today from the actions of the evil king Amon? First, despite his godly reign, Hezekiah had no perceivable influence on either his son or his grandson. In that we need to appreciate that godliness, unlike sin, is not genetic, and doesn't run in families! Second, king Amon's short reign seems to indicate that, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man', Gen. 6. 3, and the time came when God put an end to Amon's rule through the agency of his own officials. The nation of Judah was slow to learn, even after many warnings, that the time comes when a holy but merciful, and gracious God nevertheless puts an end to the breaking of His commandments. One wonders how long God is prepared to put up with a nation like ours that violates God's morality so blatantly. Surely the dear Lord's coming cannot be too distant. 'Even so come Lord Jesus'.

Endnotes

- 1 FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book X chapter 3 Section 2.2..
- 2 2 Chr. 33. 21.
- 3 In verse 11 of chapter 2 of Judges, 'And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim'.
- 4 Rehoboam, Abijam, Jehoram, Ahaziah, and queen Athaliah.
- 5 Ahaz and Manasseh.
- 6 See Newberry Bible margin.
- 7 2 Chr. 33. 12.
- 8 2 Chr. 33. 22-23. See also MICHEL DISTEFANO, *The Inner Midrashic Introduction*, DeGruyter.
- 9 ÉMILE CAMMAERTS, *The Laughing Prophet: The Seven Virtues and G. K. Chesterton*, Folcroft Library Editions, 1979.

Now retired from a career in education, **GEOFF GORDGE** is in fellowship in the small assembly at Bynea, near Llanelli, South Wales.



So begins the reign of the southern kingdom of Judah's fifteenth king, at the age of twenty-two, in 642 BC. He was the son of the previous king, Manasseh, and his wife Meshullemeth, who was the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.¹ Thankfully, he reigned for only two years.² Without giving Amon any kind of credit, he came to the throne of Judah at a difficult time in Israel's history. From almost the very first moment the nation steps into Canaan, the graph of their godliness is largely a downward slope. As early as chapter 2 of Judges, we read in verse 2, 'Ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?' Then, the first of seven castigations by God of the idolatry of the nation.³ By the time of Amon, the divided kingdom of Judah has had thirteen kings and one queen, five of whom were bad,⁴ and two who could be described as very bad.⁵ Of Rehoboam, it is said that he, 'Forsook the law of the Lord', 2 Chr. 12. 1, of Abijam, 'He walked in all the sins of his father', 1 Kgs. 15. 3. Following the good king Jehoshaphat, Jehoram 'did evil in the sight of the Lord', 2 Kgs. 8. 18, and much the same is said of Ahaziah, and queen Athaliah.

King Amon, did not have a great start in life. His father, king Manasseh, who ruled for fifty-five years, was, apart from Amon himself, considered one of the worst kings of Judah. God had always wanted to bless the nation. In Deuteronomy chapter 28, Jehovah explained to the nation that the blessings for obedience to His word would be abundant. However, God is not slow to tell them what will befall them if they 'will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God', Deut. 28. 14. Amon's father, king Manasseh, failed to heed the warnings and worked his evil in the nation for years. Sadly, king



A WORD FOR TODAY

Kyrieio, e, to be lord or master of

Kyrios, e, lord, master

Kyriotes, lordship, dominion

It must appear somewhat ironic to those who do not live in the United Kingdom that the mother of Parliaments has an unelected second chamber. Even more curious perhaps is the fact that this second house consists of Lords Temporal and Lords Spiritual plus Law Lords, who cannot strictly prevent legislation from being implemented other than in exceptional circumstances. What they can do, however, is to delay legislation or ask the House of Commons to consider revising legislation. In the main, they act independently or as overlords of the executive, by holding it to account through rigorous checks and balances. And it is this sense of being 'over' or an 'overlord' that is an intuitive feature of the Greek word *kyrios*, which occurs over 700 times in the Greek New Testament, mainly in respect of Jesus Christ.

In the Septuagint (LXX), *kyrios* is used some 6,000 times to translate the Hebrew name for God, the so-called Tetragrammaton, or four Hebrew consonants which spell out the name of God, YHWH. This was invariably written as *Yahweh*, but, following the exilic period, i.e., after 539 BC, Jews became extremely superstitious about pronouncing the term *Yahweh*, and so used the term *Adonai* instead.¹ In later translations of the Bible, e.g., NKJV, the term used is normally 'Lord' with a footnote confirming the translation of the Tetragrammaton, as in Genesis chapter 22 verse 14, YHWH Yireh - 'The Lord-Will-Provide'. Exceptionally, the Greek synonym, *despotes*, was also used to translate the name of God, but, since this word often carried the idea of 'tyrant', i.e., someone with uncontrolled power, *kyrios* was considered more appropriate to explain the nature of God and His relationship with His creation.² This is an important point as it indicates that the LXX translators were keen to equate the word *kyrios* with the Hebrew word for God,³ even though *kyrios* in general usage can often relate to human lords or masters, or simply be used as a mark of respect for someone, e.g., sir.⁴

In Exodus chapter 5 verse 1, Moses confronts Pharaoh for the first time by requesting that God's people should be permitted leave of absence to celebrate a feast to their God in the wilderness with Moses. The request is made in the name of 'the Lord, the God of Israel'. Pharaoh shows his contempt for this request by demonstrating his ignorance of the living God, and, consequently, God reveals Himself and His character to Moses through the revelation of His name, Exod. 6 *et seq.* Throughout these chapters, *kyrios* and other related forms of the word are used in the LXX to translate the name of the Lord. Similarly, in the LXX translation of the Shema statement 'Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord' in Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4, the term 'Lord' is again translated by *kyrios*, and is set in immediate juxtaposition with the word for 'God' to emphasize the uniqueness of Israel's God, i.e., the text could be literally rendered, 'The Lord is our God, the Lord alone' (my underlining). The LXX usage here of *kyrios*

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY**
Newton Abbot, England

may suggest that the word stands for the one and only God. The divine epithet 'Lord (God) of Hosts' (*kyrios Sabaoth*) is used throughout the Old Testament, e.g., Isa. 10. 23, Hag. 1. 2, and emphasizes the superiority of God over all human beings. *Kyrios* is also the word used in Micah chapter 4 verse 13 to underline the fact that the wealth of nations belongs to the Lord. As G. QUELL writes, 'The term Lord states in practice who God is and what he means for us as the one whose personal will intervenes with all the force that is the distinctive mark of the name Yahweh'.⁵ Such is the authority of the term that even Michael the archangel in his dispute with the devil over the body of Moses needs to invoke *kyrios* by way of aid to rule out the calumnies of the adversary, Jude 9, cp. Zech. 3. 2.

Some of the Greek papyri found by archeologists in ancient Egyptian towns and villages during the nineteenth century AD reveal significant uses of the word *kyrios* in the period just prior to the birth of the New Testament. In an inscription from Alexandria of 52 BC, Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra are called *oi kyrios theoi megistoi*, 'the lords, the most great gods'.⁶ Later, *kyrios* became the title bestowed upon Roman Emperors, especially during Nero's reign, thus, as we turn to the New Testament, we see that the use of the *Kyrios*-title in respect of Jesus by His disciples is a very loaded term, and one that clearly would be viewed by the state as having political undertones. Hence, to acknowledge that 'Jesus is Lord (*kyrios*)', 1 Cor. 12. 3, brought Christians into sharp focus with the Roman authorities, and considerable risk of persecution.

Turning then to the New Testament, we find that *kyrios* is used in at least three different ways. It is used generally of masters or slave owners as part of the household code, as in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 5, cp. Col. 4. 1. Second, as a common term of respect or politeness, as in the case of the Greeks who requested an audience with Jesus through Philip, John. 12. 21, cp. John 4. 11, or the respect a wife should show to her husband as exemplified in the case of Sarah who 'obeyed Abraham, calling him lord', 1 Pet. 3. 6. But it is when the term is applied by New Testament writers to significant Old Testament texts that the word becomes a designation of deity. These writers intend us to make this connection following on from the name of God in the Old Testament, and the table below provides some examples of this important interplay:

Old Testament Text	New Testament Text
Deuteronomy 6. 5	Matthew 22. 37
Deuteronomy 6. 16	Luke 4. 12
Exodus 3. 5	Acts 7. 33
Psalms 135. 14	Hebrews 10. 30

These examples also provide us with an understanding as to why, when *kyrios* was used to address Jesus, it was in recognition that He was divine. This title is given to Him on something like 500 occasions, and is therefore one of the most powerful indications in the whole of the New Testament that Jesus of Nazareth was truly

God incarnate, the Son of the living God, Matt. 16. 16. For Paul, *kyrios* is 'the name which is above every name', Phil. 2. 9, and a term that He was so committed to that he was prepared to die 'on behalf of the name of the Lord (*kyriou*) Jesus', Acts 21. 13. It is worth quoting C. E. CRANFIELD here, 'Paul applies to Christ, without – apparently – the least sense of inappropriateness, the *kyrios* of LXX passages in which it is perfectly clear that the *kyrios* referred to God Himself (e.g. 10. 13; 1 Thes. 5. 2; 2 Thes. 2.2)'.⁷

Earlier mention was made of the synonym *despotes*, which only occurs ten times in the New Testament. In the main, the word was used to describe the absolute power of God as in Revelation chapter 6 verse 10, where, following the opening of the fifth seal, the martyrs make an imprecatory cry to the sovereign Lord to bring judgement and vengeance on those who dwell on the earth. Similarly, in Jude 4, false teachers are not only guilty of perverting the grace of God, but also of denying the sovereignty of 'our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ', ESV.

In terms, then, the import of *kyrios* in the New Testament is both theological in the sense that it is a major Christological title used especially by the apostle Paul as well as being a dynamic relational term for Christians. To publicly attest that 'Jesus is Lord (*kyrios*)' is to accept His divine sovereignty over our lives, Rom. 10. 9, and to resolve that He alone is worthy of our allegiance, 1 Cor. 8. 6. Are we watching, then, for our Lord's return, Mark 13. 35?

For further reading/study

Introductory

VINCENT TAYLOR, 'The Lord' in *The Names of Jesus*, Macmillan and Co, Ltd, pp. 38-51.

Advanced

GERALD HAWTHORNE, RALPH P. MARTIN, DANIEL G. REID (Eds.), 'Lord' in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters - A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, IVP, pp. 560-569.

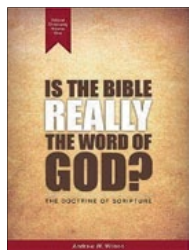
Endnotes

- ¹ 'The word Jehovah is an artificial term dating to the 16th cent. and is a combination of the four consonants of the T with the vowels of the Hebrew word *Adonai*; it is found in early editions of the KJV, in the ASV, et al'. 'Tetragrammaton', RICHARD N. SOULEN, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, Lutterworth Press, pg. 160.
- ² The philosopher Plato distinguished these synonyms by stating that a man was *despotes* in respect of his slaves, but *kyrios* in respect of his wife and children, Plato, *Legg*, vi.756e. This suggests that in making such a distinction, Greeks thought that *kyrios* was a more endearing term and took into account the wellbeing of those over whom lordship was exercised. See the later comments on the use of *despotes* in the New Testament.
- ³ W. FOERSTER III suggests that 'the LXX probably chooses *kyrios* because it stresses the fact that as the Liberator from Egypt, or as the Creator, God has a valid right to control over his people and the universe. He is sovereign in the absolute sense'. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament - Abridged in One Volume*, pg. 491.
- ⁴ See, for example, the *Letter from Apion*, an Egyptian soldier in the Roman navy, to his father Epimachus, where *kyrios* is used as a courtesy title or a title of respect, DEISSMANN, *Light from the Ancient East*, Wipf and Stock, pg.180 note 3.
- ⁵ 'Lord' as a Designation for Yahweh'. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament - Abridged in One Volume*, Eerdmans, pg. 489.
- ⁶ Berl. *Sitzungsberichte*, 1902, pg. 1096.
- ⁷ C. E. CRANFIELD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, T&T Clark International, pg. 529.

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



Is the Bible Really the Word of God? Andrew Wilson

Paperback, 214 Pages, Published by Believers Publications, North Lakes, Qld, Australia. ISBN: 9780994397713.

There can be few more fundamental issues for Christianity than the trustworthiness and authority of scripture. In recent times the diversity and intensity of attacks on the Bible have been increasing. This contribution is therefore timely, and the author deals comprehensively with the subject. The book is well presented, and written in an engaging style with clear section headings to break up the text. Major chapters address such matters as: why the Bible is truly the word of God; what is meant by the inspiration of scripture; Christ's view of scripture; the sufficiency of scripture; guidelines for the interpretation of scripture; the canon of scripture; 'which Bible version should I read?', etc. Importantly, WILSON highlights the inconsistency of confessing Jesus Christ as the divine Lord and, at the same time, conceding that He could have been mistaken as to the accuracy and authority of scripture.

The bewildering plethora of modern translations is discussed and the specialist discipline of textual criticism is introduced. Its importance is explained, thus clarifying one reason why Bible versions differ – they are not reflecting the same underlying original text at every point. On the other hand, the author emphasizes the 'embarrassment of riches' available to modern Bible translators, over against the erroneous and destructive conclusions that some have drawn from the large number of manuscript variations.

In a day when many possess Bibles which they rarely read, the final chapter, helpfully, gives important practical guidance on how to approach and sustain the daily reading of the Bible for personal spiritual profit.

Throughout, WILSON interacts with a wide cross-section of past writers who have addressed this subject. The student will find many useful pointers for further reading. Here, then, is a book to rebut negative criticism, and to reassure believers that they can have complete confidence in the Bible as fully trustworthy. It deserves to achieve a wide circulation. Whilst the focus is on English translations of the Bible, the major lessons of the book are readily applicable to other languages and versions. Anyone concerned to arrive at an intelligent appreciation of the solid foundations of the Christian faith will benefit from this book.

(Our thanks to Ken Totton, Cambridge, England for this review).



Chitokoloki Celebrating a century of the Lord's work in North-western Zambia Alma Turnbull

Paperback, 163 pages, Published by Gospel Folio Press, 304 Killaly St. West, Port Colborne, ON L3K 6A6, Canada. ISBN: 9781927521557.

This is an interesting and informative book, written by ALMA TURNBULL, recording how the Lord has worked in a mighty way in a settlement on the banks of the Zambezi River called Chitokoloki. The remarkable story commences in late 1913 when three faithful men Mr Frederick Arnot, Mr T Lambert Rogers and Mr George Suckling heeded God's call and established a ministry in an area of Zambia yet to be reached with the gospel.

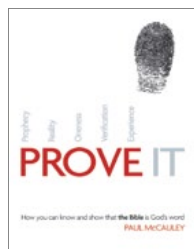
This beautifully illustrated book uses many photographs, historical accounts and documents spanning 100 years of service in order to bring the story to life for readers who have never experienced what it would be like living and working in such a region of Africa. There is a helpful map which can be used to locate the places referred to, and a chronological index of missionary workers to help readers understand where and when the workers fit into the history. My only slight criticism of the book is that it would have been nice if all the photographs came with a brief description.

The author sets the scene well and then focuses on the mission station and its workers, the advance in education, the spread of the gospel and the teaching of God's word. A large proportion of the book records the development of the medical work from a small hospital with few patients to a fully fledged hospital with modern equipment capable of conducting major surgical operations, interspersing this with touching accounts and testimonies of individuals whose lives were changed both physically and spiritually.

What makes this book interesting and challenging is the thread that runs throughout - God is faithful! Yet the reader is caused to stop and appreciate the remarkable nature of events that are recorded so simply. There is a good balance between the joys of being involved in such a work and the heartaches, difficulties and at times seemingly inexplicable circumstances that have been faced along the way.

ALMA TURNBULL gives a clear insight into the work that has been done but when reading this book it needs to be remembered, this is an ongoing work. It is also likely that this book will leave you challenged, to quote Gordon Hanna speaking at a graveside in Chitokoloki, 'what is important is not the quantity of our life but the quality - not how long we spend here on earth, but what we do with the time God has given us'.

(Our thanks to Esther Scarsbrook for this review).



Prove it How you can know and show that the Bible is God's word Paul McCauley

Paperback, 270 pages, Published by Decapolis Press (an Imprint of Precious Seed), 19 Alfreton Road, Pinxton, NG16 6JZ, UK. [Available in the Precious Seed shop: <http://www.onlineshop.preciousseed.org/>] ISBN: 978-1-871642-87-2.

This further book by our esteemed brother, a commended UK evangelist, is largely based on his experience of personal evangelism. Using the very apt acronym PROVE, he explains how we can be sure that the Bible is the inspired word of God, literally true, unique, and valuable for every spiritual purpose. His aim is to confirm the faith of believers in the Bible, and to challenge unbelievers to consider the claims of the God of the Bible on their lives.

His book, which is very readable and interesting, is divided into five sections. The first section, Prophecy, gives many examples of predictions made in the Bible about the nations, Israel, and Christ Himself which have already been fulfilled literally and accurately. This inspires implicit faith in the divine inspiration of the scriptures. The second section, Reality, explains that, 'as we look at the teaching of the Bible, we see it matches and accounts for the way the world really is' much better than any other world-view. The third section, Oneness, explains the unity and harmony of the books of the Bible, despite their diverse authors and dates. This fact helped the author during a dark period of doubt. The fourth section, Verification, explains scientific and archaeological evidence that confirms the truth and accuracy of the Bible, and states Christ's own confirmation of the Old Testament. The final section, Experience, explains how many people have experienced personally God's life-transforming power in His word, His perfection seen there, and His presence as they have read it, which is 'better felt than told'. He concludes that the Bible is altogether trustworthy. I heartily recommend this book to all readers.

(Our thanks to Malcolm Davis, Leeds, UK, for this review).

QUESTION

Why do we worship on a Sunday and not on the seventh day?

ANSWER

Although the question is phrased exactly as it was submitted, I assume that what the questioner had in mind was 'why do we break bread on a Sunday and not on the seventh day'? After all, there is no restriction imposed in either the Old or New Testaments as to when God's people can worship; they are free to worship on any day and at any time.

One of the features that distinguished Israel from the rest of the nations was their adherence to keeping the Sabbath day. The Sabbath was the seventh day and its selection was not determined by Israel but by God, for 'in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it', Exod. 20. 11. Such was the magnitude of the commandment that its violation carried the death sentence. However, it is important for us to realize that this was not a commandment issued by God for all mankind but specifically for the Jews. 'It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever', 31. 17.

The word Sabbath, or its plural form, occurs 146 times between Genesis and Acts chapter 18, from there to the end of the Bible it is only used once. Therefore, from its usage in scripture, it is quite obvious that Sabbath-keeping is not a part of 'church truth' and you will not locate one instance where Christians are exhorted to set that day aside. Even the Jewish believers of the first century church were never commanded to teach the Gentiles to obey this day. The one time the word Sabbath is used after the book of Acts is in Colossians chapter 2 verse 16, where the apostle Paul instructs us that we should not judge anyone on not keeping that day.

The keeping of the Sabbath was just one of the commandments given to Israel by God and formed part of the ritual of the old covenant. Now that Christ has died and risen and the Holy Spirit has come, we are no longer living in the age of the old covenant,

it has been replaced by something new and better. To insist on Sabbath adherence is to take God's people back to things that are weak and beggarly, to resurrect that which God has finished with, and to bring Christians into a bondage from which they have been delivered.

It might be suggested by some that for the Christian the Sabbath day has been changed to the first day of the week, but even that is not correct. It is true that within the New Testament there is a shift in emphasis from the Sabbath to the first day but nowhere does the scripture teach that Sunday has replaced the Sabbath. Neither can we find evidence that the first century Christians considered the first day to be a holy day. There is no law commanding us to keep Sunday in the way Israel were instructed to keep the Sabbath, nor is it the only day we are required to assemble and worship.

This, of course, does not mean that we should be careless as to what we do on a Sunday. It is a day of sacred association and is described in Revelation chapter 1 as 'the Lord's day'. That does not mean that any other day of the week is less sacred as far as Christian living is concerned, but it is the day of the Lord's resurrection. According to Acts chapter 20 verse 7, it is the day when the Lord's supper was observed and in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 we learn that freewill offerings were set aside. It is, therefore, a day of positive spiritual opportunity and privilege for believers but what we must avoid is introducing regulations about the first day of the week that are not mandated in the Epistles. In Romans chapter 14 verse 5 Paul states, 'One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind'. If there had been something fundamentally different about Sunday, surely Paul would have made that very clear and he would not have written that each of us should be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Chairman and General Editor:

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Ministry Articles Editor:

SANDY JACK

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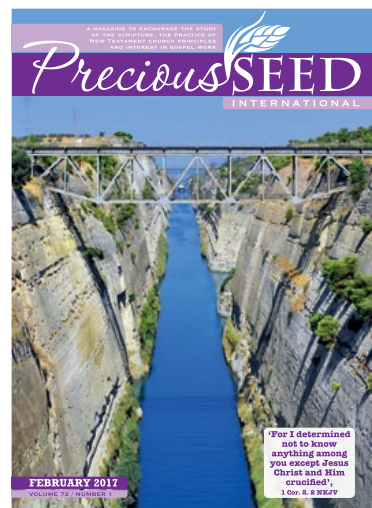


Precious Seed International

Front Cover Illustration

**'For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified',
1 Cor. 2. 2 NKJV.**

The picture on the front cover shows the Corinth Canal that links the Gulf of Corinth with the Aegean Sea. The original Canal was started by the Emperor Nero, but was then abandoned shortly after his death in AD 67. The project was only revived again in the nineteenth century, being finally completed in 1893. It enables ships to access the west more quickly from the major Greek port of Piraeus, and other parts of Greece than the rather lengthy voyage that would be necessary by sailing around the Peloponnese Peninsula. The ancient city of Corinth, which Paul visited during his second missionary journey, Acts 18, was located on the isthmus of Corinth, and famous for the Isthmian Games, a festival of athletic and musical competitions in honour of the sea god Poseidon. The city was totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1858, but archaeological excavations have uncovered the Temple of Aphrodite, which overlooked the famous market place. According to historians, this temple had thousands of sacred prostitutes, and Corinth was widely projected as a city of sin and vice. Such was its notoriety in history that the archaic English verb to 'corinthianise' means to live a promiscuous life. Yet, despite this being a cesspool of iniquity, 'it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe', 1 Cor. 1. 21, and to establish, through Paul's activities in partnership with others in the city, a New Testament church, which had an abundance of spiritual gift, and a vibrant hope in the return of Christ, 1 Cor. 1. 8. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians shows just how difficult it must have been for Christians to maintain their testimony in a secular and pagan environment. But this surely provides us with salutary teaching as we too seek to live for Christ in similar conditions today, Eph. 5. 8. When Paul was arraigned before Gallio for being accused of perverting the law of God, he stood before the proconsul's 'judgement seat', or, literally, the 'judicial bench', Acts 18. 16. The charges against him were summarily dismissed, but Paul knew that one day there would be a far greater reckoning for him, and for all believers, at the 'judgment seat of Christ', 2 Cor. 5. 10, where all actions are to be reviewed by Christ, not with punishment in mind, but with a view to reward for eternal blessing, Rev. 19. 8. May all our service for Christ be carried out in the light of that soon coming day, 1 Cor. 3. 13-15.



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