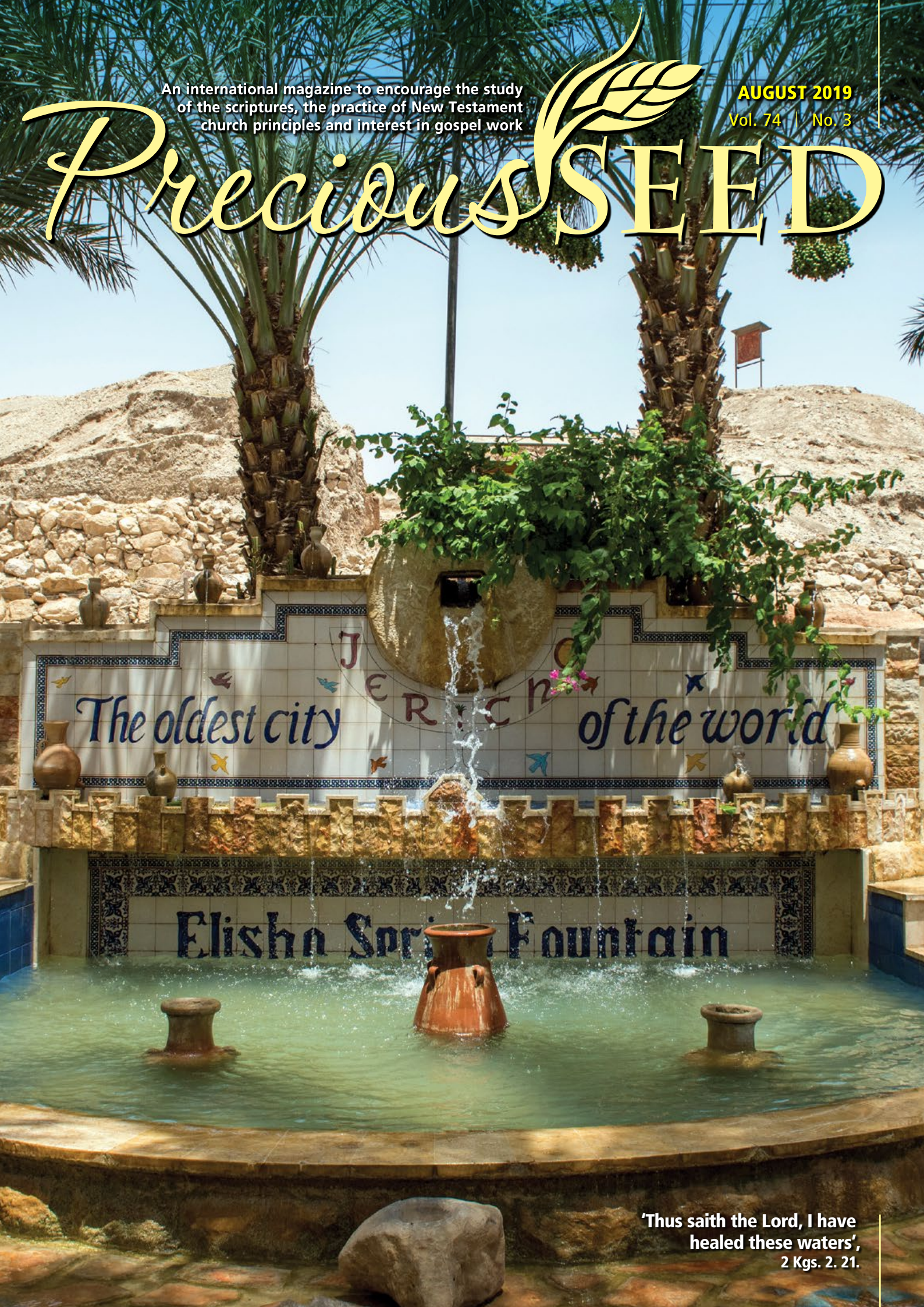


An international magazine to encourage the study
of the scriptures, the practice of New Testament
church principles and interest in gospel work

AUGUST 2019

Vol. 74 | No. 3

Precious SEED



'Thus saith the Lord, I have
healed these waters',
2 Kgs. 2. 21.

BOOKS ORDER FORM

Please complete this form and send with your card details to:

Precious Seed Publications, 34 Metcalfe Avenue, Killamarsh, Sheffield, S21 1HW, UK.

Please send the following:

NEW BOOKS AND SPECIAL OFFERS

- 100 Questions sent to Precious Seed by Richard Collings@ £7.50
- Galatians, The Merits of Christ by Norman Mellish@ £7.50
- Faith Matters 9 (packs of 100)@ £14.00
- New Testament Overview (Romanian edition).....@ £9.00

DAY BY DAY SERIES

- Bible Characters.....@ £7.95
- Bible Commands.....@ £7.95
- Bible Promises@ £7.95
- Bible Questions.....@ £7.95
- Christ and His Apostles@ £8.95
- Christ Foreshadowed@ £7.95
- Divine Titles@ £7.95
- Living in the Promised Land@ £8.95
- Moments with the Master@ £7.95
- New Testament.....@ £7.95
- Old Testament.....@ £7.95
- Pictures and Parables@ £7.95
- Paradise to the Promised Land@ £7.95
- Prayer.....@ £7.95
- Psalms.....@ £7.95
- Through the Bible@ £8.95

BOOKLETS SERIES

- Ephesians, The Members of Christ (Norman Mellish).....@ £7.50
- Ezekiel (Fred Cundick)@ £3.95
- First Corinthians (Malcolm Horlock)@ £8.50
- Israel's Wilderness Journeys Viewed Prophetically (J. M. Davies) .@ £4.50
- Notes on Galatians and Philippians (W. Trew)@ £4.50
- Philippians (Keith Keyser)@ £5.50
- Prison Letters – Colossians and Philemon (J. M. Davies).....@ £4.95
- Prophetic Profile (G. B. Fyfe).....@ £5.50
- Revelation and Future Events (E. W. Rogers)@ £4.50
- Romans – Chapters 1-8 (Albert Leckie)@ £5.50
- Spiritual Renewal (Frank Holmes, *et al.*)@ £5.50
- Serving and Shepherding (Ken Morris)@ £3.95
- The Church and the Churches (W. E. Vine).....@ £5.50
- The Levitical Offerings (John Boyd).....@ £3.95
- The Local Church (J. H. Large)@ £4.50
- The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit (Samuel Jardine)@ £4.50
- The Tabernacle and the Offerings (Albert Leckie)@ £6.50
- The Glory and Power of God (Jeff Brown).....@ £5.00
- Truth and Training in Titus (Stephen Baker)@ £6.00

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

- Stepping Stones **SPECIAL OFFER**@ £8.00
- Building Stones **SPECIAL OFFER**@ £8.00

GENERAL SERIES

- Church Doctrine and Practice.....@ £7.95
- Footprints Nurture Course (Ken Rudge), make your own multiple copies @ £15.00
- The Minor Prophets.....@ £7.95
- New Treasury of Bible Doctrine@ £12.00
- What About? 1, and 2 (each).....@ £1.50

OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW SERIES

- Vol. 1. Beginnings by Richard Catchpole@ £7.50
- Vol. 2. Laws for Life by Keith Keyser@ £7.50
- Vol. 3. Settling in the Land by John Scarsbrook@ £7.50
- Vol. 4. Kings and Prophets Part 1 by Simon Sherwin.@ £7.50
- Vol. 5. Kings and Prophets Part 2 by Colin Lacey@ £7.50
- Vol. 6. Lessons for Life by Warren Henderson@ £7.50
- Vol. 7. Coming back from Exile by Malcolm Davis@ £7.50

NEW TESTAMENT OVERVIEW SERIES

- New Testament Overview in one Volume.....@ £10.00
- New Testament Overview (Romanian edition).....@ £9.00

ARCHIVE SERIES

- Precious Seed Vol. 1.....@ £10.00
- Precious Seed Vol. 2.....@ £8.50
- Precious Seed Vol. 3.....@ £8.50
- Precious Seed Vol. 4.....@ £8.50

DECAPOLIS PRESS

- Prove it by Paul McCauley@ £8.50
- New-song singing by David Brauch.....@ £6.50
- In Due Time by Tim Mather@ £6.50
- Galatians, The Merits of Christ by Norman Mellish@ £7.50

TOTAL ORDER £

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CHEQUES IN PAYMENT FOR BOOKS

Postage will be added at cost as the order will be processed online.

You may also order on the website www.preciousseed.org, or by email secretary@preciousseed.org, or by posting this form.

UK customers can place an order by phone on 01142 511700. This will be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays ONLY. Please have your card ready when you call.

Overseas orders can be processed through the online shop with postage added at cost. Alternatively, check with our international distributors to see if they have copies available.

CARD DETAILS

Card Type: (*Visa or Mastercard. Please circle which one*)



Card Number

Expiry Date Security Code

I consent to PS retaining my data to process my order/s.

Cardholder's Name

MAGAZINE ORDER FORM

Please tick the appropriate box below and send to the address above.

- I enclose a gift towards the work of the magazine.
- Please put me on the mailing list to receive *Precious Seed International*.
- Please amend the number of copies of the magazine I receive from to

Name

Address

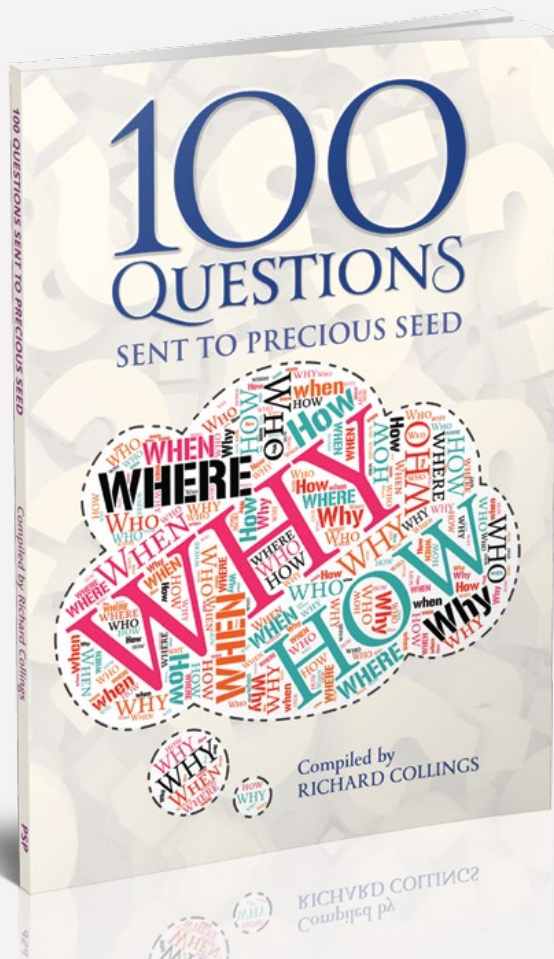
Post Code/Zip.....

Telephone Number.....

Email address

Please be aware that PSP has no full-time staff. We will attend to and deliver your order as soon as possible, so do please be patient.

NEW MATERIALS AND CONTINUING

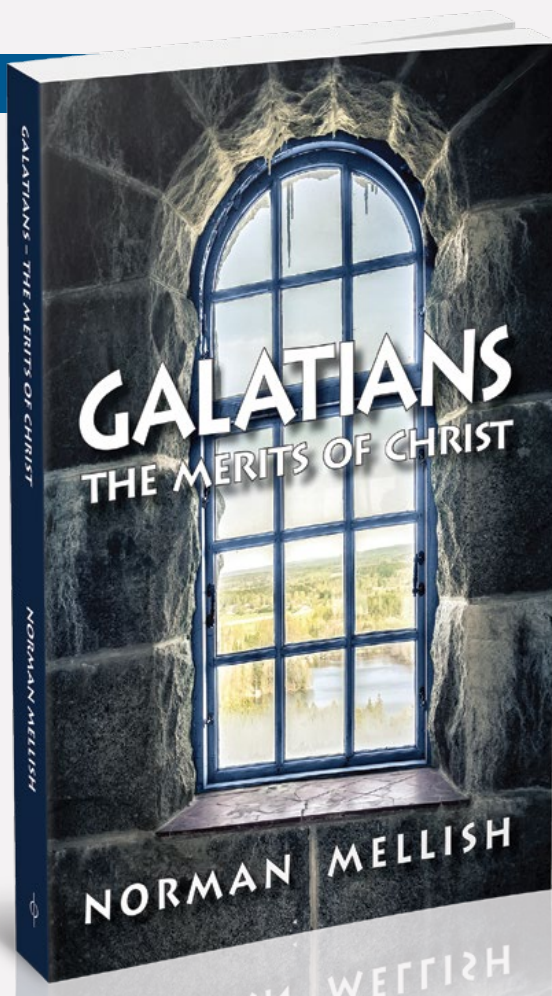


Since its inception in 1945, many questions have been submitted to the editors and trustees of Precious Seed. Of these, some were very specifically time related in that they focused on matters pertinent to a former day and, as such, they are no longer relevant to the twenty-first century. Others may have raised issues that were covered by similar questions sent in several years later.

This book is a selection of 100 of those questions. They have been categorized into nine sections: The Godhead; salvation; Church truth; Old Testament; New Testament; future events; personal; relationships; and general. Each section is set out in chronological order, in that questions are listed with the oldest first and finishing with those submitted more recently.

The attempt at answers based on God's word are submitted humbly and it is hoped this publication will help believers in their appreciation of God and encourage them on the Christian pathway through life.

£7.50 per copy plus postage at cost.



NEW FROM DECAPOLIS PRESS

Galatia was the area to which Paul first took the gospel, and, immediately, there were false teachers who followed Paul and introduced error into the area.

The book of Galatians was written to ensure that none would look to men, but only to the finished work of the Lord Jesus as their only hope for eternity. This book is written to encourage those who preach the gospel to preach Christ and Him crucified.

As a companion volume to the author's book on Ephesians, it helps to present the clear truth of 'The Merits of Christ'.

£7.50 per copy plus postage at cost.

OFFERS FROM PRECIOUS SEED

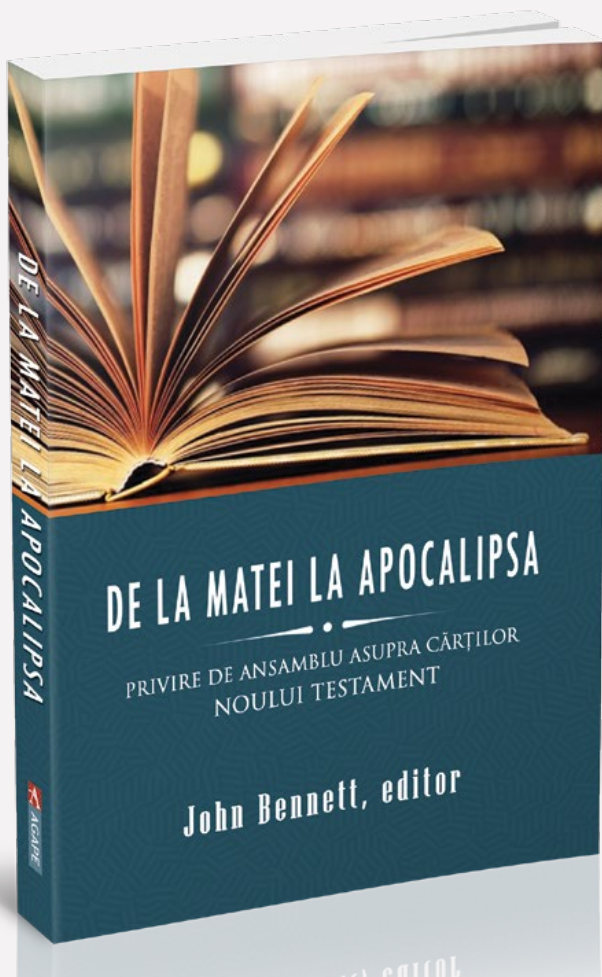
faith matters 9



The latest edition of this popular gospel pamphlet is now available. With articles by Stephen Baker, Ian Jackson, Stuart Scammell, Jeremy Singer, and Paul McCauley, there is something topical and evangelical on every page.

This is a limited print run.

ORDER YOUR COPIES NOW . . .
£14.00 per 100 copies



New Testament Overview ***(Romanian Edition)***

Through the request of fellow believers, this book has been translated and printed in Romania. Apart from providing an overview of the different books that make up the New Testament, it also provides studies on leading themes and topics as well as a chapter-by-chapter analysis in key areas.

As some assemblies in the United Kingdom now have Romanian believers in fellowship with them, we are making a small number of copies of this book available. If you feel it could be of help to a fellow Christian, you can order copies through our website shop or on the order form attached.

You can order copies at the special price of

£9.00 per copy
plus postage at cost.

‘A brother beloved’, Philem. 10.

What a difference salvation brings!

One day, as a prisoner in a Roman prison, a young man came face to face with the challenge of the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This young man had been a servant in a wealthy home in Colossae. In that home he had seen for himself the love and care of Christ. Yet, he had run away, and in all probability taken from that home that which wasn't his own. He made his way to the city 'lights' of Rome, and somehow found himself in a prison cell with a preacher of the gospel. Coincidence or providence? God's ways are truly 'past finding out', but one thing is sure, His sovereign will is never worked out at the expense of man's personal accountability, nor is that will ever put at risk by abandoning it to the fickle sin-marred human will. That does not mean these two truths are on a level, but rather that the way in which these are harmonized truly requires the gracious, divine mind. What a blessed day when the Lord opens a heart and an individual receives Christ, Acts 16. 14!

Oh the grace that pursued a rebellious Onesimus! Oh the wonder of the grace that pursued me!

But more; grace that saves, is grace that changes lives. Indeed, the message of the gospel has the unique power to change lives. This should challenge everyone who professes Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We should understand that repentance is not simply regret. Regret is not enough. Nor is repentance merely a resolve to be better or different. Resolve is not enough. Repentance is a complete change of mind, and the attitude of the penitent toward sin and all things that are unholy is aligned with God's attitude. Then, faith lays hold and rests in the only hope which God has provided for sinners, Christ, and new birth occurs, which brings to the individual the Spirit of God – the power to live for the glory of God, Rom. 6. 4.

It was the possession of this new life that changed a thieving, runaway servant into a 'brother beloved'! I

am sure that as Onesimus stood on Philemon's doorstep, letter in hand, having been converted, he wondered what reception he would have, but what is clear is that his salvation was being demonstrated by his works.

In so many areas of our lives, we should be challenged as to whether our works demonstrate our salvation; as Peter poses, 'what manner of persons ought ye to be?' 2 Pet. 3. 11.

We do thank those who have given freely of their time to write the articles which are in this issue and are sure that their desire, with ours, is that the thoughts will encourage a closer walk with our Lord as we wait for His coming.

SANDY JACK
Ministry Articles Editor

Contents

The Messianic Psalms

Psalm 69 2
By KEITH R. KEYSER

The Gospel of Mark – Part 7 4
By JOHN BENNETT

The Epistle to the Colossians – Part 6 6
By WILLIAM M. BANKS

The Son of God – His Incarnation 8
By BERT CARGILL

The Slaughter of the Innocents – Matthew chapter 2 10
By JEREMY GIBSON

An Assembly of the Lord's people will be a people among whom ... – Part 4 12
By STEPHEN G. BAKER

The Twelve Tribes of Israel – Dan 14
By LLOYD STOCK

Website Reviews 15

The Chronology of Revelation – Part 2 16
By ALAN SUMMERS

Character Studies in the Book of Proverbs – Part 7 The Righteous Man 18
By JOHN SCARSBROOK

Paul the Priest – Part 3 20
By STEPHEN FELLOWES

Tanzania – a land of many opportunities to serve the Lord – Part 2 22
By STEPHEN DAVIES

The Logos School – Cyprus 24
By COLIN P. CLARKE

Word for Today 26
By BRIAN CLATWORTHY

Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819-1886) 28
By BERT CARGILL

Book Reviews Inside Back Cover Flap
By JOHN SCARSBROOK

Question Time Outside Back Cover Flap
By RICHARD COLLINGS

PULL-OUTS

1 and 2 Chronicles
By JOHN BENNETT and SIMON SHERWIN

YPS

The Messianic Psalms

PSALM 69

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

The Travails of the Trespass Offering

Life is filled with multifarious troubles. In His incarnation, our Lord Jesus Christ experienced the tribulations that are endemic to the human condition in a fallen world; He also suffered for righteousness' sake. These difficulties outfitted this impeccable and victorious One to be a comprehensive Saviour and 'a merciful and faithful high priest', Heb. 2. 16-18; 4. 14-16. Whereas other messianic psalms explore the physical sufferings in greater detail, Psalm 69 emphasizes His emotional and spiritual sorrows at the hands of His persecutors.

The psalm may be outlined as follows:

Overwhelming suffering, vv. 1-6;
Reproach for righteousness' sake,
vv. 7-13;
Imprecation towards unjust
persecutors, vv. 14-28;
Praise for promised deliverance,
vv. 29-36.

MOTYER breaks it down this way:

'A1 vv. 1-4, Prayer describing the
deadly crisis
B1 vv. 5-12, Those needing protection
A2 vv. 13-18, Prayer pleading the
character of God
B2 vv. 19-29, Those meriting
retribution
A3 vv. 29-36, Prayer turning to
praise'.¹

The superscription connects it with
the Hebrew Shoshannim – 'lilies'.
Most likely this refers to its tune,
NKJV, and T. E. WILSON points out
the other psalms that bear it:

The lily of the valley – the cross,
Ps. 69.
The lily of the field – Solomon in all
his glory, Ps. 45.
The lily among thorns – trial and
tribulation, Ps. 80.
The lily in the garden – testimony and
victory, Ps. 60.²

Psalm 69 is one of the most cited Old
Testament messianic passages in the
New Testament.³ It looks forward to
the Lord's cleansing of the temple, the
reproaches that fell on Him from His
Father's enemies – for no just cause
– as well as Judas Iscariot's perishing
under divine wrath.

An urgent plea

The opening phrase 'save me',
indicates the desperate seriousness
of the subject matter. The first two
verses describe simulated drowning.
The waters – sometimes picturing
death and judgement in the scriptures
– are flooding into his 'soul' or 'neck',
NKJV, Gen. 7, Exod. 14. In Psalm 130
verse 1, the psalmist uses the same
term as he uses in verse 2 for deep
waters, 'Out of the depths have I cried
unto thee, O Lord'.

Simultaneously, he has that awful
sinking feeling – a sort of emotional
quicksand robs him of a solid place
to stand. SPURGEON eloquently
depicts the scene of the servant's
substitutionary sufferings, 'All the sea
outside a vessel is less to be feared
than that which finds its way into
the hold. A wounded spirit who can
bear. Our Lord in this verse is seen
before us as a Jonah, crying, "The
waters compassed me about, even to
the soul". He was doing business for

us on the great waters, at his Father's
command; the stormy wind was
lifting up the waves thereof, and he
went down to the depths till his soul
was melted because of trouble. In all
this he has sympathy with us, and
is able to succour us when we, like
Peter, beginning to sink, cry to him,
"Lord, save, or we perish".⁴

A plea proceeding from persecution

The opening words no doubt
express some of the struggles that
David endured when fleeing from
Saul, and later from his own son,
Absalom. Meanwhile, sinking in
the mire reminds one of Jeremiah's
imprisonment in an empty cistern,
Jer. 38. 6. Yet no saint, ancient or
modern, may compare with the
Lord Jesus in fulfilling these horrid
prophecies. He above anyone could
speak of the numberless, causeless
enemies who cruelly attacked Him.
Despite the water metaphors, He
describes His dehydration brought
on by His incessant crying for help;
no divine rescue, however, is on the
horizon, v. 3.

Although He is innocent and
perfectly righteous, verse 4 of
the psalm pictures Christ like the
trespass offering; offering restitution
for sin's damage, Lev. 5. 14-16.
Many old writers speak of the Lord
restoring more than Adam lost. Take
WINSLOW's remarks for example,
'by the wonderful redemption
wrought by Christ, we gain infinitely
more than we lose. Man, clad in
the righteousness of God, shines
with a luster – and Paradise, closed
against all "that defiles, and works
abomination, or makes a lie," blooms
with a beauty never possessed before
sin tainted the one, or the curse
blighted the other'.⁵

Rather than merely restoring the
world to Edenic lustre, God in
Christ will renew this planet for the
millennial kingdom, bring in new
heavens and a new earth, and raise
believers to the position of sons of
God who are accepted in the Beloved
in the Almighty's holy presence.

Reproach and rejection

As with other messianic psalms,
not all of the chapter is specifically

referring to Christ; such is the case with verses 5 and 6, which speak of a sinner like David rather than the impeccable Son of God. Verse 7 notes that He bore reproach and shame on behalf of His Father's righteous cause, instead of anything that He had done. Only He could say, 'I do always those things that please him', John 8. 29. This derision even led to His brethren's mockery, v. 8; cp. John 7. 3-10. Besides being alienated from His earthly family, He was also rejected by the nation to whom He had committed 'the oracles of God', John 1. 10, 11; Rom. 3. 1, 2.

Types, shadows, and direct prophecies all accurately painted a portrait of what the Messiah would be like when He came. Only the incomparably lovely Lord Jesus matches the description. The disciples saw this, for example, when they thought of Psalm 69 verse 9 in connection to His zealous cleansing of the temple, John 2. 17. Yet others taunted the One whose humble attitude was associated with mourning activities like 'fasting' and 'sackcloth', Ps. 69. 10, 11. The more lowly His demeanour, the more caustic the combined vitriol heaped on Him by the lowest and highest members of society, v. 12.⁶

Mercy and truth unite

In the face of pitiless human dereliction, the Messiah casts Himself on His Father. As KIRKPATRICK comments, 'From the hardheartedness of men he turns to the mercy of God'.⁷ The extreme condition that He describes in the psalm's first two verses are now reiterated as a prayer in verses 14 and 15. He confidently looks to God the Father as His deliverer, knowing that He is aware of every sorrow and trouble that His faithful servant is experiencing, vv. 16-19. The all-merciful God operates out of perfect knowledge of the past, present, and future. The psalmist's cry to 'draw nigh', v. 18, is later echoed by Asaph, Ps. 73. 28, and reminds believers today that they are promised God's nearness if they draw near to Him, Jas. 4. 8; also Heb. 13. 5.

The onslaught of reproach wounds Him deeply, Ps. 69. 20. Among

humans, He finds no comforters, though He seeks consolation from them. In the Son's experience, His disciples forsook Him in His hour of greatest need, Matt. 26. 56. His deep sorrow began in the garden of Gethsemane as He prayerfully anticipated the cup of wrath that He would drain at Calvary, Luke 22. 39-46; Heb. 5. 7, 8. It continued as the righteous judge laid 'on him the iniquity of us all' on the cross, Isa. 53. 6. The enemies' tortuous treatment concludes with their provision of poisonous food and sour drink to the thirsting sufferer, Ps. 69. 21. As KIDNER notes, 'What David was offered in metaphor, Jesus was offered in fact, according to Matthew 27:34, 48, where the Greek words for gall . . . and vinegar are those that the LXX uses here'.⁸

But after this the judgement

Believers in the present dispensation are sometimes disquieted by imprecatory passages like Psalm 69 verses 22 to 28. They see its tone as inconsistent with the Christian attitude of 'love your enemies', Matt. 5. 44. Yet it must be remembered that God is just, and one day the Son Himself will righteously judge the world, John 5. 22-30; Acts 17. 31. Of course, the punishment will fit the crimes: as one example, Psalm 69 verse 22 refers to the enemies' table becoming 'a snare'; this is appropriate considering the food that they gave Christ, v. 21. His wrath is never capricious; instead, it always accords with truth, beauty, and goodness. New Testament passages such as 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and Revelation chapters 6 to 12 are similarly devoted to the curse that will fall on those who reject the Lord. Peter even applies this imprecatory section of the psalm to Judas Iscariot, Acts 1. 20; Ps. 69. 25. God first offers salvation, but if it is rejected, all that is left for the impenitent is condemnation, John 3. 16, 17.

The light that shines more and more until the perfect day

The final two sections of the psalm return to the destiny of the suffering psalmist. In contrast to the unbelievers spoken of in the previous verses, he is 'poor', a description similar to godly ones elsewhere

in scripture, Ps. 40. 17; Matt. 5. 3. His self-abnegation leads him to cast himself entirely on God for deliverance; therefore, he is assured of divine rescue. This leads him to thankful praise, Ps. 69. 30-33, which is better than mere ceremonial offerings and which ends by encouraging others to look to the Almighty in their times of distress.

In verse 34, the psalm has a closing doxology, which encompasses all of the creation. The last two verses look ahead to Israel's future millennial kingdom glory during the Messiah's reign. As HAMILTON SMITH explains, 'Thus we learn that while the suffering of Christ from the guilty nation brings judgement upon the nation, it also leads to the exaltation of Christ. Furthermore the execution of judgement upon the nation prepares the way for the blessing of the godly remnant and the restoration of Israel'.⁹ The sorrowful psalm that begins with a cry for individual salvation, closes with a scene of glorious deliverance for the entire nation of Israel – and, by extension, to the ends of the universe, Ps. 69. 36; Isa. 9. 6, 7. Likewise, Psalm 22 verses 22 to 31 ends by considering this precious time of the King of kings' majestic and beneficent rule on behalf of the poor and needy who inherit the kingdom by His grace.

Endnotes

- 1 J. A. MOTYER, 'The Psalms', *New Bible Commentary*, IVP, 1994, pg. 528.
- 2 T. E. WILSON, 'Aug. 17', *Day by Day through the Old Testament*, C. E. Hocking and M. Horlock (ed.), Precious Seed, 1982, pg. 261.
- 3 John 2. 17; 15. 25; 19. 29, 30; Matt. 27. 34; Rom. 15. 3.
- 4 C. H. SPURGEON, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. 3, Marshall Brothers, n.d., pp. 175, 176.
- 5 OCTAVIUS WINSLOW, 'Final and Full Redemption', *Soul Depths & Soul Heights*, Banner of Truth, 2006, pg. 109.
- 6 Those 'who sit in the gate' are associated with government, justice, and business, Gen. 19. 1; Ruth 4; 2 Sam. 15. 1-6. By contrast, 'the song of drunkards' conjures up images of bawdy drinking ballads sung by low-class scoundrels.
- 7 A. F. KIRKPATRICK, *The Book of Psalms*, Cambridge University Press, 1906, pg. 402.
- 8 DEREK KIDNER, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary*, IVP, 1973, pg. 266.
- 9 HAMILTON SMITH, *The Psalms*, Believer's Bookshelf, 1995, pg. 108.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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

Part 7

The theme of the Galilean ministry of the Lord continues into chapter 2 of the Gospel, but, in this chapter, we see the storm clouds of opposition and conflict begin to cross that ministry. It is a sad reflection upon those that opposed the Lord that Luke tells us, in respect to this miracle, that 'the power of the Lord was present to heal them', Luke 5. 17, and yet, as far as we are told, only the paralysed man upon his bed was healed.

Before considering the verses in any detail, we might divide the chapter into four sections:

- The cure of the palsied man, vv. 1-12
- The call of Levi, vv. 13-17
- The concern of John's disciples, vv. 18-22
- The cornfields and the Sabbath, vv. 23-28

First, then, we will consider the palsied man.

The cure of the palsied man, vv. 1-12

The contrasts in the section highlight the commencement of opposition. The Saviour was in Peter's house, a place He often resorted to, as Mark shows. He was welcomed in this house¹ but not in the house of the Pharisees and Scribes. We see the faith of those that brought the paralysed man, but the lack of faith in the Pharisees and Scribes.

The attraction of the Saviour, vv. 1, 2

The Lord was in Peter's house. Exactly how long it had been since the events of chapter 1 verses 21 to 34 is difficult to determine. Although the KJV may imply that the 'some days' refers to this period, WUEST suggests otherwise, 'the resultant meaning being that some days went by after our Lord's arrival in Capernaum before the people found

out that He was there'.² However, since that last visit it would seem that the Lord's fame had not waned. In his customary manner, Mark tells us how quickly the news spread, 'straightway many were gathered', v. 2. Luke gives an indication of how far the message had spread, suggesting that the Pharisees and doctors of the law had come from further afield than Galilee alone. They may have come to see a miracle, but the Lord uses the moment to preach the word unto them and in a manner that suited the circumstance in which He was found.

On that previous visit to Peter's house, the Lord had healed all that were gathered at the door. Now, they were not outside but inside the house. The extent of the crowd was such that, 'there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door', v. 2.

It is worth thinking about this scene for a moment. The house is packed. Interest is high and the Lord is in His own neighbourhood. The Lord is the preacher and, as we have mentioned, the power of the Lord was present. Humanly speaking, all is right for a time of blessing. Have there been times when we have convened special gospel meetings about which we have prayed petitioning the Lord to bless? Have we been deeply conscious of the Spirit of God at work in the hearts of different individuals

and yet there has been no one saved? Might we remind ourselves that this was the experience of the Lord here and it is a timely reminder of the hardness of men's hearts!

The activity of the men, vv. 3-5

It is only Mark who gives us the number of the nameless men who brought this paralysed man to see the Saviour. The extent of the man's physical need is evident in that it took four men to bring him and that they brought him upon his bed. The word for bed, more likely a simple pallet, tells us something of this man's poverty brought about by his paralysis.

The four men persevered for they, 'could not come nigh unto Him for the press', v. 4. They did not give up but took the man up to the roof and began to dig their way through the roofing of the house. This was certainly no simple task. The digging would be hard work and the depth of the roof covering would probably be significant. At last, they were able to let this man down to the place where the Saviour was found. Equally, the sick man agreed with the activities of his companions and was prepared to take the risk of being lowered through the roof.

What is remarkable about verse 5 is that Mark tells us, 'When Jesus saw their faith'. The man's physical need was evident. Looking at the bed upon which he was let down into the midst would indicate his material need. However, the Saviour sees past the physical and material and is concerned with his spiritual need, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee'. The faith of the four, a testimony to the faith of the paralysed man as well, was what brought the response of the Saviour. Here the lesson is that the spiritual must take priority before the physical and material. WILLIAM MACDONALD says, 'Jesus went beyond the symptoms to the cause. He would not heal the body and neglect the soul'.³

The antagonism of the Scribes, vv. 6, 7

The immediate reasoning of the Scribes was that this was blasphemy.

The Lord had given forgiveness to the paralysed man. Only God can forgive sins. Logically, this leaves two possible solutions. Either the Lord was God, or He blasphemed.

The Scribes seemed to have arrived at their judgement. DARBY'S translation is, 'Why does this man thus speak?' v. 7. The word 'man', being in italics, expresses the contempt in which they held the Saviour. Their decision as to the situation was coloured by their view of the Saviour; their minds were already closed to the truth. But verse 6 tells us that they did not have the courage of their convictions. They were 'reasoning in their hearts'. They had no desire to learn the truth from the Saviour. But neither did they express their views, as that might mean they would lose face with the multitude gathered.

Human nature has not changed. Men's minds are still closed to the truth of the gospel. However, what is saddest is when believers' minds become closed, even though the truth is evident, because pride rules.

The answer of the Saviour, vv. 8-11

Mark's account of the response of the Saviour gives ample evidence of why the logical deduction of the Scribes was faulty. Who could read the thoughts and reasoning of the hearts of these Scribes but God alone? Who could bring such miraculous healing to this paralysed man but God alone?

There was no statement from the Scribes. There was no evidence in their posture. The Lord knew intuitively. Mark records, 'Jesus perceived in his spirit', v. 8. WUEST comments, 'Our Lord was not only immediately aware of what the Scribes were thinking, but was clearly and fully aware of it'.⁴ He knew their thoughts and He knew their hearts. 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts?' The problem with the Scribes was that their mental reasoning was also affecting their attitude to, and developing their antipathy towards, the Saviour. They were developing what was to become hatred capable of murder.

The questions of the Lord cut to the heart of the matter. He had forgiven the sins of this man. But where was the evidence? To provide that evidence, He said to the man sick of the palsy, 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way', v. 11. COLE comments, 'It was, in point of fact, a much lighter thing to heal the body than to restore the soul, for a prophet might heal, but no mere prophet could ever forgive sins'.⁵

It is clear from the fact that the man obeyed that he had the faith necessary – the basis of his forgiveness. It is also clear that as the forgiveness of the man was complete so his restoration to health and strength was complete. He was able to stand. He was able to walk. He was, finally, able to carry his bed. All of these things were new to his

experience. Mark, again, records that it was 'immediate', v. 12.

The amazement of the people, v. 12

The testimony that this man bore is evident and remarkable. Mark tells us, he 'went forth before them all', v. 12. This was not something that was obscure, reported second or third-hand. This was a testimony that would remain in this locality because, from verse 11, the man must have been local in order to carry his bed back to his house.

The outcome of the miracle is remarkable for a number of reasons.

- The crowd were amazed. The intensity of this experience is communicated in the word used, a word from which we get our English word 'ecstasy'. They were completely taken up with the event and publicly attested the truth of what the Lord had done.
- The crowd also glorified God. This is something that is particularly noticeable in Luke's Gospel, as it is the purpose of man to bring glory to God.
- Sadly, they were occupied with the visual rather than the spiritual, 'we never saw it on this fashion', v. 12. What had been accomplished in this man's life spiritually was wholly ignored. His cure was all that they saw.

Today, many are taken up with what they see as the miraculous, particularly healing. They allow the material and the physical to take priority over the spiritual. Clearly, this event in the ministry of the Lord is relevant, a reminder to us all of the importance of resolving man's spiritual need first.

Endnotes

- 1 'This is better translated, He was at home', JOHN MACARTHUR, *MacArthur Study Bible*, Logos software resource.
- 2 WUEST, *op. cit.*, pg. 44.
- 3 W. MACDONALD, *Believer's Bible Commentary*, Logos software resource.
- 4 WUEST, *op. cit.*, pg. 49.
- 5 COLE, *op. cit.*, pg. 66.



THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Part 6

By **WILLIAM M. BANKS** Hamilton, Scotland

Paul's two ministries, 1. 23 to 2. 3.

The two ministries were given to Paul 'according to the dispensation of God', v. 25. He is a 'minister' of 'the gospel' and a 'minister' of 'the church', vv. 23, 25. Interestingly, there are two Epistles which have Paul as the sole author – the Epistle to the Romans and that to Ephesus.¹ The subject of the first is the gospel and of the second, the Church. They expand on the summaries given here.

The two ministries can be outlined as follows:

The minister of the gospel, v. 23:

- The hope it embraces;
- The extent of its dissemination;
- The nature of Paul's service.

The minister of the church which is His body, vv. 24-29:

- My sufferings 'for you', v. 24;
- My stewardship 'for you', vv. 25-28;
- My strivings 'for you', 1. 29 - 2. 3.

The minister of the gospel

The hope it embraces

'The hope of the gospel' is a comprehensive term not only focusing on the future with the 'hope' as a time element, but incorporating the subject matter of the gospel, i.e., Christ. Certainly, He is the subject of apostolic preaching, as Paul makes clear in Romans chapter 1 verse 16, 'the gospel of Christ'. He also calls it 'the gospel of His Son', Rom. 1. 9. Since Christ is the subject, the future is, of course, secure, but so also is the present! The apostle has already indicated that the Colossians' faith and love is founded on 'hope', 1. 4, 5, and in this section, he expands on the fact that 'Christ in you [is] the hope of glory', v. 27.

The believer has been introduced to a world of hope; a 'blessed hope', 'a

better hope', a 'living hope', a 'good hope', 'the hope of His calling', a 'glorious hope', a 'steadfast hope', a 'hope' that 'we shall be like Him – righteous, pure, sinless. What hope; what a present and what a future!²

The extent of its dissemination

The gospel of which Paul was 'a minister' was 'preached in all creation under heaven', RV. While Paul had moved widely in disseminating the gospel, he had not touched 'all creation'. There might be a prophetic element in the reference, but, perhaps, more likely it is a reference to Psalm 19 verses 1 to 6, also quoted in Romans chapter 10 verses 17 and 18, 'So then faith **cometh** by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world'. Israel was without excuse and so also is all of humanity!

The nature of Paul's service

Paul was a 'minister' of the gospel. The word 'minister' is *diakonos*, translated regularly as 'deacon'. It is a general term used for a variety of service – e.g., for serving Christ, the church, and for preaching and teaching.³ Paul's ministry in the gospel included all these aspects and specifically involved worship which, of course, is the highest form of service.⁴

The minister of the church which is His body, vv. 24-29

My sufferings 'for you', v. 24

It is rather surprising in the scriptures how often joy and suffering are linked together, Rom. 5. 2, 3; 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. Here, suffering is the source of rejoicing. Paul was happy to know sufferings personally, and to rejoice in them so that other believers knew less suffering! Note that the preposition 'for' means 'instead of'. In doing this Paul was filling up – supplementing

the afflictions of Christ. The verb to 'fill up' means 'to supplement' and is only found here in the New Testament. He was happy to follow the example of his Master and to share in His afflictions (never used of expiatory or vicarious sufferings but those due to circumstances of life and the antagonisms of men) for the advantage of others. It was effectively 'the fellowship of his [Christ's] sufferings'.⁵ Paul learned on the Damascus road that the Lord suffers now in His people, 'why persecutest thou me', Acts 9. 4.

The saints for whom the suffering is experienced are described as His body, the Church. In the fulfilment of their ministry they are exposed to sufferings for Christ's sake, and these sufferings are their share in the afflictions of Christ. No doubt they are conscious that sufferings are followed with glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17!

My stewardship 'for you', vv. 25-29

Paul was made a minister of the church, according to the 'dispensation [stewardship] of God'. He was aware that it was a gift given to him as a privilege but with corresponding responsibility, cp. 1 Cor. 9. 17; Eph. 3. 2, 8.

The purpose of it

It was to fulfil, to fill up, perfect the word of God; in effect to complete the revelation of the mystery. The comment of VINE is apposite, 'the stewardship committed to him was "to fulfil the Word of God," the fulfilment being the unfolding of the completion of the divinely arranged and imparted cycle of truths which are consummated in the truth relating to the church as the body of Christ, Col. 1. 25'.⁶ It is, in effect, implementing the truth of 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 10, 'when that which is perfect is come', i.e., the completion of the revelation of the mystery described as 'the mystery of [the JND] Christ', Eph. 3. 4.

A mystery has been defined as not that 'which is mysterious, but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit'.^{7,8}

The details of the mystery

Here it is glorious in its revelation, 'the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles', v. 27. Its glorious wealth is seen in the equal incorporation of Gentiles with the Jews in the body of Christ; fellow-heirs of the same inheritance, fellow-members of the same body, fellow-partakers of the same promise, Eph. 3. 6.

There is more, however, with an unfolding of the threefold 'riches' – 'Christ . . . hope . . . glory' – 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. In you – in your midst – but more; for you and within you as individuals, Rom 8. 10, 11. The truth of the indwelling Spirit and that of the indwelling together of the Father and Son is expounded elsewhere.⁹ Here it is specifically 'Christ in you the hope of glory'. This indicates the necessary link with Christ in view of coming glory, 2 Tim. 2. 10, and parallels the divine purpose from creation to dwell with man, a truth to be realized in eternity, Rev. 21. 3.

Paul preached this Christ, 'the hope of glory'. It was not a question of what he preached but 'whom' he preached. He did it in the gospel 'warning every man' (appealing to the heart) and in the ministry 'teaching every man in all wisdom' (appealing to the intellect). The objective was to 'present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus'. For Paul there was no spiritual elite; note 'every man' three times and, with each, progress was desired to effect a worthy presentation.

My strivings 'for you', 1. 29 - 2. 3

In this section the verb 'striving' and the noun 'conflict' come from a common root and indicate 'agonizing' or 'striving', 1. 29; 2. 1. The same word is used for the prayer of Epaphras, 4. 12. The apostle's striving is thus seen in two spheres – in preaching and in praying. His praying came after his preaching and lent weight to it. He was following the example of the Master who prayed in John chapter 17 after His communication in John chapters 13 to 16. Paul's agonizing in preaching and praying were no doubt the reason for his success and its absence the reason for our lack of success.

Striving in his preaching, v. 29

There are four words used in verse 29



(the first two of Paul, the second two of the Lord) that indicate the energy expended in Paul's realization of his stewardship; '**labour**' (to point of fatigue, weariness, exhaustion), '**striving**' (labour fervently), '**working**' (be mighty in), '**mightily**' (abundance) – little wonder his ministry was effective! He recognized his strength came from his enabling Lord.

Striving in his praying, 2. 1, 2

In these verses the apostle is continuing his responsibility as a minister of the church in his prayers for the Colossian and Laodicean believers. For Paul, praying was a 'great conflict'. The word has a background in athletic contest and indicates serious intent. It was also a selfless exercise for Paul since he was praying for those who had not seen his 'face in the flesh'. What a challenge for our prayer meetings!

The apostle makes a plea that their hearts might be comforted and that there might be unity in affection. This provides a basis upon which divine revelation can be known, as indicated in Ephesians chapter 3 verses 17 and 18.

He desires also that they will come to a true 'acknowledgement of the mystery of God'. This would lead to the recognition and full discernment, not only of the indwelling presence of Christ, but of the further understanding of the 'mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ' or 'the mystery of God, even Christ', RV. This

is an affirmation of divine unity and absolute equality as also indicated elsewhere, 'I and the Father are One', John 10. 30; 17. 11, 22.

The prayer concludes by bringing together, once more, the three ideas of understanding, wisdom and knowledge which he has already developed in chapter 1 verse 9. In that case, it was 'spiritual understanding'; here it is 'full assurance of understanding'. The apostle desires that a true appreciation of 'the mystery of God, even Christ' will bring a settled assurance to the believers of the glory and power of the Son of God, to guard against the Colossian heresies. This is further affirmed by the fact that in Christ 'all the treasures of **wisdom and knowledge**' are hid. Having Him, they have all the resources necessary! However, treasure does not lie on the surface – it is necessary to dig to obtain it, but it is well worth the effort!

Endnotes

- 1 J. M. DAVIES, *Prison Letters: The Epistles to Colossians and Philemon*, Precious Seed Publications 2008,
- 2 Titus 2. 13; Heb. 7. 19; 1 Pet. 1. 3; 2 Thess. 2. 16; Eph. 1. 18; Heb. 3. 6 RV; 1. Pet 1. 13 JND.
- 3 Examples of its use are found in 1 Cor. 3. 5; 15. 9, 10; Eph. 3. 7, 8; 1 Tim. 1. 12-14.
- 4 Rom. 1. 9; 15. 16; Matt. 4. 10.
- 5 Phil. 3. 10; 2 Cor. 1. 5; Acts 9. 16.
- 6 W. E. VINE, *Amplified expository dictionary of New Testament words*.
- 7 W. E. VINE, *New Testament Word Pictures*, Thomas Nelson 2015.
- 8 Cp. Eph. 3. 5; Rom. 16. 25, 26.
- 9 Eph. 1. 13; John 14. 17, 23.

The Son of God His Incarnation

By **BERT CARGILL** St Monans, Scotland

Incarnation literally means 'becoming flesh'.¹ The word is not used in the Bible, but the truth of it is there and the evidence of it is clear. The incarnation of the Son means that the Son of God became a man; a real man of flesh and blood like ourselves as expressed, for example, in Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14, 'He likewise partook of the same', and in John chapter 1 verse 14, 'The Word became flesh' NKJV, JND.

In His great love, God would send His Son into the world to become our Saviour and Redeemer. To make propitiation for us, He would have to die to endure sin's penalty. But how could the eternal Son of God die? He would have to become a man. But how?

Isaiah had said, 'A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel', Isa. 7. 14. Immanuel, or Emmanuel, means 'God with us', Matt. 1. 23. Galatians chapter 4 verse 4 states that, 'when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law'. And so one night, on a quiet hillside near Bethlehem, startled shepherds heard the good tidings of great joy from heaven, 'Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord', Luke 2. 10, 11. Mary's child, born and laid in a manger, was God's Son given from highest heaven to become our Saviour, fulfilling both parts of the prophetic word, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given', Isa. 9. 6.

We have two unique and miraculous things to consider:

1. What happened – **the incarnation of the Son of God**. He became man without ceasing to be God. Godhood and manhood would be combined in one person.
2. How this happened – **the virgin**

birth of the Lord Jesus. He was born of a virgin after being conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb.

The incarnation – what happened?

God is a Spirit, John 4. 24, without flesh and bones, Luke 24. 39, eternal, immortal, and invisible, 1 Tim. 1. 17. No one could look upon Him and live. The few passing glimpses of His glory given to some privileged individuals in Old Testament times had left them awestruck and dumbstruck – think of Moses, Job and a few others. Remember the so-called fleeting theophanies, few and far between.² When angels appeared to people, that was daunting to say the least. So how could God the Son, infinitely greater than angels, come among men in such a way as not to terrify us but rather reveal God to us?

It would require something unprecedented and unique. He would have to become a man Himself. He would become God incarnate. He would be One who though existing 'from the beginning' would be heard by human ears, seen with human eyes, handled by human hands. That eternal life which was with the Father would be manifest to men, 1 John 1. 1, 2.

Him whom 'the heaven of heavens could not contain', 1 Kgs. 8. 27, would come to earth and dwell

in a body of human flesh, a body which would grow from infancy to boyhood to manhood, would have the limitations of time and space in order to do the will of God and accomplish the work of redemption. 'What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh', Rom. 8. 3. STENNET put it this way, 'Thou wouldst like sinful man be made In everything but sin'.

The One who was in the form of God, co-equal with God, would be made in the likeness of men, would humble Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Phil. 2. 6-8. He would not cease to be God, as He had always been and always will be, but He would take on Himself humanity and retain that forever – the 'God of glory' is even now the 'Man in the glory', Son of God and Son of Man. Deity and humanity are inseparably linked in this blessed person.

In more ways than one, how true is the word 'mystery' in the often quoted verse, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh', 1 Tim. 3. 16. It is, indeed, a precious truth revealed to us, yet also an unfathomable mystery and wonder to us, incomprehensible but totally believable. CHARLES WESLEY'S hymn says it well:

'Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see
Hail, the incarnate deity.
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel'.

So how would all this happen? It was no after-thought. The plan of redemption had been in place 'before the foundation of the world', 1 Pet. 1. 20. Thus, while the Son of God would say, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God', He also said with confidence, 'A body hast thou prepared me', Heb. 10. 5, 7. The eternal God who 'dwelleth not in temples made with hands', Acts 7. 48, lived on earth for a short space of time in a 'temple made without hands', Mark 14. 58, for thus He had spoken of 'the temple of his body', John 2. 21.

The incarnation – how this happened

This preparation of a body for our Lord Jesus would involve a unique operation of the Holy Spirit in the body of a young woman called Mary. By the power of the Highest she, a virgin, would ‘conceive . . . and bring forth a son, and call his name Jesus’. He would be called the Son of God, Luke 1. 31, 35.

The birth of Jesus was normal and similar to other births, although unattended by any midwife. But His conception was extraordinary, unique, miraculous and divine, 1. 31, 35. He had no human father. Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit, God’s power overshadowed her, and nine months later, when the time came, Mary gave Him birth, 2. 6, 7. She wrapped Him in baby clothes and

laid Him in a manger, nursed Him at her breast and cared for Him, Ps. 22. 9; Luke 11. 27, watching over him as He grew up while keeping certain special things in her heart, 2. 51.

This truth of the virgin birth of our Lord is very important. Sceptics have said that it is impossible for a virgin to bear a child. Some have said that the child Jesus was conceived in some sinful liaison of Mary with a man, possibly Joseph. The Pharisees actually inferred this at one time, John 8. 41. But they were wrong – such a thing is unthinkable. As is clear in the personal account in Matthew chapter 1 verses 18 to 25, Mary remained a virgin while betrothed to Joseph. As for the ‘impossibility’, we know that ‘the things which are impossible with men are possible with God’, Luke

18. 27. Mary herself was told this by the angel Gabriel, ‘With God nothing shall be impossible’, 1. 37. It was a very special divine miracle for a very special purpose.

The virgin birth of our Lord Jesus ensured that He did not inherit any of Adam’s sinful nature as we all do. He was the promised ‘seed of the woman’, Gen. 3. 15, not the seed of any man. Mary who brought Him into the world was herself a sinner who needed a Saviour, Luke 1. 47, but His holiness was preserved in the womb of Mary and never diminished. At His conception He was called ‘that holy thing’ who would be born, 1. 35. It laid the foundation for a perfect life and a sacrificial death. He was totally perfect and sinless, pure and holy.

The man who was known as Jesus of Nazareth was much more than a man. He was the Son of God who had come into the world. Everything about Him was special and unique – what He said, what He did, how He lived, how He died, how He rose from the dead and went back to heaven. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that He came into the world in a special and unique way. His birth of a virgin is in keeping with everything else we know about Him.

For Him to leave the glory of heaven and come into the world was an amazing act of divine love and grace. For Him to be born a tiny, helpless baby is more amazing still, and not born into rich luxury but laid in a manger for feeding animals somewhere outside. His earthly home was that of a poor family which lived in a despised town called Nazareth, John 1. 46. We marvel at ‘the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich’, 2 Cor. 8. 9.



Endnotes

- 1 From the Latin *incarnatus*.
- 2 Thus He appeared to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah.

The slaughter of the innocents

Matthew chapter 2

By **JEREMY GIBSON** Derby, England

The events of this chapter are not recorded anywhere else. No other Gospel writer mentions the visit of the magi, the slaughter of the innocents, nor the emergency flight into Egypt. And, to date, no secular document has verified Matthew's account. But such corroboration is unnecessary. Everything rings true and slots perfectly into the design of this Gospel. Herod was infamous for his paranoia, his craftiness, and his lethal attacks against all challengers. The lack of interest of Israel's religious leaders in Christ's birth was an early premonition of what was to come. Eventually, after sustained and escalating opposition, they crucified Him, Matt. 27. 35. By way of contrast, the adoration of the Gentile magi anticipated Christ's future worship by all nations in the millennial kingdom and, in so doing, confirmed His messiahship, Ps. 72; Isa. 60. Matthew's skilfully constructed narrative over chapters 2 to 4 showed how Israel's national history in Egypt and the wilderness looked forward to the experiences of the Lord Jesus. When Hosea wrote, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son', he was clearly referring to God's mighty deliverance of the nation from slavery in Egypt, Hos. 11. 1. Unbeknown to Hosea, however, these words had a future fulfilment when Christ moved north into Galilee after finding refuge in Egypt, Matt 2. 15.

Herod was well into his sixties when 'Jesus was born in Bethlehem', v. 1. Lying six miles south-west of Jerusalem and so small that Joshua did not list it among Judah's cities in Joshua chapter 16, Bethlehem was described by Micah as 'little among the thousands of Judah', Mic. 5. 2. But, under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Matthew tweaked Micah's prophecy, elevating Bethlehem. The city where David had been born, raised and then anointed as Israel's shepherd-king¹ was 'not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule [*poimainō*, shepherd] my people Israel', v. 6.

Primed with a messianic hope, these eastern astrologers had spotted a new star, realized its significance and

travelled west to Jerusalem. Entering the city, which remained oblivious to Christ's birth, they asked, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him', v. 2. Herod, who would tolerate no rival, 'was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him', v. 3. With speed and guile, he began formulating a plan to eliminate the young child. 'When he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them **where** Christ should be born', v. 4. Once these leaders affirmed that Bethlehem was Messiah's predicted birthplace, vv. 5, 6, Herod quickly turned his attention to **when** He was born. 'Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared', v. 7.

Feigning devotion, 'he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also', v. 8. How 'a crafty hypocrite never means so ill, as when he speaketh fairest'.²

The worship by these wise men was exemplary. Having been directed to Christ by the moving star, 'they rejoiced with exceeding great joy', vv. 9, 10. Unlike the Queen of Sheba, who travelled from the east to see the visible splendour of Solomon and his court, when these men entered the house all 'they saw [was] the young child with Mary his mother', v. 11. But, by faith, they viewed in that little frame the King of the Jews, the 'Star out of Jacob', Num. 24. 17, the 'day star', 2 Pet. 1. 19, 'the bright and morning star', Rev. 22. 16. Never has the expression *multum in parvo* (much in little) been so true. They 'fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures [which they had carefully wrapped to protect for the journey], they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh', v. 11. Their gold, one of the most valuable commodities, would support the poor family. Frankincense, a white, glittering vegetable resin from the bark of the *Arbor Thuris* tree, was burned on Jewish altars and used to make perfume.³ Myrrh, the bitter antiseptic resin included in the Jewish priests' anointing oil, Exod. 30. 23, was used in embalming the dead, John 19. 39, and purifying women in the Persian court, Esther 2. 12. These latter two gifts may have anticipated the Saviour's death. Having worshipped and been warned by God of the threat posed by Herod, 'they departed into their own country another way', v. 12.

Likewise, our worship should be guided by God, joyful and humbly focused on Christ, whom, though we have never seen, we believe is altogether glorious, 1 Pet. 1. 8. We ought to give Him our best and worship intelligently, carefully guarding what precious thoughts we have of Him. Just as the magi 'departed into their own country **another** way', so our worship should change us.

Joseph's blend of obedience and patience is rarely seen. While he slept, 'the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him', v. 13. The repeated expression 'the young child and his mother' emphasized Christ's apparent vulnerability and His mother's tender care, while clarifying that Joseph was not His true father, vv. 11, 13, 14, 20, 21. The threat was so great that Joseph would not wait till morning. 'When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt', v. 14. Delay could have spelled disaster. And while 'we cannot be too speedy in the execution of God's commands; we may be too late'.⁴ Then, having arrived in Egypt, Joseph patiently waited for a fresh appearance of the angel, when he was told, 'Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life', v. 20. Again, with prompt obedience, 'he arose', v. 21.

Outwitted by the magi, Herod 'slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under', v. 16. The heartbreak of their mothers is encapsulated in Matthew's quotation from Jeremiah, 'In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not', v. 18; Jer. 31. 15. Rama was the town, five miles north of Jerusalem, where Judah's captives were briefly detained before being carried to Babylon, Jer. 40. 1. Being the mother of Joseph, from whom sprung two of the northern tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, and Benjamin, one of the two southern tribes, Rachel is viewed as the concerned mother of the whole nation. Having been buried near Bethlehem, she is visualized as rising from the dead to mourn for her exiled children, Gen. 35. 19; Jer. 31. 15. In the immediate context, Jeremiah was likely referring to the recent Assyrian deportation of the northern kingdom and the soon-to-take-place captivity of Judah. But Jeremiah's

promise of future restoration provided no comfort for the mothers of these murdered infants, 'because they are not', v. 18; Jer. 31. 16, 17.

God, who 'is so infinitely wise to know the designs of his enemies before they are, could as easily prevent them that they might not be: but he lets them run on in their course, that he may fetch glory to himself out of their wickedness'.⁵ Throughout time He has permitted Satan to repeatedly attack the messianic line, Gen. 3. 15. Cain slew Abel, 4. 18. Pharaoh murdered Jewish baby boys, Exod. 1. 16. Athaliah 'arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah', 2 Chr. 22. 10. And Haman attempted to exterminate the whole nation under Persian rule, Esther 3. 6. But men reap what they sow, Gal. 6. 7. Within two years of massacring the young children, Herod died in agony, vv. 15, 19.

Travelling north, when Joseph 'heard

that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee', vv. 22, 23. Their living in this despised northern town fulfilled the general tenor of Old Testament prophecies which foresaw Messiah's humility.⁶

Endnotes

- 1 1 Sam. 16. 4, 12, 13; 2 Sam. 7. 8; John 7. 42.
- 2 J. HALL, *Contemplations on the historical passages of the Old and New Testaments*, 3 vols., Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995, Vol. 3, pg. 31.
- 3 See Exod. 30. 34-38; Lev. 2. 1, 2; S. of S. 3. 6.
- 4 *Ibid*, pg. 40.
- 5 *Ibid*, pg. 44.
- 6 See Ps. 22. 6-8, 13; 69. 8, 20, 21; Isa. 49. 7; 53. 2, 3.

Israel's experiences in Egypt and the wilderness anticipated Christ

| | Israel | Christ |
|--|--|--|
| Close relationship with God. | 'Israel is my son, even my firstborn', Exod. 4. 22. | 'This is my beloved Son', Matt. 3. 17. |
| While in Egypt was the target of murderous intent. | Pharaoh commanded the midwives to kill Jewish sons, Exod. 1. 16. | Herod 'slew all the children that were in Bethlehem . . . from two years old and under', Matt. 2. 16. |
| Water baptism on leaving Egypt. | 'All the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt . . . baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the [Red] sea', Exod. 12. 41; 1 Cor. 10. 2. | 'Out of Egypt have I called my son . . . He was baptized', Hos. 11. 1; Matt. 2. 15; 3. 16. |
| Prolonged wilderness testing. | For forty years God 'suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna . . . that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live', Deut. 8. 2, 3. | After forty days 'He was . . . an hungred . . . the tempter . . . said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread'. In response He quoted Deut. 8. 3; Matt. 4. 1-4. |
| Failure versus victory in the wilderness. | Committed idolatry and tempted Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 7, 9. | Refused to worship the devil or tempt God, Matt. 4. 5-10. |

An Assembly of the Lord's people will be a people among whom . . .

DISCIPLINE IS EXERCISED

Part 4

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

Most societies operate within set structures, rules are drawn up and the consequences of breaking the rules are clearly stated. So it is with a local church. The basic proposition is that 'An Assembly is . . . a people among whom discipline is exercised'. My objective is to establish that this is true from the New Testament.

As most of our readers will understand what is meant by the term 'an assembly', I will not take up time defining this save to say that 'an assembly' is simply a regular gathering of Christians who meet, in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the same place on a consistent basis, otherwise known as 'a church'.

Church structure

If you do a bit of research or have a bit of knowledge of 'churches' you will gather very quickly that there are many types of churches who all have different approaches to how they should be structured, led, meet, etc.

There are a few questions we need to address at this stage:

1. Should there be such a variety of churches?
2. Is there a template for church gathering that we should be following?
3. Is it wrong to 'do it our way' if the Bible states otherwise?
4. Does the Bible define consequences for disobeying the instructions or set pattern of scripture?

Let me answer the questions from what I understand to be a biblical perspective:

1. No – the Lord Jesus stated in Matthew chapter 16 verse 18 that He would build His church. There are a number of scriptures, e.g., Acts 20. 28; 1 Cor. 1. 2, where the church is described as belonging to God. If this is so then it would seem fair that He dictates how it should operate.
2. Yes – there is a template. The Book of Acts is a good place to start. Also, 1 Corinthians clearly outlines church order and structure and many of the other New Testament Epistles such as Philippians, 1 Timothy and 1 Thessalonians give clear teaching about this subject.
3. Yes – this and the rest of the article answer questions 3 and 4. In Revelation chapter 2 verse 5, the Lord Jesus reminds the church in Ephesus that if they do not repent 'and do the first works' He will remove the candlestick, i.e., the church will cease to exist. Please note that there is no church in Ephesus today, so it would be safe to assume that God had to act and discipline them because of their disobedience.

So what should the structure of a biblical church look like and how is discipline to be applied scripturally if people or churches are disobedient?

I would like to make two points at this stage. First, please remember that the teaching in this article is not about why a church might cease to exist, as in point 3 above, but I am explaining and describing the discipline that a local church would be expected to exercise and apply to maintain purity and obedience to the word of God. Second, while the

idea of punishment and discipline is not popular currently, it is still in the Bible.

Local church structure and leadership

As I read the New Testament, I struggle to find examples of one man heading up a church, as is often the norm in churches today. All of the churches we read about in the New Testament are led and guided by a group of **elders**. The word 'elder' indicates that they should be men of maturity, 1 Tim. 3. 6. Elders are appointed by the Holy Spirit, Acts 20. 28, and recognized by the members of each local church, 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13; Heb. 13. 7, 17. They answer to God for how they care for the people of God, v. 17. They are also described as **shepherds**, 1 Pet. 5. 1-4, as part of their role is to care, feed and protect God's people, and as **overseers**, as those that watch over God's people. This group of men in each local church answers to the Chief Shepherd who is the Lord Jesus Christ, v. 4.

Discipline in a local church – who is responsible?

Discipline in a local church is only implemented as a last resort. Teaching and shepherding the Lord's people is the primary responsibility of elders, 1 Tim. 3. 2. Some of the elders will make the teaching of God's word their life's work, 1 Tim. 5. 17. If false doctrine is taught in a local church the elders should have the capability to identify it and correct it. When Paul met with the elders from the church in Ephesus, as recorded in Acts chapter 20, he pointed out that they were responsible to feed the believers, v. 28. He also implies that when the church is attacked by false teachers, elders should be capable of handling the situation and protecting the believers. A quick reading of the passage makes it clear that they had been well equipped to handle these problems through the apostle's teaching and their knowledge of the word of God. Elders are ultimately responsible for the local church.

Discipline in a local church – what if an elder sins?

Elders are not exempt from discipline. However, 1 Timothy chapter 5 states that an accusation cannot be made

against an elder unless there are at least two witnesses. The principle of multiple witnesses is carried over from the Old Testament, Deut. 19. 15, and is also applied to individuals by the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 18 verse 16. If it has been proven that an elder has sinned then he should be rebuked so that the other elders will learn from his mistake, 1 Tim. 5. 20. As elders are an example to the flock, what happens to them should, in principle, be applied to all of the Lord's people.

Discipline in a local church – handling false teaching

We have already addressed the responsibility of elders to preserve and protect the church. This most primary act of discipline, refuting false doctrine and false teachers, will protect and preserve the 'church of God' from error that would otherwise need to be dealt with at a later stage if left unaddressed, as false teaching will always have a detrimental effect on a believer's beliefs and lifestyle.

Paul gives another example of this type of 'pre-emptive strike' when he writes to Titus that an elder should be able to 'exhort [the believers]' and 'convince the gainsayers [those who contradict]' by sound doctrine, Titus 1. 9. He instructs the elders to rebuke the false teachers so that the believers will be sound in the faith.

A third example is given in 2 Timothy chapter 2 when Paul warns about the false teaching being spread by two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, which was severely damaging the faith of some of the Christians. Again, immediate action is advised.

Discipline in a local church – moral sin

Discipline in a local church reflects errors in two main areas of life – what you believe and how you behave. We have dealt with 'what you believe' in the previous section about handling false teaching. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, we have an incident where a man had to be disciplined for moral sin. The believers in Corinth seemed to have ignored the sin, v. 1, and had to be reminded by Paul that disciplinary action needed to be taken.



It is important to note that disciplinary action has two objectives:

1. To maintain the purity and holiness of the local church, vv. 6-8;
2. To bring about the repentance of the individual to ensure their ultimate well-being, v. 5.

Sin that is unconfessed eats away at the individual, Ps. 32. 3, 4, and contaminates the assembly where they are in fellowship, 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. If it is not dealt with, the long-term effect for the individual and local church will be devastating. In the church in Corinth the situation was eventually handled properly and the brother who had sinned was restored to the fellowship of the church, 2 Cor. 2. 1-11. Dealing with this type of situation should never be avoided, but it should be handled biblically and sensitively so that God is honoured, and individuals are eventually restored. 1 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 11 outlines a list of sins that must be dealt with if they are committed by believers in fellowship in a local assembly. Please note that this list is not limited to moral sin. There is a tendency to ignore sins that we consider to be lesser sins, e.g., covetousness, but this should not be the case.

Discipline in a local church – guiding people and applying discipline

Please note that there are different phases of guidance and discipline in a local church. If action is taken early and the person who is wrong responds, then no further action should be taken. If, however, there is

no repentance or change of behaviour then the process of discipline will continue. These actions are not to be taken lightly or on a whim, but in the presence of God and as directed by elders in a local assembly. Allow me to take you through the scriptures that I am basing this on. Be aware that level 3 of the process should always be applied immediately where moral sin or severe doctrinal error is clearly in view.

Level 1 – Warn, admonish and create awareness.

At this level the elder is making the person aware of their behaviour. They must be warned that their behaviour is out of order. The shepherd must also identify and support those who are vulnerable and weak. Patience and wisdom are key to any decisions that are made.

Key passage: 1 Thess. 5. 12-14.

Level 2 – Avoid, purge, separate, withdraw and have no company with.

This is not ex-communication but withdrawing from the individual so that they understand the seriousness of their sin in disobeying the word. In other words, they are still in fellowship but will feel the distance caused by their sin.

Key passages: Rom. 16. 17, 18; 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14, 15; 2 Tim. 2. 16, 18, 21.

Level 3 – Put away or deliver unto Satan.

At this stage the individual is being put out of assembly fellowship. Examples of moral sin and heretical thinking are given in the passages below. A heretic is someone who is refusing the truth. The discipline for them is to be rejected. Both moral sin and doctrinal sin must be dealt with as, left unaddressed, they damage the local church, 1 Cor. 3. 17. These are sad scenarios but, as we have discussed earlier, action has to be taken to teach the person and to preserve the local assembly.

Key passages: 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 18-20; Titus 3. 8-11.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

DAN

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

Of all the tribes we have considered thus far, the tribe of Dan is perhaps the one which is most dismal. After the joy of observing God's hand in the tribe of Judah, there are far fewer positive qualities in his younger half-brother. It is not that God fails to intervene, and the final word on Dan is no different from any of the other tribes; they all have a place in God's ultimate plan. It is that, despite God's interventions, the tribes' choices leave an overwhelmingly sad mark on the page of scripture.

Sad beginnings

Dan means 'judged' or 'vindicated' and Rachel evidently felt that way when he was born, as a reading of Genesis chapter 30 verse 6 will bear out. But there is no use pretending God is in something when we are clearly going outside His will. Dan's birth was the result of Rachel's deep-seated jealousy of her sister. Envy blinded her to the fact that she had something that Leah didn't – Jacob's love. As in Eden, so today, the flesh will always cause us to focus on what we don't have in place of what we do. In Rachel's case, she took matters into her own hands. Rather than wait for Joseph, she gave her maid, Bilhah, to Jacob. The tribe of Dan would ultimately follow in Rachel's footsteps, taking matters into their own hands and often with a similar air of false piety. The fact that God allows such activities is not necessarily a vindication of them, as we shall see. Yet His sovereign purpose will work things out.

Gracious interventions

God's interventions in the tribe can be seen in the lives of Aholiab and Samson. Both knew a special gifting by God: Aholiab worked alongside Bezaleel from the tribe of Judah to furnish the tabernacle; Samson worked, despite the failure of the tribe of Judah, to 'begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines', Judg. 15. 11; 13. 5. In Aholiab's case, he was careful to carry his work out precisely in accordance with the mind of God, Exod. 39. 43. In Samson's case, he tended to take matters into his own hands, as the balance of his life shows. Faith was clearly involved, Hebrews chapter 11 makes that clear, but so was sight, and Samson's service fell short as a consequence. So with us, faith lies at the heart of so much that we do, but all too often it is conflicted by sight; sight which is finite and naive to the grander designs of our patient Father. It is better to wait on God and do things His way, in His time.

Downward developments

The tribe of Dan would take matters into their own hands when



it came to the division of the land. They failed to fully claim the land allotted to them by Joshua, for lack of faith, Judg. 1. 34. When they eventually found an easier target, they must have felt vindicated when it fell to them, 18. 10. Yet the fact of the matter is that they had failed to conquer the actual territory God had allotted to them and failed to prove Him in the process, Josh. 19. 47.

To make matters worse, having claimed this new, northern territory, they set up an idolatrous system of worship, Judg. 18. 30. Judges chapter 18 sets out their actions in incriminating detail; events which are curiously reminiscent of Rachel's own misguided seizure of household idols, Gen. 31. 32. Dan's actions are the epitome of the spirit of that age when, 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes', or in modern parlance, 'I did it my way'.

As a result of their actions, throughout the Old Testament, the full extent of Israelite territory is referred to by the phrase, 'from Dan [in the north] to Beersheba [in the south]'. It is a perpetual reminder of the unhappy circumstances by which Dan came to be in the north. This location also put them in close proximity with the Sidonians which they appear to have intermarried with at some point, 2 Chr. 2. 14. Ultimately, it was idolatry, which caused God to move in judgement on the northern kingdom; the tribe of Dan and the tribe of Ephraim spearheaded the whole thing.

The final analysis

First, Dan is conspicuous by his absence in Revelation chapter 7. Perhaps this is because God had warned the Israelites he would 'blot out' the name of those that engaged in idolatry, Deut. 29. Second, despite this, Dan is present once again in Ezekiel chapter 48. All Israel will be saved, not by their own schemes and plans but, to use Jacob's words of Dan, in their ultimate fulfilment – when they learn to 'wait for thy salvation', Gen. 49. 18. May God help us to do the same, unreservedly.

1 and 2 Chronicles

Introduction to 1 Chronicles

By **JOHN BENNETT**

Kirkby-in-Ashfield, England

Although some of the history of this book is shared with 2 Samuel, it must be remembered that 1 Chronicles was written much later than the books of Samuel. Indeed, as ROSSIER reminds us, ‘the stamp of being composed later, after the return from the Babylonian captivity, is impressed [upon us] . . . throughout the text’.¹

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles demonstrate to us God’s preservation of the history of His people throughout their exile. The sovereignty of God provides the background of the historical account. As DARBY suggests, ‘He records at the same time the names of those who had gone through the trials mentioned in this history without being blotted out of the book’.²

Most of 1 Chronicles charts the history of King David, chh. 11-19, and it establishes what God’s desires for His people were. Little mention is made of Saul and a passing mention is made of Hebron, but only as the place from which David was made king in Jerusalem. Thus, although David reigned for forty years, only his period in Jerusalem is covered by this book.

In making any comparison between 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, it should be noted that the writer omits certain serious failures of David. Whilst there is a reference to David’s wives, 14. 3, there is little of the detail contained in the former book. Equally, the reign of Saul is mentioned only in its ignominious conclusion. In 1 Chronicles you will find no mention of David’s sin with Bathsheba, his murder by proxy of Uriah the Hittite, or the rebellion of Absalom and its consequences for the kingdom. However, you will find significant detail about the preparations that David made for the building of the Temple and the worship of the people.

Purpose

As Chronicles presents the divine or priestly view of historical events, it is wholly appropriate that it should commence with genealogies.³ A cursory

glance into the books that record the return from exile, Ezra and Nehemiah, would indicate the importance of a genealogy. Those that served in the Temple or its services must be able to trace their ancestry back to the line of Aaron and his sons.⁴ One commentator says, ‘Technically, the book is anonymous – no author or compiler is named’ but the author may well have been ‘a priest or Levite because of the writer’s interest in the temple’.⁵

Similarly, one of the major themes of Chronicles is that the Davidic dynasty would be the instrument through which God would bring salvation and blessing to Israel, and through Israel to the whole world. How important, then, to establish the continuation of that dynasty. Indeed, the first book of the New Testament, Matthew’s Gospel, gives the genealogy of the final Davidic king, Jesus Christ. But for those returning from exile it was important to see that ‘the future did not depend ultimately on the decisions of Cyrus, king of the Persian Empire, but on the faithfulness of Yahweh (cf. Hag. 2:21–22)’.⁶ As DARBY wrote: ‘The Books of Chronicles give us the history . . . under another aspect (that is, that of blessing and of the grace of God); and, more particularly, they give us the history of the house of David with respect to which this grace was manifested’.⁷

Analysis

In its simplest form we might divide the book into two main sections. In chapters 1 to 9 we have the genealogies from Adam through to David, and following the Davidic line through to Zerubbabel and his grandsons. In chapters 10 to 29 the writer considers the thirty-three years of David’s rule as God’s anointed leader of His people:

- The Royal Line of David, chh. 1-9;
- The Rule of David and key events in that rule, chh. 10-29.

We might sub-divide these accordingly:

1. The Ancestry of the Nation
 - 1.1. Adam to Abraham, ch. 1;
 - 1.2. Israel to David, ch. 2;
 - 1.3. The Davidic line, ch. 3;
 - 1.4. The sons of Israel and their progeny, chh. 4-8;

- 1.5. The Nation in its relationship to the Temple, ch. 9;

2. The Activity of the Nation
 - 2.1. The reign of Saul, ch. 10;
 - 2.2. The reign of David over all Israel, chh. 11-29;
 - 2.2.1 David’s mighty men, chh. 11, 12;
 - 2.2.2 The return of the Ark, chh. 13-16;
 - 2.2.3 David’s desire to build the Temple, ch. 17;
 - 2.2.4 David’s expansion of the kingdom, chh. 18-20;
 - 2.2.5 David’s sin in numbering the people, ch. 21;
 - 2.2.6 David’s preparations for the building of the Temple, chh. 22-29.

Overview

The first nine chapters of the book form a long list of names detailing the families of various key individuals within the record of scripture. As the ‘endless genealogies’ progress,⁸ we might find it difficult to understand their significance in that they are not important to us. Yet, under divine inspiration and as offering the priestly view of historical events, the writer opens his book thus. The purpose is to help his readers to appreciate their heritage and to tie themselves to Adam, Abraham, and David in particular. Equally, for us, it reminds us that we are linked to Adam naturally, but, by faith, we are linked to Abraham spiritually through David’s greater Son.

In showing Israel’s place among the nations, it is important to establish the following links: (1) with Adam, as the head of the human race; (2) with Abraham as the father of the nation; and, (3) with David as Israel’s model king. In the world there is a fascination with ancestry and its role in the history of nations, but, as believers, we rest in the knowledge that He who chose to record these names here knows also their history and their journeying. Indeed, He knows all His creatures and His own people by name.

It should also be noted that the names given may also vary with other passages of scripture. This variation in spelling provides evidence of the date of writing of the book and that the pronunciation of many names differed from their early

CHARTING THE SCRIPTURES 1&2 CHRONICLES by Jonathan

Building after
The pattern
for
God's house



The pattern passed on to a Son

'Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch',
1 Chr. 28. 11

The pattern received by the Spirit

'And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit',
1 Chr. 28. 12

The pattern written down in scripture

'All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern',
1 Chr. 28. 19

The pattern followed in the sanctuary

'and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims',
1 Chr. 28. 18

'but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon',
1 Cor. 3. 10



*Except the Lord build the house,
they labour in vain that build it*

Psalm 127. 1

1 Chronicles - 'We are labourers together with God'

Chapter 1-9 Genealogical

- Ch 1-3 Adam to Solomon - A ruined world - a royal line**
- Ch 1** The sons of Adam - the human race, Eden-Edom
- Ch 2** The sons of Israel - the Hebrew race. David the seventh
- Ch 3** The sons of David - Solomon to the captivity

Ch 4-9 Israel to Benjamin - A royal line - a royal priesthood

- Ch 4** The sons of Judah & Simeon
- Ch 5** The sons of Reuben, Gad and 1/2 tribe of Manasseh
- Ch 6** The sons of Levi and their dwelling places
- Ch 7** The sons of Issa, Benj, Naph, Man, Eph, Ash
- Ch 8** The sons of Benjamin - the royal line of Saul
- Ch 9** The service of the Priests and Levites

Chapter 11-29 Biographical

- Ch 11-20 David's reign - A righteous king - a returning Ark**
- Ch 10** The disobedience and death of Saul
- Ch 11** The anointing of David and his chief mighty men
- Ch 12** The loyal helpers of David
- Ch 13** The return of the Ark - Obed-Edom's house blessed

- Ch 14** A sound in the tops of the mulberry trees
- Ch 15** Preparing a place for the Ark - carrying it God's way
- Ch 16** David receives the ark with a psalm of praise
- Ch 17** The Davidic covenant - a house to be built
- Ch 18** David's Kingdom expanded, conquests explained
- Ch 19** Facing the Ammonites and Syrians
- Ch 20** The time that kings go out to battle

Ch 21-29 Solomon is King - A ready people - order of service

- Ch 21** Moriah, a place purchased for the house
- Ch 22** David charges Solomon to build the house
- Ch 23** Duties of Priests and Levites
- Ch 24** Division for sacrifice - Aaron's sons
- Ch 25** Division for song - Asaph, Heman & Jeduthun
- Ch 26** Division for security - scribes and shepherds
- Ch 27** Division for service - commanders and councillors
- Ch 28** David's challenge to the people & Solomon
- Ch 29** David's full provision and his full passing

In the Hebrew Bible Chronicles
- סִימָנִיָּהּ יְרֻבָד - Chronicles

1 & 2 Chronicles include and omit details. Just as the four Gospels give a different account of the same events, but it does mention his sin, yet attributes it to Satan unlike the other Gospels.

Him that overcometh
the temple of man



New Testament

1 Chr. 22. 3
'he shall be my son'

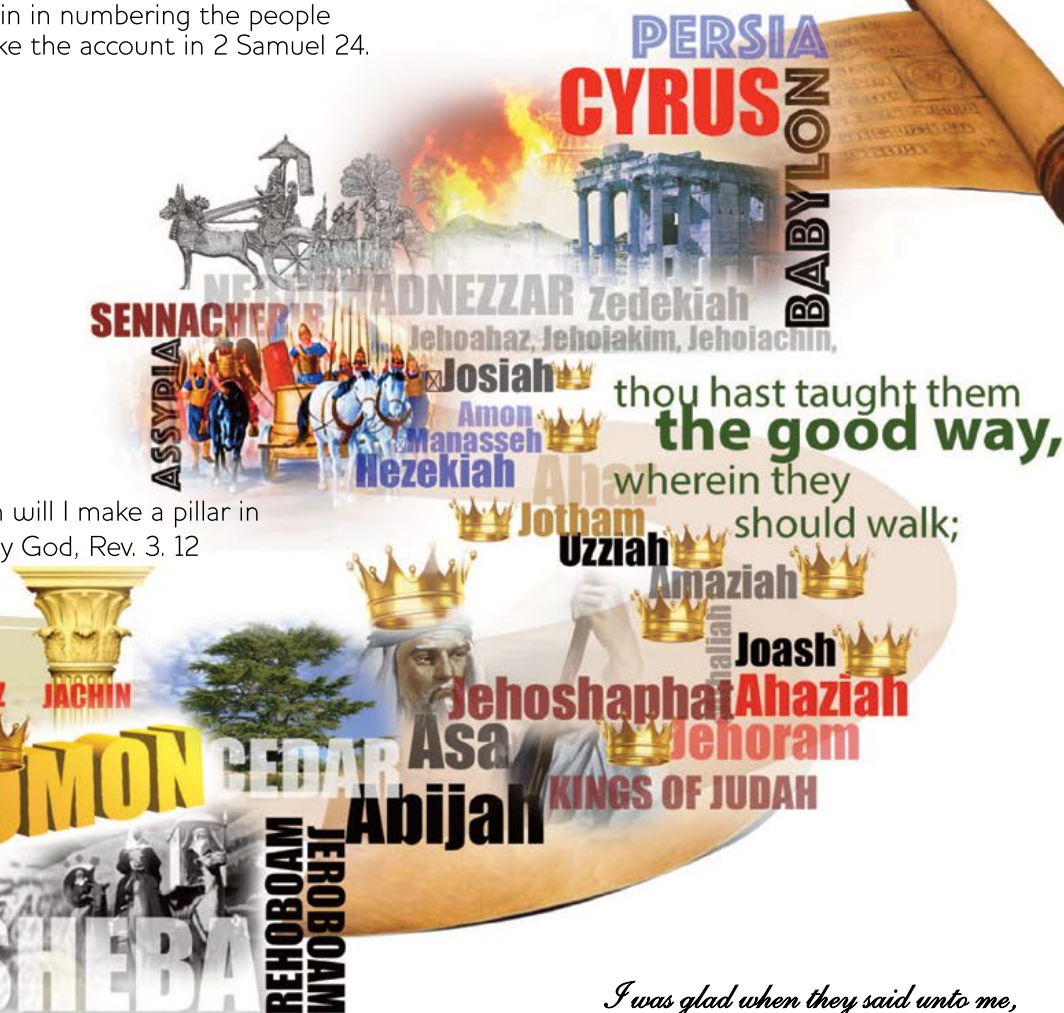
1 Chr. 29. 11-13 (Ma)
'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven, and the earth, and the kingdom, O Lord, and the sea'

2 Chr. 9. 1-5
'And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions, and to see all his wisdom, as she had heard'

The Lord

... was the last book in the OT
... means 'Words of the Days'

...ails when compared with 1 and 2 Kings.
...ent perspective so do these four books.
... mention David's sin with Bathsheba
... in numbering the people
... ke the account in 2 Samuel 24.



... will I make a pillar in
... y God, Rev. 3. 12

... NG BACK
... belling Reviving
... temple of God'

... ment quotations:
... 10 (Heb. 1. 5)
... and I will be his father'.

... tt. 6. 13 and Rom. 11. 36)
... the power, and the glory, and the victory,
... heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the
... ou art exalted as head above all'.

... 1 (Matt. 22. 42)
... ard of the fame of Solomon, she came to
... ard questions at Jerusalem'.

... d reigneth 1 Chr. 16.31

... thou hast taught them
... the good way,
... wherein they
... should walk;

*I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord*
Psalm 122. 1

2 Chronicles - 'Ye are the temple of God'.

- Ch 1-9 Solomon's reign - Wisdom for the work**
- Ch 1 Solomon's wisdom needed to build a house
- Ch 2 Solomon's will to build a house unto God's name
- Ch 3 Solomon's work to build the house
- Ch 4 Solomon's work to make vessels for the house
- Ch 5 Solomon's prayer for the house is finished
- Ch 6 Solomon's work of consecration
- Ch 7 God's glory fills the house in confirmation
- Ch 8 After twenty years...
- Ch 9 Queen of Sheba & Solomon's death
- Ch 10-12 Kingdom is rent - Wise counsel refused**
- Ch 10 King Rehoboam listens to what suits him
- Ch 11 Rehoboam told not to fight with family
- Ch 12 Rehoboam establishes the kingdom without God
- Ch 13-36 Kings of Judah reigning - Wicked or wise**
- Ch 13 King Abijah defeats Jeroboam - a good king
- Ch 14 King Asa his son reigns and defeats Ethiopians
- Ch 15 Prophet's message from Azariah
- Ch 16 King Asa's league with Syria - compromise fatally
- Ch 17 King Jehoshaphat's reign - walking with God
- Ch 18 King Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab
- Ch 19 King Jehoshaphat puts government in place
- Ch 20 Jehoshaphat's victory against Ammon and Moab
- Ch 21 Jehoram reigns - a wicked man
- Ch 22 Ahaziah reigns, dies - his mother destroys Judah
- Ch 23 Athaliah reigns but Joash crowned King by Jehoiada
- Ch 24 Joash reigns at seven repairing house of the Lord
- Ch 25 Amaziah's reign and downfall under Joash King of Israel
- Ch 26 King Uzziah - risen as a leader, fallen as a leper
- Ch 27 King Jotham - using time as mighty and prepared
- Ch 28 The reign of Ahaz - Departure from God's word
- Ch 29 Reign of Hezekiah - Way into God's house opened
- Ch 30 The reign of Hezekiah - Keeping the passover
- Ch 31 The reign of Hezekiah - Breaking the images
- Ch 32 Hezekiah - A victory against Sennacherib
- Ch 33 Manasseh & Amon - Ruin & restoration
- Ch 34 Josiah - The book of the law found
- Ch 35 Josiah - The great passover and his fatal wounds
- Ch 36 Reign of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah

Archaeology



An Orthodox Jew praying at the Western wall, also known as the Wailing Wall because it is a place where Jews mourn the destruction and glory of the former temple which Herod built. The Western wall is the remaining part of the platform of Solomon's temple which Herod extended.



The Temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra was a first century 'sanctuary' dedicated to one of the key gods of the city. Note the pillars were supporting the front porch area. Solomon's temple also had two pillars but opinion is divided as to whether they were free standing or supporting but this archaeology may help us decide.

pronunciation owing to changes in dialect brought about by the captivity.⁹

ROSSIER offers a further note of caution appropriate before we consider the lists of names; 'Yet we should . . . note that . . . Jewish genealogies present innumerable difficulties. First, very frequently those who are called the son of so-and-so are not necessarily his children at all . . . Then there are cases where the head of a clan is regarded as the father of a generation, all the generations between being omitted. There are cases where through the "right of redemption" a distant relative . . . becomes the head of an extinct family. There are those cases, very frequent during the captivity, where one family took a place in the inheritance of another family which had disappeared . . . There are cases too where, the name of ancestors being missing, the name of the birthplace replaced, so to say, the name of the family head. There are cases, common among the Jews, where a person had more than one name . . . And lastly there are cases where an abridged genealogy was given, the names indicated being nothing more than a few pointers to establish the line of descent'.¹⁰

Introduction to 2 Chronicles

By **SIMON SHERWIN**
Innerleven, Fife, Scotland

The two books of Kings and 2 Chronicles cover the period of the monarchy from the reign of Solomon down to the captivity of the nation of Judah in Babylon. Whilst, during the period of the divided kingdom from Rehoboam and Jeroboam I onwards, Kings deals with the history of both kingdoms, Chronicles confines itself to the southern kingdom of Judah, only mentioning Israelite kings when they have a bearing on the history of Judah. The view of Chronicles regarding the northern kingdom of Israel is summed up in chapter 10 verse 19, 'And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day'. The existence of the northern kingdom was a denial of the essential unity of the nation of Israel as a whole. Whilst the chronology of the books of Kings until the captivity of the northern kingdom therefore is somewhat convoluted, because the writer is weaving together two separate histories, the narrative in Chronicles is much more straightforward. Although based on contemporary sources, which are often

cited, both Kings and Chronicles are the work of a later author, though in neither case is the author known.

Purpose

In crude terms, Kings is written to explain why the exile was inevitable and that God is just in His judgements. Chronicles, on the other hand, is much more positive, stressing the possibility of recovery. In New Testament terms, Kings could be related to the Great White Throne, where every man is judged 'according to their works', Rev. 20. 13. Chronicles is the Judgement Seat of Christ, where what is to be commended is brought to light and 'every man shall have praise of God', 1 Cor. 4. 5. Of course, this can only be true in general terms for, sadly, in Chronicles, not every king can be commended. However, it is certainly true that several kings receive commendation whom we would have completely written off, had we only the account in Kings to go by. Kings is a book that deals with sin and its consequences. Chronicles, in contrast, deals with the possibilities and potential when the Lord is given His place, however imperfectly or briefly.

Analysis

1. The reign of Solomon, chh. 1-9;
2. The divided kingdom – the history of Judah and its kings, chh. 10-36.
 - 1.1. Solomon's wisdom and wealth, ch. 1;
 - 1.1.1 Solomon asks for wisdom vv. 1-13;
 - 1.1.2 Solomon's wealth, vv. 14-17.
 - 1.2. Preparation for the Temple, ch. 2;
 - 1.2.1 Materials requested from Hiram of Tyre, vv. 1-10;
 - 1.2.2 Hiram's response and Solomon's payment, vv. 11-16;
 - 1.2.3 The requisition of labour, vv. 17, 18.
 - 1.3. Building the Temple, ch. 3;
 - 1.3.1 Construction, vv. 1-6;
 - 1.3.2 Cladding, vv. 7-14;
 - 1.3.3 Columns and chapters, vv. 15-17.
 - 1.4. The furniture for the Temple, ch. 4;
 - 1.4.1 The brazen items, vv. 1-6; 9-18
 - 1.4.2 The golden items, vv. 7, 8; 19-22.

- 1.5. The dedication of the Temple, chh. 5-7;
 - 1.5.1 Solomon dedicating, 5. 1-14;
 - 1.5.1 Solomon blessing, 6. 1-11;
 - 1.5.3 Solomon praying, 6. 12-42;
 - 1.5.4 Solomon sacrificing and feasting, 7. 1-11.
- 1.6. The fame of Solomon, chh. 7-9;
 - 1.6.1 The Lord's promise, 7. 12-22;
 - 1.6.2 Solomon's cities, 8. 1-16;
 - 1.6.3 Solomon's ships, 8. 17, 18;
 - 1.6.4 The Queen of Sheba, 9. 1-12;
 - 1.6.5 Solomon's wealth, 9. 13-28.
2. The divided kingdom – the history of Judah and its kings, chh. 10-36.
 - 2.1 Rehoboam and Jeroboam, chh. 10-12.
 - 2.2 Abijah, Asa, Nadab, Baasha, chh. 13-16.
 - 2.3 Jehoshaphat and Ahab, chh. 17-20.
 - 2.4 Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Jehoiada, chh. 21-23.
 - 2.5 Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, chh. 24-27.
 - 2.6 Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, chh. 28-35.
 - 2.7 Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, ch. 36.

Endnotes

- 1 H. L. ROSSIER, *Meditations on the First Book of Chronicles*, found here: <http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/rossier/1CHRON.html#a0> [my insertion]. One of the reasons ROSSIER gives for this assertion is: 'the omissions in the genealogies in the first nine chapters of our book are a valuable testimony to the time at which it was written'.
- 2 J. N. DARBY, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Volume 1*, Morrish, pg. 546.
- 3 See, for example, DR. KENNETH BOA, *1 Chronicles*, found here: <https://bible.org/seriespage/18-1-chronicles>.
- 4 See, for example, Ezra 2; 8; 10; Nehemiah 7; 10-12.
- 5 DAVID MALICK, *An Introduction to 1 and 2 Chronicles*, found at: <https://bible.org/article/introduction-first-and-second-chronicles>.
- 6 T. CONSTABLE, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*, Galaxie Software, 2003.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 1 Tim. 1. 4. See also Titus 3. 9.
- 9 H. L. ROSSIER, *op.cit.*
- 10 H. L. ROSSIER, *op. cit.*

Website Reviews

adailydevotion.com

Editor's Note: please note that the website is not preceded by 'www.'. The full website address is <https://adailydevotion.com/>



The website adailydevotion.com reflects a larger shift in the way Christians and society now read their material. Although books and magazines will always have their place, there are a large number of saints that now digest their reading material almost entirely online. Although some may see this shift as a decline,

it behoves us to be realistic and accommodating of the way culture at large informs itself. This website seeks to do this by providing spiritual material of a devotional and encouraging nature on a regular basis. The subtitle of the website is 'edify, encourage, enlighten' which summarizes its aims.

The contributors are all in assembly fellowship and are living for the Lord in different capacities. The website includes book reviews, study material, exposition and poetry and seeks to provide a varied and consistent diet of spiritual truth.

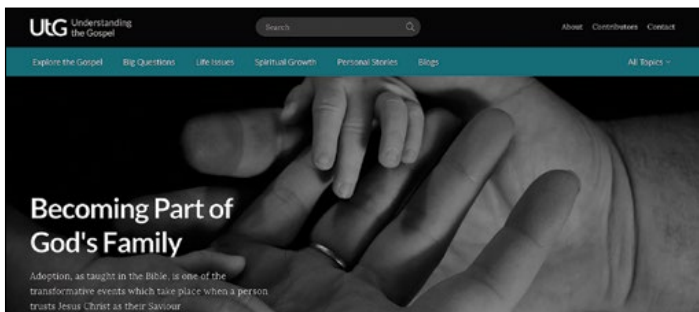
The website is attractive, accessible and regularly updated. Since many Christians, and especially those of a younger generation, now read online blogs from all over the evangelical world, it was felt that something of an assembly nature was needed. Fewer young

Christians read the assembly magazines and although many magazines are now online, they are seldom in an accessible and regular format. Many Christians also seem to read in a more bite-sized manner than previous generations, evidenced by the Christian blogosphere today. This website seeks to fill that gap by communicating sound biblical truth in a relevant and accessible form. Your prayers for this work would be greatly appreciated.

[Our thanks to Huw Rees, Carmarthen, Wales, for this review]

understandingthegospel.org

Editor's Note: please note that the website is not preceded by 'www.'. The full website address is <https://understandthegospel.org>



As its web address suggests, this is a site aimed at providing material supportive of the gospel and those that seek to preach it, which ought to be all of us, albeit in different ways. From the opening page of the site there are six areas, each with subsections. The six main menu options are: Explore the gospel; Big questions; Life issues; Spiritual growth; Personal Stories; and Blogs. In total there appears to be

thirty-seven contributors currently, made up of thirty-three men and four women. A closer investigation suggests that not all of the stated contributors have yet submitted material. However, what is there is substantial and has been written from a variety of perspectives – for example, those who are full-time gospel preachers as well as those who are not. Apart from the range of

contributors, some well-known names, some not, there is also a variety of material – mainly articles but also some videos. All the articles are catalogued in terms of the date of their inclusion and also in terms of how long they will take to read. For example, PAUL MCCAULEY's article *Has Science Buried God? (Part 2)* was uploaded on the 30th April 2019 and is a four-minute read. With each article there is a short biography and picture of the author to make the whole site less impersonal. Videos can be played through YouTube, which also indicates the run time.

To give some impression of the variety of material, there are: seven articles on the evidences for

Christianity; twelve articles on the Bible; six articles on creation; nineteen articles on God; five articles on evangelism; and many more topics of an evangelistic nature. For those who are saved but, perhaps, young in the faith, there are also a number of topics including a short study of the book of James as well as a nine-article series on Church truth.

It would seem that the site is growing and that a number of people have been recruited to add to its pages. Apart from providing material to confirm the faith of some and guide others in their Christian life, it may provide material for church website links, or as links to add to Christian literature for personal distribution.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF REVELATION

Chapters 21 and 22

By **ALAN SUMMERS** Mayfield, Scotland

Part 2

Specific considerations

In chapter 21 verses 1 to 5, a city called the New Jerusalem descends from God's presence.

'I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband', Rev. 21. 2.

This city descends from God's eternal dwelling place. The city should be understood as a literal city. The city is not a metaphor. The metaphor in this verse is the comparison of the city to a bride. The metaphor compares the beauty and freshness of a bride with the new Jerusalem.

In the section commencing at verse 10, there is further description of a city descending. According to those who consider that John goes back in time from the eternal state to the Millennium, this describes a different Jerusalem which also comes down from heaven. I consider that this is an unlikely interpretation. In all other passages of scripture, Jerusalem in the Millennium is an earthly city. There is no hint that it has a twin city bearing the same name. A better way of reading this section is to understand verses 9 to 27 as a recapitulation. This literary technique is used in a number of places in Revelation. It enables the writer to introduce a subject and then return to it in more detail. Thus viewed, John, having described the descent of the city, breaks off the narrative in verses 5 to 8, and then returns to provide greater detail of the vision of the city. This is the view I favour and it explains why there are two

descriptions of the new Jerusalem descending.

Those who favour the view that chapter 21 verse 9 to chapter 22 verse 5 describes the Millennium do not accept this. In their view these are two descents. They accept that a city called Jerusalem descends from heaven at the start of the eternal state, but assert that there is a prior descent at the start of the Millennium. They acknowledge that there is already a Jerusalem on earth at the start of the Millennium, a city that has survived the ravages of the tribulation. It would be absurd to have two cities of the same name on earth simultaneously. To avoid this anomaly, it is argued that the second Jerusalem descends but does not alight on the earth. It is in orbit over the earth. John certainly describes the city 'coming down' or 'descending' out of heaven, 21. 2, 10. But John states that it 'lies foursquare'. If it is in orbit over earth, on what does it lie? It is hard to see that it could be lying on anything if it is in orbit over the earth. Surely the better way of interpreting this section is that it comes from heaven and lies on the earth? It is sometimes said that the saints of the church age populate this heavenly city and rule over the earth. This is based on Revelation chapter 5 verse 10, which states, 'And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth'. DARBY translates this as 'they shall reign over the earth'. This is interpreted to mean that they reign in the city above the earth. There is an abundance of problems with this interpretation. Most translations retain the KJV reading

'on the earth'. Even if the word *epi* is translated 'over', it is unlikely to have a physical connotation. The queen reigns over the United Kingdom and Commonwealth but no one would suggest that this means that Buckingham Palace hovers over the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Other factors should be noted. First, the Jerusalem in chapter 21 verse 9 to chapter 22 verse 5 is located in a realm where the curse has been banished and all are saved, 22. 3; 21. 27. This is consistent with the state of perfection in the eternal state. It does not fit with what we know of the Millennium. The Bible tells us man remains sinful in the Millennium and rises to rebel against Christ, 20. 7-9.

Second, the city in chapter 21 verse 9 to chapter 22 verse 5 has no need of natural light, 21. 23. But in the Millennium the sun and moon continue to shine and the earth is governed by the seasons of the year, Isa. 30. 26; Zech. 14. 8. This indicates that chapter 21 verse 9 to chapter 22 verse 5 is the eternal state and not the Millennium.

Third, this section of verses describes a new earth that no longer needs a temple, but in the Millennium a temple will be built beside Jerusalem and will be supported by a priesthood and a system of sacrifice, Ezek. 40. 2; 48. 8, 10; Isa. 2. 2. This indicates that the verses relate to the eternal state and not the Millennium.

Finally, the vast dimensions of the new city make a lot more sense in the context of a new earth unconstrained by the limitations of the old creation, 21. 16. The city measures twelve thousand stadia (approx. 1,500 miles square; the distance between London and Athens). If we propose to defend the literal 'one thousand years' in chapter 20 verses 2 to 7, we should be consistent and interpret the twelve thousand stadia as a literal measurement. If the text purports to give the dimensions of the city that is how the text should

be understood. It is true that numerals in Revelation have, at times, a figurative aspect, e.g., 666, in chapter 13 verse 18, but these numbers purport to be dimensions not symbols.

Objections

Are there any problems with the interpretation that treats the final section of Revelation as a description of the eternal state? There are a few! Chapter 21 verse 9 to chapter 22 verse 5 describes a tree whose leaves provide 'healing', v. 2. This might be thought inconsistent with the idea that in the eternal state all will be perfection. If sin has been banished there can be no risk of illness or injury and, if that be so, there is no need for 'healing'. This is a fair point. But it suffers from some flaws. It should be remembered that this tree is the 'tree of life', not the trees that line the Millennial river, v. 2; Ezek. 47. 12. It first appears in the Garden of Eden and unlike the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was available to our first parents to eat. Earlier in Revelation the saints were promised the right to eat from 'the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God', 2. 7. So when we seek the meaning of 'healing' we should remember that the tree was not designed to cure disease or illnesses. It was in the Garden

before disease and illness entered in, Gen. 3. 22, 24. If it was removed by God after the Fall because of the risk that unsaved men and women would eat and live forever, it is hard to understand why God would make it available in the Millennium when man is still fallen. But if it is reintroduced in the eternal state, the risk is absent. The word 'healing' therefore should be understood in the sense that the leaves supply and enhance life.

It is also argued that this section cannot refer to the eternal state because it refers to 'kings' and 'nations'. It is argued that in the eternal state there are no kings and that the only authority that exists is God's. It is also argued that all ethnic differences are eradicated and hence there can be no nations. My difficulty with this argument is that it assumes a knowledge of the eternal state and its organization that we do not have. During the Millennium, rule is concentrated in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, but this does not mean that there are no kings on the earth. The fact that ultimate authority is in the hands of Christ does not prevent lesser rulers exercising delegated authority. If that is so I do not see why the fact that power is concentrated in the hand of the Father in the eternal

state means that no one else can exercise delegated authority in the city or on the new earth. It is sometimes pointed out that the Lamb and the Bride are not mentioned in chapter 21 verses 1 to 5, and that God alone is mentioned. By contrast, the Lamb and Bride are mentioned in the section of verses we are considering. It is said that this is consistent with the inference that in the eternal state the Lord Jesus has ceded authority to the Father and the Church is no longer prominent. This is certainly an interesting argument, but the absence of a reference to Christ and the Church may not signify very much given the brevity of the section. Had the section been longer this argument would have more force.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the article will not satisfy everyone, but it does seem to me that, on balance, it is better to interpret the closing chapters of Revelation as a description of the realization of God's purpose rather than a phase of history that, although in many respects is glorious, ends with man proving once more that he is antagonistic to God. It is better to read these chapters as an account of the eternal state with God enthroned and righteousness reigning.



Character Studies in the Book of Proverbs

The Righteous Man

By **JOHN SCARSBROOK** Killamarsh, England

Part 7

The righteous man occupies the central place in the book of Proverbs. He is seen as a shining example to the various characters as they move around him on the stage of life. His morally upright walk and his excellent judgement in all matters are the result of his acceptance of the teaching and instruction of the wise man. This man is both a hearer of the word and a doer and, accordingly, he receives the acclaim for his consistency. He is a man whose 'delight is in the law of the Lord', Ps. 1. 2.

There is, of course, only one truly righteous man. The Lord Jesus alone is the one who can fully appropriate every virtue seen in the righteous man of Proverbs, the only man who did 'always those things that please the Father'. It is a worthwhile exercise to apply to the life of the Lord Jesus many of the verities recorded of the character in our current study, always bearing in mind the practical voice, which we must hear for our own instruction.

Righteousness is an essential and intrinsic attribute of deity. In simple terms it just means doing what is right, and God can never deviate from that standard. The Psalmist David declared that, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works', Ps. 145. 17. In like manner, the word of God is righteous and can be trusted in every detail, Prov. 8. 8, 9. In previous generations, much of our legal, moral and educational framework was based upon the scriptures. It is a sad reflection that in our present day the word of God has been marginalized to such an extent that there are no longer clear and accepted standards of right and wrong. Decisions which affect behaviour, discipline and order in society, are made subjectively,

based only upon the opinions of unregenerate men and women.

Just as righteousness is the fundamental nature of deity, so unrighteousness is the natural characteristic of fallen man, Rom. 3. 10-12. When the Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees that He 'came not to call the righteous', Mark 2. 17, it was plainly true, there were none! This was His perceptive challenge to their conscience. He did come, however, to call 'sinners to repentance', and all come under that heading. Yet such is the nature of man, in seeking to improve himself while leaving God out of the equation, that the pathway of history is littered with his vain attempts at self-righteousness.

The basic concept, which seems to elude man's understanding, is that righteousness is absolute. There cannot be degrees of righteousness, though we naturally try to compare ourselves with others while conveniently forgetting that 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags', Isa. 64. 6. Two examples from Old Testament history will serve to illustrate this. In Genesis chapter 38 verse 26, Judah compares his own actions with those of Tamar, and declares her to be 'more righteous

than I'. In fact, the behaviour of both Jacob and Tamar in the previous verses leaves much to be desired! Neither could claim to have acted righteously. Again, in 1 Samuel chapter 24 verse 17, Saul, on realizing that he could have died in the cave at the hand of David, makes a pathetic plea for his own self-preservation by declaring 'thou art more righteous than I', as though his actions had some merit! He then shows how righteous he really was by continuing to pursue David!

When we considered the wise man in the book of Proverbs, we noticed that he was invariably seen in contrast to the foolish man. In the same way, the righteous man is consistently contrasted with the wicked. The first Psalm is an excellent illustration of this principle, which has its practical outworking in the Proverbs. As early as chapter 2, the righteous man acknowledges that wisdom from the Lord acts as a shield for his protection, v. 7, and a clear guide for his pathway through life, vv. 8-12. The alternative route is a way of 'darkness', v. 13, chosen by those who 'rejoice to do evil', v. 14. In this way, we are taken through the book, noting the walk and the words of the righteous man, and the corresponding behaviour of the wicked.

As the wise precepts are set out, we notice that every action, every word, and every facet of behaviour issues in a particular result, whether for good or ill. Those of the righteous man invariably bring blessing, prosperity and well-being. The wicked man's behaviour results in failure, poverty and ultimately destruction. This leads us to believe that the principles of life, as seen in Proverbs, have not only time but also eternity in mind. Men do not always see the full measure of their actions in this life. There are times when the wicked seem to flourish, while the pathway of the righteous is fraught with difficulties and sorrows. We know, however, that, for the believer, treasure laid up in heaven will bring a just and eternal reward, whereas all unrighteousness will receive its appropriate recompense.

In the central section of the book, chapters 10-19, there is much practical truth which can be applied, and many warnings of pitfalls to be avoided. We need to remember that the people who first read these writings were under a covenant of law, given and accepted at Sinai. To live righteously before God, however, needed more than just an external ceremonial and legal observance. It required faith in God. The patriarch Abraham, who lived before the law, 'believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness', Rom. 4. 3; Gal. 3. 6. Zacharias and Elisabeth 'were both righteous before God', Luke 1. 6, keeping the law, v. 6, yet praying in faith, v. 13. The unconverted Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, lived in respect of 'the righteousness which is in the law, blameless', Phil 3. 6. Yet without faith he could not please God, but would be placed alongside his fellow countrymen, 'going about to establish their own righteousness', Rom. 10. 3.

For the believer in the Lord Jesus, He 'is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption', 1 Cor. 1. 30. We can never work for our blessings in Christ, but through faith in Him those blessings are ours, and we are enabled to live a life which is pleasing to God. The righteous man in the book of Proverbs exemplifies that life.

Let us then examine just a few of those features that mark the righteous man. In chapter 10, he is also known as the upright or the just man. The first thing we note is his own assurance of life, he is 'delivered from death', vv. 2, 16, 25. His knowledge of this gives him confidence to make known to others the way of life, v. 17. We are reminded of David, who desired to appreciate again 'the joy of thy salvation'. Then, said he, 'will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee', Ps. 51. 12, 13. Maybe our gospel testimony would be more effective if we really

lived in the appreciation and assurance of our salvation.

We also notice that the righteous man is certain his pathway will end in blessing, even though there are difficult times, 10. 25. What an encouragement to believers, troubled by circumstances, downcast and sad, to know that 'the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it', v. 22; note also vv. 28, 29. These verses, and many others in these chapters, will also provide strength and comfort to a beleaguered remnant in tribulation days.

In chapter 11, we are given an insight into the way in which the righteous man goes about his daily work; a clear lesson for every believer engaged in employment. He is marked by honesty, v. 3, and a desire to do what is right, vv. 5, 6. He avoids situations which may cause trouble, v. 8, and earns his wages justly and conscientiously, v. 1. As believers, we are not immune from the trials that may come with redundancy. We should not, however, find ourselves unemployed because of dishonesty or poor workmanship.

The secret of living a righteous life is found in chapter 12. We read of 'the root of the righteous', vv. 3, 12, and 'the house of the righteous', v. 7. The root of a plant is its life source, and the strength of a house is its foundations. The believer has been born from above, our life source is found in God through the Lord Jesus. We also belong to that glorious edifice, 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone', Eph. 2. 20. What greater incentive do we need to determine that we will live 'the rest of [our] time', 1 Pet. 4. 2, walking the narrow homeward path, living out the example of the righteous man!

There is much more for the interested believer to glean from this particular character but, reluctantly, we must leave him for a while and learn lessons from others whose actions are weighed in the book of Proverbs.



Paul the Priest

The Pouring Out of the Drink Offering

By **STEPHEN FELLOWES** Skibbereen, Ireland

Part 3

'Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all', Phil. 2. 17.

Once again in the Epistle to the Philippians the Apostle Paul occupies our thoughts with terminology that is taken straight from the Old Testament context of the offerings. Here we have a clear allusion to the drink offering of Numbers chapter 15. Paul sees himself as the drink offering adjoining the large self-sacrificial offering of the lives of the Philippian saints. Let us glean some lessons from this for ourselves.

The **contrast** in size of the drink offering is worthy of note. Many sacrifices were offered upon Israel's altar: the large bullock, the heifer, the lamb, the ram, even down to the humble pigeon. These all, along with others, had their rightful place upon the brazen altar, but as far as the drink offering was concerned it was something which was comparatively small, in fact it was an adjunct to the other larger offerings, Num. 15. 1-16. It was supplementary in character.

We cannot fail to see the significance of this in the light of the Philippian Epistle. The chapter from which our verse comes may well be summed up by the words of verses 3 and 4, 'in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others'. To do this, of course, necessitates that we are small in our own esteem, and that we are marked by humility and self-sacrifice.

Four great examples are brought before us in chapter 2. The first,

and supreme example is our Lord Jesus Christ. Whilst much time has been profitably spent discussing the significance of each word employed by the Holy Spirit in describing the self-humbling of our Saviour, we can easily miss the mind of the same Spirit if the basic reality of the fact that 'he humbled himself' does not bear in upon our lives as a practical reality, v. 8!

This is not so much an unfolding of doctrine, although doctrine is of course involved, but rather it is a deeply practical section of scripture, given to us that we might emulate Christ in His selflessness.

Timothy followed this pattern closely, vv. 19-24. He was a man very like his mentor, Paul; he followed Paul inasmuch as Paul followed Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 1. Thereby he stood in contrast to the self-seeking majority, v. 21, as did Epaphroditus, who, for the work of Christ, put his very life on the line, vv. 25-30. Paul speaks of his own life as the small drink offering which was 'poured out as a libation', JND. Have I given over my life to Christ in this manner, or am I holding on to it for my own benefit?

'Wouldst thou be chief?
Then lowly serve;
Wouldst thou go up?
Go down.
But go as low as e'er you will,
The highest has been lower still'.

The **combination** of the drink offering with a bigger offering is

clear to be seen when Paul speaks of himself being offered 'upon the sacrifice and service of your faith'. He views the lives of the saints at Philippi as the much larger burnt offering placed upon the altar, upon which he, as the supplementary drink offering, was poured out. Their lives are described as lives of sacrificial service which sprang from their faith in Christ; lives that were priestly in character. It is interesting that the word used for 'service', *leitourgia*, refers to the priestly service of Zacharias and also to that of our Lord Jesus, Luke 1. 23; Heb. 8. 6. The Philippians had already placed themselves upon the altar, as Paul exhorts in Romans chapter 12; they were living consecrated lives for God.

It is always the mark of a spiritual person when they think higher of the work and service of others than they do of their own. In fact, it is a real test of our spirituality, the weed of jealousy lies buried in every breast and must be kept in the place of mortification.

Paul is putting into practice the selfless example of Christ; in his writing here he rises high in our esteem by bowing low in his own personal estimation. He could call himself 'less than the least of all saints', Eph. 3. 8. There was no mock humility with Paul.

How do we see ourselves? Am I always number one? Am I full of my own importance? We too often brush past these things as if they were of little consequence but many of the problems faced in assembly life would be solved if there was a spirit of Christ-like humility amongst us as God's people.

The case of Euodias and Syntyche is a case in hand in this very Epistle, 4. 2. What the particular difficulty was we are not told, but it was sufficiently serious for Paul to seek to admonish the sisters when he impartially exhorted them to 'be of the same mind in the Lord'. The one sure way to achieve this was by the practical application of humility. To act 'in the Lord' is to bow to His lordship, to recognize



His authority, and when we do this we subject our own will to His will. If pride stems from my own wilfulness, then humility results from bowing to His will.

The **content** of the drink offering was wine, Num. 15. Wine is the well-known Bible symbol of joy, 'which cheereth God and man', Judg. 9. 13. How fitting this symbol is when we think of the last clause of our verse, 'I joy, and rejoice with you all', and then Paul adds, 'for the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me', v. 18. Here is a reciprocating fellowship of joy at the contribution of Paul's poured-out life to their consecrated lives.

Joy is a prominent theme in this Epistle; the words 'joy' and 'rejoice'

occur frequently. Paul desires that the Philippians 'fulfil [his] joy'; that is, 'fill it up to the brim', 2. 2. The suggestion is that there was something lacking, some hindrance to this fullness of joy. Most likely the case of the divided sisters was the reason.

Another interesting point is that the wine of the drink offering increased in proportion to the size of the offering. For a lamb approximately 0.5 litres would suffice; a ram needed 0.8 litre; and for the bullock 1 litre was required, Num. 15. This suggests that the amount of joy I experience as a believer is dependent upon how much I appreciate Christ. Do we long for joyful lives? The answer is in keeping Christ before our souls. The blessed man of Psalm 1 did not

simply find his joy in his separation from all that was wrong and godless, but from occupation with the word of God, 'his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night', Ps. 1. 2.

In chapter 3, Paul, with single purpose, desires this full appreciation of Christ as he continually pursues Him as a prize to be won and a person to know, 3. 8, 10. This involves the ongoing pursuit of the life, dedicated and consecrated to apprehending more of such a glorious person.

The **completeness** of the drink offering is seen in the simple fact that it was fully poured out, nothing was held back, it was given completely and unreservedly. When Paul comes to the end of his life, he views life again from the drink offering standpoint. He speaks with great pathos when he says, 'I am now ready to be offered', 2 Tim. 4. 6. NEWBERRY, in the margin of his Bible, indicates the sense of it when he says, 'already being poured out'. The difference between this pastoral passage and the reference in Philippians chapter 2 is that in Philippians we suggest that it is Paul's life of service as a drink offering being poured out, whereas here he is clearly at the end of life and in martyrdom he would finally be poured out in death for the glory of God. It is searching that Paul can look back with no regrets and look forward with confidence to the righteous crown from the hand of his Lord and Master.

As we review these few articles, wouldn't it be something for us all to pursue the crown by God's grace, to place our lives upon the altar as living sacrifices, feeling the reality and dignity of being part of God's inner temple. May we live lives of purity in keeping with such a position, emitting a fragrance heavenward as we 'walk in love' after the pattern of Christ. Would that we could communicate in practical matters the same sweet odour that ascends towards the heart of God, and be content to be the humble drink offering poured out fully in service for Him.

TANZANIA

A land of many opportunities to serve the Lord, Part 2

Compiled by **STEPHEN DAVIES** Tanzania, from contributions from missionary colleagues

The Emmaus Bible School correspondence course was started right from the beginning of missionary work in Tanzania in 1955 in the coastal towns of Kilwa, and later in Mtwara. After a long and fruitful period in Dar es Salaam, Emmaus moved to Dodoma. Currently there are 2,000 students, half of them being prisoners. The demand for online studies is big and the possibility of offering the Emmaus courses online is being explored, so that many more young people might continue to profit from them. Emmaus is staffed by two local instructors and a missionary.

Education of children has long been a challenge to missionary families and those remaining in the field. The Haven of Peace Academy (HOPAC), in Dar es Salaam, is a Kindergarten-Grade 12 (Year 13) school that was founded by missionaries in 1994, but did not have a boarding facility. The Lord gave the German Section the vision to build a hostel for missionary children on land near to HOPAC, to give their parents the opportunity to keep on working in their ministry up country or even in Dar es Salaam while their children went to a Christian School. CMML(T) has been operating **The Haven Christian International Boarding House** since 2002, initially only for German missionary children but now accommodating children from across the globe.¹ The goal is to provide a Christian home-away-from-home, helping missionary children to develop a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Together with times of devotion and worship, the students are supported in their studies and homework,² with activities also offered in the evenings and at weekends to build good relationships with each other and create a family-like atmosphere. The Haven employs six nationals, all Christians, who are overseen by two missionaries plus two one-year volunteers. The team

members enjoy a good relationship, always start with prayer in the morning and have known the Lord's blessing as they have worked together for the Lord.

Moshi Christian Children's Centre (MCCC aka MTOTO) was first established in 1969 as a missionary response to children in crisis. For nearly five decades it has been a Christian ministry that goes on reaching out to support children, youth and families who find themselves in extreme and difficult circumstances in northern Tanzania. It has always been shaped by a compassionate response to those in distress or danger, offering open arms of welcome and protection; offering the open arms of God's love to those who need it. 'Caring for children one child at a time' means that personalized care is offered to every child that the Lord brings to the Centre – the aim is to try to care for individuals just as we believe God knows us individually. In its earliest days, MCCC was a loving response to the malnutrition and hunger of many children in the community. Today, it is still the response of local Christians in their own communities of northern Tanzania to the ongoing needs around them. In conjunction with the Social Welfare department and under

licence, MCCC provides home to approximately thirty-five children of various ages. Two nationals, one who was brought up at the Centre, serve the Lord out of a call and compassion for children's ministry, and lead MCCC; this results in MCCC children being intimately involved in a local church where one of them is a church leader.³

Western Tanzania is vast, and some villages are isolated due to poor roads and infrastructure. While helicopter services were occasionally available, missionaries could hitch a ride and visit small assemblies to teach and encourage the believers, but only for just a few hours. When these occasional opportunities ceased with the relocation of the helicopter service, what alternatives were there? For one missionary couple living in Kigoma, in 2010, the Lord gave the vision to build their own **sailing boat**, *Wings of the Morning*, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, with the purpose of sailing to remote villages to preach the Good News and strengthen the believers. The two-masted ketch-rigged vessel was launched in 2011, and nine ministry trips, ranging from a day's sail to week-long voyages, have been completed to-date. Equipment for gospel film showings is taken, along with literature, and the missionaries are accompanied by Tanzanian fellow-workers, who help out with children's meetings and seminars. As more road access comes to the different villages, it is hoped to be able to go further south with the boat towards the Zambian border. On one voyage a medical team of fourteen was taken to a village north of Kigoma for three days of ministry to sick people and needy souls.

There are also **refugees** on the doorstep. Tanzania has long been a refuge for people fleeing wars in neighbouring countries. In the 1990s new floods of refugees came into Tanzania's western region from Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1996 missionaries had just moved from Burundi to Kigoma, Tanzania and knew some of these refugees as fellow believers from the assemblies in Burundi and Congo. The Lord

enabled them to help the refugees establish assemblies in the different refugee camps and they made regular visits with spiritual and material aid. Whilst many of the camps were closed as refugees returned home or migrated to Australia, Europe or North America, missionaries have been able to connect some with assemblies in the USA and Canada.

The Muslim population of Tanzania is estimated at around 40%. In general, believers have been reluctant to evangelize Muslims, mostly due to fear and lack of training. The previous focus on open air evangelistic meetings and showing Christian films in the Kigoma region was met with minimal interest, especially compared to the effort and expense that went into such endeavours. Thus, there was a shift of focus to more door-to-door evangelism! Those involved were surprised at how many people warmly welcomed them, had a genuine interest in discussing religious things, and were willing to listen to the message they had brought. They made sure to always give a clear gospel presentation, and then left their hosts with a few good tracts or booklets.

Seminars were also held on how to reach Muslims through friendship evangelism. Building friendships, so that they can be shown the love of Christ, often enables the scriptures to be read with them. It is only the truth of God's word which will then begin to correct the many misunderstandings they have about



God, Christ, and Christ's followers! Please pray with us that believers might be trained and motivated to evangelize their Muslim neighbours. We long for Christ to be glorified in His church.

Other missionaries based in Dar es Salaam, burdened with the need to evangelize children from poor and disadvantaged families, obtained a plot of land in Kinzudi village on the outskirts of the city. In 2009, **Watoto wa Thamani Day Care Centre** (WWT) opened, a kindergarten for fifty, four to six-year-old children, registered with the Social Welfare department. Each day, the children begin by singing Bible choruses, memorizing God's word, hearing Bible stories and prayer. Afterwards they are taught basic literacy and numeracy in Kiswahili to prepare them to enter Primary School. The Christian teachers, all nationals, are committed to bringing the gospel to these young hearts and through them to their families, who are invited to special assemblies throughout the year. One grandmother has been saved and baptized and is in fellowship in the local assembly. Contact with the parents has brought many needy souls who have been helped physically, but also brought under the sound of the gospel. Many of the children who have been through WWT now form the core of the assembly Sunday School and the nucleus of a Friday children's meeting.

Visit any village in Tanzania and you will notice the number of children sitting about, or maybe playing with their friends. Should you start to show an interest in them, you quickly get an audience. The city of Dar es Salaam is no different. Missionaries based in the city were invited by a contact to hold a children's meeting in the open air in a major police housing compound. This work on a Thursday afternoon has been going on for more than ten years. At the start, 200+ children could be expected, but these numbers have started to shrink as families are relocated. Around sixty children still come each Thursday (weather permitting) to learn and hear God's word, to sing choruses, and answer

questions to get a reward. Enthused by such a response, once WWT had been established, they decided to try holding a similar Kids' Club on a Friday afternoon using the WWT facility. More than 400 children, from both Christian and Muslim backgrounds, regularly attend the meetings, at which they sing choruses with gusto, memorize God's word with accuracy, listen to Bible stories attentively and answer questions with eagerness. Each precious child is a soul for whom Christ died.

From small beginnings in Southern Tanzania, the Lord's work has spread and grown, and over the years the number of missionaries has far exceeded the 100 that Dudley Dalton envisioned under CMML(T). Many Tanzanians have been won for the Saviour, many assemblies established, and many national evangelists called to serve Him. Yet many of the assemblies are small and weak, and the number of assembly-commended missionaries registered under CMML(T) is only a fraction of what it was in the past. Yes, the fields are white unto harvest, but the labourers are few! The Lord is still calling! Where are those who will hear and heed His call?

Prayer is sought not only for more to be exercised, called and sent as missionaries, but for the building up of Tanzanian believers, for the establishing of local New Testament assemblies that cherish the distinctiveness of gathering to the Lord's name, and for a local awakening of nationals with a heart for Him and to reach out with the gospel of the grace of God to their own people, young and old, of any religion or none, that the Lord might be glorified and see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

Compiled from contributions from assembly-commended missionaries across Tanzania.

Endnotes

- 1 Denmark, the Netherlands, USA, New Zealand, Rwanda, Madagascar, and South Korea.
- 2 For many English is not their first language.
- 3 See <https://mtoto.co/about> for more information on this particular project.

The Logos School – Cyprus

By **COLIN P. CLARKE**, Chairman of The Logos Trust

It would not be incorrect to say that the beginnings of the Logos School began at the Nuremberg Trials in Germany at the end of the Second World War. It was there that Ian Ross, in his military capacity as a captain, required a secretary and translator. Christa, a skilled secretary and linguist was provided by the military. Gordon Ian Moore Ross and Christa Rosemary Erica Schneider were married in Hamburg in 1950. After the marriage they moved to Glasgow to Ian's family home with his parents. Ian was called as a serving soldier to Aden and left Christa behind in Glasgow with their daughter.

In 1953, Billy Graham held a gospel campaign in Glasgow. Christa went to hear this speaker on her own. Due to the large gathering, she could not get inside the Kelvin Hall, but was able to listen to the message relayed on speakers. This was when Christa trusted the Lord as her Saviour.

Christa wrote a letter to Ian who was living the 'wild life' with the troops in Aden. One particular evening Ian had decided to walk back to the barracks. The Lord wonderfully preserved him from death as the Land Rover he should have been a passenger in overturned on its return journey after a 'wild' night out and the occupants were all killed. The next morning Ian received the letter from Christa telling of her salvation. On reading Christa's letter, and just after he had been saved from death, Ian placed his trust in the Lord.

In 1960, Ian was posted to Cyprus and lived in Nicosia. He made many friends who were believers, including Sam Chorbajian and Levon Yergatian. In 1962 Ian returned to Scotland to the family home as an Army Scripture Reader, where he served the Lord until 1969. He was active in gospel outreach work amongst the university students

in St. Andrews, and at the same time, Christa was also very active in this work.

During a holiday in Cyprus meeting again with old friends, especially Levon and Sam, the concept of a school took shape.

In 1971, Ian and his son Toby went to Cyprus. Upon returning to Scotland, Ian brought into being 'The Logos Trust', the purpose of which was to provide finance to commence a school in Cyprus with spiritual guidance and educational control.

The commitment of Ian and Christa to this work is seen in the sale of Ian's family home, together with the entire contents, except for the few possessions that fitted into the Bedford CA Van. In 1971, the family commenced the journey over land from Scotland to Cyprus, travelling through Europe and Turkey, and arriving at the port of Famagusta.

In Cyprus Ian and Christa had with them the £6,000 they received for the sale of the family home and they used the money to commence the Logos School. Ian purchased the original six prefabricated buildings which were to become the classrooms with chairs and tables, with half of the money from the sale of their home. These buildings had cost 13,000 Cypriot pounds to build. Next, he painted the classrooms, and the school began September 1973.

Ian was a co-founder of the school with Levon Yergatian.

The vision of the founders was of a school where children would receive a sound secular education, and, at the same time, hear the word of God and be daily acquainted with the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ian was not only co-founder of the school but throughout his life was a member

of the Board of Governors. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the school, as he sought tirelessly to promote its interests, in recruiting staff, sourcing equipment, and encouraging the support of the Lord's people.

The **Logos Trust** is the vehicle through which equipment and funds is channelled to the school. Through Ian's influence, hundreds of thousands of pounds have been forwarded from the UK to Cyprus through the Trust, and these funds have been acknowledged by interested local Cypriot believers to have been the life-blood of the Logos School. The Logos Trust continues to support the school. England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland are all represented on the Trust which currently comprises sixteen brethren, all in assembly fellowship, who meet at least twice a year. From the Trust, a small group form the board of governors (six) who meet to review the education, staff, buildings, and finance of the school. The vision of the founders is in no way diminished, and the school continues to provide quality education in conjunction with the proclamation of the gospel message daily.

By the early 1980s, the population of Logos School had outgrown the facilities and, in 1984, believers provided the funds for land and new buildings.

Around this time, a board of directors was appointed. They oversaw the major decisions of the school, and were responsible for the money that believers gave for the work.

By 2002, the school population reached 300, with a teaching staff of approximately thirty-six from around the world. This number fitted the school perfectly, both physically and socially – large enough to be a significant outreach in the community, but small enough to maintain a family feel where every child is known by name. Throughout its forty-six years, about 2,500 children have attended Logos School, many having trusted the Lord as their Saviour.

Today

Under the leadership of the board of

directors, along with Nathan Moore, the Principal, the Logos School is thriving. Our student body of around 300 is made up of individuals from more than forty different countries and many different religious beliefs, including Muslims, due to our location in the Middle East. We maintain a high educational standard, following the English curriculum and being an official centre for Cambridge and Edexcel Examination Boards.

Why do families send their children to Logos School, knowing it is a Christian institution?

The main reasons are:

Financial. Thanks to the support of the believers abroad, we offer tuition discounts to families in need: 75% of our families receive a discount of more than 10% and half of the students pay less than 50%. We offer the opportunity of a quality education to children who could never otherwise afford one.

Discipline. Muslim families really appreciate our moral code. The public Greek schools have a reputation for being quite chaotic, whereas Logos School is known for its Christian values and extremely high standard of behaviour. No swearing. No bullying. No smoking. No alcohol or drugs. No physical contact between the teen boys and girls. No fighting. No mobile phones. Even rules regarding modesty of dress and no piercings are enforced.

Obviously, this is rare anywhere in the world in this generation, and most parents are grateful. When children transfer to Logos School from other schools, they often find the new rules



strange and difficult, but almost all of them settle in quickly and soon find themselves feeling secure, loved and protected. Compared to many schools around the world, Logos is a peaceful haven with hardly any major discipline issues.

Fees. While the Logos School is a private school and fees are charged to those parents who can afford to pay, to-date the school has operated on the principle that no child should be turned away because of the inability of the parents to pay fees. This has been made possible through the generosity of kind, believing friends and by the sacrificial service of our expatriate teachers, who accept salaries much lower than in their homelands, i.e., in the UK, Canada and the USA. The recruitment of teachers is an ongoing need that could be affected by the UK Brexit situation and we are thankful to the Lord for those who come and share in the work.

To convey a little of the nature of the school, we have students from the following countries: Armenia, Austria,

Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Palestinian territories, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, USA, and Yemen.

The Logos Trust is a registered charity. Courtesy of the UK HMRC and the Gift Aid Scheme, a UK tax payer can upgrade a donation of £100 into £128. Such additional income has proved most valuable. The school buildings are now old and overcrowded by the current student body of 300. With European Union (EU) standards now applying in Cyprus, the buildings fail to meet current legal requirements on many points, including health and safety, and various other criteria. Currently, we are modernizing the school fire-escapes, providing more toilet facilities, upgrading security, and upgrading and reorganizing classroom facilities. Indeed, upgrading the school seems a constant pursuit, the new computer laboratory being a recent example.

Post-Brexit. We do not know how the Cypriot government will react to the separation of the UK from the EU. Before Cyprus joined the EU, we had to register non-Cypriot teachers year-by-year, the government requiring us to justify every member of staff. You can imagine the amount of time this exercise took on a yearly basis. There could be new requirements brought in by the EU which will be applied to the school, and these are as yet unknown.

Prayer Points

- The Lord's provision for the continuance of the work, particularly the modernization of buildings.
- The Lord's overruling in relation to ongoing recruitment issues. Those interested in short-term or longer-term service for the Lord at Logos should email: LogosTrust@Logos.ac.cy.
- A resolution of any problems that might be created by Brexit, particularly for UK citizens working in the school.
- The Lord's blessing as the gospel is presented to the students each day.



WORD FOR TODAY

By **BRIAN CLATWORTHY** Newton Abbot, England

agapeo (to love, to feel and exhibit esteem)

agape (love, brotherly love, affection)

agapetos (beloved, esteemed)

Perhaps the one major word group in the New Testament whose origin and use is misunderstood by many are the Greek words for love *agape* (noun) and *agapeo* (verb). Preachers often assert that *agape*, in particular, is a unique Christian word created specifically by the Holy Spirit to express the love of God.¹ Some even assert that it was not in common use before the birth of the New Testament. These assertions do not seem to be supported from the use of the noun and the corresponding verb in pre-biblical Greek, the Septuagint (LXX) and the papyri.² Nevertheless, we should be cautious in this area of linguistics as ultimately words are known and understood by the company they keep.

In pre-biblical Greek, *agapan* – present active infinitive of the verb *agapeo* – was not a hugely popular word, but it was part of the vocabulary of the ancient world. It occurs infrequently in classical Greek to denote friendship between equals, the love of money³ and it is even used by the Greek philosopher Plutarch of Caesar, who denounced certain women in Rome ‘who squander on animals that proneness to love and loving affection . . . which is due only to our fellow-men’.⁴ In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, the author makes a clear distinction between the Greek verb *phileo* and *agapan* when he states of Aristarchus that ‘the women loved (*phileo*) him as a protector, and he cherished (*agapan*) them as beneficial’. This suggests, therefore, that the word group was already in usage before the New Testament, and also indicates that it did not always have a positive meaning, i.e., it depended wholly on its context.

In the Septuagint (LXX) the verb *agapeo* is chiefly used to translate the

common Hebrew verb *ahab*, which expressed familial love as in Genesis chapter 22 verse 2, where Abraham is told by God to take his only son ‘whom thou lovest’. Contrast this with the use of the same word to describe the incestuous lust Amnon had for Absalom’s sister Tamar that ended in rape, in 2 Samuel chapter 13. And in Proverbs chapter 20 verse 13 the sluggard is told not to love sleep, because ultimately it would lead to impoverishment. In David’s thanksgiving prayer in 1 Chronicles chapter 29, the word is used in verse 17 of God, who desires or takes pleasure in righteousness. God’s love (*agapeo*) for His people is not only eternal, Jer. 31. 3, but is also expressed through discipline; Prov. 3. 12; cp. Heb. 12. 6. Hence His choice of them was not motivated by any external factor, but entirely on the basis of intuitive love, Deut. 7. 6-8. So, whilst the objects of love can vary, the context here again dictated as to whether the word was used in a positive or negative way.

By the time of the New Testament there were at least four Greek words being used to describe the senses of love. In English we only use one word to cover many forms of ‘love’; hence our difficulties in understanding the various nuances of these Greek words. As MOULE has written, ‘without using intolerably cumbrous and pedantic methods, it is nearly impossible to define a particular phrase of some language with strict accuracy’.⁵ The four main Greek words were *erao* (*eros*), *storge*, *phileo* and *agapeo*.

The word *eros* does not occur in the Septuagint (LXX) or the Greek New Testament, but it does occur in some early Christian literature. Greeks used it generally to describe unreasoning or overmastering passion, which could lead to degenerate love, hence our English word erotic. Critically, *eros* was predicated upon being attractive in some way to someone else. It had the notion of giving, but only

to receive; thus, it was always a conditional form of love. The second word, *storge*, generally referred to family affection or love of relatives, in essence natural affection through relationship. The word is only used, however, three times in the New Testament and in two of these occurrences it is prefixed by ‘*a*’ (*astorge*) to produce negative statements of those who are ‘without natural affection’, Rom. 1. 31; 2 Tim. 3. 3. In the other occurrence, it is combined with *phileo* to describe the natural affection or mutual love that should exist between believers, the family of God, Rom. 12. 10.

The verb *phileo* in its various forms occurs some forty-five times in the New Testament. Whilst it is a synonym for love, it has more to do with the love of emotion and friendship than the selfless love that is usually typical of the words *agape/agapeo*. So, for example, the relationship between David and Jonathan would exemplify the meaning of *phileo*. It is used in a negative way in James chapter 4 verse 4 as a warning to us that ‘the friendship of the world’ puts us at enmity with God. The verb can also be translated as *cherish* and includes physical love, as the warmth of real affection such as a kiss – positively of social etiquette, Luke 7. 45, or the kiss of believers, 1 Thess. 5. 26 – negatively of the kiss of Judas when he betrayed the Lord, Matt. 26. 48. But, interestingly, it can also refer to divine love, as in John 5. 20; 16. 27. The message sent to the Lord by Lazarus’ sisters confirms that the Lord had great affection for Lazarus, 11. 3. The love of the brethren/ brotherly love is also expressed in the derivative word *philadelphia*, e.g. Heb. 13. 1; 2 Pet. 1. 7. *Phileo*, then, can be understood as affection for others based upon the intrinsic qualities that one individual sees in another.

The main word used in the New Testament for love is *agape* and with its derivatives it occurs in excess of 300 times – *agapeo* occurs most frequently in the writing of the Apostle John. There is no doubt that this is the finest word that could be used for love, especially the love of God, as it reflects an emotion of

the heart that is not based upon the merits of the person who is being loved, Rom. 5. 8; 1 John 4. 10, but keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy, Luke 23. 34. It not only delights in giving freely to others, but also desires the well-being of others, 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5; thus, it is self-sacrificing to such an extent that it is unconditional love because it is based upon the love of God, John 3. 16; Rom. 5. 5. This is why John makes that profound statement in 1 John chapter 4 verse 8 that 'God is love'. In other words, God not only epitomizes everything that love is, but it is an essential and intrinsic part of His whole being. Those who practise such love, give evidence of the fact that they are 'born of God', and 'know God', 1 John 4. 7. The converse can also, sadly, be true, v . 8. But the impetus for us to love one another is solely based upon the unconditional

love that has been extended to us through the death of Christ, vv. 10, 11. And loving one's neighbour, in addition to loving God, is now also incumbent upon us because of the transcendence of the love of God, Mark 12. 30, 31. As SPICQ writes, 'Only Mark comments "There is no other commandment greater than these". The union of the singular "no other commandment" and the plural "than these" maintains the distinction between the two precepts, but puts both of them into a special category. No other commandment equals them in importance, in excellence, or, consequently, in force of obligation'.⁶ However, forms of the word are used in a negative context, as in John chapter 3 verse 19, John chapter 12 verse 43 and 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 10.

Finally, just a brief comment on the alternation of the words for love

agapeo and *phileo* in John chapter 21 verses 15 to 17. Interestingly, for those who argue that there is a distinction being made between the two words, our Lord only uses *agapeo* in His first two questions, vv. 15, 16, but in the third question, v 17, He uses *phileo*! Despite the volume of literature that has been written on this exchange, it does seem to me that the difference is more apparent than real, and as SCHNACKENBERG writes, 'it is artificial to read a distinction into Jesus' questions. The two verbs are also used elsewhere in John's gospel synonymously'.⁷

Let us, though, rejoice in the love of God, which has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit, Rom. 5. 5, and daily seek to show that love to others, John 15. 12.

'Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky'.

For further reading/study
Introductory

Agape in the New Testament
(Volumes 1-3) by CESIUS SPICQ

ADVANCED

Agape/agapeo at page 9 in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Volume 1), Ed(s) by HORST BALZ and GERHARD SCHNEIDER

Endnotes

- 1 A similar claim by a German scholar in the nineteenth century that the Greek of the New Testament was 'a language of the Holy Spirit' was shown to be incorrect.
- 2 'But this argument has been overturned by the diachronic study of Robert Joly, who presents convincing evidence that *agapeo* was coming into prominence throughout Greek literature from the fourth century B.C. on, and was not restricted to biblical literature'. D. A. CARSON, *Exegetical Fallacies*, pg. 53.
- 3 Cp. Eccles. 5. 10; 1 Tim. 6. 10.
- 4 *The Life of Pericles*, 1.1
- 5 *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, pg. 1.
- 6 *Agape in the New Testament - Volume 1*, pg. 64.
- 7 *The Gospel According to St. John*, pg. 363.



Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819–1886)

By **BERT CARGILL** St Monans, Scotland

One of our best-known and most-sung hymns must be *What a friend we have in Jesus*, yet its author, Joseph M. Scriven, is not so well known or remembered as many of the other hymn-writers of the nineteenth century. His life-story is interesting, filled with variety and punctuated by great poignancy.¹

He was born almost exactly 200 years ago, on 10th September 1819 in Banbridge, County Down, Ireland, the second child of John Scriven, a captain in the Royal Marines, and Jane Medlicott. The family moved to England in 1826, and then to Dublin in 1834 where Joseph attended Trinity College. In the tradition of his family, the army was his choice and he entered the officers' training facility at Addiscombe Military Seminary in Croydon.² After two years he resigned, finding that he was physically unfit to be a soldier. He returned to Trinity in Dublin to study and he received his BA degree in 1842. He also began associating with some brethren in an early assembly of Christians in Dublin.

With his good educational background, he found work as a tutor. In 1843 he became engaged to be married, but a terrible tragedy struck. His fiancée fell from her horse while crossing a bridge over the river Bann and drowned the day before they were to be married, while he stood helplessly watching on the other bank.

To Canada

Two years later, aged 25, he emigrated to Canada on the ship *Perseverance*. He lived at Woodstock, Ontario, but illness made him return to Ireland after only two months. He became a tutor in the Bartley family in Plymouth and, in 1846, went with them on a trip to the Middle East. It is said that there he wrote a rough draft of a poem, later to be called *Pray*

Without Ceasing, with the first line, 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'. He also fell in love with a Miss Falconer but, again, this prospect of companionship and marriage was frustrated for someone else stole her heart.

He returned to Ontario in 1847, to the Woodstock and Clinton area, where he began teaching in a school and met with believers in a recently formed assembly. There in Huron County he often went to read the Bible to the labourers constructing the Grand Trunk Railway from Clinton to Goderich, 'getting small thanks for his pains', it is said. He distributed poems and tracts of his own, including some *Hymns* which he had printed for this purpose. Said to be 'a big man, of pleasant countenance', he was deeply respected for his charity and unselfishness.

In 1850 he became tutor to the ten-year-old son of a retired naval officer, Robert Pengelley, and his wife, Lydia Roche. He lived with them for the next five years. Here he first met Eliza Roche, Mrs Pengelley's niece, and nine years later they became engaged when she was 22. Almost unbelievably, another great sadness lay ahead. Eliza, seeking fellowship in the assembly, was baptised in April 1860 in Rice Lake while ice still partly covered it. Already ill with consumption, she developed pneumonia, and although carefully nursed by Joseph and others, she died on 6th August 1860. She was

buried in the little cemetery in Bewdley.

His charity

Before this, Joseph had left the Pengelleys and gone to live with James Sackville's household in Bewdley. In effect he became a member of that family and paid his way by cutting wood and doing other chores. He usually spent the winter there and contributed much to the work of an assembly recently begun at that time. During the summer months he moved to Port Hope, where he boarded for twenty-two years with a widow called Mrs Margaret Gibson. Her husband had been a milkman, and she still kept a cow or two. She was crippled with arthritis, so Joseph milked the cows and carried the milk to her customers. He preached in the streets and to workmen in the taverns in simple language and in a quiet, unassuming way. Some of them dismissed him as 'only old Joe', and he was often pelted with rotten fruits and vegetables, but this never deterred him.³

He became a familiar sight around the township of Port Hope, a big man with bushy white hair and full white beard. He went about offering to cut wood for those who were unable to cut their own, refusing any payment for it. He gave away to any needy person what he could more readily have used for his own comfort. When a cow belonging to a poor family was lost, he sold the watch he had brought from Ireland to buy another one for them. His family in Ireland stopped supporting him financially when they found he gave it all away. Once he was given money to pay his way to Toronto to attend a religious gathering, but he gave it to someone in distress, and walked from Port Hope to Toronto. The testimony of one lady from that time is, 'I never knew another person who was as constant a Christian. He would keep only what he barely needed for his necessities, though pressed to take more. He desired not honour or any worldly thing, but wished to be free to serve his master with a pure conscience in a humble way'. He took seriously the instructions of the



Lord Jesus in Matthew chapters 5 to 7 and lived by them.

A mysterious death

In 1884 Joseph Scriver returned to the Pengelleys in Bewdley to be a tutor to the first four of their sons. He lived in a very small basic cabin, but a year or so later he took ill and became deeply depressed. His friend, James Sackville Jnr., took him into his house to care for him.⁴ His greatest fear in these days was dishonouring God, or bringing reproach on the name of Christ, but his confidence in the Lord and the prospect of future glory were unshaken. During his last days he often repeated, 'I am the Lord's', and, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee'.

His death occurred under strange circumstances. Late one night Mr Sackville left him and waited in another room, spending the time reading some of his writings. At

about 5am he went to check on his friend and to his utter dismay he found his bedroom empty. Some hours later, on 10th August 1886, he was found drowned in the deep mill pond near the house. No one knows what happened. He was buried in an unmarked grave beside Eliza Roche, the young lady he had hoped to marry in 1860. A granite memorial stone was eventually put in place in 1920 and still stands in Port Hope, Ontario.

The hymn

Joseph Scriver wrote several hymns and other short papers with the titles *The Church of God*, *Priesthood*, *The Ministration of the Spirit*, *Our Assembly*, *The Coming of the Lord*, *Discipline*, all published by James Sackville. It was he who discovered *What a friend we have in Jesus*. One night he was looking through Scriver's papers and asked him 'Who wrote this?' Scriver replied, 'I wrote it.

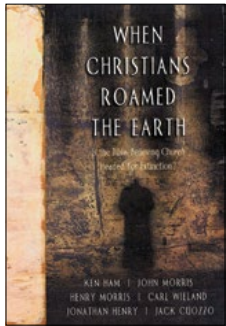
The Lord and I did it between us. Many years ago my mother was going through a time of great sorrow and I wrote it to comfort her'. He had not included it in a collection of 115 hymns he had published in 1869, but after his death it came to light in a copy of *The Port Hope Guide*, a local newspaper which had been used to wrap a parcel sent to New York. It quickly attained widespread popularity. The composer Charles Converse wrote its beautiful and appropriate tune. IRA D. SANKEY stated that wherever he had sung it, it was a greater favourite than any other. It has been called 'beyond question the best-known piece of Canadian literature'.

Although the other hymns written by Scriver are almost unknown, very few hymns have become as well known as this one, and found such an affinity with so many Christians worldwide. In 1920 it was said that over 50 million copies of it were known to have been made. For over 100 years now it has been sung with its characteristic tune: quietly in lonely homes in times of sadness, harmoniously in vast congregations in times of rejoicing, appropriately in prayer meetings far and near; by children too, able to relate to its simple yet profound truth. It has been the request of criminals on the scaffold and of soldiers on battlefields. It has brought encouragement and strength to many different people in all of life's varied experiences and situations.

Endnotes

- 1 Material for this article has been abstracted from www.porthopehistory.com/jmscriven which is gratefully acknowledged. See also JACK STRAHAN'S *Hymns and their Writers Vol 1*, pp. 185-188, Gospel Tract Publications, Glasgow, 1989, pp. 185-188.
- 2 A training facility for army officers of the British East India Company, 1809-61.
- 3 He also taught a few boys at this time, among them A. F. Willis (1859-1929).
- 4 Son of James Sackville referred to earlier.
- 5 cp. Isa. 53. 4.

Book Reviews



When Christians roamed the earth Henry Morris, Ken Ham, Jack Cuzzo and others. Paperback, 192 pages, Published by Master Books, Inc., PO Box 727, Green Forest, AR 72638. ISBN: 978-0-89051-319-8

This title caught my eye and invited further examination. I found it to be a rather satirical take on the title of a book by STEPHEN ATTMORE, 'When Dinosaurs roamed the earth'. The implied suggestion being that just as dinosaurs advanced to extinction, so many Christians today are sleep-walking towards a situation where atheists and humanists are given a free hand to set the education agenda without restraint or challenge. A society in which the Bible is, at best, marginalized and, at worst, mocked and rejected is one in which the evangelical Christian is given the status of a radicalized extremist! Hence, the sub-title of the book poses the question, 'Is the Bible-believing church headed for extinction?'

The authors are all eminent writers and lecturers to a worldwide audience, well qualified in a variety of scientific and associated disciplines. This book majors on the historical and minute accuracy of scripture, in opposition to the

fallacious doctrine of evolution and related issues.

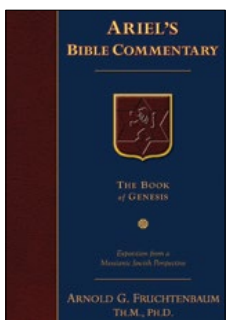
In the opening chapter, HENRY MORRIS explains that the anti-Christian features of our society should not take us by surprise, but rather they have been evident in various forms throughout time, as satanically inspired philosophies have opposed the word of God ever since Eden's garden. In more recent times, following the revival of a Christian world-view in Victorian times, the adversary sought to counter this by the works and teaching of men like Sigmund Freud in the field of psychology and human relationships, Karl Marx in the arena of economics and political science, and Charles Darwin on the theme of natural science, all of whose works are now embraced to a greater or lesser degree in our political and educational systems.

KEN HAM writes to emphasize the need to accept the factual record of the book of Genesis in order to understand

and appreciate the ways and purposes of God as taught throughout the scriptures. He deplores, as do other contributors, the increasing tendency for some Christians to try and accommodate the long ages of an evolutionary world-view, rather than accept a young earth belief supported by scripture.

Other writers deal with the cataclysmic nature of the flood and its effects upon the topography of the planet, the question of UFOs and extra-terrestrial life and the emergence and growth of New Age philosophy. This is shown to be essentially pagan, based on a form of Hinduism, fundamentally anti-Christian resulting in a worship of the creation rather than the Creator.

The underlying aim of the book is to issue a wake-up call to Christians, an appeal for a return to face-value acceptance of the Genesis record and its teaching, as an antidote to the dogma of a secular society. Recommended reading from year eight school age to adult.



The Messianic Jewish Epistles: An Exposition of Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter and Jude Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum Th.M., Ph.D. Hardback, 478 pages, Published by Ariel Ministries, P.O. Box 792507, San Antonio, TX 78279-2507 ISBN 978-0-914863-11-8

It is extremely difficult for a twenty-first-century Gentile to identify with a first-century Jew when considering the impact of the New Testament teaching on their way of life, culture and religious heritage. The initial response on the part of some is seen in the reaction of Saul of Tarsus, while others, like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, grasped the reality and relevance of the Lord's life, death and subsequent resurrection.

Following Pentecost, the first believers, who were almost entirely from the Jewish and proselyte communities, faced two main challenges to their new-found faith. The first was physical opposition, including theft of and damage to their property, resulting in a movement from Jerusalem and the Judean locality. Also, as a result of their ill-treatment, some were tempted to return to the fold of Judaism to find some relief. The second threat was the infiltration of false teachers seeking to undermine the faith of the Christians.

DR. FRUCHTENBAUM explains that the first of these predicaments prompted the Epistles to the Hebrews, James and 1 Peter. While a response to the second problem resulted in 2 Peter and Jude. Notwithstanding the writer's undoubted academic achievements, the style of this book is very readable and the textual explanations easy to follow. His understanding of the Jewish mind and customs give a refreshing insight to the Hebrew Epistle, while, above all, he makes clear that the theme of the letter is 'the superiority of the Son' and this is focused upon throughout.

Of the Epistle by James, he writes, 'The letter is thoroughly imbued with the spirit and imagery of the Old Testament and Judaism'. References to the law and to the synagogue and reference to the Old Testament characters of Abraham, Rahab, Job and Elijah would maintain the interest of his readers. The teaching is, however, brought

very clearly into the context of New Testament principles and practice.

In Peter's first Epistle, the emphasis is upon his appeal to his readers as an elder and as a shepherd. Sympathizing with them in their suffering, but reminding them in each chapter of the sufferings of Christ, through which they have been brought into a unique place of blessing; exhorting them to cast all their care upon the One who cares for them.

The similarities between 2 Peter and Jude are noted, while the point is made that Peter wrote in the future tense in anticipation of false teachers, while Jude wrote in the past tense as seeing the fraudulent incomers already in place.

A handy index on the outer pages of the book enables the reader to refer quickly to any book, chapter and verse. This reviewer will now be looking for other writings by this author!

Question Time

Conducted by
Richard Collings

QUESTION

Does the first part of 1 John chapter 3 verse 8 teach us that a Christian will never sin?

ANSWER

In responding to the above question it may help to quote what the verse actually says and then to contrast that with what it does not say. The opening clause of the verse reads 'He that committeth sin is of the devil'. What John did not write was 'He that committeth **a** sin is of the devil'. The difference between these two statements in actual wording is very small; it is merely the inclusion of the indefinite article 'a' in the second quotation. However, the difference in meaning between the two statements is vast.

If the second quotation was what John wrote or meant, then there would be no one who could claim to be saved, for the sad reality is that all of us sin from time to time. In the fifth verse of his hymn *At even when the sun was set*, HENRY TWELLS wrote:

'And none, O Lord, have perfect rest,
For none are wholly free from sin;
And they who fain would serve Thee best,
Are conscious most of wrong within'.

Whilst we read in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 15, 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation', the scriptures never anticipate that we shall achieve a status of impeccability whilst we are 'at home in the body', 2 Cor. 5. 6.

The opening verse of 1 John chapter 2 is very relevant to the matter now being considered. There we read, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous'. The expectation is that we should not sin but, thankfully, there is provision made for when we do, for we have 'an advocate with the Father'. In his commentary on 1 John, A. M. S. GOODING states that John's 'word is clear and unambiguous "that ye sin not" or "that ye may not sin" (Revised Version). His words were to preserve them from sinning; they were both preventative and prohibitive. Believers are not expected to sin, it should be an exceptional, unusual occurrence'.

Whilst sinning ought not to be the habitual practice of Christians, when we do fail we have an Advocate. The aforementioned commentary adds, 'This Advocate does not excuse sin, explain it away, try to justify our actions, or argue extenuating circumstances.

He is righteous, He deals righteously, and He has a sacrifice as a righteous basis for His advocacy'.

The verse referred to in the question stands in contrast to the verse that precedes it, for verse 7 of chapter 3 reads, 'Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous'. John is teaching that people either belong to God or to the devil and one way of determining to whom they belong is by observing their life-style. Those who are the children of God will be characterized by righteous living; they will seek to live purely, for God is pure. The norm of their daily life is to live a holy life. In contrast, those who habitually sin manifest the fact that they do not know God. John sums all this up in verse 10, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God'.

The King James Version translation of verse 9 would also seem to show that a Christian will never sin, but all verses must be viewed contextually. The point that John is driving at in this section of chapter 3 is one of life style, of the continual repetitive behaviour of a person, their habitual practice. A child of God will not, as a rule of life, sin. DARBY'S translation of the verse gives help, as does the ESV, 'Whoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin', JND; 'No one born of God makes a practice of sinning', ESV.

PHILIP PAUL BLISS died when only 38 years old through a tragic accident, but in that short life he wrote a number of hymns. It is fitting to close this answer with a verse from one of them,

'More purity give me,
More strength to o'ercome;
More freedom from earth-stains,
More longings for home;
More fit for the kingdom,
More used would I be;
More blessèd and holy,
More, Saviour, like Thee'.

The Precious SEED Committee

Chairman and General Editor:

JOHN BENNETT

19 Alfreton Road, Pinxton,
Nottingham NG16 6JZ

Treasurer:

MICHAEL BUCKERIDGE

PO Box 10544, Grantham NG31 OHW

Secretary:

JOHN SCARSBROOK

34 Metcalfe Avenue, Killamarsh,
Sheffield S21 1HW

Ministry Articles Editor:

SANDY JACK

YPS:

STEPHEN BAKER

Editors can be contacted through the email address below or by post to the Chairman.

Other Trust Members:

**Jonathan Black, Brian Clatworthy,
Richard Collings, Frank Proudlock,
Ian Rees, Stephen Sherwin,
Ken Totton.**

*All committee members can be contacted at
secretary@preciousseed.org
or via **0044(0)1142 511700***

FACTS AND FIGURES

- The magazine is published quarterly by the Precious Seed Trust, Registered Charity No. 326157.
 - It is distributed, without charge, to over 100 countries, many in the developing world.
 - Numbers printed are over 12,000 (50% of these going overseas) plus over 1500 in India.
 - Postage accounts for over 60% of our costs.
 - Including postage, each magazine costs around £1.00 sterling.
 - Gifts to help in the work may be sent in any major currency to any of the addresses shown below or through the website.
 - UK donors can add 25% to their gift by using the Gift Aid scheme (details available from the secretary).
- Please send book orders to: Precious Seed Publications, 34 Metcalfe Avenue, Killamarsh, Sheffield S21 1HW, UK.
 - Magazine orders, amendments and gifts should be sent to the address below or to the Lilydale, Livonia, or St. Catharines addresses below.
 - Contact Addresses:
 - U.K.** **Precious Seed International,**
PO Box 10544, Grantham, NG31 OHW.
 - Australia** **Precious Seed International,**
PO Box 836, Lilydale, Victoria 3140.
 - Canada** **Precious Seed International, c/o Counsel Magazine,**
PO Box 427, St. Catharines, ON, L2R 6V9.
 - U.S.A.** **Precious Seed International, c/o Truth & Tidings Gospel Trust USA,**
34742 Bretton Drive, Livonia, MI 48152.
 - Visit our web site: **www.preciousseed.org**
 - Make use of our e-mail facility: **secretary@preciousseed.org**
 - Call us on **00 44 (0)1142 511700**



If you wish to help in the work, this can be done in several ways:

1) **BY CREDIT/DEBIT CARD** using our website www.preciousseed.org and selecting 'Support Precious Seed' on the menu bar, or

2) **BY ELECTRONIC BANK TRANSFER** either using online banking, or by instructing your bank local branch to make an electronic payment. The Precious Seed bank account details are:-

- Account name: Precious Seed
- UK Account Number: 00399475
- UK bank Sort Code 30-98-94
- IBAN: GB75 LOYD 3098 9400 3994 75
- BIC: LOYDGB21454

If you use this method please let us know separately either by email to secretary@preciousseed.org or via the post as sometimes the details of payees are not evident from bank statements.

USA If you wish to make a donation using a cheque in US Dollars please:

1. Make payable to: Truth & Tidings Gospel Trust USA.
2. Send to: Truth & Tidings Gospel Trust USA, 34742 Bretton Drive, Livonia, MI 48152, with instructions to forward funds to *Precious Seed International*.

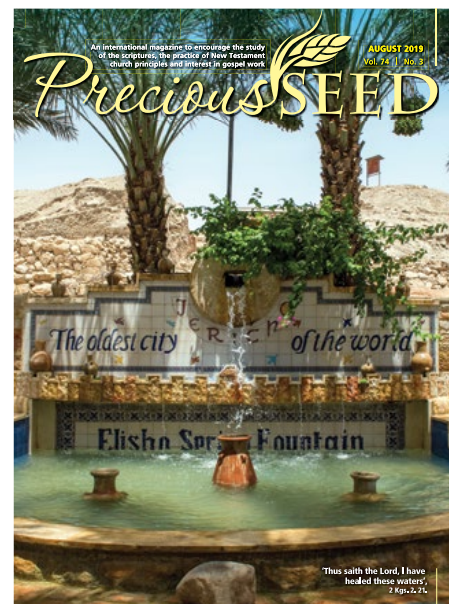
Canada If you wish to make a donation using a cheque in CAN Dollars please:

1. Make payable to: Gospel Trust Canada.
2. Send to: Gospel Trust Canada, 3 Hill Top Trail, Stouffville, ON, L4A 3G7 with instructions to forward funds to *Precious Seed International*.

New Zealand If you wish to make a donation using a cheque in NZ Dollars please:

1. Make payable to: Global Connections in Mission.
2. Send to: Global Connections in Mission, PO Box 744, Palmerston North, 4440 with instructions to forward funds to *Precious Seed International*.

NOTE: ARTICLES EXPRESS THE CONVICTIONS HELD BY THE AUTHORS. ALL THE TRUSTEES MAY NOT AGREE WITH EVERYTHING THAT IS STATED IN ANY ONE ARTICLE. ULTIMATELY, THE AUTHOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT IS WRITTEN.



'Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters', 2 Kgs. 2. 21.

The city of Jericho was known in the ancient world as the 'City of Palm Trees', Deut. 34. 3, and features prominently in Old Testament history as a place of triumph and tragedy. It was here that Joshua triumphed when he led the children of Israel to a most unusual military victory, Josh. 6, proving that God's ways are not our ways, Isa. 55. 8. Similarly, it was here that man's hubris and defiance of God were exhibited during the reign of King Ahab in the tragic events of Hiel the Bethelite, who, in attempting to fortify Jericho, fell foul of Joshua's curse on the city, Josh. 6. 26, and laid its foundations at the cost of his first-born son, Abiram, and set its gates in place at the cost of his youngest child, Segub, 1 Kgs. 16. 34. RALBAG interprets the placement of this verse as indicating that although Ahab should have understood what happened to Hiel as a warning of what might happen to him, he persisted in his ways. God's reckoning with Ahab would, however, come later. Having ignored the warning of the faithful prophet Micalah, 22. 15-27, Ahab disguised himself in battle and was slain by a stray arrow fired by an Aramean soldier, vv. 34-37. Our text moves us on to an incident concerning another faithful servant of God, the prophet Elisha, who with the spirit of Elijah, and in the name of God, performed the second miracle of his ministry where he provided a cure for foul water, 2 Kgs. 2. 19-22. Such was the effectiveness of the cure that even today the spring near Jericho, now known as 'Elisha's Spring' (modern day 'Ain es-Sultan'), still produces freshwater that makes the whole area agriculturally rich, v. 22. In New Testament times, Jericho became famous for the winter palace built by Herod the Great in its locality. The palace included ornate gardens and palm and balsam groves. Jericho lies about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, and it was during visits to this area that our Lord healed a blind man, Luke 18. 35-43, and called a chief tax-collector named Zacchaeus to repentance, 19. 1-10. The danger of the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was graphically set out in the parable of the Good Samaritan, 10. 30, and continues to remind us that not only do we have a duty to love God, v. 27, but also to show love and compassion to anyone in need, irrespective of their background, v. 37. A very apposite message for our society today!

© Precious Seed International. The magazine is copyrighted for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the material and not to limit proper use of the articles. For use in other publications and for orders and distribution please contact Michael Buckeridge, PO Box 10544, Grantham, NG31 OHW, UK. The magazine is issued free of charge. Its production is maintained by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. Readers are requested to notify changes of address and to keep the number of magazines ordered under review. No member of the Committee receives any remuneration for services to the Trust.



www.preciousseed.org

f Precious Seed International