

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1520



The Way Ahead – page 3
Bible Reading Tables – pages 10 & 11
Two Testaments make One Bible – page 12

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

127th Year

A11

1520



A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world.

Its objectives are – to encourage the study of the Bible as God's inspired message to men; 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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Bible Versions

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The Way Ahead

One thing about climbing a mountain is that you get a different view of the world, by looking at some of it from a different perspective. That can help when things are difficult and there seems no way out, especially if you are anxious about the future.

Look Up!

God once said to Abraham, after his large family group had split up:

Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are – northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you (Genesis 13:14–17).

Abraham was looking over the land of Israel at the time, which is why it became known as the Promised Land, and that promise became a benchmark in Abraham's life. It was something for him to look forward to, and for his descendants to look back at. Because it was God's promise it was different from anything else. A mighty king might have promised him an inheritance, but however powerful he was that king could not live forever, nor could he guarantee that he could keep the promise. Mortal men are fallible and frail by comparison with the God of the Universe. The



Creator and Maker of all things always keeps His promises and always can. He is the Almighty!

Looking Forward

If you could get a lofty enough vantage point to be able to see coming events, what would you expect to see? As one year passes and another begins it is difficult to be entirely optimistic about the future. The world is still struggling to overcome its financial problems with uncertainty about the strength of the euro and the US dollar; fears of a double-dip recession still exist; and the promised cutbacks to public services and welfare budgets leave a lot of people anxious about the security of their jobs and the sort of financial and other support they might be able to get. Nor are the prospects for peace any better with the war in Afghanistan dragging on with an ever greater death toll and no immediate prospect of the country returning to stability.

It would be depressing to list other difficulties faced by mankind at this critical time, like ongoing problems in Haiti, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma and elsewhere. "Glad Tidings" is not a newspaper devoted to tracking and reporting newsworthy events. If it was it would need to be renamed "Bad Tidings!", for newspapers do not allow much space for good news stories.

The purpose of this magazine is to draw attention to God's plan and purpose for the world, which is long-established, as His promise to Abraham makes clear. God

promised Abraham an earthly inheritance and countless descendants and that promise will be fulfilled, of that there is no doubt. Just that one promise – and the Bible is full of unbreakable promises – gives any Bible reader something by which to measure the progress of God’s gracious purpose.

Read the Bible!



There has never been such a choice of what to read and indeed how to read it. Either by means of the printed page or electronically, everybody wants our attention and usually our money. That way we can be entertained, informed, diverted or amused. But there is only one place where we can read about the unbreakable promises of God, and that is in the Bible. There is a special reason why English readers should seize the opportunity to read through the Bible in 2011.

It is the 400th anniversary of the King James (or Authorised) Version of the Bible, which was published by the royal decree of James I in 1611. That followed a traumatic time in England, as various attempts were made to make the Word of God available to ordinary people, who could not read Latin and who were otherwise totally dependent upon what they were told by the established clergy. How could anybody know whether their teaching was right or wrong, when there was no direct public access to the Scriptures?

A series of articles begins in this issue which will trace the process of Bible translation through the ages, so you can see how the King James Version came about, and why it is important that you read the Bible for yourself. This is a message from the Creator to all mankind and because He is a gracious and loving God you can be assured that His message contains an offer of salvation you should not miss. But what is the best way of reading a book the size and complexity of the Bible? There are very few people who could just start at the beginning and read right through it, as you might with other works of literature. So this month’s issue contains something else that can help.

Bible Reading Tables

The middle pages contain a set of Bible Reading Tables which allocate three portions of Scripture for each day of the year. You can start on any day, but beginning on 1st January has the advantage that you begin at the start of Genesis, Psalms and Matthew.

Follow that set of readings every day and by the end of the year you will have read right through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice. This way you can absorb God’s message a little at a time. And keep reading “*Glad Tidings*” so you can get help with important Bible teaching and find out about what is coming as God’s great plan nears its final phase – the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign on earth as God’s appointed king.

You don’t have to climb a mountain to get a different perspective. Reading God’s Word will give you an insight into the world from His lofty point of view.

Editor

Inspiration and Early Translations

2011 marks the four hundredth anniversary of the first printing of the King James (or Authorised) Version of the English Bible.

It was printed in 1611 at Barker's printing house in Aldersgate Street, London. Open the King James Version of the Bible and you should find these words,



The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments. Translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesty's special command – Appointed to be read in the Churches.

We should add three important words, "... and at Home"! For the Bible is not just for reading in churches. God intended that we should read it ourselves, at home. It tells us everything we need to know about His purpose with the human race and His intention to send the Lord Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God here – in a rejuvenated earth.

This Series

The purpose of this year-long series, God willing, is to trace the history of the English Bible so that we can see the way in which God has worked through the centuries to preserve the gospel message. Wonderfully, that gives us the opportunity today to read,

understand and respond to its call.

The Bible declares that it is the Word of God and it speaks with authority about God and His purpose with mankind. At least 40 writers were involved, spread over a period of about 1,500 years. They came from a wide range of occupations and backgrounds, including a king, courtier, poet, herdsman, scribe, tax-gatherer,

fisherman, physician and tent-maker. They lived in different countries and most did not know one another. Yet the whole forms one unified book consisting of sixty-six sections, grouped in two volumes known as the Old and New Testaments.

Inspiration

It was the original Hebrew and Greek texts that were the inspired Word of God. We should remember that versions of the Bible are translations into other tongues, and are not inspired texts in themselves. We plan to look at this in more detail in a future article.

The New Testament writers recognised that the Old Testament writers were inspired by God's power to record His Word. Thus the Apostle Peter records, under inspiration, ...*that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke [as they were] moved by the Holy Spirit* (2Peter 1:20-21).

The Old Testament writers were guided by God speaking to them to declare His purpose. Take for example, Moses (Exodus 19:9), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:7-9) and King David (2Samuel 23:1-2) as representatives of the Law, Prophets and the Psalms. They each wrote the inspired words given to them by the Lord. God also spoke through the New Testament writers. By this means they were able to accurately record everything that He requires us to know for our salvation.



identify some key points of Bible teaching.

Translations

In the 1st Century AD Christianity spread westward to the Latin speaking half of the Roman Empire. A Latin translation of the Bible therefore became necessary. Many Latin translations were made of the Old and New Testaments, dating from the 2nd Century AD.

↘ Jerome

In 382 the Pope commissioned Jerome to make a new authoritative Latin translation which was accepted by Christendom and was known as the 'current received' or 'common version'. It did not receive the designation the 'Vulgate' until the Council of Trent in 1546.

Jerome's source documents for this work included Hebrew and Greek Old Testament texts and Old Latin texts. The spread of Christianity from the 2nd to 5th Centuries AD brought the Gospel message to many more nations including Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia and Armenia. This was made possible through the translation of many more versions of the Bible, for people to read and learn of the Gospel message of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. For God has ensured that His plan and purpose with mankind was available for all to read.

↘ Caedmon

At various times between the 7th and 14th Centuries AD, the Psalms and portions of the Old and New Testaments were translated from Latin into English. Today we still have some references to these early translations, but most of them have not survived. For

Wholly Inspired

The last Book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, is a personal message from the Lord Jesus Christ to believers telling them of things that will happen before the Kingdom of God is set up on earth. This is how he described his message:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants – things which must shortly take place. And he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John (Revelation 1:1).

Thus Jesus shows us that the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God. For Jesus used the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets to help his followers understand God's purpose through his ministry and sacrifice (see Luke 24:44-45).

The Bible has stood the test of time. Its message is unchanging and God, in His mercy, offers us a hope of life beyond the grave, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As this history of the English Bible progresses we will also

example, Bede tells us of a 7th Century Whitby monk by the name of Caedmon who made a paraphrase translation from Latin to Anglo-Saxon and is said to have sung of many events recorded in the Bible – the Creation, the Exodus and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

↘ **Guthlac**

Around the close of the 7th Century AD, Guthlac a Saxon hermit from Crowland near Peterborough translated a Psalter, that is, a group of Psalms for liturgical use. Another version of the Psalter was made in 706 by Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury.

↘ **Bede**

In Britain Latin did not extinguish the mix of local languages as it did in other Western Roman Provinces. However, Latin continued to be the language of the learned. Bede was a famous scholar of his day. His studies included Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He was a monk in the monastery of Jarrow and translated parts of the Bible from Latin into Anglo-Saxon. Bede (circa 637-735) translated the Lord's Prayer, the Gospel of John and the Creed into Anglo-Saxon. This was for the guidance of the native clergy whose understanding of Latin was limited.

↘ **Alfred the Great**

At the end of the 9th Century, Alfred the Great translated the Ten Commandments into Anglo-Saxon which became the first part of the ancient laws of England. Alfred recognised that God's Laws are the best basis and model for human legislation. He also began a translation of the Psalms but died before the task was finished.

↘ **Aldred**

The 7th Century Lindisfarne Gospels are an example of perhaps the first

English interlinear translation of the Latin text. Appearing as a background to this page, these Gospels contain a word-by-word translation into Old English (Anglo-Saxon). This was written between the lines of the Latin text during the third quarter of the 10th Century AD by a priest named Aldred. This is the earliest surviving version of the gospels in any form of the English language.

Latin Versions

After the 11th Century Norman Conquest, Latin remained the language of the Church and of scholars in Western Europe. This was a barrier for the common people as it inhibited free access to reading the Bible. They had to rely on the Church priests for an interpretation of the Bible message. However, the winds of change were blowing and the drive for unfettered access to the Word of God would prove to be unstoppable.

The Lord God tells us that His Word is unstoppable. It cannot be thwarted by men, it will achieve His plan and purpose with mankind. The prophet Isaiah says:

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Peter Moore

Next month: the work of Wycliffe

Paul and King Agrippa

Now that the apostle Paul had appealed to Caesar by exercising his rights as a Roman citizen, the Roman governor Festus had to summarise the case against him so that he could send the prisoner for trial in Rome. The charges the Jews had made against Paul baffled Festus so he was delighted when King Herod Agrippa called at Caesarea he asked if the king would hear Paul's case and help him with the summary of charges.

Baffled!

Festus recounted to Herod how he had arranged for a hearing of the case, once the Jewish hierarchy had come to Caesarea. He had been baffled by the case against Paul, for it did not consist of normal criminal activities but related to aspects of the Jewish faith. In particular, the argument concerned someone called Jesus, who was supposed to be dead but who Paul claimed was alive. It is understandable that the case perplexed Festus since it ought to be relatively easy to show that this Jesus was dead. After all, he had been crucified! And if he was dead, he would have reasoned, that was an end of that!

So why was there such a fuss about Paul's claim that Jesus was now alive? And why were the Jewish authorities asking for Paul's death for such a claim? It should have been easy for them to demonstrate that this Jesus was dead. Just produce the body!

Note that despite the fact that Felix said he could make no sense of the charges against Paul, he was quite clear that the central issue was the alleged resurrection of Jesus. So Paul had managed to get his main point across! It seems likely that, Festus



now realised that Paul was no danger to Rome, but that he was a harmless crank. So what could he say to Caesar?

Another Hearing!

No doubt intrigued by the case, King Agrippa indicated that he would like to hear what Paul had to say and Festus arranged for a hearing the following day. Agrippa and

Bernice arrived at the audience hall with great ceremony. The hearing was also attended by the 'commanders', that is, military tribunes and prominent men of the city. There would be five commanders since five cohorts were stationed at Caesarea. The prominent men of the city would be largely Gentile. Here was a remarkable fulfilment of something the Lord Jesus had said about Paul many years before:

"He is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

Paul probably had mixed feelings about a further defence. It would provide an opportunity to witness to Gentile leaders and to a king who was regarded as the secular head of the Jewish church; yet it would not necessarily facilitate his early departure to Rome.

Opening the hearing, Festus addressed Agrippa and the other digni-

taries by setting out the case before them as he understood it. After hearing Paul, Festus concluded that the charges against him did not amount to a capital offence. But the prisoner had exercised his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard before the Emperor, so he would go to Rome. But it was pointless sending a prisoner for a hearing before the Emperor without being able to specify what crimes he was alleged to have committed.

Although Festus did not say this, it would also be evident that his own reputation would be at stake. The prisoner had, in effect, expressed his lack of confidence in the Governor's capability and if he appeared before the Emperor without proper documentation then the latter would question the competence of his representative in Judea! So, Festus explained that the purpose of the hearing was to enable King Agrippa to assist him in establishing what the prosecution case was about.

Paul before Agrippa

King Agrippa now took charge of the hearing, indicating to Paul that he might speak for himself. This was all that the king could do, for he could not ask him how he pleaded or how he answered the charges since it seems that no one knew what these were!

Paul stretched out his hand, perhaps as a gesture of respect or as the usual stance of an orator, and expressed his satisfaction at being able to present his case since he knew that Agrippa was expertly familiar with Jewish customs and controversies. So Paul besought his judge to listen patiently to what he had to say. He began by explaining that he was well known to the Jews, especially those in

Jerusalem as he had been brought up and educated there and had been groomed for high office. He was so well regarded by the priestly hierarchy that he had been commissioned to persecute Christians. He had been brought up as a Pharisee: Agrippa would know that this was the most zealous Jewish sect. So his Jewish credentials were impeccable.

Now Paul comes to the crux of the issue in question. He was being judged, he said, for believing in the very essence of Judaism. This was the promise which God had made to the patriarchs. This promise – the promise of the Messiah – was the central hope of Judaism and the whole purpose of their faith. Yet it was for his faith in these things that the Jews, of all people, were accusing him!

Paul then asked the key question which was the difficulty with which Festus struggled during the earlier hearing when Paul affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth whom the authorities had executed, was alive again.

“Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?” (Acts 26:8).

Any Jew who read his Old Testament Scriptures would be aware of instances when God had indeed raised the dead. The prophet Elijah raised the widow of Zarephath's son (1 Kings 17:17-24) and the prophet Elishah raised the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4:32-37). Even if one disregarded these examples, as the Sadducees did, it was still a vital question: Was God incapable of raising the dead?

The answer was obvious to Paul. Of course God was able to raise the dead. But what would Herod think, and what might he say, if anything?

John Hellawell

Bible Reading

JANUARY

1	Gen. 1, 2	Psa. 1, 2	Matt. 1, 2
2	... 3, 4	... 3, 5	... 3, 4
3	... 5, 6	... 6, 8	... 5
4	... 7, 8	... 9, 10	... 6
5	... 9, 10	... 11, 13	... 7
6	... 11, 12	... 14, 16	... 8
7	... 13, 14	... 17	... 9
8	... 15, 16	... 18	... 10
9	... 17, 18	... 19, 21	... 11
10	... 19	... 22	... 12
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12	... 22, 23	... 26, 28	... 14
13	... 24	... 29, 30	... 15
14	... 25, 26	... 31	... 16
15	... 27	... 32	... 17
16	... 28, 29	... 33	... 18
17	... 30	... 34	... 19
18	... 31	... 35	... 20
19	... 32, 33	... 36	... 21
20	... 34, 35	... 37	... 22
21	... 36	... 38	... 23
22	... 37	... 39, 40	... 24
23	... 38	... 41, 43	... 25
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25	... 41	... 45	... 27
26	... 42, 43	... 46, 48	... 28
27	... 44, 45	... 49	... 29
28	... 46, 47	... 50	... 30
29	... 48, 50	... 51, 52	... 31
30	Exod. 1, 2	... 53, 55	... 7, 8
31	... 3, 4	... 56, 57	... 9

FEBRUARY

1	Exod. 5, 6	Psa. 58, 59	Rom. 10, 11
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3	... 9	... 62, 63	... 13, 14
4	... 10	... 64, 65	... 15, 16
5	... 11, 12	... 66, 67	Mark 1
6	... 13, 14	... 68	... 2
7	... 15	... 69	... 3
8	... 16	... 70, 71	... 4
9	... 17, 18	... 72	... 5
10	... 19, 20	... 73	... 6
11	... 21	... 74	... 7
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18	... 29	... 85, 86	... 14
19	... 30	... 87, 88	... 15, 16
20	... 31, 32	... 89	I Cor. 1, 2
21	... 33, 34	... 90, 91	... 3
22	... 35	... 92, 93	... 4, 5
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24	... 37	... 96, 99	... 7
25	... 38	100, 101	... 8, 9
26	... 39, 40	... 102	... 10
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28	... 3, 4	... 104	... 12, 13

MARCH

1	Lev. 5, 6	Psa. 105	I Cor. 14
2	... 7	... 106	... 15
3	... 8	... 107	... 16
4	... 9, 10	108, 109	2 Cor. 1, 2
5	... 11	110, 112	... 3, 4
6	... 12, 13	113, 114	... 5, 6, 7
7	... 14	115, 116	... 8, 9
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9	... 16	119, v. 40	... 12, 13
10	... 17, 18	v. 41-80	Luke 1
11	... 19	v. 81-128	... 2
12	... 20	v. 129-176	... 3
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14	... 22	125, 127	... 5
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16	... 24	131, 134	... 7
17	... 25	135, 136	... 8
18	... 26	137, 139	... 9
19	... 27	140, 142	... 10
20	Num. 1	143, 144	... 11
21	... 2	145, 147	... 12
22	... 3	148, 150	... 13, 14
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27	8, 9	... 5	... 19
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3	... 15	... 59	... 3, 4
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17	2 Sam. 1	... 7	... 18
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4	... 22	... 25	... 13, 14
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6	... 24	... 27	Mark 2
7	I Kings 1	... 28	... 1
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9	... 3	... 30	... 3
10	... 4, 5	... 31	... 4
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26	... 21	... 48	... 7
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30	... 4	... 52	... 12, 13
31	... 5	Lam. 1	... 14

SEPTEMBER

1	2 Kings 6	Lam. 2	I Cor. 15
2	... 7	... 3	... 16
3	... 8	... 4	2 Cor. 1, 2
4	... 9	... 5	... 3, 4
5	... 10	Ezek. 1	... 5, 7
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5	...	20, 21	...	15	Eph.	1, 2
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8	...	26	...	18	Phil.	1, 2
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20	...	3	...	30	...	15, 16
21	...	4	...	31	...	17, 18
22	...	5	Eccl.	1	...	19
23	...	6, 7	...	2	...	20, 21
24	...	8, 9	...	3	Acts	2
25	...	10	...	4	...	3, 4
26	...	11	...	5	...	5, 6
27	...	12, 14	...	6	...	7
28	...	13, 14	...	7	...	8
29	...	15	...	8	...	9
30	...	16	...	9	...	10
31	...	17	...	10	...	11

MAY

1	Deut.	18	Eccl.	10	Acts	9
2	...	19	...	11	...	10
3	...	20	...	12	...	11, 12
4	...	21	Song	1	...	13
5	...	22	...	2	...	14, 15
6	...	23	...	3	...	16, 17
7	...	24	...	4	...	18, 19
8	...	25	...	5	...	20
9	...	26	...	6	...	21, 22
10	...	27	...	7	...	23, 24
11	...	28	...	8	...	25, 26
12	...	29	Isaiah	1	...	27
13	...	30	...	2	...	28
14	...	31	...	3, 4	Col.	1
15	...	32	...	5	...	2
16	...	33, 34	...	6	...	3, 4
17	Joshua	1	...	7	1 Thes.	1, 2
18	...	2	...	8	...	3, 4
19	...	3, 4	...	9	...	5
20	...	5, 6	...	10	2 Thes.	1, 2
21	...	7	...	11	...	3
22	...	8	...	12	1 Tim.	1, 2, 3
23	...	9	...	13	...	4, 5
24	...	10	...	14	...	6
25	...	11	...	15	2 Tim.	1
26	...	12	...	16	...	2
27	...	13	...	17, 18	...	3, 4
28	...	14	...	19	Titus	1, 2, 3
29	...	15	...	20, 21	Philemon	...
30	...	16	...	22	Heb.	1, 2
31	...	17	...	23	...	3, 4, 5

JUNE

1	Joshua	18	Isaiah	24	Heb.	6, 7
2	...	19	...	25	...	8, 9
3	...	20, 21	...	26, 27	...	10
4	...	22	...	28	...	11
5	...	23, 24	...	29	...	12
6	Judges	1	...	30	...	13
7	...	2, 3	...	31	James	1
8	...	4, 5	...	32	...	2
9	...	6	...	33	...	3, 4
10	...	7, 8	...	34	...	5
11	...	9	...	35	1 Peter	1
12	...	10, 11	...	36	...	2
13	...	12, 13	...	37	...	3, 4, 5
14	...	14, 15	...	38	2 Pet.	1, 2
15	...	16	...	39	...	3
16	...	17, 18	...	40	1 John	1, 2
17	...	19	...	41	...	3, 4
18	...	20	...	42	...	5
19	...	21	...	43	2 & 3 John	...
20	Ruth	1, 2	...	44	Jude	...
21	...	3, 4	...	45	Rev.	1, 2
22	1 Sam.	1	...	46, 47	...	3, 4
23	...	2	...	48	...	5, 6
24	...	3	...	49	...	7, 8, 9
25	...	4	...	50	...	10, 11
26	...	5, 6	...	51	...	12, 13
27	...	7, 8	...	52	...	14
28	...	9	...	53	...	15, 16
29	...	10	...	54	...	17, 18
30	...	11, 12	...	55	...	19, 20

OCTOBER

1	1 Chron.	15	Ezek.	27	Luke	24
2	...	16	...	28	Gal.	1, 2
3	...	17	...	29	...	3, 4
4	...	18, 19	...	30	...	5, 6
5	...	20, 21	...	31	Eph.	1, 2
6	...	22	...	32	...	3, 4
7	...	23	...	33	...	5, 6
8	...	24, 25	...	34	Phil.	1, 2
9	...	26	...	35	...	3, 4
10	...	27	...	36	John	1
11	...	28	...	37	...	2, 3
12	...	29	...	38	...	4
13	2 Chron.	1, 2	...	39	...	5
14	...	3, 4	...	40	...	6
15	...	5, 6	...	41	...	7
16	...	7	...	42	...	8
17	...	8	...	43	...	9, 10
18	...	9	...	44	...	11
19	...	10, 11	...	45	...	12
20	...	12, 13	...	46	...	13, 14
21	...	14, 15	...	47	...	15, 16
22	...	16, 17	...	48	...	17, 18
23	...	18, 19	Daniel	1	...	19
24	...	20	...	2	...	20, 21
25	...	21, 22	...	3	Acts	1
26	...	23	...	4	...	2
27	...	24	...	5	...	3, 4
28	...	25	...	6	...	5
29	...	26, 27	...	7	...	7
30	...	28	...	8	...	8
31	...	29	...	9	...	9

NOVEMBER

1	2 Chron.	30	Dan.	10	Acts	10
2	...	31	...	11	...	11, 12
3	...	32	...	12	...	13
4	...	33	Hosea	1	...	14, 15
5	...	34	...	2	...	16, 17
6	...	35	...	3	...	18, 19
7	...	36	...	4	...	20
8	Ezra	1, 2	...	5	...	21, 22
9	...	3, 4	...	6	...	23, 24
10	...	5, 6	...	7	...	25, 26
11	...	7	...	8	...	27
12	...	8	...	9	...	28
13	...	9	...	10	Colos.	1
14	...	10	...	11	...	2
15	Neh.	1, 2	...	12	...	3, 4
16	...	3	...	13	1 Thes.	1, 2
17	...	4	...	14	...	3, 4
18	...	5, 6	Joel	1	...	5
19	...	7	...	2	2 Thes.	1, 2
20	...	8	...	3	...	3
21	...	9	...	4	1 Tim.	1, 2, 3
22	...	10	...	5	...	4, 5
23	...	11	...	6	...	6
24	...	12	...	7	2 Tim.	1
25	...	13	...	8	...	2
26	Ezra	1	...	9	...	3, 4
27	...	2	...	10	Titus	1, 2, 3
28	...	3, 4	...	11	Philemon	...
29	...	5, 6	...	12	Heb.	1, 2
30	...	7, 8	Obadiah	1	...	3, 4, 5

DECEMBER

1	Esth.	9, 10	Jonah	1	Heb.	6, 7
2	Job	1, 2	...	2, 3	...	8, 9
3	...	3, 4	...	4	...	10
4	...	5, 6, 7	...	5	...	11
5	...	8	...	6	...	12
6	...	9	...	7	...	13
7	...	10	...	8	...	14
8	...	11	...	9	...	15
9	...	12	...	10	...	16
10	...	13	...	11	...	17
11	...	14	...	12	...	18
12	...	15	...	13	...	19
13	...	16, 17	...	14	...	20
14	...	18, 19	...	15	...	21
15	...	20	...	16	...	22
16	...	21	...	17	...	23
17	...	22	...	18	...	24
18	...	23, 24	...	19	...	25
19	...	25, 27	...	20	...	26
20	...	28	...	21	...	27
21	...	29, 30	...	22	...	28
22	...	31	...	23	...	29
23	...	1	...	24	...	30
24	...	2	...	25	...	31
25	...	3	...	26	...	1
26	...	4	...	27	...	2
27	...	5	...	28	...	3
28	...	6	...	29	...	4
29	...	7	...	30	...	5
30	...	8	...	31	...	6
31	...	9	7

By courtesy of The Christadelphian

Two Testaments Make One Bible

*Some people say that the Old and New Testaments in the Bible tell different stories but Christadelphians believe differently. In this article **Trevor Pritchard** shows how the Bible is remarkably consistent despite it having been written by many people over a long period of time*

Founding Father

We need to start with the many stories about Israel in the first book of the Bible. The God of heaven revealed His purpose in creation to the founder of the Hebrew nation when God promised Abraham that from him would grow a great nation, that he would be blessed and that those that blessed his people would also be blessed (Genesis 12: 2,3).

It was as God had promised and the nation of Israel grew out of Abraham's family, but the promises were never forgotten. Like a golden thread woven through the Old Testament, those promises were renewed by the prophets of God, time and time again to successive generations, all of whom were much in need of a blessing!

The purpose and plan of God the Creator was that the nation of Israel should be a shining beacon for all nations, one that would bring the light of the knowledge of the glory of God when they communicated His great plan and purpose to the nations of the world. Their behaviour and demeanour should have proclaimed it – but each individual Israelite had a choice. There was nothing automatic or inevitable about it: everyone had to make up their own mind and act accordingly. A person could either fulfil God's intentions or refuse to do so.

It should have been clear that a person's life would only be properly ful-

filled if he or she always turned towards God, realising that in Him alone lay peace and contentment.

Notable Exceptions

There were some notable successes. Famous Old Testament characters such as Abraham, his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, Grand Vizier Joseph, Moses who led the Hebrews out of Egypt, the greatest of Israel's kings – David, Elijah the prophet, King Hezekiah and many others less well-known took note of what God had promised and lived their lives accordingly. But sadly the nation as a whole turned their backs on God and on all that He had promised them.

The Old Testament books are mainly about the opportunity that was given to the nation of Israel and the choices that were made throughout their history. The challenge is always whether the generation in question will follow God's Way, or make their own way through life, often preferring the gods of the nations around them. The sadness of what happened is summarised in the New Testament by the apostle Paul when he was in Rome, talking to the Jewish community there:

The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; for the hearts of this

people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.” Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it! (Acts 28:25–28).



sin into God’s wonderful world thus spoiling what God had created (see Genesis 3: 17-19 and Romans 5:12).

We need to appreciate that death is a punishment for wrongdoing. In the New Testament death is called “*the wages of sin*” – and they are a very real payment for wrongdoing (Romans 6: 23). Every one of us earns those wages many times over during our lifetimes, however long we live. So it

Not without Fault!

Mind you, even those who strove to live as God would have had them live, they made some terrible mistakes. Abraham told lies about his wife; Isaac didn’t guide his sons as he should have done; Jacob deceived his father; Moses disobeyed God and was prevented from entering the Promised Land; King David stole another man’s wife and then had her husband murdered. And I could go on!

All of them despite their good intentions were weak and erring men and women just like us. The Bible speaks of “*the weakness of the flesh*” – and how right that is! All of us have good intentions but so often find ourselves unable to fulfil them. Have a look at what the apostle Paul writes about this to the believers in Rome, when reflecting upon his past life and its struggles (Romans 7:18-23).

All of us – from the least to the greatest – share the same fragile nature, a nature which is subject to corruption, sin, disease and finally death. This is the very essence of human nature and we have inherited that flawed nature from our first parents, Adam and Eve. They brought

looked as if God’s purpose was going to be thwarted by the constant rebellion of the Israelites, and because of that rebellion, all men would die. What was to be done and how could things be put right?

God’s Foreknowledge

If God was just like us humans the future would be as unknown to Him as it is to us. If that were so, when the people of the Old Testament failed, He would have been looking around for another way forward. But God is not like us and He knew exactly what would happen. God’s plan for mankind and His remedy were in place from the very beginning. He knew just what would happen when mankind exercised its free-will and so His sublime plan of salvation was revealed in the Bible from the outset. And more and more detail was provided as generations came and went.

Throughout the Old Testament prophecies are made about One who would be born who would, despite man’s rebellious nature, realise God’s plan. Spend a little time looking at the following passages of Scripture:

- Genesis 3:15,
- Psalm 72:1-8,
- Isaiah 9: 6-7 and
- Isaiah 11: 1-9.

They speak of someone special who would come, someone who would have a dual role. Not only would he, in course of time, be the king of the whole world – and I mean that in a very real political sense – but he would also be the One who would destroy, through his own death, that rebellious nature which is common to man. Just look at Genesis 22:15-18 and Hebrews 2: 14-18. Abraham was promised someone who would conquer all enemies and Hebrews tells us that Jesus did this by dying on the cross.

For the coming Deliverer – the one who would have a dual role to fulfil – is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole of God’s purpose is centred in him. He gave his life as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. His life was expended and his blood was shed so that we might receive forgiveness of sins and have a hope for the future.

God’s Greatest Gift

Jesus Christ is God’s greatest gift to mankind – for both Jew and Gentile. He is a gift from a loving God to weak and failing mankind (see John 3:16). It is quite overwhelming to understand that this man gave his life – by the most cruel death of crucifixion – for all men and women, including you and me. Yet he is the very same person who is destined to be God’s King here on earth – the one before whom everyone will bow. We know this because the promises of the Old Testament are repeated and enlarged in the New Testament. For example, when Mary was

told that she was to bear God’s Son, the angel told her:

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:31–33).

Precious Promises

In Galatians 3: 23-29, the apostle Paul explains that the promises made to Abraham were in fact made to and about Jesus Christ and, because he has fulfilled them, all of us can now become children of God and heirs to those very promises, if we want to. So now we are the ones who have a choice to make.

If we do nothing then we will have already made that choice by default. As the years go by, we can only anticipate extinction in the grave. If however we turn towards God realising our own need of salvation from sin and death, we can look forward to resurrection, full of joyful anticipation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). For the real hope offered in the Bible gives our lives meaning and purpose. The promise is that we can be raised from the dead when Jesus returns so that we can live with him in the coming Kingdom of God when it is re-established here on earth.

Death is not the end

When the New Testament speaks of the death of a believer it uses the term “sleep” to describe the period of unconscious existence that will occur until Jesus comes. A believer is said to be “asleep in Jesus” (1 Corinthians

15:50-57). To be in that relationship with Jesus you have to obey the commandments of Christ and be baptized – by full immersion in water – having come to understand and believe the Bible message of salvation. Baptism is the means God has provided whereby we can begin a new life in Christ. As the apostle Paul said:



If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:19–22).

Living with Christ

This is the greatest challenge any of us can ever face. It is the challenge which comprises the consistent message of the Bible. You will have noticed as you have read through this article that the Scriptural quotations have been drawn from all parts of the Bible. The golden thread of truth runs throughout Scripture. So, which course are you going to choose? What are you going to do?

Are you going to read God's Word? If so, will it be more than just now and again: on a daily basis to feed your inner man? The daily Bible Readings included in this issue will give you that opportunity, reading just a few chapters a day, every day. The alternative is that you will feed on the diet of man-made thinking the world provides, with its selfish ways of thinking, its preoccupation with money, its constant

hankering after more and more possessions, and its love of what man calls 'progress'. Jesus once declared himself to be the bread of life (John 6: 35). So our prayer should always be that

we might be drawn to God's Word so that we might understand its consistent message, and act upon it.

God's Offer

The Bible has a message of glorious hope for the future, which can be an abiding strength for the present. That hopeful message is just what this troubled world desperately needs and we, as individuals, also need.

- ❖ It is a personal message about freedom from the shackles of sin and death.
- ❖ It is a wonderful message that enables us to look to the future with confidence.
- ❖ It is a merciful message that God's purpose will be realised, despite man's rebellion, (read Isaiah 2:2-4).

We trust that you will have the courage to face this demanding challenge and begin a new life in Christ by turning in repentance towards the Creator for the help and guidance to be found throughout His Word. And that you will then want to be baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ His Son, so you can begin to live for him and with him: a life of love, joy and hope.

Trevor A. Pritchard

Genesis - In the Beginning

The opening verse of the Bible pictures the earth in a state of chaos. Deep waters surge to and fro, and it is intensely dark.



But God the Creator, in six days of intense activity and by the limitless energy of His Spirit power, transformed the turmoil into a new world of order and beauty. He turned on the light of the sun, dried out the land, planted trees and grasses, and stocked both sea, land and sky with a huge variety of life forms, each capable of reproducing. Then the mighty Designer proclaimed the seventh day a day of rest. Amazingly, that is how it still is – we measure our lives by groups of seven days and we call them weeks.

In the second chapter, we have more detail of the creation of man, brought to life with the breath of God, the very same life-force which keeps us going until one day we breathe our last, and our life stops. That sad fate is introduced in chapter three.

Tragedy!

Adam, and his partner Eve lived in a Paradise – a watered garden. There they were subject to God's law – *'feel free to eat any fruit you desire, except from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'*. One day the Serpent – a creature created by God – fooled Eve into breaking God's rule. She then talked Adam into joining her in crime. Soon the human pair found themselves before the great Judge and were

condemned to die at the end of a process of ageing, inevitable and final. This grim news was accompanied by exclusion from Paradise; in future they were to find their food only by toil and perspiration.

This human condition, which we all inherit (remember, we break God's rules ourselves, and therefore deserve Adam's sentence) would be grim indeed, were it not that God is merciful. Seeing the predicament, He prepared a way for us to achieve reconciliation and everlasting life.

Take a look at Genesis 3:15 for a taste of the many hidden surprises in the Bible. The Serpent had deceived Eve into breaking God's law, which the Bible calls Sin. From this point onwards, the Serpent in the Bible becomes symbolic of Sin. So, in this cryptic statement, which seems at first glance to state the obvious – that mankind and snakes do not get on with each other – God promised that a descendant of Eve would one day destroy Sin. He would stamp on the Serpent's head.

The Way

The solution to this 'Serpent Mystery' only became plain with the coming of Jesus, millennia later. Jesus, descended from Eve, conquered the temptation to sin day after day. Arrested and falsely accused, he volunteered to die, a sentence he did not deserve, and endured the pain of the cross so that he could share our

humanity to the full. Consigned to the tomb, he could not in justice remain there, being a sinless man. God raised him to immortal life on the third day. At this point the power of sin was broken and those who believed in Jesus could be forgiven their sins and likewise raised from the dead at the Last Day. Amazingly, the whole gospel is there, in the opening chapters of Genesis!



After their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, it seems that Adam and his family worshipped God at the gates of their former paradise, through which they could see the Way to the Tree of Life. Fiery cherubs and a flaming sword barred the road to happiness and fellowship with God, but the hope was set before them that one day, on God's terms, and in His good time, they might eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and live forever. That could only be possible through the death of the Son of God. And so they brought to this appointed place at the required times the sacrificial animals which God had prescribed, spotless and blemish-free, to represent in symbol his own dear Son.

Downhill Path

The next 1000 years or so of human history are compressed into a few verses. Chapters four and five of Genesis record two rival genealogies – the one of the descendants of Cain, and the other of Seth, born to replace Abel. Cain's family were strong, warlike and selfish, with no respect



for God. Seth's people, in contrast, were believers, and kept the commandments of the Lord. At last the longsuffering of the Creator was stretched too far. The Cainites had filled the world with violence and bloodshed. God's Way, the life He taught man to live, had become corrupted and man did what he pleased.

The time had come to wash the world clean and start again.

The account of the Flood in Genesis chapters six and seven is a stark reminder of the power of God to judge the world, and His mercy in preserving the children of faithful Noah. He does not condemn the righteous with the wicked. When the waters retreated, Noah's family replenished the earth. From them came the three main branches of the modern family tree – the black peoples, the Asiatic/Europeans, and the Semitic race of Jews and Arabs.

No Change!

Not surprisingly, the rebellious heart of man had not changed. Noah's descendants settled in Mesopotamia (recognised as the source of civilisation) and began to build the great cities of the plain. In an attempt to thwart the Creator, they planned the Tower of Babel, high enough they thought to protect them against another flood (even though God had promised He would not send one again). A visit from the angels (God's immortal messengers) put a stop to that by confusing their languages. After

that the disparate tribes spread outwards into the earth.

Abraham

From this point the Genesis camera focuses on the family of one man – Abraham, the father of the Jews and the Arabs. Our hero, a devout believer in God, was asked by an angelic visitor to leave his comfortable home in Ur, a city whose ruins are still visible in Iraq. In spite of the obvious uncertainties, and his advanced age, he set off for an unknown land. His reward was the promise of a large family, and a permanent inheritance of this land, which turned out to be Canaan, or Israel as we call it today.

The fascinating biography of the Father of the Faithful occupies 13 chapters of the Bible. Abraham's faith in God was tested time after time. He had been promised a son, but it took 25 years before the baby arrived. He had been guaranteed the land on which he camped in his tent, but until the day of his death he still owned none of it except a cemetery plot, which he paid for in cash.

As the New Testament writer to the Hebrews remarks, Abraham died in faith, still believing God would give him the land in which he was to be buried.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ... all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (Hebrews 11:13, 39-40).

This means Abraham's faith stretched beyond death. He believed in the resurrection from the dead. He was convinced God would one day bring him back to life, so that he could inherit the land for ever. That is why the Apostle Paul says the 'gospel' was preached to Abraham.

Isaac and Ishmael

Abraham had two sons. One was born of his slave-concubine Hagar. This was Ishmael, forefather of the Arab races. The other was Isaac, his son by his true wife Sarah, and born miraculously in extreme old age. God chose Isaac as the heir of Abraham's promises, and repeated them to this young man as he grew up. One most moving incident, in chapter 22, involves the final and greatest test for Abraham.

The angel of the Lord asked him to offer his beloved Isaac as a sacrifice on a hill three days' journey away – from the directions probably Mount Moriah outside Jerusalem. The torment of the old man and the obedience of his young son – who was later spared – is a classic of literature. It also helps us understand how much God suffered when He allowed His own dear Son to die at the hands of his enemies, so that we could be delivered from death.

In time Isaac and his wife had twin boys, and once again the firstborn, Esau, was demoted in favour of the younger, Jacob. Esau became the head of the Edomites, who like the Arabs became implacable rivals to the descendants of Jacob – the twelve tribes of Israel. The twists in the fortunes of Jacob are riveting. Jacob tried endlessly to prosper himself by craft and guile but came to realise, after 20 years, that it was God who had protected him, and given him success.

In recognition of this realisation, Jacob's name was changed to Israel, 'a prince with God'. He returned to the land of his birth, but was devastated by the loss of his dearest wife, Rachel, in childbirth. Sorrow struck again when his favourite, her son Joseph, was taken from him by stealth as his jealous brothers sold him into slavery and pretended to their father that he was dead.

Joseph in Egypt

The last 14 chapters of the Book of Beginnings tell the amazing story of young Joseph, transplanted violently at the age of 17 into an alien land. For 21 years he had no contact with his family or any other believer in God, yet his faith never wavered. His master promoted him from slave to head of the house. Then overnight he was thrown into prison, after his master's wife pretended he had molested her. Defenceless and alone, this second reversal was daunting but even in prison Joseph made the best of things.

Eventually his God-given gift of interpreting dreams opens the door to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and overnight he finds himself Lord of the Land. Here he was in a position to provide for the salvation of his family in a time of famine. They all came down to Egypt to live with him, and Jacob found his favourite son alive after all. God had guided the fortunes of Abraham's family through a plot with many twists and turns.

In fifty fast-moving chapters Genesis traverses two thousand years of human history and the Bible drama is poised to introduce the Exodus, the beginning of the nation of Israel.

David Pearce



Time

Time slips through our fingers
Like golden grains of sand,
As God works out His purpose
In all that He has planned.

And He has made His purpose known:
It's written in His Word;
So all who love and fear His Name
Will never be deterred.

And though the future may look bleak
To those whose faith is nil;
All those who know the Scriptures
See the working of His Will.

Time marches on and soon there'll be
God's Will on earth sublime;
May we be there, its joys to share,
Until the end of time.

Colleen Simons

Bible Reading Help

If you would like help with the Daily Bible Readings – the tables on pages 10 & 11 – use the worldwide web to get comments every day.

Find www.dailyreadings.org.uk where there are over 20,000 different comments, all designed to help you understand the Bible. If you wish, you can have each day's thoughts e-mailed to you.

Peter Forbes

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