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OF THE SCRIPTURE, THE PRACTICE OF  
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# Precious SEED

INTERNATIONAL



MAY 2017

VOLUME 72 / NUMBER 2

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



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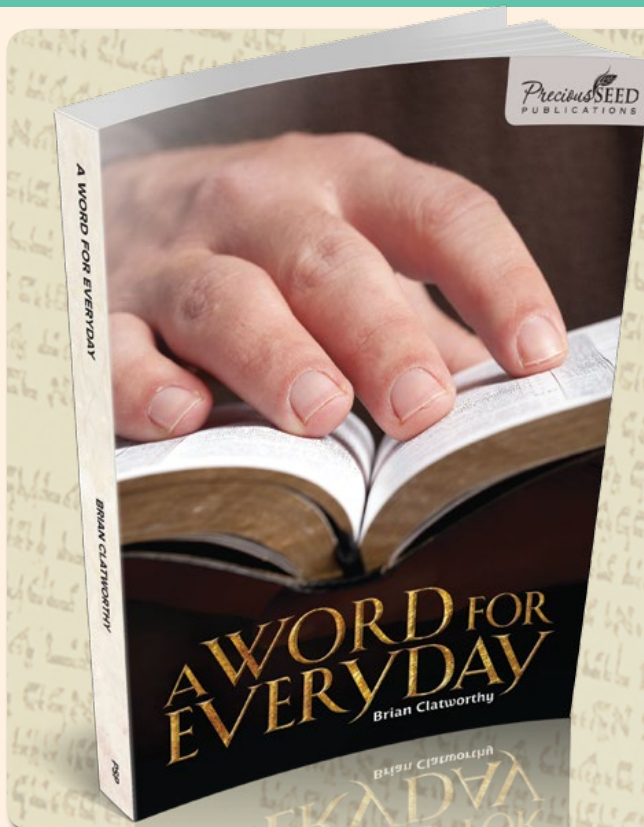
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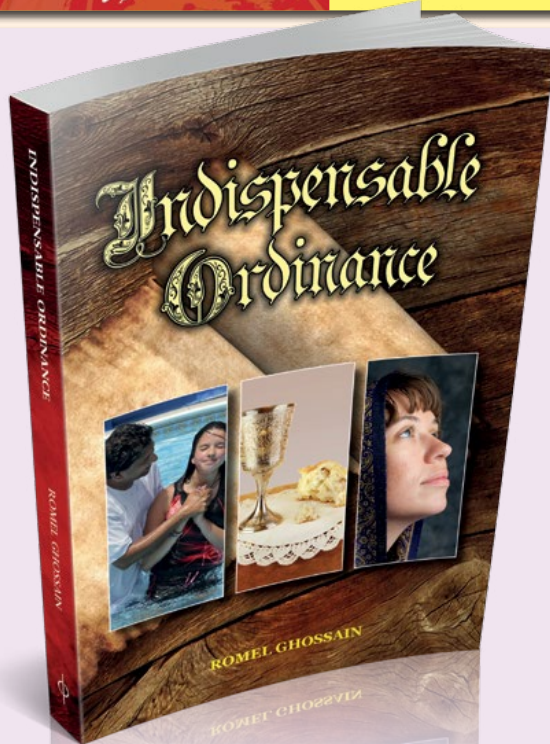
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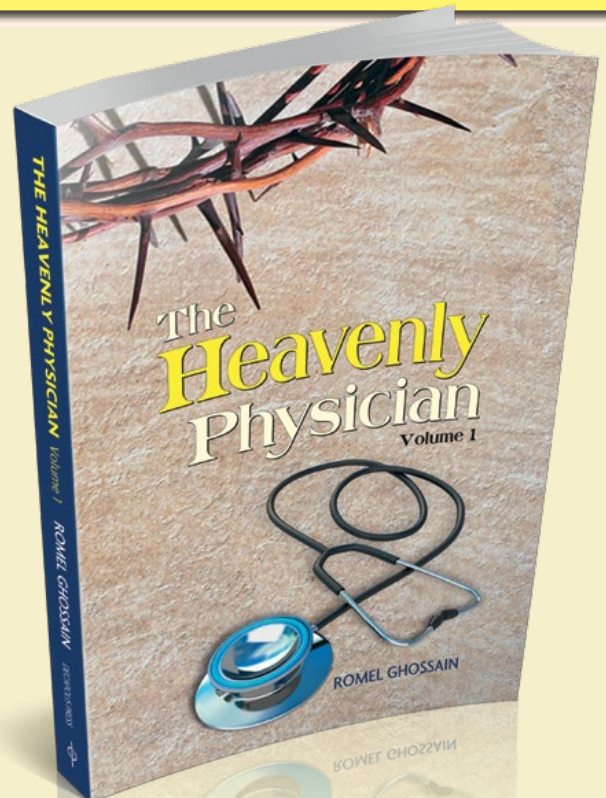
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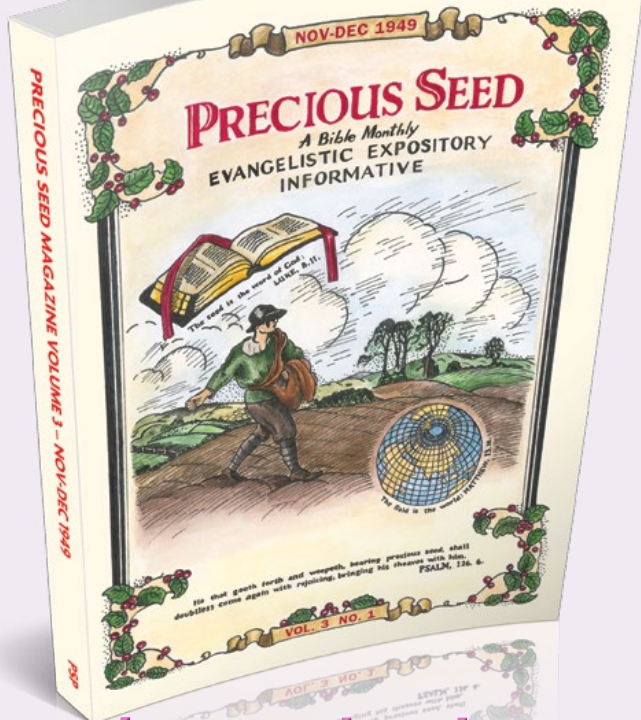
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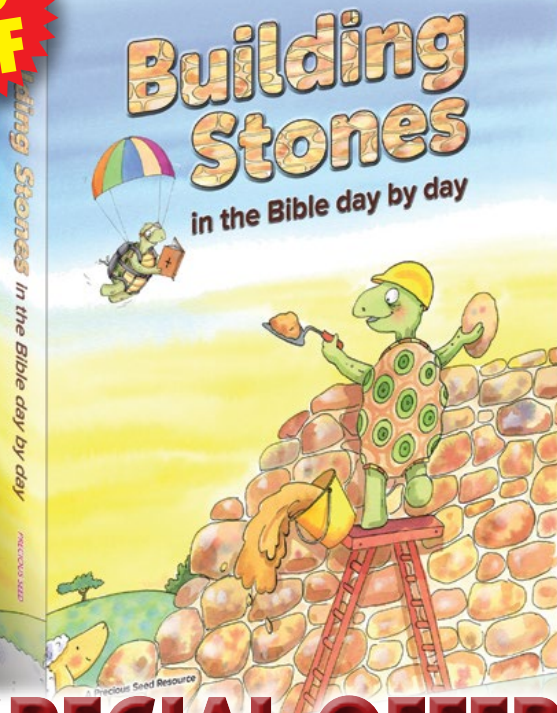




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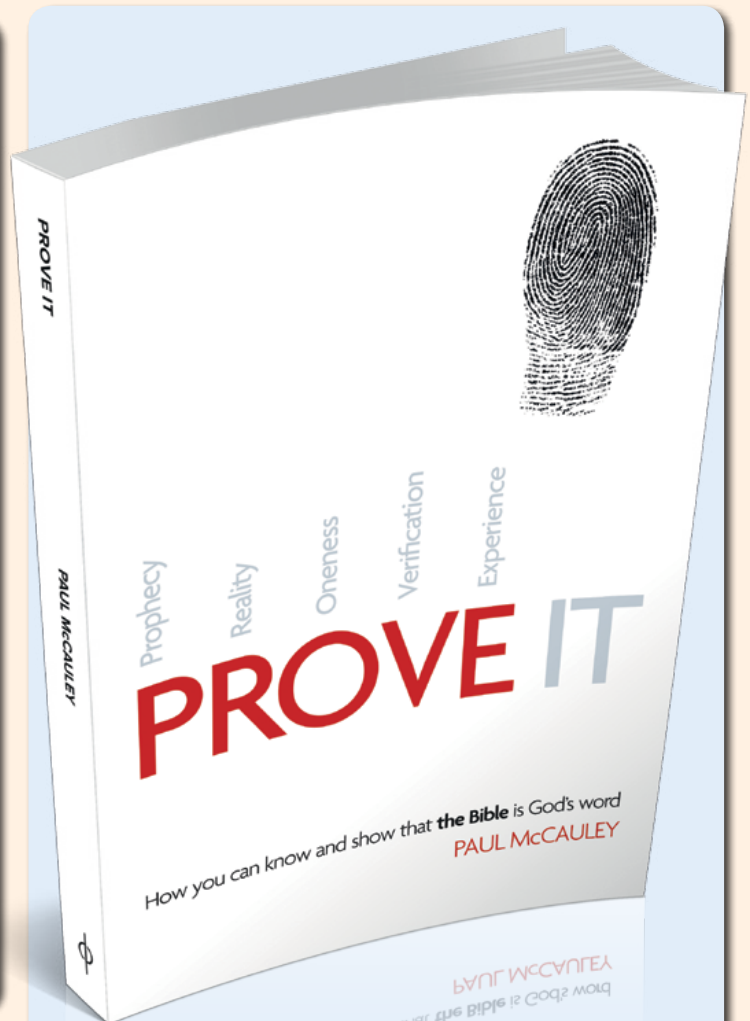
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# Editorial

## **‘They were cleansed . . . where are the nine?’ Luke 17. 14, 17**

How precious it is to be ‘cleansed’! The defilement that sin brings to the human condition is not to be underestimated, and as these ten lepers ‘stood afar off’ they knew something of the isolation that defilement brought – an isolation that was not merely social. As they ‘go’ in obedience to the Lord and demonstrate their faith, the power of a sovereign God and the personal responsibility of mankind interweave to the blessing of individuals and the glory of God.

How much more serious and real was the isolation which resulted from our sins. ‘Dead in sins’, Eph. 2. 5, couldn’t be more definite! In such a state, we were totally incapable of helping ourselves – after all, how can someone who is dead help themselves? How wonderful to note that God, who extended mercy to the lepers, is described as being ‘rich in mercy’ and One who has loved us greatly. If our isolation was great when we were ‘without Christ’, then how wonderfully beautiful is the nearness that the believer discovers in being ‘raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus’, v. 6.

## **It is a nearness that will declare the glory of God eternally**

It is rather sad and challenging that only one leper turned back to demonstrate his appreciation. We might consider the loudness of his voice and see his unashamed testimony and be challenged as to how ‘loud’ our voice of testimony is. We might note his posture, as he prostrates himself face-down at the feet of the Lord, and be caused to examine if our expressions of thankfulness are truly marked by self-abasement, as all worship must be. We might see that he was the ‘stranger’, and challenge whether or not our familiarity with truth has dulled our appreciation and application of that truth.

Perhaps the most significant and relevant challenge is the simplest – ‘giving him thanks’. How simple! How eloquent! We are not told how many words he used, or which, if any, scriptures he quoted. He did what any believer can do. He did what we should all do. I detect a sadness in the question of the Lord, ‘where are the nine?’

The simple, orderly, expression of a thankful heart is to be encouraged. It would delight the Saviour and breathe new life into many assembly gatherings. Let us not be numbered among the ‘nine’!

It is the simple and sincere prayer of the committee that this issue’s content will help encourage the Lord’s people and we are grateful to those who have expended a great deal of effort in writing the articles.





With tremendous realism, the second Psalm depicts the rebellious condition of the present world, demonstrating the obdurate opposition of fallen human beings towards their creator. It also describes God's ultimate triumph and future glorious reign on earth in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That He will eventually rid the universe of evil and replace it with righteousness is a great encouragement to believers. It assures us that the trials that we face will inevitably give way to the King of king's glorious reign.

### Setting the stage

The psalm divides into four stanzas composed of three verses apiece. They may be outlined thus:

Man's delusion, vv. 1-3;  
God's derision, vv. 4-6;  
Messiah's decreed rule, vv. 7-9;  
Directions for the nations to repent and be blessed, vv. 10-12.

Or, as brother T. ERNEST WILSON delineated it, this way:

'There are four speakers, one in each section:

- (1) The voice of rebellion – man in revolt, verses 1-3.
- (2) The reply of Jehovah – God in His wrath, verses 4-6.
- (3) The revelation of the Son, verses 7-9.
- (4) The Spirit's call to reconciliation, verses 10-12.

Note: It is the answer of the Holy Trinity to the anarchy of man'.<sup>1</sup>

The first two psalms function as an introduction to the entire book. As one commentator notes: 'Psalm 1 deals with the most urgent individual matter; you must know where you are going and must be sure you belong to the congregation of the righteous. Psalm 2 says that you must know where history is going; you must see the whole show; you must understand that *the world has been promised to the Messiah*'.<sup>2</sup> More succinctly, HENRY adds: 'As

# PSALM 2 THE TRIUMPH

By KEITH KEYSER Gilbertsville, USA

the foregoing psalm was moral, and showed us our duty, so this is evangelical, and shows us our Saviour'.<sup>3</sup>

### Rebels without a clue

The psalm begins with a rhetorical 'why?' incredulously asking how the Gentile nations can be so foolish as to tumultuously rage against the Almighty's perfect rule. FRANZ DELITZSCH avers that 'The mischievous undertaking condemns itself, it is groundless and fruitless. This certainty is expressed, with a tinge of involuntary astonishment, in the question'.<sup>4</sup> One of his contemporaries agrees, writing: 'Their insurrection is at once causeless and hopeless'.<sup>5</sup> To purposely oppose the Lord is the height of arrogance and sets the stage for one's own destruction.

The ringleaders of rebellion are 'the kings of the earth'<sup>6</sup> and 'the rulers', v. 2. They 'imagine' – alternatively rendered 'devising' NAS, 'meditate' ASV, JND, or 'plot' NKJV – 'a vain thing', v. 1; however, their mental exertions and insidious scheming are destined to come to nothing.<sup>7</sup> Yet this is the flowering of the iniquitous idea whose seed is found in Genesis chapter 3 verse 5: 'Ye shall be as gods'. COWLES unpacks its true character, declaring: 'Alas! for the folly and the guilt of such rebellion! It is precisely *sin* – sin in its very nature and essence; the heart lifting up itself against the perfectly reasonable authority and most righteous claims of the infinite God, and none the less for his inexpressible goodness and perfect purity; none the less because he is our Great Maker and Father – the glorious giver of every good. Against such a God rebellion is simple madness – the madness, not of real insanity, but of supreme folly'.<sup>8</sup>

Their perverse thinking sees God's commands as overly restrictive

and pines for an atheistic freedom from divine constraints, Ps. 2. 3. Since the garden, Satan has peddled the lie that the creator is against mankind and wants to unnecessarily burden them with oppressive demands. They fail to see that His cords are 'bands of love', Hos. 11. 4, and 'His commandments are not burdensome', 1 John 5. 3 NKJV. Rejecting God-given restraints inexorably leads to sinfully self-destructive behaviour. How much better to heed Christ's summons: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light', Matt. 11. 28-30.

### A funny thing happened on the way to the revolt

God responds to this frenetic human wilfulness with derisive laughter.<sup>9</sup> How can He be so dismissive of their insurrection? Verses 6-7 provide the answer: He has installed a special messianic king on Mount Zion – one who will eventually judge the earth. 'Yet have I' forms the central part of the psalm, turning from man's vain usurpation of power to God's invincible will. As PEROWNE explains: 'And in the







# TRUMP OF THE KING

words BUT I, we have the central truth of the Psalm. The "but" is to be explained as referring to an unexpressed "ye may plot", or some thought of the kind, in the mind of the speaker. It is God's own answer to them that oppose Him. I, the pronoun is emphatic in the Heb., the King of heaven and earth, have set my own King, my Son and my viceregent, on the throne . . .<sup>10</sup> More than just a mere human deliverer or a powerful angel, this monarch is God manifest in the flesh, John 1. 14, and is the eternal Son of God, Heb. 1. 5. Despite the opposition of despots like Herod and Pilate, Acts 4. 25-28, the resurrected Christ, 13. 33, has been vindicated and is destined to put all enemies under His feet, Eph. 1. 22. As Paul later explained it: 'And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead', Acts 17. 30-31.

## Wrath and repentance

Psalm 2 verses 8 and 9 envision the time when God gives His Son the nations as His inheritance, and the latter forcibly imposes justice on mankind. This will occur when Christ returns to reign from Jerusalem in His millennial kingdom, Isa. 2; Rev. 20. He will 'break them' – or some prefer the Septuagint's 'shepherd them'<sup>11</sup> – with 'a rod of iron'. This latter object was a royal sceptre but in this case it is used as a disciplinary instrument. Revelation frequently quotes this psalm, and especially likes this imagery of Messiah pulverizing His enemies as if they were fragile pottery, Rev. 2. 27; 12. 5; 19. 15. Such a picture of the Christ runs counter to the popular unassertive, spineless image of Jesus – a super tolerant

sage who condemns nothing and nobody. But this is a fictitious caricature of the Saviour, who saves people *from* sin – not *for* sin! As OLSEN affirms: 'Some may say "I want a God whose love is everlasting; whose mercy is unending; but whose wrath is non-existent". Such a God is the production of a distorted mind. He is neither the God of creation nor the God of the Bible. A God who can sit silently by while the earth quakes and reels like a drunken sailor, opening its jaws to devour helpless men, women and children, can sit in the heavens and laugh against man's foolhardy efforts to drive Him out of the universe'.<sup>12</sup>

Surprisingly, the psalm ends with a gospel entreaty, calling on these rebellious nations to learn wisdom, by submitting to and serving the sovereign Saviour, vv. 10-12. The final line in particular is a beautiful beatitude declaring the happiness that flows from trusting the Lord. Psalm 2 has had to graphically describe the hideously depraved human condition. Yet it ends by returning to the theme of blessedness that Psalm 1 began. This can only occur by humbly submitting to God's anointed Saviour-King, the Lord Jesus. As GRANT succinctly said it: 'One sanctuary refuge is there only. None *from* Him; nowhere but *in* Him. Happy all they who take refuge there!'<sup>13</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 T. E. WILSON, *The Messianic Psalms*, Loizeaux Bros., 1978, pg. 13.
- 2 DALE RALPH DAVIS, *The Way Of The Righteous In The Muck Of Life: Psalms 1-12*, Christian Focus, 2011, pp. 27-28. [Italics original].
- 3 MATTHEW HENRY, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Hendrickson, 1994, pg. 744.
- 4 FRANZ DELITZSCH, 'Psalm 2', in Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 5, Hendrickson, 1996, pg. 54.
- 5 A.F. KIRKPATRICK, *The Book of*

*Psalms*, Cambridge University Press, 1906, pg. 8.

- 6 The phrase 'kings of the earth' occurs twenty-four times in the Old Testament with six of these in the Psalms: 2. 2; 76. 12; 89. 27; 102. 15; 138. 4; 148. 11. A careful examination of these references demonstrates the supremacy of the Messiah over these terrestrial potentates.
- 7 The Hebrew text dramatically paints the scene with purposeful verb usage: 'The tenses of the original in vv. 1, 2 give a vividness and variety to the picture which can hardly be reproduced in translation. *Rage* and *take counsel* are perfects, representing the throng as already gathered, and the chiefs seated in divan together: *imagine* and *set themselves* are imperfects (the graphic, pictorial tense of Hebrew poetry), representing their plot in process of development. The rapid lively rhythm moreover well suggests the stir and tumult of the gathering host', KIRKPATRICK, pp. 8-9. [Italics original].
- 8 HENRY COWLES, *The Psalms*, D. Appleton & Company, 1879, pp. 11-12. [Italics original]. DAVIS further writes: 'Whether congresses or parliaments, whether democracies or dictatorships, the root attitude of nations and of the head knockers of this age is: "We do not want this man to reign over us", Luke 19. 14. This is Psalm 1. 1 to the second power and writ large; this is what it looks like when the counsel of the wicked and the way of sinners and the seat of scoffers goes international', DAVIS, pg. 28.
- 9 SMITH puts it well: 'The great men of the earth – its political leaders, its scientists, its philosophers – may combine to cast off all recognition of God, but, unmoved by all their efforts the Christ of God "sitteth in the heavens", and holds man's revolt in derision. Men rage on earth; God laughs in heaven. Human ideas are employed to convey to us heaven's contempt of man's folly', HAMILTON SMITH, *Psalms*, Electronic edition accessed here: <http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/smith/PSALMS.html#a2>
- 10 J. J. STEWART PEROWNE, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. 1, Deighton Bell & Co., 1883, pg. 117. [Italics original].
- 11 For example F. W. GRANT; NETmg.
- 12 ERLING C. OLSEN, *Meditations In The Psalms*, Vol. 1, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1941, pg. 9.
- 13 F. W. GRANT, *The Numerical Bible: The Psalms*, Loizeaux Brothers, 1897, pg. 21. [Italics original].





It might seem strange to some readers that this article draws on New Testament teaching relating to masters and slaves. However, it is submitted that the behavioural principles set out for healthy relationships between masters and slaves in the first century are equally applicable to employers and employees today. Almost every household in the Roman Empire was affected by such relationships; indeed, it has been estimated that there were in the region of 60 million slaves in the Empire. Roman slavery in the first century was different from the ideas we often have of it. True, the picture was not always a rosy one, but reforms had come in that brought about immense improvements in the treatment of slaves. Approximately 50 per cent of them were freed before they reached the age of thirty.

Similarly, most Christian households today are affected by employer/employee relationships. Official data shows that UK employees spend, on average, almost 1700 hours annually in the workplace; therefore, it is important for Christian employers and employees to consider how they behave during this significant proportion of their lives. They are expected to display a high standard in their relationships at work that is honouring to God and points fellow workers to Christ.

## Pressures for employees

### The pressure of working for an unreasonable employer

Peter writes, 'Servants [house servants], be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward', 1 Pet. 2. 18. No mention is made here of the servants' rights. Naturally speaking, workers are more likely to stand up for their rights if their employers are harsh and difficult to deal with. However, if this is the case, their response must be one of subjection, rather than retaliation, insubordination and standing on their rights. True subjection is motivated by fear, i.e., a respect for the employer's position and

# GODLY LIVING IN THE WORKPLACE

authority. A submissive spirit brings great pleasure to God: 'For this is thankworthy [commendable, NKJV], if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully . . . if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God', vv. 19-20. It should be of prime importance for the employee to please God, rather than men.

By  
**COLIN LACEY**  
Bath, England

### The pressure of showing a lack of respect for non-Christian employers

Paul writes, 'Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour', 1 Tim. 6. 1. The word 'count' has the thought of an estimate based on external considerations, as opposed to internal sentiments or feelings. The servant was under an obligation to give 'all honour', i.e., in every area, to his master, whatever he thought of him. Sadly, this attitude is seldom seen in the workplace today. Paul made it clear why such an approach was so important: 'that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed'. There is, therefore, much more at stake than employees' prejudices towards their employer. The testimony is in danger of being brought into disrepute if they act in a disrespectful manner.

Paul also recognized that there was a very real danger awaiting Christians who had believing masters: 'And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit [because those who are benefited are believers and beloved NKJV]'. The fact that they are brothers in the Lord should enhance their relationship and motivate them to respect each other on the basis of a mutual love.

### The pressure of being disobedient and dishonest in the workplace

In many workplaces today disobedience and dishonesty are rife. As far as **obedience** is concerned, Paul's words to Titus are unequivocal:

'Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again', Titus 2. 9. Christians should not seek to overthrow the plans of their employers, however just the actions of their fellow-workers might appear to be.

Within this context, some might raise the question as to whether a Christian should belong to a Trades Union. Their strong political connexions, their commitment to the right for employees to withdraw their labour, the biblical teaching relating to the unequal yoke and their ultimate demise, Rev. 18, ought to give us the answer! If a Christian employee has any choice in the matter, he/she should avoid such associations. Nevertheless, if this is not possible, there will be times when the believer will have to stand against the instructions of such a body, often at great personal cost.

As for **honesty**, Paul's words are equally clear: 'Not purloining [pilfering NKJV] but shewing [providing proof of] all good fidelity', Titus 2. 10. Believers must provide constant proof that they are trustworthy employees. It is possible that some employers might actively encourage or require their employees to commit dishonest acts. Paul's use of the term, '**good** fidelity' means that the guiding principle for believers faced with such situations is that they **must** obey God, rather than men. Pleasing God is of paramount importance in believers' lives: 'not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men', Eph. 6. 6-7. The judgement of men pales into insignificance compared to the fact that 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ', 2. Cor. 5. 10. Paul reminds his readers that service for earthly masters must be 'in singleness [sincerity, purity, without hypocrisy] of your heart, as unto Christ', Eph. 6. 5. Christ, not men, is the focal point of their service; therefore, they should regard Him as their employer and this will regulate their actions.





# WORKPLACE – ITS PRESSURES

On a daily basis, therefore, Christian employees have the responsibility to 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things', Titus 2. 10, i.e., they have the opportunity to clothe the doctrine of the gospel by proclaiming its message, through their actions, to unsaved employers and fellow employees. Living in the light of this will make them the best workers in the workplace.

## **Christian employees must guard against pride and ambition**

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with a desire to make progress in employment and to be the very best. However, any advancement that comes must be accepted and held in deep humility, recognizing that any success comes from the Lord. Joseph provides an excellent example in this respect: 'And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord had made all that he did to prosper in his hand', Gen. 39. 3. After he had risen to a position of great power and authority in the land of Egypt, he said to his brethren, 'God . . . hath made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt . . . God hath made me lord of all Egypt', Gen. 45. 8-9.

## **Pressures for employers**

### **The pressure of misusing their authority and power**

It is so easy for them to think that they are above their employees. Paul writes, 'And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing [giving up NKJV] threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him', Eph. 6. 9. The same things that apply to the employees, apply to them. They must treat them in the manner in which they would wish to be treated. If they desire their employees to be respectful, honest, considerate, conscientious and co-operative, they must be the same. They should never abuse their position by issuing threats to their workers or by being vindictive. Their behaviour must be motivated by the fact that they have an impartial Master in

heaven. As Christ treats them, so the employer must treat his workforce. They will ultimately be answerable to Him for how they have conducted themselves. They will besmirch their testimony and 'the doctrine of God our Saviour', if they are known by others to be aggressive and unreasonable employers.

### **The temptation to exploit their workforce**

Paul warns masters, 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven', Col. 4. 1. He had already spoken about putting off 'the old man with his deeds' and putting on 'the new man', 3. 9-10. It is 'the old man' that will exploit the workers. Christian employers must be seen to pay their workers what is fair and equal. The little word 'also' is important: both employers and employees serve the same Master. Both will be answerable to Him at the Judgement Seat in heaven as to how they have treated each other.

Employers should, therefore, treat their employees as He treats His servants. He never exploits them and He will reward them in a coming day according to their faithfulness in service now, Luke 19. 12-19. Their reward will be exactly commensurate with what they have gained (ten pounds = ten cities, five pounds = five cities – just and equal).

### **The pressure of how to respond to the accumulation of wealth**

There is nothing wrong in wanting to run a successful business. However, it is how success is handled that is vital. A key passage in the scriptures that gives clear instruction as to how a believer should respond to wealth, 1 Timothy chapter 6, begins by addressing masters and slaves! This chapter contains the important statement, 'For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows', v. 10. Many Christian employers have found out the truth of this to their cost.

### **How to manage his/her time efficiently and effectively**

Business life can be time consuming and, all too easily, destroy the spiritual life. Time is a precious commodity and once it has gone it cannot be retrieved. It must be used wisely; therefore, assembly matters ought to have priority of place in our plans.

The principles outlined in this article relating to godly living transcend the changing economic and political climate of any country. Christian employers and employees, who seek to be true to them, will often have to face the ridicule and hostility of those with whom they work. Compromising them in any way will lead to the loss of an effective personal witness to the power of the gospel to change lives. Scriptural doctrine is not something simply to give mental ascent to, but is to be lived out in our lives. Our actions must match what we say; indeed, if this is so, unbelievers will be challenged by our godly living, and 'whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [conduct – NKJV] in Christ', 1 Pet. 3. 16. Are we prepared for the cost?







## (VII) THE ALLUSIONS TO THE LORD, 10. 4

### (i) The Corner, i.e., the cornerstone.

Christ as the foundation stone is the bedrock of Israel's Messianic hopes. The cornerstone was also the keystone which brought together two walls; a possible picture of the two kingdoms being reunited in one nation through Christ. It was from this stone that the rest of the building had stability and steadfastness.<sup>1</sup>

### (ii) The Nail or Tent-peg

Isaiah refers to Christ in a similar vein, Isa. 22. 23, tallying with the sentiment of Zechariah chapter 6 verse 13, 'he shall bear the glory'.

### (iii) The Battlebow

In chapter 9 verse 10 the battlebow has been cut off from Ephraim and Jerusalem. Christ becomes His people's defence, cp. Ps. 45. 5. He returns as the Warrior-king for the deliverance and defence of His earthly people. There is no further need for the huge expenditure on the arms race of the past. All military hardware has been decommissioned. Peace reigns. Christ is His people's safety and security.

Today, the peace of God garrisons our hearts. Our conflict is spiritual and the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God, 2 Cor. 10. 4.

### (iv) The Exactor

He is the supreme ruler in the millennium. Others appointed by Him will be rulers, princes, and judges throughout the Gentile lands.<sup>2</sup> The Gentile nations will pay tribute to Israel and their Messiah, Isa. 60. 16, 17. Gentile wealth will be bestowed upon Israel and her Messiah. He will receive the tribute of worship and praise as the nations come to Jerusalem to worship at the Feast of Tabernacles. What tribute of praise and worship do we offer our Lord?

## (VIII) THE ALLEGORY OF THE SHEPHERD, 11. 12-13

In this passage we have two kinds of shepherd contrasted. Christ, the faithful Shepherd, vv. 4-14, and Antichrist, the foolish shepherd, vv. 15-17. Matthew quotes from this passage – one of forty in the

# CHRIST in ZECHAR

New Testament. It is a composite quotation from Zechariah and Jeremiah. Matthew gives attribution to Jeremiah, because he was a major prophet.<sup>3</sup>

Our Lord is the good shepherd. He, too, was rejected and despised by the nation. They only valued Him, as represented by Judas, at thirty pieces of silver. This was the price paid for a slave that had been gored by an ox, Exod. 21. 22! The sarcasm is highlighted by the expression, 'a goodly price that I was prized at of them', 11. 13. The thirty pieces of silver were cast into the house of the Lord, the temple.<sup>4</sup>

The shepherd character Christ relates to His people today. John portrays Him as the good shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. Hebrews declares Him to be 'that great shepherd of the sheep' in resurrection. Peter speaks of Him as the chief shepherd in relation to assembly overseers or shepherds, linking this aspect of His shepherd character to the time of His second advent.

## (IX) THE ATONEMENT OF THE REMNANT, 12. 10-14; 13. 1

In verses 1-9 Jehovah's eyes are opened; cp. v. 4. Verses 10-14 indicate that Judah's eyes are opened, cp. v. 10. The conversion and conviction of the house of David is followed by their cleansing, 13. 1. What a transformation when the Lord appears out of heaven for the house of Judah and Jerusalem, Rev. 1. 7. After centuries of rejection, Israel will

acknowledge at last their dreadful sin of rejecting their Messiah and handing Him over to the Romans to crucify Him. Joel's prophecy regarding the outpouring of the Spirit will be finally and fully discharged. Israel's Day of Atonement, the only fast amidst the feasts,<sup>5</sup> will be accompanied with repentance by the people nationally and individually. The genuineness of their repentance is recognized in their mourning and bitterness of soul.<sup>6</sup>

What a confession will be theirs as Isaiah chapter 53 becomes their acknowledgement of guilt and complicity in the sufferings and death of their Messiah! What a cleansing will be theirs when the fountain for sin and uncleanness opened at Calvary becomes applicable to their moral condition.<sup>7</sup>

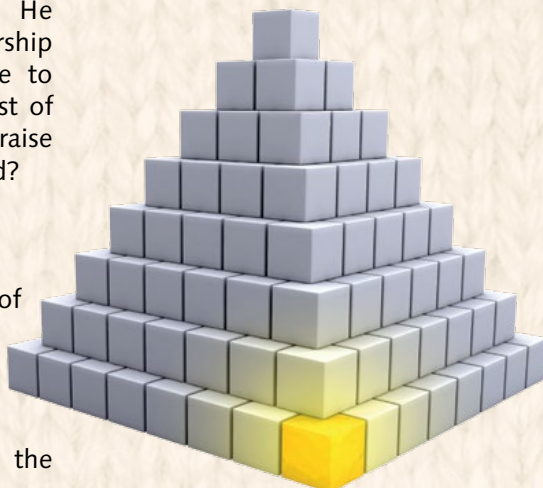
What a beautiful picture of how the Lord works in salvation! The Holy Spirit promotes supplication. Their eyes 'look upon' the pierced One, or, rather, as with the serpent on the pole, they 'look to' in faith and trust. Genuine soul-searching leads to repentance from the top down, king, prophet, and 'all the families that remain'. Then, their cleansing is complete at the fountain.

Would God that the need for 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ', Acts 20. 21, were more faithfully preached from the pulpits of the land!

## (X) THE AWAKING OF THE SWORD, 13. 7

The sword speaks of judicial punishment.<sup>8</sup> In the passage before us, the sword is not literal but represents the infliction of judgement. The judgement is not 'upon him that doeth evil' in this case, but upon the One, 'who his own self bare *our sins in his own body on the tree*', 1 Pet. 2. 24.

This metaphorical sword is wielded against 'my shepherd'. The contrast in this chapter is with the false prophets of Israel and the One, true, genuine Prophet, 'my shepherd'. Our Lord quotes this verse partially, Matt. 26. 31, after the experience of Gethsemane's







# IAH'S PROPHECY 4

By  
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garden. It was prophetic of what was about to befall Him.

The shepherd title is carried forward from chapter 11 and is used of kings and the pastoral care they should display towards their subjects, the flock. Ezekiel chapter 34 demonstrates the abject failure of the shepherds of Israel, and the ideal Shepherd, Christ. The link between shepherd and sovereign perhaps explains the quotation being in Matthew's Gospel, the gospel of the King.

Israel, and we sinners, deserved the full force of the smiting sword but remarkably, 'O Christ, it fell on Thee'!

Notice that this is the fifth time 'man' is used of Christ in this prophecy. The particular word here is not of weak man, as in Adam, but it signifies a strong, valiant man, even a warrior. How strong our Lord was in bearing the judgement of God against sin upon the cross. Truly, a mighty man of valour.

In addition to His human nature we are reminded that the smitten One was 'my fellow'. His deity is inherent in this title. The word 'fellow' bears the meaning 'next of kin' or 'equal'. He 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God', Phil. 2. 6. The smitten One was both human and divine.

The result, 'the sheep shall be scattered'. Israel has been scattered amongst the nations of the world. After Rome sacked and burned Jerusalem in AD 70, the nation lost its homeland, until 1948. They have had no king or country, and currently are only back in the land in unbelief. One day they will be recovered from the graveyard of the nations, and will have one Shepherd over them, Ezek. 34. 12, 23.

## (XI) THE APPEARING OF THE WARRIOR-KING, 14. 3, 9, 16

### (i) The Warrior-king, v. 3

As the Lord fought on Israel's side in the wilderness and in the land, so He will 'go forth' as the Warrior-

king on His war steed, with the armies of heaven behind Him to engage the Gentile nations in battle.

The One who parted the Red Sea and the Jordan, the One who caused the veil of the temple to be rent in twain will now cause the Mount of Olives to cleave in two! The parting of the Red Sea and the Jordan gave God's people access to the wilderness and Canaan, respectively. The tearing of the veil of the temple in two halves gave access to the presence of God. The cleaving of Olivet will give the remnant an escape route out of Jerusalem to access a place of safety in 'my mountains'.

### (ii) The Worldwide King, v. 9

The Lord is Emperor. All the earth is subject to Him. Despite their aspirations, the previous world empires only held sway over the then known world. Even the man of sin does not succeed in complete world domination, and the second advent of Christ puts an end to his adventuring.

There shall be one Lord, Jehovah. Israel's God will be universally accepted. All religions, all so-called gods will be swept away. Jehovah will be Lord and He alone will be the object of worship in the golden age, the glorious millennium.

Jehovah, of course, will be none other than our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. His mediatorial rule will be experienced on earth for 1000 years, Rev. 20. 2-6. At last, it will come true, 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven', Matt. 6. 10.

### (iii) The Worshipped King, v. 16

After the judgement of the living nations, when the surviving remnant of the Gentile nations will have been judged; the sheep,

as opposed to the goats, are told by the King, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world', Matt. 25. 34. These Gentile believers will be expected to go up to Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles on an annual basis. The significance of all the other feasts and fast will have been fulfilled, but the Feast of Tabernacles will find its consummation in the glory and rejoicing of the millennial day. The purpose of their visit is to worship the King, Jesus Christ, who is also designated by a title more frequently used of the Father, the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts!

The prophecy closes with a picture of domesticity in Jerusalem and Judah. All is 'holiness unto the Lord'. A holy nation shall dwell in the holy land, reigned over by a holy King and served by a holy priesthood (Zadokite) in a holy temple. But the unique feature is Jehovah-shammah, 'The Lord is there'.

## Endnotes

- 1 Christ is described as the chief cornerstone, Ps. 118. 22, 23; Matt. 21. 42; the precious cornerstone, Isa. 28. 16; 1 Pet. 2. 6; He is the bedrock of the local Assembly, 1 Cor. 3. 11, and the dispensational church, 1 Pet. 2. 5, 6.
- 2 See Isa. 32. 1; Ps. 45. 16.
- 3 See Matt. 27. 9-10; Jer. 18. 2, 3; 19. 1-13; 32. 6-15.
- 4 The temple authorities recognized it as blood money and used it to purchase the potter's field to bury strangers in. The name of the field is Aceldama, the field of blood, a continuing memorial to the dastardly act of the temple authorities.
- 5 Lev. 23. 26-32.
- 6 Their mourning is as for a first-born son and an only son, both references to their Messiah. Such will be their grief-stricken mourning that it is likened to that accompanying the death of Josiah, v. 11, at the hand of Pharaoh-necho.
- 7 Blood has to do with judicial cleansing, water with moral cleansing. Here, it is water. 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you', Ezek. 36. 25.
- 8 For example, the sword of the Angel of Jehovah hanging over Jerusalem when David purchased the threshing floor from Ornan the Jebusite, 1 Chr. 21. 15, 16, 27, 30, or the sword in the hands of divinely appointed rulers, Rom. 13. 4, 'to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil'.





## The sanctifying influence of love

As we approach this fifth chapter, it is good to glance over the supreme interest of the Lord in the church seen in it. It is formed of believers in the Lord Jesus who are:

- Chapter 1 Chosen in Him
- Chapter 2 Elevated in Him
- Chapter 3 United in Him
- Chapter 4 Instructed in Him
- Chapter 5 Loved by Him
- Chapter 6 Enabled and Preserved by Him

We find four simple divisions to this chapter:

- Motivated by love, vv. 1-7;
- Movements in light, vv. 8-14;
- Maturity in life, vv. 15-21;
- Marriage of the Lamb, vv. 22-33.

### Motivated by love, vv. 1-7

#### The imitators of love, v. 1

The fact that God is love is stated in 1 John chapter 4 verse 8, and that love has been demonstrated to us, making us 'dear children'. The expression 'dear' is that used by the Father of the Lord Jesus.<sup>1</sup> What the Lord Jesus is to the Father is what we have become. How blessed if we manifest a family likeness and become imitators of God as His offspring!

#### The initiator of love, v. 2

Love could never begin with man, but it is demonstrated in all its fullness in the person of Christ. He initiates love. The habit of our life now is to walk, Greek *peripateo*, in love, as Christ has loved us and given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God. We are to follow the pattern 'as Christ has loved us'.

#### An immoral walk, v. 3

We are now confronted with six sins, and the mind of God concerning them, in a threefold way. First, we have the practice of sinners, followed by a prohibition for saints, and, finally, the punishment by the Sovereign on those who commit those sins.

Of the three sins enumerated in the verse we can see that in fornication there is a desire to do, in uncleanness there is the thought or

# PHILESIANS

## Chapter 5 verses 1-14

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desire to be, while with covetousness there is the desire to have.

#### Immoral talk, v. 4

We now come to sins that only occur here in the New Testament: filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. When Paul speaks of filthiness, he is recording something of the shameful and indecency of those who practise it. It is not enough to abstain from immorality; to speak of it exposes a desire to practise it and reveals an unclean mind.

Along with the injunction to abstain from foolish talking, he adds jesting to the sins to be abhorred. Once again the apostle is linking this word, which in our day infers a witticism or clever turn of speech, to portray a vulgar use of the tongue, making a clever play around immorality.

#### Immeasurable loss, v. 5

Such is the end of those who practise those things that are incompatible with knowing God. RUTH PAXSON has ably put it, 'God's attitude to sin remains inflexible, God and sin can never fellowship together'.<sup>2</sup> It is this that will bar people from the kingdom of Christ and of God.

#### Impending doom, v. 6

That there are those who would seek to turn us from a path of separation is evident, be they men of the world or carnal Christians. The plea from the apostle is 'Let no man', for we hear and know of those who would trifle with sin and seek companions to justify their evil doings. Well might Paul make such an appeal to the saints when the flesh is always eager to fulfil its base desires!

The pleas of those who would turn us from a life of holiness are vain,

that is, empty and meaningless, for it is as the result of immorality in its many forms that the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience.

#### Immediate separation, v. 7

Rather than be drawn into these evil practices, from which verse 6 desires to turn us away, we are now enjoined not to be partakers with those sins, or with those who would practice such, 1 Cor. 5. 9-13.

This word 'partakers', *summetochos*, is derived, as WUEST explains, 'from metecho "to hold with another" and sun "with", the compound word meaning "partaking together with one"'.<sup>3</sup> So we find that the practices should 'not be once named among you, as becometh saints', v. 3, and we should not be partakers with those who blatantly defy God.

### Movements in light, vv. 8-14

#### Reality, v. 8

Once we were darkness, now we are light in the Lord. In chapter 4 verse 18 the understanding was darkened, and, in Colossians chapter 1 verse 13, darkness was the sphere of our activity, but we were delivered from the power of it and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Both the sphere and the state have changed as we are now in Christ. The state is 'now are ye light in the Lord'. We are not merely enlightened, but we are light! This is not the lamp, but the light. It is not the environment in which we move but the reality of what we have become.

#### Productivity, v. 9

If verse 8 exhibits the reality of the transformation that has taken place through conversion, we now are confronted with the productivity





that should be seen because of our salvation.

There is a threefold cluster here: goodness, righteousness, and truth. The first has the thought of virtue, beneficence, and would lead to good works being performed as a course of habit. The second, righteousness, would infer equity, justification, and it would produce in us a good walk. The third evidence of being light is truth. Much could be said about this, seeing that the Devil is the father of lies.

#### **Acceptability, v. 10**

We have considered what is not acceptable to the Lord in verses 3-7; we must now prove what is acceptable to the Lord.

All our actions and activities should be motivated by what is acceptable to the Lord. Everything must be put to the test. There is a demand for careful thought in all that we do that there might be a right course of action that will have in mind the Lord's pleasure.

#### **Purity, v. 11**

We come to a further stage in the Christian life. Whereas in verse 7 we were to avoid persons who practised those sins that call for the judgement of God, now we are not to have fellowship with their works.

Rather than have association with the unfruitful works of darkness, we are to reprove them. To reprove is to bring disgrace upon, to put to shame. The meaning is that the Christian, by a life so essentially different from those around him, rather than by reproof in speech, is to expose their sins. This is done by the action of light; this exposes the filth all around us.

#### **Sensitivity, v. 12**

Again we have confirmed to us that the unfruitful works of darkness are reproved by our life rather than by our lip, for it is a shame to speak of them. This is further emphasized in verse 13 where all things are made manifest by the light. Light is the operating power that exposes evil. The word 'shame' occurs four times in the New Testament and means that which is base, unseemly, and carries the thought of being lewd.

The word of the Lord is pure. Let our language be consistent with what we believe!

#### **Clarity, v. 13**

There are three simple statements in this verse that all relate to what has gone before. The apostle speaks of 'all things that are reproved'. This takes us back to verse 11, where now it is the unfruitful works of darkness that must be exposed for the sins that they are.

One of the prime objects of the saints becoming 'light in the Lord' is that the unfruitful works of darkness should be exposed. Prior to this light coming, the immoral deeds of all were the same and the mind of God was not known. Now, as light has been manifested through the transformed life of the believer, it makes evident the base character of sin. Such is the expression, 'for whatsoever doth make manifest is light'. The presence of light brings into the open what is only known in the dark. We might remember how the light brought by Nathan exposed the unfruitful works of David, 2 Sam. 12.

#### **Activity, v. 14**

Four thoughts are expressed in the verse:

- 1 An alert – the request of the Lord. This is a call from the Saviour to His own children to manifest what they have become. We are not to sleep our lives away but to be alert to the needs of the hour.
- 2 Awake – remove the lethargy. Many believers tend to be indifferent to the plight of those around them and are even careless in their testimony before the lost. We are called to 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven', Matt. 5. 16.
- 3 Arise – revive the life. It would seem that a path of separation is being advocated here. The Lord wants no indifference or half-hearted commitment to His cause, but for every believer to manifest

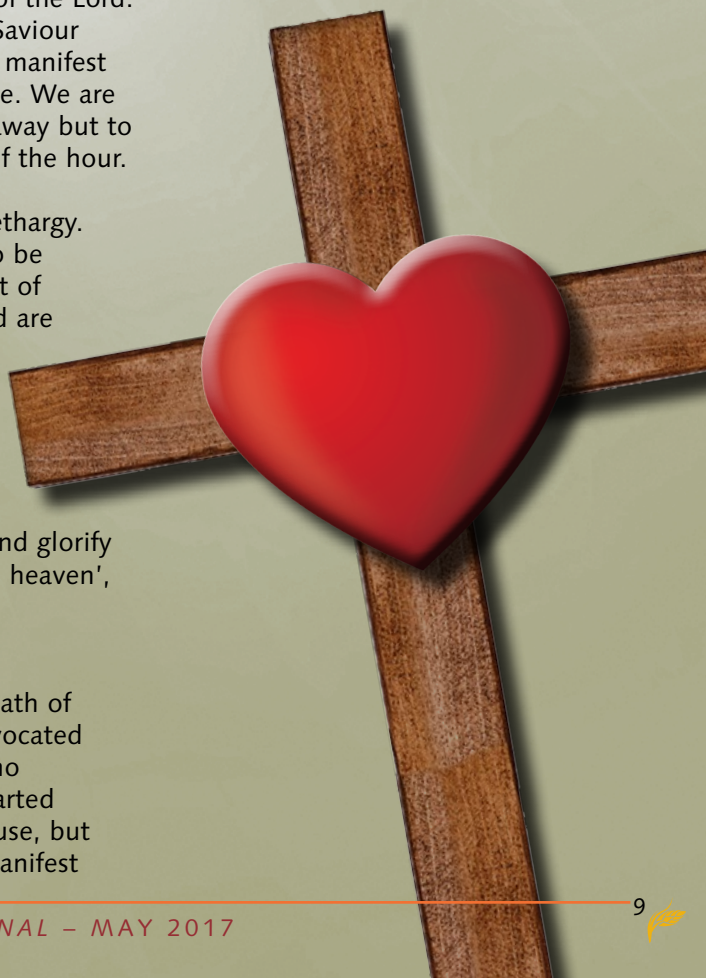
the life they have received in a positive testimony before the world. For, as WILLIAM SECKER says, 'many appear righteous, but are only righteous in appearance'. He adds, 'A rotten post, though covered with gold, is more fit to be burned in the fire than for the building of a fabric'.<sup>4</sup>

- 4 Accept – receive the light. As those who have been 'made light in the Lord', v. 8, the thought before us is rather 'and Christ shall shine upon thee', thus enjoying the presence of the Lord as we testify for Him.

We have a picture of this verse in the life of Samson who recovered his place with God after a life of careless living, 'so those which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life', Judg. 17. 30.

#### **Endnotes**

- 1 See Matt. 3. 17; 12. 18; 17. 5.
- 2 RUTH PAXSON, *The Wealth, Walk and Warfare of the Christian*, Fleming H. Revell, 1939.
- 3 K. S. WUEST, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004.
- 4 WILLIAM SECKER, *The nonesuch professor in his meridian splendour: or, The singular actions of sanctified Christians*, Fleming H. Revell, 1899.







**This is a much-neglected area of teaching today. It is little surprise, therefore, that there have been so many examples over the years of disciplinary matters that have been either ignored or inappropriately handled, resulting in spiritual damage to individual believers and the overall testimony of the assembly.**

The reader might be tempted to think that this article is purely for elders, who have a key role to play when matters of discipline arise; however, it will be seen that all believers in fellowship in a local assembly have their part to play. The fact that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth', Heb. 12. 6, does not absolve us from the part that we have to play in maintaining scriptural order in the assembly. It is true, of course, that the word 'discipline' does not appear in the scriptures; however, the truth that 'God is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . . in all churches of the saints' runs like a thread throughout the New Testament, and requires that 'all things be done decently and in order', 1 Cor. 14. 33, 40. Inevitably, human nature being what it is, it will be necessary for discipline to be employed to achieve this end.

It is important for all believers in a local assembly to understand. This will encourage them to ensure that it happens, if needed, and also that it leads them to be more accepting of it if they should happen to be on the receiving end. First, the local assembly (the people, not the building) is described in exalted terms in the New Testament, e.g., it is 'temple of the living God', 'an habitation of God through the Spirit', and 'house of God, which is . . . church of the living God . . . pillar and ground of the truth'.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, therefore, those in fellowship with any given assembly have a responsibility to meet together in the light of these great truths, and, without doubt, discipline will need to be administered from time to time to ensure that God's name is not dishonoured in any way. Second, individual believers must be taught that it is important to live in obedience to the word of

# LOCAL CHURCH

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God; otherwise, a state of anarchy will soon exist and order will be absent. Third, all discipline should be motivated by a great desire to bring about the restoration of repentant offenders, no matter how serious their offences have been, 2 Cor 2. 6-8. Fourth, discipline should have a wide audience of onlookers in mind. Unbelievers, angels, principalities and powers look on and expect to see in the assembly, 'the manifold wisdom of God', Eph. 3. 10. Discipline, therefore, must be brought to bear upon any who mar the testimony. Fifth, discipline protects an assembly, 1 Cor. 5. 6-7. If sin goes unchecked, the entire assembly is affected. Once those in fellowship grasp these truths, they will appreciate the magnitude of what is at stake and accept the necessity for discipline.

If local church discipline is to be administered in an effective way, it must be understood that not all offences by believers fall into the same category; therefore, they do not all require the same response. As in any natural family, there must be degrees of discipline that are commensurate with the offence committed. If an offence is dealt with too harshly or too leniently, it can have a detrimental effect upon individuals and the assembly. Offences in an assembly can range from minor errors of judgement that can easily be put right, to wilful doctrinal and gross moral errors that will call for excommunication from the fellowship. Discipline must be brought to bear in all cases, but elders and the assembly need to exercise wisdom as to what is appropriate in each case and also pray for the restoration of the offender.

For example, Paul spoke of a man being 'overtaken in a fault'. Clearly, his error is not wilful or habitual, but a temporary lapse; therefore, it would be unwise to use the 'heavy hand' of discipline in such a case. Indeed, the emphasis from the outset should be on restoration, not retribution: 'Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in

the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted', Gal 6. 1. In contrast, his instructions were much more stringent when he spoke of the unruly and disorderly.<sup>2</sup> The discipline to be imposed upon them ranges from warning them and rebuking them sharply, to having no company with them.

Sadly, many problems that call for discipline in local assemblies arise from a clash of personalities, rather than doctrinal issues. These are often left unresolved and hinder the spiritual health of the assembly for many years. They are not always dealt with objectively, especially when friendships and family relationships are involved. The principles for dealing with such matters were clearly set out by the Lord Jesus Himself; yet, in spite of this, they are seldom followed. The onus is placed on the offended brother to resolve the issue, personally, with his brother, Matt. 18. 15. If this fails, he should seek to resolve it in the presence of one or two witnesses. If this proves unsuccessful, he should take it to the whole church. If his brother fails to hear them, it will lead to his excommunication, v. 17. It is unlikely that many readers will have witnessed these procedures being carried out to their conclusion when one brother has offended another. However, there have been far too many unresolved cases of this nature that have been allowed to fester and stifle the spiritual growth of an assembly, when simply following the clear steps outlined by the Lord would have nipped the matter in the bud and avoided much heartache.

From the first century onward, doctrinal issues blighted the history of the Christian church, e.g., Paul refers to 'heretics (hereticks in the KJV)', those who 'pervert the gospel of Christ', and others who 'resist the truth'.<sup>3</sup> Peter describes false teachers as 'natural brute beasts' and 'wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest', 2 Pet. 2. 12, 17. Although false teaching must be dealt with immediately and decisively, there is a clear principle set down in the



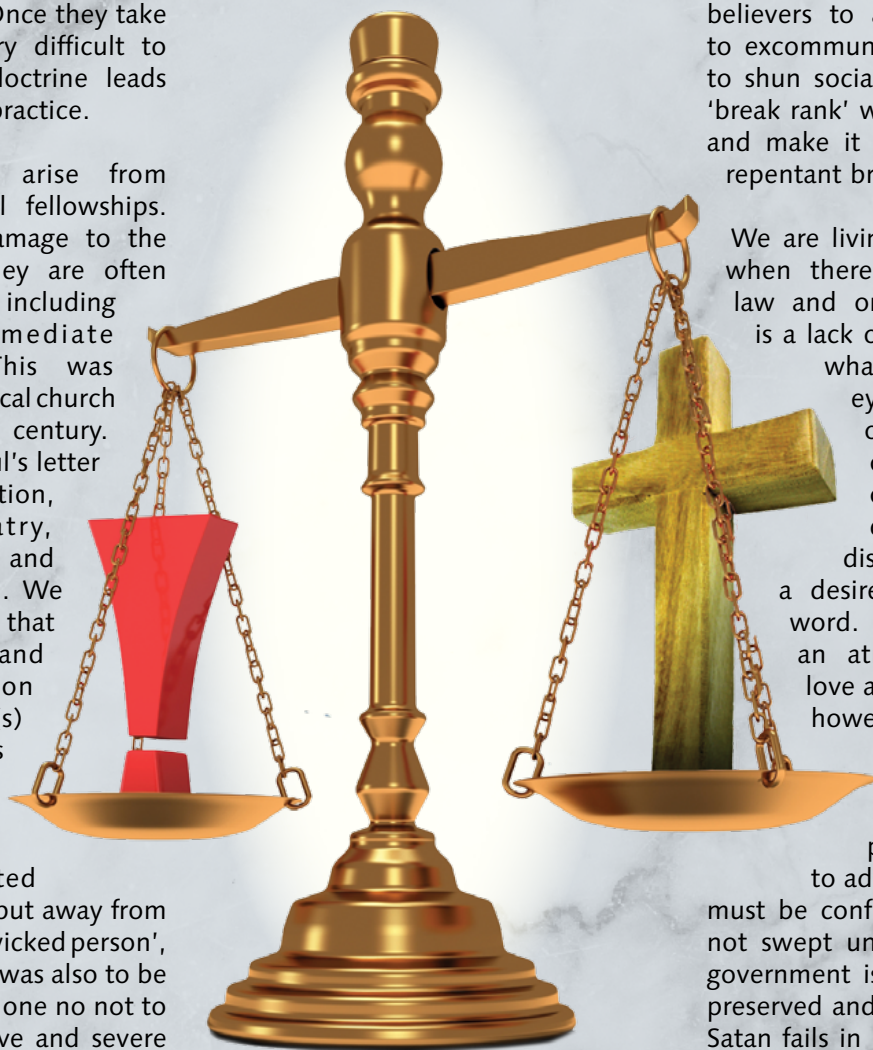


# RCH DISCIPLINE

scriptures: 'A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject', Titus 3. 10. Our thoughts should not turn immediately to retributive judgement. Nevertheless, if the false teachers refuse to repent, the discipline must be severe. Paul employs expressions such as 'accursed', 'cut off', 'reject', and 'condemned'.<sup>4</sup> Simply stated, such teachers should be disciplined and put out of the local fellowship. False doctrines regarding the fundamentals of the Christian faith must not be permitted to flourish. Once they take root, they will be very difficult to remove, and wrong doctrine leads very quickly to wrong practice.

Sadly, moral issues arise from time to time in local fellowships. They can do great damage to the testimony, because they are often open and known to all, including unbelievers in the immediate neighbourhood. This was particularly true in the local church at Corinth in the first century. Mention is made in Paul's letter to them of fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, and extortion, 1 Cor. 5. 11. We are left in no doubt that such offences demand the excommunication of the person(s) concerned. This is typified in Paul's words concerning the man who had committed fornication: 'Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person', v. 13. All social contact was also to be shunned: 'with such an one no not to eat', v. 11. Such decisive and severe discipline does not mean, of course, that there is no road back for the truly repentant moral offender. Later on, Paul writes to the local church concerning this same man: 'Sufficient to such a man is this punishment . . . forgive him, and comfort him . . . confirm your love toward him', 2 Cor. 2. 6-8. No matter how low a fellow believer may sink, they should never be out of our affections. As was mentioned earlier, we might

be tempted to divorce ourselves from the issues raised in this article, believing that they are the concern only of elders (overseers) in local assemblies. Clearly, the elders have a key role to play in providing teaching and spiritual guidance as far as disciplinary procedures are concerned. Indeed, they are not above facing discipline themselves, 1 Tim. 5. 20. However, once again, clear guidelines are laid down should this become necessary, v. 19.



While elders (overseers) have a major responsibility as far as leadership is concerned in matters of discipline, the entire assembly also has a key role to play.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it is the assembly, not the elders, that receive a believer into fellowship and, if necessary, excommunicates him/her. Unity of this nature will emphasize to offenders that they are not only out of step with the elders, but also with their fellow believers. When Paul

gives instructions as to the various disciplinary actions to be taken, he does not often address the elders specifically, but all believers forming the local assemblies concerned. This is clearly seen when he addresses the serious issue of fornication in the assembly at Corinth. His expression, 'when ye are gathered together', highlights the corporate responsibility of all the believers in the assembly to deal with the offending brother, 1 Cor. 5. 4. If the discipline was to be effective, it was important for all the believers to abide by the decision to excommunicate the offender and to shun social contact with him. To 'break rank' would lead to confusion and make it difficult to restore the repentant brother later on.

We are living in challenging times when there is a break down in law and order worldwide. There is a lack of restraint and men do what is right in their own eyes. Local assemblies ought to be beacons of light in the midst of this increasingly dark world. They must display godly order and a desire to adhere to God's word. They should promote an atmosphere of genuine love and concern for all men; however, this must never be at the expense of upholding divine standards and disciplining those who fail to adhere to them. Problems must be confronted and dealt with, not swept under the carpet. Sound government is vital if unity is to be preserved and anarchy kept at bay. If Satan fails in his attempts to destroy an assembly from without, he will seek to do so from within.

## Endnotes

- 1 2 Cor. 6. 16; Eph. 2. 22; 1 Tim. 3. 15.
- 2 See, for example: 1 Thess. 5. 14; 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14-15; 1 Tim. 6. 3-5; Titus 1. 11, 13.
- 3 Titus 3. 10; Gal. 1. 7; 2 Tim. 3. 8.
- 4 Gal. 1. 9; 5. 12; Titus 3. 10-11.
- 5 See, for example, 1 Cor. 5. 4-5; 2 Cor. 2. 6-8; Rev. 2. 12-17.





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



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

## Titus 2. 1-10

Paul is writing to Titus to instruct people who have just become Christians on the island of Crete. We have already learned in chapter 1 some of the characteristics of the people of Crete, 1. 12. Their national tendencies were not very admirable, but God saved them and he is now teaching them how to live as Christians. Earlier in the Epistle, Paul has outlined for Titus how to deal with the false teachers who would come among God's people, seek to deceive them and divert them from living lives that are pleasing to God.

This chapter addresses issues relating to domestic life and is mainly about how Christians conduct themselves at home and at work. Paul addresses the different groups of believers about the part they play and then he deals with the reasons why believers should act in this way. The chapter has been divided as follows:

*Adorning the doctrine*, vv. 1-10. This is a phrase that is found in verse 10 explaining how a Christian bondservant should behave. Good Christian conduct adds value to the truth of the gospel.

*Expounding the doctrine*, vv. 11-15. This section deals with why Christian behaviour should be different from that of people who do not have their sins forgiven. We will deal with this section in the next article. It is important to understand the doctrine of Christian life – the *why*, as well as the practice – the *how*.

Looking at the first eight verses of the chapter we can see what Titus is expected to teach the people who had been saved in Crete. First, he

addresses the older men and the older women, vv. 1-3. Then, the emphasis changes slightly, as Paul tells Titus that he must teach the older woman to train the young woman, vv. 4-5. The penultimate subsection of this part of the chapter is where Titus is told not only to encourage the younger men but to be an example to them, vv. 6-8. In the next article we will look at the relationship between servants and their masters in the final section, vv. 9-10.

It is wonderful to see how the Spirit of God highlights the practical wisdom of God in this passage. Titus has to learn to be wise. It would not be appropriate for him to teach the younger women about the issues that are dealt with in this chapter so he will teach the older woman to train the younger. Also, it may not go down well if Titus was to try to teach the younger men about things that he wasn't actually practising himself, so he is instructed to be an example to them.

Let's look at some of the detail:

### Promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching, v. 1.

Titus is being reminded that he is to be different from the false teachers who Paul has warned him about in the previous chapter. His responsibility as a teacher is not only to teach theory or doctrine but also to speak about the type of character that healthy teaching produces in a believer's life. When teaching, Titus should not be worried about repeating himself, as there are some things that need to be taught consistently. Peter, in his second epistle, goes back over old ground, as he reminds his readers of things that they were already aware of. Repetitive teaching should not be boring, but essential truths should be taught consistently with freshness.

### Teach the older men, v. 2.

These are men older in years as opposed to men who are recognized as elders. There are six things that older men must be. The first three

deal with self-control and the second three deal with spiritual health.

*Sober* – this word has to do with abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its uncontrolled use. While scripture doesn't give a blanket ban on drinking alcohol, it is clear that drunkenness is prohibited, 1 Cor. 6. 10, and abstinence is to be preferred if we want to serve God well, Lev. 10. 9, Prov. 20. 1. The wider application is that older men should exercise self-control at all times.

*Grave* – the word in the KJV is sadly associated with death and gloom, but the real idea is that older men should be men of dignity, have gravitas and a demeanour that causes others to respect them. This does not mean that they are not to be joyful and happy.

*Temperate* – this is another word to describe self-control. It's about having your wits about you, as it describes a person who knows how to control their desires and impulses.

Where the first word of the three, sober, describes self-control over external influences, the third word, temperate, seems to describe being in control of your personal impulses and desires.

*Sound in faith, in charity and in patience* – this triplet highlights the spiritual health of older men. This word 'sound' comes up time and time again in Paul's writings. The word that we would use in our modern vocabulary is 'hygiene'. It means to be healthy and well. Paul is teaching Titus here that the older men have to be spiritually healthy in three areas – faith, love and patience. As they are mature believers their faith in God should be healthy, their love for God and His people should be healthy and they should endure life and its dilemmas with a patient, cheerful and hopeful attitude. Some teach that because the definite article is in front of each of these words that 'the faith' is describing the word of God. This may well be so but the outcome





# from Titus <sup>(7)</sup>

of having a healthy acquaintance with scripture will also be great trust in God and dependence upon Him.

## Teach the older women, v. 3.

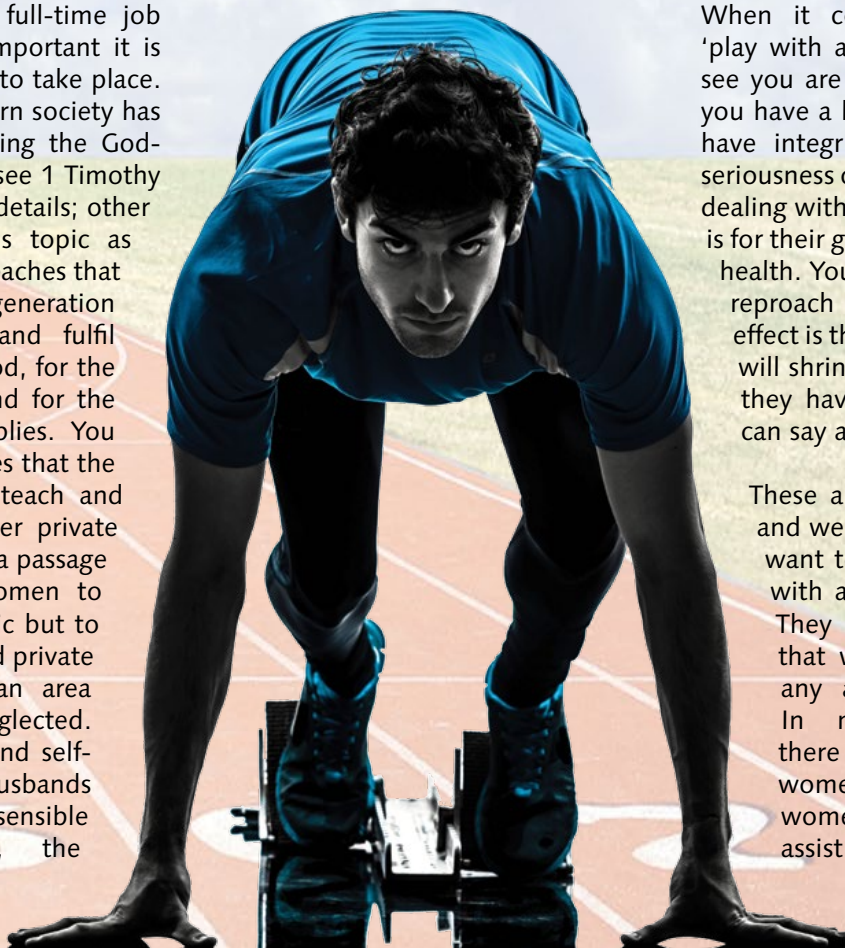
The advice for the older women is similar to what was given to the older men. In other words, they should also behave in ways that are becoming for people who are holy, i.e., believers. Their lifestyle should reflect the fact that they are saved. This will be seen in what they talk about – no gossip or slander. It will be reflected in how self-controlled they are – again, the issue of drink and its effect is introduced. They will also be known to be teachers of good things, both by what they say and how they live. How vital it is to have godly older women in our local assemblies who display these characteristics! Only this type of woman has the moral right to train the young women.

## The older women should train the younger women, vv. 4-5.

It looks like the older women in a local assembly have a full-time job on their hands. How important it is for this training process to take place. To a large degree, modern society has succeeded in undermining the God-given role of a woman (see 1 Timothy 5. 10 and 5. 14 for the details; other passages deal with this topic as well), but this passage teaches that we need to train each generation to know their roles and fulfil them for the glory of God, for the good of our families and for the benefit of local assemblies. You will notice that the issues that the older women have to teach and train about are all either private or domestic. This is not a passage that instructs older women to preach or teach in public but to train in the domestic and private sphere. I think it is an area that has often been neglected. The key issues are around self-control, affection for husbands and children, wise and sensible living, moral purity, the protection of the home (not guarding

the physical property but creating a safe atmosphere and haven from the dangers and influences of society), a lifestyle known for its goodness and submissiveness to one's husband (promoting the order that God has created for the good of the family). Many of these issues are dealt with in other passages which it would be wise to read, cp. 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5; 1 Tim. 2; 1 Pet. 3.

Paul ends this little section with the rider – 'that the word of God be not blasphemed'. He uses a similar expression in 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 1 when discussing servants and their relationship to their masters. The point is that there is just the danger that we could bring God and His word into disrepute by how we behave. We may claim to be believers and state that God's word has changed our lives but if that isn't reflected in the way we live then we cause God's word to be evil spoken of. God's reputation is at stake and our lives can either cast it in a good light or a bad light.



## Encourage the younger men to live wisely, v. 6.

By now you must be beginning to see the common thread running through all of these verses. God expects all of His people to live wisely. It should be known that Christians are wise, discreet, sensible and good people. The young men are to be encouraged to live like this as well. But, Titus, don't expect them just to listen to your sermons!

## Be an example to the younger men and teach them the truth, vv. 8-9.

EDGAR A. GUEST'S poem says:

'I'd rather see a sermon,  
than hear one any day,  
I'd rather one should walk with me,  
than merely tell the way.  
The eyes a better pupil  
and more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing,  
But example's always clear'

This is exactly what Paul is teaching Titus. He is saying, in effect, in every area where you want the young men to learn from you, show yourself a pattern or a good example. Do good works of every kind – good works that are spiritual, relating to God and His people, as well as practical. When it comes to your teaching 'play with a straight bat' – let them see you are serious; show them that you have a high regard for truth, you have integrity. You understand the seriousness of the matters that you are dealing with. Make sure what you say is for their good; it is for their spiritual health. Your words should be above reproach and above criticism. The effect is that those who oppose you will shrink away in shame because they have nothing bad that they can say about you.

These are great words of advice and well worth considering if we want to be effective in working with and teaching young men. They are, however, principles that will work when teaching any age group of believers. In many local assemblies there will be older men, older women, young men and young women. This passage should assist us in knowing how to deal with each group in an appropriate way.





# Introduction to the Messianic Psalms 2

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

## Editor's Comment:

Please note that this article is Part 2 of an introduction to these Psalms. Part 1 was published in the February issue of the magazine.

## The Messianic Psalms in the ministry of Christ

The value of these Psalms in their testimony to the Lord Jesus is seen not only in the way that the Holy Spirit is careful to quote and interpret passages from them in the New Testament in reference to Christ but is equally seen in the way that Christ Himself took them up in His ministry and teaching. Though this list is not exhaustive, consider how, in answer to the displeasure of the chief priests at the crying of the children in the temple, the Lord said, 'have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' Matt. 21. 16; Ps. 8. 2. In applying the lesson of the parable of the wicked husbandmen, He said, 'Did ye never read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes', Matt. 21. 42; Ps. 118. 22-23. In contending with the Pharisees, He asked, 'How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy

footstool?' Matt. 22. 43-44; Ps. 110. 1. In His lament over Jerusalem, He said, 'Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord', Matt. 23. 39; Ps. 118. 26. His cry 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Matt. 27. 46; Ps. 22. 1.

## The Messianic Psalms and communications between the Father and the Son

It is instructive to note how, in some of these Psalms, we are privileged to 'listen-in' to conversations between the Father and the Son. In Psalm 102 verses 25-27, the reader would think initially that we are listening to the psalmist addressing Jehovah, 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands . . . they shall be changed; But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end'. But, when these verses are quoted in Hebrews chapter 1, we find that we are listening to the Father addressing the Son. Other passages will readily come to mind: 'Unto the Son he saith: Thy throne O God is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity', Heb. 1. 8-9; Ps. 45. 6-7. 'He that said unto him Thou art my

Son this day have I begotten thee', Heb. 5. 5; Ps. 2. 7; 'Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec', Heb. 5. 10; Ps. 110. 4. Equally, we listen to the Son addressing the Father: 'When he cometh into the world he saith . . . Lo I come . . . to do thy will, O God', Heb. 10. 5-9; Ps. 40. 6-8. What a privilege to be introduced to conversations within the Godhead; what a privilege to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

## The Messianic Psalms and the believer

The Lord said, 'Search the scriptures . . . they are they which testify of me', John 5. 39. These Psalms make an important contribution to the testimony of the scriptures to Christ. To neglect the study of them cannot but leave the believer poorer in His appreciation of Christ.

A study of these Psalms will help and enhance our prayers and praise. Have we forgotten how Peter and John, having returned to their own company, with one accord lifted up their voice in prayer to God, quoting and applying the words of Psalm 2, Acts 4. 23-28?

A knowledge of these Psalms has practical implications also. As an example, we could take the writer's exhortation in Hebrews chapter 13 verse 13, 'Let us go forth . . . unto him without the camp bearing his reproach'. An exhortation that is certainly expanded when we refer to Psalm 69 where, some five times, we find the word 'reproach'. Each time it comes in a different context, the Psalm indicating why and how men reproached our Lord, and, thus, what going forth to Christ in the day of His rejection will involve.







# JOSHUA

By **JOHN SCARBROOK** Killamarsh, England

## Introduction

### - Purpose and plan

The book of Joshua marks an important milestone in the history of the nation. Promise was made to Abram in Genesis chapter 12 of both a land and a nation. Abram and his immediate descendants had lived in the land, without occupying more than room to pitch a tent and owning only a place to bury their dead. In Genesis chapter 46, Jacob took his family into Egypt with the promise of God fresh in his mind, 'Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation . . . and I will surely bring thee up again', v. 3.

Now the great nation had been brought out of Egypt, through wilderness trials, to the borders of the land which 'He swore unto their fathers'. A land of cities they had not built, houses full of good things, wells they had not dug, vineyards and olive groves they had not planted.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses had reviewed their history and set out the pathway which would result in blessing and enjoyment of the land. With equal clarity he gave warning of the consequences of self-will and disobedience. Then, having blessed the twelve tribes and with a final promise of their future prosperity, the great man of God turned and ascended Pisgah's heights to view with undimmed eyes the land which his heart longed for.

In the purposes of God it was left to a man whose name means Jehovah is Saviour to bring the nation into their inheritance. But God is gracious, and, almost 1500 years later, Moses would stand in the land with Elijah and commune with the One who is *the* Saviour.

## The appointed leader

The people who stood on the wilderness side of Jordan, maybe as many as two-and-a-half to three million, had never known life without Moses. He had always been there – a father figure, a shepherd, an outstanding leader, but, above all, a

man in touch with God. Now news was filtering back, Moses is dead. The nation wept.

It would have come as no surprise to the people, that the man who assumed the mantle of leadership was Joshua, the son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim. For over forty years Joshua had been at Moses' shoulder, watching, listening and learning from the man of God. He had led the army against Amalek, Exod. 17. 9; he is called Moses' minister in chapter 24, his servant in chapter 33; he was one of the faithful spies, together with Caleb in Numbers chapter 13, and Moses successor, chosen by God, in chapter 27.

Joshua had waited in the foothills of Sinai as Moses met face to face with God. He had no part in the idolatry involving the golden calf but stayed in the tent pitched by Moses outside the camp. He was a young man of evident spiritual calibre, learning through a variety of trials to be a leader of God's people. Now, as we come to the opening of Joshua chapter 1, there are conflicts to be engaged in, decisions to be made, and Moses is dead!

It is worthy of note that Joshua was quite content to wait God's time before stepping forward to take the leader's role; Joshua was no Diotrophes! But the years of learning bore very evident fruit as, throughout the book, his leadership is never questioned, his authority is paramount and his character unblemished. On only two occasions do shadows pass over the progress of the nation. First, in the matter of Achan, in chapter 7, and, later, the failure to ask 'counsel at the mouth of the Lord' regarding the scheming Gibeonites in chapter 9.

So it is that in chapter 1 verse 1, for the first time we read that 'the Lord spake unto Joshua'. The words spoken on this occasion seem quite abrupt, 'Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan'. It brings to mind a quotation

attributed to Charles Wesley which is inscribed on his tomb in Westminster Abbey, 'God buries His workmen, but continues on His work'. So preparation must be made to cross over the Jordan in order that the inheritance can be enjoyed.

## Outline of the book

Chapter 11 verse 23 provides a brief and concise summary of the book, 'So Joshua **took the whole land**, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua **gave it for an inheritance** unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war'.

**Chapters 1-12** describe the '**taking**' of the land, while **chapters 13-24** deal with the '**giving**' of the inheritance.

The book covers a period of some twenty-five years up to the death of Joshua, and commences the history of the nation in their promised land. Jewish tradition attributes the authorship of the book to Joshua, and may well be accurate. Twelve times in the book, events and actions are recorded as being present 'unto this day', a phrase which signifies their relatively recent occurrence, and, most likely, the record of an eye witness.

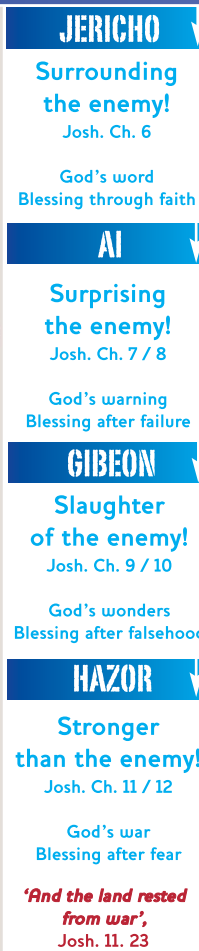
**Chapters 1-4** give details of preparation for and the crossing of the River Jordan. Just as the mighty hand of God was seen in bringing the people out of Egypt, so the same power was evident in bringing the nation into their inheritance. The crossing of the Red Sea on dry ground was still recalled in Jericho some forty years later, 2. 10. The fear and consternation generated by this gave Israel's armies the initiative as they commenced the conquest of the land.

**Chapters 5-8** record the remarkable account of Jericho's fall; the army of Israel simply obeyed instructions given by the Lord through Joshua. The plan defied all human logic and reasoning, but, as always, obedience resulted in victory for the people of God. The Spirit of God faithfully records the



# The book of Deuteronomy

'And she sent them away, and they departed: and

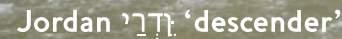


The Canaanites = Spiritually Immature

2 Cor. 10. 3 'For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war as men do. For our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.'

1 Tim. 1. 18 'That thou by them mightest war the good warfare.'

1 Pet. 2. 11 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as ye have loved the word which is in us, that ye abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.'



'In the **tenth day of this month** they shall t  
'And the people came up out of Jordan on the **tenth d**  
'For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from b  
to the Red sea, which he dried up from bef

*The pathway of*

Waters of Jordan cut off = Death of Christ  
Inheritance through His death & resurrection

*hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an*

'put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground', Exod. 3. 5

## New Testament references to Joshua

Jam. 2. 25 'was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers'. Josh. 6. 20

**Heb. 11. 30** 'by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days'. **Josh 6. 20**

**Heb. 13. 5** 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee'. **Josh. 1. 5**

'Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of

**Exod. 33**  
The young u  
Found in th

*The progress of*



**Key words** Jordan / land / strong / courage / inheritance / sword / **Writer** - Part / Joshua

and she bound the **scarlet** line in the window', Joshua 2. 21

## Inheriting the Land

### great warfare

mutual enemies, lust & sin  
not **war** after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare  
telling down of strong holds), - **Use of good weapons**  
war a good warfare' - **Use of the good word**  
teach you as strangers and pilgrims,  
against the soul' - **Use of good works**



take to them every man a lamb', Exod. 12. 3  
day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal', Josh. 4. 19  
before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did  
before us, until we were gone over', Josh. 4. 23



### a great Saviour

Joshua > Gospel The Ark

12 Stones on bed = Dead with Christ. Rom. 6. 6-7  
12 Stones on bank = Risen with Christ. Eph. 2. 6

Old corn of the land = A higher diet  
Feeding on Christ - Heavenly Joshua in glory

Possessing the land and inheritance  
Our spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ  
Put on the whole armour of God

*inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you', 1 Peter 1. 4*

### us service of blessing

'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy', Josh. 5. 15

### whom ye will serve; se, we will serve the Lord.

of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ', Col. 3. 24

Joshua  
worshipper  
the sanctuary

Num. 11 Joshua  
The young man  
Foolish advice

Num. 13 Joshua  
The young leader  
Following the Lord

Num. 27 Joshua  
The shepherd  
Flock gets a leader

### a great leader

Deut. 31  
Joshua Charged

#### Ch 13-21 THE POSSESSION FROM VICTORY Dividing the borders of the land

##### Security in our service

- Ch 13 God's message - Battles and borders
- Ch 14 Dividing the inheritance
- Ch 15 Inheritance of Judah
- Ch 16 Inheritance of Joseph
- Ch 17 Lot of Ephraim & Manasseh
- Ch 18 Tab at Shiloh - Benjamin lot
- Ch 19 Lot of other tribes
- Ch 20 Appoint cities of refuge
- Ch 21 Levi's inheritance
- Ch 22 Error at the fringes - 2 1/2 tribes build altar

#### Ch 22-24 THE PURPOSE OF VICTORY Defining service in the land

##### Sincerity in our service

- Ch 23 Joshua's final words - Be courageous
- Ch 24 Joshua's death - Joseph's bones





sin of Achan and the set-back which followed at Ai. However, the matter was dealt with immediately, and, in chapter 8, Ai was soundly defeated and destroyed.

In **chapter 9** the Gibeonites came to Joshua with an audacious and deceitful plan, seeking to ensure their own safety. Joshua, without asking counsel of the Lord, accepted their story and made a league with them. When the subterfuge was discovered, the leaders of Israel, to their credit, having given their word, stood by the agreement, but imposed a life of manual labour on the Gibeonites as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the service of the tabernacle. Later, in the temple, and after the return from captivity, it may be that the Nethinims, mentioned as assisting the Levites, were the descendents of these same Gibeonites.

The treaty made with Israel called down the wrath of the neighbouring city-kingdoms upon the Gibeonites in **chapter 10**. An appeal for help was made to Joshua and the ensuing battle saw the annihilation of the confederacy of kings. Divine assistance ensured that their

destruction was total. As they fled, two supernatural events occurred. A hailstorm of lethal force accounted for many of the Canaanite army and, at Joshua's request, the day was lengthened to allow more daylight hours to complete the rout. 'If God be for us . . . '!

Having dealt with the kings and their armies, the balance of chapter 10 records the destruction of their cities. The summary is found in verse 42, 'All these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel'.

**Chapters 11 and 12** complete the record of Joshua's victories. The remaining Canaanite rulers from the extremities of the land joined forces in a vain attempt to repel the invading army of Israel. Vain hope indeed, as word came from the Lord to Joshua, 'Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel', 11. 6. The totality of the devastation inflicted on the kingdoms and tribes of Canaan is a measure of the righteousness of God, and His abhorrence of sin. Time and opportunity had been given to

the Canaanites to turn from idolatry and mend their ways. But the cup of iniquity was overflowing, to the extent that heaven could no longer remain simply an observer. A consideration of society's ills in our present day begs the question, how much longer can heaven withhold just retribution?

Time has moved on at the commencement of **chapter 13**, for Joshua was now 'old and stricken in years'. A review is given of land yet to be possessed, but, from verse 17, the division of the land begins. This occupies the latter part of the book to **chapter 21**, with a number of interesting and important lessons for the careful reader. Provision was made for cities of refuge, **chapter 20**, and for the settlement of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh on the east bank of Jordan in **chapter 22**.

The closing **chapters 23 and 24**, record the last counsels of Joshua, together with a final charge reminding the people of God's care for them and a challenge to, 'fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth', followed by his own commitment, 'but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'.







# A WORD FOR TODAY

Pinna, corner

**Panim, face,  
countenance, person**

Pasah, pass

Human beings have always been fascinated with faces, simply because the face says a lot about an individual. We can quickly detect a person's mood from their facial expression. Our appearance can change rapidly and radically, depending upon our circumstances at the time, and the whole of our human personality or presence is reflected in our faces. Effectively, the face is shorthand for the person themselves, and the Hebrew word for face, **panim**, and its New Testament equivalent, **prosopon**, both convey this dual meaning of physical countenance as well as the whole person.

The word **panim** occurs over 2,000 times and in many contexts throughout the Old Testament. The first mention of the word is in Genesis chapter 1 verse 2, when it is twice used to refer to the face of the deep or deep water, as in Exodus chapter 15 verse 8. Scholars are divided over the interpretation of the precise activity of the Spirit of God in verse 2. Traditionally, it has been compared to the hovering or fluttering of a bird over its young, as of the eagle in Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 11. But, as VICTOR HAMILTON writes, 'this interpretation may be called into question by the possibility that *îr* in Deut. 32. 11 does not mean "stir up," but rather "to watch over"'.<sup>1</sup> If this is the correct interpretation then it implies that the Spirit of God is controlling the deep rather than simply hovering over it, and **panim**, in this immediate context, could mean 'presence' rather than 'face'. Later, in Genesis chapter 4 verse 5, the dual function of **panim** is immediately evident when we read that, as a result of his rejection and that of his offering by God, Cain's 'face fell', again implying not only a reference to his physical face, but a reflection of his emotional state as a result of rejection, cp. Jer. 30. 6, where fear changes the colour

of men's faces. The word **panim** can also refer by way of metonymy to the process of sudden death, as in the case of Goliath who, when struck in the forehead, fell face down on the ground, 1 Sam. 17. 49. Often, the word is connected with an attitude of prayer, as in Daniel chapter 9 verse 3 NKJV, where we read, 'Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes'. The worship of God is also an important usage of the word, as indicated in Joshua chapter 5 verse 14, where Joshua threw himself face down to the ground prostrating himself before the captain of the Lord's host. Similarly, we read of Balaam who, when he saw the angel of the Lord, 'bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face', Num. 22. 31. Occasionally, the word refers to the face of God, as in Exodus chapter 33 verse 20, which cannot simply mean some form of physical countenance since God is invisible. The use of anthropomorphic language here helps us to understand that the reference to God's face relates to the actual presence of God with Moses. It was God Himself who would go up with Moses, Exod. 33. 14. God spoke to Moses 'face to face', v. 11, which is interpreted as 'mouth to mouth', or the 'likeness of the Lord' in Numbers chapter 12 verse 8; cp. Ps. 17. 15. Notice how many times the word 'presence' occurs in Exodus chapter 33. The very lifting of God's face or countenance is an expression of His gracious presence, Num. 6. 25, whereas the withdrawal or hiding of His face or presence leads to judgement, Deut. 32. 20.

In the Greek theatre, the mask worn by actors, which resembled a face, was known as a **prosopon**, thus enabling the actor to portray some other person.

Turning, then, to the New Testament, we find that the Greek word **prosopon** occurs around eighty times, and is again linked to both the physical features of an individual's countenance, as in Matthew chapter 6 verses 16 and 17 of those who show on their faces that they are fasting,

and, metaphorically, of the disciples in Matthew chapter 17 verse 6, who, on hearing the voice of God at the transfiguration, 'fell on their faces'. It is also used metaphorically of the Lord as 'he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem', Luke 9. 51. Here, the imagery conveys the idea of turning towards testing or judgement. The word is used literally of the natural face of Stephen, which appeared to take on the likeness of an angel when he stood before the council in Jerusalem, Acts 6. 16. Similarly, it is the natural face that is used by the writer James to illustrate the danger of simply being a hearer of God's word and not a doer, Jas. 1. 23-25. Paul frequently uses the word **prosopon**, as, for example, in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 11, where he refers to many 'faces' as 'persons', making the point, again, that 'face' speaks of personality. But it is perhaps the reference in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6 to 'the face of Jesus Christ' that so captivates the heart. This was the face that was once 'so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness', Isa. 52. 14 NIV, yet this is the face that eclipses the sun, Acts 26. 13. What then is in this face? Paul's immediate response would be that in this face, and none other, the effulgent glory of God resides in human form! And this glory, unlike Moses' fading glory, 2 Cor. 3. 7, will never fade, and the light of that glory will forever shine on His people. May we, with unveiled faces, contemplate the glory of God, and continue to be transformed into His glorious likeness, 2 Cor. 3. 18. Who then is sufficient for these things?

## For further reading/study

### Introductory

LELAND RYKEN, JAMES C. WILHOIT, TREMPER LONGMAN III (Eds.), 'Face, Facial Expressions' in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, IVP, pp. 259-261.

### Advanced

WILLEM A. VAN GEMEREN (Gen Ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis, Volume 3*, Zondervan, pp. 637-640.

### Endnotes

- 1 The Book of Genesis - Chapters 1-17 (1990), *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 115.





BBC Radio 4 airs a programme called *Great Lives*, in which a celebrity picks a notable historical figure and describes their admirable qualities. Judging by spiritual criteria, Paul lived 'a great life' worthy of study and emulation – though he would quickly add 'Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ', 1 Cor. 11. 1 NKJV. His intrepid evangelistic fearlessness, coupled with a powerful, Spirit-illuminated mind, made him one of the most dynamic shapers of human thought in world history. One writer avers: 'Surely, when we study Paul, we study one of the greatest trophies, if not *the* greatest trophy, of divine grace the world has ever seen and the greatest pioneer missionary the church has ever known'.<sup>1</sup> In a career of stirring gospel sermons, enlightening Bible teaching lectures, and timeless written ministry, his finest hour must be his triumphant finish during the fierce opposition of his Roman imprisonment, as recorded in 2 Timothy chapter 4.

### Dispatch from the frontlines

The star young rabbi of his generation, Gal. 1. 13-14, Saul of Tarsus was an avowed enemy of Christ's church. He zealously persecuted it – even pursuing believers to the lands of the Jewish Diaspora. But on his way to root them out in Damascus, he met the risen Lord Jesus, and he was instantly converted from a persecutor to a preacher of the faith he once tried to destroy, Acts 26. 9-20. As one writer explains: 'Grace flooded with faith a heart previously filled with unbelief, and flooded with love a heart previously polluted with hatred'.<sup>2</sup> Even at the end of his life, Paul's single-minded pursuit was to glorify Christ and build His church.

Paul became an indefatigable church planter, willing to suffer persecution for the sake of the Lord and His people. DAVID GOODING describes his mindset: 'He has been given a course to run and a task to fulfil by the Lord Jesus. That by itself, no matter what the course or the task might be, was in his eyes the supreme honour anyone could be given; and to complete the

# AN OLD SOLDIER'S TRIUMPH PAUL'S FINEST

course and finish the task to the satisfaction of the Lord Jesus was the supreme joy that a man could ever know! But then consider the task. It was to testify to and proclaim the gospel of God's grace . . . The majestic magnificence of that grace was a perpetual dynamo of motivation and energy for Paul. It took no more of God's grace, of course, to save him than to save us. The difference is, if there is a difference, that he never forgot the wonder and splendour of it, Eph. 3. 7-8; 1 Tim. 1. 12-14. It changed his set of values. Life ceased to have any worth to him independent of living and working for Christ. If to complete the task Christ had given him he must surrender life itself, it was a nothing: he would gladly let it go'.<sup>3</sup> He would have identified with the sentiment of the martyred missionary JIM ELLIOT, who wrote: 'O God save me from a life of barrenness, following a formal pattern of ethics called Theism and give instead that vital contact of the soul with Thy divine life that fruit may be produced and Life-abundant living may be known again as the final proof for Christ's message and work'.<sup>4</sup>

Years later, in the face of imminent death, Paul's most important concern was to prepare his 'son in the faith', Timothy, and the assemblies with which he laboured for the increasing attack on God's truth in this age. As an apostle, he was a man of one book; thus, he repeatedly directs his younger co-labourer to the fearless proclamation of the scriptures. For example, in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 2 to 5 he charges Timothy to carry out his teaching and evangelistic ministries against the backdrop of progressive infidelity and dissatisfaction with the truth among his hearers. Despite the people's appetite for self-satisfying error, Timothy, and the church in general, must resolutely hold to God's word as their ground for faith and practice. Verse 2 gives the flavour of this challenging ministry: 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out

of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine'. It was a lonely mission, but one that Paul himself had resolutely pursued throughout his Christian life.

### At the end of the campaign

Paul's remarks in 2 Timothy chapter 4 demonstrate that he was well-aware of his coming martyrdom and was prepared to depart for his eternal home with God. He phrased it in terms of a drink offering 'being poured out' in the Lord's service, v. 6. His earlier statement to the Philippian saints reveals that his life was an ongoing, measured sacrifice in service to God

and His church, Phil. 2. 17. He did not throw his life away; rather, he gave it in deliberate daily portions. He also referred to it as his 'departure', using a term that in extrabiblical Greek often indicated a ship loosing its moorings.<sup>5</sup> RYLE's words regarding the evangelist George Whitefield's death are also appropriate for the apostle to the Gentiles: 'If ever man was ready for his change, Whitefield was that man. When his time came, he had nothing to do but to die'.<sup>6</sup>

Paul delineates his life's work by using three perfect tense verbs in verse 7. SCHOFIELD summarizes the apostle's metaphors, remarking: '. . . as a Christian soldier he has "fought the good fight"; as a racer he has "finished his course"; and as a witness for God in this world he has "kept the faith"'.<sup>7</sup> In his *New Translation*, J. N. DARBY shows the martial nuance of the first phrase by rendering it: 'I have combated the good combat'. It is true that the terms used could apply to athletics, but that aspect of his ministry is comprehended in the phrase 'I have finished my course', evoking images of distance runners. 'I have kept the faith' refers to his stewardship of the body of truth that God entrusted to him. All of these actions displayed his faithfulness and exertion in the Lord's things. He began well, continued well, 1 Cor. 9. 24-27, and now was finishing well.

By

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# HANT FINISH HOUR

To the victor go the spoils, and, like any champion, this overcomer in Christ was awaiting his triumphant crown. He turned his eyes from his past service to patiently await the coming of his Lord, who, as 'the righteous Judge', will reward Paul with 'the crown of righteousness', 2 Tim. 4. 8. Regardless of whether he received unjust treatment at the hands of his Roman captors – or from Caesar himself – the omniscient and perfectly righteous Judge would appropriately compensate His servant at His judgement seat.

## The last words of a shepherd

Facing his court hearings alone, v. 16, with few close associates nearby – including the defection to the world of his once trusted co-worker Demas, v. 10 – Paul found consolation in

the Lord's abiding presence. As he put it: 'Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion', v. 17. Even his personal sufferings and the Almighty's providential deliverance were viewed through the lens of what God was doing in evangelizing the world and manifesting His glory through them. Even at the close of his earthly career he was still directing his fellow saints to faith in the Lord and fidelity to His word. No complaining murmur escaped his lips; instead he looked to his God for sustenance in this difficult hour in some Roman dungeon.

## The narrow road

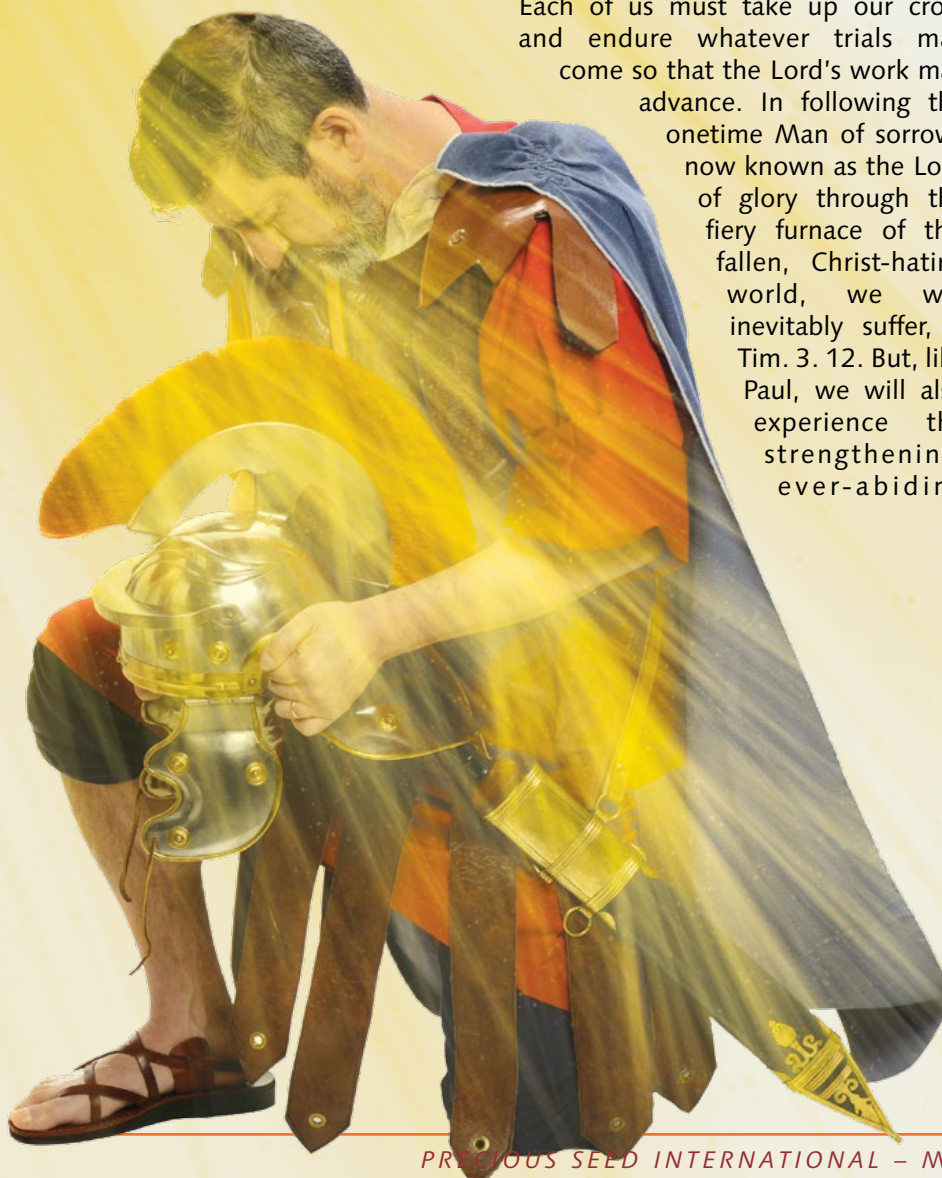
Historians tell us that Paul was beheaded as a martyr to the risen Christ's cause. Yet he, being dead, still speaks. His selfless service, culminating in a courageous finishing of the course set before him, left behind a tremendous example for the saints of the succeeding centuries. Each of us must take up our cross and endure whatever trials may come so that the Lord's work may advance. In following the onetime Man of sorrows now known as the Lord of glory through the fiery furnace of this fallen, Christ-hating world, we will inevitably suffer, 2 Tim. 3. 12. But, like Paul, we will also experience the strengthening, ever-abiding

presence of the Lord, who makes us to overcome, 1 John 5. 4-5.

One author compared Paul's 'finest hour' – and his legacy in general – to the vaunted Roman roads that crisscrossed their empire and signified their lasting influence. This seems to be a fitting tribute with which to close this article: 'All the glory which those ancient roads witnessed has passed away, but . . . Paul's work remains; that work which he was then doing, as the great Pioneer of the Gospel, the Apostolic Road-maker of an Appian Way for the Prince of Peace; a work which was heeded by none of the noble, the great, and the powerful, who travelled then on the Appian Way. But that Apostolic Road remains; it is a living, a growing Road, branching ever into new lands, and opening the way to new conquests; and it is much more enduring than the solid volcanic blocks of the pavement of this great "Queen of Roads"; for it is the Road which was made by the power of Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life", John 14. 6, and it leads to the "Eternal City", "the City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"'.<sup>8</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 ROBERT L. REYMOND, *Paul, Missionary Theologian*, Christian Focus, 2000, pg. 15. [Italics original].
- 2 JOHN R. W. STOTT, *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus*, IVP, 1996, pg. 52.
- 3 D.W. GOODING, *True To The Faith: Charting The Course Through The Acts Of The Apostles*, Myrtlefield House, 2013, pg. 424.
- 4 JIM ELLIOT, Journal entry 3 February 1948, in *The Journals of Jim Elliot*, ed. Elisabeth Elliot, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1978, pg. 21.
- 5 G. ABBOTT-SMITH, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922, pg. 31.
- 6 J. C. RYLE, *The Christian Leaders of the Last Century*, T. Nelson and Sons, 1869, pg. 43. Jim Elliot wrote something similar in his diary: 'When it comes time to die, make sure all that you have to do is die'. Quoted in 'Go ye and preach the Gospel', *Life magazine* 40:5, January 30, 1956, pg. 11.
- 7 A. T. SCHOFIELD, 'A Few Thoughts On Hebrews 11', in *The Bible Treasury*, Vol. 12, accessed electronically here: [http://stempublishing.com/magazines/bt/BT12/1879\\_231\\_Hebrews11.html](http://stempublishing.com/magazines/bt/BT12/1879_231_Hebrews11.html).
- 8 CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, *Tour in Italy*, Vol. II, pp. 216-217; quoted in J. S. HOWSON, *Scenes from the Life of Paul*, Religious Tract Society, 1909, pp. 243-244.







Scripture tells us that our Lord was to be 'numbered with the transgressors', and so He arrived at Golgotha 'where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst', John 19. 18. These two are not named but are identified as thieves, 'malefactors', possibly the companions in crime of Barabbas who had 'committed murder' and whom Pilate had endeavoured to be crucified instead of our Lord.

What a hostile place that Golgotha would be to our Lord, a place which was to be the hour of triumph for His enemies and also of the oppression of 'the powers of darkness'! Not only did He have to endure the physical torment of crucifixion, being fastened by iron spikes hand and foot to a cross, suspended between heaven and earth in shame, with all the weight of His body tearing at the wounds in His hands and feet and with breathing becoming more and more difficult and painful as the hours passed, He also had to endure the mockery and reviling of hostile men. He 'looked for some to have pity, but there was none, and for comforters' but He found none, Ps. 69. 20. 'They that passed by reviled him . . . likewise also the chief priests, mocking him . . . the rulers also with them derided him'. He who once had been the theme of angels' worship became the song of the drunkard, and even in their last hours, the two men dying with him mocked and reviled him, casting their reproaches 'in his teeth'. As the hours of his suffering passed, however, one of the thieves had a change of heart. We should note:

### His condition

Neither of the two men crucified with our Lord would have had any hope or consolation in their dying hours. In thinking of their condition we are obviously not referring to

# CHARACTERS AROUND THE THE THIEF WHO TURNED TO HIM

them physically but spiritually. Thieves they were, malefactors, possibly violent men if they had been the companions of Barabbas, and unwitting blasphemers as they cursed the Christ of God. Not only had they been condemned by the law of the land, even if it were a Roman judge following Roman law, they were also condemned by their own Jewish law, for God of old had pronounced a curse upon any of His people who were executed by public hanging from a tree. 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree', Gal. 3. 13; Deut. 21. 22-23. To die under the curse of men and also the curse of God would have been to die comfortless – no hope of 'paradise' for these two malefactors and, apparently, not much fear of God as they hung there either. Paradise for the Jew was another name for 'Abraham's bosom', the place in death where the souls of the righteous dead were supposed to go. A certain rich man, our Lord told us, died and went to hell, but the poor beggar, Lazarus, died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man, in torments, longed for the peace and comfort which was denied him because he was not in Abraham's bosom and wishes to warn his brothers to live in such a way as to ensure their own reception into paradise. For a condemned thief, cursed by God as well as by man for his crimes, there was even less prospect of paradise. All that was left for him was a terrible death and torment afterwards. One dare not imagine the torrent of abuse they would have heaped upon

their tormentors and upon their companion. Their condition was hopeless and their attitude vicious and godless.

### His companion

Yet the one crucified between these two thieves was entirely different. From Him came no cursings, mockeries, threats or oaths. 'When he was reviled he reviled not again. When he suffered he threatened not', 1 Pet. 2. 23. Instead, He prayed for those who crucified Him. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'. Instead of thinking of His own suffering, He thought of the sufferings of His mother. 'Woman, behold thy son', He said, committing her into the care of the disciple whom He loved. In what exalted company was this man put to death! To hang next to the Son of God Himself, to suffer in His presence, to hear His gentle words, to breathe His compassion and care – what a privilege indeed! God in His sovereign grace had ordained that this man should die next to His beloved Son, the One who was sinless and who died in the strong assurance that God would not leave His soul in hell, nor would He suffer His 'holy one' to see corruption, Ps. 16. 10. Here was a God-given opportunity for a dying man to see how wretched and sinful he was in the presence of the One who was 'holy, harmless, undefiled'.

### His conversion

As the process of crucifixion went on, there was a change in attitude for one of these thieves. Both

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# CRUCIFIXION 7

of them had reviled our Lord at the beginning of their suffering, Matt. 27. 44; Mark 15. 32. Yet Luke records that, at an early stage in their torment, 'one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us', to which the other replied, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?' Luke 23. 39-41. A change of attitude has come over him, revealing a change of heart. He seems to be horrified at the thought that his partner-in-crime would link them both to the innocent man next to them. 'Save thyself – *and us*?' Has he begun to be moved by the patient suffering of his companion? Surely it is just the fear of God that must come upon everyone as we die? No, not necessarily so. Not everyone dies in repentance. 'Rage, rage against the dying of the light' is the advice of one godless poet. Yet one of those thieves, but only one, shows the reality of conversion. First of all, he confesses his own sin – 'we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds'; second, he has a profound understanding that Jesus of Nazareth is totally different to him – 'this man hath done nothing amiss'. Then again, he has come to believe that this Jesus of Nazareth, suffering under the mocking title 'the King of the Jews', really is the Christ of God, the promised Messiah, for he believes that after His death, this same Jesus is going to come in His kingdom, Luke 23. 42. What astounding faith! To believe that someone who is apparently dying helplessly and in shame is going to return in power and glory is astonishing. Finally, he turns to this Messiah of God for hope in a hopeless situation. 'Jesus', he prays, 'remember me'.

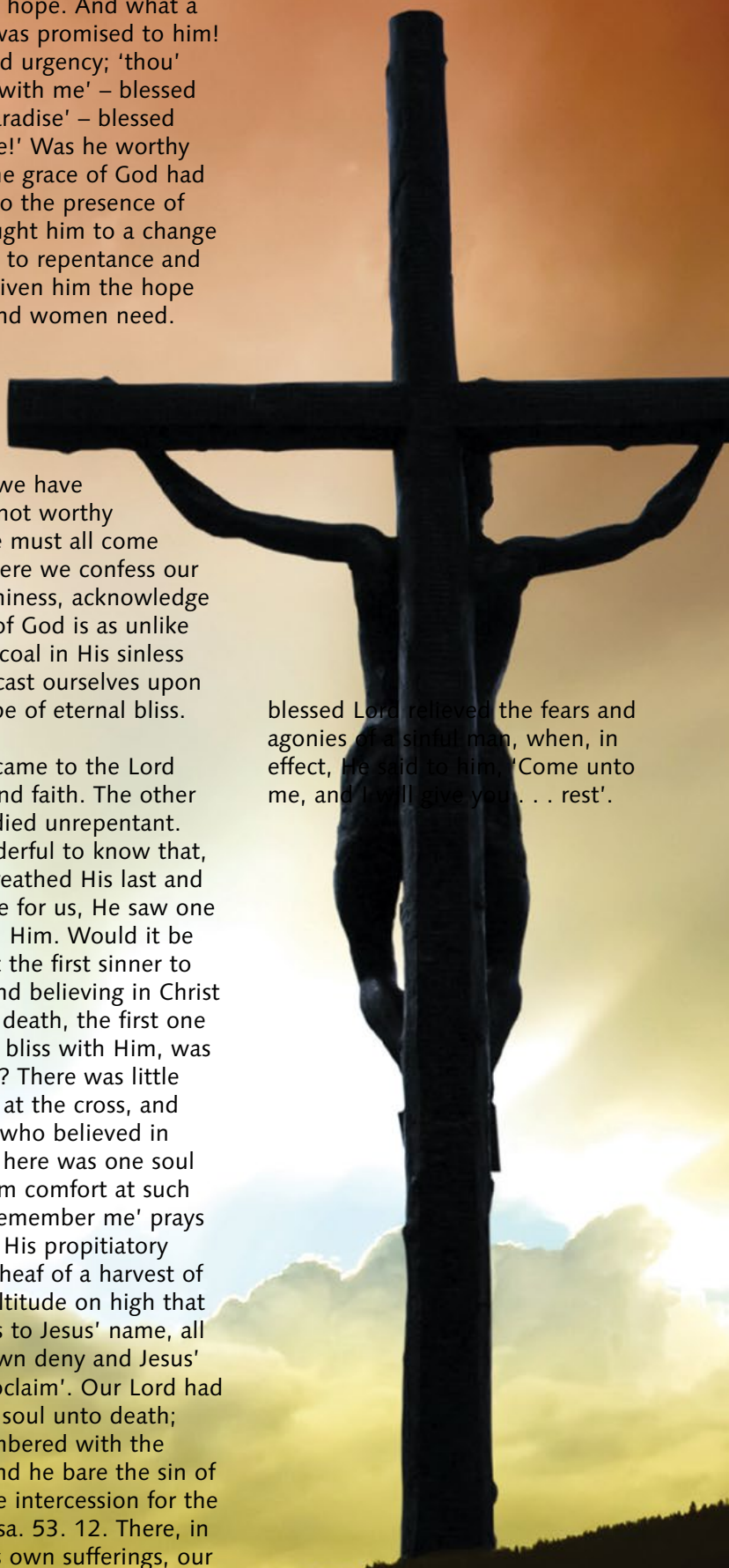
## His consolation

Can there really be any doubt that the Spirit of God has brought this man to repentance and faith in his dying hours? Our Lord's response doubtless brought great comfort to this repentant, praying sinner.

'Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise'. When the final day of his life on this earth had dawned, the thief had had no prospect of paradise, but as dusk falls he is full of hope. And what a huge privilege was promised to him! 'Today' – blessed urgency; 'thou' – blessed pity; 'with me' – blessed company; 'in paradise' – blessed felicity. 'Paradise!' Was he worthy of it? No. Yet the grace of God had brought him into the presence of Christ, had brought him to a change of heart leading to repentance and faith, and had given him the hope all dying men and women need. And we, too, must make the same journey of faith to Jesus Christ. Though we have sinned and are not worthy of His grace, we must all come to the point where we confess our sin and unworthiness, acknowledge that the Christ of God is as unlike us as gold is to coal in His sinless perfection and cast ourselves upon Him for our hope of eternal bliss.

Only one thief came to the Lord in repentance and faith. The other seems to have died unrepentant. Yet isn't it wonderful to know that, e'er our Lord breathed His last and lay down His life for us, He saw one come to faith in Him. Would it be right to say that the first sinner to die repentant and believing in Christ after our Lord's death, the first one to enter eternal bliss with Him, was a Gentile sinner? There was little to comfort Him at the cross, and there were few who believed in Him. But surely here was one soul that brought Him comfort at such a time. 'Jesus, remember me' prays the firstfruits of His propitiatory work, the first sheaf of a harvest of a 'countless multitude on high that tune their songs to Jesus' name, all merit of their own deny and Jesus' worth alone proclaim'. Our Lord had 'poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors', Isa. 53. 12. There, in the midst of His own sufferings, our

blessed Lord relieved the fears and agonies of a sinful man, when, in effect, He said to him, 'Come unto me, and I will give you . . . rest'.







Keeping in focus the persons you wish to photograph is essential to having a clear picture of them. With the wise men in Matthew's Gospel chapter 2 we see a clear picture of them because Matthew wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but, unfortunately, over time they have become 'out of focus' because of folklore, songs, and pictures. I wish to focus on the wise men, with the aid of RUDYARD KIPLING's adage: 'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are *what and why and when and how and where and who*'.

# Keeping the Wis

blessing. When the priests entered the Tabernacle and Temple they had to move from east to west. When the Lord went to Calvary, starting with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He came from the east to the west. The wise men 'rejoiced with exceeding great joy', Matt. 2. 11, as the star guided them from the east to the west soon after His birth. Interestingly, in John chapter 12 verses 20 and 21, we read of Greeks from the west who sought Him prior to His death.

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chapter 1 verse 16, 'These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel'. Micah stresses the insignificance of the birthplace of Israel's King. It is omitted from Joshua chapter 15, where we have a description of the region allocated to the tribe of Judah after the Israelites conquered Canaan.

Nor is it mentioned in the roll of cities in Nehemiah chapter 11. Bethlehem was merely an unwallled town in the countryside in contrast to the walled cities of the urban districts, John 7. 42.<sup>1</sup> Bethlehem is minimised so that its Prince can be magnified.

## Who were the wise men?

The literal translation is *magi*. HERODOTUS, the Greek historian, says they were initially one of the tribes of the Medes in the Persian Empire who were astrologers and interpreters of dreams. As Zoroastrians, they worshipped the heavenly bodies and the elements. In the Old Testament, wise men were advisers to kings, such as those of Egypt and Babylon. In Genesis chapter 41 verse 39, Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'there is none so discreet and wise as thou art' when he interpreted his dreams. Compare this with Daniel and his three companions, Dan. 1. 19, 20.

A. C. GAEBELEIN says that the magi became aware of the Lord Jesus as 'the desire of all nations' at His birth, Hag. 2. 7. Like him, many Jewish and Christian scholars regard it as a messianic title. The magi, therefore, were representative of the nations who, in the future, would come to pay homage to the Messiah during the Millennium when the Temple referred to by Haggai would be built.

The magi came from the east, that is, east of Palestine. It includes Mesopotamia and the region beyond the Euphrates. Probably, they came from Persia, that is Iran. Symbolically, east has an evil and good significance in scripture. Moving from west to east implies sinfulness, such as Lot 'who journeyed east . . . and dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom', Gen. 13. 11, 12. Moving from east to west implies

## Where were they heading?

The wise men were heading for Palestine. The precise location was unclear at first. They came initially to Jerusalem, under the guidance of the star, as it was the metropolis. There they were expecting celebrations everywhere. There was nothing of the sort. They would have to travel five miles south of Jerusalem to find the new born King. Something similar happened at the end of His life, when He resorted to Bethany for accommodation rather than remain in Jerusalem.

They were redirected to Bethlehem, or Bethlehem-Ephrath, as Micah refers to it in his prophecy, 5. 2. The chief priests and scribes in Herod's courtroom quote it, Matt. 2. 6. 'Bethlehem' means 'house of bread', because of the cornfields of which we read in the book of Ruth. To this 'House of Bread' came the living Bread, the Bread of God, from heaven, John 6. 33, 35, 48, 51. Ephrath means 'fruitfulness', so called because of the fertility of the land there. Bethlehem was in the 'land of Juda', v. 6, as opposed to Bethlehem in Zebulon, Josh. 19. 15. God did not want us to be in any doubt as to where Christ would be born.

'Art not the least [in honour] among the princes of Juda', v. 6. Micah says, 'among the thousands of Judah'. The tribes were divided into families, clans or 'thousands', with a prince over each, as we read in Numbers

## What kind of person were they seeking?

The wise men were seeking a king. God wanted Israel to be a theocracy when they had conquered Canaan. 'After that he gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when He had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king . . . of this man's seed has God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus', Acts 13. 20-23.

Normally, an infant would become a prince at birth. The Lord Jesus was born King because He is the sovereign of the universe. He does not have to wait for His accession to the throne of Israel to be King. According to the Roman historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, there was the expectation in the east of a king arising out of Judea, which was based on Messianic prophecies such as Isaiah chapters 9 and 11 and Daniel chapter 7. The Jews were expecting a king who would release them from Roman occupation, Luke 24. 21. Rather, He first had to be a suffering Messiah before being a conquering Messiah, 24. 26.

The Lord was referred to as 'the King of the Jews' by Gentiles. Indirectly





# The Men in Focus

and sincerely, the wise men from the east acknowledged Him as such in His infancy. Before His death, Gentiles from the west mocked Him directly as the King of the Jews. The Roman soldiers did so collectively, Matt. 27. 29, and Pilate personally, 27. 11. He reminded the Jews that they themselves called Jesus 'the King of the Jews', Mark 15. 12. These words were written above the cross in Greek, Latin and Hebrew.

## When did the wise men seek the King?

'In the days of Herod the king', v. 1, they sought Him.<sup>2</sup> He was the first of the 'Herods', a family of petty rulers among the Jews in New Testament times. This one was an imposter, being half Edomite, half Jew. He was made king of Judea in 40 BC by the Roman Senate, so 'king' was merely an honorary title. The Jews opposed him but were defeated by him, enabling him to rule Judea. He was very suspicious of, and ruthless toward, any that he regarded as a threat to his authority. Hence, he instigated the 'slaughter of the innocents', vv. 13, 16-18.

The announcement of the birth of a King by foreigners who were guided by cosmic phenomena troubled Herod. His recently acquired kingdom may soon be taken from him. The people of Jerusalem were also troubled, for they could not suffer another rash change of

government.

## How were the wise men guided?

They were guided by a star on their outward journey and a dream on their homeward journey. God guided them by these means because they were conversant with them.<sup>3</sup> They obeyed God with the knowledge He had given them. The Jews were more privileged by having the scriptures, vv. 4-6.

Some commentators draw a comparison between the Star of Jacob, spoken of by Balaam the soothsayer in Numbers chapter 24 verse 17, and the star followed by the wise men, because they were all from the east, Num. 23. 7. However, the star in Matthew chapter 2 is literal and relates to the King's first coming, whilst the star in Numbers chapter 24 is symbolic of Christ at His second coming. These commentators suggest that the wise men found a document stating Balaam's parables. If Balaam did write such a document, he certainly did not return home with it because he died in battle.

God also guided them through dreams. This title is used because the magi were Gentiles who did not have an intimate relationship with Him. After paying homage to the

King, they returned by a different route.

## Why did the wise men seek the King?

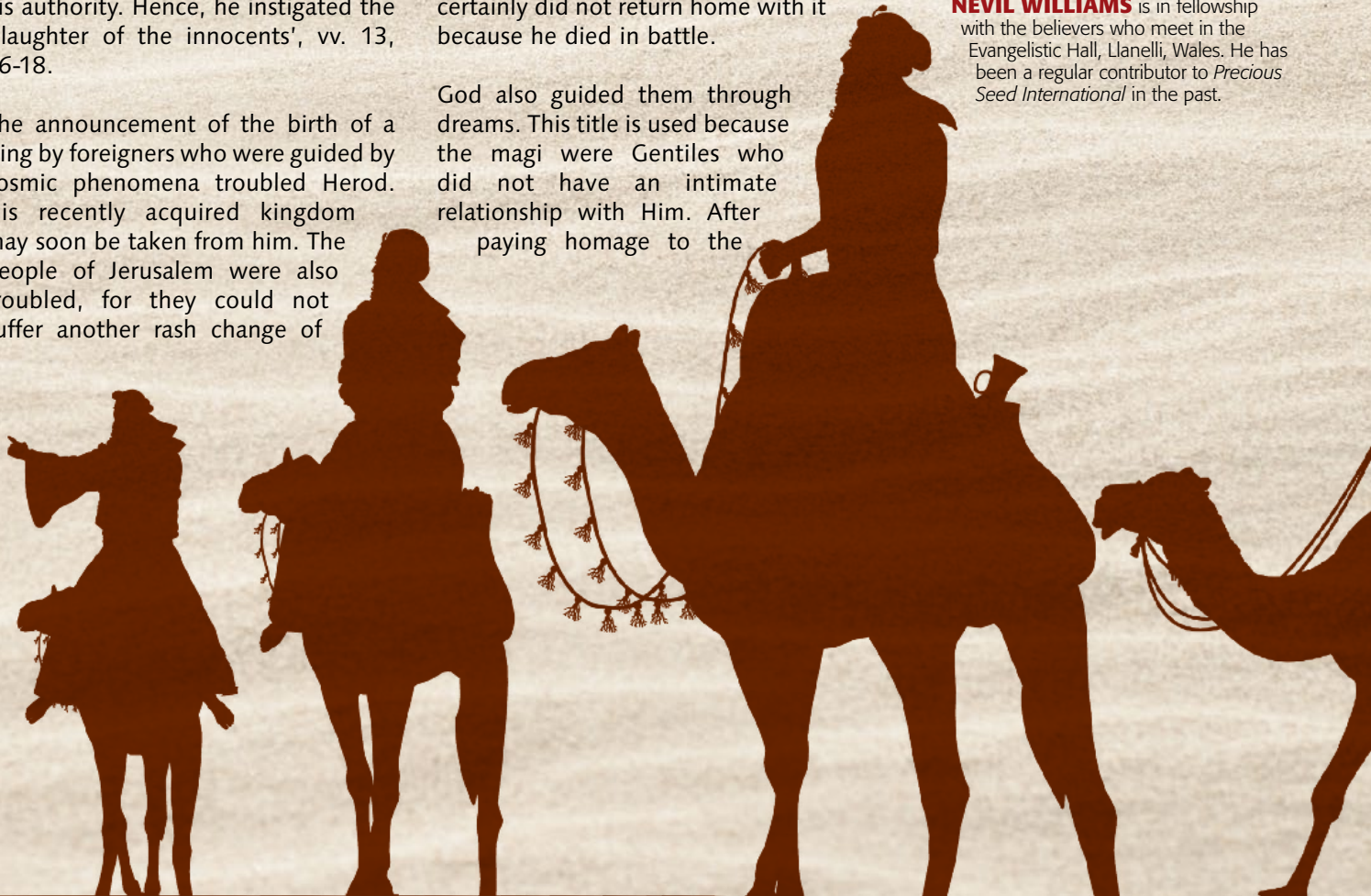
The wise men came to pay homage to the King. It was customary for monarchs to bring gifts to each other, 1 Kgs. 10. 1-10. In Matthew chapter 2 the 'young child' received homage in a house rather than in a palace. 'The young child', not His mother, is worshipped. The magi from their caskets bring out gold, frankincense and myrrh, typifying His kingship, deity and sufferings respectively. Here is an allusion to Psalm 72 and Isaiah chapter 60, where the nations will bring similar gifts in the Millennium. Indeed 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever'.<sup>4</sup>

May we, guided by our daily reading of the scriptures, be filled with adoration for the Lord!

## Endnotes

- 1 C. L. FEINBERG, *The Minor Prophets*, Moody, 1976, pg. 173.
- 2 Compare Luke 1. 5.
- 3 Compare Daniel 2. 27, 28.
- 4 Westminster Shorter Catechism.

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What comes into your mind when you consider the terms 'pilgrim' or 'pilgrimage'? My English dictionary<sup>1</sup> defines *pilgrim* as 'a person who undertakes a journey to a shrine or other sacred place'. This common understanding reflects widespread practice in earlier centuries, but is divergent from scriptural teaching. As we consider this important subject, we discover that Christians are *constituted* pilgrims by God's call. At the same time, *living out the implications* of this is quite another matter! Yet there are few topics more vital for bringing the right perspective to life in this world.

### Some terms used

Peter refers to believers as 'strangers and pilgrims'. From the outset he addresses the 'elect . . . sojourners of the Dispersion', 1 Pet. 1. 1 RV. Originally, the Dispersion denoted Jews living outside Palestine.<sup>2</sup> It pointed to the fact of being scattered, but, at the same time, reminded the Jews of their commonwealth, homeland, and temple at Jerusalem. However, in view of the fact that Peter's readers are mainly Gentiles,<sup>3</sup> he is thinking of a Christian dispersion, not a Jewish one. Just like Israel, we too are *sojourners*, in an alien land remote from our heavenly homeland.

Again, Peter addresses his 'beloved' readers: 'I beseech you as *sojourners and pilgrims* to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul'.<sup>4</sup> The word 'sojourner' (Gk. *parepidemos*) literally denotes persons *staying briefly* in a foreign country, and emphasizes the transitoriness of their sojourning. 'Pilgrims' (Gk. *paroikoi*) points to their legal position as resident aliens in a foreign land. Christians are sojourners and pilgrims for a good reason – we belong elsewhere: 'For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come'.<sup>5</sup> As Paul put it, 'Our citizenship is in heaven'; 'Rejoice', said Christ to His disciples, 'that your names are written in heaven'.<sup>6</sup>

### Pilgrim patriarchs

The words highlighted above are used by Abraham in his negotiation with the sons of Heth, Gen. 23. 4 LXX. He says, 'I am a stranger and a

# THE BELIEVER

By **KEN TOTTON** Cambridge, England

sojourner with you'. Abraham and his descendants had been promised the land of Canaan by God, yet it is clear that he possessed none of it. In fact, following the death of Sarah he had to purchase a burial site. Canaan never was the ultimate goal of Abraham and his family, for we read: 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city', Heb. 11. 13-16 RV.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to a community of Jewish Christians who had made a bright start in their Christian pilgrimage, but who are now paying a price for their loyalty to Christ. Unbelievers would taunt them that they had abandoned their Jewish heritage with nothing to show for it. 'Not so', says the writer. He emphasizes that, on the contrary, they have a far better inheritance in the Lord Jesus and associated new covenant blessings than Israel could ever boast of. Moreover, *they* (as opposed to unbelieving Israel) are the true spiritual successors of the men and women of faith whose lives are celebrated in Hebrews chapter 11. We may confidently trace parallels and encouragements for ourselves in what the writer has to say of the pilgrim patriarchs.

In response to the call of God, Abraham had '*gone out*' from his familiar surroundings, facing an unknown path; similarly, the Hebrews responded to the gospel call, renouncing Judaism and '*going forth*' unto Christ alone.<sup>7</sup> Abraham did not live to experience the fulfilment of the messianic promises, but he and his offspring 'greeted them from

afar', as a weary traveller sees the goal of the journey afar off, and is refreshed and energized thereby. Similarly, the Hebrew Christians could endure present trials in view of the assurance of the coming of the Lord.<sup>8</sup> They no longer have any attachment to Jerusalem, but, like Abraham, they have citizen-rights in the well-founded eternal city which was his goal.<sup>9</sup> The word 'for', connecting Hebrews chapter 11 verses 9 and 10, indicates a causal connection; it was the wonder of the heavenly inheritance that enabled succeeding generations of patriarchs to hold loosely to earthly possessions. We would do well to follow their lead. J. N. DARBY caught the spirit of this with the following lines:

*'Tis the treasure I've found in His love  
that has made me a pilgrim below;  
And 'tis there, when I reach Him above,  
as I'm known, all His fullness I'll know'.*

More generally, the people of Israel were to regard themselves as aliens, even when settled in the Land: 'The land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me'. At the same time, they could be reassured of God's protection and instruction.<sup>10</sup>

### Pilgrim perspective

The concept of earthly pilgrimage and heavenly citizenship is fundamental to the Christian understanding of life. The believer is *in* the world, but not *of* the world. We do not owe our origin or prospects to the world. Our value lies in being *distinct* from it, not accommodated to it, just as light dispels darkness and salt stems putrefaction.<sup>11</sup> The church at Philippi was founded as a colony of heaven in a colony of Rome, with distinctive values, practices, and prospects.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, we must not allow our separation from the world to degenerate into isolation. That would be to disobey our Lord's express intention for our mission: 'As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world'.<sup>13</sup>

There is no doubt, however, that





# AS A PILGRIM

tensions arise from worldly influences which test our pilgrim commitment. Israel was constantly in danger of absorbing the debased religious practices of the surrounding nations. There is always the danger of acclimatizing to our cultural surroundings. Indeed, some believers crave acceptance from the people of the world, in the utterly mistaken belief that somehow the gospel can thus be promoted. When Christians 'go native', it is clear that they have forgotten their true homeland and heavenly citizenship. So, how can we remain true to this divine calling?

## Pilgrim preservation

### 1 Focus

Those who succeed in business or sport invariably set their hearts single-mindedly on achievement. Some might call it obsession. We must allow our pilgrim/sojourner status to exercise a *controlling* effect over our lives. This will only be possible as we 'set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth',<sup>14</sup> allowing the glory of our heavenly inheritance to illuminate and regulate all earthly pursuits. We must remember that 'the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever'.<sup>15</sup> May we know what it is to truly set our hearts on pilgrimage!<sup>16</sup>

### 2 New identity

In a world struggling with multiculturalism, we should rejoice in the wonder and glory of our position by grace in the diverse worldwide household of faith. Unity in obedience to Christ is the divine antidote to all that fractures and mars human society both locally and globally. What a priceless message! This should also guard us from narrow nationalism, and, instead, broaden our horizons to embrace a world of need, both by prayer and by practical support. At the same time we should seek to be ideal citizens of the community in which we live.<sup>17</sup>

### 3 Clear testimony

The patriarchs were characterized by *bold confession*, whether we think of Abraham facing the sons of Heth, or Jacob before Pharaoh. The testimony

of both life and lip are important, and must be consistent. Hebrews chapter 11 verses 13-14 stress the importance of this: 'having . . . *confessed* that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things *declare plainly*'. For their part, the Hebrews had confessed Jesus as their Apostle and High Priest; accordingly, they are exhorted to hold fast their confession without wavering, for 'He is faithful who promised'.<sup>18</sup>

## 4 Heavenly values



As aliens in a foreign land, our values will be biblically informed and, thus, distinctive from those around. Peter appealed to his readers that 'they abstain from fleshly lusts'.<sup>19</sup> These evil desires are on the march; they go to war against the soul. In a similar vein, Paul lists the works of the flesh in Galatians chapter 5 verse 19 onwards. Note that his list encompasses enmities, jealousies, and strife – sins

not specifically associated with the body. But this passage also reminds us of the indispensable help of the indwelling Holy Spirit in this ongoing battle.

Unregenerate people know no such battles, and, faced with conscientious Christian living, may oppose and misrepresent believers. Yet Peter also expresses optimism that 'they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation'.<sup>20</sup>

## 5 Fellowship on the journey

JONATHAN EDWARDS, the New England Puritan, wrote: 'Let Christians help one another in going this journey. Therefore let them be exhorted to go this journey as it were in company: conversing together, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as this. Let them go united and not fall out by the way, which would be to hinder one another, but use all means they can to help each other up the hill. This would ensure a more successful travelling and a more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory'.<sup>21</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 *The New Collins Concise English Dictionary*, pg. 858.
- 2 John 7. 35.
- 3 1 Pet. 1. 18; 2. 10; 3. 6 RV 'whose children ye *now* are'; 4. 3.
- 4 1 Pet. 2. 11 RV.
- 5 Heb. 13. 14 RV.
- 6 Phil. 3. 20 RV; Luke 10. 20.
- 7 Heb. 11. 8 (x2); 15; 13. 13.
- 8 Heb. 9. 28; 10. 25, 37.
- 9 Heb. 11. 10.
- 10 Lev. 25. 23; 1 Chr. 29. 15; Pss. 39. 12; 61. 4; 119. 19.
- 11 Matt. 5. 13-16.
- 12 Acts 16. 12; Phil. 3. 20; 2. 15-16.
- 13 John 17. 18 RV.
- 14 Col. 3. 1f.
- 15 1 John 2. 17.
- 16 Ps. 84. 5 NIV.
- 17 1 Tim. 2. 1-2; cp. Jer. 29. 7.
- 18 Heb. 3. 1; 4. 14; 10. 23.
- 19 1 Pet. 2. 11.
- 20 1 Pet. 2. 12; 4. 4.
- 21 JONATHAN EDWARDS '*The Christian Pilgrim, or The True Christian's Life a Journey Toward Heaven*', (Sermon on Hebrews 11. 13-14), 1733.





Fruit – that which is produced externally from a life source within a plant or being. So too with the believer, having been sealed and indwelt by the Spirit of God, should be giving evidence of spiritual fruit. It is not something that springs out of our old nature, amended, educated or refined. It is not something that we create in ourselves by our own will or effort however hard we try. It is that which is wrought in us by divine power and energy, as we allow the Spirit of God to work in our lives.

There should be a marked difference in each of our lives, as time progresses, since we first came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord. There should be no standing still in our development in the things of God, 'desiring the sincere milk of the word that we might grow thereby', 1 Pet. 2. 2. As Paul says, 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive', Eph. 4. 14. It was the Lord's desire, and proof of our attachment to Him, that we give evidence of fruit bearing, John 15. Yet, so often, we are occupied with outward formalities rather than that which is an inwrought grace within the heart of each one of us giving evidence that we are His by faith.

In noting these aspects of the fruit primarily from both Galatians and Ephesians, it can be seen that they divide into three triplets. (See table below).

In its context, Galatians chapter 5 is dealing with believers putting themselves under the yoke of the law, when they should have been resting in the work of Christ for righteousness. As J. N. DARBY remarks, 'The Holy Ghost dwells in him (the believer). Faith rests in this righteousness, even as God rests in it, and this faith is

# THE FRUIT OF

## GALATIANS 5. 22-23

### The Character

By **FRED WHITELOCK** Warrington, England

sustained by the Holy Ghost, who turns the heart that is established in that righteousness towards the glory that is its recompense – a recompense which Christ enjoys already, so that we know what that righteousness deserves. Christ is in the glory due to righteousness, to the work which He accomplished'.

Each of the inwrought graces as here identified is developed by allowing the Spirit of God and the word of God to have their effect upon our lives. It is first and foremost that we are to give evidence of our salvation: 'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure', Phil. 2. 13. It is our Father's desire that we would be more conformed to the image of His dear Son, Rom. 8. 29. Therefore, it is important that we, in our daily walk with the Lord, distinguish between that which is the work of God, giving evidence of the 'fruit of the Spirit' in our lives, in contrast to those of the 'works of the flesh'.

Fruit is grown as the branch is attached to the tree, and, in this respect, it is that which the Saviour referred to in John chapter 15, the branch abiding in the vine in order that the fruit will bring delight to the Father. Christlikeness is that which is to be produced in the life of the believer.

As was intimated above, the first group of these is: **Godward**.

Let us clearly observe the order of these to see that which comes first in all of them, namely love!

#### Love

The word for love here, in the Greek (*agape*), signifies divine love, unselfish in character and purpose, and this is central to God, John 3. 16, our Lord

Jesus Christ, Gal. 2. 20; Eph. 5. 25, and the Spirit of God, Rom. 15. 30. Love is a fulfilling of the divine law and is central to the divine purpose, for without it God would not have spared His own Son, nor would the Son of God have left heaven to die on the cross, nor would the Spirit of God come down to indwell each born-again child of God. It is not until man is born again by the Spirit of God that *love* opens his eyes to see the loveliness of Christ, 2 Cor. 4. 6, the wonder of His grace, righteousness, and fullness.

This fruit, however, is primarily *love* for God and the things of God; the Lord Himself said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments', John 14. 15. Therefore, this love is to evidence itself in our lives, as stated previously, firstly towards God, His word, His will and His work. However, this also should be evidenced towards our fellow believers, Eph. 1. 15, and to all with whom we come into contact.

There is much in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 that is instructive to us with respect to love. If, in my heart, I do not exercise love, then, as verses 1-3 show, 'I have nothing to promote', v. 1, 'I am nothing', v. 2, and 'all that I do avails to nothing', v. 3. How we all need to read and re-read all of chapter 13 and to remind ourselves of the wonder of God's love for each one of us, and how we need to develop this divine impartation in each of our lives! As Romans chapter 12 verse 9 says, 'Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good'.

There should be a love for our fellow men, even those who are perhaps our enemies, that by this love and our lives lived in the light of it, we might prayerfully see them won for Christ. This, of course, precludes the world, its attractions, its fashions and its ways. No believer should have a love for the things which are contrary to the new life and nature which are divine in origin.<sup>1</sup> It should be borne in mind, that it is the world

Galatians 5. 22-23		Ephesians 5. 9
Love, joy and peace	Godward	Goodness
Long-suffering, gentleness and goodness	Man-ward	Righteousness
Faith, meekness and temperance (self-control)	Self-ward	Truth







# THE SPIRIT

## Character Developed in the Believer

**PART  
ONE**

and its system that the child of God has been saved from, 'if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new', 2 Cor. 5. 17. Furthermore, Romans chapter 6 reminds us that God has finished with the old man – the old nature – and, as far as God is concerned, it is dead and we ourselves are to reckon it dead too. For this reason, too, Romans chapter 12 verse 2 reminds us, 'be not conformed to this world' – don't mould yourself to this world – 'but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'.

He, the Son, was about to suffer, that endearment was expressed in His prayer to His Father, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee', Mark 14. 36. How much more, then, we who have been brought into such high and holy privileges, are to approach with an expression of joy, finding it a delight to come to Him knowing that we too are accepted.<sup>2</sup>

### **Peace**

#### **Having peace with God**

Oh how precious it is to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Peace is something the world is striving

Unfortunately, we live in a world where sin abounds on every hand, and the child of God has to strive against the wiles of the devil seeking to reach out to others that they may be won for Christ. Sadly, we find that it is not always possible to avoid confrontation with some, and we are exhorted with the best of our effort, to control our emotions in order that, 'As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men', Rom. 12. 18. It is in this respect that the Apostle reminds us of the supreme example in our Lord Jesus, 'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously', 1 Peter 2. 23. In such circumstances it is wise to leave the matter with the Lord and commit the same in prayer that they might be saved, remembering the exhortation of the Lord Himself who said, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you', Matt. 5. 44.

#### **Peace among ourselves**

There is another matter which is of great import relative to the matter of peace, and that is that we are as believers to be at peace among ourselves, 1 Thess. 5. 12-13. How sad it is that believers cannot maintain this very important request! How unfortunate it is when the world observes such behaviour that the testimony is marred and the devil rejoices. How much more grievous it must be to the Lord as He sees such behaviour amongst His saints. As Paul says, 'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace', Eph. 4. 1-3.

#### **Endnotes**

- 1 John 15. 19; 1 John 2. 15.
- 2 Rom. 8. 15; Gal. 4. 6.

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### **Joy**

The second of these fruits is joy and, again, there is much for our souls to enjoy. The word in this verse means cheerfulness, with calm delight, and gladness. If love is the outworking of an inwrought grace, an appreciation of that into which we as believers have been brought, then surely we should have joy in our approach to our Heavenly Father. The Father finds delight in those who approach Him in adoration of His person, all that He is as our Father. We can remind our hearts of how much the Father delighted in His only begotten. Think of the Son as He could say, 'I do always those things that please Him', John 8. 29, yet in that garden, in view of all that

for, yet cannot find because they are looking in the wrong place. Real peace is that tranquillity of heart and mind, knowing that there is nothing between me and God in spite of past transgressions. It is that which is the result of our repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and resting in the assurance that 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ', Rom. 5. 1. The believer draws near into the very presence of God, knowing that the Lord Jesus has 'made peace through the blood of His cross', Col. 1. 20 and we can draw near, 'in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water', Heb. 10. 22.

#### **Peace with men**





## Introduction

There can be no more fascinating and inexhaustible study than the study of God. We are familiar with the multiplicity of titles and offices of Christ which, together, highlight the greatness of His person and work. Similarly, scripture employs a rich variety of symbolism to convey the nature and operations of the Holy Spirit. Within this brief paper we consider only the following principal symbols: wind, fire, dove, water, and oil.<sup>1</sup> The diversity of this list points to the Spirit's limitless nature as one with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we review these symbols may we appreciate afresh the majesty and glory of the Holy Spirit of God, and the amazing wonder that 'because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"'.<sup>2</sup>

## Wind

Wind symbolizes the invisible yet irresistibly powerful work of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament word for wind, *ruach*, can also mean 'breath' or 'spirit', and translators must render it according to context. Overwhelming power is an essential aspect of the word.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the wind points to God's vigorous action; nothing can withstand its force.<sup>4</sup> On the Day of Pentecost, 'there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting'.<sup>5</sup> The Spirit is invisible, and, therefore, at critical events it has pleased God to make His presence felt in an emphatic manner. The mighty Spirit of God baptized and transformed the disciples into a Spirit-animated body. The promised Holy Spirit had unmistakably arrived in *sovereign power*. Centuries earlier, Ezekiel's invocation of the wind – the all-powerful Spirit of God – animated and transformed Israel's slain into a mighty army.<sup>6</sup>

Our Lord in His interview with Nicodemus brought out a further aspect. Just as we feel the powerful

# SYMBOLS OF THE

*Unless otherwise stated all Bible quotations*

in Israel might well ask, 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?'<sup>11</sup> Praise God, it is possible for the justified, 'He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high'.<sup>12</sup>

Again we read, 'Before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God', Rev. 4. 5 ESV. John gets a glimpse of the Spirit in His seven-fold self-sustaining fullness, here seen as the executor of the purposes of God.

In the tabernacle, the fire of the brazen altar was the means by which God assimilated the excellence of Israel's offerings. Likewise, in an assembly, practical holiness must be observed, lest the gracious Spirit be grieved, and the worship and service of God be impeded. Again, the Spirit's ministry can be *quenched*, by despising the communications He inspires.<sup>13</sup> Finally, we are warned, 'Do not *grieve* the Holy Spirit of God', where the solemnity of His full title is to be noted.<sup>14</sup>

## Water

Fire and water might be regarded as opposites, but this points to the remarkable variety of the Spirit's operations. Water is essential to life and agriculture – a fact especially apparent in eastern lands. Just as water transforms arid conditions, bringing life and fruitfulness wherever it goes, so it symbolizes the Spirit's boundless life-giving creativity in the spiritual realm.

Often the Old Testament speaks of the Spirit being 'poured out',

*effects* of the wind, but we cannot pin down its origin or destination, so the Spirit is sovereign and inscrutable in His saving operations: 'The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes'.<sup>7</sup>

A special instance of the Spirit's operation relates to the inspiration of holy scripture. How good to know that when it came to this supremely important matter, prophets and apostles were not left to their own best endeavours, but 'men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit'.<sup>8</sup> We can, therefore, have absolute confidence in the written word of God.

## Fire

It is easy to become familiar with the Spirit, and fail to appreciate the unspeakable holiness that characterizes Him. Fire frequently symbolizes God's presence, as in the experience of Moses at the burning bush.<sup>9</sup> This serves as a timely corrective, especially in a day of ungodliness and moral laxity. The power of fire is terrifying. It consumes all that stands in its way; it devastates, sifts, refines, and purifies. 'Our God is a consuming fire'.<sup>10</sup> The ungodly





# HOLY SPIRIT

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Cambridge, England

are taken from the New King James Version

reminding us that God does not give His Spirit 'by measure', sparingly, but abundantly.<sup>15</sup> Speaking of Israel's future cleansing, God promises, 'Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes'.<sup>16</sup> With clear echoes of this passage, Jesus warns Nicodemus, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'.<sup>17</sup>

Later in John's Gospel, the idea of the *abundance* of the Spirit's refreshment is brought out: 'On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit'.<sup>18</sup>

The bride in the Song of Solomon is pictured as a well-watered garden, secured for her beloved, filled with exotic fragrant plants, and constantly supplied by refreshing fountains.<sup>19</sup> How vital for the believer to be daily renewed in the enjoyment of the Spirit's supply, like the blessed man of Psalm 1!

## Dove

The descending dove at Christ's baptism at Jordan supplies one of the most striking symbols of the Holy Spirit. Human eyes witnessed the majestic descent of the Spirit to abide in all His plenitude on the Lord Jesus, and thus empower Him for His mighty public ministry. The Father's acclamation from heaven completed the sublime Trinitarian scene. In Leviticus the dove was classified as ceremonially clean, and, therefore, suitable for sacrifice.<sup>20</sup> How fitting that the Spirit should thus distinguish One who is 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher

than the heavens'.<sup>21</sup> The Spirit's anointing inaugurated a gracious ministry of cleansing and healing. The dove is known for several characteristics: loyalty to its mate, its homing instinct, and also notable for its mourning call,<sup>22</sup> suggestive of the ways of the Spirit with God's children. The Spirit pours out the love of God in our cold unworthy hearts, and serves as a proof and pledge that our hope will never disappoint us.<sup>23</sup> The gracious Spirit is also the agent of holiness, striving energetically against our waywardness.<sup>24</sup> May we ever be sensitive to His yearnings and promptings as enlightened by the scriptures He inspired.

## Oil

Holy anointing oil was used on the tabernacle and the Aaronic priests.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Davidic kings and prophets were *anointed* with oil, consecrating them to sacred office. Corresponding to this, the Holy Spirit marks out the believer as separated to God, 'in sanctification of the Spirit', with a view to complete obedience.<sup>26</sup>

Oil also *fuelled* the lamps in ancient Israel. This is seen in highly developed form in the vision of the lampstand in Zechariah chapter 4. In the design of this elaborate lampstand the numeral seven is prominent, suggesting fullness and security of supply of the precious oil essential to the maintenance of the lamp of testimony. The vital lesson for the feeble but faithful remnant of God's people is, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit", says the Lord of hosts'.<sup>27</sup> This should also encourage us that the burden of witness to the Lord Jesus will be borne by the mighty Spirit, as Christ assured His apostles, 'the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning'.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the dual leadership of priest and prophet is symbolized by the two 'sons of oil' who stand by the Lord of the whole earth. The term 'son of oil' suggests a person characterized through and through by the Holy Spirit, and, thus, a ready *channel* of His blessings to

others. May we, like Simeon, be so anointed, enlightened, and directed by the Spirit that we may speak well of the Christ whom the Spirit always delights to glorify.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

This brief survey has highlighted the Spirit's divine nature, and the range and diversity of His powerful yet gracious operations. How thrilling and humbling to realize that each believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit in all His fullness!<sup>30</sup> How carefully we should behave, both individually and collectively, lest we quench or grieve the Spirit of grace. Amidst spiritual drought, may we know His unfailing refreshment. Above all, may He magnify Christ in us, and through us, to the glory of God.

## Endnotes

- 1 A more comprehensive treatment – including seal, earnest, dew, and clothing – may be found in: S. JARDINE, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, Precious Seed Publications. Helpful general books on the Holy Spirit include: L. MORRIS, *Spirit of the Living God*, IVP; S. RIDOUT, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, Ritchie.
- 2 Gal. 4. 6.
- 3 Exod. 10. 19; 15. 8; Ps. 148. 8; Ezek. 1. 4.
- 4 Isa. 40. 7.
- 5 Acts 2. 2.
- 6 Ezek. 37. 9.
- 7 John 3. 8.
- 8 2 Pet. 1. 21 ESV. Contrast the totally different sentiment of the writer of the apocryphal 2 Maccabees: 'So I will here end my story. If it is well told and to the point, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was the best I could do', 2 Macc. 15. 37-38 NRSV.
- 9 Exod. 3. 1-5.
- 10 Heb. 12. 29.
- 11 Isa. 33. 14.
- 12 Isa. 33. 15-16.
- 13 1 Thess. 5. 19-21.
- 14 Eph. 4. 30.
- 15 John 3. 34; for pouring out the Spirit see: Num. 19. 17-19; Ps. 51. 9-10; Isa. 32. 15; 44. 3-5; 55. 1-3; Jer. 2. 13; 17. 13; Ezek. 47. 9; Joel 2. 28-29; Zech. 14. 8.
- 16 Ezek. 36. 25-27.
- 17 John 3. 5.
- 18 John 7. 37-39.
- 19 S. of S. 4. 12-16.
- 20 Lev. 1. 14.
- 21 Heb. 7. 26.
- 22 Isa. 60. 8; 38. 14; 59. 11.
- 23 Rom. 5. 5.
- 24 Rom. 1. 4; Gal. 5. 16-18.
- 25 Lev. 8. 10, 12.
- 26 1 Pet. 1. 2. See also 1 John 2. 20, 27.
- 27 Zech. 4. 6.
- 28 John 15. 26-27.
- 29 Luke 2. 25-35; John 16. 14.
- 30 1 Cor. 6. 19-20.





In recent years, Bible Exhibitions have been used as a means of reaching young people and adults with the message of the gospel and providing a deeper understanding of the Bible. Typically, they are set up in assembly premises and local schools are encouraged to send pupils to participate in guided tours. The emphasis tends to be on primary schools and, generally, at the P6 or P7 levels (Year 5 or Year 6 in England and Wales), although, while the emphasis in most cases is on children's outreach, many churches take the opportunity to make the exhibition available to adults also.

# BIBLE EXHIBITIONS AS

Brother Robert Stevely from Saltcoats who, with the help of some other brethren, turned his vision into reality. The exhibition has been used from Shetland to the Channel Islands. The decision was taken in 2013 to rename it Bible Exhibition Scotland and since then they have been working on a new exhibition which was completed in August 2016. In the course of an average year, approximately 5,000 children, along with their teachers, will visit the exhibition. It covers the following topics: Who is God, What is the Bible, How did we get the Bible, What's in the Bible, and Why is the Bible important to me?

By  
**IAN GRANT**  
Aberdeen,  
Scotland

learned and, during the tour, the children are encouraged to learn John chapter 3 verse 16. Each child leaves the exhibition with a pack containing a John's Gospel and various pieces of literature, including a 'free Bible offer' card which often results in someone requesting a Bible.

Feedback from teachers is usually positive and the following was written by a head teacher recently: 'What an inspiring morning. The exhibition brought the Bible to life. So many children remarked on how real it made the Bible feel to them. Every child was encouraged and thoroughly enjoyed the personal teaching of their guides. The quiz is a real high point of their experience and the point scoring board is ingenious. Many thanks for a terrific experience'.

The exhibition is often used as a building block for ongoing children's work. As the children attend the exhibition, they are often introduced to weekly children's meetings. After the exhibition is finished, prizes are awarded to the best in each class and there is usually an opportunity to give these out at the school assembly.

Since the commencement of the exhibition, it is estimated that in excess of 400,000 children have visited it. It has proved a tremendous instrument to reach the lost.

For further information contact Willie Deans at [willie@bibleexhibition.co.uk](mailto:willie@bibleexhibition.co.uk) or follow the link [www.bibleexhibition.co.uk](http://www.bibleexhibition.co.uk)

## The Brilliant Interactive Bible Learning Experience (BIBLE)

This exhibition was designed and put together by Gordon McCracken, who is a full-time children's evangelist meeting with the assembly in Eastpark, Glasgow.

There are a number of assembly exhibitions in the UK and at least three in Scotland. Most of them are well occupied and have been used in the spread of God's word to young people. The schools are generally happy to bring their pupils along as the content fulfils much of their requirement to teach Christianity as part of the curriculum.

This article will concentrate on three of the Scottish exhibitions with which the writer is familiar – Bible Exhibition Scotland, The Brilliant Interactive Bible Learning Experience, and the Ultimate Adventure Exhibition – and contact details for each of these is included within the article.

The exhibitions vary in content and style – some more interactive than others, some word and text based and some more technologically based – but in all cases they contain a clear declaration of divine truth, a broad outline of the biblical story and clear statements of the gospel message.

## Bible Exhibition Scotland

The exhibition was initially known as the Ayrshire Bible Exhibition and has been in existence for the past thirty years. It was the vision of our late

The tour begins with the fact that, 'In the beginning, God' and though this is not normally taught in our schools today, it has never been challenged by either the school children or teachers.

One of the great points about the Bible Exhibition is its relevance to the Christianity strand of Religious and Moral Education in the school curriculum and the following is a sample of what is included: Adam and Eve and the entrance of sin into the world; A nation born – Abraham, Joseph, Moses; the Ten Commandments; the Exodus; Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and their fulfilment; the birth of Christ, miracles, parables, the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension; Acts, and Paul's missionary journeys; two ways and the 'Bridge to Life'. The guided tour is concluded by highlighting a number of well-known people and what Christ means to them.

The work required by the local assembly in preparation and hosting the exhibition is substantial, with schools to be contacted and scheduled visits planned and arranged.

At the end of the tour, there is a quiz about what the pupils have just







# AN EVANGELISTIC TOOL

The Brilliant Interactive Bible Learning Experience, or Bible Experience for short, has been in use around the UK for the past three years. It was designed to appeal to all ages from primary school children to adults. The whole exhibition is made up of four zones which can be housed in different rooms. Alternatively, they can be used as stand-alone exhibitions if space or time is an issue. These zones are: Orange Zone – the Bible; Green Zone – the Old Testament; Red Zone – the New Testament; and Blue Zone – what Christians believe.

Each zone is modern, bright, colourful and filled with interactive exhibits that capture the imagination of both young and old. The panels have vivid graphics with easy-to-read scripture and interesting explanations, which could keep even the most intellectual reader engaged for hours.

Interspersed among the panels are audio-visual displays which are operated either by pushing a large red button or by a touch-screen interface. There are also interactive exhibits such as: A whale with a mouth that opens to reveal Jonah, a bronze serpent that casts the shadow of the cross, a rock formation from which water pours out and a replica of the garden tomb that has a stone which rolls back. These and many more exhibits work at the touch of the button and captivate visitors of all ages.

The exhibition has been set up in Gospel Halls for local primary schools to visit and for members of the public to view in the evenings. A good number of secondary schools have also been pleased to host the exhibition and use it to meet their curriculum requirements for religious education with all levels of pupils.

While some assemblies have sufficient numbers to man the exhibition

themselves, others do not and we have a dedicated team of helpers from various assemblies who are willing to go with the exhibition around the country. Our desire is to share the gospel and the wonders of God's word in a way that enthuses the visitor and encourages them to read the Bible for themselves.

For further information contact Gordon McCracken at [gordonsmccracken@gmail.com](mailto:gordonsmccracken@gmail.com) or on 01419452908 or follow the link <http://bibleexperience.uk/>.

## Ultimate Adventure Exhibition

With the objective of producing a colourful, child-friendly, gospel-centred exhibition that would faithfully tell the story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, a small group of Christians, from the North East of Scotland, has designed and manufactured a Bible Exhibition that can be used by local assemblies to present the message of the Bible to reach young people in the P5-P7 age group (Years 4-6 in England and Wales).

They have achieved this through a series of 50-60 panels that are colourful, attractive and simple to understand, with interactive points around the display. Since 2005 the Ultimate Adventure Exhibition has been used in the North-East of Scotland, and beyond, by local assemblies.

The focus is on the main themes of the Bible, so sin, judgement and salvation are highlighted throughout with key symbols. A number of interactive panels ensure that there is variety within the tour.

The normal routine is for the exhibition to be set up in a hall for a period of five days. Prior to this, the local assembly will have invited schools and arranged

a timetable for them to visit. Upon arrival at the exhibition the children are divided into four small groups and are directed to a guide who will take them through the exhibition for sixty minutes.

During the tour the children complete activity sheets as they are told the message of the Bible. Following the tour a review quiz will be given. As the children leave the building, they are always given a gift pack of suitable gospel literature with invitations to receive a Bible and Bible Lessons (through Bible Educational Services).

The hosting of the exhibition has seen local assemblies develop and strengthen contacts with local schools. One assembly that started going to the schools to take the prize-giving assembly now visits nine local schools between four and seven times a year to take assemblies.

There is still an open door in the UK for this type of work. If you would like to know more about 'The Ultimate Adventure' contact Paul Coxall on [paul\\_coxall@sky.com](mailto:paul_coxall@sky.com) or Murray Lawrie on [murray@btng.org.uk](mailto:murray@btng.org.uk)

From a personal point of view, our assembly in Aberdeen has used all three of these exhibitions at various times for one week over the past fifteen years or so. We have seen around 350 children with their teachers and support staff attend each year. The local schools in our area continue to view the experience in a very positive way and, from the springboard of the exhibitions, we have had opportunity, on occasions, to take school assemblies with the whole school present.

With the requirement for teachers to explore a variety of religions in the curriculum, there are real opportunities being presented for the spread of the gospel among a rising generation and these three exhibitions are great examples of effective tools in that process.

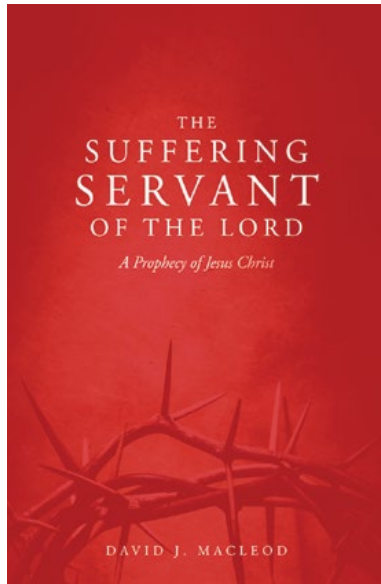




# Book Reviews

Compiled by JOHN SCARBROOK

Books are available from the publishers shown (or from John Ritchie in the UK, or Gospel Folio Press in Canada), and **NOT** from Precious Seed Publications



## **The Suffering Servant of the Lord: A Prophecy of Jesus Christ** David J. MacLeod.

Paperback, 225 pages, Published by Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, Iowa, 2016  
ISBN 978-0-692-53824-1.

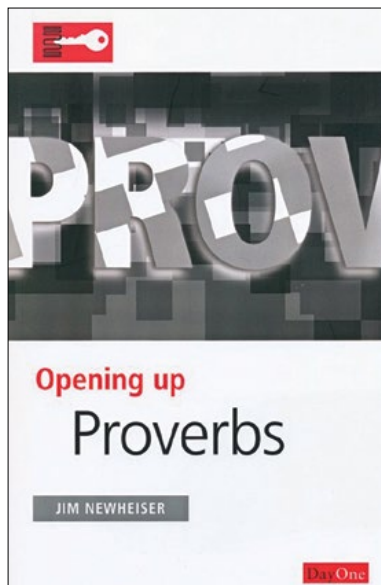
DAVID MACLEOD, a Professor at Emmaus Bible College and a commended teacher among American Bible Chapels, has written a fine, if very scholarly, exposition of Isaiah's fourth Servant Song from a thoroughly conservative evangelical and pre-millennial standpoint. It has also been presented as a series of lectures given in various parts of the world to well-grounded Christians, including some missionary brethren and sisters. It includes hundreds of extensive footnotes, which present, and sometimes refute, the views of scholars of various persuasions, and discusses in great detail the meaning of the original Hebrew text, which the author quotes throughout.

MACLEOD divides his exposition of the prophecy into its five stanzas of three verses each, to each of which he gives a helpful heading relating to its fulfilment in the life, sufferings, death, and resurrection glory of Jesus Christ. He is in no doubt about the Messianic nature of the prophecy, and emphasizes the vicarious nature of the Saviour's sufferings for sin throughout the chapters covered. He points out that Isaiah anticipates the very different reactions of the nation of Israel to our Saviour, both at His first coming in humiliation and then at His future appearing in the end times.

Five long appendices complete the book, including one on the various Jewish interpretations of the chapter, another on the question of healing and the atonement, raised by verse 4 and here answered helpfully, and a third on objections to the doctrine of substitution.

This book is recommended to very serious Bible students, who will also appreciate its clear layout, literary style, and typographical production.

Our thanks to Malcom Davis, Leeds, England, for this review.



## **Opening up Proverbs** Jim Newheiser

Paperback, 182 pages, Published by Day One Publications, Leominster, HR6 8NZ, UK. ISBN 978-1-84625-110-8.

The 'Opening up' series covers many of the books of scripture, written by a number of respected, mainly American, authors. The book of Proverbs does not lend itself easily to analysis, nor to a verse-by-verse approach. The wise man sets out his instruction rather more by subjects which are taken up at various points to emphasize the instruction given. This book, though brief, takes the reader through the major topics, dealing with the first nine chapters of Proverbs in a consecutive manner. Then, by linking verses and sections together, the author deals with issues such as morality, finance, work and family life. At the end of each chapter, subjects and references are given for suggested further study and a number of practical matters for the reader to consider or discuss with others.

The present reviewer found this an engaging book to read right through, rather than to be treated as an exposition to dip into for help on a certain verse. The author is well versed in his understanding of twenty-first century society which makes this book of particular interest and relevance to young believers; remembering that the early chapters are addressed to one whom the writer calls 'my son'.

The writer emphasizes that Proverbs is a book of practical precepts, not a book of promises. Although, having said that, the wise instruction given, if followed, will issue in blessing and well-being for the one being instructed. The book of Proverbs finds its counterpart in the New Testament epistle by James, who draws on the same principles to record his inspired writing.

This is a book well worth recommending and which provides a sound introduction to one of the more neglected books of scripture.



## QUESTION

**Would it be in order to have a hymn or reading between breaking bread and drinking the cup?**

## ANSWER

Although we are given very clear instructions as to the preparation required by those who participate in the Lord's Supper, and equally clear guidance as to the purpose of the event, very little detail is supplied relative to the format of the meeting. This does not give us licence to be unwise as to the order of things but it does mean that we need to guard against imposing regulations that are not endorsed in the scriptures. Something may be a personal preference or a pattern that has been followed for decades but that does not make it authoritative and unchangeable.

The only detailed information we have regarding the Lord's Supper is given in the first three gospel records and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In comparing these records, we learn that the bread is a symbol of the body of the Saviour that was given for us. As for the symbolic relevance of the cup the Lord Jesus said 'this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins', Matt. 26. 28. If we only had Matthew's and Mark's accounts we would not know that what the Lord did on the eve of His crucifixion was something to be perpetuated throughout the years until His return. That instruction is briefly alluded to by Luke but clearly stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 24-34.

The request made by our Saviour was that we should partake of the bread and cup in remembrance of Him. In addition, as we carry out this request, there is an outcome, for we 'proclaim the Lord's death till he comes', 1 Cor. 11. 26. This is not something we are requested to do, it is something that happens as we eat and drink at the supper. As the bread speaks of the Lord's body and the cup of His blood, two things which are closely linked, and as we are to call Him to mind in the partaking of them both, I suggest that we ought not to separate them by readings or hymns etc. Other than the giving of thanks prior to using

each of the symbols, I am of the mind that it would be preferable that the one should follow the other without any other contributions between.

However, whilst these are my convictions, I would be hard pressed to dogmatize that this is what should be done everywhere and at all times. There seems to be an innate desire with many, maybe for very commendable reasons, to impose regulations as to the format of the Lord's Supper that go far beyond the simplicity of the meeting as revealed in the scriptures. One danger we need to be aware of is that of becoming very ritualistic or formulaic instead of being sensitive to the guiding of the Spirit of God. I know of no reason why the partaking of the bread and cup has to be reserved for a particular point in the meeting or specific time showing on the clock. On one occasion it may be appropriate to break bread at the start, on another occasion it might be correct to leave it until the later stages of the service.

There is need for those who are mature to be wise in their handling of those who are younger in the faith. Perhaps a younger brother might give out a hymn that is not in keeping with the remembrance of the Lord, or participates in prayer in a manner that indicates their very limited understanding as to the purpose of the meeting. Such a person needs to be gently guided and should not be chastised or publicly embarrassed.

I cannot think of a more privileged way, or more heart warming manner, to commence each new week than that of responding to a request made by our Saviour when, on the night of His betrayal, He said 'this do in remembrance of me'. Let us respond to that in the joy and liberty of the Holy Spirit, doing so in an orderly manner with hearts bursting with love and gratitude to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.



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Precious Seed International

## Front Cover Illustration

**'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace', Eph. 1. 7**

The city of Ephesus was situated near the mouth of the river Cayster, and was regarded as the commercial metropolis of Asia Minor. The official capital of this province was Pergamum, but Ephesus was a more important city. Its geographical position facing the Aegean Sea gave it an advantageous position for trading with and in the ancient world.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 32 Paul makes reference to 'fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus', which is probably an allusion to the wild-beast fights that were held in a stadium close to the city's open-air theatre. Paul uses the expression metaphorically of the opposition he encountered in the city, Acts 19. The city was, however, mainly famous throughout the Roman Empire for the nearby temple of 'Artemis', or better known to us by its Roman name 'Diana', hence the cry of the artisans in Acts chapter 19 verse 28 when they thought that their source of income was being put in jeopardy by Paul, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians'. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the world, and as HAROLD ST. JOHN once wrote, 'Paul's letter to the Ephesians was addressed to saints living under the shadow of a powerful and tyrannical religion – what we might call a 'Cathedral' city'. Today, only one solitary column of the temple remains, but many other parts of the city have been reconstructed, such as the Library of Celsus which is shown on the front cover. The library was thought at one time to have housed in excess of 10,000 scrolls or books, and some may well have ended up in the pile of books burnt in the city during Paul's period of preaching, 19. 19. These books probably contained spells and incantations linked to forms of exorcism and magic. Although these practices were widespread in the city, the citizens of Ephesus became conscious of a much greater power at work in their midst – the power of God – because not only was the name of the Lord Jesus extolled, v. 17, but many individuals were delivered from the domain of darkness, cp. Col. 1. 13, and showed evidence of their new found faith in Christ by an act of true repentance, Acts 19. 18-19. Even though the price paid by these new Christians was exceedingly high – the equivalent of 50,000 pieces of silver – they entered into a new relationship with God that would lead them to embrace far greater riches, Eph. 1. 7. May we never fail to appreciate and thank God for the riches of His grace in our own lives today.



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