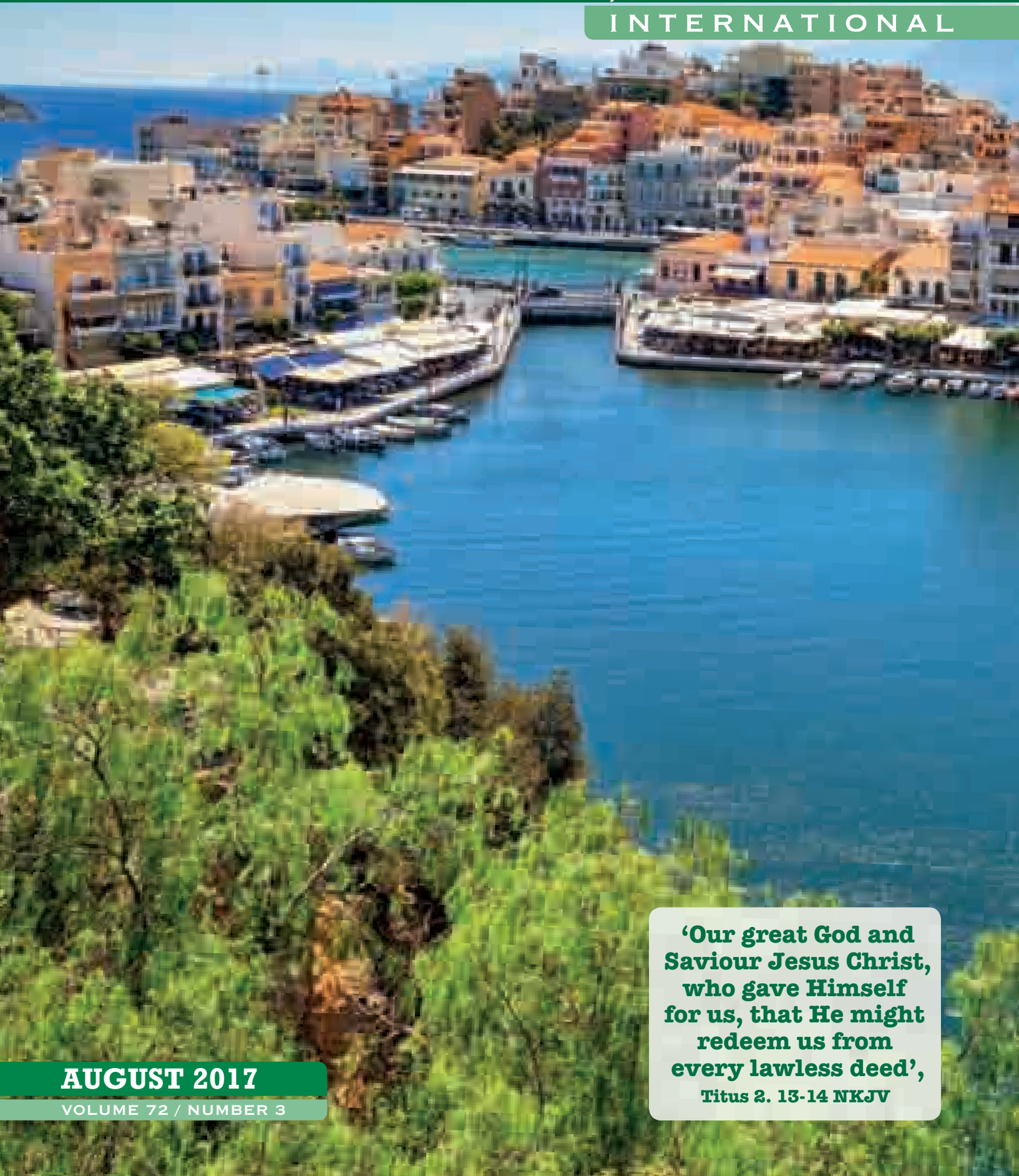


A MAGAZINE TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY
OF THE SCRIPTURES, THE PRACTICE OF
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AND INTEREST IN GOSPEL WORK

Precious SEED

INTERNATIONAL



AUGUST 2017

VOLUME 72 / NUMBER 3

**‘Our great God and
Saviour Jesus Christ,
who gave Himself
for us, that He might
redeem us from
every lawless deed’,
Titus 2. 13-14 NKJV**

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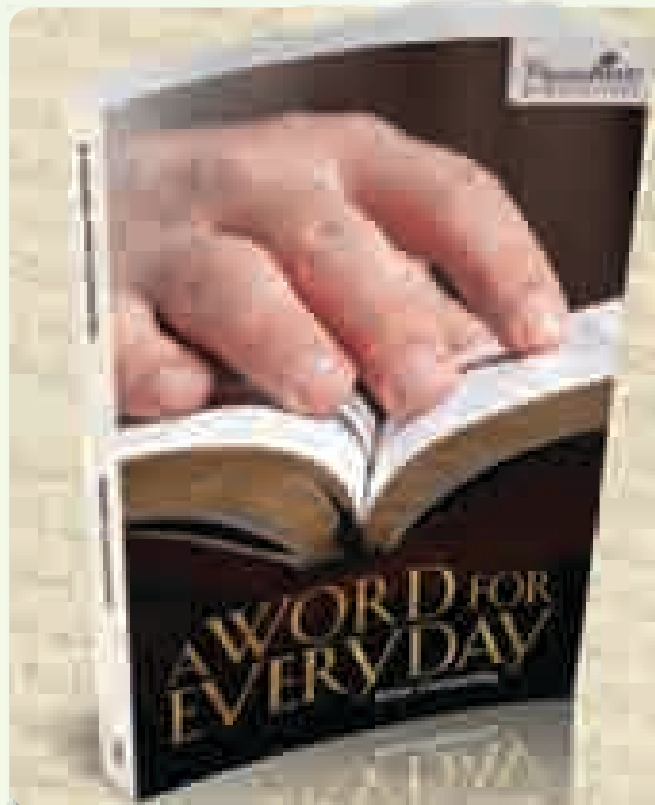
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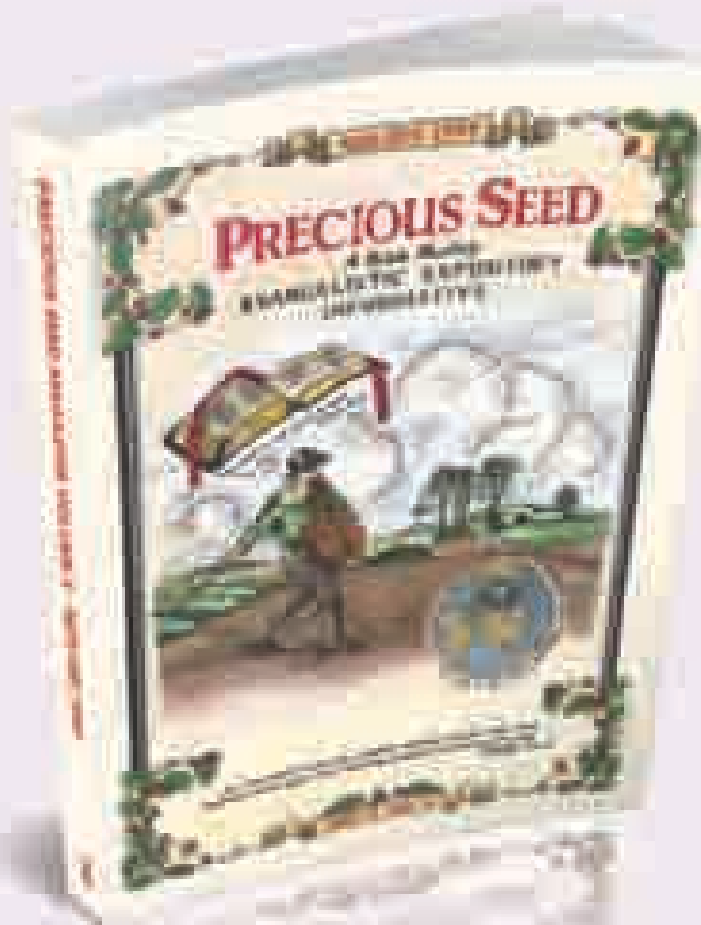
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Editorial

‘He shall grow up before him as a tender plant’, Isa. 53. 2.

It was divine hands that first planted anything in earth's soil, Gen. 2. 8. That planting established a place where man and God might commune – a place where not only man might enjoy fellowship with his creator but also where God might enjoy man, the crowning glory of His creation.

The entrance of sin marred mankind and creation; what had been a relationship and place of rich enjoyment for heaven, became an utter barrenness in heaven's eyes. Man, designed to draw all his purpose and delight from his creator, abandoned his source of ‘life’ and put his roots well down into other sources.

What delight must have dawned in heaven's eternal day, when One was born who was altogether different; One who would grow up before Him as a tender plant. One who, untainted by the sinfulness of flesh, would constantly draw His purpose and delight from God Himself.

To heaven, He was a tender plant – a sapling which drew all its nourishment from eternal sources.

As the inspired Gospel writers unfold for us the history of the Lord Jesus, that dependence of the perfect man is seen in many ways.

Sitting among the religious academics of the day, He shows His actions are drawn from divine purpose, Luke 2. 49. On a later visit to the temple, He affirms that His actions are designed to produce divine pleasure, John 8. 29. In the busyness of daily serving, He takes time alone to draw on eternal resources, Matt. 14. 23.

How is it with us? As those who are subjects of the new birth and have received the blessing of new life, are our actions drawn from divine purpose? Are we allowing the glory of the Father to be our regulator as we walk in newness of life, Rom. 6. 4? We can be sure that such heavenly living will only be possible if we have our ‘roots’ settled and drawing sustenance from the appropriate place.

As we send this issue of the magazine to press, it is the sincere prayer of the committee, and those who have taken the time to write for this issue, that its content will promote a deeper appreciation and love for the One who delights heaven.



The Old Testament is divided by the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke chapter 24 verse 44 into three distinct parts: the law, the psalms, and the prophets. In each of these sections there is an outstanding passage in relation to His death. Leviticus chapter 16 emphasizes the atonement in all its God-satisfying glory. In Psalm 22 we read, in most touching language, of the anguish of the death of Christ, while Isaiah chapter 53 reveals the acknowledgement of His death by the repentant nation of Israel. It is the central portion of these scriptures that we will seek to consider a little in this article.

If a messianic psalm is to be defined as one wherein there is a direct reference to the Messiah which is applied to Him in the New Testament, then we are on safe ground calling Psalm 22 messianic. Numerous references are made to this psalm in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel accounts of the cross-work of our Lord Jesus. The immediate context of the psalm bears testimony to the suffering of David at the hands of Saul, yet, however real these afflictions, they could never fully satisfy the depth and pathos of the language. Truly, we see 'a greater than David' in the fulfilment of the forsakenness, the intense hatred, the profound agonies, and, at the last, the unequalled glory. The outpourings of a heart in such distress could only fully refer to 'the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow', of which we read in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 11.

Here indeed is suffering unmeasured and unequalled. We cannot deny the intense tribulation experienced by many of the Old Testament worthies. Joseph experienced the pit and the prison. Job's life was left in total devastation in just one day, as bit by bit he was stripped of all that he possessed. Jeremiah, Daniel and the prophets would suffer greatly for their faithfulness to the word of God. Paul unfolds in the second Letter to the Corinthians a catalogue of trials that would make us blush at how

THE MESSIANIC PSALM

By **STEPHEN FELLOWES** Skibbereen, Ireland

little we are prepared to suffer for His name's sake. Yet there is one whose experience stands in distinction to the worst of mortal agonies. We are thinking, of course, of the sinless sufferer for sin on Golgotha's tree.

Here none can follow but with unshod feet, standing on holy ground.

'I'll creep beside him as a worm
and see him die for me'

WILLIAM BUTTY

The title *Ajeleth Shahar* meaning 'the hind of the morning', traditionally refers to 'the early light preceding the dawn of the morning, whose first rays are likened to the horns of a hind', KEIL and DELITZSCH. When we come to the end of our psalm we see these rays shining as the day of millennial glory dawns. However, before the glory must come the suffering, and so the tender, innocent, hind-like Saviour must face the cross with all its sorrow, surrounded by bulls, lions and dogs.¹

Verses 1-5: The Sufferer abandoned

F. W. GRANT succinctly stated that the Lord was in verses 1 to 21 'alone', and in verses 22 to 31 'not alone'. It is with aloneness the psalm commences. We are brought straight to Calvary to listen to the cry of the holy, sinless Saviour, forsaken by His God.² As J. N. DARBY said beautifully, 'His cry was the perfect expression of His nature'. Notice the language carefully – 'my God'. This is God acting as God, demonstrating the holiness of His being. He exercises His justice as the sin-hating God, demanding that sin be fully and unsparingly judged. Here we are on the ground of the sin offering.³ This is not an orphan cry; it is vital to notice that the Saviour does not address His Father to ponder His forsakenness, rather He addresses God. Never was the Son abandoned by the Father, even at Calvary. He is ever 'in the bosom of the Father' and this position is eternal, timeless, and uninteruptable.

The theme of this psalm is God, El, and His dealings with sin in the person of Christ. 'He . . . made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin'.⁴ Here we observe the stroke of divine justice falling; we recoil at the darkness, the distance and the awful destitution of the sinless Saviour suffering for sins. Yet in the midst of it He acknowledges to His God 'but thou art holy'.⁵ In this utterance He answers His own question, knowing that God must punish sin and, in punishing sin, forsake the sufferer. Others may have experienced deliverance but He willingly accepts the forsaken place.⁶ Wonder of wonders that He did – may our hearts bow in worship!

Verses 6-21: The Sufferer's anguish

If the first five verses bring before us Christ's sufferings from the divine aspect, from verse 6 we have the human and satanic viewpoints. How touchingly the psalm expresses the feelings of the Lord Jesus at the cross! The book of the Psalms is the great book of the inward man, exploring his emotions, desires, purposes and feelings. We cannot cover every detail but let us try to get some sense of the depth of the sensibilities of the perfect man in His agony on the cross.

In verse 6, in an outburst of utter humility, the Lord refers to Himself as 'a worm'. The word *tala* means 'worm, maggot, larva'. It signifies one characterized by complete lowliness, apparent weakness and total insignificance in the eyes of men. The Lord of glory could become no lower.

In the next two verses the mockery of the cross is brought before us. We hear the scorning, the scoffers ridiculing. Yet, their words, intended to degrade and wound, declared Him as the perfect, dependent One, who always delighted God. In verses 9 and 10, the Lord Himself declares His pathway of dependance, entered



PSALMS - PSALM 22

upon from birth. This pathway was unique to Him, contrasting with the birth of the wicked, who 'are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies'.⁷ As dependent man, the Lord acknowledges the role of God in His birth, 'he that took [Him] . . . out of the womb'.⁸ Now, on the cross, He owns the same hand '[bringing Him] into the dust of death'.⁹ How perfect and consistent is His attitude, and what delight this must have brought to God!

The enmity of the cross is highlighted in verses 12-13, 16 and 20-21. Here we have a hideous display of the hatred of the heart of man. Indeed, if I want to see what man *is* in the essence of his nature I look to Calvary. Throughout scripture we have a record of man's thoughts towards God. We see him fail miserably time and time again in spite of God's goodness towards him. Here, at Calvary, at the zenith of God's love, under the full blaze of divine grace, man shows himself at his worst – a God-hater and a Christ-rejecter. Various parties are mentioned:

Verse 12 – The 'bulls' denote religious leaders of the nation, powerful and august.

Verse 16 – The 'dogs' are a reference to Gentile soldiers, and the singular 'dog' in verse 20 denoting perhaps Herod or Pilate.

Verse 21 – The 'ravening and roaring lion' must be none other than the devil himself, with echoes of the words of the apostle Peter.¹⁰

One is reminded of the union of hatred in Psalm 2, with the heathen raging, the people imagining a vain thing, and the usually antithetical kings and rulers combining forces 'against the Lord and against his anointed'.

The agony of the cross should touch every redeemed heart, couched as it is in the most moving and

poetic language. The Lord Jesus was conscious of His utter physical weakness, being 'poured out like water' while His agony is excruciating; He could say, 'all my bones are out of joint'. His 'heart [was] melted like wax', 'in the sacrificial fire of wrath against sin', F. W. GRANT. He felt powerless, utterly without strength, and dehydrated with unquenchable thirst. Verse 16 leaves us in no doubt as to the method of His death by crucifixion. Words fail to express adequately the depth of it all; we concur with the hymn-writer's sentiment:

'O, wonder to myself I am
Thou loving, bleeding,
suffering Lamb
That I can scan the mystery o'er
And not be moved
to love thee more'
JOSEPH DENHAM SMITH

Verses 22-31: The Sufferer answered

We see in this last section that God *does* answer, in resurrection power and in the ultimate exaltation and glory of the Son. Notice the ever-widening circle of praise. Verse 22 surely takes us to John chapter 20 verse 17 where the risen Saviour declares the name of His Father and God to His brethren. His brethren here are His disciples, those in close relationship to Him. It is not the church in view here, though the disciples did become the nucleus of the church. We do not find the church, *per se*, in the Old Testament.¹¹

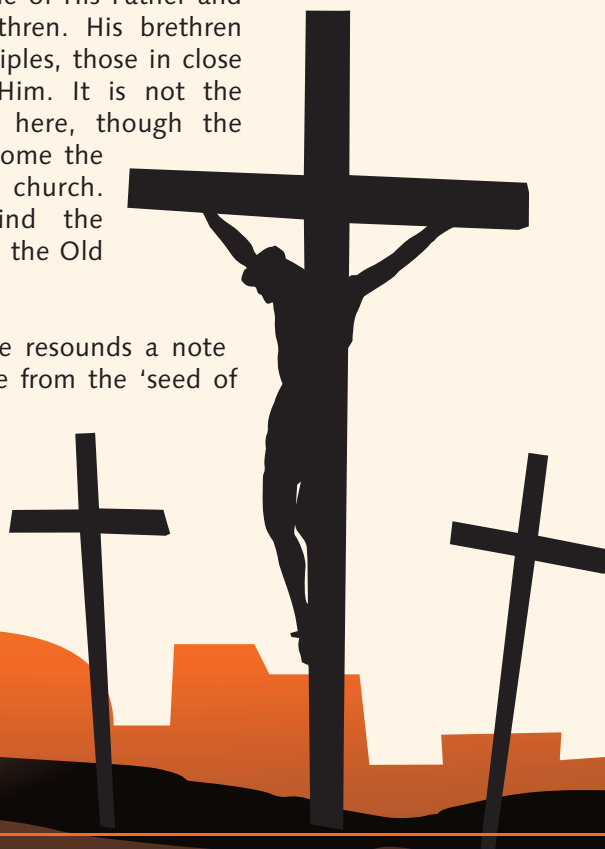
In verse 23 there resounds a note of national praise from the 'seed of

Jacob'. In verse 25 we have united praise by a united nation, the 'great congregation'.¹² The praise becomes universal in verse 27 as the 'the ends of the earth' and 'all kindreds of the nations' unite, with Jew and Gentile harmoniously linked together in praise to the One who was forsaken by all on the cross. This glorious outpouring of adulation will occur during the millennial reign of Christ, when He will be universally acknowledged as 'governor among the nations'. Note, however, the concluding verse of the Psalm – the cross will never be forgotten, all the glory that men will enjoy whether heavenly or earthly will be because 'He hath done this'!

Endnotes

- 1 Verses 12-13, 16.
- 2 Matt. 27. 46.
- 3 Lev. 4.
- 4 2 Cor. 5. 21.
- 5 Verse 3.
- 6 Verses 4-5.
- 7 Ps. 58. 3.
- 8 Verse 9.
- 9 Verse 15.
- 10 1 Pet. 5. 8.
- 11 Eph. 3.
- 12 Ezek. 36.

STEPHEN FELLOWES, originally from Belfast, is in fellowship in the assembly in Skibbereen, West Cork, Ireland. Married to Rachel, they reside in Skibbereen with their three young children. Stephen is active in the little assembly and in gospel outreach work throughout this needy part of Ireland.



We delight to read the Epistle to the Hebrews as the writer presents to us 'this man', e.g., Heb. 3. 3; 10. 12. The purpose of this paper is to take us through the Gospels and to see something of the setting as it was used when our Lord was here. Sadly, as we shall seek to show, the words, and similar ones, were mainly used in derision and indifference.

Matthew chapter 9 verses 1 to 8

This incident is also recorded in Mark chapter 2 verses 1 to 12 and Luke chapter 5 verses 18 to 26.

Whatever section we read it is a delightful scene that is brought before us. The four friends could not save the palsied man, but they could bring him to someone who could. However, the Lord did not deal with the man's illness first, but says to him, 'Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee'. Straight away the Scribes said within themselves, 'This man blasphemeth'. The Lord knew their thoughts, and it is Mark who informs us that their further reasoning was that this was the prerogative of God alone. They did not consider the real identity of the Saviour, 'God manifest in the flesh'. The idea to them was unthinkable – inconceivable. The Lord faced opposition when His deity was apparent. What a contrast is revealed to us by the multitudes who saw what took place and 'marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men'. Divine power was demonstrated to the man, and deity was revealed as the Lord knew their thoughts. They were very quick to catch hold of His words, but not that their thoughts were read and revealed.

Matthew chapter 13 verses 53 to 58

We can also read this account in Mark chapter 6 verse 1 to 6 and Luke chapter 4 verses 16 to 30. He came unto His own country, but the whole atmosphere seemed to be one of unbelief as to who He really was. Whilst Mark records



the facts, they give mention to some of His family by name but not to His name. They wondered at His words, His wisdom and His mighty works but they could not appreciate that He was more than a carpenter, He was the Creator. His hand had carved many pieces of wood, but also He created the worlds. Mark, too, informs us that the Lord Himself marvelled at their unbelief. They should have known better.

Matthew chapter 21 verses 1 to 11

This passage is often referred to as the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; how different from His exit. Verse 1 states, 'He drew nigh unto Jerusalem' and, verse 10, 'He was come into Jerusalem'. Between these two verses we read of the instructions given to the two disciples regarding the colt. His foreknowledge is apparent, 'ye shall find'. The Lord was aware of future events. Interestingly, Isaiah chapter 62 verse 11 and Jeremiah chapter 9 verse 9 are quoted. Despite this, there is the question in verse 10, 'Who is this?' or, to paraphrase it, 'Who is this man?' Here we have the unrecognized Messiah. They could only acclaim that He was Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. They had little understanding of who He really was! I trust as we meditate on the scriptures we realize our Lord was indeed the promised Messiah and we do not need to look for

another.

Matthew chapter 27 verses 45 to 49

Our focus is on verse 47, 'This man calleth for Elias'. This is also recorded in Mark chapter 15 verses 35-36. Of the seven sayings from the cross, only one is recorded by Matthew. Men were not allowed sight of the Lord in His deep suffering. He was made sin for us. The bystanders heard the cry from the Lord and thought He was calling for Elijah, interpreting 'Eli' as Elias, but scripture gives us its true meaning, v. 46. Some consider that the Lord was expecting Elijah's return, as some did, but, as verse 49 suggests, it was said in mockery. It certainly was not the time for Elijah to come, but it was for the Lord to die. Even on the cross they refer to the Lord as 'this man'. Here is an utterance misunderstood.

Mark chapter 4 verses 35 to 41

The Lord had indicated to His disciples to pass over to the other side. Other ships were present to share the perils of the storm but also the peace of the calm. A storm arose and they awoke the Lord – they were gripped by fear, not faith! The Lord is equal to meet every emergency. Some of the disciples were fishermen and must have experienced storms akin to this, but the Saviour had to rebuke them. The Son of God possessed great powers even to the calming of this storm. The Creator speaks and the



great storm becomes a great calm, 'He maketh the storm a calm', Ps. 107. 29. The circumstances provoked them to ask the question, 'What manner of man is this?' What they had experienced was unnatural – unbelievable. This man was different!

Luke chapter 7 verses 36 to 50

There are three characters in this story: Jesus – the righteous One; the Pharisee – the self-righteous one; the woman – the unrighteous one. She knew where He was, she knew what to do, and she came to know forgiveness from the Saviour. What a contrast: One who was invited, v. 36, to the woman who was uninvited. She was a woman of the street with a bad reputation.

The Pharisee questioned in his mind what sort of prophet this man was, but his thoughts were known by the Lord. We know that Simon did not give the Lord water, a kiss, or anointing, but she did. Here was an unwarranted thought. Here was more than a prophet, for the Lord alone could forgive sins. To such He can say, 'Go in peace'. The woman is commended by the Saviour. She loved much, v. 47. Such is the transformation that Christ can bring: forgiveness of the past; salvation in the present; peace for the future. 'This man' was more than a prophet. He is the forgiving Saviour!

Luke chapter 15 verses 1 and 2

'This man receiveth sinners'. What a wonderful gospel preacher's text!

They came near to Him but they also came to hear Him. It is lovely to think that He came near to us. Sadly, the Pharisees murmured. This is one of sixteen occasions in Luke's Gospel where sinners are mentioned. The Lord is still interested in sinners, to receive them and have them at His table. What tender love, grace and mercy He bestows upon lost sinners. This is unprecedented. 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost', Luke 19. 10.

Luke Chapter 23 verses 1 to 4

The chapter commences with

the accusation that the Lord was making himself 'a King'. Then the Lord is referred to as 'this fellow'. A charge had to be concocted for Pilate to deal with the case. They did not give the Lord the courtesy of His name. Matthew chapter 27 verse 2 records the people's desire to put the Lord to death. Here, Pilate questioned the Lord to ascertain the facts. So, in verse 4, and again in verse 14, Pilate stated, 'I find no fault in this man', as he addressed the crowd. The prisoner was faultless. Four times Pilate found no cause of death. The decision he came to was unquestionable – undeniable. Pilate had the power to put to death, but the Jews did not. The Jews did not agree with the verdict, and did not bow to his authority.

Luke chapter 23 verse 18

The Lord had told a parable in chapter 19 of a 'certain nobleman'. It was prophetic, as He had stated: 'we will not have this man to reign over us'. In a short while these people showed that attitude to Him. The people were presented with another man, Barabbas, totally different to the Lord in every way. Their voices prevailed. Pilate was a weak man and did not stand by his conviction. The Lord was unwanted. Finally, the sentence was passed: 'it should be as they required'. Looking down the avenue of time there is only One of whom it can be said, 'I find no fault in him'.

Luke chapter 23 verses 39 to 43

In verse 41 an unknown malefactor stated, 'but this man hath done nothing amiss'. Luke is the only Gospel writer to inform us of the conversion of the dying malefactor. This man accepted that by his own deeds he received the 'due reward', but he also accepted the facts of the sinlessness of the Man on the centre cross. He acknowledged the One hanging near to him was Lord and was to have a kingdom. Here is an unassailable fact. What profound words came from the lips of such a man who knew, from the Saviour, that soon he would be ushered into paradise!





WILL I BE A WINNER OR A

By JOHN GRIFFITHS Port Talbot, Wales

Will I have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom or will I be saved by the skin of my teeth? 2 Pet. 1. 11; 1 Cor. 3. 15. Will it be reward accompanied by rejoicing, or will it be reward tinged with regret?

The believer of the church age is judged on three levels:-

a	As a sinner	in the past	by God	John 5. 24; Rom. 8. 1
b	As a son	in the present	by the Father	John 15. 1-6; Heb. 12. 5-11
c	As a servant	in the future	by the Son	John 5. 22

'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all [future] judgment unto the Son', John 5. 22.

There are seven aspects of judgement where divine persons are responsible for meting out judgement:-

- 1 Christ at Calvary was judged by God on account of human sin and guilt.
- 2 Believers, at Calvary, representatively in Jesus Christ.
- 3 As sons we are chastened or child-trained by our heavenly Father, Heb. 12. 5, 6; John 15. 1-6.
- 4 As stewards or servants at the bema or tribunal, by Christ, Rom. 14. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 10.
- 5 The nation of Israel in the wilderness, by Messiah, Ezek. 20. 33-44.
- 6 The 'living nations' in the valley of Jehoshaphat by Messiah, Matt. 25. 31; Acts 17. 31.
- 7 The unsaved at the Great White Throne, by Christ, Rev. 20. 11-15.

Of these, only two take place away from earth, the bema and the Great White Throne. Notice first, their similarities and then their differences.

	The bema	The Great White Throne
Similarities	A future event Undertaken by Christ Do not take place on earth, not in heaven, but in between Verdicts do not affect the place of eternal destiny. This is already determined Have to do with awards Subject has to give account	
Differences	Only saints present At the commencement of the Day of the Lord Degrees of praise – award based on works Heaven – eternal	Only sinners present At the conclusion of the Day of the Lord Degrees of punishment – award based on works Lake of Fire – eternal

The bema, Judgement Seat or tribunal, was a marble table or dais with a seat for the judge. Both Pilate and Herod are associated with a bema in respect of dispensing judgement. Paul uses this word of the adjudicator's chair and platform at the Grecian games, in the context of prize-giving. The phrase 'the judgment seat of Christ' occurs twice in our King James Version of the Bible, 2 Cor. 5. 10, Rom. 14. 10. Literally, the first reference is 'of Christ', the second is 'of God', and, by inference, the deity of Christ is borne out.

We must be clear that the bema has nothing to do with our sin, or our salvation, but it has everything to do with our service and stewardship as Christians. By asking certain questions

of the scriptures we can arrive at a sound understanding of this event.

1. THE SEASON – When does it take place?

'And thou shalt be blessed . . . for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just', Luke 14. 14. 'His wife hath made herself ready . . . the fine linen is the righteousness [plural – 'righteous acts'] of saints', Rev. 19. 7-8. The church has been judged and is arrayed in the garment of righteous acts which have been designated as such at the bema. The bema must, therefore, take place after the resurrection but before the marriage of the Lamb.

The bema is closely associated with the Lord's coming and our resurrection, as demonstrated in 2 Timothy chapter





A LOSER AT THE BEMA? PART 1

4 verse 8, 'a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day', where 'that day' is His appearing and, again, in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 5, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come . . . and then shall every man have praise of God'.

2. THE SITE

– Where does it take place?

It is patently not on earth. It takes place after resurrection. After being raised and changed, we meet the Lord in the air (the atmosphere). He is about to take us to His Father's house and the many mansions. But the adjudication of our service has to take place first. Is it likely that it takes place in heaven? The answer has to be, 'No'. The judgement seat is accompanied by suffering loss. While the overall ethos will be one of rejoicing and reward, there will be regret and even remorse as the fire tries everyone's work of what sort it is. Regret for not having given our all for Christ; remorse at seeing the effects of the fire. As heaven itself is devoid of pain, sorrow and tears, there is only fullness of joy in heaven, the bema must take place after the believer's resurrection but before we enter glory.

3. THE SURVEYOR

– Who is the judge?

The terms 'judgment seat of Christ' and 'judgment seat of God' are pertinent to our question. The judge will be the Lord Jesus Christ in His deity. John chapter 5 and verse 22 reveals the assessor as the Son of God, 'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son'. Paul in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 8 describes Him as, 'the Lord, the righteous judge'.

We are not left in any doubt as to the identity of the adjudicator. It is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

4. THE SUBJECTS

– Who is judged?

Romans chapter 4 verse 10 declares, 'We shall all stand', that is, all believers from this church era will be present and give account. Again in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 10, 'For we must all appear' – be made manifest, that is, every child of God

from the day of Pentecost to the rapture, without exception, will be at this tribunal.

5. THE SERVICE

– What is judged?

'Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful', 1 Cor. 4. 2. Our service, our life's work, will be scrutinized for faithfulness. This will include our manners, our ministry, our materials and our motives.

Manners – how have we treated our fellow-saints, Rom. 14. 10-13? Have we been guilty of criticizing one another? Have we put a stumbling block in our brother's way? These and other matters in Romans chapters 14 and 15 will be called into question and reviewed.

Ministry – how have we built for God? 'Take heed how he buildeth thereupon', 1 Cor. 3. 10. Paul makes reference to the building up of the local assembly on the foundation that has been laid, Jesus Christ. Care is to be exercised in the matter of building up a local assembly. Here it is 'how' not 'what'!

Materials – what have we built into the assembly? Have we built in that which God regards as valuable or have we gone for volume? Have we looked for quality – gold, silver and precious stones. Or, have we looked for quantity – wood, hay and stubble. It is readily apparent which burns and which remains, vv. 9c-17.

Motives – why have we done what we have done? 'Until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart', 4. 1-5. It is possible to do the right thing for the wrong reason. Equally, our motives may be gold but our methods tin. God is not interested merely in what we have done but why we have done it.

6. THE SCRUTINY

– How is it judged?

The thoroughness of His scrutiny is shown in the term 'give account', Rom. 14. 12 – not 'an account' or 'the account' but 'account'; 'made manifest', 1 Cor. 3. 13 – to become

apparent or visible; 'declare it', v. 13 – to make it plain; 'revealed', v. 13 – to uncover; 'tried', 1 Pet. 1. 7 – to prove.

The righteousness of His scrutiny is declared in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 8, 'the Lord, the righteous judge'.

There are three principles demonstrated in this regard in the Gospels.

The principle of equal responsibility as seen in the parable of the pounds, Luke 19. 11-27.

Each person was given one pound, with the expectation that they would use it to the best of their ability until their master returned. It is clear that the servants were rewarded according to their effort rather than by results. The third servant went unrewarded, as he made no attempt to make any kind of return for his master. His unused pound was given to the servant who had achieved most. What effort are we putting into the service of our Lord? We are equally responsible.

The principle of differing abilities as seen in the parable of the talents, Matt. 25. 14-30.

The lord gave three typical servants five talents, two talents and one talent according to his assessment of their ability to trade with them. Two doubled their talents by using them on the lord's behalf. The third buried his and only had one talent to show at the end. This was evidence that he was not a genuine servant at all. Our Lord has entrusted us with 'talents' according to our varying ability. What will we have to present to our Lord and Master at the end of the day?

The principle of divine assessment as seen in the parable of the labourers in the harvest field, Matt. 20. 1-16.

The labourers began work at differing times and the duration of their working day varied. The earliest workers struck an agreement with their employers for one penny per day. Those taken on later in the day left it to their employer to pay them as he saw fit. They were all paid the same sum irrespective of their hours. This irritated the all-day workers however they negotiated the settlement! Far better to leave rewards to the discretion of our Lord than to seek to negotiate. 'Whatsoever is right I will give thee', v. 4.

To be continued.

Maturity in life, 5. 15-21

The first three verses of this section have a close connection with those that have gone before. Since we are now 'light in the Lord', 5. 8, and our life is to expose the evil around us as sin against God, we must act in wisdom, assess the wickedness, and appreciate God's will for us. Only in this way will we have a direct influence on the prevailing system.

Act in wisdom, v. 15

The walk of the believer takes another turn from not walking as Gentiles walk, 4. 17, and walking in love, 5. 2, or walking as light, to walking in wisdom.

To 'walk circumspectly' would imply that we are not to be careless in our walk, for the five places where the word is found would indicate that we must be diligent as to how we walk, and have a perfect understanding as to our movements among men for their good. We should not walk as fools, that is, in a mindless, stupid way, with no regard for the consequences that spring from it, but to walk as wise, that is, to walk in a moral way befitting our calling as children of light. This is not merely a mental faculty. Enoch walked in such a way when he walked with God, Gen. 5. 24.

Assess the wickedness, v. 16

The familiar word 'redeeming', meaning to buy out of the market, is used here of buying up the opportunities that are given to us to have an impact on the world and its ways. Its ways are said to be evil. This was demonstrated at Calvary when the Lord was crucified and the full character of the heart of man was displayed, and his thoughts concerning God were fully expressed. The outcome of that is that we have 'this present evil world', Gal. 1. 4, that is, a world system that is guilty of the rejection of the Lord Jesus. Not only is it an evil world because of its most nefarious act, but it has continued in this way every day, making the days evil. Such was Noah as he built the ark and redeemed the time.

Appreciate God's will, v. 17

In verse 15 we are called not to walk as fools, which carries the thought of a moral rather than a mental action; here the reverse is before us. When

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Paul writes, 'Wherefore be ye not unwise', not stupid, it is in a mental rather than a moral capacity. We must not be unthinking in our life for God. The call is to understand what the will of the Lord is.

We can see in the relationship that there was between David and Saul, how David walked in wisdom and Saul as one who was unwise.

Abstain from wine, v. 18a

Not to imbibe wine to a state of drunkenness must be impressed on the Christian's mind. We recall how that wine, being a mocker, affected the ministry of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus chapter 10, and God called for its prohibition when on divine service and ministering in the tabernacle, v. 9.

If wine is a mocker, it is also medicinal. The Good Samaritan used it on the wounds of the man who fell among thieves, Luke 10. 34, and Paul encouraged Timothy to 'use', not abuse, 'a little wine', not a lot, 'for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities', 1 Tim. 5. 23.

Here, in Ephesians, wine is a motivator to affect the life, for wine affects our walk, our talk and our thinking. It robs the drinker of all self-control. Sadly, I came from a drunken family and felt the effects of a slum home, a broken home, and brothers encouraged into careless living because of wine. Every child of God should heed the injunction brought before us here. Rather, we should allow the Spirit to control and change us, and certainly not wine.

Abundance of wealth, v. 18b

Why allow such a destructive thing as wine to control the body when we have the Holy Spirit to control us in devotion to God? Once again, we

have an injunction in the form of a command, 'Be filled with the Spirit'. This is a far cry from this so-called charismatic age, where believers are called to seek for, pray for, what is already the blessed portion of every blood-bought, born again believer. At the moment of conversion the Holy Spirit is given to those who believe, and is the means whereby we know God as our Father, Gal. 4. 6. If we do not possess the Spirit of God we are none of His, Rom. 8. 9, indicating that we are not saved. It is sad when gullible Christians are swept aside by false doctrine, with some persecuting themselves because they cannot receive what certain would teach is a second blessing, rather than a primary blessing, given by God and not sought by men.

Attitudes of worship, vv. 19-21

As we have seen, a Spirit-filled life will transform our attitudes and habits as we live for God, and, with the things of God predominant in the life, they will affect:

1) Our speech, v. 19a

'Speaking to yourselves'. I take it that we would insert a comma at this point, separating the clause from what follows. The desire of the apostle is that there will be constant communion between believers regarding the truth of God. We should be taken up with divine truth. In his book *The History of the Brethren* THOMAS NEATBY relates how that, in the early days, an invitation for tea was an invitation to a Bible reading. Sadly, those days are nearly gone, and very few desire to discuss the word of God.

2) Our singing, v. 19b

How beautiful when the heart is full of Christ and we desire to sing the songs of Zion. Many fill their homes





and their cars with equipment to play the songs of the world. As a young Christian I was stopped in my tracks by a believer who was associated with the Baptists. He came into the home where my best friend, who was an excellent pianist, was playing the piano and I was singing the songs of the world. Abruptly, he said, 'You don't sing those kinds of songs, do you?' From that day onwards I determined that only spiritual songs would be on my lips. We are to sing for God's pleasure, for we are to make melody in our hearts unto the Lord. Yet we are now living in a day when, even though there is a piano in the home, very few want to gather round it and raise their voices in spiritual melodies. Sadly, I find that some are very happy to follow the crowds that are engaged in attending pop concerts.

3) Our supplication, v. 20

The apostle constantly puts into practice what he preaches; we find him constantly giving thanks throughout his writings. Here he encourages the saints to give thanks always and for all things. He writes the same to the young Christians, 'In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you', 1 Thess. 5. 18.

If it is easy to raise our thanksgiving for blessings received, it may be more difficult to give thanks for the burdens we bear, but it is in *all things* that we must give thanks. There is a divine purpose in every experience that we are called to pass through. Paul taught elsewhere that trials are for our future prosperity and profit, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory', 2 Cor. 4. 17.

4) Our submission, mutual, v. 21

As PETER T. O'BRIEN points out, verse 21 is a hinge verse.¹ It is the final thought regarding being filled with the Spirit, but then opens the way to develop the various aspects of submission in both family, and servant and master relationships.

The word 'submission' means to arrange under and is a military term for soldiers carrying out the officers' commands. It has nothing to do with authority but rather the need

to see ordered conditions that cause harmony and unity. If we fulfilled the word of God and 'esteemed other better than ourselves', Phil. 2. 3, it would not be a problem to have a spirit of submission.

It is to be carried out in the fear of God; most manuscript scholars say, 'in the fear of Christ'. However, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. It was this fear that caused Noah to move and build an ark, Heb. 11. 7. It cost the Lord Jesus; though He were a Son 'he was heard in that he feared', 5. 7. It is a fear of displeasing God that should cause our submission.

Marriage of the Lamb, vv. 22-33

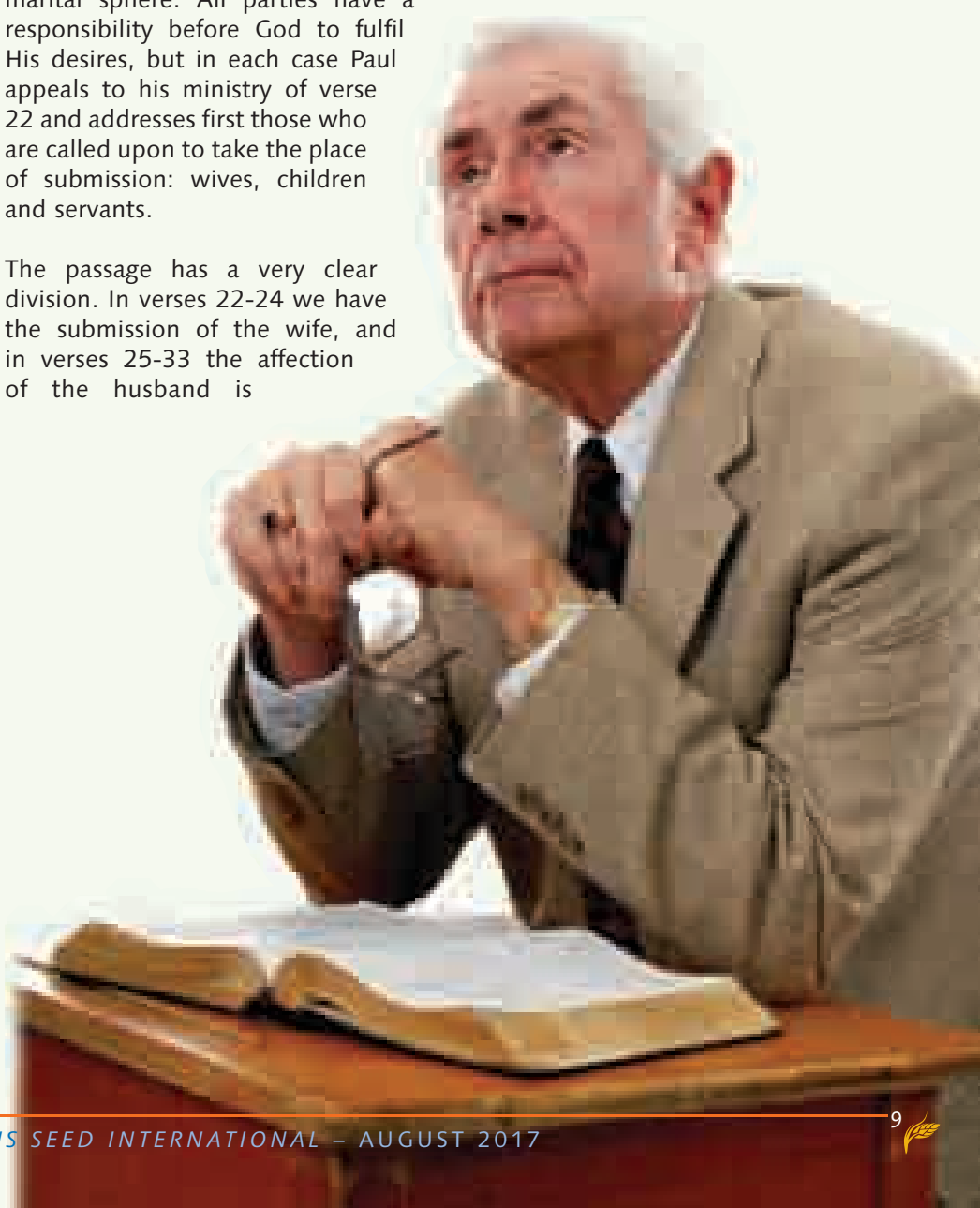
We are now moving into a section that details the need for submission to be seen in all walks of life, if harmony and unity are to be maintained. In verse 22 it is seen to be mutual among the saints; now it is into the marital sphere. All parties have a responsibility before God to fulfil His desires, but in each case Paul appeals to his ministry of verse 22 and addresses first those who are called upon to take the place of submission: wives, children and servants.

The passage has a very clear division. In verses 22-24 we have the submission of the wife, and in verses 25-33 the affection of the husband is

brought before us. In the former, it is a submission of love and loyalty, and as far as the husband is concerned, a sacrifice of love and labour. The pattern on which the marriage bond is set moves far above the merely natural and physical; it is based on the spiritual, that is, the relationship between Christ and His church. In this way the marital bond is elevated and brought to very high ground indeed. If the principles of marriage as set forth in the word of God are carried out, there would be no difficulties in any relationship. Harmony and blessing would be evident to all. In this relationship there is no separation and no divorce, but both parties moving for the good of the other.

Endnote

- 1 PETER T. O'BRIEN, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary), William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, pg. 399.





Preaching in Tenby a little while ago, I was alarmed to hear somebody say, 'I like to think that the Lord Jesus was just like me. I like to think that He could have sinned and, therefore, understands the pressure I am under when I am tempted to sin'. My inward reaction was, 'I'm glad to think our Lord is nothing like me', and my mind turned to His wonderful statement, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me', John 14. 30. Now what did our Lord mean by that?

The point of His departure

There were many times before this point in His life when, despite men's plans to do our Lord harm, we read, 'His hour had not yet come'. Yet, as He drew closer to the final Passover feast He would celebrate with His disciples, our Lord knew the time of His suffering was drawing near. 'Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour', 12. 27; 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me', vv. 31-32. Even as He entered the upper room, 'Jesus knew that his hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father', 13. 1. The hour of His suffering was upon Him.

The pressure of the Devil

But who is the prince of this world whom He said was coming to Him? Why, it is Satan, surely. We refer, again, to what our Lord had said with reference to His death on the cross, 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out'. Speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, our Lord said He would convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement, 'because the prince of this world is [has been] judged', 16. 11. The prince of this world is also called 'the god of this world', who has 'blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them', 2 Cor. 4. 4. He is also called a ruler of this dark

THE IMPECCABILITY

By **IAN REES** Tenby, Wales

world, Eph. 6. 12, and 'the prince of the power of the air', 2. 2. This is the one whom our Lord said was now coming to Him.

Satan had, of course, been against Him before. He had tried, through Herod, to kill our Lord when He was just a baby; he had tried to trip Him up by tempting Him after His days of fasting in the desert; he had encouraged men to throw Him over a cliff, or to stone Him to death; he had attempted, through our Lord's own disciple Peter, to deflect Him from going to the cross. There is little doubt that he had been to Him time and time again, in addition to these instances, for we read, after the temptations in the desert, that Satan left Him for a season. But now, to the chief priests and others, our Lord said, 'When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness', Luke 22. 53. The prince of this world put it into the heart of Judas to betray our Lord, and then, when he found Judas such a willing tool, he entered his heart; he ensured that the High Priest would call for crucifixion as the sentence of death, and who can say that he did not increase greatly our Lord's torment in the garden of Gethsemane? Yes, the prince of this world was coming to Him again.

The perfection of the divine

Yet what a wonderful claim our Lord was able to make! Although the prince of this world was coming, He 'hath nothing in me'. It is true that our Lord could be referring to the fact that He was *innocent of any crime worthy of the death sentence*. Though the High Priest would try to pin blasphemy on Him as an accusation worthy of execution, this charge would not stand, for Pilate would have nothing to do with Jewish religious squabbles. When they changed the accusation against our Lord to one of stirring up trouble, Pilate discerned that it was for envy they had delivered Him, not on a political charge. He tried Him and came back with straightforward

verdicts: 'I find no fault in this man'; 'This man hath done nothing worthy of death'. It is also true that our Lord could have meant that, when it came to sin in general, Satan had no hold over Him, for He was *innocent of any sin at all*. Our Lord was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners', Heb. 7. 26. And though it is true that the wages of sin is death, 'he did no sin', 'he knew no sin', and 'in him is no sin'.¹ He could say to His enemies, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' John 8. 46, and the One whom our Lord addressed as 'Holy Father', in His holy heaven, could say of Him, 'my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased', Matt. 17. 5. So, when it came to exerting a rightful claim of death upon a sinner, Satan found nothing in our Lord to claim.

Yet though some may say this is all our Lord had in mind when He said Satan 'hath nothing in me', I am persuaded He meant more than just that Satan had no charge to lay against Him, nothing in Him to insist on His death. Other versions render 'hath nothing in me' as: 'he has no *claim* on me', ESV; 'he has no *hold* over me', NIV. JAMESON, FAUSSETT AND





ITY OF OUR LORD

BROWN say Satan had 'nothing to fasten on'. We should note here the double negative, which makes our Lord say, 'he has *absolutely nothing* in Me'. To the famous list of things said of our Lord in His innocence, (He did no sin, He knew no sin, in Him is no sin), we add this, He could not sin. 'God cannot be tempted with evil', Jas. 1. 13. There was no sinful nature inside our Lord that could respond to Satan's temptations. There was nothing within Him that could respond to the temptations, to lust, lie, deceive, or to manifest hypocrisy, pride, arrogance, etc., that ensnare all sinners. The chain of sin given to us so clearly by the Holy Spirit through James is this, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death', Jas 1. 13. It is surely inconceivable to us that our Lord would have had any root that could bring forth lust within Him.

'Could not' or 'would not'?

Though it used to be a test of orthodoxy that one believed in the impeccability of our Lord, there are

increasing numbers of preachers of the word of God who are inclining to the position that our Lord could have sinned. It is one thing for your average Christian to think so; it is surely alarming when men in the pulpit think and teach so. Note that we are not here discussing the sinlessness of Christ. That is not the issue, for no born-again believer could possibly believe that our Lord ever sinned. The word 'impeccability' means not that He *did not* sin, but that He *could not* sin. The question of the impeccability of Christ was considered a matter of important Christian doctrine centuries ago. Latin phrases, discussed by the church, give us these expressions, *non posse peccare* and *posse non peccare*. The word *non* means 'not', the word *posse* means 'able to' and the word *peccare* means 'sin'. *Non posse peccare* therefore means 'not able to sin'; *posse non peccare* means 'able not to sin'. All believers believe our Lord was 'able not to sin' but was He also 'not able to sin'?

Believing that our Lord had a divine nature is essential to Christian faith, as it is equally essential to believe that He had a human nature. The question

is, were those two natures, the divine and the human, combined into one nature, or did both exist separately at the same time in His human body? And was that human nature a fallen one, inherited from Adam and capable of sin? Some would remind us that Adam and Eve had innocent natures in Eden, yet still those innocent natures were able to sin, because they did sin. Their human natures in Eden were *posse non peccare*, able not to sin, but also *posse peccare*, able to sin. They suggest our Lord possessed, and, therefore, still possesses this innocent, as-yet-unfallen, human nature, able not to sin but also able to sin. Christian orthodoxy says, No! In His divine nature our Lord could not be tempted to do evil and could not sin, Jas. 1. 13, neither can He today. And in His human nature? Is it the case that our Lord did not sin because He could not sin, or because He would not? All who have been born to Adam through the natural process since the fall have natures that are able to sin. Conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin meant that our Lord was conceived with a human body received from His mother and a human nature, too. This human nature He could have received either from a human father (but Joseph had no part to play in this), or from a human mother. Yet the intervention of the Holy Spirit ensured that the Seed of the woman was impeccable. Our Lord was, and is, not only able not to sin, but He was, and is, not able to sin.

We sin as a matter of nature, as a matter of course. Our Lord never had that fallen human nature. He is not like us. And, surely, this is what our Lord meant when He said, 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me'. When Satan came to tempt our Lord, there was nothing within our Lord that could even respond to His temptations. There was no 'fifth column' within Him, able to open from within the gates to the enemy. He had no 'Trojan horse'. We should all be thrilled to think that in this, as in many other things, He is nothing like us! How majestic, then, that expression, 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me', John 14. 30!

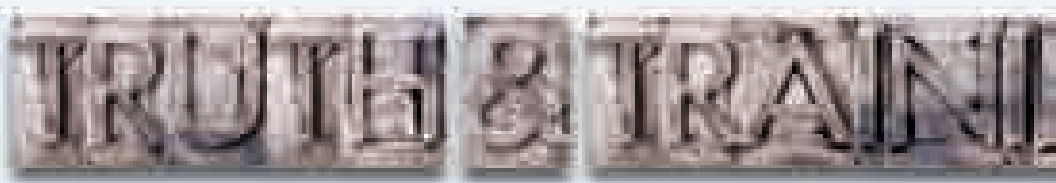
Endnote

1 1 Pet. 2. 22; 2 Cor. 5. 21; 1 John 3. 5.





This article is part of an on-going 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. It might be helpful to read the previous articles either in the printed edition of the magazine or online via www.preciousseed.org.



Titus 2. 9-16

This section deals with why Christians should behave differently from unsaved people. It is important to understand that doctrine underpins Christian life, and the gospel changes how people behave.

As we have previously covered verses 1 to 8, we will start by looking at the topic of servants or slaves in verses 9 to 10.

Servants or slaves, vv. 9-10

The word translated servant here could be translated 'slave' or 'bondservant'. In New Testament times the word was used to describe a variety of relationships, some voluntary and some enforced, but we can apply the principles to our modern employment situations.

It was a tough life being a slave. A slave's lot in life was to do exactly as instructed by his owner. The consequences of disobedience and rebellion could be devastating. If you currently live in a world of relative freedom it might be hard to imagine how a slave felt. In these verses we discover that the Christian slave was to be different. He or she was not encouraged to rebel or to revolt against their masters, but to submit to them. Submitting is about more than just obedience. It is essentially about a mind-set. It meant that the Christian slave would make a daily choice to honour the master, to demonstrate by their attitude, reactions, behaviour and working habits that he respected his master. In other words, he was voluntarily placing himself under the authority of his master. You might argue that he didn't have much choice. Correct; but life would be a lot easier and God-honouring if he submitted to

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his master.

In verses 9 and 10 we have two basic principles:

- 1 Please your master, AND don't answer back.
- 2 Don't steal, AND demonstrate that you are trustworthy.

It is one thing to behave as a Christian when life is smooth and easy. It is quite another thing to behave well in extremely difficult circumstances. Paul is teaching that if slaves behaved well they would enhance and embellish the truth about the God who saved them. It is an amazing fact that we can add an extra sparkle to the gospel by how we live. The danger is that we can take the shine off it if we behave badly.

Please note two additional things about these verses. Firstly, the current passage was not written to discuss the rights and wrongs of slavery but to bring appropriate teaching to people in that situation. Other scriptures, such as Exodus chapter 21 verse 16 and Leviticus chapter 25 verses 39-43, make a very clear case for the value that God puts on the individual. In these passages warnings are given of God's judgement on those who force people into slavery.

Secondly, the teaching is not that a 'slave' class of people should be subject to a 'master' class. The teaching is about how to behave in relation to your 'own' master if you are in these circumstances. This is important to notice.

How do we apply this teaching to Christians today? If it is the duty of slaves as Christians to obey their masters and to give them satisfactory service in every way, then this must apply to everyone else. In the workplace, Christians should be known for their hard work and diligence. We shouldn't just give the bare minimum, but we should give our best. Other passages that deal with attitudes and behaviour at work are Ephesians chapter 6 verses

5-9, 1 Timothy chapter 6 verses 1-2, and Colossians chapter 3 verse 22 to chapter 4 verse 1.

Expounding the doctrine, vv. 11-15

This section starts with the conjunction 'for', which indicates that everything Paul has taught in the preceding verses is only effective because of the truth of salvation and its effect on our lives. Therefore, this truth is now expounded.

There are a couple of things to notice in verse 11. Firstly, Paul states that the grace of God appeared. He is almost talking about it as if 'the grace of God' is a person. In one sense it is, as that person is the Lord Jesus Christ. There are other verses in the New Testament that describe the coming of the Lord Jesus as an appearing, 2 Tim. 1. 10; Titus 3. 4; Heb. 9. 26. His appearing brought God's grace out into the open as people saw what the grace of God looked like. For example, God's compassion, His kindness, His gentleness, and His patience were all demonstrated in the life of Christ. He genuinely displayed the grace of God. John states in chapter 1 verse 14 that He was 'full of grace and truth'.

Secondly, that grace brought salvation. The ultimate evidence of the grace of God is not seen in the miracles of Jesus, or in the care of Jesus, but in the cross of Jesus. At Calvary, grace is seen for what it is. God's grace is limitless, daring to go where no one has ever gone before, bearing the judgement of sin and being made a curse for us. This is grace, undeserved and outside our grasp, but made available to all of humanity through the death of Christ. Notice that this grace-bringing-salvation is available to all humanity – 'it has appeared to all men'. It has brought salvation within the grasp of all. 'God is not willing that any should perish', 2 Pet. 3. 9; it is His desire that all will be saved and 'come unto the knowledge of the truth', 1 Tim. 2. 4. Therefore, the grace of God appeared. When people get saved they will



from Titus (8)

also begin to demonstrate grace-like characteristics in their lives.

Verse 12 is about discipleship. The grace of God teaches us that there are things that need to change when a person gets saved. The Christian is undergoing training and needs to learn to say no to ungodliness and worldly desires. We must reject and renounce everything that is irreverent and would displease God. Worldly passions and desires need to go. Essentially, the grace of God instructs us to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures.

Two parts to this process of discipleship training are defined in this verse. The rejecting and the renouncing must go hand in hand with living soberly, righteously and godly. The world we presently live in is not an ideal environment for godly living. There will be many temptations to face. However, it is possible to live a God-pleasing life in this world. God's instructions to Jeremiah in Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 10 provide a simple template. We must 'root out . . . pull down, and . . . destroy' what is godless and worldly to 'build and to plant' a lifestyle that is compatible with the grace of God.

When translating this verse J. B. PHILLIPS describes the Christian lifestyle that God desires for us as 'responsible, honourable and God-fearing'.¹ May the Lord give us help to live like this!

In verse 13 we have a two-pronged description of the second coming of Christ. It is called the 'blessed hope and the glorious appearing'. Most translators join the two expressions together with the word 'even' instead

of 'and', indicating that they are describing one event.

The word 'hope' has changed its meaning over time. Today, it gives the impression of something being a *possibility*, whereas its original meaning was that of a *certainty*. This is the way the word is used in Romans chapter 8 verse 24 and Philippians chapter 1 verse 20. This makes the preceding word, 'blessed', come to life. The return of the Lord Jesus to earth is a happy certainty.

Please notice the use of the word 'appearing' again. This time it points forward to the coming of Christ in power and great glory, Matt. 24. 30. Paul, the apostle, uses this word, normally but not exclusively, to describe the second coming of Christ to earth. Each of the references is in the context of the glorious appearance of Christ ushering in His world-wide kingdom.² The term should incentivise believers to keep their chins up, their eyes focused and their hearts cheered by the prospect of their once rejected Saviour coming back in triumph.

The next expression is also of great importance. Verse 13 is not describing the coming of two persons, the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, but it is a twofold description of one person. Jesus Christ is both the great God and our Saviour. Check your translations and you will discover that many trusted translators put the terms great God and Saviour together followed by the name of the one whom these terms describe, Jesus Christ. The saving character of God is referred to repeatedly in this epistle, 1. 3; 2. 10; 3. 4, 6.

Next, we are confronted in verse 14 with the sacrificial death of Christ and its consequences. The great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us. It is personal on both counts. The Lord Jesus *gave Himself* – it was a willing sacrifice. And He gave Himself *for us* – He had us in His mind when He gave Himself. This is a truth to rejoice in.

His sacrifice had a threefold purpose:

- 1 To redeem us from all iniquity.
- 2 To purify people for Himself.
- 3 To produce a people zealous of good works.

The price of redemption is beyond calculation. Psalm 49 verses 7 and 8 state that the cost of redemption is too high for us. Despite this, the Lord Jesus paid the price to redeem us from all iniquity. We broke His law; He paid the price to release us from our guilt.

He cleansed us from the filth of sin, and made us fit to be His own people. The work of redemption has made us a treasured people in the eyes of Christ. The response from those who love Him must be devotion to do works, spiritual and practical, that reflect the beauty of what has been done in our lives through Him.

Paul ends this section with a word of encouragement to Titus:

- 1 These things must be taught;
- 2 Urge them to action;
- 3 You, Titus, have the authority to correct them when appropriate;
- 4 Don't let anyone treat you with contempt.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+2&version=PHILLIPS>
- 2 2 Thess. 2. 8; 1 Tim. 6. 14; and 2 Tim. 4. 1, 8.





GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL

By **GRAEME PATERSON**
Plains, Scotland

The so called 'great commission' from the Lord in Mark's Gospel is straightforward:

'Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature . . . And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following', Mark 16. 14-20.

Although assembly testimony in some areas of the globe is diminishing, all around us there are more and more opportunities to go and take the gospel to the lost. There are many 'special events' organized in our localities, from sporting, cultural or traditional events, to summer fairs and gala days. These places have a ready-made audience to take the gospel to! We don't need to bring them into our halls, or host meetings or events to reach them, we simply need to go to them!

As a result, www.gospelforscotland.com was established. We wanted to be able to go into different areas and visit various events throughout Scotland with the gospel. Considering the lack of assembly testimony in some of these places, we felt before the Lord that directing individuals to this website was a good first point of contact; thereafter the contact can be passed to their local assembly.

For a few years now I have been looking for opportunities to have some form of gospel outreach in our capital city of Edinburgh. Many know how busy the city is over the summer months, especially during the International Festival every August. Edinburgh is generally a very busy tourist city; however, in August it is bustling with visitors from all over the world.

Another great Edinburgh institution is the Royal Military Tattoo. Since the 1970s, on average, just over 217,000 people see the Tattoo live on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle each year, and it has sold out in advance for the last decade. Thirty percent of the audience is from Scotland and thirty-five percent from the rest of the United Kingdom. The remaining thirty-five percent of the audience consists of 70,000 visitors from overseas. Each evening approximately 8,800 people watch the performance – what potential for the gospel!

With prayer and consideration, we are planning a week of gospel outreach during the festival this year.

From Monday 14th to Friday 18th August we will be focusing our effort around the main tourist sites in Edinburgh.

Our exercise is to distribute postcards with an image of Edinburgh, and a gospel text, around the Royal Mile, Princess Street, Holyrood Palace, Princess Gardens, and other sites.

There will then be some down-time until the crowds head up the Royal Mile for the Tattoo, commencing at 9pm. Obviously we would like to reach as many people as we can with the postcards.

The focus, however, will be when the Tattoo ends. We have ordered 30,000 specially designed canvas shopping bags which are blue and white with a map of Scotland and John chapter 3 verse 16 on both sides along with the website details. They will also contain a postcard.

We cannot distribute these before the show as all bags are searched for security purposes. However, as people leave, they need to all exit by the same route and we will be able to reach many people with the bags. As you can imagine, we will need a large number of teams of two to three people scattered all around the castle area in order to distribute as many as we can. It will be after 11pm before we finish each evening, so please bear that in

mind if you plan to get involved.

Everything distributed will be pointing to www.gospelforscotland.com. This will be specifically designed for the work and will feature images of Edinburgh and the surrounding area. We have also had a professionally produced video of the city and sites with a gospel message voiceover. This has been done in a variety of European and other languages to bring the gospel to as many as possible.

As described, these will be long days, and we are hoping to have enough volunteers to enable two shifts, an afternoon team and then an evening team.

Prior to each day's activity we are planning to meet at Gorgie Gospel Hall, 4 Smithfield St., Edinburgh, EH11 2PJ, to have a time of prayer and briefing for the afternoon and evening ahead.

We are looking to run the days to the following programme:

- 2.30pm – Meet at Gorgie Gospel Hall for briefing and prayer.
- 3.00pm – Team 1 into Edinburgh for postcard distribution.
- 5.30pm – Dinner. Can bring food back to hall or can make own arrangement.
- 7.00pm – Prayer and briefing of Team 2.
- 7.30pm – Postcard and bag distribution.
- 11.00pm – End.

The aim of our exercise is to distribute as many bags and postcards as we can over the week, and to mobilize and exercise believers young and old in the gospel.

If you are interested in being involved in any of this work please feel free to contact us. If you can't be with us, then please pray for this effort.

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JUDGES

By **JOHN SCARBROOK** Killamarsh, England

The design of the book

Among the many words of wisdom in the book of Proverbs, there are some which serve both as statements of fact and, at the same time, provide a word of warning. Chapter 13 verse 15 is one such example, where the wise man reminds us that 'the way of transgressors is hard'. The Lord Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, expressed similar truth when He said, 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin', John 8. 34. Both of these statements find a practical expression in the book of Judges. We must be careful, therefore, not to consign these events to history, for 'all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come', 1 Cor. 10. 11.

Chapter 2 verses 7-19 provide a concise and pertinent summary of the whole book. We see here three generations. First, there were those who were prepared to make a stand and fight against the enemies of the people of God in order to protect the inheritance, and maintain the worship of the one true God. This generation had respect for the standards expected by God, in contrast to the idolatry which surrounded them. The following generation were prepared to live in the shadow of those who had laboured and fought to uphold spiritual truth, often at great cost. They just sat back and enjoyed what others had won for them! This attitude prepared the way for a third generation who fought for nothing, had little appreciation of the inheritance, and eventually lost the benefits and blessings which came from the hand of God to those who obeyed His word. History shows that these three generations are not restricted to the days of the Judges. Through the years of Christian testimony, up to our present day, the characteristics which mark each generation have run concurrently, resulting in appropriate blessing or retribution.

The repeated cycle, which brought the Judges to prominence, is detailed in chapters 3 to 16. Each sequence began with a downward spiral of rebellion against the specific commandments of God, usually involving idolatry. This inevitably brought a just response from heaven, and Israel was made subject to one or more of the surrounding nations. When the effect of their sin took its toll, there was a cry of repentance. A longsuffering and merciful God then raised up a deliverer, and there was a measure of recovery, followed by a period of rest, before the next cycle began!

A distinct contrast

If we take time to compare the book of Joshua, the contrast is quite startling! The theme of that book is victory through faith, whereas in Judges we see failure through compromise. In Joshua the motivating force among the people of God is the Spirit of God; in Judges, the flesh is given prominence. Joy, victory and progress are evident throughout the book of Joshua; sorrow, defeat and decline mar the record of Judges. Faith and freedom in Joshua give way to unbelief and bondage in Judges. With such an outline the reader could be forgiven for thinking that Judges is a very negative book. Far from it! In these chapters we can learn valuable and positive lessons of leadership; lessons in faithfulness, both of God and to God; the importance of obedience to the word of God, and the practical reality of living for God in a corrupt society.

We learn also what God is able to do with small, seemingly insignificant things in the hands of those whose hearts are right: an ox-goad; a home-made dagger; empty pitchers and trumpets, and the jaw-bone of an ass!

The book of Judges divides broadly into three sections. Chapters 1 and 2 form an introduction and reveal the apathy which had gripped the people of God; a condition of heart in which the seeds of apostasy will germinate

and bear fruit in chapters 3 to 16. This in turn produces the dreadful anarchy which prevails in the closing section, chapters 17 to 21. Moral restraint was abandoned and 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes', bringing the challenge of Judges clearly into our 21st Century society!

The dangers of compromise

It may seem that failure and decline came rather suddenly and almost unexpectedly as we enter chapter 1, yet departure from the word of God seldom happens overnight! The seeds had been sown some years before when Israel sought to possess the land. As both Judah and Ephraim were allocated their inheritance, they failed to 'drive out' the idolatrous Jebusites and Canaanites, but allowed them dwelling places, Josh. 15. 63; 16. 10. Their insidious influence weakened the resolve of the people of God, and the effects spread to other tribes. The Jebusites were allowed to occupy part of Jerusalem, a place which should have been wholly for God, where later He would record His name! The Canaanites were merchants, traders who represent materialism, and how often do we allow such things a 'dwelling place' in our affections? May our hearts be in accord with WILLIAM COWPER when he wrote:

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only Thee.

Judah and Ephraim had reached a compromise with the inhabitants of the land, but compromise is infectious, and causes weakness! Within a few brief verses in chapter 1, six other tribes had failed to drive out the occupants of the land. It is worth noting also that such was the powerlessness of the tribe of Dan that 'the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain', 1. 34, a place without pasture, water or shelter, the consequence of compromise!

The divine comment on these events is seen at the beginning of chapter 2.

CHARTING

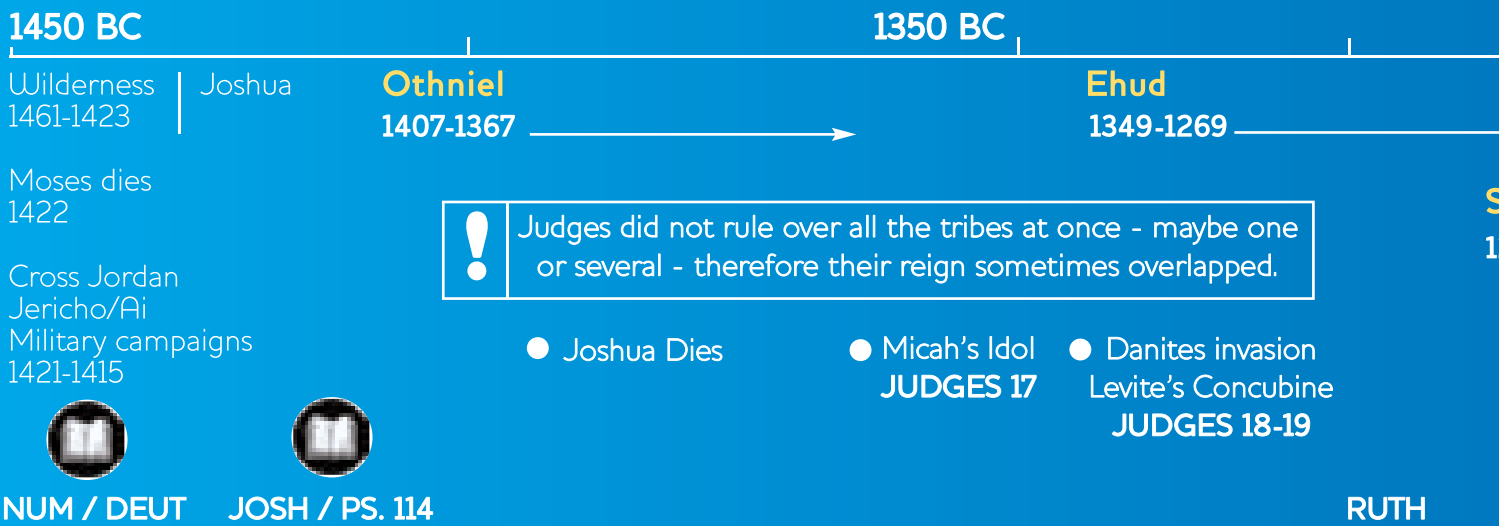
THE

SCRIPTURES

JUDGES

by Jonathan Black

Judges of Israel timeline 1415 - 1065 BC Out of approx. 400 years of the Judges there was approx. 290 years of rule



The book of Joshua

 <div>Othniel</div> <div>Judges 3. 7-11; 1. 12-14</div> <div>Name means Lion of God</div> <div>Tribe - Judah</div> <div>Years of rebellion 8</div> <div>Years of peace 40</div> <div>ENEMY MESOPOTAMIANS</div> <div>A spiritual man is good with his sword!</div>	 <div>Ehud</div> <div>Judges 3.12-30</div> <div>Name means Joining together</div> <div>Tribe - Benjamin</div> <div>Years of rebellion 18</div> <div>Years of peace 80</div> <div>ENEMY MOABITES</div> <div>Disabled but with left hand on sword - dangerous!</div>	 <div>Shamgar</div> <div>Judges 3. 31</div> <div>Name means Sword</div> <div>Tribe - Not known</div> <div>Years of rebellion N/A</div> <div>Years of rule N/A</div> <div>ENEMY PHILISTINES</div> <div>One verse, but he did what he could with an Ox goad</div>	 <div>Deborah</div> <div>Judges 4 - 5. 31</div> <div>Name means Bee</div> <div>Tribe - Ephraim</div> <div>Years of rebellion 20</div> <div>Years of peace 40</div> <div>ENEMY CANAANITES</div> <div>Only woman to judge, helped by another woman, Jael!</div>	 <div>Gideon</div> <div>Judges 6 - 8. 32</div> <div>Name means A Cutter down</div> <div>Tribe - Manasseh</div> <div>Years of rebellion 7</div> <div>Years of peace 40</div> <div>ENEMY MIDIANITES</div> <div>Victorious with a small army, but faith in God's word.</div>	 <div>Tola</div> <div>Judges 10. 1-2</div> <div>Name means Scarlet worm</div> <div>Tribe - Issachar</div> <div>Years of rebellion N/A</div> <div>Years of peace 23</div> <div>ENEMY UNKNOWN</div> <div>Deliverance from the hill-country.</div>
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And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived him

'Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son', Deut. 7. 3

Potential for...perpetual

- A character of failure before the Judges
- Ch 1 The seeds of failure, the potential of faith
- Ch 2 A summary of Israel's failure
- The cycle of failure during the judges
- Ch 3 Othniel / Ehud / Shamgar
- Ch 4 Deborah - her rule
- Ch 5 Deborah - her song
- Ch 6 Gideon - developing faith
- Ch 7 Gideon - dealing with fear
- Ch 8 Gideon - defeating the foe
- Ch 9 Abimelech
- Ch 10 Tola / Jair
- Ch 11 Jephthah
- Ch 12 Abdon / Ibzan / Elon
- Ch 13 Samson - growing up
- Ch 14 Samson - going down
- Ch 15 Samson - great deliverance
- Ch 16 Samson - great repentance
- The confusion from failure under the Judges
- Ch 17 Micah - A home with the wrong image
- Ch 18 Dan - A tribe with the wrong image
- Ch 19 Levite - A priest with the wrong motives
- Ch 20 Israel - A civil war with the wrong objective
- Ch 21 Israel - Counting the cost

'In those days there was no king which was right in his

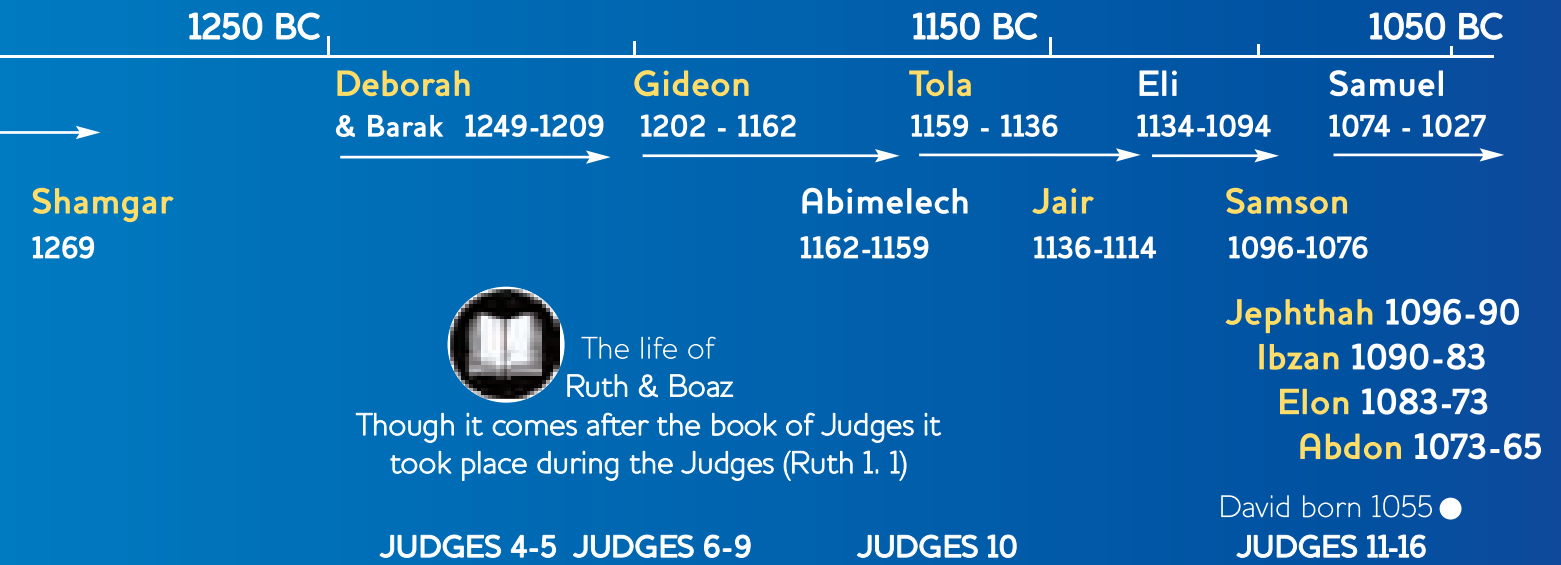
'Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered the

New Testament Heb. 11. 32 'And what shall I more say? for the time would fail

Christ 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the







Key words delivered / judged / drive out / rest Writer Samuel

years when they enjoyed peace yet a steady decline spiritually. **Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, Ruth 1. 1**



The life of
Ruth & Boaz

Though it comes after the book of Judges it
took place during the Judges (Ruth 1. 1)

 Jair <i>Judges 10. 3-5</i> Name means God enlightens Tribe - Manasseh Years of rebellion N/A Years of peace 22 ENEMY UNKNOWN 30 sons, 30 donkeys and 30 cities - A balanced judge!	 Jephthah <i>Judges 10 - 12. 7</i> Name means God sets free Tribe - Manasseh Years of rebellion 18 Years of peace 6 ENEMY PHILISTINES / AMMONITES Despised & rejected, but sympathetic to the people	 Ibzan <i>Judges 12. 8-10</i> Name means Their whiteness Tribe - Judah Years of rebellion N/A Years of peace 7 ENEMY UNKNOWN Bethlehemite - 60 sons and daughters married outside.	 Elon <i>Judges 12. 11-12</i> Name means A mighty oak Tribe - Zebulun Years of rebellion N/A Years of peace 10 ENEMY UNKNOWN From Zebulun he led for 10 years quietly - no fuss!	 Abdon <i>Judges 12. 13-15</i> Name means Service Tribe - Ephraim Years of rebellion N/A Years of peace 8 ENEMY UNKNOWN A grandfather judge with 40 sons and 30 grandsons.	 Samson <i>Judges 13-16</i> Name means Like the Sun Tribe - Dan Years of rebellion 40 Years of peace 20 ENEMY PHILISTINES Nazarite who started well, went down, but mentioned in Hebrews 11!
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outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel', Judg. 2. 7

for blessing
at in failure

ing in Israel: every man did that
is own eyes', Judg. 21. 25

d them out of the hand of those that spoiled them', Judg. 2. 16

tament references to Judges

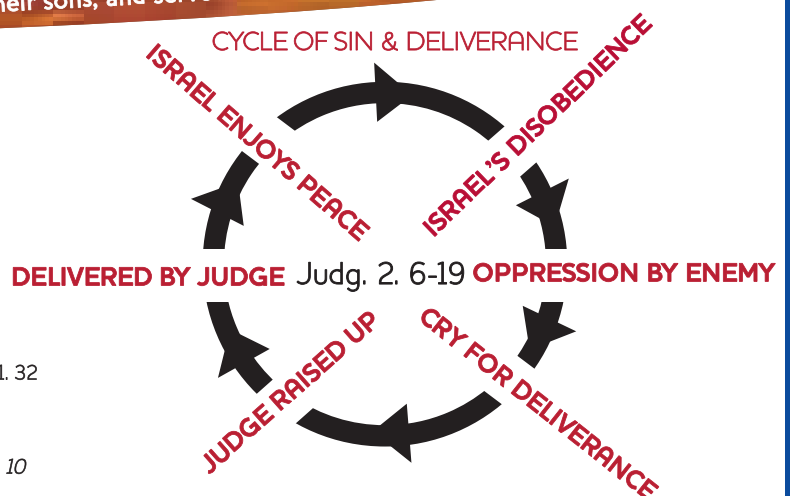
ld fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae', Heb. 11. 32

Christ the deliverer

arkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son', Col. 1. 13

from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come', 1 Thess. 1. 10

'And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their
daughters to their sons, and served their gods', Judg 3. 6



The book of Ruth



There is a significant moment when 'an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim', v. 1. From the place of victory, to the place of weeping, from triumph to tears! The people are reminded of the Lord's faithfulness in spite of their failure, 'I will never break my covenant with you . . . but ye have not obeyed my voice', vv. 1-2. We should consider the many blessings which are ours in Christ; the incalculable value of the inheritance we have; the debt we owe to His great faithfulness; the promises we have which 'in him are yea, and in him Amen', 2 Cor. 1. 20. How often, because of *our* weakness and failure, *our* proneness to sin, does He have to say to *our* hearts as He did to Israel, 'Why have ye done this?' Judg. 2. 2.

Twice over in chapter 2 we read, 'they forsook the Lord'. Then, in verse 14, the Lord 'sold them'. That tells us there was a price to be paid. Israel had tried to incorporate the ways of Canaan into their own society. They thought they could handle it; they wouldn't

be adversely affected by it. How wrong they were! The first, seemingly insignificant, steps of compromise had led to disappointment, frustration and defeat. It would prove to be very costly!

Throughout the following chapters we will see the response of a loving God to the waywardness of His own chosen people. Men and women are brought to our attention who 'out of weakness were made strong', who 'waxed valiant in fight'. Lessons can be learned and applied which will enable us to live for God in a morally bankrupt society.

The downward path

In the final section of the book, chapters 17 to 21, the curtain is drawn aside to reveal the moral and spiritual abyss into which the nation had descended. These chapters are not necessarily placed chronologically, but, instead, give us an insight into the character of the days when the Judges ruled. There was a veneer of

religion, as seen in the man Micah and his involvement with the tribe of Dan. But the words of Isaiah, later quoted by the Lord Jesus, are most appropriate, 'This people . . . honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me', Matt. 15. 8. Theft, idolatry and self-seeking ambition spiralled downwards to such heinous sins as rape, murder, genocide and civil war! And where did it all begin? A departure from the word of God; a failure to obey His commands; a desire to please self, rather than to please the Lord!

The recurring sin which caused Israel to stumble was idolatry. Some believers today may think that such a sin belongs to a past age of ignorance. An idol, however, can be anything, or any person who claims my devotion, my time and attention in preference to the Lord Himself. The passage of time has not diminished the need for John's closing exhortation in his first Epistle, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols', 1 John. 5. 21.





A WORD FOR TODAY

Pistikōs, *having the gift of persuasion*

Pistis, *faith, belief, trust, confidence*

Pistōs, *be trusted or believed*

During his imprisonment in Tibet by the Chinese communists, the English missionary Geoffrey Bull was subjected to a continuous period of interrogation aimed at breaking his Christian faith. Just before his release from captivity, he examined himself as to his faith in Christ. This is part of what he later wrote, 'All the waves and billows of the past three years have gone over me. Satan had brought to bear every device upon me. My mind had been so battered and was now so fatigued that I hardly knew how to think. Yet, as in that dark cell my vision cleared, I could not explain it nor did I need to do so. I knew that I believed my Saviour risen from the dead . . . And there as I sat, from the very springs of my soul surged up the words that God is pleased to honour above all human utterance, "I believe"'.¹ What an example of faith to follow, Heb. 13. 7! It is no wonder, then, that his last interrogator said to him, 'Your faith is different from ours'.² And it is this sense of difference or otherworldliness, Heb. 11. 1, plus an absolute belief in God and the person of Christ that underpins the usage of the Greek word **pistis** in the New Testament. As STEPHEN D. RENN confirms, 'In most cases, the meanings "belief" and "faith" are interchangeable'.³

In the Septuagint (LXX) the word **pistis** is used chiefly to translate the Hebrew word **ē-mū-nāh**. Whilst the language of faith and belief expressed in the Old Testament is not exactly the same as in the New Testament, the principles of trust and confidence in God are effectively the same. So, irrespective of the great time differences between the two Testaments, faith in God's word and confidence in His promises remained inviolable. In Genesis chapter 5 verse 24 we read that 'Enoch walked with God'. In Hebrews chapter 11 verse 5 the writer interprets this earlier text by stating that Enoch 'pleased God'. And this is further expanded by the

writer in verse 6 by reference to a general principle that without faith it is impossible to please God. So the assumption must be that Enoch exercised faith in God *throughout* his lifetime, and, eventually, it was through the exercise of this faith that he was translated into God's presence, Heb. 11. 5. His translation shows how faith made all the difference.

This can be further illustrated by Abraham's faith in Genesis chapter 15 verse 6. He had utter belief in God's promises, despite the empirical evidence that his wife Sarah was barren. Paul reminds us, 'He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God', Rom. 4. 20, NKJV. We might contrast Abraham's certain faith with the 'double-souled' person in James chapter 1 verse 8 who is characterized by divided loyalties.

Another example of the word being used in the LXX is found in Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 4, but on this occasion the word 'truth' is used by the translator rather than the word 'faith'. What is in view is the God-ward aspect of 'faith'. Because the God we serve is a God of truth, or trustworthiness, He will be faithful to all His promises, cp. Isa. 25. 1.

Moving then into the New Testament, we find that the word **pistis**, has assumed a much broader canvas. It is not just translated by the word 'faith', but has secondary meanings such as 'belief', 'assurance', 'conviction' and, following the usage in non-literary sources, 'faithfulness'. Essential to salvation is the exercise of 'faith' in Christ, which is not simply a matter of mental or intellectual assent, but of belief and trust in the finished work of Christ, Acts 20. 21; Rom. 10. 9, and a personal relationship to Christ, Gal. 2. 20. This is the principle or law of faith, Rom. 3. 27, and, as such, is contrasted with any form of legal obligation or human endeavour, Rom. 3. 31; Eph. 2. 8-9. But just as faith or trust and fear are closely related in the Old Testament, e.g., Psalm 42, so the dynamics of the New Testament require that a believer should continue in faith,

Col. 1. 23, and seek to increase the measure of their faith, 2 Cor. 10. 15, so as to avoid similar doubt or fear. For as Paul succinctly reminds us, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin', Rom. 14. 23.

The word 'faith' is often linked with other Christian virtues such as those contained in the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22-23, as well as virtues that can enhance faith, 2 Pet. 1. 5-8.

There is also another aspect of **pistis**, when it is preceded by the definite article, i.e., when it refers to 'the faith', as in Jude 3. Rather than being a reference here to active faith or saving faith, the expression refers to the *content* of what is believed. It is the totality of Christian doctrine that is being emphasized. This formula, 'the faith', is commonly used in the Pastoral Epistles, e.g., 1 Tim. 6. 21; 2 Tim. 2. 18, where it has essentially the same meaning. Notice the finality of this message, 'once and for all', it cannot be added to or changed - note the similar warning given by Paul in Galatians chapter 1 verse 9 to anyone seeking to make such a change. A salutary warning to us all in these days of relativism.

A definition of faith is given in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1. One translation states 'And what is faith? Faith gives substance or assurance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see', NEB. Having that conviction, then, that faith can give us an insight into the order of things that cannot be seen, 2 Cor. 4. 18, let us hold fast to our faith, 1 Tim. 1. 19; Heb. 10. 23, and continue as instructed by the Lord Jesus, 'Have faith in God', Mark 11. 22.

For further reading/study

Introductory

Faith in 18 Words - The Most Important Words you will ever know, by J. I. PACKER at pp. 125-134

Advanced

The **pistis** word-group in the Pastoral Epistles (Exkurs 4), *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC) by I. H. MARSHALL at pp. 213-216

Endnotes

- ¹ *When Iron Gates Yield* (1962), Hodder and Stoughton, London, pp. 241-242
- ² *Op cit.*, pg. 244
- ³ *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, (2005), Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, Peabody, Massachusetts, pg. 360.



Over 200 years ago a group of five men, including William Carey, met to discuss their vision for taking the gospel to India. One of their number, ANDREW FULLER, later recalled the meeting: 'Our undertaking to India really appeared to me . . . to be somewhat like a few men penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were thus deliberating, Mr. Carey said, "Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope". But before he went down he took an oath of each of us . . . that while we lived, we should never let go the rope'. History records that the four men present rose to the challenge, and each 'held the rope' until he died. They prayed constantly for William Carey and raised funds for the work in India. Andrew Fuller, in particular, persevered in the midst of severe personal affliction and overwhelming responsibilities. He suffered the loss of his first wife and eight of their eleven children; yet, he refused to 'let go the rope'. He had a deep concern that unreached peoples should hear the gospel.

When the apostle Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy it is clear that he was in a 'deep mine'; indeed, it could hardly have been deeper. During his first imprisonment in Rome, he was under house arrest; nevertheless, he was able to enjoy fellowship with believers in the city, Acts 28. 30. It was comparatively easy for them 'to hold the rope' at this time. Circumstances changed when Nero intensified his persecution of Christians. Paul knew that his life of service for the Lord was shortly to close, 2 Tim. 4. 6, and he needed fellow believers to 'hold the rope' more than ever before. Sadly, there were those who failed so to do, including Demas, v. 10; indeed, he suffered widespread abandonment by those who had once been faithful to him, 'This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes', 1. 15. Later on in this

THEIR FINEST HOUR TIMOTHY

same letter, he records, 'At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me', 4. 16. However, there was a minority who refused to abandon him in his darkest hour, including Onesiphorus, Luke, and, of course, Timothy, 2 Tim. 1. 16-18; 4. 11.

Paul's deep affection for, and longing to see, Timothy can be captured in his moving plea to him, 'Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me . . . Take Mark, and bring him with thee . . . The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments . . . Do thy diligence to come before winter', 4. 9, 11, 13, 21. There were, no doubt, many memorable moments during their time together; however, the present writer suggests that these final requests mark Timothy's 'finest hour'. Loyalty and commitment are rare qualities among people in all walks of life today. Sadly, they are also often absent among believers. Whether Timothy actually saw Paul before he faced his executioner is not known; nevertheless, it is clear that he had total confidence in his willingness and ability to carry out his wishes, if it were possible so to do.

Such loyalty stems from a firm resolve to put others before self. Paul wrote to the Philippian believers about those who 'seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's', Phil. 2. 21. Such a charge could not have been levelled at Timothy. He commended him to them as a 'man likeminded, who will naturally [sincerely, NKJV] care for your state', v. 20. He challenges us today as to how genuine our care is for fellow believers. Do we put our own welfare before that of others? There are many who need us in different ways, to 'hold the rope' for them, either in prayer or

practical fellowship. Are we prepared to make the sacrifices that loyalty to them demands? Sometimes we do not even bother to find the rope, let alone hold on to it!

Paul had spotted Timothy's potential for the Lord when he first came across him as a young man in his teens in Lystra, Acts 16. 1-2. Indeed, from the outset of their fellowship in the Lord's work, he showed that the needs of others were paramount in his life. He had a Jewish mother and a Gentile

father; therefore, in order not to cause an offence or confusion, he willingly submitted to circumcision before setting off with Paul on his missionary journeys. If he had not agreed to this, he would have been regarded as a Jew by the Gentiles, and as a Gentile by the Jews. GEORGE MATHESON writes, 'Timothy was therefore the child of opposite worlds, and it was inevitable that they would strive within him. Israel and Greece were essentially opposed currents. Their difference lay deeper than any religious doctrine; it was constituted by their view of life'.¹ It must be noted that this circumcision had nothing to do with Timothy's salvation. Paul strongly opposed those who claimed that circumcision was necessary for salvation. From this point onwards, whatever the cost, he did not waver in his commitment to Paul and the spread of the gospel. Indeed, the reference to him by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews indicates that, in all probability, he was imprisoned at some time for his faithfulness to Christ, Heb. 13. 23. Paul did not marry and, therefore, had no natural children, but he looked on Timothy as a true spiritual son, 1 Tim. 1. 2, 18; 2 Tim 1. 2. Indeed, his references to him as a son indicate that he was almost certainly instrumental in his conversion, and also in his further spiritual development once he was

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saved through faith in Christ. Clearly, he enjoyed a closer relationship with him than with anyone else. His mother and grandmother also exercised great influence over him in the home by consistently teaching him the Old Testament scriptures, 1. 5; 3. 15. There was, therefore, already a solid foundation for Paul to build upon. Parents and other family members have a vital role to play in the spiritual development of children. It has often been remarked that the spiritual health of an assembly will rarely, if ever, rise above the spirituality of the families within it.

As well as being a personal support and encouragement to Paul as he neared the end of his earthly journey, Timothy was also encouraged to continue 'holding the rope' of the gospel message after he had departed: 'But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them', v. 14. The Apostle was well aware of the dangers that were abroad to undermine the truth that he had so faithfully taught. He made an urgent final appeal to his young companion: 'I charge thee . . .

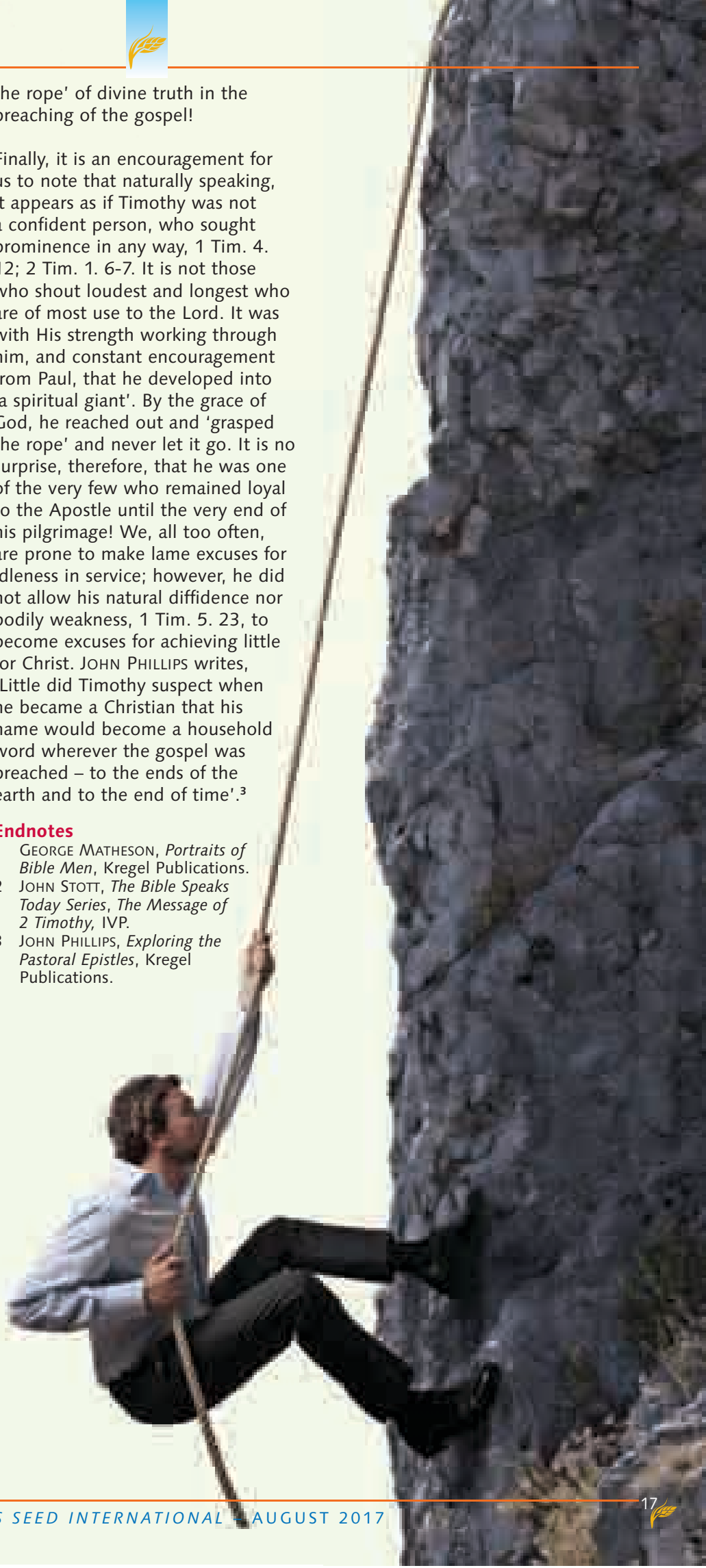
Preach the word . . . be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . And they shall turn away their ears from the truth . . . But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist', 4. 1-5. The same encouragement to continue to 'hold the rope' of the gospel message is as relevant today as it ever was. JOHN STOTT's words are apposite: 'The church of our day urgently needs to hear the message . . . all around us we see Christians and churches relaxing their grasp of the gospel, fumbling it, in danger of letting it drop from their hands altogether. A new generation of young Timothys is needed, who will guard the sacred deposit of the gospel, who are determined to proclaim it and are prepared to suffer for it, and will pass it on pure and uncorrupted to the generation which in due course will rise up to follow them'.² Let us pray for the desire and strength to rise to Paul's challenge to 'hold

the rope' of divine truth in the preaching of the gospel!

Finally, it is an encouragement for us to note that naturally speaking, it appears as if Timothy was not a confident person, who sought prominence in any way, 1 Tim. 4. 12; 2 Tim. 1. 6-7. It is not those who shout loudest and longest who are of most use to the Lord. It was with His strength working through him, and constant encouragement from Paul, that he developed into 'a spiritual giant'. By the grace of God, he reached out and 'grasped the rope' and never let it go. It is no surprise, therefore, that he was one of the very few who remained loyal to the Apostle until the very end of his pilgrimage! We, all too often, are prone to make lame excuses for idleness in service; however, he did not allow his natural diffidence nor bodily weakness, 1 Tim. 5. 23, to become excuses for achieving little for Christ. JOHN PHILLIPS writes, 'Little did Timothy suspect when he became a Christian that his name would become a household word wherever the gospel was preached – to the ends of the earth and to the end of time'.³

Endnotes

- 1 GEORGE MATHESON, *Portraits of Bible Men*, Kregel Publications.
- 2 JOHN STOTT, *The Bible Speaks Today Series, The Message of 2 Timothy*, IVP.
- 3 JOHN PHILLIPS, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*, Kregel Publications.





It would appear that there were very few at the cross of our Lord who grieved for Him or were in any way sympathetic to Him. 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness' is what He had said to the Jewish rulers as He approached His hour of suffering. The scripture, 'Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none', Ps. 69. 20, is often quoted of His sufferings on the cross, and it may well be appropriate to do so bearing in mind the words that follow, 'They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink'. There was one group, however, that did weep for Him, a small huddle of women to whose faithful love the Spirit of God draws our attention. Chief amongst this group was Mary, the mother of our Lord, who also drew from our Lord a cry of pity.

The love of a mother – devotion

For just over three years our Lord had had the constant company of His twelve disciples and, as His fame spread abroad, He was dogged by crowds of needy people, and of those determined to trap Him or catch Him out. Except when He withdrew to pray privately, it would appear that He was seldom alone. Yet, as He drew closer to the cross, He knew that even His beloved disciples would let Him down. 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone', John 16. 32; 'And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered', Mark 14. 27. Inevitably, His disciples took exception to this. Peter insisted vehemently that he of all the disciples would not let the Lord down, and when our Lord warned him that he would deny him three times, Peter insisted he would not. 'Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this

CHARACTERS AROUND THE CROSS

MARY

WHO GRIEVED FOR HIM

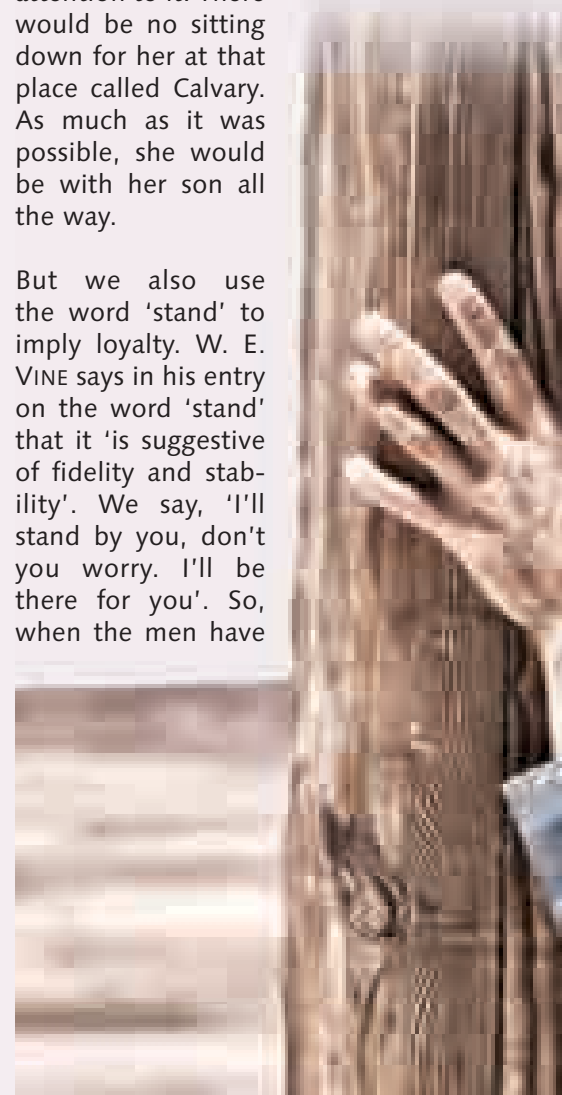
night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples', Matt. 26. 33-35. Yet, when the moment in the garden of Gethsemane came when our Lord was arrested by the band of soldiers, 'they all forsook him and fled', Mark 14. 50. Admittedly, John, the beloved disciple, having fled from the garden, returned to observe the farce of a trial our Lord had to endure in the High Priest's house, as did Peter, and John was very evidently there at the cross, for our Lord commended His mother into his care, but Peter had gone by then, as had the other nine. Oh, the misplaced bravado of males. The men have let Him down. But the Holy Spirit draws our attention to a band of women who were there at Calvary. 'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene', John 19. 25. This band of women had not been included at the feast in the upper room, they had not been in the garden of Gethsemane, they were not allowed into the High Priest's rooms, but they must have heard of our Lord's arrest and trials and they came to the place of the skull to watch Him there. The disciples' bravado had failed them. They hid from the authorities out of fear and shame. But oh the loyalty of a mother and the women who stood with her! What devotion she showed her son and Lord there!

The loyalty of a mother – deference

The scripture explicitly states, 'There stood by the cross of Jesus'. The phrase speaks of a physical standing. Different attitudes were seen at that cross. Some merely 'passed by, wagging their heads', others, 'sitting down', guarded Him there, tossing

dice as they did so. But His mother stood, and, again, we stress, stood, in the heat of the day and through the hours of supernatural darkness, hour after agonizing hour, to watch her son. The word 'stand', we are told, implies 'abiding' (W. E. VINE). Her attitude is surely important, for standing implies respect. One stands in the presence of greatness; when someone enters a room we often stand to greet them; in the presence of royalty one cannot do anything but stand until invited to sit. Mary stood out of respect and deference to our Lord, and the Father in heaven noticed it and the Spirit of God draws our attention to it. There would be no sitting down for her at that place called Calvary. As much as it was possible, she would be with her son all the way.

But we also use the word 'stand' to imply loyalty. W. E. VINE says in his entry on the word 'stand' that it 'is suggestive of fidelity and stability'. We say, 'I'll stand by you, don't you worry. I'll be there for you'. So, when the men have





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run away from fear and shame, here is a woman who will stand by her son. How difficult it must have been to identify oneself with Him at such a time! Do we think that His enemies around the cross did not despise her, mock her, triumph over her? Do we think she bore no shame in standing by Him at His execution, identifying herself with Him in His shame? Was there no threat to her, or to the other women who stood with her? Yet, dare we say it, nothing seems to have taken her from that place until it was all over, until the beloved disciple took her to his home. The hymn-writer, quoting God Himself in reference to Israel, asks, 'Can a mother's tender care cease towards the child she bare?' Some may very well do so, but Mary did not.

The loneliness of a mother – distress

So the band of four women and John stood by the cross out of respect and loyalty to the One who suffered there. Yet Mary had her own sorrow which no one else could bear. At His dedication as a child in the temple, a man called Simeon, 'blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in

Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also)', Luke 2. 34-35. It may very well have been that she had suffered for Him during His life. The angel may well have said, 'Blessed art thou above women', but not everyone would have said that. Was there no slur upon her character when men said to her first-born son, 'We be not born of fornication', John 8. 41? Yet there at the cross no doubt she suffered the agonies that only a mother can feel for her child as he suffers. That sword, so prophetically spoken of in His infancy, pierced her soul at Calvary. And surely our Lord, in His intense suffering, felt and knew hers, for, with a word of compassion, He says to her, 'Woman, behold thy son', and, turning to John, He said, 'Behold thy mother'. In His dying hour our Lord knew the depths of agony to which His mother went. Yet, despite the love, the loyalty and the loneliness of a mother who entered into some of His suffering, no mortal being could fully enter into it, nor can we fully enter into it, because none would ever know, or could ever know, the depths to which Christ's soul went when He felt forsaken of His God, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us, when He went,

like that sin-bearing scapegoat of old, into 'a land not inhabited', Lev. 16. 22, a place of desperate isolation and distress.

And what of us today? Have we become so familiar with the cross and with the sufferings of our Lord thereupon, that we no longer feel distress at what He suffered in our room and stead? Have we become so matter-of-fact about Calvary that we no longer grieve for the One who suffered there? The hymn-writer says, 'Thus might I hide my blushing face while His dear cross appears, dissolve my heart in thankfulness and melt my eyes to tears'. Do we? One does not wish to over-emphasize the physical sufferings of our Lord to the extent that some do, becoming mawkish, but they are a very real part of our faith. Should the sight of our Lord upon the cross not deepen our devotion to Him, especially as we are reminded of 'Him there' every Lord's Day morning as we break bread? And are we willing to 'stand by the cross' in the sense of identifying ourselves with it and with our Lord upon it. The words of Galatians chapter 6 and verse 14 are often misquoted. Paul does not say, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the death or our Lord Jesus Christ'. He says, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Paul deliberately and carefully brings the two words 'glory' and 'cross' together for they should contradict one another. How is it possible to find glory in a place of shame, or to worship One who died in shame? It has to be so for us. Like Mary of old, let us 'stand by' the cross, identify ourselves willingly with it and with the One who died for us upon it, lovingly bearing any shame or reproach that comes with identifying ourselves with Him. 'The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God'; 'We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God', 1 Cor. 1. 18, 23-24. 'Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the cross of Christ my God; all the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to His blood'.





Walter Thomas Prideaux (W.T.P.) Wolston (1840-1917), who died 100 years ago this year, has left us a wonderful example of a believer who was able to lead a busy life in full-time employment, whilst, at the same time, being very active in the Lord's work. For more than forty years he was busily engaged in his medical practice in Edinburgh, and also heavily involved in preaching, writing, and editing, and it is said that for many years he preached the gospel somewhere, to somebody, every day. At the same time his conversion story is a great encouragement to believing parents who are praying that their wayward children would be saved. WOLSTON himself noted later, 'It is an inestimable boon for a man to have a praying mother and much, I know; mine prayed for me. But for twenty years I knew nothing of the grace of God, nothing whatever!'¹

Wolston was born on the 6th of September 1840, in Brixham, a busy fishing and naval port in Devon, England, thirty miles from Plymouth. He was born into a Christian family, but grew up to be quite rebellious. On leaving school he joined a solicitor's firm in Brixham, intending to enter the legal profession. He admitted later that, at the time, he was 'a most thorough-going young worldling, deeply immersed in its pleasures and its sin . . . I had meant to be a lawyer at that time; and although this did engage my attention in office hours, my heart was far more in everything that concerned the world and its enjoyments than anything else'.

At the age of twenty, he left home in December for London to further his legal studies, intending to return home over the Christmas holidays to fulfil a number of engagements in connection with a 'Glee Band', in which he was a prominent singer, performing in music halls. However, shortly afterwards he got saved, and it happened as follows. On his first Sunday in London, a fellow-lodger, an engineering student called Tom, also from Devon, suggested that they go and listen to Richard Weaver

WALTER WOLSTON

(1827-1896), the famous coal-miner preacher, that night preaching in the Surrey Theatre in Blackfriars Road. HENRY PICKERING later said of Weaver – who was largely uneducated and had been a feared boxer – 'a greater God-made preacher has not been known in living memory'.

WOLSTON, who said of his thoughts at the time, 'Sunday is really an awfully dull day for an unconverted man', went along, and joined the 3,500 other people in the theatre. Weaver read Mark chapter 5 verses 25-34, and then preached on the woman with the issue of blood, and how she simply touched the hem of Jesus' garment in faith. Wolston was quite affected that night, but it was only after hearing Charles Stanley preach the gospel the next Sunday, having been urged to do so in a letter from his mother, that the light dawned in his soul, and Walter Wolston was saved!

Charles Stanley (1821-1890) was the leading evangelist among the Exclusive Brethren during the nineteenth century, having preached his first sermon at fourteen. He became famous for his 'C. S. Tracts'. He had been known to Wolston for ten years or so since Stanley stayed in the Wolston family home while preaching the gospel in the area. He spoke to Stanley in the inquiry room after the meeting, and, after Stanley pointed out various scriptures, Wolston got saved. He would later say to a group of students in Edinburgh, 'There is not a man in this hall tonight, who was more deeply immersed in the world, in its pleasures, its sin and its enticements, nor a more downright, out-and-out slave of the devil, than the man who speaks to you tonight. Yet in one hour God saved me', but, 'I went home that night to my lodgings as happy as a man could be. I was forgiven, saved, emancipated, taken out of darkness into light, brought from distance into nearness. I knew it, and enjoyed it. My soul began to cry out under the sense of the favour of the Lord, and of the love of the Lord; for I had the consciousness that my

Saviour had made atonement for my sins, and had washed them all away in His blood'. He immediately witnessed to Tom, who got saved the following evening.

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Straightaway, Wolston wrote to the leader of the Glee Band in Brixham, telling him that since leaving home he had been converted, that the Lord had put a new song into his mouth, and, although he was willing to fulfill his promised engagements, he could now only sing about the Saviour who had done so much for him. Not surprisingly he was excused his commitment! The band-leader refused to read his letter to the other band members as Wolston had asked; he just told them that Wolston had gone wrong in his head. WOLSTON later commented, 'I had not gone wrong in my head, but I had got right in my heart'.

On being saved, he immediately threw himself wholeheartedly into the Lord's work, and soon changed career direction and trained in medicine in London. In 1864, feeling the Lord's call to Scotland, Wolston left behind lucrative possibilities in London and moved north to Edinburgh. His first job was as a house surgeon in the Old Edinburgh Infirmary. Afterwards, he established his own private practice in the city. The *Journal of the British Homoeopathic Society*, 1894-5, noted that 'Wolston, Walter Thomas Prideaux, M.D. Edin., M.R.C.S., Physician to the Edinburgh Homoeopathic Dispensary, 46, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh', had been granted his membership of the *British Homeopathic Society* in 1877, and reported that he was one of the three homeopathic doctors practising in Edinburgh at the time. Interestingly, another Exclusive brother, Dr. Edward Cronin (1801-1882), was a pioneer in homeopathy in England, being the fifth-ever homeopathic practitioner in the country, after returning from being a medical missionary in Persia and India, helping Anthony Norris Groves.

Dr. Wolston was 'universally acknowledged to be a skillful and

WOLSTON

kindly Christian doctor'. At the same time he rented halls and theatres for gospel preaching himself and urged others to preach also, saying, 'Conversion is just like scarlet fever; it is infectious. If you get converted yourself, you tell others of your new-found joy, and others will get converted also'. He had a particularly great influence with young men, and frequently lectured Edinburgh University students on spiritual subjects. It was on the last night of such a gospel series for young people that he gave his testimony, as afterwards recorded in booklet form.² In this testimony he wrote, 'I have been seven-and-thirty years converted, and I find that my portion gets better every year. Christ is dearer, and heaven is nearer, and the gospel is sweeter every year'.

In 1906 Wolston published *The Evangelist's Hymnal*, a collection of 536 gospel hymns, which, over the years, has been reprinted more than seven times. Its publishers claim that over 91,000 copies have been sold, and it is still in print, and used!

Wolston was greatly blessed in that his wife, Mary – about three years younger than him – fully supported him in his gospel work, and was also busily engaged in writing gospel tracts, anonymously signing herself 'X' at the bottom of her tracts, saying that she didn't want to 'go before her husband'. Her tract titles included *Homeward Bound*, *Light at Eventide*, *Saved*, *Snow Water*, *Wash me and then I Shall be Whiter than Snow*, and *Too Good for Jesus*.

Wolston was the editor of *God's Glad Tidings* magazine, afterwards renamed *The Gospel Messenger*, for forty-five

years, and he wrote many excellent gospel booklets. He also produced nine volumes on spiritual subjects, which have been helpful to many, these too, like the gospel booklets, can be read online at Stempublishing.com.³

Wolston generally steered clear of the controversies in the Exclusive Brethren following the death of J. N.



Darby, but eventually he joined the group called the Glanton Brethren, who represented about 16% of the 730 Exclusive assemblies from whom they broke away. Wolston justified his position in a 32-page booklet, called "*Hear the Right*": *Narrative of facts written at the time of the Glanton Division*, Alnwick and Glanton, Edinburgh and London, 1908.

When Wolston retired from his medical practice in 1909, he fulfilled a long-held ambition to visit Australia and New Zealand. While he was in Australia, characteristically, he busied himself with a number of public gospel meetings in Brisbane and elsewhere. He was described at the time as 'the venerable missionary'.⁴

The (Brisbane) Telegraph September 11th, 1911, advertised meetings at the Centennial and Albert Halls on 'Eight lectures on the Holy Spirit's Activities', and 'Night Scenes of Scripture', and his final talk in Brisbane was on 'The Lord's Second Coming'. Special twenty-minute talks for businessmen were held in the YMCA Reception Hall in Brisbane, on such subjects as 'Building from the bottom', discussing the new birth as the best foundation, and 'Faith, what is it and what it does'. Similar public meetings were later held in Adelaide and Melbourne.⁵

Afterwards, he visited Norway twice, but during his second visit in February, 1915, he had a stroke and was left paralyzed. He was brought home to Weston-super-Mare, where he lay helpless for two years. A few weeks before he died he had another stroke and was left in a coma. On 11th March, 1917, he went to be with the Lord. As one obituary at the time well remarked, 'at the age of seventy-six, the good doctor made his appointment with the great Physician, who forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases'.

Endnotes

- 1 W. T. P. WOLSTON, *No Man Can Serve Two Masters or How I Found the Lord*, <http://bibletruthpublishers.com/no-man-can-serve-two-masters-or-how-i-found-the-lord/walter-thomas-prideaux-wolston/seekers-for-light-w-t-p-wolston/la61286>. Many of the other quotes in this article are drawn from this source.
- 2 See Note 1.
- 3 The present writer first came across Wolston's writings in *Night Scenes of Scripture*, but he also wrote many more, viz., *Simon Peter: His Life and Letters*, *Young Men of Scripture*, *Another Comforter*, *Behold the Bridegroom*, *Forty Days of Scripture*, *Seekers for Light* and *The Church*.
- 4 *Brisbane Courier*, August 29th, 1911.
- 5 *The Register (Adelaide)*, Thursday 29th February 1912, and *(Melbourne) Punch*, February 29th, 1912.



No careful reader of the Gospels could fail to appreciate that when the Lord Jesus was here, manifest in flesh, He experienced in an unprecedented way the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. As the perfect Man, the Lord Jesus lived totally submissive to the will of His Father. 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered'.¹ But, equally, as the perfect Man He lived in total dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and in both of these matters He has left an example for us to follow.

The Holy Spirit in relation to the birth of the Saviour

Matthew introduces his account of the Lord's conception and birth with this significant statement, 'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise'. His language indicates that he is about to tell us of something different to the norm, different to the birth of all those named in the preceding genealogy. In the following verses Matthew records how the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary's husband, Joseph, in a dream saying, 'Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost'. Then, quoting from the prophet Isaiah, Matthew adds, 'Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled . . . Behold, a virgin shall . . . bring forth a Son'. Conceived of the Spirit, born of the virgin.²

While Matthew describes the matter from Joseph's perspective, Luke views it from Mary's. To her the angel Gabriel announced 'Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son'. Perplexed at his saying, she replied, 'How shall this be seeing I know not a man?' Her response was not prompted by unbelief, for her cousin Elisabeth would say later, 'Blessed is she that believed', but was rather the expression of her pure conscience, 'I know not a man'. Although, over the centuries, Jewish women must have longed to be the mother of the Messiah, it seems evident that they had not really grasped that He would be born of a virgin. In answer to her query, having spoken of *the fact* of the conception,

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Gabriel proceeded to describe *the means*, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee', that is *for production*, as the angel said to Joseph, 'that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost'. Gabriel continued, 'the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee', that is *for protection*, guarding her offspring while she carried Him in the womb. Then Gabriel added, 'therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God'. 'That holy thing' lays stress upon the essential sinless nature of the One who was to be born. That He will be called 'the Son of God' marked Him out to be the eternal and only begotten Son of the Father.³

Bildad, in his controversy with Job, said, 'How can he be clean that is born of a woman?'⁴ The Lord Jesus was born of a woman, yet He was 'clean'. We know that Mary was a sinner, for in her song of thanksgiving she said, 'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour',⁵ yet she gave birth to One who was without sin. 'How can he be clean that is born of a woman?' Luke will tell us, through divine conception and divine protection, preserving the holy child from all taint of Mary's sin. This is fundamental, vital truth relative to the person of Christ, conceived of the Spirit; born of the virgin; intrinsically holy. Truth that sadly is denied by many today, truth to which we must faithfully adhere.

The Holy Spirit in relation to the life of the Saviour

1. 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power'. When the Lord Jesus was baptized, Luke says, 'The heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased'.⁶ Three things accompanied the Lord's baptism that had not taken place with those who had been baptized previously: 'heaven was opened'; 'the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him'; and the voice of the Father was heard

speaking from heaven. We should not miss that all three persons of the Godhead are mentioned, the Son baptized, the Spirit descending, and the Father speaking. Three distinct persons, yet acting in absolute unity and harmony! We must not think

from this reference that prior to His baptism the Lord did not possess the Holy Spirit. We have seen that He was conceived of the Spirit, and we can say that His body was ever

the temple of the Holy Spirit, but here, at His baptism, He *is anointed by the Spirit*. This anointing was with a view to service, the Lord at His baptism taking His place publicly as the Servant of Jehovah.

Later, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read from Isaiah chapter 61, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord', adding, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears'. Peter, preaching in the house of Cornelius, declared, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil'.⁷ All these passages demonstrate that in His ministry and service He always lived and worked in dependence upon and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the baptism of Christ, the Holy Spirit descended in 'bodily shape like a dove'. In Leviticus chapter 1 the turtledove is associated with a 'burnt offering', in Leviticus chapter 12 with 'poverty'; and in Matthew chapter 10 with 'gentleness', all features characteristic of the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus.⁸

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him in this way also had in view His manifestation to Israel. In John chapter 1 verses 30 to 34, John the Baptist said, 'This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing

By
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RIT AND CHRIST

with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God'.

2. *Led by the Spirit* – Following the baptism, Luke says, 'And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil'.⁹ We should notice that the word 'being' ought to be omitted from the verse. This was not something exceptional in the experience of Christ, but was continually true of Him. As He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil He was 'armed' with two things, the Spirit of God and the word of God, that He might thereby provide an example of the resources available to ourselves in time of temptation.

3. *Empowered by the Spirit* – After the temptation in the wilderness Luke says, 'And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee'.¹⁰ We have seen that the opening verse of chapter 4 said, 'Jesus . . . full of the

Holy Ghost'. In between these two references we have the record of the temptation. Now, as He returns, He does so in 'the power of the Spirit'; there had been nothing in His life, in that intervening period, to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

His preaching was in the power of the Spirit. Commenting on the Lord reading from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue at Nazareth 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel', the late GEOFFREY BULL, in an article in the *Believer's Magazine*, said this passage was, 'chosen deliberately, read significantly, and interpreted personally',¹¹ preaching in the power of the Spirit.

His miracles were likewise accomplished in the power of the Spirit. In Matthew chapter 12, the Lord said, 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you'. Just a few verses earlier, in a quotation from Isaiah chapter 42, we are reminded that this is the One of whom Jehovah said, 'I will put my spirit upon him'. Little wonder men should say 'Never man spake like this man'; 'He hath done all things well'.¹²

4. *The fruit of the Spirit* – The fruit of the Spirit is nine-fold:

'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance'. It would be beyond the scope of this article to expand how each aspect of the fruit of the Spirit was fully seen in the life of the Saviour.¹³

We do well to remember that we also have an 'anointing',¹⁴ but what do we know of the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives? What evidence is there of the fruit of the Spirit?

The Holy Spirit in relation to the death of the Saviour

In Hebrews chapter 9 verse 14 the writer says concerning the Lord Jesus, 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God'. As He went to the cross, His steps were controlled by the Spirit, His heart was dependent upon the Spirit, and in the power of the Holy Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. We notice He 'offered himself' – a willing, obedient act. 'Without spot', without a single blemish, and that after living some thirty-three years in this polluted world. Offered Himself 'to God', for His pleasure and satisfaction. Although there are many other verses that we might have considered, perhaps we do well to conclude this meditation by reminding ourselves of our own responsibility as expressed in the words of Romans chapter 12 verse 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service'.

Endnotes

1. Heb. 5. 8.
2. Matt. 1. 18; Isa. 7. 14.
3. Luke 1. 26-35, 45.
4. Job 25. 4.
5. Luke 1. 47.
6. Luke 3. 22.
7. Luke 4. 16-21; Acts 10. 38.
8. Lev. 1. 14; 12. 8; Matt. 10. 16.
9. Luke 4. 1.
10. Luke 4. 14.
11. *Believer's Magazine*, December 1970, pg. 365.
12. Matt. 12. 28, 18; John 7. 46; Mark 7. 37.
13. But see *The Spirit of Glory*, Assembly Testimony Publications, pp. 99-102.
14. 2 Cor. 1. 21; 1 John 2. 20.





Longsuffering

It is at this point that we find the next three 'fruits' primarily centred in the direction of our fellow men. This particular fruit of the Spirit carries the thought of being long-patient, using restraint in the light of circumstances, having forbearance or fortitude as an end product or result in view. Paul reminds us that 'charity [love] suffereth long'. O, how this is so closely linked with the divine character that scripture speaks of, the longsuffering, patience of God. His love was so severely tried, whether we view it in the Old Testament or in the New.

Examples abound in the Old Testament where the expression 'slow to anger' is found, and of those who knew through personal experience to call upon the Lord at such times.¹ Peter also speaks of the longsuffering of God, and in the days of Noah.² In the New Testament we can certainly think of our blessed Lord as He spoke of Jerusalem with a tenderness that only He knew, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' Matt. 23. 37.

The exhortation is of import to all who read the word of God and recognize the dealings of God in their lives. Although primarily to the Jew, the principle is the same to all: 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' Rom. 2. 4.

In light of the grace of God and the salvation that we have and enjoy, we, as believers, are to show a pattern of longsuffering to those whom we are seeking to reach with the glorious gospel of Christ, 1 Tim. 1. 16. We are to be an example to our brethren and sisters in Christ, particularly younger ones, 2 Tim. 3. 10. Those who are elders and those who teach the word of God as sound doctrine are exhorted to do so with all longsuffering in order that there be no departure from it, 4. 2.

Therefore, let us endeavour to

THE FRUIT OF

GALATIANS 5. 22-23

The Character

By **FRED WHITELOCK** Warrington, England

The second group of this fruit is MAN-WARD

exercise this fruit that we might be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, 2 Pet. 3. 14-15.

Gentleness

In each of the ten occasions this word is used in scripture, its import is good (once), goodness (five times), or kindness (four times); it also implies 'kind', 'gracious', and 'better'. It is mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, an unruffled disposition, and a disposition to treat all with a gentle kindness.

We should not forget that it was through that same gentle kindness that God our Saviour moved towards us in salvation, Titus 3. 4, which was shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, v. 6.

Once again, this trait of character is to be developed in us as something we put on, Col. 3. 12, as we seek to reach our fellow men, and in our dealings with one another. As Peter says in his Epistle, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious', 1 Pet. 2. 3.

David knew of this fruit from personal experience in the Lord's dealings with him. 'Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great', 2 Sam. 22. 36; Ps. 18. 35. As we seek to reach our fellow men for Christ, may we emulate Him, 'But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil', Luke 6. 35. In this way we can help them to understand that God is working in their lives, not only because He loves them but that His kindness might lead them to repentance, Rom. 2. 4. So often Christians are unkind and unforgiving to one another, and the exhortation of scripture is placed to one side, 'And be ye kind one

to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you', Eph. 4. 32. May we, as His children, never forget that God will show us, throughout eternity, that kindness that we do not deserve, 'That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus', 2. 7.

Goodness

The word is found four times in our New Testament. Its meaning is that which is of benefit to others, thus giving the intention of a disposition to do good to others. In other words, a Christian must be a good man or woman.

One thing that is emphasized in the word of God is that there is nothing good in us, forasmuch as 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight', Isa. 64. 6, and that we are not saved by good works, Eph. 2. 8-9. However, once we are saved, Paul states, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them', 2. 10. There are many scriptures which the Saviour taught to emphasize that new life gives evidence of that which is good, even the relationship with the Father.³ It is that character that shows goodness and kindness toward our brethren and sisters and to the world around us. It is this that Paul referred to as he wrote to the saints in Rome, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another', Rom. 15. 14.

We are exhorted to prove the reality of our surrender to Christ, in order that experimentally we would be found to be doing the 'will of God' from the heart, 12. 1-2.⁴

We now come to the last three,



THE SPIRIT PART TWO

Character Developed in the Believer

which are of concern to ourselves – **self-ward** – and the first of these is:

Faith

Faith is taking a person at their word. The pathway of faith began when we repented and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. That is, we took God at His word, we applied faith; as the scripture says, 'So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God', Rom. 10. 17. Then, as we began that step of faith and read His word, faith was deepened, and we began to know more of Him and His ways. But faith is a continuous journey, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith', 1. 17. Indeed, experiences come into our lives, even unpleasant ones, in order that God may refine our character, and deepen our appreciation of His working in us, 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ', 1 Pet. 1. 7. God has His own glory and that of His own Son in view.

God has willed it that we should be like His Son, 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son', Rom. 8. 29. How little we appreciate the wonder of it all! How marvellous that God would ever take worthless sinners and make us like unto His own Son!

Meekness

To the world, meekness is often seen as weakness! Sadly, they don't know what it really means. Meekness is a surrender of our rights in the face of provocation, for God is the One who judges righteously. Thus, there is only One, our Lord Jesus Christ, who could say of Himself that He was meek, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart', Matt. 11. 29. However, there are others who are identified as having this calm and meek spirit:

- Abraham – Gen. 14. 22 – 15. 1; 16. 5, 6.
- Moses – Num. 12. 3.
- David – 2 Sam. 16. 10-12.

They each show a calm temper of mind, not easily provoked, Jas. 3. 13, gentleness linked with humility.

This virtue is to be evidenced in each of our lives, particularly in our dealings with other saints, Col. 3. 12. Paul mentions it where those who are spiritual seek to restore one who has been overtaken in some fault, Gal. 6. 1. Equally, Paul exemplified it, 2 Cor. 10. 1. But, this does not exclude our attitude or dealings with men and women in the world, Titus 3. 2. We are not to be angry with those who are ignorant of the truth, but, in meekness, seek to instruct them in the hope they will come to the acknowledgement of it, 2 Tim. 2. 25.

Temperance

This word means self-control – the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions. Self-control is one of the hardest traits of character to develop and, sadly, one that in

times of deep stress or illness is the first to be let go. At such times we often wish we could turn the clock back and retrace our steps when we have caused pain and sadness in the hearts of others because of a momentary loss of control of our tongues or actions. How often the problem is that we speak before we think. How appropriate the words of the psalmist, 'I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me', Ps. 39. 1.

This fruit of the Spirit is one of the things that overseers should possess. Sometimes they find themselves under attack, not from the world, nor by the devil, but by those whom they are seeking to shepherd. But, for all of us, our manner of life should be 'walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit', Rom. 8. 1, 4. We must mortify the deeds of the body, and walk in newness of life.

The possession of these virtues gives evidence of the work of the Spirit of God in the lives of every believer, as Peter exhorts in his Epistle, 'And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ', 2 Pet. 1. 5-8. Therefore, let us seek to give ourselves in surrender to the development of the same that we might 'show forth the virtues of him who hath called us into his most glorious light'.

Endnotes

- For example: (1) The remnant of Nehemiah and Ezra in their prayer, Neh. 9. 17; (2) The psalmist, Pss. 103. 8; 145. 8; (3) Joel's cry to the nation, Joel 2. 13; (4) Jonah, at the repentance of Nineveh, Jonah 4. 2; (5) Nahum as he speaks of the character of God, Nahum 1. 3.
- 1 Pet. 3. 20; 2 Pet. 3. 9.
- See Matt. 5. 45; 7. 17-18; 12. 35.
- There are many examples given to us in the scriptures of those who manifested this fruit in their lives: e.g., Tabitha, Acts 9. 36; Barnabas, 11. 24, and Priscilla and Aquila, Rom. 16. 3-4.





This New Testament letter had a significant impact on the sixteenth century reformer Martin Luther who once stated that 'The Epistle to the Galatians is my Epistle; I have betrothed myself to it; it is my wife'.¹ He saw in this letter a direct parallel with the legalism that Paul confronts in Galatia and that of the Papacy of his day.²

It has been said that Galatians 'takes up controversially what Romans puts systematically'.³ That may be too facile an explanation, but as we read Galatians it does reflect a much more trenchant approach on the part of the apostle Paul than in Romans. He clearly seems to have the 'bit between his teeth' as he engages in a heated debate with those who were seeking to undermine the very fundamentals of the Christian faith. His words, on occasions, are very sharp and reflect the urgency of the matter at hand. As ALAN COLE puts it, 'The Epistle to the Galatians is spiritual dynamite, and it is therefore almost impossible to handle it without explosions'.⁴

So what is the letter essentially about? Well, shortly after the Galatians had embraced the gospel of the grace of God, they started to waver in their allegiance to Christ alone. They were being troubled by certain individuals who sought to pervert the message that Paul had originally preached to them. It was asserted by these individuals that their salvation was not complete unless they added to it Jewish ritualism, which included, among other things, a strict adherence to the Mosaic law, and the practice of circumcision, cp. Acts 15. 1. They were also impugning Paul's apostleship, suggesting that it was inferior to that of the apostles at Jerusalem, being later in time. If they could in some way discredit or depreciate Paul's apostolic credentials, then the message he proclaimed was also in danger of being discredited, and, worse still, rejected. Paul, therefore, devotes part of his letter vindicating his claim to be an apostle, and thus establishing the validity of his God-given message. This is the crux of his *apologia*. In biblical terms, the credibility of the messenger and his message are indissolubly linked, Matt. 10. 40.

The Argument

PART ONE

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY**
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Paul's argument in the letter can be conveniently divided into three parts:

Chapters 1 and 2	The argument from history (Personal and apologetic)
Chapters 3 and 4	The argument from precedent (Old Testament theology)
Chapters 5 and 6	The moral/ethical argument (Practical)

Chapters 1 and 2 - The argument from history - (Personal and apologetic)

The defection of the Galatians was imminent, 1. 6, the Greek verb is in the active present tense, and can be literally rendered 'being removed', implying that they were in the process of changing sides. Immediate remedial action was therefore necessary, so Paul dispenses with his usual opening salutation. He makes no room for praise since he views the Galatians as turncoats,⁵ and points out to them the irony of embracing a message, which some described as good news, but which, in fact, was quite the reverse! It was a message of a completely different kind, and this is *possibly* why Paul uses two different Greek adjectives in verses 6 and 7 for the word 'another'.⁶ Paul states that it was a different kind of gospel to that which he proclaimed. The centrality of Paul's preaching was the cross of Christ, 6. 14, but his opponents emphasized salvation by works and law keeping. To Paul, it was simply irrational as well as contradictory that believers were prepared to take on board a message that would:

- Take them back into a state of spiritual bondage, 1. 6-7; 5. 1, and
- Cause the work of Christ to appear redundant, 5. 2, and ultimately superfluous, 2. 21.

An anathema is pronounced on anyone, either angelic or human, who proclaimed a different gospel to that preached by Paul.

Paul defends his apostleship in the

opening verse of chapter 1. He does not claim that he is the only apostle of Jesus Christ – in the Greek text there is no definite article before ἀπόστολος in 1. 1 – but that he is to be numbered along with the other apostles. He points out that his commission as an apostle came from the risen Christ, not through any human agent or agency. History bore witness to the fact that after his miraculous conversion to Christianity, he had spent three years consolidating his faith in the Arabian desert, without any contact with the other apostles, vv. 17-18; Acts 9. 22. His three years of probation can be compared with the years that the other apostles spent with Christ during His earthly ministry.

Later, though, Paul did make contact with the other apostles, making a visit to Jerusalem. This first encounter was shortly after his three years in Arabia, but, on this one particular occasion, he met only with Peter, and James the Lord's brother, 1. 18-19. *Prima facie*, nothing seems to have come out of his meeting, although a comparison with Acts chapter 9 verses 26-29, suggests that for most of this fifteen-day visit, Paul was preaching the gospel rather than debating doctrine with the other apostles. A second visit was made by Paul to Jerusalem some fourteen years later, i.e., presumably fourteen years after his conversion. On this occasion, 2. 1, Paul was accompanied by Barnabas and Titus. They initially conferred with the leading brethren in private and then publicly on the crucial matter of the substance of Paul's preaching, v. 2 – the substance of which is clearly set out by Paul in chapter 1 verses 3 to



for Galatians

5. Was it in fact any different from that taught by the other apostles? Was Paul guilty of misleading men and self-deception? Clearly not, for his critics were soon silenced by the warm reception that the other apostles gave him, 2. 9. They were also only too ready to endorse his apostleship and to acknowledge that there was no difference in the content of the gospel that he proclaimed – ‘they had nothing to add to my gospel’, v. 6 J. B. PHILLIPS. One difference was, however, noted, and that was that Paul had been called to preach to the Gentile world, not to the Jewish commonwealth, vv. 7, 9, cp. Rom. 11. 13.

Unfortunately, the rapprochement was quickly broken when the apostle Peter compromised the gospel by withdrawing himself from uncircumcised believers because he was afraid of what would be said by certain Jewish Christians, Gal. 2. 11-13. Paul immediately rebukes Peter for this flagrant compromise of the gospel, which emphasized the equality of all believers in Christ, vv. 11, 14; 4. 27-28. In so doing, Paul reminded the Galatians that men could never be justified by law. Any attempt to resurrect that which was now effete would have disastrous consequences not only for them, but would, in effect, render the work of Christ to be null and void, i.e., it would bring the work of Christ into complete disrepute, 2. 16-18. Leading Christians astray would inevitably lead to the judgement of God, irrespective of the status of the person involved, 5. 10. Paul ends his argument as he had begun, with the death of Christ, 2. 20, the only message which secured righteousness for those who believed, v. 21.



Endnotes

- 1 *Luther's comments on Galatians*. Luther sometimes referred to the letter as 'his Katie' in deference to his wife Katharine (von Bora) who he married on 27 June 1525.
- 2 GODET says, with regard to Luther on Galatians (quoted in '*The Outlined Galatians*' by Robert Lee, Pickering and Inglis Ltd., pg. 2, 'This was the pebble from the brook with which like another David, he went forth to meet the papal giant and smote him in the forehead'.
- 3 ROBERT LEE *The Outlined Bible*, Pickering and Inglis Ltd., Analysis No: 48.
- 4 ALAN COLE, *Galatians*, An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale, pg. 11.
- 5 In the papyri, the Greek word μετατίθημι was used to describe one Dionysius of Heracleia, who deserted the Stoics for the Epicureans ('the Turncoat') - *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* by MOULTON AND MILLIGAN, Eerdmans, pg. 405.
- 6 The Greek adjective ἕτερος in verse 6 refers to numerically one, but not of the same nature, form, class, kind, whereas the Greek adjective ἄλλος in verse 7 refers to numerically one but of the same nature, form, class etc. Considerable importance has been placed by many expositors on this difference because of classical usage, but one should be cautious about building a theory on synonyms. In fact, Paul uses both adjectives interchangeably elsewhere, see 1 Cor. 12. 9-10; 2 Cor. 12. 4. As GORDON FEE indicates, 'Words were sometimes chosen for the sake of variety (e.g., John's interchange of ἀγαπάω (love) and φιλέω (love)), because of wordplay, or because of alliteration or other stylistically pleasing reasons'. *New Testament Exegesis*, WJK, pg. 80.



The population of Thailand¹ is 67 million with 10 million people living in the capital Bangkok. Ninety-three per cent of the population is Buddhist, and five per cent is Muslim, with Christians making up less than two per cent. Animism is found in the tribal groups of Thailand but the worship of spirits is rampant, and spirit mediums are to be found in towns and villages all over the country. Demon possession is not uncommon. Thai people have no sense of spiritual need. When receiving a tract or listening to a word of witness, they reply, 'Yes, all religions are good'. There is no saviour in Buddhism; everyone tries to make merit by good works.²

How Assembly work started

The first record of assembly commended missionaries dates from 1882, when some from Malaya went to Phuket to study the Hokkien dialect of Chinese. In 1886 Mr. McDonald and Mr. Hocquard visited Phuket and found eight Chinese believers gathered in one of their homes. Two of these brothers were Ong Him, and Sun Leang. Ong Him, a cake seller, at great sacrifice to himself, bought a house for a meeting place.³ This house, at 24 Thalang Road, is still being used today as a place of worship.

Dr. Horatio Amner lived and laboured in Phuket for some years from 1891 and saw blessing. Dr Amner engaged in medical work, while caring for the Chinese assembly and evangelizing the area. There were very few Chinese women in Phuket at that time and the majority of the immigrants married Thai women. Accordingly, Mrs. Amner learned Thai in order to reach these women.

Dr. and Mrs. William B. Toy, who went to Thailand in 1891 as Canadian Baptist missionaries, joined the assembly in Phuket in 1920, and devoted most of their time to reaching the people in distant villages, both in Phuket and on

ASSEMBLIES IN FROM ISLANDS

the mainland. Their knowledge of the Thai language was of immense help in the assembly and in evangelism. Dr. Toy also gave considerable help to Chinese Christians.⁴

During the years of the Second World War there were no missionaries in Phuket. However, local Christians continued to worship and to witness.

A new lease of life

The expulsion of missionaries from China in 1951 led to some taking up work in other Asian countries. The work which is carried on today had a new lease of life when Reg and Marjorie Vines arrived in Phuket in 1952. Arnold and Betty Clarke joined the Vines in 1954 and, although they could not speak Thai, both couples were able to preach in Chinese. The Vines moved to Tungsong on the mainland where they started a new work.

Reg and Marjory started the distribution of Emmaus Bible Courses throughout the country, which they paid to have translated into the Thai language. A Thai Chinese brother, Kum Heang, worked with the Vines and together they visited every High School in the country, accompanied, at times, by other missionaries. Gospel tracts and Emmaus application cards were distributed by the thousands and adverts were also inserted in local newspapers, resulting in many studying the Bible by correspondence courses.

Meanwhile, though Arnold and Betty Clarke studied Thai, they also had a ministry in Chinese. The assembly in Phuket continued to use both Chinese and Thai for many years. Tracts were distributed in many villages and the gospel was preached in the open air, many hearing the gospel for the

first time. However, it was in Sunday School and young people's meetings that blessing was seen. Annual camps were also arranged in schools by the sea and many were saved through the camps. Betty Clarke also started weekly meetings for women which have continued to this day.

Sea gypsies

David and Doreen Hogan from Australia and New Zealand arrived in Phuket in 1958. Although involved in work with the Thai people, their main focus was in reaching the Sea Gypsies in Phuket. Sea Gypsies are found all over South East Asia and are divided into three dialects. The Orak Lawoi (Sea people) are the main group in Phuket and on other islands in south-west Thailand. There are also the Moken and Moklen tribes. The Moken live on their boats and move from place to place. The Moklen are more numerous and live on islands in Myanmar.

The Hogans lived among the Orak Lawoi in Rawai Village where they studied the language. Over a period of twenty years they translated the New Testament into Orak Lawoi. This was before computers were in general use and every word had to be recorded in note books. It was time consuming work to reference how they had translated a word on an earlier occasion. David Hogan sent lists of words to Peter Ferry in Krabi Province where there were Orak Lawoi villages to check to see if they used the same words. By the time the New Testament was translated and printed, an assembly had started in Rawai. Today, there are three Sea Gypsy assemblies, and this work continues to grow. The work of translation is now being done by a Sea Gypsy brother who translates from the Thai Bible.



IN THAILAND TO HILL TRIBES

Out from Phuket

Missionaries commended from UK, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand started serving the Lord in new areas in the early sixties. Peter and Peggy Ferry from Scotland and Malaysia moved to the province of Krabi to pioneer a new work.⁵ Krabi province was both Buddhist and Muslim and had not been evangelized. Peter visited weekly markets by motorbike where he preached the gospel and sold thousands of copies of the Gospels. He and Peggy also witnessed in the town where they lived, distributing tracts from door to door. Many interesting conversations were had, especially about their interracial marriage! A Sunday School was also started in their house.

In 1964 Graham and Rinske Williams joined the Ferrys and they had years of happy fellowship in the gospel. Some people were saved, and, today, believers can be found in many parts of the province.

Peter and Jean Wilkinson from Bradford went to Thailand in 1962 and served the Lord in Phangnga Province, the nearest province to Phuket. The area had also not been evangelized. Peter preached the gospel in towns and villages, traveling by scooter and, sometimes, he was away from home for a week or more. Souls were saved, and, today, there are various churches and a new assembly in the province. Ray and Carol Dadswell also spent time witnessing in Phangnga. Workers from Australia and New Zealand also served the Lord in Bangkok where a small assembly was started.

Assemblies today

The assembly in Phuket increased in numbers until the Old Hall became too small and believers were seated on the platform. As there is only one entrance, this was a fire hazard and all the believers began to pray for

larger premises. For a year or more, the assembly met in a local hotel for worship on Sunday mornings. In August 2007, the Lord led a sister to donate a piece of land for the building of a new hall. Two weeks later a Catholic who owned an adjacent piece of land offered to sell it to the believers. They offered to sell the land below the market price and were prepared to accept payment in four instalments. After much prayer and discussion, the assembly elders decided not to borrow money but to trust the Lord to provide the resources for the building. The Lord answered prayer through the giving of local Christians and gifts from the UK and Malaysia.

In September 2009 the building of the new hall was completed and on Sunday, October 4th, the assembly gathered to remember the Lord for the first time. Part of the original assembly continued to meet in Phuket town, and now there are two Thai-speaking assemblies. Overall, assemblies are now functioning in twelve different parts of Thailand and every two years the believers gather for fellowship through camps for families, and for children and young people.

Local outreach in Phuket

Almost every day in the week believers are serving the Lord. On Tuesday mornings a group of sisters visit the elderly and those who are unable to get out to meetings. They read the scriptures, sing and pray with those they visit. Wednesday mornings brother Amnart leads a team who visit two other provinces where there are groups of believers, the nucleus of new assemblies. On Thursday mornings another group visit an Old Folks' Home where they have a gospel meeting. Over the years people have been saved and baptized. In the afternoon Peter Ferry visits Sea Gypsies for Bible teaching, and on

Saturday mornings a team conducts Children's Meetings in another village. During the week both Amnart and Peter have a teaching ministry with three different groups.

Short-term Bible schools

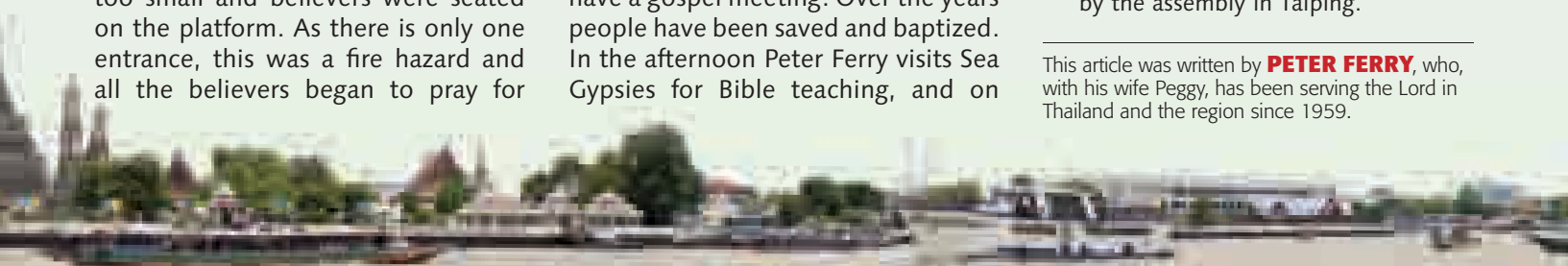
In order to train future leaders in the assemblies, brother Amnart, a commended worker, has arranged fortnightly Bible schools in Phuket over the last couple of years. Most of the students were from the northern hill tribes. The students have classes for six hours each day four days a week, with Peter Ferry teaching for three hours each morning and brother Amnart teaching in the afternoon and evenings. The assembly in Burmah Road Gospel Hall, Penang, Malaysia, provided funds to enable the believers to build accommodation for one hundred. This is used both for Bible school students, for camps and other activities.

From a remarkably strong historical development of the assembly work in Thailand, there has sprung a continuing vibrant Christian witness across a wide range of groups and locations in the area, with assemblies seeing blessing in salvation and believers being baptized and joining local companies of God's people.

Endnotes

- 1 Thailand means 'land of the free'. Until 1939 the country was known as Siam and since 1932 it has had a constitutional monarchy.
- 2 This determines their future in the next life. Forgiveness of sins is also unknown; the law of Karma teaches that you must reap what you sow, good for good, evil for evil. Good does not cancel out evil. According to the law of Karma, Jesus died a violent death because of a violent act in a previous existence.
- 3 Ong Him said, 'I am now 59. After I die, believers will have a suitable place in which to meet'.
- 4 He died in 1930 and was buried in Phuket.
- 5 Peter had met Peggy in the Taiping Gospel Hall when he was a soldier in Malaya. The Lord had called Peggy to the work and she was commended by the assembly in Taiping.

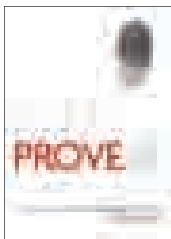
This article was written by **PETER FERRY**, who, with his wife Peggy, has been serving the Lord in Thailand and the region since 1959.



Book Reviews

Compiled by JOHN SCARBROOK

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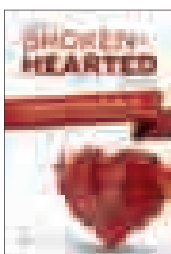
Prove it: how you can know and show that the Bible is God's word

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 book by Paul McCauley, 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]



Israel's broken-hearted prophet

Hosea's prophecy: an introduction and concise commentary Malcolm C. Davis

Paperback, 96 pages, Published by John Ritchie Ltd., 40 Beansburn, Kilmarnock, KA3 1RH. ISBN: 978-1-910513-73-6.

As FRASER MUNRO writes in the Foreword to this book, 'Those who have benefitted from previous commentaries by Malcolm Davis will be grateful to him for turning his attention to Hosea'. Although the Minor Prophets may be a neglected area of scripture, DAVIS establishes the importance of this book early on. Its message, he writes, 'can . . . be summarized in three words: sin, judgement, and salvation'. Apart from the appropriateness of these

words in a gospel context, the application of the truths of this book for today is also considered. Indeed, the writer uses every opportunity to remind the reader that, if it is to be profitable, scripture needs to be applied.

The commentary on the text is accessible on a number of levels. A summary of the content of each chapter is given, together with a useful analysis, before considering some of the detail of the verses. In this way, it enables the busy reader to get to the nub of what they want to know. It may be titled 'concise' but it is not shallow!

There is also a willingness on the part of the author to tackle the problems of Hosea. For example, in chapter 1, DAVIS states his belief that Hosea's wife Gomer 'was sexually pure at the time of their marriage' and that her moral waywardness came later. DAVIS also establishes his clear pre-millennial, pre-tribulational interpretation of the text, stating his view on the glorious hope of Israel's future restoration, and the role of David in the administration of Christ's kingdom.

To those who are prepared to spend time with it, this book will prove useful in enabling the reader to gain a better understanding of Hosea, the man and his ministry for God.



Cornerstone Magazine

Edited by David Dunlap

On-line magazine, 20 pages, Published by Cornerstone Magazine, 30 Maricon Way, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2T 1H2. Available at: <http://cornerstonemagazine.org/>

Cornerstone Magazine was launched in January 2017 as a magazine designed for those gathered in 'assemblies in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ'. Its stated purpose is 'for teaching and expositing the Bible which is the Word of God, for building up the body of Christ and the edification of individual Christians, [and] for the spread of the Gospel of Christ'.

Although at the early stages of its development, the CMI editorial board, plans to publish the magazine bi-monthly, but with the hope that this will develop and grow into a monthly publication. It is distributed free of charge to all interested persons who subscribe to it through the website above and is dependent upon the free-will donations or offerings from interested Christians or local churches or assemblies. For those who may prefer it, copies can be downloaded in Adobe pdf format from the same website.

Early articles have included: When the Bible quotes the Bible, by William MacDonald; Beauty for Ashes, by Mark Kolchin; Unbounded grace, by George Ferrier; Declare the whole counsel of God, by David Dunlap; The sword of the Spirit, by Carl Knott; and The filling of the Spirit, by Rex Trogon. Woven into that doctrinal mix of articles, there are notices of events that will be taking place, reports of assembly activity in North America, book reviews, and some assembly histories. Whilst readers in the UK will find those aspects specific to North America of only passing interest, there are ample articles to whet the appetite for further Bible study. We wish our brethren well in their exercise and trust that the magazine will be used of God to the building up of His people, and assembly testimony in North America.

QUESTION

Is it appropriate for assemblies to donate to non-Christian charities?

ANSWER

I have no experience of charities that operate outside of the United Kingdom so my response has to be limited to the scope of what I know. However, the principles that I refer to apply anywhere and I trust they will be of help. Within the United Kingdom there are in excess of 200,000 registered charities that raise billions of pounds per annum and employ hundred of thousands of workers. Some of these charities will be involved in issues that would not be appropriate for Christians to support. Therefore, in those instances assemblies should not send them donations or display any of their literature. Any reputable charity will have a website, so time spent researching their online information should provide answers to any concerns anyone may have as to how they raise their funds and how they utilize their finances.

Nevertheless, there are vast numbers of charities that are doing things that do not conflict with any scriptural principles, even though they would make no claim to being a 'Christian' organization. It is in relation to these that the question arises as to whether it would be appropriate to financially support the services they provide. One general objection that might be aired is that some charities spend significant amounts of their income on administration so that only a percentage of what is given will reach those in direct need. Whilst this is a reasonable point, it has to be recognized that to run a charity in a legal, effective and efficient manner, does cost money and the larger the organization the greater are the unavoidable overheads.

Some might feel unwilling to donate assembly funds to any kind of charity that is not involved in what might be termed 'Bible-based' work. They will freely donate to various aspects of missionary activity, or send a gift to meet the costs of building or refurbishing a hall for use by an assembly. In addition, they might be happy to forward gifts to a third party for transmitting to one of the Lord's servants somewhere in the world, but would not contemplate making a gift to a charity doing humanitarian work in some area blighted by disaster or disease.

The consequences of the fall have devastated human

life in one way or another ever since that catastrophic day in Eden. Whilst much of the suffering and deprivation in the world is caused by human abuse, or mismanagement, the overall scale of need is monumental and there are millions whose lives are shattered. It was not significantly different in the days when our Lord lived here, and of Him it is recorded that He 'went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil', Acts 10. 38. As we follow His pathway in the Gospel narratives, we find numerous occasions when He dispensed food to the hungry, sight to the blind, healing to the sick and comfort to the bereft. It is acknowledged that these actions had a deeper motive than just resolving physical needs, but it cannot be denied that He was moved with compassion and showed mercy to those who were suffering.

As Paul concludes his letter to the churches in Galatia, he exhorts them as follows: 'Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith', Gal. 6. 9-10. Whilst the pattern shown by the Lord and the precept given by the Apostle does not mandate that we must give to secular charities engaging in humanitarian relief, they do afford us the liberty to do so. On this basis, I see no reason why an assembly should not send a gift to an organization that is creditable and legally compliant, should it be the mind of the elders to do so.

It might not be a doctrine of scripture but there is some truth in the phrase concerning the destitute and needy that, 'they don't care how much you know until they know how much you care'. We may choose to prioritize our assembly giving to fellow believers, but we should not overlook the need of those who are not saved. Lydia was a woman full of good works and charitable deeds and when she died there were many beneficiaries who could testify to her generosity. I close with the words of Peter, 'Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation', 1 Pet. 2. 12.

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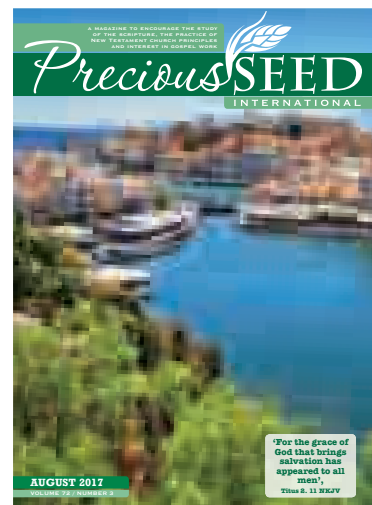
Precious Seed International

Front Cover Illustration

'Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed', Titus 2. 13-14 NKJV

The mountainous island of Crete is located in the Mediterranean, somewhat south of the Aegean Sea. It is the largest of all the Greek islands, and the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean. Whilst the name of the island does not appear in the Old Testament, many scholars think that the island was originally named 'Caphtor', and was the homeland of the Philistines, Jer. 47. 4; Amos 9. 7. Hence, they are referred to as 'the Caphtorim' in Deuteronomy chapter 2 verse 23, who conquered the coastal plain of the Promised Land by destroying and displacing the Avims, and subsequently occupied their villages as far as Gaza. In the New Testament, the island is mentioned by name on four occasions by Luke during Paul's journey to Rome following his appeal to Caesar, vv. 7, 12, 13, 21. It would seem that had the Roman centurion taken Paul's advice and harboured in Crete then the perils of the subsequent sea journey could have been avoided.

Nonetheless, despite man's extremity, Paul was given the opportunity to witness to the saving power of God, Acts 27. 22-25. The island is again mentioned in Titus chapter 1 verse 5, where the inference is that Paul had previously been working on the island but had left before completion of the work. This was evident by the nascent state of the local churches on the island. Titus is therefore commissioned by the Apostle to set in order any matter that needed addressing so that these local churches might function appropriately. This included the very important task of recognizing local church elders who would be equipped by God to challenge false and spurious teaching by holding firmly to the truth of God's word, Titus 1. 5-11. Crete had long been notorious for its many forms of lawlessness, and Paul's unflattering personal appraisal of the Cretans is supported by an acerbic quotation from one of their own poets, Epimenes, who was regarded as a religious teacher and prophet in Crete, v. 12, cp. Acts 17. 28. This highlights one of the major themes of the Epistle, that through the redeeming work of Christ the power of lawlessness has been defeated. God's people have been liberated from all iniquity so that they might have a positive zeal for righteousness, Titus 2. 12-13. May this zeal characterize us as the people of God, Matt. 5. 6.



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