

# Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1491



***Ready, Steady, Go! – page 3***  
***The Shedding of Blood – page 10***  
***Remember Me? – page 12***

# Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

124th Year

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1491

A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world. Its objectives are – to encourage study of the Bible as God's inspired message; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God's world-wide Kingdom.

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# Ready, Steady, Go!

Earlier this year Usain Bolt, a 21-year-old Jamaican became “the fastest man in the world”, a description that is used about athletes who hold the world record for the 100 metre race. He covered the distance in 9.72 seconds, thus exceeding the record previously held by his fellow-Jamaican Asafa Powell.

It wasn't even Usain's specialist distance, for he is better known as a 200m runner; but his remarks after the race say a lot about the short-term nature of fame. Asked if he would now be competing in this month's Olympics at Beijing, he said:

*“I don't think there's any comparison between the two. You've got to be Olympic champion or world champion to really count.*

*“Tomorrow if someone comes and runs faster than me I'm no longer the fastest man in the world. If you're the Olympic champion then they have to wait four more years to get you again.*

*“I think the Olympics is the biggest thing, so I'm looking for that, definitely.”*

## Faster and Faster

9.92 Carl Lewis (US) - September 1988  
9.90 Leroy Burrell (US) - June 1991  
9.86 Carl Lewis (US) - August 1991  
9.85 Leroy Burrell (US) - July 1994  
9.84 Donovan Bailey (Canada) - July 1996  
9.79 Maurice Greene (US) - June 1999  
9.77 Asafa Powell (Jamaica) - June 2005  
9.74 Asafa Powell (Jamaica) - September 2007  
9.72 Usain Bolt (Jamaica) - May 2008



Over the years the speed at which this distance has been covered has gone down and down. It was 1968 when the 10 second barrier was broken by Jim Hynes of the US (9.95) and that record lasted 15 years, until Calvin Smith's race in 1988 (9.93). As athletics fans will know, the world record has changed nine times since then, as fractions of a second have been shaved off the time and that has only happened because of the sheer dedication and determination of the various athletes who have trained diligently and pushed themselves to the uttermost.

The Beijing Olympics will see many similar performances in field and track events, where trained athletes compete for glory and honour, for themselves and for the countries they represent.

For four years that Olympic record will stand, but then it will most likely be overtaken by another holder, and then another, confining the present victor to the history books. That's what happens in all fields of human endeavour: nothing lasts forever because nobody lasts forever and, as the years pass, our athletic powers are bound to fade and eventually they will fail.

## First Century Olympics

These international competitions began in Greece and were current in the first century, when the New Testament was being written. The apostle Paul was fully conversant with them, and their aims, although we do not

know if he ever went there as a spectator, but he made a very appropriate comment about the difference between athletic aims and his own. For, in his own way, he was every bit as dedicated and determined as they were:

*“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).*



In those days the winners were given a crown or wreath of olive leaves, a tradition which continues today. Paul, however, and his fellow believers, were running their race to obtain a reward that would last forever. They were hoping for everlasting life at the end of the journey of life.

## **Sprint Finish?**

The picture of a race being run, or of competing for a prize, occurs many times in Scripture. In one case two runners went by different routes to tell King David about the outcome of a battle, and the one who was last to leave got there first, so that he could cushion the bad news the second runner blurted out insensitively (see 2 Samuel chapter 18). Sometimes the running is part of a battle scene, where

the victors either pursue the defeated until they catch up with them, or the losers take to their heels. More often the idea of running is used to encourage believers to keep going to the end of their lives with the same diligence and enthusiasm they have shown earlier in their lives.

The prophet Isaiah definitely had a long-distance race in mind, if not a marathon, when he offered this encouragement, which is also repeated in the New Testament:

*“Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, ‘Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; he will come and save you’” (Isaiah 35:3,4 and see Hebrews 12:12,13).*

We need to take a long-term view in the race of life, for it is not a matter of sprinting to the finish but of making good progress year-by-year. Like the apostle Paul, and like the athletes that compete for earthly glory, every believer needs to focus on the end of the road and plan his or her effort accordingly.

Self-discipline, commitment and dedication are the vital components, if we are to succeed and come safely to the journey’s end. So when you admire athletic endeavour of whatever sort, ask yourself: “How ready and how steady am I, to go forward with the Lord?”

**Editor**

## Lifestyle Choices (2)

# Towards a Better Diet

*In the first article in this series, **David Pearce** suggested some ways in which we could live in a healthy and wholesome way. He explained that work and exercise are good for us and stressed the importance of eating properly. That is something he now explains in more detail.*

What are the components of the ideal diet? Put simply, we need carbohydrates, for energy, movement and warmth, protein to build and replace our muscles, fibre for a healthy intestine, and minerals and vitamins in much smaller quantities to keep the body 'ticking'.

### Energy from Carbohydrates

The amount of energy we need depends on the kind of work we have to do – a truck driver needs far less than a road sweeper, and a housewife needs more than an office worker. Because hard physical work is less common than it used to be, people nowadays often take in more calories than they use up, and the surplus is then stored in the body as fat. Energy is supplied by three kinds of foods:

- ❖ Sugar and sweets;
- ❖ Foods rich in starch (bread, rice, pasta and potatoes);
- ❖ Fats or oils such as butter, cheese, lard, and vegetable oils used for cooking. A little fat contains a lot of calories – weight for weight, 3½ times as much as starch. So if we have a high-fat diet, we will be much more likely to accumulate fat in our bodies.

One of the problems of accumulating

fat is that it may build up on the linings of our arteries – the muscular tubes through which the vital blood supply is pumped round the body. This makes us much more prone to suffer a heart attack or a stroke. Arterial fat is particularly likely to build up if we eat fats of animal origin such as butter or lard. Olive oil or sunflower oil is much safer. And here is another point – many of the “quick” foods in our modern diet have been highly processed so that they contain lots of starch and fat. White flour, biscuits, sweets and sugar raise the sugar levels in the blood quickly, but have no lasting effect.

“Soft” canned drinks are also loaded with sugar. Energy derived from nuts or whole grains such as wholemeal flour or brown rice, where the husk and kernel of the grain has not been taken away, is much better, because the energy is released more slowly. Also the fibre content is higher, and that is important, as we shall see in a minute.

### Protein

Most of our body is made up of muscle, nerve and skin. This material is built up as required from proteins – the nitrogen rich items in our diet such as beans, peas, milk and meat. It is not always appreciated that most cells in our body have a very short life – around six weeks, after which they die and have to be replaced. So there is a



constant demand for protein. Nutritionists have discovered that proteins are made from chains of nitrogen compounds, called amino acids. There are about sixteen of these that are absolutely essential for health; that is to say, if we have fifteen of them in good quantities, but the sixteenth is missing, the body cannot make protein. So we need a good range of protein rich foods in our diet.

One of the cheapest sources of good quality protein is the group of crops which we call legumes – plants which have nitrogen-catching bacteria linked with their roots. These include peas, beans, and lentils. These



foods are available in dry form, and can be soaked and boiled in winter-time to provide good protein when fresh foods are not available. Proteins of vegetable origin lack a few amino acids which are found richly in animal proteins such as milk, eggs, cheese, fish and meat, so a small proportion of our diet should include these more expensive foods – it only takes a little of them to keep us healthy if we eat plenty of legumes.

## **Fibre**

In recent years, nutrition scientists have become increasingly aware that when wheat and rice are processed to remove the husk and kernel in an effort to make the food whiter in colour and blander in flavour, a lot of the goodness is taken away. This is particularly true of the outer layers of husk which surround the grain. When God gave us wheat, barley and rice to eat, he did not intend us to process it in factories. He meant us to grind the

whole grain between millstones and eat everything together. The outer layers are made up of tough fibres which are not digested in the intestines, but which help the intestine to push food along more steadily. Similar fibre is found in vegetables such as cabbage, in nuts, and in fruits like oranges.

It is because fibre is missing from the modern diet that people suffer so much from constipation, which in turn increases the likelihood of bowel cancers. So the lesson is obvious. For a healthy intestinal system, cut out white flour, white rice and pastas, and go for whole foods, green-stuff and fruit.

## **Minerals**

Our skeletons are made mainly from lime (calcium carbonate) and phosphorus compounds. Young growing children need plenty of calcium-rich foods. But so also do elderly people, for in old age calcium is withdrawn from the bones, which then become brittle and break easily. **Calcium** is found richly in cow and goat milk, because this is intended for young animals with quickly growing bones. It is also found to a lesser extent in bread.

**Iron** is another very important mineral, for it is needed to make new red blood cells – the ones that carry oxygen round the body. People with low iron levels have pale lips and gums. They suffer from anaemia, which leaves them tired and breathless. Anaemia is common in women who suffer from heavy monthly periods. Iron is found in egg yolk, in liver, and in green vegetables. Other minerals are

needed in tiny quantities – salt (sodium chloride), for example, for healthy digestion in the stomach, and potassium salts for the nerves. These are less likely than calcium to be deficient in a balanced diet, but can be taken as a supplement along with vitamins.

## Vitamins

**Vitamins** are different. They are not exactly foods, but complex natural chemicals which enable the normal processes and chemical reactions inside the body to function smoothly. In chemistry at school, we would call them 'catalysts'. They are labelled by letters of the alphabet – a, b, d, etc. Vitamins are most likely to be noticed when they are missing. Vitamin A comes from fish liver oil, carrots and greens, and protects the skin and eyes.

A deficiency of **Vitamin B** shows up in nerve problems. This vitamin is to be found in yeast products and in the kernel of wheat.

**Vitamin C** is absolutely essential to keep the skin and teeth healthy. Because it cannot be stored in the body, it must be eaten daily. This vitamin is found in oranges, tomatoes, raspberries, grapes and cherries, and to a lesser extent in potatoes.

**Vitamin D** is another important one, because it has to be present when calcium is laid down and replaced in our bones. The body can manufacture its own Vitamin D when sunlight shines on the skin, but in the winter, especially if we live indoors, it runs low. Children with

low levels of Vitamin D grow up with rubbery, curved legs and arms. If we live indoors, we can supplement Vitamin D by eating fish oils or taking vitamin supplements.

**Vitamin E** seems to be important in fertility, and this one is found richly in the kernels of cereals. There are other vitamins which are important but less likely to be deficient in a good diet, such as pantothenic acid, needed during pregnancy, and **Vitamin B12**, lacking in the diet of vegetarians. If there is any doubt about the quality of the diet, vitamins and minerals can be taken as a daily tablet, but it is important that children are given special low-dose tablets, and grown ups must not take more than one tablet a day.

## Improving the Diet

The first step is to cut out from your daily menu frozen pre-prepared meals, pastas, white bread, biscuits, sugar, and animal fats. Aim to do this slowly over a period of a fortnight, so as to allow time to get used to new tastes and textures.

Search out a source of guaranteed wholemeal bread. If you cannot find this, look in the supermarket for a ready-to-bake wholemeal bread packet, and make your own bread with a bread machine, or get someone who is a good cook to bake it for you.

Breakfast on whole wheat cereal biscuits and a piece of fruit – bananas are good because they are high in slow release energy and minerals - or for something hot, oat porridge made with half milk and half water. Buy tomatoes or oranges to give you Vitamin C, and cabbage for iron,



Vitamin A and fibre.

- ✓ When you prepare a salad, cut it up just before you need it, for vegetables begin to lose their valuable vitamins once they are chopped up.
- ✓ For a salad dressing, use olive oil or pure sunflower oil, in modest amounts.
- ✓ When you cook meat, cook it on a grill, where surplus fat can drain away.
- ✓ If you make a stew, add lentils, peas or beans, because these are rich in vital protein.

Every day, ensure you have:

- a) *wholemeal bread as toast or sandwiches,*
- b) *cooked vegetables plus chicken, fish, egg, cheese or milk for animal protein, and*

- c) *fresh fruit and vegetables such as cabbage and carrots, tomatoes, raspberries, cherries or oranges.*

If you really have to economise, then as a minimum eat wholemeal bread or porridge, dried peas or beans, and cabbage soup, and once a day a piece of cheese or a little fresh milk. But there's something else you need to eat every day as well, for as Jesus once said:

*"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' "* (Matthew 4:4).

In the last article in this series we will see how wise that counsel really is.

**David M Pearce**

## The Book of Hours



On a narrow ridge looking over the Severn valley on the Welsh border stands the austere medieval fortress of Powis Castle. The interior has been transformed over the last four centuries into a comfortable family home on a grand scale which contains much of beauty and some quite unusual items. Amongst these treasures is a

fifteenth century illuminated book, described as the Book of Hours. It is kept in a glass cabinet, covered with a velvet cloth to protect it from damage and sunlight. Lifting the cloth allows the visitor to see the beautiful and colourfully illustrated pages. The book was used by Lady Eleanor Percy, wife of the first Lord Powis, as an aid to the prayers which were said seven times each day.



## Time to Pray

We may marvel that in the fifteenth century people could manage to find time to spend seven periods in each day engaged in prayer. For many the rush and bustle of twenty first century life would not allow that. Yet the Psalmist says:

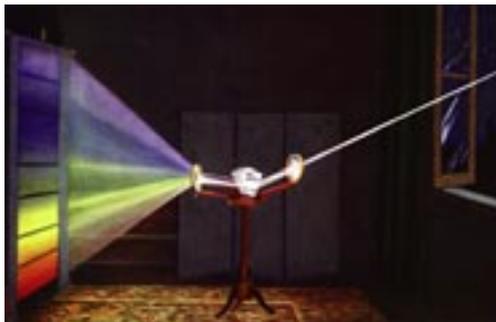
*“Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules” (Psalm 119:164).*

Clearly he managed to make the time, but did he really pray seven times each day? Even for those who try hard to remember God and think about Him, to find a quiet moment each morning and evening for prayer is often difficult. Sadly, many others only find time to pray when they are in trouble, when they can find no other solution to the problems of their life. Even more sadly, many never even think of praying: they have no time at all for God in their lives, and look with scarcely concealed contempt at those who do have and who pray to Him. So churches are empty, or closed, turned into homes, community centres or offices.

## Seven Times?

Did the Psalmist really expect those who used his Psalm to pray seven times each day? When he worked on the formulation of the spectrum, Sir Isaac Newton found that he could split white sunlight into all the colours found in the rainbow using a triangular glass prism. He identified seven colours in the spectrum, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, though there is an infinite range of colours to be seen.

Newton knew that the number seven is often used in the Bible to show perfection or completeness. Like others



since he marvelled at the completion of the spectrum, the beauty of the colours. So when the Psalmist talks of praising God seven times a day he really meant that each day should be a day of continuous praise to God, not just in the words spoken in prayer, or sung in praise, but in the whole of a life lived for God. He continues *“Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble” (Psalm 119:164,165).*

Even at the speed at which life is sometimes lived, it is possible for those who make God the One they worship to have that peace, and make their lives a continuous praise of God. They do not need the richly illustrated “Book of Hours”, but they will not manage to live in a way that pleases God without careful attention to the Book of Books – the Bible, the Word of God.

## Mark Sheppard

*Quotations from the English Standard Version of the Bible*

## Bible Line



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# The Shedding of Blood

In this consideration of the Book of Genesis **Dudley Fifield** is tracing the way in which events there anticipate the themes that will be developed as God's purpose unfolds in the rest of Scripture. In this article he shows how the first sacrifices in Eden were designed to educate mankind about sin and salvation.

## 1 A Covering

When God provided a covering for the sin of Adam and Eve, He made them coats of skin. (Gen. 3:21). This required that animals be killed. Blood was shed and this gives us the first indication in the Bible that for sin to be put away, it was essential that a sacrifice be offered. The Epistle to the Hebrews emphasises this truth:

*"According to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).*

## 2 A Representation

We get a further insight into the purpose of sacrifice in the events of the Passover, when God delivered Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. Each household was to kill a lamb that was to be eaten in its entirety. They were to take the blood of the lamb and sprinkle it upon the lintel and the two side posts of their houses so that the angel of death might pass over them when he smote the Egyptians (see Exodus 12: 21-23). Concerning the blood, God said:

*"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to*

*destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13).*

The blood was to be a 'sign' or 'token' (KJV). It had no efficacy in itself; for it was a representation of something else. It was the same with the lamb that was slain: its life was surrendered that their lives might be saved.

## 3 A Life Given

These principles are taken further in the Book of Leviticus:

*"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (17:11).*

Again the point is emphasized that there was no intrinsic value in the blood itself: its power lay in God's decree and what it represented. Notice that God said: *"I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement"*.

The life is in the blood, for it is this which distinguishes animal life from plant life. Life courses through the blood, and without it life ceases. The fitness of blood as a token is found in the fact that it is a symbol of life. When we say that blood has been shed, we mean that a life has been taken and, in the Scriptures, when



blood is shed in a sacrifice, it means that a life has been given.

#### ④ **The Lamb of God**

These preparatory considerations take us into the New Testament and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was John the Baptist who said of him:

*“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).*

This carries us back to the Passover and possibly to the skins provided for Adam and Eve in the garden, for the Book of Revelation speaks of *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).*

The *“foundation of the world”* was established in Eden, for it was Adam’s sin that determined the kind of world we live in: a world dominated by sin and death. In the purpose of God, the Lord Jesus is the lamb that God then knew about. In His wisdom and foreknowledge, everything pointed forward to the sacrifice of His Son and the indications are that the animals slain to provide a covering in Eden were indeed lambs.

#### ⑤ **Christ’s Death and Resurrection**

- ➔ The Lord Jesus in his sacrifice gave his life so that we might have life through him.
- ➔ He shared our nature. He was one of us (see Hebrews 2:14).
- ➔ Yet, although he was tempted (see Heb. 2:18; 4:15), he never once sinned.
- ➔ In the way that he lived and died, Jesus was a perfect man.
- ➔ When he died as our representative, our human nature was nailed to the cross. In that sense, when we look at the Lord Jesus, we

should see ourselves crucified with him, for he represented us.

In recognising this we acknowledge also that God was right when He imposed the sentence of death upon sinful men. (See Romans 3:23-26). Because he was sinless, the Lord Jesus did not deserve to die and for this reason God raised him from the dead:

*“Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it” (Acts 2:23,24).*

#### ⑥ **Our Sins Covered**

Just as Adam and Eve had their sins covered in Eden, if we associate ourselves with the death of Jesus our sins can be covered. It is by baptism into his death that we share in both his death and resurrection:

*“Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:3-5).*

In this way we can have the hope of eternal life through our association with the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. His life was given so that we too can have eternal life.

**Dudley Fifield**

# Remember Me?



I had the date clearly marked on the calendar. It said, “Dentist 3:30 p.m.” It wasn’t as if it was only a check up. I had made the appointment myself only a couple of days before because of toothache.

Now it was 5:30 p.m. and no way could I keep the appointment. I had become so involved in other things that the time had slipped by without my noticing until far too late – so there would be a ‘fine’ to pay, certainly if I was to stay on that dentist’s books.

I am sure many of us have done exactly the same thing with perhaps far more important appointments. Sometimes it is due to genuine forgetfulness or another important distraction; sometimes there is a certain amount of psychological avoidance – we really don’t want to face the pain, as in the dentist visit. Sometimes we don’t want to face the reality or just lack motivation.

## Remember or Forget?

Which of these reasons might apply to mankind forgetting God – failing to recognise Him as Creator; paying no attention to His communications; and neglecting to worship Him as our Maker and Redeemer? Or what about remembering the Lord Jesus? Jesus lived and died to save us from the certainty of a hopeless and useless life by giving us the opportunity of a lasting relationship with the Lord God of heaven and earth. And he has given us the possibility of living in the strength



of that relationship for always: for he has given us the hope of eternal life.

Surely that is worth remembering, even though many people have forgotten all about it. The Lord Jesus sacrificed his life, dying the most horrendous death, to make all this possible for us. Yet so many people simply ignore it, attack it, despise it, or just forget it.

They take no notice at all of the warning contained in Scripture:

*“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard him?” (Hebrews 2:3).*

## How to Remember

Where do you fit into this picture? Have you a good memory for the things you really ought to remember and think about? How can we put something like remembering the Lord at the top of our personal priorities? Here are some practical tips:

### ① Listen to Jesus

Jesus encourages us to listen to him in the Bible, so that we can discover his motivations and his aspirations. He once said:

*“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me. But you are not willing to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39,40).*

There can be no holding back on

this: we all need to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and with the right attitude, so that we can come to know Jesus and find out what is true. In that way we will become true followers of Jesus, not followers of someone else – like a teacher or pastor. It is by understanding God’s Word that a bond is formed between the follower and his or her Lord:

*“Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” (John 8:31,32).*

### ② **Everyday Advantages**

There are enormous advantages that come from having a properly-founded belief in Jesus. People who have no such hope have to rely upon political pundits, media hype, old wives tales, superstition and gossip. In that world everyone’s opinion is as good as that of everybody else. For nobody really knows how things will work out: people just hope for the best. But the Word of God explains how and why things are working out as they are: so it gives believers a yardstick by which to assess the daily news. It tells us what we really need to take note of and what can safely go for recycling! In this way, the truth truly sets us free.

### ③ **Pray Every Day**

The Lord Jesus has shown us how to pray. Every day we need to read the Scriptures and daily we need to pray so that we can bring to him, and through him to his Father, our concerns and our appreciation of all his goodness and love shown in so many ways. Jesus even gave his disciples a pattern prayer, so called



because it provides a framework for all the prayers we ever need to offer:

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:9-13).*

### “Remember Me”

Has Jesus provided anything else we might regard as a reminder of the place he should have in our lives? Earlier in this series we considered the need to be baptized as a believing adult, just as Jesus was. He gave us the example to follow when he said: *“thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).* In that act of immersion in water, we not only remember Jesus but identify with him.

But that is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, not a regular reminder. To help us remember, Jesus instituted a weekly act which, he said, would be *“in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).*

He did that at the Last Supper! In the Upper Room, only a few hours before his trial and death on the cross,

Jesus said this:

*“With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of*

God comes.’ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ Likewise he also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you’” (Luke 22:15-20).

## Christadelphians

True believers will do this every week following this example and the pattern of behaviour established by the early church. One of the greatest helps to remembering the Lord Jesus is to be part of the group of people who remember him all the time. Christadelphians call that grouping of people “an ecclesia”, a Greek name which simply means a congregation of people who have been called out to worship God. The word “Christadelphian” itself just means ‘brothers and sisters in Christ’ and designated a community of people who meet regularly to remember their Lord and who meet on the same foundation of beliefs.

Ours is a simple form of worship – no flowing robes, no crosses, no icons – nothing to get in the way of focussing upon the Lord Jesus Christ and through him to God. When baptised members meet together to remember Jesus, we focus on the simple symbols of bread and wine, as Jesus commanded. Here are some key indicators.



## Feast of Remembrance

It gives an immediate link with the Old Testament, for the breaking of bread looks right back to the

Passover deliverance of Israel from Egypt (1 Corinthians 5:7);

- This was something that Jesus really wanted to share with his disciples;
- The bread and wine were shared around all the disciples present;
- The symbols of bread and wine are reminders of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus;
- The bread is symbolic of the body of the Lord Jesus – his life was given for our salvation, not only on Calvary’s cross but in everything he did he fulfilled the will of God;
- The wine is a symbol of his blood – a life that was given so that sins might be forgiven.
- His shed blood has also sealed the New Covenant by which God has promised to forgive us our sins and to give us the precious gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of God when Jesus comes again.
- Jesus himself was looking forward to that day in the Kingdom when he would once again celebrate this ‘feast’ with his disciples.

This feast of remembrance is such a simple celebration, but it is packed with wonderful meaning. Indeed, if we accept the teaching of Jesus, are baptized and then remember him in bread and wine, week-by-week, we shall really be obeying his commandment and will be found remembering him, until he comes.

**David Nightingale**  
(Series concluded)

# Paul in Ephesus

*During his Third Missionary Journey, the apostle Paul stayed in Ephesus for three months, teaching and preaching. He was able to authenticate his message by using the Holy Spirit powers he had been given, and the ready acceptance of his message made both Jews and Gentiles jealous and deeply concerned about the impact this might have on them, as **John Hellowell** now explains.*

## **Jewish Exorcists in Ephesus**

The effectiveness of Paul's healing capabilities was not lost on itinerant Jewish exorcists who earned their living by quackery, employing biblical names as part of their incantations. They now used the name of the Lord Jesus in attempting to exorcise evil spirits:

*"Some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, 'We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches'" (Acts 19:13).*

A Jew named Sceva, who claimed to be a Jewish chief priest, had seven sons working with him in what must have been a family business. They adopted this approach in the case of a man with an 'evil spirit' (probably some mental disorder) who responded with:

*"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" (Acts 19:15).*

It is interesting that two different Greek words are used for "know" in that sentence. This is probably because the two kinds of knowledge differed: he knew the Lord Jesus by reputation; but he knew Paul personally, for the second Greek word may mean 'understand', which could imply that he had listened to Paul's preaching. Similar cases of recognition by the mentally ill occur in the Gospel records (e.g. Mark 1:24 which tells us about

the man in the synagogue at Capernaum).

## **Dramatic Effect**

The sick man then attacked Sceva's sons, overpowering them and beating them. They hastily left the house with their clothes ripped off and bleeding. The incident became widely known amongst both Jews and Greeks in Ephesus and had a dramatic effect on the population:

*"This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Acts 19:17).*

Many who had believed now came forward and openly confessed their evil deeds. This comment is not easy to understand. Superficially, the inference would seem to be that these people were former believers who had lapsed in their faith. The incident with Sceva had brought them to their senses and they wished to return to the faith. However, it is possible that the reference is to those who had formerly believed Sceva and people like him, who now realised that here was a genuine power to be reckoned with.

A number of those who practised sorcery brought scrolls and burned them in public. Ephesus was famous for documents containing magical spells. These 'Ephesian Letters' were

highly prized. The scrolls were extremely valuable and in total they were worth 50,000 drachmas. The actual monetary unit is missing from the text but can be inferred. A drachma was about a day's wages and therefore would be approaching, by today's standards, at least £3 million!



you" (Romans 1:9,10);

*"Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles ... But*

*now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints" (Romans 1:13; 15:23-25).*

The record continues:

*"So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed" (Acts 19:20).*

It is a sad reflection on human nature that the incident with Sceva and his sons was so effective in changing attitudes, when compared with the logical arguments made by Paul.

## **Moving On**

It may be that Paul decided that it was now time to move on because of what was happening. The Gospel was making a tremendous impact and it was likely that there were now sufficient believers to carry on the work. He intended to go to Jerusalem once more but not directly. He would visit the Christian communities in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) and Achaia (possibly Athens, certainly Corinth and Cenchrea) before departing for Jerusalem. The next phase would be a visit to Rome in order to fulfil an ambition that he had cherished for some time for, as he wrote to the Romans in a letter dated about this time:

*"God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to*

Paul's comment in Rom 15:23 throws some light on his reason for deciding to go to Jerusalem. He regarded his work in Asia as now completed, but he would make a final visit to Macedonia and Achaia before he ventured westwards to Rome. The comment indicates that the Letter to the Romans was written just before Paul travelled to Jerusalem.

It is believed that the Letter to the Romans was written in Corinth during Paul's visit to Achaia, since it seems that it was conveyed to Rome by Phoebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, the eastern Corinthian port.

Paul now sent Timothy and Erastus ahead into Macedonia, intending to follow them later as indicated in v.22, whilst he remained a little longer in Asia.

**John Helawell**

# “Many are Called, but Few are Chosen”

What does this Bible statement mean and what principle is it explaining? Is it telling us that religion is an exclusive preserve of those whom God is pleased to honour because He has already chosen the people He wants, or what? **Hamilton Wilson** now investigates and explains.

The phrase which raises these questions is to be found in two places in Scripture – Matthew 20:16 and 22:14. If you look those passages up, you will notice at once that this is not the manifesto of an exclusive religious sect, or of a self-righteous power-builder. The statement is made by Jesus himself!

When we look at the context in Matthew chapter 22, we find that Jesus is telling a parable about people who were invited to come to a great wedding-feast but who despised the invitation and wouldn't go. So the offer to come to the feast was passed on to anyone the servants could find on the highways and byways, “both good and bad”.

This was quite clearly a parable about the rejection of the gospel by the Jews, or their religious leaders, and God's subsequent offer of the gospel to the Gentiles, or non-Jews. More specifically perhaps, it was about the rejection of the message of the gospel of Jesus by the Pharisees – see verse 15.

## Called but Not Chosen

But even among the Gentiles there were some who were unwilling to meet the requirements that were expected of those who would participate in a



wedding feast (verses 11-13).

That's typical of human nature, isn't it? Even though we think we're on to a good thing, we want to do things our own way. But the ruler of the feast, in this case, God, wasn't at all pleased with that attitude

(verses 13-14), hence the conclusion Jesus offers: “For many are called, but few chosen” (Matthew 22:14).

So this saying comes at the end of a story that shows that people can exclude themselves from God's will and purpose by their own know-it-all attitudes. If they want to ‘do their own thing’, God will let them: they are called but not chosen.

## “I never knew you”

Jesus has another sombre saying:

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practise lawlessness!"* (Matthew 7:21-23).

We have to be absolutely sure that

what we do in our religious life is actually what God wants us to do, and not what we think He'll be satisfied with. It is a matter of doing the Father's will, and we won't know what His will is unless we read His Word, the Bible, and try to carry out it's principles in our lives. How dreadful if, just through our own neglect, we should hear these words of doom, "I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!" Jesus also said:



*"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13,14).*

Jesus is not being deliberately exclusive; he is making an observation about human nature. We naturally find it easier to go with the crowd, to go with the flow, and the slightest obstacle is enough to put us off trying.

### **Only a Few**

When we examine the Bible record, we find that to be the general pattern. When God brought His destruction through a flood, only Noah and seven other members of his family were saved out of that great disaster! And out of all the 70 nations that were established from the descendants of Noah, God concentrated on one man, Abraham, through whom His purpose would be revealed. Both men were chosen because they were willing to put God's requirements first in their lives and obey His commandments.

Jesus taught this principle to his dis-

ciples by teaching in parables. It was the disciples themselves who asked him why he only spoke in parables (Matthew 13:10), and his answer was:

*"Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given ... Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (13:11-13).*

Is that fair? Studying the context is so important, for if you read on you will find that Jesus then quoted a passage from Isaiah's prophecy (chapter 6 verses 9-10), and commented about the people who did not understand that they had closed their eyes and blocked their ears so they could not hear. In other words, the people of Isaiah's day, like those of Noah's, and now those of Jesus' day, had deliberately closed their eyes to God's truth, and despised His offer of salvation. They wanted salvation on their terms, by their own efforts, but weren't willing to listen to God's requirements. The contrast with the true disciple of Jesus is then clearly stated:

*"But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear" (13:16).*

### **Hard Hearted**

There was an occasion, long before the time of Jesus, when the Pharaoh of Egypt had his heart hardened by God, so that he had no freedom of manoeuvre. But, again, you have only to read the record carefully to discover that Pharaoh hardened his own heart first, and God simply confirmed the

process as he became more and more stubborn.

*“Pharaoh’s heart became hard”* (Exodus 7.13-14, NIV), and we read six times that Pharaoh hardened his heart before God hardened it four times. It was Pharaoh’s natural pre-disposition that brought him trouble – look at chapters 8:15; 9:7,34; 10:3; 1 Samuel 6:6; Proverbs 29:1.

The fact is that God uses people like Pharaoh to fulfil His purpose – see Romans 9:17,18 – and God, with His foreknowledge, knows who will respond to His purpose, and who will turn out bad (note verse 14). God never does the wrong thing or acts unfairly. We have to acknowledge that none of us deserves anything at all from God – it is in His mercy that He offers grace and salvation (see Romans 9:15-16).

God knew beforehand what sort of person Pharaoh would turn out to be, so He used him to send the children of Israel out of Egypt. We are all like clay in the hands of the Master Potter, as Paul explains, saying that God brings the right pressure to bear to make us beautiful. But if the clay is unyielding, it will be discarded.

We always tend to look on things from the clay’s perspective, not realising that it is the clay which is imperfect. The Master Potter knows his craft and knows what he wants from the clay. He alone knows the possibilities. No potter wants to use or sell a faulty vessel; instead he will use good clay, which can be moulded and perfected into a useful vessel.

## Who and How?

In another of his letters the apostle Paul gives an explanation that doesn’t go down well with those who have a

high opinion of themselves and their intellect. Writing to believers in Corinth, a city which prided itself on its learning and culture, he says that he preached the cross of Christ because:

*“The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your **calling**, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are **called**. But*

*God has **chosen** the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has **chosen** the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty ... that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Corinthians 1:25-27,29).*

It is God’s sovereign choice who He chooses, but He *calls* all men and women through the preaching of the gospel, and by making His existence evident through the creation of the natural world (see Romans 1:20-25).

## Summary

Thinking men and women in all ages have been stimulated to enquire further about the God of the Universe and to explore His Word to see what He has to say about life and the life to come. God calls us through His Word and invites us to respond, by doing what He asks of us. He chooses those who are right in His sight. What we can do – must do – is to respond to the gracious call of God when it comes to us.

**Hamilton Wilson**



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