

# Bridging the Gap

There is a small town in England called Tadcaster, through which runs the river Wharfe. The river is not huge, but wide enough to need a road bridge to cross it. In fact, the bridge is believed to have been there for some 300 years, and the earliest bridge at this spot was probably built around 1200 AD. None of this is particularly remarkable in this part of the world, but it has given rise to an important local news story.

On 29<sup>th</sup> December 2015, the bridge was partially destroyed in a storm, such that it could not be used. It was more than 12 months before the repairs were completed and the bridge became usable once more. This caused lots of local protest, as traffic had to make a very long detour to get from one side of town to the other.

Local townsfolk, interviewed for news programmes, talked about the community being divided in half. People found life very difficult, for example if they lived on one side and worked on the other; or if they had family on the opposite side; or regularly needed to cross the river in the course of their daily activities.

Where people are divided, be it by a river, train track or ravine, bridges play a vital role in connecting them. This applies in a figurative way to the huge gap between God and mankind.

## The Great Gap

It can be said that God is everything that humans are not. He is the Creator of the universe, the source of life, immortal and invisible. He lives in heaven, and is described as inhabiting the light to which no human can approach.



*Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God Who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. ...Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, Whom no man has seen or can see, to Whom be honour and everlasting power (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16).*

We read in Titus 1:2 that God cannot lie; and in James 1:13 that He cannot be tempted. He is unchanging (James 1:17; Malachi 3:6).

We know all too well that we are mortal, earthbound and prone to all sorts of temptation and personal failings, however hard we try. Of course, some try harder than others to live good, moral lives, but we all fail to some extent.

We can see this gap very clearly in Genesis chapter 3. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and this is what 'sin' is. Sin separates mankind from God, and is the cause of death (James 1:15). Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden and prevented from returning.

Ever since, men and women have continued to disobey God, whether in big things or small, and the gap remains.

## The 'Bridge'

Bridging the gap requires someone extremely special, a unique individual. Somebody who can have direct connection to God and enter His presence, whilst relating to and being accessible to men and women. The Lord Jesus Christ is this person.

Jesus was born to a human mother, Mary, and shared our nature. He was mortal just like us, and was tempted in just the way we are tempted. As he grew up, he suffered the difficulties of life, and despite his obedience to God, he died a horrible death, dying for us.

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but [Jesus] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).*

The key point: in all of this he did NOT sin or disobey God. In fact, he led a sinless life, always obedient to his Father's will. Because of this, God raised him from the dead and made him immortal. Not only that, but Jesus went to heaven afterwards and is there today, literally in the presence of God.

*For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9:24).*

Jesus was Son of God and Son of Man; able to sin yet sinless; born mortal but made immortal; lived on earth but now in heaven. We can see why he is the unique person who can bridge the apparently unbridgeable gap between God and mankind. He is described as a priest or mediator, the one who can reconcile the two parties.



Yet it took a life of obedient, dedicated service and the death of this perfect man to bring this about. Think about the great love that God has for His creation, and that Jesus has for his fellow men and women. The 'bridge' was provided at great cost to them both, and is something for which we can be very grateful.

## Using the 'Bridge'

Like any bridge, this provision is only effective to us if we make use of it. We read that Christ suffered "*that he might bring us to God*" (1 Peter 3:18). It is through belief in his work, and baptism as evidence of that belief, that we can be brought near to God. We need to do this if we want Jesus to act as our connection to God.

The rewards are wonderful. We can have an active relationship with God, providing perspective and confidence in life today. Even more, it makes the future bright, with the prospect of a direct relationship with God, as foretold about His future kingdom:

*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God (Revelation 21:3).*

**Editor**