

An international magazine to encourage the study
of the Scriptures, the practice of New Testament
church principles and interest in gospel work

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Precious SEED

'And the Lord came down upon
mount Sinai, on the top of the mount',
Exod. 19. 20.

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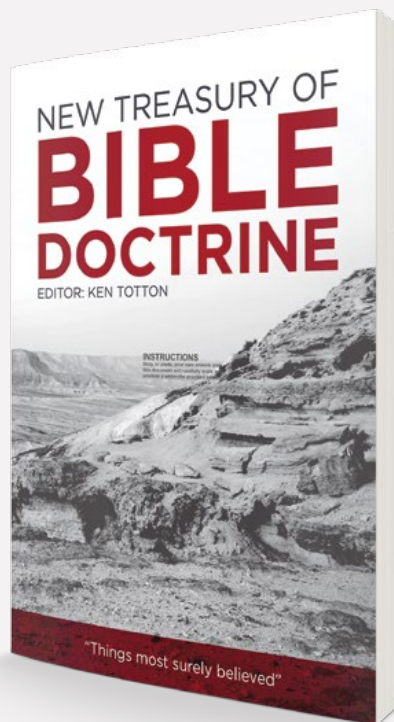
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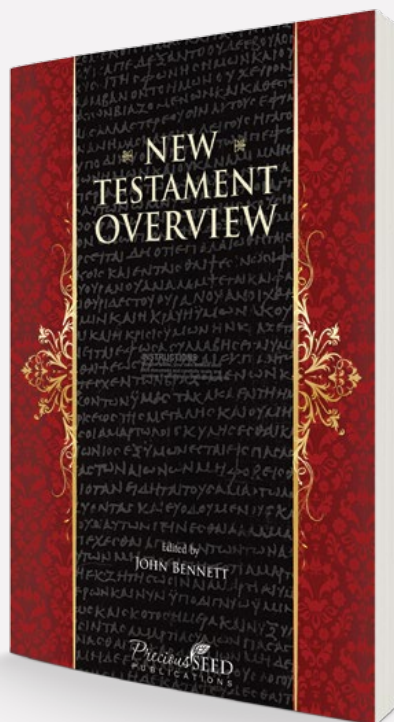
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‘Take heed therefore how ye hear’, Luke 8. 18.

In every generation, God has His messengers. In Old Testament times, preachers like Noah declared the righteousness of God to an antediluvian audience, and a multitude of prophets, including Moses and on down the centuries, to the peak of God’s human mouth-pieces, declared, ‘Thus saith the Lord’.¹ God, who will not fail in this regard, still provides His people with those who sow the precious seed – the gifts of evangelists and teachers, provided by divine, sovereign grace, to serve His people in local churches.

In our day, there might be the temptation to resort to thinking that the problem amongst the people of God is down to a paucity of good preachers and teachers. But God still has His messengers, and He **will not fail** to provide what is needed for His work. Rather than a lack of gift, might it be that where low levels of spiritual health exist among the people of God the cause lies much closer to home? Might it lie in our individual, personal **attitude** to what we hear?

In this simple, yet profound parable of the sower, the Lord issues a warning, which, if we see as an application solely in terms of an individual’s response to the ‘gospel’, we avoid an uncomfortable truth which the Lord is reminding His disciples about.

What we hear is, of course, to be guarded. The seed is the word of God, and we should take note of that above everything; this sacred tome must be proclaimed, expounded and perused. It, and it alone, is the touchstone for all that honours the Lord, and the mere opinion of any individual must never usurp it, Rev. 22. 18, 19. In our generation, it does seem ironic that while we are blessed to have greater access than ever before to **what** the word says, we may have abandoned the equally important issue of **how we hear**. To draw on, but paraphrase, the wisdom of an old preacher, ‘to the arranging of, and attendance at meetings, there can be no end’, but how futile and fruitless it is to have the word nigh us, and not to allow it to challenge and change us!

The people in the Lord’s day had gathered out of every city to hear Him, but He knew that for many, they would simply be hearers and not doers. Which will we be? The same preacher of old, would remind us of the conclusion he came to as to the whole duty of man – ‘Fear God, and **keep** his commandments’, Eccles. 12. 13.

As we launch in on another year in His will, maybe we can examine **how** we hear the word.

We would wish to thank those who have, with a genuine desire to encourage and challenge our interest in the scriptures, expended significant efforts in writing for us. We, with them pray, that the word of God will be heard.

SANDY JACK

Ministry Articles Editor

Endnotes

- 1 Luke 7. 28; Matt. 3. 1; Exod. 4. 22; 2 Pet. 2. 5.

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YPS

The Messianic Psalms

PSALM 24

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

The 24th Psalm can be considered in at least three ways.

Historically

Viewed thus, it is generally accepted that it can be connected to the joyful occasion when David brought the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom to Mount Zion, 2 Sam. 6; 1 Chr. 15.

Prophetically

Some interpret the Psalm in reference to the ascension of the risen Lord Jesus and in HANDEL'S oratorio, Messiah, it is applied in that way. But in looking at the Psalm we should note that it is an earthly scene and not a heavenly one that is being presented to us, and in verse 3 the references to 'the hill of the Lord', i.e., Mount Zion, and 'the holy place', the temple at Jerusalem, are to be interpreted literally. The Psalm is anticipating the day of the Lord's coronation following His return and manifestation in glory and power. Five times we find the title 'King of glory', a title unique to this Psalm. The reference in verse 1 to, 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein', clearly looks on to the time when Psalm 2 verse 8 will have its fulfilment, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession'.

Practically

While it is clear that the primary focus in the Psalm is upon the King of glory, it nevertheless also refers in verse 6 to, 'the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob', companions of the King – individuals who take moral character from Him, having, 'clean hands and a pure heart', v. 4.

The Lord the great creator, vv. 1-6

The Psalm begins, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof'. The title 'Lord' is in a position of emphasis; the psalmist stressing the fact that it belongs to Him, and Him alone. A comparison with verse 2 indicates that, by 'the earth', the psalmist has in view the land in contrast to the sea, and 'the fullness thereof' is a reference to its materials and resources, its fertility and fruitfulness. Why does

the Psalm specifically mention these things? Surely it is in anticipation of the abundant fruitfulness of the millennial day, when 'there shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon', Ps. 72. 16. Interestingly, this is the only part of the Psalm directly quoted in the New Testament, the basic principle that all belongs to the Lord being equally applicable today, 1 Cor. 10. 26. Paul quotes from the Psalm in

asserting the believer's liberty to eat all food sold in the market, asking no questions for conscience sake as to whether it had been first offered to idols. Believers are to acknowledge that what they eat comes from the Lord, and for which they should give God thanks, v. 30.

Not only is the earth the Lord's, but also, 'the world, and they that dwell therein'. The word for 'world', refers to the habitable parts of the earth, and, 'they that dwell therein', to the world's population. Again it anticipates the millennial period when the Lord Jesus will be 'the governor among the nations', Ps. 22. 28. In principle, that is equally applicable today, whether men recognize it or not; for the Father 'hath committed all judgment unto the Son', so that ultimately, all men are accountable and answerable to Him, John 5. 22.

But on what basis do the earth and its inhabitants belong to the Lord? Verse 2 gives the answer, 'For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods'; His right is creatorial, He founded and established it all. The expression 'founded it' refers to the emergence of the dry land, the habitable world, from the waters as recorded in Genesis chapter 1 verses 9 and 10. Further, the psalmist says, 'And established [erected] it upon the floods', the verse moving from the appearance of the dry land to the means for the maintenance and sustenance of its life. The word 'floods' could equally be rendered 'rivers' or 'streams'. The verse reminds us of Paul's words concerning the Lord Jesus, 'by him were all things created . . . by him all things consist [are held together]', Col. 1. 16, 17.

In view of the Lord's majesty and sovereignty, who is fit to join in His triumphant procession? 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?' v. 3. Note the combination of royalty and priesthood. 'The hill of the Lord' – Zion – the centre of government; 'his holy place', the centre of priestly activity. The kingdom has been established, the temple has been built, and the day of coronation has come. While the two offices of king and

priest were separated in Israel under the Aaronic order, they will be united in the millennium according to the Melchizedek order of priesthood, 'he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne', Zech. 6. 13. Now come the questions, 'Who shall ascend?' i.e., be present to accompany Him in the procession, and 'Who shall stand?' literally 'stand fast', is fit to have a place and standing before Him. Verse 4 makes it clear that there is in view the moral and spiritual fitness to do those two things. In answer, four things are mentioned, 'He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully'. But there is a somewhat unusual feature in verses 4 to 6. In verses 4 and 5 a singular pronoun is used, 'He', as though one man is being sought who meets the criteria, yet in verse 6 we read of a 'generation' who come into this category. There is no contradiction. The one man who uniquely meets the requirements is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and in that sense the verse establishes His moral right to the kingdom. At the same time, 'the generation' fit to accompany Him, are those who take character from Him.

Clean hands

The word for 'hands' denotes the 'palm of the hands', thus the picture is of a man holding out his hands for inspection – a man who, even in the face of examination, is found free from defilement. The Lord Jesus could say to His enemies, 'Which of



you convinceth me of sin?' John 8. 46. Likewise Peter wrote of Him, 'who did no sin', 1 Pet. 2. 22. With David we should surely say, 'I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord', Ps. 26. 6.

Pure heart

The word 'pure' is used here in the sense of a 'singleness' of heart; a heart that in its devotion and affection for God is undivided. Christ could say, 'thy law is within my heart', 40. 8. God still desires 'truth in the inward parts', 51. 6.

Hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity

A mind that is not directed to what is false and worthless, but set upon that which is true and wholesome. The Lord could say, 'I have set the Lord always before me', 16. 8. The Colossians were exhorted, 'seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth', Col. 3. 1, 2.

Nor sworn deceitfully

As to conversation – honest and true. The Lord Jesus 'did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth', 1 Pet. 2. 22. Believers are exhorted to lay aside 'all guile' and to 'speak no guile', 2. 1; 3. 10.

Not only are these four things essential to be morally fit for the company of the Lord, they are equally essential to know the commendation of God, 'He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation', Ps. 24. 5. It is this man who will prosper, 'receive the blessing'; it is this man who will be vindicated in the face of every charge and receive 'righteousness from the God of his salvation'. So in verse 6, these moral qualities are seen to be characteristic of those who seek after God. The primary connection is that those who genuinely desire to seek His face will see to it that their lives are morally and spiritually acceptable to Him. The end of the verse is not without its difficulties, 'that seek thy face, O Jacob'. J. N. DARBY gives the translation, 'that seek thy face in Jacob'. The key to its interpretation is found in observing that, in the verse, two different Hebrew words are

translated 'seek'. The first in 'them that seek him', denotes to, 'tread or frequent a place' and refers to those who habitually have recourse to God and are well acquainted with Him. Is this a reference to Israel in the millennium? The second word in 'that seek thy face O Jacob', means, 'to seek with a desire to obtain'. Is this a reference to Gentiles in the millennium, when ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, 'We will go with you', Zech. 8. 23? But why 'Jacob' and not 'Israel'? In the millennial period, instead of the proud arrogant spirit that marked them when the Lord first came, they will be conscious that once they partook of the character of 'Jacob', but grace has been extended to them, a nation of humble spirit. Drawing out some practical lessons – do we habitually resort to God as those who are well acquainted with Him? Are we of such a character that others are likely to want to go with us?

The Lord the great conqueror, vv. 7-10

In verses 7 to 10, the coronation procession arrives at the gates of Zion and the command goes forth to, 'lift up the gates'. The gates embrace three parts. Two main gates that were swung open each morning and closed each night for the daily business of the city. Above this, and stretching across the whole width, there would be a 'portcullis' which was raised when a dignitary visited. This is the idea here – the call declaring the personal right of this One to enter, for He is the King of glory. From within the city the cry goes forth, 'Who is this King of glory?' v. 8. The answer focuses attention upon His triumph, 'The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle'. The campaign of Armageddon is past and He comes as the mighty victor. Again the command goes forth, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . and the King of glory shall come in', followed once more by the enquiry, 'Who is this King of glory?' vv. 9, 10. Now the focus is not upon His triumph but upon His Person, 'The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory'. But for whom are those gates to be lifted up? For the very same One who once 'suffered without the gate', Heb. 13. 12. Well might the Psalm end 'Selah'!

Truth and Training from Titus – No. 10

By **STEPHEN G BAKER** Liverpool, England

This article is part of an ongoing study. The writer's intention is to look at each phrase and statement in the letter and to glean a simple understanding of what Paul was writing to Titus about. It might be helpful to read the previous articles either in the printed edition of the magazine or online via www.preciousseed.org.

The Details of Sound Doctrine, 3. 5-11, Continued.

Rock solid truth, v. 8a.

Titus will now be required to emphasize the rock-solid nature of the truths that Paul is teaching. He must also make clear to the believers that doctrine must always be converted into practice, v. 8b.

Here, Paul makes a classic statement of confirmation; 'this is a faithful saying'. This formulaic phrase highlights truth that is expressed intelligently, and coherently. It focuses on the fact that the doctrine will win over the confidence of the believer because it is valuable truth. It is not an off-the-cuff, quick-response soundbite, but a statement that has been considered and thought through. You might say that the truth carries weight; it is substantial. It could also be described as balanced truth, not in the sense of compromising any one viewpoint, but finely balanced, in that it is exactly what God wants us to know and understand.

Paul only uses this phrase in the Pastoral Epistles, and in each case the emphasis appears to be on the statement that follows.¹

In 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 15, the truth, is the longsuffering of Jesus Christ in reaching extremely sinful people through the gospel, whereas, in chapter 4 verses 9 and 10, Paul is reminding Timothy of the exhaustion and persecution that comes 'because we trust in the living God', and that God is the deliverer of His people when facing tough situations. The emphasis of the phrase in this case, is that, believing in God must be seen in the Christian's attitude and behaviour.

Christians should do good works and be devoted to doing good, v. 8b.

Even if you speed read Titus you still could not miss the themes that run through this small letter. Two of these themes are in this verse.

1. Titus was responsible to do some straight talking, and to confront the Christians in Crete when appropriate.

Unfortunately, some may have an image of Christians as soft, spineless and an easy target – nothing could be further from the truth. To be a Christian takes courage, and that courage is not the result of the absence of fear, but conquering fear through the help that only God can give. Honesty, truthfulness and handling issues as they arise, are all part of Christian life and experience. This is especially so if you are in a leadership role.

Titus had been instructed regularly to act decisively throughout this letter. For example, he was to identify elders, 1. 5, and to confront, stop and rebuke sharply false teachers, 1. 9-14. In chapter 2, he was to address the various groups that comprise the local church; directly to the older men and women; indirectly to the younger women; and as a role model

to the younger men. The chapter ends with Paul reminding Titus that he needed to talk about the truth which Paul had written to him about; to get alongside people to help them, and, on occasions, he would need to point out people's errors (essentially prove them wrong – with the aim of helping them), and rebuke them authoritatively. Paul also feels that it is appropriate to remind Titus that he mustn't let people look down on him or disregard what he has to say. All of this is in the context of Titus acting wisely as a servant of God.

In our current chapter, Titus has reminded the believers of their civic responsibilities, and now he is going to focus on their good works in the community.

2. Good works are a key part of the life of a Christian.

You cannot ignore this truth! Salvation is not the result of our good works, but good works should be the proof of our salvation. It is a key quality and characteristic of a genuine believer.

'Good things' and 'good works' are major themes in the letter, and there are many references to Titus's responsibility to insist strenuously on the importance of the Christians involvement in good works.² A person who claims to trust in God must show by their life that this is a fact, and James teaches, 'faith without works is dead', Jas. 2. 26. While 'works' in the New Testament does not only refer to actions to help others, these verses are teaching that a believer must pay diligent attention to doing good works.³

This is a challenge that we need to think about, for if we fail in this area we leave ourselves open to criticism as to the genuineness of our faith!

The blessing that comes from practising these truths is undoubted. J. B. PHILLIPS translated the clause, 'These things are good and profitable unto men' as 'Good work is good in itself and is also useful to mankind'.⁴ The word 'good' carries with it the idea of things that are beautiful, harmonious and complete. So it is

that doing good works is inherently good, and beneficial to others.

What a powerful testimony to God and His saving grace when His people do good things which are for the good of society. To use the words of Titus chapter 2 verse 10, it will 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things'.

Focus on the truth and steer clear of stupid speculation, vv. 9.

Our attention is now turned to things that need to be avoided at all costs. Whereas 'good' and 'good works' add value to the gospel, the issue in this verse is matters that destroy Christian life and testimony.

The word 'avoid' is a very strong word, and comes from the idea of people who stood back as they disassociated themselves with someone or something. For instance, in John 11 verse 42, the crowd stood back to see what Jesus would do at the grave of Lazarus. They did not want to associate with Him. In Acts chapter 25 verse 7, the Jewish leadership arrive to put their case against Paul, and it states they 'stood round about', that is they stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Titus is being taught that it would be wise for believers to stand clear of foolish questions, genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law. We should turn away from them, avoid them and shun them.

This was a recurring theme that Paul wrote about and a consideration of other scriptures will give a fuller picture of the problem that the church faced in New Testament times.⁵ This may not be a big problem in the 21st century, but the principles of debating legalistic, non-biblical issues still apply. We must be firmly glued to what is clearly taught in scripture and avoid debate about legalistic and religious issues.

What are foolish questions?

Many translators simply call them stupid questions – others describe them as speculations. The word seems to indicate the idea of a philosophical discussion with an exchange of words rather than a genuine search for truth. In other words, arguing for the sake of it. We still do it!

What are genealogies?

This is only mentioned twice in the New Testament, once in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 4 and here. Both references are in the context of a warning. The people loved establishing family trees, their ancestry, and their blood lines, and felt these were of spiritual significance to them.

What are contentions and strivings about the law?

The argumentative mindset and combative spirit reflected in this statement tells us all we need to know. These men were not submitting to the will of God, but debating issues where scripture had nothing to say. We need to beware of this way of behaving in our day!

There is no benefit to be found for the believer in participating in any of these discussions – Paul writes, 'they are unprofitable and worthless', 3. 9, ESV. They don't add value to Christian doctrine and practice. They belong to another era and, even then, are not the core of what the Law was about.

Helping and disciplining habitually disobedient people, vv. 10-11.

There will, however, be some people whose whole focus will be on these issues and Paul now teaches Titus how to handle them. The aim of these verses is to preserve and help the genuine, to expose the false, and to avoid division in the church.

People who are not genuine believers have to be identified to preserve the church of God. 1 John chapter 2 verse 19 states, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us'. The word 'heretick' describes someone who has made a conscious decision to choose something, in this case, not the truth.⁶ This is a tragedy, but some people do this. Another idea in the word is that of a person who 'creates and fosters faction'; this is sometimes translated as a 'divisive person'.^{7,8}

In keeping with the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter

18, this person must be given an opportunity to sort the matter out. On the third occasion, if there has been no genuine change of mind, the person must be refused. They could not be in fellowship; they cannot have social relationships with believers, and there must be a distance between them and the believers. This is the same word that is used in 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 7 about the Christians' response to irreverent and silly myths – have nothing to do with them. This is a sad and serious instruction that is only applied to remove spiritual disease, and preserve the Lord's people.

There are other passages in the New Testament that give similar instructions in differing situations. They all teach that sin and false doctrine need to be addressed and cannot be ignored; sin, error and bad attitudes, are never ignored in scripture.⁹

Verse 11 describes the character of the heretic.

He is subverted. This literally means he is turned inside out. His mindset and behaviour is all wrong. He calls wrong, right, and right, wrong. This man has changed; he knows the truth and has turned from it.

Endnotes

- 1 See 1. Tim. 1. 15, and 4. 9.
- 2 1. 8, 16; 2. 3, 5, 7, 14; 3. 1, 8, 14.
- 3 For example, Abraham's obedience to God in offering Isaac is described as works in James chapter 2 verse 21.
- 4 *The New Testament in Modern English Revised Edition*, J. B. PHILLIPS, pg. 452.
- 5 1 Tim. 1. 3-7; 6. 4; 2 Tim. 2. 23; Titus 1. 10, 14.
- 6 *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 'Heresy' & 'Heretical'
- 7 *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, WILLIAM D. MOUNCE, Zondervan.
- 8 *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, Holman Bible Publishers, Titus 3. 10.
- 9 Avoid them that cause divisions, Rom. 16. 17; put away from among yourselves, 1 Cor. 5. 13; withdraw, 2 Thess. 3. 6; have no company with him, 2 Thess. 3. 14; admonish him as a brother, 2 Thess. 3. 15; from such withdraw thyself, 1 Tim. 6. 5; in meekness instructing those that oppose, 2 Tim. 2. 25; shun, 2 Tim. 2. 16; whose mouths must be stopped, Titus 1. 11.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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

Introduction

The Gospel of Mark is designed to portray the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Servant of Jehovah. SIDLOW BAXTER wrote, 'What Jesus did proves who He was. What He wrought authenticates what He taught. The mighty works verify the startling words'.¹ Thus Mark records the actions of the Lord, but omits much of what He said.

Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels, with significant sections contained in the other Gospels omitted by Mark. The genealogy of the Lord is missing. As HIEBERT puts it, 'Not the pedigree but the performance of this Servant was the primary concern'.² But Mark also includes touches and insights that no other Gospel writer adds.³ He gives prominence to the reactions of the Lord. He mentions compassion, sighing, indignation, distress and sorrow. He mentions the sweeping gaze, the touch of the hand, and His concern for little children.

Perhaps the most noticeable of Mark's characteristic words is that variously translated as 'immediately', 'straightway', 'forthwith', 'anon', and 'as soon as'.⁴ He conveys the idea of the ceaseless energy and work of the Servant, ever in pursuit of the Father's will and purpose, and its completion.⁵

Author

It is to be noted that there is no reference to the author in this Gospel. Although it has been the subject of some dissent amongst scholars, the author is assumed to be the John Mark of the New Testament. His name occurs eight times.⁶ John was his Jewish, and Mark his Roman, name.

We learn from Colossians chapter 4

verse 10 that he was 'sister's son to Barnabas', and, most probably, the spiritual son of Peter, 1 Pet. 5. 13. For this reason, some scholars assert that Mark gained much of his information for the Gospel from Peter.⁷ HIEBERT comments, 'Peter's preaching indeed was the main source upon which he drew, but before Mark became Peter's assistant, he already knew a great deal about Jesus'.⁸ Thus, whilst Mark could support what he wrote from eyewitness accounts, what he wrote was a consequence of the activity of the Spirit of God, 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Analysis

We might divide the Gospel into four broad sections:

The Testimony of the witnesses,
1. 1-13;
The Testimony of the Lord's works,
1. 14 – 10. 52;
The Trial of the week,
chh. 11-15;
The Triumph of the Lord's
resurrection and the witnesses,
ch. 16.

SCROGGIE's more detailed analysis is as follows:

'The Divine Servant and His day of service, 1. 1-13;
The Galilean Ministry – First Period,
1. 14 – 3. 6;
The Galilean Ministry – Second Period, 3. 7 – 7. 23;
The Galilean Ministry – Third Period,
7. 24 – 9. 50;
The Perean Ministry, 10. 1-52;
The Closing events of Christ's ministry, 11. 1 – 15. 47;
The New day, 16. 1-20'.⁹

ST. JOHN offers a similar perspective:

'Part 1. Division 1 – Chapters 1-3
The First Phase of the Galilean Ministry

Subdivision A: 1. 1-13

The Entrance Hall to the Gospel

Subdivision B: 1. 14 – 2. 12

The First Seascape

Subdivision C: 2. 13 – 3. 6

The Second Seascape

Subdivision D: 3. 7-35

The Third Seascape

Division 2 – Chapters 4, 5

The Salvation of God displayed in wisdom, power, and love

Subdivision A: 4. 1-34

The Fourth Seascape

Subdivision B: 4. 35-41

The Fifth Seascape

Subdivision C: 5. 1-43

The Sixth Seascape

Division 3 – Chapter 6. 1 – 8. 26

Wanderings in the North: Spiritual Feeding

Subdivision A: 6. 1-56

From Nazareth to Gennesaret

Subdivision B: 7. 1-37

Tradition and Plain Speaking

Subdivision C: 8. 1-26

The Seven Loaves and the One

Division 4 – Chapter 8. 27 – 9. 50

The Cross, the Coming, and the power of the Name

Subdivision A: 8. 27 – 9. 29

Caesarea Philippi and the Holy Hill

Subdivision B: 9. 30-50

The Failure of the Disciples

Part 2.

Division 5 – Chapter 10

Teaching in Transjordan: From Creation to the Kingdom of Light

Subdivision A: 10. 1-31

The Pillars of Society

Subdivision B: 10. 32-52

Going up to Jerusalem

Part 3.

Division 6 – Chapters 11-13

Three Days in the Holy City

Subdivision A: 11. 1-11

Day 1: From Bethany to the Temple

Subdivision B: 11. 12-19

Day 2: From Bethany to the Temple

Subdivision C: 11. 20 – 12. 44

Day 3: From Bethany to the Temple
Subdivision D: 13. 1-37
The Lamp of Prophecy

Division 7 – Chapters 14, 15

In Jerusalem: From the Feast at
Bethany to the rock-hewn tomb

Subdivision A: 14. 1-25

Alternate Treachery and Trust

Subdivision B: 14. 26-52

From the Upper Room to
Gethsemane

Subdivision C: 14. 53-72

The Trial and the Denial

Subdivision D: 15. 1-47

Pilate's Power

Division 8 – Chapter 16

The Risen and Enthroned Servant –
Still working'.¹⁰

Endnotes

- 1 J. SIDLOW BAXTER, *Explore the Book*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1956.
- 2 D. EDMOND HIEBERT, *The Gospel of Mark*, Bob Jones University Press, pg. 12.
- 3 SCROGGIE states, 'He alone tells us of not less than eleven occasions amid His work on which Christ retired . . . He alone tells us that Jesus was "the carpenter", so flashing a light over the obscure years in Nazareth'. W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, *Know your Bible, Volume 2*, Pickering and Inglis, pg. 28.
- 4 SCROGGIE states, 'Forty-one times he uses a word (euthēōs) which is variously translated "immediately", "anon" . . . and "straitly". *Op. cit.*, pg. 28.
- 5 'The primary stress is upon the deeds of Jesus. It vividly portrays the fact that Christ's work was continuous, persistent, and strenuous. He was incessantly busy'. HIEBERT, pg. 12.
- 6 Acts 12. 25; 13. 5, 13; 15. 37-39; Col. 4. 10; Philem. 23, 24; 2 Tim. 4. 11; 1 Pet. 5. 13.
- 7 'Mark's Gospel is not a primary source of knowledge of Christ, but a secondary: the primary source was the preaching of Peter', ALAN COLE, *Mark*, Tyndale Press, pg. 34. For a fuller treatment of the internal evidence in the Gospel to Peter as its source, see: W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, *A Guide to the Gospels*, Pickering and Inglis, 1948, pp. 177-179. Additional information on Mark's sources can be found in this same book on pages 182 to 184.
- 8 D. EDMOND HIEBERT, pg. 7.
- 9 W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, *Know your Bible, Volume 2*, Pickering and Inglis, pp. 29-34. The author has abbreviated a more detailed analysis for the sake of space.
- 10 H. ST. JOHN, *An Analysis of the Gospel of Mark*, Pickering and Inglis, 1956, pp. 7-10. The author has abbreviated a more detailed analysis for the sake of space.

'I have redeemed thee ... and thou art mine'

By **EDDIE HONEYBALL** Denston, England

Whilst these words are specifically addressed to Jacob and Israel, it must be noted that 'thee' and 'thou' are singular. Israel might be God's redeemed ones perpetually, in spite of their failure and sin, yet redemption is the priceless possession of every believing individual. A redeemed soul is wholly the fruit of divine grace, the accomplishment of God's sovereign will and purpose, but drawn in the power of inexpressible love. The words, 'created thee' and 'formed thee', tell of the power and purpose. This one was the creation of God, forming and making him for His own purpose, a sovereign work indeed. It may be stated categorically that the object thus created is unquestionably the property of Him who made it.

But redemption is the necessity for mankind, for Israel and for each individual because of the fallen condition which has brought us into bondage to sin, Satan, and death. Like the former work of God, no human hand had any part to play; indeed, to those spiritually dead, such was impossible. Again, redemption is a work wholly of God, something He alone could do.

Alone He bore the cross,
alone its grief sustained;
His was the shame, the loss,
and His the victory gained;
The mighty work was all His own,
Yet we, by grace,
shall share His throne.

Yet the stubborn heart of man
requires further divine grace. This

comes out in the most tender beseeching of God's love, 'I have called thee by thy name'. What infinite patience and grace He has lavished upon us in this three-fold way to make us His own. How secure and certain is all that He does! His work can never fail.

But, in spite of all this assurance, every heart has times of doubt and fear. The cause is always and ever the same. It is when the focus of our faith is diverted from Christ to some aspect of our own inadequacies and failures. Our minds waver and doubt. Did I really believe? Did I mean it? Was it all emotion or imagination?

If salvation rested on such things, we might have reason for fear and doubt. But, as this verse tells us, we all rest fully on Him. What assurance these words convey – the eternal reality, 'thou art mine'! Foreknown, made, redeemed, called. These words are fully explained in Romans chapter 8 verses 29 and 30, all resting on His sovereign grace. But more lies in these words than just the facts of us belonging to Him. Do we not hear in them the breathings of satisfied love? His joy is being able to call us His own – 'thou art mine'.

These Old Testament words are illustrated in John's Gospel where we read of the Lord as the Good Shepherd. He seeks and finds His own sheep in chapters 8 and 9. They are brought to the fold. But chapter 13 shows how precious His own are to His heart, 'having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end', v. 1. Thus, He prays that they may 'be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory', John 17. 24. We have been redeemed and called. We have this intimacy of love. Surely we may say with the beloved, 'I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine', S. of S. 6. 3.

EPHESIANS

Chapter 6 verses 1-17

PART 12

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

Stand against the adversary

Having appreciated our heavenly calling in chapters 1 to 3, and something of our earthly conduct that continues from chapter 4 to verse 9 of this chapter, we will then be confronted with our satanic conflict as we draw to the close of this majestic Epistle.

There are actually three sections in the chapter:

- Subjection and responsibility, vv. 1-9;
- Satanic power resisted, vv. 10-17;
- Supplication for God's representative, vv. 18-24.

Subjection and responsibility

Personal subjection, vv. 1-3

The word *teknon* speaks of those who are born into the family. The word is found five times in Ephesians and never refers to infants but to those of maturity, 2. 3, or to the believers.

Unlike wives, who are called to submit, which is a voluntary attitude, children are charged to obey. The definition by *Strong's Concordance* is very clear as to its meaning, 'to hear under (as a subordinate), that is, to listen attentively'. But how much better if believing children 'understand what the will of the Lord is', 5. 17, and simply obey their mother and father, in the Lord.

The call to obey in verse 1 is set against the background of our conversion; it is in the Lord. It is a call to honour, that is 'to value, revere, venerate', THAYER. This honour is the frame of mind from which obedience springs and is in accordance with the mind of the Lord Jesus who, on various occasions, drew attention to the fifth commandment. That God adds a promise to the commandment in

Exodus chapter 20 verse 12 reveals the estimation the Lord has for the position of the parent who brought a life into being, and the regard children should have toward them as a result.

In verse 3 there are two specific blessings that are promised on giving this honour. The first is material, 'that it may be well with thee'; the second is physical, 'that thou mayest live long in the earth'.

Parental stability, v. 4

Whereas the child is to 'obey your parents in the Lord', involving submission both to the mother and to the father, now it is the father who is addressed directly as the head of the home. The father must take the lead in controlling household affairs. Even in the home of a Roman soldier we find how Cornelius caused his fear of God to affect his family, Acts 10. 2.

Fathers must not provoke their children, that is, 'to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger'. There should be no unreasonable blame, vexatious demands or uncertain temper against them. To nurture is to discipline, to train by act, though admonition is to put in mind, to train by word. How sad when fathers act like Eli who, when his sons made themselves vile, 'he restrained them not', 1 Sam. 4. 13.

Profitable servants, vv. 5-9

The heart, v. 5

Having dealt with marital and parental responsibilities, the apostle now deals with occupational duties. A Christian ought to be a model servant, always manifesting the virtues of Christ in their employment.

The service of Christian servants should be carried out in total

obedience, with a fear of displeasing their masters according to the flesh, for all service has a higher calling attached to it. Ultimately, it must be done as unto Christ. Service is to be from the heart with a greater master in view.

The eye, v. 6

The verse before us makes it clear that a Christian should give unstinted service at all times, not only when under the eye of others. As the servants of Christ, it is God's will that must control our actions, and the heart, not the eye, motivates our service.

The will, v. 7

The service is rendered, as being in the position of a servant and acting accordingly. The word service, *douleuo*, is 'to be a slave', literally or figuratively, involuntarily or voluntarily.¹

The slave should always have the master's interests in view.

The mind, v. 8

The apostle draws our attention to the benefit of carrying out our service as to the Lord. We should have an appreciation mentally as we serve, that such service is not in vain, for the paymaster is the Lord Himself. Unlike the masters of James chapter 5 verse 4 who have 'kept back by fraud', he shall receive from the Lord a benefit for the good things he does.

The attitude, v. 9

This section, though dealing with slaves, puts the masters and lords on the same footing, and bids them 'do the same things', that is, to act as the slave has been counselled to do in verses 5 to 7. If the servant is encouraged to know that the Lord will reward his faithful service in a coming day, the master is charged by knowing that he also is a servant, and his master is in heaven. The Lord is no respecter of persons, and will require of him his failing, surliness and domineering character.

Prepared soldiers, vv. 10-17

Dependent saints, v. 10

Again, we are confronted with a favourite word of Paul, 'Finally'. In

it he is encouraging the saints as to where their strength is for the conflict we are faced with. It is not in your position of chapters 1 to 3, nor in your practise of chapters 4 to 6. No, your ability to be victorious in the battle is found in the Lord and in the power of His might. We have seen that this power raised up Christ and exalted Him, 1. 19-22; it is the power that enables a true minister to make known his message, 3. 7, and it is a power that enables us to pray as we ought, 3. 20. It is this power that will enable us to stand in the conflict.

The dress required, v. 11a

It is spoken of as the panoply; it is that of a heavily-armed soldier. Today, the devil is a defeated enemy and well might James write, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you', 4. 7. Yet we must not underestimate his power. If we do not wear the whole armour, it will give the devil an opportunity to bring us down.

The Devil's strategy, v. 11b

We must remember that we stand against a cunning foe. We find that this word 'wiles' only occurs elsewhere in chapter 4 verse 14, where it is translated 'deceive'. It carries the thought of working by method, pursuing an orderly procedure. The Greek word *methodeia* would indicate that Satan will use strategy, and lie in wait until the opportunity comes to make his attack.

The destroyers, v. 12

The devil is not alone in his efforts to frustrate the desires of God. We are confronted with all the powers of darkness, said here to be 'principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits, margin] in high places'. It is against such powers that we wrestle. In verse 11, it is the captain who orders the planned attacks that we have to contend with; in this verse, it is his army that carries out the assault.

The day of attack, v. 13

The divine provision for every believer is brought before us. It is not enough to be supplied with this armour and leave it in a safe place for



use when the assault takes place; we need to be constantly arrayed, since we know not when the enemy will make his sudden foray.

Defeat is not contemplated in this war. The believer has all that is required to be victorious in the battle and has the ability to stand against these pernicious foes when the evil day comes. This 'evil day' is a specific time in the experience of a believer – a definite approach will be made, aimed at destroying our spiritual life and testimony. We know not when this will be, or in what form it will come, hence the injunction to, 'take unto you the whole armour of God' so that we will be prepared to repel the attack when it comes. Even then, we cannot relax our vigilance, for we know not when these satanic forces will return. So we are exhorted ever to be on our guard, 'and having done all, to stand'.

The defensive weapons, vv. 14-16

These weapons are those that speak of the practical outworking of all that the Lord would desire of a Christian, that is, truth, with righteousness guarding the affections, so that we do not allow evil to dominate our lives. Then, constantly prepared with our feet shod to carry the gospel, this will enable us not only to testify but, as we do, to manifest the godly conduct people expect. It is essential that we take to ourselves this very large shield as a complete cover against the assault of the wicked one. The shield

of faith is an absolute necessity, for self-confidence in spiritual things is very destructive, and the tempter will act very quickly on any part that is open to being assailed. Confidence in the Lord, and complete dependence on Him, is the only preservative in this warfare.

Our mentality – the helmet of salvation, v. 17

How blessed it is to have in constant remembrance the salvation into which we have been brought; just to rest in the salvation that has secured our eternal blessing. Such a helmet is a great preservative in the day of battle. To be conscious of the deliverance from the power of Satan and of the realm in which he moves, and to know our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, this is a good helmet to wear every day.

Our authority – the sword of the Spirit, v. 17

Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12 leaves us with no doubt as to what we are presented with here. It also reveals its potency; it is effective in all it is used for. Although this weapon is often spoken of as the only offensive weapon in the armour, we should remember that the sword is just as effective when used defensively. It is not only 'quick and powerful' in attack, but it is also 'a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'.

Endnote

- 1 See JAMES STRONG, *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

THE SCENE OF THE CROSS OF CALVARY

Part 1

By **JOHN TINKLER** Red Row, England

SPURGEON once wrote, 'A work done in a day and wondered at forever'. Whilst each Gospel writer brings before us different views of the Lord in His birth and life, they must present to us the purpose of His coming. It is a passing scene – only taking place once. It is summarized by a quote I recall, 'The Gospels give the facts of the Crucifixion with an economy of words'.

The mockery of the trials is over, and Pilate's decision is that the sentence should be as they, the leaders of the nation, required. Never before or since has heaven or earth witnessed such a scene. With reverence we follow the Lord as He leaves the holy city.

The situation of Calvary

It is John in his Gospel who informs us that 'the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city', 19. 20. Luke informs us of the place called Calvary – the only time the word is used in scripture – whilst Mark informs us of Golgotha, both meaning the skull. 'He bearing his cross went forth'. It was voluntary, no resistance to a place called Calvary. God always had that place in mind, Gen. 22, and the objective of our Lord was that 'He shall save his people from their sins'.

Simon the Cyrenian

He is mentioned in one verse

each of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It would appear the Romans had authority to draft citizens to aid in such situations, hence the word 'compelled' or 'compel' or 'laid hold upon' in the three accounts. Interesting to note that Simon Peter said to the Saviour, 'Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death', Luke 22. 33, but it was another Simon who bore the cross without complaint and without shame. Mark adds that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Some feel that the Rufus mentioned by Paul in Romans chapter 16 verse 13 is the same person who Paul states was 'chosen in the Lord'. We must mention that there is no record in scripture of the Lord being so weak He faltered or stumbled in bearing the cross beam. To the soldiers, it seemed He might not get to Calvary, so they chose a man 'at random'.

Following from the book of the Acts, it should be noted of Cyrenians, Cyrene being a city in Libya, that they were hearers, 2. 10. 'Hear we every man in our own tongue', v. 8;

they were preachers, 11. 19, 20; there was amongst them teachers, Lucius of Cyrene, 13. 1.

Could these fleeting references stem from one man who had such a story to tell when he returned home from Jerusalem? As a witness to the scene of Calvary, it was something which he would never forget.

Scoffers that passed by the Cross

In Mark chapter 15 verses 29 to 32, he informs us of these people. They mocked Him as a prophet, v. 29, John 2. 19, as a Saviour, v. 31, and as King, v. 32.

These were the taunts of the people to His message, His miracles, and His messiahship. This mockery added to the sufferings of the Saviour. They had every opportunity to believe on Him in His life, but He was doing a 'great work', Neh. 6. 3. 'He could not come down'. Sad to think that even today there are scoffers!

Spectators that challenged

Luke informs us of their words, 'He saved others; let him save himself', 23. 35. This cosmopolitan crowd or, as Luke records, 'a great company of people', 23. 27, was predicted by the psalmist in Psalm 22 verses 6 to 8. If He had saved Himself then nobody else could be saved.

The people reviled Him, Matt. 27. 39. The rulers derided Him, Luke 23. 35. The soldiers mocked Him, Luke 23. 36. The malefactor railed on Him, Luke 23. 39.



How right was the psalmist, Ps. 69. 20! Again, turning to Psalm 22, we have the imagery of animals: bulls, v. 12, lions, v. 13, and dogs, v. 16. When men reject the Saviour they become like animals. These people challenged our Lord's divinity, 'If', Matt. 27. 40.

Sitting near the cross

Matthew makes this observation in chapter 27 verse 36. One wonders what went through their minds? History records that whether crucifixions, or beheadings, or people burnt at the stake, there are always observers. Have we taken time to sit near the cross, as we often sing the lovely hymn, 'Jesus keep me near the cross', and not be moved by its sentiments? Some may be content to view; some consider that view, but, praise be to God, some are convicted by the view!

Standing by the cross

What a contrast! John is alone in informing us of the band of women and John at the cross, 19. 25, 26. Revealing to us their devotion to Christ even at His crucifixion, he draws us to this little group in contrast to the others at Calvary. How long they stood at the cross is unknown. The Lord knew they were there as He speaks four words to His mother and three words to John. Calling her 'woman' is not a word of disrespect. It was Simeon, Luke 2. 35, who stated prophetically, 'yea, a sword shall pierce through thy soul also'. In silence the Lord's mother stands, but one wonders, as she sees the one she brought into the world hanging on the cross, about those words spoken to her about her firstborn.

The superscription they wanted changed

John chapter 19 verses 19 to 22 is where we read that Pilate himself wrote the title. The full title is believed to be: 'This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews'. Jesus – His humanity; Nazareth – His humility; the King – His royalty; of the Jews – His nationality. Written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, it was there for all the world to see. The Jews, however, wanted the wording changed, but here Pilate was strong willed, 'What I have written I have written'. He was not strong willed earlier!

Some imply that this was the first 'Gospel tract' written. In this instance, it was the last act of Pilate. In respect of the Saviour, it will remain forever. It has been read by many since as the sight of Calvary has charmed and changed millions.

The scene of darkness

All but John write about the darkness. It is the symbol of judgement that the Lord endured for us. How could a Holy God look with favour on His Son who became sin for us? There is silence from Heaven. For three hours no human eye was to watch God's intervention in this scene, and upon His Son. Light came from Heaven upon the scene when the Saviour was announced, Luke 2. 9-11, but there was darkness at His death when salvation's work was being accomplished. The believer acknowledges that the Lord Jesus bore the penalty of our sins in His body on the tree that we may come from darkness to light.

The scriptures and their completion

Matthew, Mark and Luke only mention one scripture being fulfilled at the cross whilst John mentions four. There is no doubt as to the harmony of scripture and all prophecies in relation to His first coming being fulfilled. Interestingly, some men fulfilled scripture without knowing anything of prophecies written previously. Some twenty-four prophecies at least were fulfilled in twenty-four hours. But also in their completion there is a reminder of the future, 'They shall look on him whom they pierced'.

The Saviour and the condemned

Only Luke records the conversation of the two malefactors, whilst John informs us that Jesus was in the midst. Luke chapter 23 verse 32 has an important comma in the King James Version between 'other' and 'malefactors' emphasizing 'others' of a different kind – the Lord crucified between two thieves. These two had been caught, convicted, and condemned to be crucified. They are unnamed.

Notice should be given to these men who died, that in the final hours of their lives:

- both had equal access to the Lord Jesus,
- both could read the superscription,
- both could watch and observe,
- both could speak,
- both could hear
- only one repented.

What significance for men and women today. Viewing the scene, they can repent of their sin, but many, sadly, do not.

The sayings from the cross

Before the Lord gave up the ghost we are able to put together, from the Gospel records, seven sayings or, as some indicate, cries, but John alone records, 'It is finished', 19. 30. It is a finished work and a debt paid in full. He was in complete control. It stands finished and it will always be. Praise God that our salvation is based on the completed work of one who was willing to die in our place.



WHAT IS MEANT BY INSPIRATION?

By **BERT CARGILL** St. Monans, Scotland

The word inspiration

The word 'inspiration' can have different meanings depending on its context, as is the case with many other words. Its root is a Latin word, *spirare*, which means 'to breathe', with different prefixes making it more specific.¹

In a physiological context, inspire originally meant 'to breathe in', and its opposite is expire, literally meaning 'to breathe out', although now it commonly means to breathe out for the last time and has become a synonym for dying. Nowadays, inhale and exhale are more often used in the context of breathing; respiration is the inclusive term for it all. Related words include 'transpire', a botanical term for transmission of moisture through leaf surfaces; 'perspire', an everyday process whereby moisture moves through the skin; and 'aspire', a mental process, literally to breathe towards and hence to reach forward to some goal.

Our context here is different from all of these, but nevertheless related as we shall see. The question we have to answer is really, 'What is inspiration in the context of our Bible which is said to be "given by inspiration of God"?'.

Inspiration of the scriptures

Before we reach the answer we are looking for, there is one more use of the word we need to examine, for it is very common, but it is **not** the meaning we seek. It is when someone is undertaking a new or challenging task, such as an author writing a book or a poem (or even a magazine article like this), or an artist creating a painting, or a gardener designing a flower bed or a landscape. The delay in getting such tasks begun is often said to be due to the lack of inspiration. But when this inspiration comes, the task takes off and, when it is finished, you might hear about the inspiration behind it. Such inspiration may well have led to the creation of great works like JOHN MILTON'S *Paradise Lost* (350th anniversary in 2017) or JOHN BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress*. These authors got the subject matter, the idea, out of their fertile minds and imaginations. With great skill they wrote words to suit their readership, using their own vocabularies. Within a relatively short time their tasks were finished.

But the Psalms of King David, or the Revelation written by the Apostle John, did not come about in that way. It was something deeper and more radical than that. This time the subject matter, the 'idea', was put into their minds by the Spirit of God who also controlled the words they used, whilst their writing styles and vocabularies were their own. Here is what King David wrote, 'The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue', 2 Sam. 23. 2. Later the Apostle Peter wrote about it as follows, 'Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost', 2 Pet. 1. 21.

But how precisely did this happen? It was by the 'inspiration of God'.

'Inspiration of God'

This key phrase is found in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16, where we read, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God'. In the Bible this phrase is found only here, apart from one other reference, Job 32. 8, which is related but in a different context. To understand this key phrase we go back to where we began in this article. It has to do with breathing, in fact the literal translation of 'given by inspiration of God', is 'God-breathed', Gk. *theopneustos*. So we are told that the holy scriptures came to us by means of the breath of God. That makes them uniquely different!

We may perhaps explain or illustrate it this way. When we speak, our breath is necessarily involved. Breath leaves our lungs and when a particular valve is open, the breath passes through our larynx (voice-box). There, when our brain passes signals to the tiny chords it contains, in a marvellously intricate way, that breath is modulated into sound patterns by the tongue and teeth to make it into speech that we recognize or tunes we sing, and others listening get the meaning when they know the language we are using. Information is transferred from one person to another by means of these patterns of sounds generated in the larynx and modulated in the mouth. But it is all propelled and propagated by the breath. Without the breath no words will come, no information will be transmitted. The breath is the necessary energizing vehicle which produces our words.

Apply this now to the way in which scripture was produced. It was the 'breath of God' which energized it. The 'holy men' who wrote it were 'moved by the Holy Ghost', that is, their minds and pens were made available to God for Him to use to transmit His word to us. They did not, could not, do it by themselves – it 'came not in old time by the will of man', 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21 again. Necessarily, it required the breath of God, the action of the Holy Spirit, to produce the words which would convey what He wanted to

tell us. Inspiration ensured that the right words were used so that these ancient scriptures were kept free from the human errors and misconceptions common to the age in which the writers lived. Without divine inspiration the writing might be interesting but it would not be authoritative.

The 'breath of God'

The Bible has some interesting mentions of the breath of God, especially in connection with creational and final events. It is clearly connected with acts of great power and significance. We must not think that God, who is spirit, actually breathes like we do, but in our Bible His 'breath' denotes His energizing power in the same way as His 'hand' denotes His creative and preserving power and His 'heart' denotes His affection. Note the following references to His breath:

- God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life', Gen. 2. 7, cp. Job 33. 4 – the special creation of man;
- 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth', Ps. 33. 6, cp. Job 37. 10 – the creation of the universe;
- 'He breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost', John 20. 22 – the promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit;
- 'The breath of the Lord . . . doth kindle it', Isa. 30. 28, 33, cp. 2 Sam. 22. 16 – the judgement of the Day of the Lord.

It is no surprise therefore to discover that the breath of God is essentially involved in providing us with the holy scriptures full of all their treasures of wisdom and knowledge, another act of great power and significance. But what is the 'breath of God'?

The Spirit of God

In the Bible the 'breath of God' and the 'Spirit of God' are intimately linked in many texts and contexts. In fact they are the same many times, for the Hebrew word *ruach* is translated sometimes as 'breath' and sometimes as 'spirit'.

This links the key texts we have already noted. 'All scripture is given

by inspiration of God' can be read as 'All scripture is given by the breath of God'. His breath is, in fact, the 'moving of the Holy Spirit' in the holy men who wrote what God wanted them to write. His breath is the 'speaking of the Spirit of God' in the tongues of such authors as King David, and it is the same when John exhorted his readers to have an ear to 'hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches', Rev. 2. 7 etc.

There is something similar in Genesis chapter 1. The Spirit of God is described as 'brooding' (or 'hovering', NKJV) over the face of the deep, anticipating the great work of creation. Then ten times we read 'God said'. Thus the energy of the Spirit of God in the spoken word of God created the universe. This is summarized in Psalm 33 verse 9 as, 'he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast'. It was, in fact, the living and eternal Word who brought creation into being, 'In the beginning was the Word . . . all things were made by him: and without him was not anything made that was made', John 1. 1, 3. All three persons of the triune God always work in harmony and in unison.

We see this again when 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us', John 1. 14. He was filled with the Spirit and He was led by the Spirit.² Led by the Spirit, the words that Christ spoke

were His Father's words, and the works that He did were His Father's works.^{3,4} In all His ways He was revealing the Father, and doing His Father's will in the power of the Holy Spirit. Can we not say that just as the Holy Spirit gave 'inspiration' to the written word, so did the Holy Spirit give 'inspiration' to the living Word?

Does this Holy Spirit not give us inspiration also? Not the same inspiration as He gave to those who wrote the scriptures, for they are complete. But as we read these scriptures surely He will inspire us in the sense of motivating us, causing us to aspire to be more like Him of whom they speak. The Lord Jesus said to His listeners one day, 'Search the scriptures . . . and they are they which testify of me', John 5. 39. He also said that 'in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms' were written 'things concerning Himself', Luke 24. 27, 44. Thus Christ is revealed to us also, and as the Spirit of God who inspired the scriptures dwells within us He can make them real to us, John 16. 13, 14. We will find that they are still 'warm with the breath of God'.

Endnotes

- 1 Oxford Universal Dictionary.
- 2 Luke 4. 1.
- 3 John 14. 10, 24.
- 4 John 9. 4; 10. 37.

Seven prophecies of the church's condition fulfilled

By **RANDAL AMOS** Rochester, New York, USA

Some see the church as full of hypocrites and errors. These seven prophecies show this would happen. God allows the negative to reveal the positive, Mal. 3. 13-17. May we see this as a test and thus an honour to be a minority, and hold fast the ways of the Lord Jesus, 2 Thess. 2. 15.

Prophecy 1 – *Distorting truth in divisive and sectarian attacks from the inside*

‘For I know this, that **after my departing shall grievous wolves enter** in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves **shall men arise**, speaking perverse [distorting truth] things, to draw away disciples after them’, Acts 20. 29, 30. How sad that some desire a following, more than providing food from the Lord!

Prophecy 2 – *Legalistic rules that deny grace – orchestrated by the devil*

‘The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the **latter times some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received’, 1 Tim. 4. 1-3.

Prophecy 3 – *Liberalistic lifestyle that distorts grace into self-gratification*

‘This know also, that **in the last days perilous times shall come**.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away’, 2 Tim. 3. 1-5. ‘Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [sensuality and license]’, Jude 4.

Prophecy 4 – *Desires self-satisfaction rather than absolute truth and doctrine*

‘Preach the word . . . **for the time will come** when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables’, 2 Tim. 4. 2-4.

Prophecy 5 – *Bending the gospel and the word as a means of marketing for self-gain*

‘But there were false prophets also among the people, even as **there shall be false teachers among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them . . . and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you’, 2 Pet. 2. 1-3.

Prophecy 6 – *A denial and mocking of a judging God – claiming no divine intervention*

‘Knowing this first, that **there shall come in the last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation’, 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4.

Prophecy 7 – *An increase in the rebellion of self-will (iniquity) and deception*

‘For that day shall not come, except **there come** a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way’, 2 Thess. 2. 3, 7. ‘But evil men and seducers **shall wax worse and worse**, deceiving, and being deceived’, 2 Tim. 3. 13.

May we say, ‘I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end’, Ps. 119. 112.



First Samuel

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

Introduction

First Samuel is a book of contrasts. There are the themes of light and darkness that pervade the book. The times of spiritual darkness might be summarized by the writer's comments in chapter 3, 'And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision', v. 1. In contrast, there are the gleams of light that shine through, displaying God's spiritual care for His people and the provision that He makes in times of departure. Thus, as chapter 3 closes, the writer records, 'the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord', v. 21.

Chapters 1 and 2 display aspects of the darkness, demonstrating the condition of the nation in that transition period between the judges and the kings. Even the glimmer of light in the call of Samuel is set against the background of the loss of the ark in the battle with the Philistines in chapter 4. Any emergence from the darkness, as the ark is returned in chapter 6, has the shadow of the death of many in Bethshemesh as a consequence of their folly in looking into the ark.

But even in times of moral and spiritual darkness there is evidence of the movement of God. In the exercise of Hannah, chapter 1, in the call of Samuel, chapter 3, and in the ministry of Samuel, chapter 7, there is the seed-plot that might provide the basis of revival in the nation. Here in 1 Samuel is a man and a woman who are prepared to commit themselves to the work of the Lord.

As the book progresses from the ministry of Samuel to the reign of Saul, the same contrasts continue. We see the king of the nation's choice contrasted with the man after God's own heart. In Saul there was a man who had potential – the guidance and help of a true man of God in Samuel; a new heart from God, 10. 9; the Spirit of God who came upon him, 10. 10; 11. 6; supporters who were valiant men, 10. 26; and the confidence of

the people, 11. 15. How sad to see one who once knew the help of God, 10. 7; 11. 13, rejected by God because of disobedience. So begins the decline of the man of Benjamin who, at the end of the book, commits suicide upon the field of battle, having been defeated by the Philistines.

In David, who appears in chapter 16, we have a man who, in spite of failure, was the man of God's choice, 16. 1. It is worth contrasting the attitude of Saul when battling against the Ammonites, and David as he took on Goliath in the valley of Elah. David's confidence in his God is evident, 17. 45-47. Yet, sadly, such a man is hated, pursued, fleeing for his life from a man, Saul, who has given himself up to lawlessness. But out of that state of Saul's mind and heart, God is preparing His man for the throne of Israel and for the blessing of His people.

The Purpose of the Book

The record of the books of Samuel is one of transition – the transition from the rule of the judges to that of the kings. The gradual decline of the judges into a period of lawlessness is traced through the book of that name, but here, in 1 Samuel, we have men who rise out of that lawlessness as men that God can use.

This is a book that contains much to encourage believers in times of moral and spiritual darkness; much to challenge, as it faithfully records the consequences of disobedience and departure; and much to assure believers as to the sovereign purpose of God that cannot be thwarted.

The Plan of the Book

ANDERSON offers the following outline (adapted):

- 'I. Transition from Judges to Kings – 1 Samuel 1:1 – 10:27
 - A. Samuel's birth and dedication 1:1 – 2:11
 - B. Samuel's rise at Shiloh 2:12 – 4:1a
 - C. The capture and return of the ark 4:1b – 7:2

- D. Samuel's judgeship 7:3-17
- E. The selection of a king 8:1 – 10:27

- II. Reign of Saul – 11:1 – 31:13
 - A. Early events of Saul's reign 11:1–15:35
 - B. Transition from Saul to David 16:1–31:13'.¹

In many ways the book might be divided into two sections around two of its main characters, Samuel, chapters 1 to 7 and Saul, chapters 8 to 31. However, that would be to ignore the parts played by Hannah, chapters 1 and 2, Eli, chapters 2 to 4, Jonathan, chapters 13 and 14, and 18 to 20, and David, chapters 16 to 31. Equally, we will see the emergence of men like Joab and Abishai, of whom more will be seen in the second book of Samuel. The scene is being set for the reign of the man after God's own heart, and that man, David, is being shaped and moulded in the hands of his God.

A detailed outline is as follows:

Chapters 1-7, the days of Samuel

The conditions at that time, 1. 1-8
The character of Hannah, vv. 9-18
The compassion of the Lord, vv. 19-28

The worship of Hannah, 2. 1-11
The wickedness of Eli's sons, vv. 12-26
The wisdom of the man of God, vv. 27-36

The Lord's appearance, 3. 1-10
The Lord's announcement, vv. 11-18
The Lord's appointment, vv. 19-21

The battle against the Philistines, 4. 1-11
The broadcast of defeat, vv. 12-18
The birth of Ichabod, vv. 19-22

The eviction of Dagon, 5. 1-5
The emerods at Ashdod, vv. 6-9
The Ekronites destroyed, vv. 10-12

The jewels and the trespass offering, 6. 1-9
The journey back to Israel, vv. 10-18
The judgement of the men of Bethshemesh, vv. 19-21

The collection of the ark, 7. 1, 2
The conquest of the Philistines, vv. 3-12
The circuit of Samuel, vv. 13-17

CHARTING THE SCRIPTURES 1 SAMUEL by Jonathan Black

THEOCRACY >>> MONARCHY

Genesis & Job

Exod/Lev/Num/Deut/Josh/Judg/Ruth

1 & 2

1

Ps / Prov

2000 BC

1500 BC

1000 BC

CHRONOLOGY

Gen. 1-11
Beginning of Human race

Gen. 12-50
Beginning of Hebrew race

The Exodus
Wilderness & Conquest

THE
KI

KEY VERSES

'Make us a king to judge us like all the nations', 1 Sam. & 5

'This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you', 1 Sam. & 11

'I gave the

PROPHET / PRIEST / JUDGE

THE PEOPLE

Hannah

'And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth',
1 Sam. 1. 12

SAMUEL

I will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

The praying man of the sanctuary

Samuel means 'and God heard'

Elkanah / Peninnah / Eli
Hophni & Phineas / Ichabod

SA

God gave him

The fleshly man

'From his shoulders and than any of the people

'For the Lord seeth not as man

THE JOURNEY OF THE ARK

Service is not based on succession but devotion and obedience to God - 'Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel', 1 Sam.

THE ARK IN THEIR MIDST - DISCERNMENT

'And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep',

'Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh',

THE ARK WAS

'And the ark of the two sons of Phineas

'Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us', 1 Sam. 7. 12

Crying in prayer, 1 Sam. 1. 10

Continuing in prayer, 1 Sam. 1. 12

Answer to prayer, 1 Sam. 1. 27

God save
The power

'Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, Nay; but we will have a king. That we also may be like all the nations'

New Testament reference

'Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as well as all the kings of Israel, have not been able to bring this people to the Lord, and yet they have not returned from their wickedness.'
'And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred years, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also,

Samuel - the praying man
The longing of a woman in touch with God
- dependant upon God in prayer

1 - Hanna's life of supplication - requesting a son to serve God
2 - Hanna's living sacrifice - reasonable service offered to God
3 - Samuel's service - responding to the call of God

The loss of the Ark of God (6. 2)
- defeat without God's presence

3 - Where the ark was - Samuel's position
4 - Ark is taken - The glory departed
5 - Ark abused - Philistines suffer
6 - Ark opened - punishment of death
7 - Ark returned - victory for Israel

Saul - the fleshly man

The lust for a King instead of God
- departure from God's purpose

8 - The people demand a King. Samuel prays
9 - God's choice of Saul as King
10 - Saul is anointed King
11 - Saul's first victory

Key words prayed / heart / spirit / night / King **Writer** Samuel / Nathan / Gad

(1 and 2 Samuel were all one volume until the Greek Septuagint separated them)

2 SAMUEL

Chronicles
Song / Eccles

1 & 2 Kgs/2 Chr/Isa/Jer/Hos/

Joel/Amos/Obad/Jonah/Mic/ Lam / Dan / Ezek / Ezra / Esther / Neh
Nahum/Hab/Zeph Hag / Zech / Mal



931 BC

722 BC

400 BC



THE UNITED KINGDOM

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

THE SINGLE KINGDOM

NT

ENEMIES

Philistines
Intermarriage
Business deals

ISRAEL - NORTH
JUDAH - SOUTH

ASSYRIANS
INVADE

EXILE IN BABYLON 597 - 539 BC / RETURN FROM BABYLON

Jesus Christ,
the son of
David

'...see a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath', Hos. 13. 11

'My father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel', 1 Sam. 23. 17

DAVID'S KING

THE SHEPHERD KING

SAUL

Jonathan

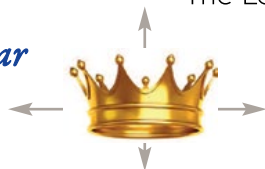
DAVID

Abigail

in another heart.

man with the spear

upward he was higher
'e', 1 Sam. 9. 2; 10. 23



The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart.

The spiritual man with the sling

'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of
his stature; because I have refused him', 1 Sam 16. 7

'...man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart', 1 Sam. 16. 7

'Now there was no smith found
throughout all the
land of Israel: for
the Philistines said,
Lest the
Hebrews make
them swords or
spears: But all the
Israelites went
down to the
Philistines, to
sharpen every man
his share, and his
coultter, and his axe,
and his mattock',

1 Sam. 13. 19

Amalek
Saul preserved Agag
of the Amalekites
Amalek represents
the flesh.

1 Sam. 15. 20 / 30. 1

8. 19 / 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams', 1 Sam. 15. 22 / 'who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth', Gal. 3. 1

MISSING - DEFEAT

'...God was taken; and
of Eli, Hophni and
s, were slain',

'And she named the child Ichabod,
saying, The glory is departed from Israel:
because the ark of God was taken',

THE ARK WAS MOVED - DEPARTURE

'And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-
yearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years:
and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord',

the King!
of prayer!

'And let us bring again the ark of our God to us:
for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul', 1 Chr. 13. 3

Ceasing to pray is a sin, 1 Sam. 12. 23

Gathered in prayer, 1 Sam. 2. 1

Rejoicing in prayer, 1 Sam. 2. 1

**to obey the voice of Samuel;
will have a king over us;
e nations', 1 Sam. 8. 19-20**

ferences to 'Samuel'

many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days', Acts 3. 24
ur hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet', Acts 13. 20
ould fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak,
and Samuel, and of the prophets', Heb. 11. 32

The lessons from fleshly living against God

- disobedience to God's precepts

12 Samuel's exhortation to the people

13 Saul's foolish behaviour

14 Jonathan's favour fight and food

15 Saul's rebellion sparing Agag

David - the spiritual man

The lessons from spiritual living in the fear of God

- dependency upon God's provision

16 David anointed - Saul troubled

17 David defeats Goliath with God

18 David behaves wisely

19 David a fugitive escapes with Jonathan

20 David in the field with Jonathan

21 David exiled, with Ahimelech - eating shewbread

22 Doeg slays the priests

23 David on run strengthened by Jonathan

24 David spares Saul in the cave

25 Samuel's death - Abigail marries David

26 David and Abishai spare Saul again

27 David lives with Philistines at Ziglag

28 Saul visits the witch of Endor

29 Philistines don't want David fighting with them

30 David defeats the Amalekites

31 Death of Saul

Chapters 8-10, the decline of Samuel and emergence of Saul

The problem of Samuel's sons, 8. 1-5

The prayer of Samuel, vv. 6-9
The prophecy of Samuel, vv. 10-18
The people's refusal, vv. 19-22

Saul seeking asses, 9. 1-14
Samuel sacrificing, vv. 15-27

Saul's anointing and prophecy, 10. 1-16
Saul's acceptance before the people, vv. 17-27

Chapters 11-15, Saul's enthronement and disobedience

The reproach of Israel, 11. 1-3
The response of Saul, vv. 4-9
The rout of the Ammonites, vv. 10, 11
The rejoicing of the people, vv. 12-15

The forbearance of Samuel, 12. 1-5
The faithfulness of God, vv. 6-15
The fear of the Lord, vv. 16-25

The fear of the people, 13. 1-7
The folly of Saul, vv. 8-16
The forging of weapons, vv. 17-23

The daring of Jonathan, 14. 1-15
The defeat of the Philistines, vv. 16-23
The distress of the people, vv. 24-46
The digest of Saul's reign, vv. 47-52

The remembrance of the Amalekites, 15. 1-5
The rout of the Amalekites, vv. 6-9
The revelation of the problem, vv. 10-23
The resolution of the problem, vv. 24-35

Chapters 16-31, Saul's decline and death alongside David's exploits and escapes

The journey of Samuel, 16. 1-5
The judgement of God, vv. 6-13
The joylessness of Saul, vv. 14-23

The challenge of Goliath, 17. 1-11
The coming of David, vv. 12-31
The confidence of David, vv. 32-37
The conquest of David, vv. 38-51
The chase of the Philistines, vv. 52-58

The love of Jonathan, 18. 1-5

The lauding of David, vv. 6-9
The Lord was with David, vv. 10-16
The love of Michal, vv. 17-21
The levy upon the Philistines, vv. 22-30

A reconciliation, 19. 1-7
A relapse, vv. 8-17
A refuge, vv. 18-24

The plea of David, 20. 1-10
The plan of Jonathan, vv. 11-23
The passion of Saul, vv. 24-34
The place of archery, vv. 35-42

The meeting with Ahimelech, 21. 1-9
The madness of David, vv. 10-15

Mizpeh of Moab, 22. 1-5
Massacre of the priests, vv. 6-19
Meeting with David, vv. 20-23

The conflict with the Philistines, 23. 1-15
The covenant with Jonathan, vv. 16-18
The concord with the Ziphites, vv. 19-29

The wilderness of En-gedi, 24. 1-8
The witness of David, vv. 9-15
The words of Saul, vv. 16-22

The wickedness of Nabal, 25. 1-13
The word to Abigail, vv. 14-17
The work of Abigail, vv. 18-31
The witness against Nabal, vv. 32-38
The wedding of Abigail, vv. 39-44

The spear of Saul, 26. 1-12
The speech of David, vv. 13-20
The sin of Saul, vv. 21-25

David's escape to Gath, 27. 1-7
David's exploits in battle, vv. 8-12

Saul's dilemma, 28. 1-6
Saul's deception, vv. 7-14
Samuel's declaration, vv. 15-20
Saul's departure, vv. 21-25

Philistine disquiet, 29. 1-5
David's defence, vv. 6-11

David's distress, 30. 1-10
David's destruction of the Amalekites, vv. 11-20
David's decision, vv. 21-31

The death of Saul, 31. 1-6
The defeat of Israel, vv. 7-10
The demise of Saul, vv. 11-13

The Author and Date of the Book

The narrative of the book spans the hundred-year period from the birth of Samuel to the death of Saul upon Mount Gilboa. It begins at the close of the period in which Israel was ruled by judges, of which Samuel is the last. It describes the transition from that system of rule to the establishment of the theocratic monarchy.

When, however, the book was written, and by whom, is difficult to determine. DAVIS puts it succinctly when he states, 'We know neither the date nor author(s) of 1 and 2 Samuel'.² But to this pithy summary we should add that, 'Although it could be suggested that Samuel-Kings is a compilation of historical records that were gradually made by one prophet after another over a period of four hundred years, in fact the work bears the marks of a single author; the same key turns of phrase and historical and theological emphases are found throughout'.³ Whilst we may not know who the human penmen were, we know the divine author!

Endnotes

- 1 STEPHEN ANDERSON, *Interpretive Guide to the Bible*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, pp. 41, 42.
- 2 DALE RALPH DAVIS, *1 Samuel*, Christian Focus Publications, 2005, pg. 12.
- 3 STEPHEN ANDERSON, *Interpretive Guide to the Bible*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, pg. 38.

WORD FOR TODAY

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY** Newton Abbot, England

ἁμαρτήμα, *n* (Sin, evil deed)

hamartia, *n*

(A missing the mark, guilt, sin)

ἁμαρτωλός (Devoted to sin, a sinner)

Although there are at least nine different words in the Greek New Testament to describe sin in all its various guises, the word that is used most often is the noun **hamartia**. But why should the Bible refer to sin so often when there are so many other more pleasant topics to choose from? J. I. PACKER perhaps provides us with the answer when he states that ‘the subject of sin is vital knowledge. To say that our first need in life is to learn about sin may sound strange, but in the sense intended it is profoundly true. If you have not learned about sin, you cannot understand yourself, or your fellow men, or the world you live in, or the Christian faith. And you will not be able to make head or tail of the Bible. For the Bible is an exposition of God’s answer to the problem of human sin, and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing the point of what it says’.¹

In the Septuagint (LXX) **hamartia** is used in Genesis chapter 15 verse 16 of the Amorites who are dispossessed of their land, not simply because of God’s promise to Abraham, but because of their own sin or iniquity. Notice in a similar passage in Leviticus chapter 18 verses 24 to 30 the metaphorical language used by God, that the land ‘vomited out its inhabitants’ because of their uncleanness. This uncleanness not only affected their way of life, but also polluted the land itself, v. 25. This is an early indication in scripture of the way in which sin has a corrosive effect on everything, cp. Gen. 3. 17-19. Abimelech uses the word **hamartia** when he confronts Abraham in Genesis chapter 20 verse 9, after God reveals to him that Sarah is, in fact, Abraham’s wife, v. 7. It is the use of the word ‘guilt’ here by a pagan king who righteously rebukes Abraham, God’s servant, for his deception, that makes the scene so ironic. Conversely, in Genesis chapter 41 verse 9, the chief cupbearer confesses his sin for failing to speak to Pharaoh about Joseph, Gen. 40. 14, 23. In other Old Testament texts we find that **hamartia** takes on

a metaphorical meaning, as in Judges chapter 20 verse 16 where it refers to a stone slinger not missing his mark. Also, in Proverbs chapter 19 verse 3, the word is used of someone missing the way. So in the Old Testament **hamartia** had to do with uncleanness, guilt, offence, and of missing a target or pathway. Interestingly, it is the word selected by God for the sin offering in Leviticus chapter 4.

The word was often used in classical Greek in a similar way to describe failure on the part of an individual who fell short of a target. As WILLIAM BARCLAY comments, ‘In classical Greek these words (**hamartia** and related words) are always connected with some kind of negative failure rather than with some kind of positive transgression, but in the New Testament they come to describe something which is very much more serious’.² Essentially then, the Greeks used **hamartia** as signifying a failure to meet a target or complete an activity. But the New Testament uses the word not just to express failure to hit a mark or navigate a path, Rom. 3. 23, but places an emphasis on human failure to comply with God’s law, 8. 7, and also the active violation of God’s law, 1. 24-31. The word is also used in a collective sense of the aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many, 3. 23. KENNETH WUEST points out an interesting contrast when he writes that ‘in Romans the word **dikaosune** which means “conformity to the standard” appears as the opposite of **hamartia**, a missing of the standard set by God, 6. 16-18’.³

The New Testament surprisingly uses **hamartia** sparingly in the Synoptic parallels, but our Lord makes it quite clear that His mission in life was to call ‘sinners [ἁμαρτωλούς = people devoted to sin] to repentance’, Matt. 9. 13. In fact, His very name suggested that He would be victorious over sin, 1. 21. The apostle John has no doubt that this was the reason for His incarnation, and contrasts the sinlessness of Christ with those He came to save, 1 John 3. 5. That sin is universal is confirmed by both the Old and New Testaments, 1 Kgs. 8. 46; Rom. 3. 9-12, 23; so John indicates the comprehensive and universal nature of Christ’s atoning

work embracing the sins of the whole world, 1 John 2. 2. Forgiveness of sins is based on an act of repentance, Acts 2. 38; 1 John 1. 9; but for all those who reject Christ, they die in their sins, John 8. 24.

By far the main contributor to our understanding of this subject is the apostle Paul who uses the word some sixty times in his letters. Paul uses **hamartia** to explain the state of sin that exists through Adam’s fall, Rom. 5. 12, but only actuated and accountable through the law, 8. 7; 5. 13; 3. 20. Nevertheless, the influence of sin, even before the law of God was enacted, reflects the power that sin had in the habitable world, 5. 14. Ultimately, Paul concludes that since we were unable to fulfil the law of God, the law openly condemned us by bringing us into a state of guilt before God, 3. 19. This inexorably leads Paul to triumph in the work of Christ over sin, 2 Cor. 5. 21; Col. 2. 14, 15. By faith-union with Him, we are delivered from the penalty of sin, and through baptism we have died to sin, Rom. 6. 2-3, thus we are freed from the power of sin to be servants of righteousness, 6. 7, 14. But as W. GRUNDMANN writes, ‘tension exists between the somatic life, which is given up to death, and the pneumatic life, which has overcome death, Rom. 8. 10. This tension continues until Christ comes again and definitively abolishes sin and death, 1 Cor. 15. 26’.⁴ May we then not only continue to triumph in the work of Christ, 2 Cor. 2. 14, but seek at all times to be led by the Holy Spirit so that we might no longer serve sin, Rom. 6. 7-9.

For further reading/study

Introductory

‘SIN’ in KENNETH S. WUEST, *Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, pp. 95-100

Advanced

‘ἁμαρτία’ in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Edited by Gerhard Kittel), Volume 1 (Ā-Ä), pp. 267-335

Endnotes

- 1 J. I. PACKER, *18 Words – The Most Important Words You Will Ever Know*, Christian Focus, pg. 69
- 2 WILLIAM BARCLAY, *New Testament Words*, pg. 119
- 3 KENNETH WUEST, *Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, pp. 95-96
- 4 W. GRUNDMANN, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament – Abridged in one Volume*, pg. 50

Character Studies in the Book of Proverbs

By **JOHN SCARSBROOK** Killamarsh, England

The Old Testament commences with seventeen books of history – Genesis to Esther, and closes with seventeen books of prophecy – Isaiah to Malachi. In between are five books – Job to Song of Solomon – which, although they contain both history and prophecy, could perhaps best be described as books of experience.

The central book of these five is the book of Proverbs. The central verse of the book is chapter 16 verse 17, which really sums up its teaching and its value as a practical guide for the people of God in all ages. ‘The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul’. We are reminded here that our journey through life requires constant watchfulness, self-control and discipline. Only then will we make any real spiritual progress. This is the underlying theme of the book of Proverbs.

It has been suggested that this book complements the book of Psalms as being the practical outworking of devotional principles taught and learned there. The word hidden in the heart, Ps. 119. 11, becomes the word spoken in season, Prov. 15. 23. The way learned in the sanctuary, Ps. 25. 4, enables the walk in safety, Prov. 3. 23.

Perhaps we need first to ask a few basic questions:

1. What is a proverb?
2. Who wrote the book?
3. What are its lessons?

What then is a proverb? JIM NEWHEISER, in his book *Opening up Proverbs*, suggests that a proverb is easier to recognize than it is to define. In simple practical terms, it is a brief, but weighty saying that provides a statement by which one can judge one’s life or actions.

The Hebrew word for ‘proverb’ suggests a comparison, a contrast or a parable. We could say that a proverb is a condensed parable, while a parable is an expanded proverb.

So, who wrote the book? Although much has been written regarding the author, there is, of course, no doubt that all is divinely inspired. Chapter 1 verse 1, and chapter 10 verse 1, assure us that Solomon, the son of David, the man endowed with God-given wisdom was responsible for speaking and writing many of the proverbs found in these thirty-one chapters. Chapter 25 verse 1 attributes the recording of some of Solomon’s proverbs to the men of Hezekiah’s day; no doubt these were some of the 3000 referred to in 1 Kings chapter 4 verse 32.

Chapter 30 presents the words of Agur the son of Jakeh, and, in chapter 31, King Lemuel records words ‘that his mother taught him’, and wise words they are indeed. We have no other reference to these individuals; some writers suggest that their names also may be pseudonyms for Solomon. Suffice it to say that whoever was used by the Spirit of God to place these writings on record, they have a clear voice to us today. Down-to-earth practical truth. Sound common sense, both challenging and inspiring. True wisdom from above that we ignore at our peril.

I recall reading on one occasion

that maybe Solomon drew upon the experiences of his father, David, in portraying some of the characters we meet throughout the book, e.g.:

- Jonathan – the friend who sticketh closer than a brother, 18. 24;
- Joab – the violent man who entices his neighbour, 16. 29;
- Absalom – the evil man seeking only rebellion, 17. 11;
- Hushai – the friend at all times, 17. 17;
- Shimei – the ungodly man, who digs up evil, 16. 27;
- Barzillai – The hoary head, found in the way of righteousness, 16. 31.

If we then seek to discover the lessons from the book, the first seven verses of chapter 1 form an introduction, and provide a summary for what follows in the rest of the book. You would not need to read far into Proverbs to discover that the major theme of the book is wisdom. In verses 2 to 4, the stated aim is clearly seen: ‘To know wisdom . . . to receive instruction . . . to give knowledge and discretion’. In verses 5 and 6, the anticipated response is set out: ‘A wise man will hear’, he will understand the wise counsels, and attain unto them or make them his own.

There are a number of ways in which the wise man presents his instruction. Many of the verses contain a parallel thought or injunction. On occasion, the second clause serves to emphasize



or add to the first, e.g., 4. 11; 9. 10, and many more. The conjunction 'and' identifies most of this type. In other proverbs the teaching is by way of contrast, and the conjunction is in most cases 'but'; for example, see most of the verses in chapter 10.

How then can we achieve the high moral standards expected of us? How can we be preserved from taking the character of the fool, or the simple, or even manifesting the features of the wicked? Verse 7 has the answer! It is the key that unlocks the whole book, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge'; this is a true appreciation of the character and greatness of the God of heaven, and of His intrinsic holiness and righteousness. The awesome majesty and purity of His being should always be our starting point in seeking to understand His word and His ways with men.

In chapter 9 verse 10 we are taken a step further. Here we learn that, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'. Wisdom is not synonymous with intelligence, education, knowledge or I.Q. level, yet, on occasion, needs some or all of these. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge in every sphere of life, based upon a fear, a reverential awe, of the Lord, and on a knowledge of His word. We recall that ancient monarchs like Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar had their wise men, but it required a Joseph and a Daniel to apply the

needed wisdom. We are not surprised, then, when our leaders and politicians make decisions and frame legislation that is patently foolish and unwise. They have no fear of God, and know nothing of His word!

It is possible to have a vast store of knowledge. To be acclaimed for academic achievement, and yet be unwise in our use of that knowledge. On the other hand, we may feel limited and inferior with regard to our intellect and understanding, yet show much wisdom in what we do and say as guided by the Spirit of God.

A conscious awareness and fear of God is alien to the modern unregenerate man. 'God is not in all [any of] his thoughts', Ps. 10. 4.

From chapter 1 verse 8 to the end of chapter 7, Solomon records instructions, precepts, and warnings, directed to one whom he calls 'my son'. The expression is used fifteen times in this section, which furnishes 'sons' of all ages with an invaluable guide to life. It is of interest to note that although Solomon 'had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines', 1 Kgs. 11. 3, and though he reigned for forty years, we only read of one son born to him. Mention is made in passing of the daughters of Solomon, 1 Kgs. 4. 11, 15, but Rehoboam appears to be his only son. If that is so, then, sadly, the wise counsel of Solomon was utterly

disregarded when Rehoboam stepped into his father's shoes. We read that having consulted with the older men who were contemporary with his father, he forsook their advice before he turned to the younger men that had grown up with him and accepted their foolish counsel. The result was a divided kingdom and enduring strife.

Throughout the book we are introduced to a number of interesting and instructive characters. They are nameless, known only by their behaviour in a variety of circumstances. As such they are representative and are placed on record for our learning. The purpose of these few articles is to draw some practical lessons from a number of these characters as the Lord enables.

The wise man and the fool are both clearly seen. The righteous man is held up as an example, but the untruthful man also has lessons for us. The sluggard drags his feet across our pathway, and the talebearer goes about his pernicious work. It should not be necessary, we trust, to spend too much time in the company of the drunkard (!), or the man of quick temper, but we need to examine our own hearts as we read through Proverbs. A number of women are found in the book, mostly of dubious character. The final chapter closes, however, with a lovely picture of the virtuous woman, a shining example to all.



CHARACTERS AROUND THE CROSS

JOSEPH WHO BURIED HIM

Part 10

By **IAN REES** Tenby, Wales

The crowds had watched Jesus of Nazareth die. They had observed the Roman soldiers breaking the legs of the two thieves on either side of our Lord, in order to hasten their deaths. They had also heard the centurion pronounce that Jesus of Nazareth was already dead and did not need to have His legs broken. They waited for the bodies of the three men to be taken down because the next day was a feast day and the Jews did not allow bodies to be left on a cross on a feast day.

It was customary for the bodies of crucified criminals to be taken down from the cross and thrown into a pit, along with other criminals, being buried in a common grave. No doubt the religious leaders of the day relished the thought of the body of this 'imposter', as they saw Him, being consigned to a common, disgraceful burial. We can well imagine their shock, therefore, when two wealthy, well-respected members of their own Sanhedrin came out of the crowd, lifted up the cross of Jesus out of the hole into which it had been dropped, laid it gently down on the ground and proceeded to unfasten His body from the gibbet on which it had been nailed. Proceeding to wash the body as best as they could, they wrapped it in fresh clean linen interlaid with generous quantities of spices, and carried it away to be buried in a private tomb. This was not what the Jewish authorities had wanted. How had this been permitted?

Quite some time before the betrayal, trial and crucifixion of our Lord, the Sanhedrin – a body of seventy prominent Jewish men – had warned people that if they believed and followed the teachings of this Jesus of Nazareth they would be excommunicated from temple and synagogue worship. The Sanhedrin had appeared, to a man, to be opposed to Jesus of Nazareth and all that He taught. Yet there were two members of this Sanhedrin who were secret followers of Jesus Christ. One was Nicodemus, who had come at night to see our Lord at the beginning of His public ministry. He it was who had initially been confounded at our Lord's teaching, 'Ye must be born again', John 3. 7. 'How can these things be?' he asked. We read no more of his reaction to our Lord's teaching on that occasion, but we discover later that Nicodemus must have come to some sort of faith in our Lord. John records in the seventh chapter of his gospel that the chief priests and Pharisees had ordered the arrest of this Jesus of Nazareth, but their soldiers had returned without Him in their custody. When the officers excused themselves by saying, 'Never man spake like this man', the Pharisees answered, 'Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers [or of the Pharisees] believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed'. Nicodemus, who, says John, 'was one of them', i.e., a ruler of the Jews and a Pharisee, who according to the others did not believe in Jesus, asked, 'Doth our law judge a man before it hear him and know what he doeth?' 7. 45-52. Ah, we ask ourselves, is something going on in the heart of Nicodemus of which we know nothing as yet? He it was who stepped forward after

the death of our Lord. 'There came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen', 19. 39, 40. He was not the only one, though, for another member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph from Arimathea, was the other man who took down the body of Jesus, v. 38. John tells us this Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but 'secretly for fear of the Jews', v. 38. Both of these men, then, were 'secret' disciples, afraid to be publicly identified with Jesus of Nazareth, knowing the huge cost that excommunication from the synagogue would have entailed – loss of business, loss of friends, loss of standing in the top level of Jewish society, loss of a place on the influential Sanhedrin. But the cross changed all that.

The cross turned a secret disciple into a public one

We do not know what went through the minds of these two men as they heard about, possibly even watched, the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. All we know is that they were moved to do something. It seems as though they could not face the thought that the One in whom they had come to believe as Messiah, if not as Saviour, should be given a criminal's burial as well as a criminal's death. They could not have intervened to prevent the indignity and shame of His death, but they could intervene to prevent the indignity and shame of a common burial. But, in order to do so, they would have to come forward publicly to intervene. There could be no hiding of faith and discipleship now. And so both rich and influential Joseph of Arimathea, and rich and influential Nicodemus, stepped out of the crowds that stood hushed around the cross, and either ordered the taking down of the cross and removal of Jesus' body, or did it themselves. The cross has turned secret disciples into public ones.

The cross turned a coward into a brave man

For however many years it was that he had been a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, Joseph of Arimathea had been a secret one, 'for fear of

the Jews', John 19. 38. How often had his tongue remained tied in the Sanhedrin meetings? We know it was so at least once, for the scripture tells us of 'a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God', Luke 23. 50-52. Was his objection to the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus kept secret? It hardly seems to have been public, for he is still described at the crucifixion as being 'a secret disciple'. But, again, the cross changed that. 'And now, when the even was come . . . Joseph of Arimathea . . . came and went in boldly unto Pilate', Mark 15. 42, 43. Note that word 'boldly'. W. E. VINE writes that it signifies, 'to dare to do, or bear, something terrible or difficult'. STRONG says it implies doing something 'through the idea of extreme conduct'. The cross has turned a man who had kept in the shadows, who was afraid of public scandal, into someone who demanded access to Pilate – something only a member of the Sanhedrin could do – and marched boldly in to face the Roman tyrant to ask for the body of a criminal. Can we imagine how much he agonized over having to do this terrible, difficult, thing? But there was no one else who could do it, so it had to be done. A coward has become a brave man.

The cross turns a rich man into a beggar.

And what does rich and influential Joseph do before Pilate? He, 'craved the body of Jesus', Mark 15. 43, Matt. 27. 58. Once again we turn to W. E. VINE for help. 'Crave' 'suggests the attitude of a suppliant, the petition of one who is lesser than he to whom the petition is made'. One can see Joseph, on bended knee before Pilate, begging for the body of Jesus of Nazareth and refusing to go until he receives permission to have it. He has to wait in the presence of Pilate, too, until the centurion in charge of the crucifixion has been summoned to confirm Jesus of Nazareth is dead. Only then does he receive what he has begged for – 'when [Pilate] knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph', Mark 15. 44, 45. The cross

has turned a proud, self-sufficient man into a beggar on his knees before a hated ruler.

So we return to the foot of the cross. Crowds wait for the bodies to be taken down by Roman soldiers and cast into a criminal's common grave. But wait, two men hurry forward, no longer afraid to be associated with Jesus of Nazareth, enduring the incredulity and mockery of fellow members of the Sanhedrin. Gently, loving, believing hands unfasten the body of the Son of God from the cross. The scripture stresses 'he took him down'. Joseph had brought fresh, fine linen to wrap the body. Nicodemus had brought 'a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight', John 19. 39. Together, they took Him away to be washed, perfumed, wrapped in fresh linen interwoven with spices that in value were fit for a king's burial, and then loving, believing, reverent hands placed the body in a quiet, unused, private tomb belonging to Joseph himself. The spices, perhaps bought for Nicodemus' own burial, and the tomb intended for Joseph's burial, were freely given to the Son of God.

How important was it that these men stepped forward to be associated with our Lord? So important that Joseph's actions here are mentioned in every single one of the Gospels. It was of supreme importance that they stepped forward, because only they could fulfil the scripture, '[They] made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death', Isaiah

53. 9. This prophecy indicates that, though men had intended for His beloved Son to be buried in the common grave of the wicked, tossed in along with the thieves and covered with a shovel of lime, God would have Him buried with the rich. The actions of Joseph and Nicodemus remind us that God has His people in secret places. It may very well be that not all are as brave as others. But when the disciples, being humble Galilean fishermen, had no right to demand entry into the presence of Pilate, and when our Lord's family, being as yet unbelievers, had no desire to ask for His body to bury it, God had His men, waiting, worrying, yet, in the end, willing to step forward and do what needed to be done. God is never caught unawares.

And what difference has the cross of Christ made to us? Paul would say, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. 'Love, so amazing, so divine, demands [and should demand] my life, my all'. Why cherish dignity, when Christ lost His for us? Why shun shame, when Christ was shamed for us? Why long for reputation, when 'he made himself of no reputation'. We may not like the sentimentalism and sacerdotalism of the hymn, *The Old Rugged Cross*, but its sentiments should be true. 'To the old rugged cross I will ever be true, its shame and reproach gladly bear; then He'll call me some day to my home far away, where His glory forever I'll share'.



THEIR FINEST HOUR JOHN

By **MICHAEL BUCKERIDGE** Grantham, England.

John wrote his Gospel that, 'ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name', 20. 31, and his first Epistle so that, 'ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God', 5. 13. He is very clear that eternal life is essentially a relationship with God the Father and Son, John. 17. 3; 1 John 1. 1-4, and that through this our joy might be full, 1 John. 1. 4. The Psalmist tells us that it is in His presence there is fulness of joy, Ps. 16. 11, and thus it is interesting that the hunger for the presence and knowledge of Christ permeates the record of John's life, from the moment of his first question, 'Master, where dwellest thou', John. 1. 38, to the last longing of his heart, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus', Rev. 22. 20. Perhaps his finest hour therefore, was the culmination of a life enjoying fellowship with the Son when the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ' was sent to 'his servant John', Rev. 1. 1.

In the beginning

So begins John's gospel and it is interesting, assuming John is correctly identified as the unnamed man with Andrew in chapter one, that, at the very beginning of his relationship with Him, he asks Jesus, 'Master, where dwellest thou?' In his book, *Jesus among other gods*, RAVI ZACHARIAS suggest that this

goes beyond simply wanting to know where He was staying, and is rather an example of typical Eastern thinking. Where someone is from, or rather who they are from, is of the utmost importance. Illustrating the point, he recalls a time when he was speaking in India and the 10-minute introduction – much to his Canadian wife's bemusement – was filled with his father's achievements rather than his own! Having been directed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, to understand where this One was from became the priority. In those sublime early verses of his gospel he gives us the answer to the question before it is asked, 'the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father', 1. 18. In answer to the question, Jesus does not give an address, but an invitation, 'Come and see'. In his Gospel, John guides us through what he discovered as Jesus performed the signs that proved that He was 'the only begotten of the Father', 1. 14.

Right from the beginning, John's desire was to know Christ; for the fathers he wrote to, he could have no greater desire than that they continued to 'know him that is from the beginning', 1 John 2. 13, 14. That others might do the same and thus enter the fellowship and joy he and the other apostles enjoyed, was the reason why he declared all that he had heard and seen, 1. 3. According to John, the very essence of Christian life is knowing the Father and Son; to such was the Revelation given. Do we have eternal life? Let us ask how much of a priority is this relationship to me?

Called

'And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him', Matt. 4. 22. The fact that there were servants in the boat helping, Mark 1.

20; that his mother helped support Christ in His life, 15. 40, and provided spices for His burial, 16. 1; and that John seemed to be acquainted with the High Priest, John 18. 15, all indicate that his family were successful in business and had connections with the higher classes. However, in response to the call of the Lord and the evidence of His power and glory, Luke. 5. 9, he was prepared to forsake it all for Christ. We have seen his desire to know Christ and here he receives a test; Christ demands a willingness to give all. Discipleship demands devotion, 14. 25-27, and John, counting the cost, found in Christ one that he could follow all the way to exile on the Isle of Patmos where he received the greatest revelation of His glory.

Chosen and close

After his calling, John was chosen as one of the twelve, Matt. 10. 2, as one of three, Mark 5. 37, then as one of two, Luke 22. 8, and finally as the sole person into whose care Jesus could commit His mother, John 19. 26, 27. He was recognized by the others as close to the Lord, and who dared to ask the question all the others wished to know the answer to. He delighted to be near, and his writings are permeated by the instruction to abide, remain and continue in Christ. Was it this nearness that enabled him to comprehend while others were only seeing, 20. 8? In Revelation we see him as an old man 'in the Spirit'; still close, still abiding and consequently able to receive a foretaste of the full answer of the prayer he heard in John chapter 17 verse 24.

Is it significant that this disciple, who so appreciated the love of Jesus, 13. 23; 19. 26, was the one left to the end of the first century to defend His very nature? In seeing the life-giving grace to a girl and glimpsing the radiant glory on the mount, he was sure of His deity, and in the grief in the garden, His humanity. Was Jesus also the Christ, 1 John 2. 22? Absolutely, with the very ability of man to enjoy fellowship with the Father dependent upon this fact, v. 23! What joy and confirmation for this old saint to receive this final revelation of the ultimate glory of

Christ from, 'I Jesus', Rev. 22. 16, for, 'at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow', Phil. 2. 10!

Correction

Even one so close as John occasionally needed to be corrected – beware of the pride that is never far from any of us. Let us guard against a feeling of superiority in service and remember the Lord's rebuke, 'he that is not against us is for us', Luke 9. 50. His suggestion to scorch the Samaritans who rejected the Saviour could appear noteworthy in terms of his apparent indignation of the affront to their Lord and the faith that would be able to bring fire down, but it rather displayed ignorance

concerning the Lord's purpose during His first advent, Luke 9. 53-56, and was perhaps a manifestation of why he was surnamed a 'Son of Thunder'! Again, we would admire the expectation of faith in his request, along with James, for superiority in status, but learn the lesson that, in the kingdom of God, glory is preceded by suffering, Mark 10. 38, 39; position is sovereignly prepared, v. 40; and greatness is achieved through service, vv. 42-45. Would he have reflected on these lessons as the great Revelation was given and he saw the One who had been prepared to serve rather than be served and to give His life a ransom for many now highly exalted?

Character

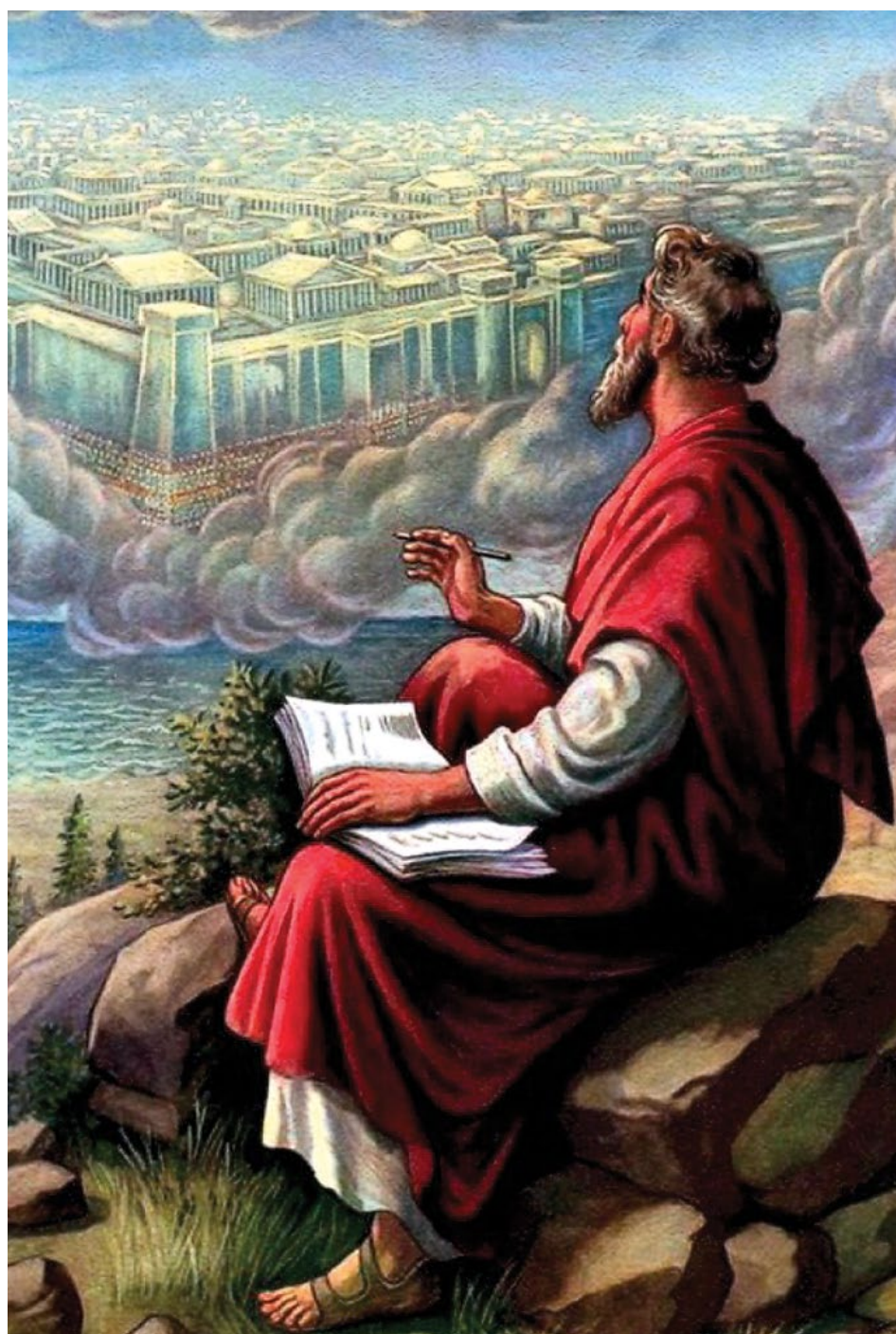
If the name that the Lord Jesus gave to him is any indication, John and his brother were of fiery disposition; sons of thunder – even in Revelation chapter 10 verse 4 John is told to suppress the voice of thunder! It is perhaps an indication of the truth of his name, Jehovah is gracious, that John is generally linked with love rather than judgement. For the one who learned through fellowship with his Lord to keep the thunderous side of his nature under control, there is the revelation of the judgement of God, the understanding that, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord', Rom. 12. 19, is no idle threat.

Continuance

Through persecution, John was a pillar, Acts 4. 21, Gal. 2. 9. In old age and exile on Patmos he still persevered, Rev. 1. John wrote that there is no fear in love, 1 John 4. 18. Is it a coincidence that he describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved and that he, alone among the disciples, is found at the cross? In understanding that he was loved by Christ, he could not be daunted by man. He had remained faithful to the Word made flesh, John 1. 14, and now he was richly rewarded in the final visions he received of the Word riding out in power and glory with His armies, acknowledged as 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS', Rev. 19. 16.

Conclusion

John tells us that the Good Shepherd came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly, John 10. 10, for 'in him was life', 1. 4. Eternal life is enjoyed as we know Him and abide in the Vine, for there we will bear fruit of the same character. For John, perhaps his finest hour on earth was that of the revelation of Jesus Christ, for he entered life that bit deeper. But John was looking beyond this earth, longing for the promise of his ascended Lord that 'where I am, there ye may be also', 14. 3, for then would not just be a fine hour, but fullness of eternal life as the children of God see Him and become 'like him; for we shall see him as he is', 1 John 3. 2.



Sir Robert Anderson

(1841–1918)

By **HOWARD BARNES** Westhoughton, England

Christian magazines like this one do not normally contain articles describing the life of a man who was a spymaster, a chief police detective, a knight, and a prolific author on Bible topics, but this really is a suitable description of Robert Anderson, who died 100 years ago, leaving a wonderful inheritance of still-in-print Christian books on a wide range of important topics. He is better known as 'Sir' Robert, a title conferred on him following his retirement, aged sixty, after thirty-four years of successful and high-profile public service. Another mark of his public standing following his career was that his portrait was hung in London's National Portrait Gallery in 1916.

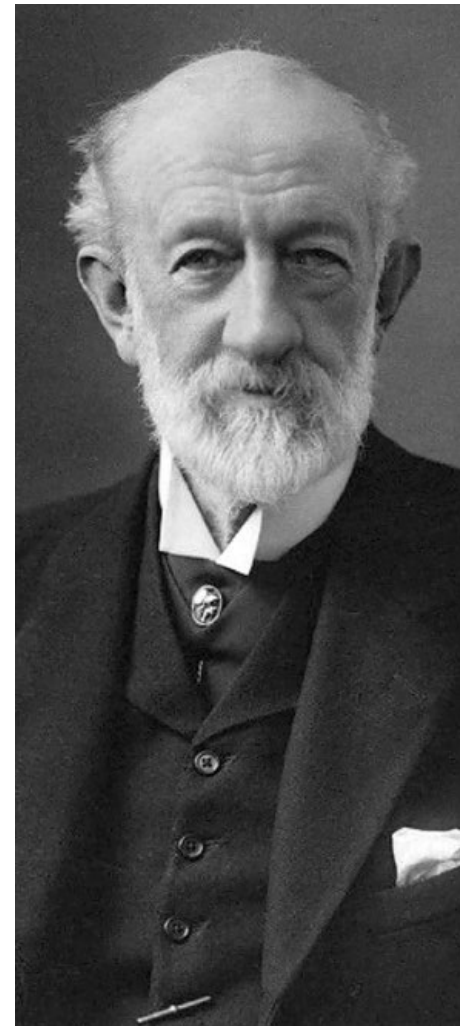
Robert Anderson was born in Dublin, Ireland, on 29th May 1841, into a Christian family of Scottish descent. His father, Matthew, was a senior civil servant employed as the provincial Crown Solicitor for the city and county of Dublin (long before the days of the Irish Republic). It was at the time of the Irish '59 Evangelical Revival that Robert's sister was converted at gospel services being conducted in Dublin by Joseph Denham Smith – author of the well-known hymn, 'Rise my soul! Behold 'tis Jesus'. She persuaded 19-year-old Robert to accompany her to one of Denham Smith's meetings. He went, but was not particularly impressed, or, in his own words later, 'the meeting only disappointed and vexed me'. However, salvation came the following Sunday evening through a sermon in his own Presbyterian

church. The preacher, in Robert's own words, 'boldly proclaimed forgiveness of sins, and eternal life as God's gift in grace, unreserved and unconditional, to be received by us as we sat in the pews. His sermon thrilled me, and yet I deemed his doctrine to be unscriptural. So I waylaid him as he left the vestry, and, on our homeward walk, I tackled him about his heresies . . . At last he let go my arm, and, facing me as we stood upon the pavement, he repeated with great solemnity his Gospel message and appeal: "I tell you", he said, "as a minister of Christ, and in His Name, that there is life for you here and now if you will accept Him. Will you accept Christ, or will you reject Him?" After a pause – how prolonged I know not – I exclaimed, "In God's Name I will accept Christ". Not another word passed between us; but after another pause he wrung my hand and left me. And I turned homewards with the peace of God filling my heart'.

In his early Christian days in Ireland, Robert became acquainted with many well-known Christians, among them G. F. Trench, C. H. Macintosh, Henry Grattan Guinness, Horatius Bonar, etc., even the famous English preachers Richard Weaver ('The Converted Collier') and Harry Moorhouse ('The Boy Preacher'). He was active in the gospel in Ireland, preaching not only in churches, but – in his own words – 'in schoolrooms, court-houses or jury rooms, in private houses, cottages or barns, once at least in a ballroom, at times in the open-air . . . We are living in the pilgrim fashion'. He recounted stories of God's work, such as the one about a man who 'said that a week ago he was the vilest wretch in the country, but now saved'.

On leaving school, Robert had at first embarked on a business career in a large brewery, but, after eighteen

months, he left and went into higher education. After studying at Boulogne and Paris, he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College Dublin in 1862 as a medal winner. After further studies he was called to the Irish Bar as a solicitor in 1865. Very soon afterwards, he was assisting the provincial Irish Government in the prosecution of treason charges against the so-called Fenians (the Irish Republican Brotherhood), the forerunners of today's Irish Republican terrorists. At that time, he wrote a well-accepted summary of the Fenian movement from secret documents. This work involved running spies (his most famous being Thomas Beach, who masqueraded as Major Henry Le Varon 'the champion spy of the [19th] century' who infiltrated the Fenian movement in America for twenty-one years), and Anderson earned quite a reputation in the area. Indeed, it was his inside knowledge of Fenian conspirators that led to his appointment as Irish Agent at the British Government's Home Office in London. It was a very dangerous time, with a bombing



campaign being carried out on the mainland, especially in London.

Anderson (by now Dr Robert Anderson) progressed well in police work, and he eventually became an Assistant Commissioner at the famous Scotland Yard police headquarters, from 1888 to 1901, and head of the newly-formed Criminal Investigation Department (CID). At the time, the capital was experiencing great panic because of the 'Jack-the-Ripper' serial murders. He led the CID until 1901, when he was knighted on his retirement at sixty in recognition of his fine work, being made a 'Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath' in the King's Birthday Honours List. As an important public figure, he had become close friends with many members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, as well as knowing the great Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone.

As to his personal life, in 1873 Anderson married a fellow Christian, Lady Agnes Moore, a sister of the Irish nobleman, the Earl of Drogheda. She was a true help-meet for him, and she herself became a leader in many branches of women's Christian work in London. They had five children, and one of them, Arthur, wrote his father and mother's biography in 1947.

He was well-known as a speaker for a wide range of evangelical organizations, including: the YMCA; the Church Army; the Evangelical Alliance; The Prophecy Investigation Society; the Advent Testimony Movement, etc. Dr Frederick A. Tatford (1901-1986) effectively took up the mantle from Sir Robert Anderson in his equally profound interest in prophetic matters – he was editor of *The Prophetic Witness* – and his wide interest in evangelical societies (FEBA, CEF, etc.), while likewise being successfully occupied with a high-powered full-time job. Drawing up a list of Robert Anderson's friends and acquaintances at that time is like producing a veritable 'Who's-Who' of Victorian evangelical life, especially those with a prophetic interest, viz. James M. Gray, C. I. Scofield, A. C. Dixon, Horatius Bonar, E. W. Bullinger (Bible scholar and secretary of the Trinitarian Bible

Society), author David Baron, Walter Scott, J. C. Ryle (the first bishop of Liverpool), Ada Ruth Habershon, Charles Alexander, A. T. Schofield, J. N. Darby (of whom Sir Robert said 'the greatest man I ever met'), C. H. Mackintosh, W. E. Vine, Henry Drummond, W. F. Moulton, Bishop Taylor Smith, Bishop Handley Moule, Adolph Saphir, and more.

A friend said of Sir Robert Anderson: 'On the platform, he appeared warrior-like; in conversation, he was professor-like; in friendly intercourse, brother-like. Throughout his life, he bore the true test of Christian manhood: the better known, the better loved'. One secular historian wrote of him that he was 'able to work with the quiet patience and efficiency of a spider'.

One of his great achievements, and the thing that he is most well-known for today, is his analysis and exposition of Daniel's prophecy of the sixty-nine weeks of years, Daniel chapter 9.¹ He has shown the fulfilment of this prophecy down to the very day, and this work is often cited by evangelical writers to this day. With the help of the then Astronomer Royal, Sir George Airy, he fixed the date of the decree by Cyrus for the Jews to 'restore and build Jerusalem' at March 14, 445 BC. Anderson calculated 173,880 days – accounting for sixty-nine weeks of years on the lunar calendar – and then arrived at April 6, AD 32 as the date the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem, shortly before his crucifixion!

Some of his major works which are still available today include: *Daniel In The Critics' Den*; *The Coming Prince*; *The Silence of God*; *Redemption Truths* (with a biographical sketch of him by Warren W. Wiersbe); *The Honour of His Name*; *Misunderstood Texts of the Bible*; *Human Destiny - 'After Death - what?'; A Doubter's Doubts about Science and Religion*; *The Bible and Modern Criticism*; *The Lord From Heaven* (a study of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, with a preparatory note by Bishop Handley Moule); *Pseudo-Criticism or the Higher Criticism and its counterfeit*; and *Unfulfilled Prophecy* (The Second-coming hope of the Church).

All his books are now out of copyright, since he has been dead for more than 70 years, so there has been a proliferation of his books in-print and on-line. So, for instance, seven books are available from iTunes, and most of his books are even available on eBay, while a good number are available as free downloads!

As to his spiritual affiliation, the well-known Christian biographer HENRY PICKERING said in his book *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, that Sir Robert was 'associated with the assemblies in an "on-and-off" basis during his life but said his heart was always with the assemblies'. In his Dublin days he attended the Merrion Hall assembly and for some time in London he assembled with believers in Camberwell and other places. A few months before his death he explained to HENRY PICKERING that he 'would have been much more with "brethren" in later years but for the question of ministry'. The 'open meeting' with its many abuses, did not naturally appeal to such an orderly mind. Yet his heart was ever there'.

In his later days, Robert Anderson attended the Trinity Presbyterian Church in Notting Hill, London, where, at one point, the well-known Adolph Saphir was the minister. Sir Robert's son wrote that 'I remember hearing my father say that, if I was put with his back to the wall and compelled to make an avowal, he would say he was a Presbyterian!' However, an appreciation in *The Witness* following his death told how, not many months previously, he had explained to the writer that his main reason for not continuing regularly with the 'Brethren' was their unwillingness to provide intelligent ministry at meetings other than the Lord's Table, and their haphazard way of doing things. The 'Brethren' he thought were strong on ministry and weak on ministers. Yet he expressed his indebtedness to and esteem for 'brethren beloved', and had the joy of worshipping with them and helping them as opportunity offered.

Endnotes

- 1 See his book *The Coming Prince*.

The Ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT in the life of the Believer

By **HOWARD A. BARNES** Westhoughton, England

Introduction

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that the future relationship that believers would enjoy with the Holy Spirit would be: 'he dwelleth with you [i.e., by your side], and shall be in you', John 14. 17, and that 'for ever', v. 16. So today each believer's possession of the Holy Spirit is internal and eternal, personal and permanent, from the moment of conversion!¹

Below we outline seven aspects of the present work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Salvation

The important work of the Holy Spirit for unbelievers – as promised by the Lord Jesus – is that He would, 'reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment', John 16. 8, where 'reprove' means providing sufficient and convincing evidence and proof of the reality and importance of something. In the same way, even in the days before the Flood, we hear God saying, 'My spirit shall not always strive [plead, JND] with man', Gen. 6. 3. This implies that even in those wicked days the Holy Spirit was active in giving men such necessary evidence for them to repent.² Today, anyone who accepts the Holy Spirit's proof and believes on the Lord Jesus as Saviour is born of the Spirit, John 3. 5, 6, 8. Thus, Peter says, 'Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit', 1 Pet. 1. 22, while Paul says, 'Ye have been

justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God', 1 Cor. 6. 11. Our salvation, and the justification it brings, is through the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, and is made effective through the activity of the 'Spirit of our God' in our hearts.³

Sealing

In ancient times fixing a seal to anything signified ownership, authentication, or approval, see Matt. 27. 66. In the same way, the Holy Spirit in us is God's seal.⁴ Similarly, the Holy Spirit is God's 'earnest' for us,⁵ that is, His present pledge and guarantee of all the good things to come. In the same way we read about 'the firstfruits of the Spirit', Rom. 8. 23, where the firstfruits are the present proof of a future full harvest, i.e., our blessings when the Lord comes.

Security

One important aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in us is assuring us that we are really saved, and also guaranteeing that we have eternal security and cannot be lost.⁶ We know this because the Holy Spirit Himself bears witness, along with our spirits, that we are children of God.⁷

Sanctification

The practical side of sanctification is when believers live Christ-like lives that set them apart from the evil influences of the world, the flesh and the devil. This is the external consequence of the internal working of the Holy Spirit. Hence, we read that, in general, the fruit of the Spirit is of the highest spiritual quality, i.e., 'in all goodness and righteousness and truth', Eph. 5. 9, or viewed in detail, 'the fruit of the Spirit is love,

joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance', Gal. 5. 22, 23.

The believer's life is a battlefield, where 'the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other', v. 17. The old verb 'to lust' meant 'to desire', 'to long for', 'to crave or yearn after' something either good or bad. So, on the one hand, we have the Holy Spirit desiring and able to produce His Christ-like fruit in us. On the other hand, we have the flesh longing to bring about, in general, 'the desires of the flesh and of the mind', Eph. 2. 3, or specifically, 'the works of the flesh . . . adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like', Gal. 5. 19-21.

We are reminded that the Holy Spirit who is in us is greater than 'he that is in the world', 1 John 4. 4, i.e., the devil, 'the prince of the power of the air', Eph. 2. 2. Also, 'we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God', 1 Cor. 2. 12.

Strengthening

The apostle Paul prays for the Ephesian Gentile believers 'that [God] . . . would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man', Eph. 3. 16. Paraphrasing this we might say, 'strengthened with power, through His Spirit, right into the inner man'. The measure or amount of this potential strengthening is considerable, i.e., 'according to the riches of his glory', 1. 18. There are quite a number of things in this prayer that arise from this first outcome, e.g., a Christ-centred life and a full comprehension of the things of God, see vv. 17-19.

Service

Service for God can only be undertaken properly using the gifts that He gives, not relying on any natural ability. There are a number of passages in the New Testament where

such spiritual gifts are described. The passage that goes along with our subject is 1 Corinthians chapter 12. The context is the local assembly and the gifts are the gifts of the Spirit, while in Ephesians chapter 4 the gifts are with reference to the body of Christ and are the gifts of the risen Lord Jesus, see verses 11 and 12. Lastly, in Romans chapter 12, the gifts are the gifts of God and are with a view to the individual believer, vv. 3-8.

First, in 1 Corinthians 12, we note that, 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal', v. 7, reminding us that all believers are gifted, but there are a variety of these gifts, vv. 8-11. Having a gift is no reason for boasting because the Holy Spirit decides how each believer is gifted, 'dividing to every man severally as he will', v. 11. Neither is the use of a gift any reason for arrogance, for in each gifted person 'worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit', v. 11, cp. Phil. 2. 13.

No effective service for God can be performed without prayer, and twice in the New Testament we read about 'praying in the Spirit'.⁸ Prayer should be motivated and governed by the Holy Spirit in terms of how and what we pray for. More than this, we are promised that, 'the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered', Rom. 8. 26, 27; cp. v. 34.

Old Testament servants of God – prophets, priests, and kings – were anointed with oil as a demonstration of divine choice, consecration, and empowerment. Today, as God's servants, we too have an anointing, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, viz., 'ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things', 1 John 2. 20 and, 'the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you', v. 27.

Stipulations for truly experiencing the Holy Spirit's work

To fully experience the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, we should 'walk in the Spirit', Gal. 5. 16, 25, which simply means us choosing to move through



life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, putting ourselves in situations where He can work in our lives, e.g., reading our Bibles, 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God', Eph. 6. 17; seeking the fellowship of God's people, etc. If we make the decision to 'walk in the Spirit' then we will certainly 'not fulfil the lust of the flesh', Gal. 5. 16. Also, we should be 'filled with the Spirit', Eph. 5. 18, that is, we should ensure that our lives are not absorbed with other things, thus allowing Him to influence every area of our lives.

Otherwise, looked at negatively, we should stop quenching the Holy Spirit in our lives, 1 Thess. 5. 19. This has the idea of extinguishing a fire, cp. Acts 2. 3, i.e., not allowing the Holy Spirit to kindle a spiritual flame in our lives. Then, lastly and very importantly, since the Holy Spirit is a real person, we should stop grieving Him, Eph. 4. 30, i.e., disappointing and upsetting Him by not allowing Him to work effectively in our lives.

Summary

First of all, the Holy Spirit showed us beyond any doubt that we were sinners; then, through the new birth, using the word of God, He ensured that we became children of God. Next, having become God's seal and

pledge by permanently dwelling in us, He continued assuring us that we are now, beyond any doubt, children of God, interceding for us, and comforting us, helping and facilitating our prayers. He then leads, strengthens, gifts, guards, guides and works in us, so that we can live practically as children of God, manifesting the 'fruit of the Spirit'. At the same time there are certain practical requirements on our part that we should fulfil if we are to enjoy these blessings to the full, i.e., not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit, but, on the other hand, to walk in and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Endnotes

- 1 The following twenty New Testament verses clearly show that believers are now truly in such permanent possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and do not have to look for His later or fresh entry into their hearts: John 7. 39; 14. 17; Acts 2. 38; 10. 45; 11. 17; 15. 8; Rom. 5. 5; 8. 9, 11, 15, 23; 1 Cor. 3. 16; 6. 19; 2 Cor. 1. 22; 5. 5; Gal. 3. 2, 14; 1 Thess. 4. 8; 1 John 3. 24; 4. 4, 13.
- 2 See, for example, Enoch and Noah's walk and witness, 1 Pet. 3. 19; 2 Pet. 2. 5-9; Jude 14.
- 3 See also 2 Thess. 2. 13; and 1 Pet. 1. 2.
- 4 See Eph. 1. 13; 4. 30; 2 Cor. 1. 22.
- 5 See Eph. 1. 14; 2 Cor. 1. 22; 5. 5.
- 6 See Rom. 8. 16, 17; cp. Gal. 4. 6.
- 7 Rom. 8. 15, 16; and see also 1 John 3. 24; 4. 13; and 5. 10.
- 8 See Eph. 6. 18 and Jude 20.

MAMBILIMA MISSION

1898 to 2017

By **ROBERT MUIR** Cowdenbeath, Scotland

Mambilima means 'the jumping waters' and gets its name from the raging of the waters of the Luapula River over the rocky outcrop just above the village. Dan Crawford reached this point in his canoe as he and Grace were on a visit to the grave of David Livingstone.

Mr. Pomeroy began the work and was joined by his sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. These early days were turbulent as the political climate was tense. When the Andersons moved for health reasons, Dugald Campbell arrived and took over the work. Soon a house was built and a school room erected. Two church services were held every day and a school for children began. Soldiers, government servants, chiefs, children and adults attended the services. Against the background of the practice of witchcraft and lycanthropy, Campbell preached the good news of salvation for a number of years, but there was no response to the message.

With no results of believing faith in the Saviour, Dugald became despondent. In such a fit of despondency he called the elders of the village and announced that as no one believed the teaching he was going to move elsewhere. The elders listened but pleaded with him to stay. One elder said changes were taking place in the village and certain evil practices had been stopped. 'No', he said, 'Do not leave us. Keep on preaching'. Campbell continued the work and a few Sundays later the movement came.

The hall was packed to capacity

and many had to stand to listen. Campbell preached, conscious that the Holy Spirit was working. There was a move in the congregation as a man stood up and raised his head. It was Mitamba, the witch doctor, who was known and feared by all. God had spoken to him and he was a troubled man. 'Last night', he said, 'In despair I cried out to God for forgiveness and I trusted Jesus Christ for salvation'. He was now a new man in Christ and went on to prove it by his lifestyle. He was publicly baptized in the river and, in the weeks that followed, further confessions of faith were made and the church began. However, these were difficult days in the Luapula valley. Campbell suffered personally as his wife and child died at Luanza, and another two children were taken in death later. Beyond this, loneliness, and the incidence of malaria, diarrhoea, dysentery and black water fever all took their toll.

In 1905, Mr. and Mrs. W. Lammond joined the work, but Mrs. Lammond died from black water fever in 1906. In 1908, Mr. Lammond remarried and his new wife joined him in the work.

The gospel continued to be preached and its power was seen as devilish practices and native rites were abandoned by those who trusted the Saviour. Over this period, sixty-two men and women openly confessed faith in the Lord. As the gospel brought liberty in Christ, the reading of the word brought a change of behaviour in the home.

The blessing they had experienced soon meant that the school room where they met was not big enough, but the people had a mind to give for the building of a hall. The women carried the water from the

river, the men made the bricks and fired them, and in three months the hall was complete and debt free.

Sadly, there was a set-back to the work when the government doctor found signs of sleeping sickness, and this spread, closing down the work. They were not allowed to return to Mambilima until 1922.

Soon after that return, in 1923, a new hall was opened and around 1,200 were present for that meeting and, on Lord's Day, 200 broke bread.

A little later, Miss Beatrice Fraser from Aberdeen joined the work as a registered nurse, Mr Charlie Stokes joined taking responsibility for the school work, and Miss Esther Woolnough came, being the first trained teacher for the girls. The schools developed and basic skills were taught, including the skill of making bricks and firing them in kilns, carpentry, shoe repairs, and soldering. Miss Woolnough encouraged the development of education for the girls, ultimately providing them with fifty New Testaments, having taught them to read. The medical work also developed under the leadership of Miss Fraser, and at least 100 patients were treated at the dispensary each day. The word of God was brought to the patients and staff each day.

In 1931, Mr. Swan laid the foundation stone for the 'new' school classroom, a building still in use today! In 1940, the school for blind children was opened and numbers increased until, in 1945, there were 1,030 pupils attending.

In 1944, Miss Woolnough left Mambilima for Mansa, but in that same year Meryl Shepherd joined the work, and was followed by her sister Elizabeth Shepherd in 1946. 1944 was also the year Noeline Stockdale arrived from Carlisle and took over the hospital, allowing Miss Fraser to retire. In 1949, Cathie Arthur joined the hospital work, and Archie Ross arrived and took over the school work.

As the work entered the 1950s, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Ford joined the work,

and the work of the hospital and schools progressed. Later, Morag Anthony, and then Margaret Jarvis, arrived to strengthen the work.

Another milestone was reached in 1956 when the first edition of the Bemba Bible was produced, providing a complete Bible in the mother tongue. At the same time, a small radio station was commenced. However, in the years that led up to independence, increasing nationalism and anti-European feeling meant the police had to move in to protect the lady missionaries. Finally, on the 25th October 1964, Zambia became the ninth African state to gain independence from the British crown, and fortunately the change was conducted in a peaceful manner. Perhaps the greatest blow to the work came on the 24th of February 1968 when Mr. Lammond became ill and was taken into the presence of the Lord. For many, this was the end of an era.

It has been great to see the spread of the gospel in the last eighty-five years, much of that due to the African believers' faithful witnessing to their fellow villagers of the Saviour, the message backed up by the change the love of God has brought into their lives. In 1982, there were forty-one churches and many had congregations of 200. Alongside those who spread the gospel, there were local believers who stood out in their ability to teach the scriptures. These included Henry Pandawe, Charles Muyembe, and Bwanga Jackson who have been used of God in teaching the word.

In 1983, Mark Davies arrived, followed by Shirley Thomson, and they were married at Mambilima in 1986. Soon after Dr. Martin and Naomi Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hatcher, and Mr. and Mrs. Rod Boatman joined the work. They used their joint experience in administration, nursing and teaching to forward all aspects of the work at Mambilima.

As work progressed into 1991, a hospital management team was set up to help run the hospital. Young

Zambian men were brought onto the board of management for the hospital and the school, preparing them to take over the running of the establishments when overseas staff would no longer be there. By the end of 1996 all the missionaries had gone and local staff were in charge.

My first introduction to Mambilima was in 1997, while fleeing from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Because the station was then without a missionary, and preparations were being made for Centenary celebrations in 1998, my wife, Margaret, and I were asked if we would go and host the visitors that were coming. Although the assembly at Kashikishi, north of Mambilima, were encouraging us to go and help them, we were aware of many areas at Mambilima where we could be involved. For example, the hospital required help and, as we were both nurses, we felt we could assist, especially in administration. We were also teachers and could help with the schools too. Finally, Margaret was fluent in the Bemba language, as she had previously spent time at Mambilima. Thus we settled for Mambilima and the assembly elders welcomed us into what became a busy but exciting and satisfying work.

When we took over the mission we were conscious that, because of age, we had a limited time span. Whilst there was much to be done with regard to teaching the word of God, there were buildings and property that needed upgrading. During the next twelve years to 2012, improvements were made to the buildings. This included the building of an operating theatre, an out-patient department, wards for men and women, a new laboratory, a dental room and staff houses. Most recently, we have been able to build a new state-of-the-art maternity unit. Alongside these developments, every morning the word of God was preached over loudspeakers, and daily visitations were made by the evangelists and the believers to the patients. Thus, during their stay in hospital many came to faith in the Lord Jesus.

During this period, we also saw the school develop, starting as a school for disabled children in primary grades. Permission was given to expand into secondary school level. In 2004, Brass Tacks came, and, over a period of six months, a new building with six classrooms, assembly hall, teachers' office and toilets were built. At the same time, the dining room was doubled in size, and the foundations for the new meeting hall for the church were laid. Working with the local builders they also developed their building, plumbing, and electrical skills. Since then, another three classroom blocks have been built. The high school now has around 300 pupils and the primary school has also increased to around 180 pupils, both able-bodied and disabled. The teachers at the schools are all believers, and most in assembly fellowship. Again, the word of God is brought to the children every morning, and it is great to know many of the children have trusted the Lord Jesus. We give God thanks for the liberty there is to teach the word of God both in school assemblies and in classes.

During these years we had the joy of commencing and teaching consecutive Bible study, which they love to call 'Bible school'. At Kashikishi, mature students come for two months twice a year. Then at Mambilima they meet for two months twice a year. These are great times of fellowship and blessing as the scriptures are taught. Also, every second year, the Luapula conference is held here, and thousands attend for a week of Bible teaching, fellowship and singing. A group of local elders has now taken over the running of the site.

Since 2012, Margaret and I have been residing in Scotland and visiting Zambia once or twice a year. From those early beginnings when the gospel was first preached with no obvious fruit, now every second year around 10,000 will gather for one week in August to enjoy the word of God, fellowship and singing. We look back over the years and see God's goodness.

AT HIS FEET

John 11 – WEEPING AT HIS FEET

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

One simple lesson we can learn from this chapter is that believers are not immune to sorrow or exempt from times of grief and loss. From the first verse we learn of the close relationship that existed between the Lord and those that occupied the home of Lazarus in Bethany. Indeed, the sisters, Martha and Mary describe Lazarus as 'he whom thou lovest', v. 3, and yet it was that home that experienced serious illness and, eventually, death. Indeed, illness and death are no respecters of persons!

The reaction of Martha and Mary to this situation is to communicate with the Lord. It is interesting to note that both kept in touch with the Lord's movements – they knew where to find Him. Equally, we might all learn a lesson from these sisters in maintaining open lines of communication with the Lord, taking to Him the concerns of our hearts, although, as here, the answer is not always immediate. In fact, Lazarus dies!

One of the most misused texts in moments of grief is 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13, 'ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope'. Those who have lost someone very close will appreciate that the weight of sorrow is intense and the sense of loss palpable. Such grief and sorrow is not assuaged by the inappropriate quotation of a familiar text! Perhaps we could learn something from the approach of the Saviour. One thing to note from this chapter, and from verses 20 to 38 in particular, is how little the Lord actually says. If there

is one thing that Job's miserable comforters got right it was that 'they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great', Job 2. 13.

But there are two other little points worthy of note. The first is the difference of approach that the Lord takes with the two women. You will notice that it is Martha who has most to say, at least as far as the record of John is concerned. She has many questions to ask and issues to be resolved. Thus, the Lord tells her something of His character and person as He addresses her concerns. It is to Martha that the Lord reveals Himself as 'the resurrection, and the life', v. 25.

With Mary, the Lord does not say much, but He 'groaned', v. 33, He 'was troubled', v. 33, and He weeps with Mary as He shares in her sorrow in a



very touching way. Although Lazarus' death was very much in the purpose of God, the Lord also sees it for what it is, a consequence of sin and the fall.

What do we learn here? In simple terms we learn that the Lord treats each person differently. There is no 'blanket approach' in the actions of the Saviour. But, more importantly, we learn the truth of the priestly work of the Lord, 'for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities', Heb. 4. 15. Perhaps Mary is a good illustration of the following verse, 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need', v. 16.

The second point I want us to note, is that what the Lord did say cut to the heart of the matter, 'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live', v. 25. As believers, what is it that enables us to see the death of a loved one differently? How do we come to terms with the loss of those with whom we have shared so much of our Christian life? It is in this: death is not the end. We shall see that fellow believer again when we are united, once more, in the presence of the Saviour. That is what the apostle meant when he wrote, 'ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope', 1 Thess. 4. 13. Is the sorrow any less real? Is the burden of grief any lighter? From my own personal experience I would say, 'No'. But in such moments of sorrow and grief we are able to cling to the truth of God – we have hope!

In writing upon Luke chapter 10 and Mary at the feet of the Lord, we stated that the important lesson was to see service in its true perspective and to appreciate the necessity of spending time with the Lord, meditating upon Him and His word. In John chapter 11 we see sorrow in its true perspective. How can we make sense of the seasons of sorrow and grief? Surely it is by spending time with the Lord, speaking to Him about our sorrow, meditating upon Him, and finding in His word, and the promises of His word, that which will bring comfort to our souls.

Legality, Liberty and Diversity

By **RANDAL AMOS** Rochester, New York, USA

In a free society promoting liberty and diversity, 'legalism' is a common cry. If something is judged as absolutely right or wrong, not respecting personal choice, it's now labelled 'legalistic'. If it doesn't include diversity of thought, it's branded 'legalism'. But is legalism and legality the same? For the Christian who has a heart for the mind and will of God, how does Holy Scripture present legality, liberty, and diversity? The following is a short summary.

Legality is of God

God is a legal God. Legality upholds right and wrong, which is justice. God is revealed as 'just and right'.¹ The Lord's law to Israel upheld social justice.² God ordains government to uphold civil justice in punishing evil.³ Even the Lord's universe operates by absolute laws, like the law of gravity, etc. Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 35 says, 'the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night'. The gospel is also legal [just]. It requires punishment for sin [His death] before offering forgiveness 'that he might be just', which upheld the law that requires death for sin.⁴ Legality doesn't function by bias or mood but by justice, which can protect and secure.

Legalism – the perversion of legality.

Legalism is to impose man's way on God's people as if it were law. Legalism is to restore Israel's law in principle, with works or rituals as a requirement to secure God's salvation of grace.⁵ It includes binding Israel's, or man's, traditions on the church, that contradicts God's way, as the way to worship and serve.⁶ It can involve man's professional hierarchy which restricts the liberty given to the New Testament church by limiting the practice of the priesthood of all believers in the assembly meeting.⁷

Caution – what legalism is not.

To obey the word and traditions of the Lord Jesus is not legalism but love.⁸ Do

not be intimidated by dubious cries of legalism. Express your love for the Lord who died for you by obedience to His word!

Liberty is of God

Consider Israel. The Lord wanted them to leave Egypt: 'let my people go that they may serve me', Exod. 8. 1. But Pharaoh said 'no', as he was their slave master. Israel couldn't serve God – they were restrained by another power. So the Lord freed them from the bondage that restrained them. They now had the ability to serve the Lord freely – this is liberty!

Liberty is being made free from restraints that keep us from serving God. There is the restraint of the power of sin: 'being made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness' is what the gospel of Jesus Christ accomplished. Free to serve! There is the restraint of the authority of the Old Testament law to form a relationship with God. 'But now we are delivered from the law . . . that we should serve in newness of spirit', Rom. 7. 6. The law, with its principle of judgement, stirs up our flesh, rather than produce fruit unto God. Now the church has been 'called unto liberty',⁹ free and able to serve the Lord His way!

Liberalism: the perversion of liberty.

Liberalism is based on my right to choose what I want – my *choice* of what to believe, what lifestyle I will live, how I worship, or how church should be. The Lord's liberty is not freedom to choose my choice – but being free to choose God's choice. It's not freedom to sin but freedom from sin.¹⁰

Diversity is of God

Diversity is 'including a variety' – but a variety of what? The world is made up of diverse nations, peoples, families and languages¹¹ – one blood (human race) with different nationalities. This happens naturally by God's choice apart from our choice.¹² The church also has a diversity of spiritual gifts.¹³

The Lord's diversity in the gospel of Christ is the equal inclusion of all *believing* nationalities into the body of Christ. It is without bias or

discrimination. All groups are equally united in the Head. All are given the same blessings regardless of colour, culture, class, gender, prior religious heritage, or sins committed.

Each member of this one body will have the manifestation of the Spirit with gifted abilities to serve, but the gifts will differ. The body of Christ is a diversity of God's choosing forming the unity of the one body.

Inclusivism: the perversion of diversity.

Biblical diversity is not the inclusion of diverse immoral lifestyles. God's church, as the holy temple of God, is not to be tolerant of so-called believers who are living in sin. Immorality and other sins of the flesh are **our choice**. Our choices are not God's diversity.

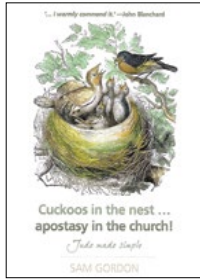
The Lord's diversity is not equal roles for men and women in the home or the church but diverse roles. God's diversity is not the toleration of unscriptural practices in the church. The church, while made up of diversity, is called to a unity (oneness) in its Head. The thinking and wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ alone is to govern us.¹⁴ The church is designed to be a diversity created into a unity, expressed with unanimity of speech and thinking from its Lord.

The Lord Jesus Himself is not pleased with a doctrinal diversity of choices or practices by His churches.¹⁵ What Paul taught in one church, he taught in all.¹⁶ The church is a unity of truth. Amazing grace!

Endnotes

- 1 Deut. 32. 4.
- 2 Deut. 4. 8.
- 3 Rom. 13. 4.
- 4 Rom. 3. 25, 26, 31.
- 5 Rom. 3. 28.
- 6 Matt. 15. 8, 9; Col. 2. 14-17.
- 7 Heb. 10. 19-25; 1 Pet. 2. 5; 1 Cor. 14. 23-40 (note vv. 36-38).
- 8 John 14. 15; 1 Cor. 14. 37; 2 Thess. 2. 15.
- 9 Gal. 5. 12.
- 10 Rom. 6.
- 11 Rev. 5. 9.
- 12 Acts 17. 26.
- 13 *There are diversities of gifts*, 1 Cor. 12. 4. This happens supernaturally apart from our choice – but His choice, 1 Cor. 12. 11.
- 14 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment', 1 Cor. 1. 10.
- 15 Rev. 2 and 3.
- 16 1 Cor. 4. 17.

Book Reviews



Cuckoos in the nest ... apostasy in the church. Sam Gordon

Paperback, 145 pages, published by Christian Year Publications, available from John Ritchie Ltd, 40 Beansburn, Kilmarnock, KA3 1RH. ISBN 978-1-872734-43-9.

A book review is, by its very nature, a subjective exercise; it is just one person's thoughts and opinion. The sub-title of this book is, 'Jude made simple', yet on first reading, the writer does not really achieve that aim. The book falls between an exposition and an explanation and is written in a colloquial, informal style which is presumably intended to appeal to younger readers. This may be one reason why the present reviewer, who can no longer lay claim to youth, found the book not entirely to his taste!

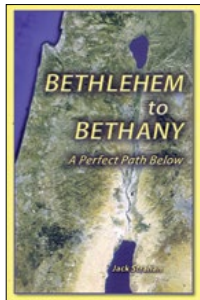
The writer correctly identifies the occurrence of the number three throughout the structure of the epistle and divides the chapters broadly around verses in groups of threes. The underlying outline and teaching from Jude's Epistle

is sound, but the narrative is impaired by the use of far too many clichés and soundbites. As an example, in three paragraphs on page 50, the following phrases are used in quick succession: The gauntlet is thrown down ... go with the flow ... swim against the tide ... buried their head in the sand ... failing to grasp the nettle ... the spiralling situation ... twin towered influences ... mass media including cyberspace ... a secular sybaritic environment ... that's old hat ... intellectual lightweights and fuddy-duddy obscurantists ... maintain a sense of equilibrium ... never-say-die attitude ... once bitten, twice shy.

Unfortunately, this style of presentation continues throughout the book, making it

rather difficult at times to follow the line of Jude's teaching. Jude himself, of course, uses a number of telling metaphors and word pictures to make his point, but MR GORDON goes 'over the top' in his efforts to clarify these weighty verses.

There are a number of summaries throughout the book, presented as bullet points and often alliterative in style to help the reader to memorize the truths being taught. MR GORDON rightly emphasizes the importance of Jude's Epistle for the present day, but this reviewer would venture to suggest the *The Acts of the Apostates* by S. MAXWELL CODER, quoted several times in Mr GORDON's book, gives a much clearer and readable presentation of the epistle.



Bethlehem to Bethany Jack Strahan

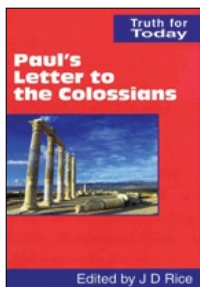
Hardback, 192 pages, Published by Scripture Teaching Library, Cookstown, Northern Ireland. ISBN: 978-1-909789-31-9

From the title alone one might consider this book to deal with familiar places in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. In that sense, the assumption is accurate. The author does indeed cover places such as Bethlehem, Bethabara, Bethsaida, Bethesda, Bethphage, and Bethany. However, these 'Stepping Stones on the Saviour's earthly pathway', as the author describes them, are covered in a very distinct way. Weaving the historical background, the present geography, illustrated with photographs and diagrams, and the biblical record of each place, the writer provides us with

some choice and heart-warming material, all from the pen of one who has visited Israel on many occasions.

As the number of scriptural references varies, so the writer spends different amounts of space on each place. Equally, for those not familiar with the physical geography of Israel, STRAHAN seeks to paint a mental picture of the landscape in which the Saviour moved, as well as providing photographs of its present layout. This is all-important preparation for the consideration of the

characters and events associated with each town or city. Seldom has this reviewer read devotional material of such quality. It is difficult to pick out examples but STRAHAN's comment on the healings of the Lord Jesus, pages 84 and 85, was particularly choice. As DAVID GILLILAND says in his comments on the back cover, the reader will be 'treated to a rich feast of meditations on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus reflecting years of in-depth study and intimate appreciation of the Saviour'. This book is highly recommended.



Truth for Today – Paul's Letter to the Colossians Edited by J. D. Rice

Paperback, 82 pages, Published by Scripture Truth Publications, 31-33 Glover Street, Crewe, CW1 3LD, UK. ISBN: 978-0-901860-58-3

As the Foreword suggests, this book might be best described as 'suitable Bible Study material for young Christians'. It is a compilation of chapters taken from a series of talks given by different speakers on the *Truth for Today* radio programme broadcast on London's Premier Christian Radio.

The book is divided up into seven chapters entitled: Introduction; Pre-eminence in all things; Christ in you the hope of glory; You are complete in Him; Christ our life; You serve the Lord Christ; and Pray, walk and talk. As most of

the chapters have a different author, it is to be expected that the approaches to the subjects will vary. Some authors stick to the passage before them, going down the verses in a systematic way. Others bring a particular 'template' to their portion and apply that approach as they consider the verses before them. Similarly, certain topical references reveal its origins in a radio broadcast. All of this can be helpful in showing the richness and practicality of the epistle. I particularly enjoyed GORDON KELL's chapter on the different spheres of service

covered in chapters 3 and 4.

Although there were one or two weaknesses in the editing of the book and a number of poorly chosen comments and phrases, such as 'abstract Deity', page 33, the book provides a useful outline of some of the key issues in this portion of the word of God. Taking into consideration that it was primarily a series of radio talks, it has been well constructed and should whet the appetite of the reader to pursue a more detailed study of this important New Testament book.

Question Time

Conducted by
Richard Collings

QUESTION

There was a lot of music linked to worship in the Old Testament, is it appropriate for today?

ANSWER

Generally speaking, up until the middle of the twentieth century many assemblies had no musical instrument at all and, even today, that would be the case in several areas. Even those that did use a musical accompaniment limited this to either an organ or a piano. Things began to change about fifty years ago and the rate of change has accelerated over the last three decades. Such is the extent of this shift that the use of multiple musical instruments is considered by some to be an integral and essential element of corporate worship.

Our only guide as to whether this change is right or wrong, beneficial or detrimental, must not be our personal preferences, or what is culturally acceptable, but the word of God. In examining the scriptures, one thing becomes apparent very quickly; there is a complete contrast between what prevailed in the Old Testament and what we find in the New Testament. Whereas in Judaism music, and a diversity of instruments, is mentioned, there is not a single reference to the use of any musical instrument in relation to any church.

This total silence cannot be coincidental, but must be significant. At the very least, it teaches us that there is no mandate to introduce a musical instrument into the various meetings of an assembly. In addition, I suggest that the use of a musical instrument was either totally absent or was of such insignificant usage as to not merit one reference to it. Although it is not a strong counter argument, it must also be accepted that there is not a specific prohibition against the use of some form of accompaniment to the singing recorded in the Epistles.

In view of the comments made in the previous two paragraphs, I believe we can come to some definite responses to the question that has been asked. Firstly, as the use of musical instruments is primarily linked to the ceremonial law observed by Israel, that would suggest that it has no place in church life today.

Secondly, in the absence of any biblical prohibition stipulating we must not use any instruments, we should guard against going beyond what the scriptures teach. Thirdly, it is clear that music should not have any place of priority in church life, nor should it have any place of prominence, as it is afforded neither in the New Testament.

We all probably subscribe to the teaching that each assembly is autonomous, and, whilst that does not mean each can do whatever they want, it does mean that one company cannot legislate for another. If one church believes they are free to use some form of music then, providing it has no place of prominence nor is given any priority, they are at liberty to make that decision. However, this gives rise to another issue – what kind of music is appropriate and when can it be used? To answer the latter point first, if it is not wrong to use an instrument, then I cannot see why it cannot be used at any meeting where hymns are being sung.

In respect of what musical instrument to use, then each church must decide what is appropriate and ensure its usage is neither intrusive nor dominant. Traditionally, many readers of this magazine will have grown up in an assembly where the organ was the only instrument, but this is no more ‘sacred’ than the use of a piano or something else. Passions can run high on this matter, but we need to accept that this is a matter of taste and familiarity, rather than one of a definite instruction from the scriptures.

What is more important is not what is played but how it is played. The purpose of a musical accompaniment is not to show how talented the player is; it is merely to assist the saints in being able to sing in tune and in time. Equally, if a musical instrument is going to be used, it needs to be played well; it is not a good testimony to have someone playing poorly and making it difficult for the saints to recognize the tune.

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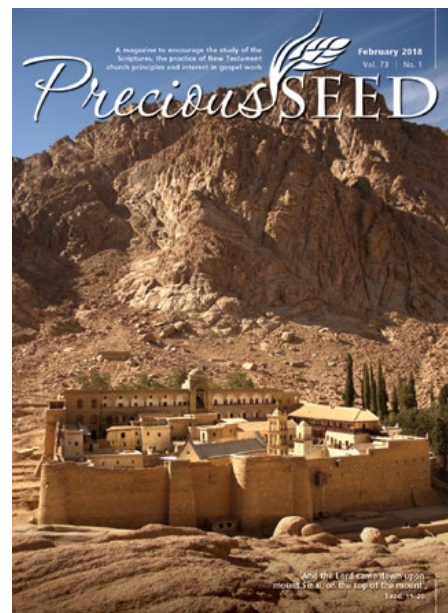
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**'And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai,
on the top of the mount', Exod. 19.20.**

Even today, the exact location of Mount Sinai is highly disputed by scholars, but the traditional view, going back as far as Justinian in the sixth century AD, is that the mountain can be identified with Jabal Mūsā (mount of Moses), a mountain in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. The mountain is also known as Mount Horeb in the Old Testament, Deut. 1. 6, and it was here that God revealed Himself to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments, Exod. 20. The mountain presented the children of Israel with an awesome sight as it appeared to them to be on fire, Deut. 4. 11, and the entire mountain trembled violently, similar to that of a volcanic eruption with smoke enveloping the whole scene, Exod. 19. 16-18, cp. Judg. 5. 5. The noise must also have been deafening as the blare of horns grew louder and louder, cp. Pss. 18. 8-16; 68. 7. 8, ultimately proclaiming the power and majesty of God in answering Moses through thunder, Exod. 19. 18, 19, see also Deut. 33. 2. The writer to the Hebrews tells us of the affect that this event had, when he states that 'So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake', 12. 21. In the New Testament, Paul uses the imagery of the mountain in an allegory to compare and contrast two distinct covenants. The first covenant is characterized by bondage and linked directly to Mount Sinai, which is interpreted by Paul as the earthly Jerusalem or Judaism with its inherent bondage to the law. By contrast, the second covenant, which Paul describes as 'the Jerusalem which is above' is characterized by freedom, and equates to the mother of all those children of promise, i.e., like Isaac, children born after the Spirit not after the flesh, Gal. 4. 21-31. This imagery is further developed in Hebrews chapter 12 where those who belong to Christ have no need of a sacred mountain like Sinai, but 'are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem', v. 22.

Our picture also shows the famous Saint Catherine's monastery that has existed at the foot of Mount Sinai since the sixth century AD. It was here, in the nineteenth century, that Constantin (von) Tischendorf discovered parts of the fourth century AD Codex now known as Sinaiticus, which contains the oldest surviving complete manuscript of the New Testament together with fragments of the Old Testament. Later, Tischendorf gifted the codex to his patron, the Russian Tsar Alexander II. When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917, they looted many of the prize artefacts of the Russian royal family, and, in 1933, under the ruthless leadership of Joseph Stalin, who was desperate for foreign currency to implement his socialist plans, sold the Codex to the British Museum for £100,000. How sad to think that God's word has been so despised by men that it is simply reduced to some form of monetary value. May we learn to rightly value the word of God in our lives, and, like Ezekiel, may it taste as sweet as honey, Ezek. 3. 3.

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