

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1456

Getting Safely Home – page 3

***A Closer Look at Bible
Prophecy – page 9***

***Three Steps to a
Happier Life
– page 18***

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

121st Year

105

1456

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Getting Safely Home

It seems that we can no longer be wholly certain about even the simplest and most routine matters in life – like arriving home safely.

Who knows whether there will be a suicide bomber sitting in the same railway carriage, or a package primed to explode on the luggage rack? Or could there be a hidden device waiting on the roadside?

Fear for the Future

People trying to disrupt the lives of ordinary people, who are about their everyday activities, want to make people afraid. But they are also achieving another objective, one

they may have forgotten about themselves.

They are helping all of us to realise that we should not take too much for granted: for life is an uncertain commodity and all sorts of things can happen unexpectedly.

Danger exists around us all of the time because we are mortal and are therefore bound to die at some time or other.

It's not a thought we dwell upon too much, because such morbid thoughts could make us depressed. We tend to put all such thoughts out of our minds until something like a bombing campaign, or a brutal murder, reminds us of the unpleasant facts. For, whatever it was, it

could have happened to us!

All at Sea

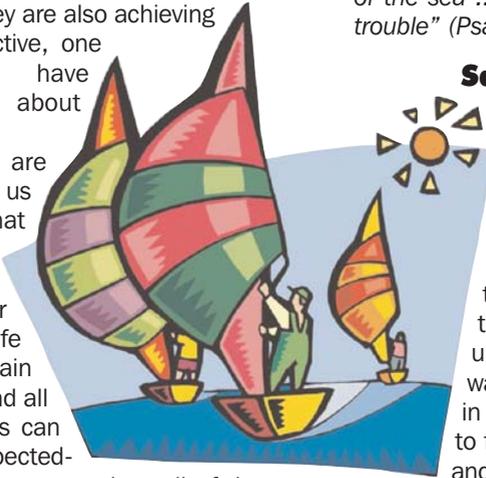
People who live and work in dangerous circumstances have to come to terms with such routine risks and take what avoiding action they can. Sailors or trawler-men, for example, live dangerously because the sea is a dangerous place. Long ago the Hebrew poet wrote about:

“Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea ... their soul melts because of trouble” (Psalm 107:23-26).

Safe Passage

Journeying across dangerous seas is very much like our journey through life. Nobody knows what might happen next, or how suddenly things could change. But there are things we can do to minimise the risk and to keep our spirits up. Just as sailors have found ways across the sea or places in which to shelter, it is possible to find the right way through life, and a safe haven. God still works wonders for those who come to Him seeking salvation from sin. The writer to the Hebrews, who seems to have had a fair amount of seafaring experience, says this:

“God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we



might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:17-19).

He was writing to people who were being persecuted for their faith and was reminding them that there are some unshakable things in life – things that would never move however great the pressures. Right at the top of the apostle’s list were the promises God has made and one in particular, which God had underwritten by an oath that He swore – a promise and an oath: the apostle says those are immutable – or unchangeable – things. Trace back to the passage in question (in Genesis chapter 22) and you will find that the promise was about the Coming of a King, who will reign over all God’s enemies and bring lasting safety and eternal security to a troubled world. God has promised to take over the rulership of our troubled world and make it a place of peace and harmony, when His will and His values will prevail and great blessing will result.



Constant Hope

The boats shown on this month’s front cover are anchored in Tenby harbour, on the South Wales coast, and they are safe for as long as they stay there. But boats are made for use on the open sea and those who sail them need requisite skills. They have to know how to navigate, how to sail, when to run for cover, how to avoid the dangers of the sea and coast – all

sorts of maritime skills are required. When leaving harbour the sailors will travel in hope of a safe return, as one of them indicated by naming his boat “Constant Hope”.

That’s how all of us can travel if we have put our lives right with God. God offers us nothing less than constant hope – in His promises, His purpose and His salvation. He wants to save us from our sins and to give us a sure and certain prospect of a safe haven in His coming Kingdom. Jerusalem – the city from where the Lord Jesus will reign as worldwide King – is an inland city. But the prophet Isaiah describes the safety and security of the coming age in maritime terms, saying that Jerusalem will become a harbour for all those who have crossed

the troubled sea of life and at last have found their way home to be with the King:

“Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that will not be taken down; not one of its stakes will ever be removed, nor will any of its cords be broken. But there the majestic LORD will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, in which no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by (for the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us)” (Isaiah 33:20-22).

Believe God’s promises as recorded in the Bible and you can live with assurance and confidence. For God’s Word is a constant in ever-changing times. He can bring you safely home.

Editor

Norman the Navigator

Tenby and Saundersfoot are both beautiful holiday areas in South Wales, and both provide harbours for a multitude of small pleasure craft. Locals and visitors alike flock to enjoy the opportunities of enjoying this magnificent coastline.

In this article **Derek Palmer**, who lives locally, describes some seafaring experiences and applies those lessons to life.

Norman the Sailor

Some years ago I met a local character, Norman, who regularly sailed out of Saundersfoot not only around the adjacent coast line but as far as Southern Ireland to places like Dunmore, the Waterford River, Kinsale, even visits to South and East Ireland to Galway, the Dingle peninsular and Bantry Bay. Such was his enthusiasm that he soon interested me in sailing, shared with me his healthy respect for the sea and taught me how to keep safe on this sometimes dangerous element

Apart from the more obvious precautions like the use of safety lines and life-jackets, the availability of navigation aids and emergency flares, Norman was very conscious of the need to know exactly where you are in case a sea mist suddenly left one without a visible point of reference.

Navigation

‘Navigation’, said Norman, ‘consists of two processes which have to be continually repeated

- ☞ Position Fixing;
- ☞ Course Setting, first from a known starting position, and thereafter from the latest of a succession of observed positions (or fixes).

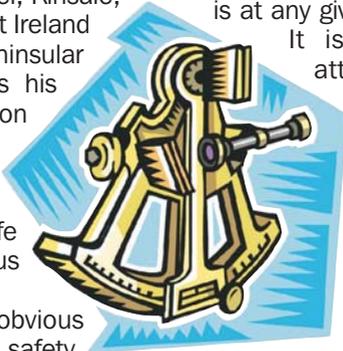
These, together with keeping careful note of the course being steered and the speed of travel, not forgetting to make appropriate allowance for current drift, tidal flow and wind strength, mean that should visibility be lost the sailor can know quite precisely where the boat is at any given moment.

It is when this meticulous attention to detail is appreciated that one recognizes the beauty of a phrase that expressed one of Norman’s most disparaging comments for some weekend sailors. ‘*They just swan around*’ he used to say. It’s a powerful image.

Think of a Swan on a lake: it appears to paddle around aimlessly, turning this way and that without any purpose or destination. Such a casual attitude on the sea, felt Norman, was foolhardy. For him a sail out of Saundersfoot Harbour into the bay was never a matter of ‘swanning around’. A course would be set for a distant headland, then perhaps for a Marker Buoy, then back for Caldy Island. There was a course set at all times.

Disciplined Living

Once one accepts a discipline like that on the sea, it is but a short step to apply its principles in daily life. Although always meticulous at sea, once in



Norman's shore life, he seemed to find himself as it were adrift without a bearing. This was the time when his wife had died, he was lonely, his eyesight troubling him to a point where reading was impossible, driving was hazardous in the dark and sailing looked doubtful for the next season. Not surprisingly, he became depressed.

It was then that he met someone who suggested the Bible might help and offered to read to him on a Wednesday evening. Some would say that was a chance happening; some that it was merely a fortunate coincidence. Norman came to see it as a chance to take a new bearing, which would give him a new direction in life. He came to believe that it was the hand of God at work in his life.

Setting a New Course

Those Wednesday evening sessions became the reason for Norman to again apply his principles and 'Fix' his position, much after the lines of his advice to me on sea navigation. He came to see that he needed to take immediate action, before the situation proved hopeless. Understanding what he had read, he realised that, in his condition at that time, he was:

"without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

That was not a comfortable fix: he realised that unless he did something about it. But as he read the Bible further, he came to see that he could do something, with God's help.

He promptly 'took soundings', allowed for the variable factors, and was soon baptised – by immersion in water – into

a new course setting for his life. Those who came to know him as a member of the Christadelphian meeting – at their room in Upper Park Street, Tenby – will readily testify how carefully Norman adhered to his new course in life. He was always conscious of the demands of his new course and took constant observations of position to amend his course when it proved necessary.

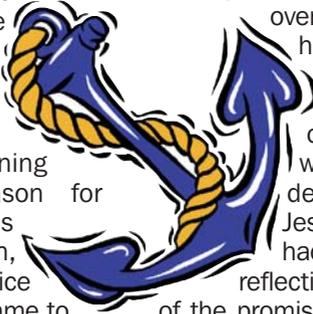
At Anchor

The man who has a clear course before him is a man who knows where he is heading and this is what made Norman so clear in his mind and sure in his dealings with all. Norman's voyage is over for the time being, for he has now fallen asleep in death.

Norman lived with the constant hope that he would be raised from the dead at the Coming of Jesus Christ, a hope that he had developed after mature reflection and by careful analysis of the promises of God. It was for him "an anchor of the soul", for he had set a course in life which is destined to lead him, and others like him, to the life that is to come. This is what the apostle Paul said about that which he was waiting for after his death:

"The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Derek Palmer



World Problems

Birth Pangs of a New Age

One of the most notable 'events' in family life is the birth of a baby. Particularly if the new life has been eagerly awaited with the days counted down towards the 'big day'.

When however, that day (or night!) arrives there may well be hours of relentless pain and discomfort before the child is placed in the mother's arms.

Jesus has promised that he will return to the earth and establish a world-wide government of peace and prosperity. He tells us there will be

clear indications when his coming is near. He tells us the signs will be relentless and distressing but will herald a new birth for the world. He tells us to be watchful and prepared.

Worldwide Troubles

In Luke chapter 21 the words of Jesus are very clear. He had been asked about the signs of his Second Coming and the end of the age and he spoke of several things that had to happen first, including that:

"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven" (21:10,11).

Press headlines and TV News stories illustrate for us everyday that we are living in these momentous times.

□ **Earthquake** monitoring techniques show that our planet is increasingly subject to daily stresses and strains. Fault lines around the globe are constantly moving. The Asian TSUNAMI death-toll stands in excess of a quarter of a million people. Families have suffered terrible losses. Property and livelihoods have been shattered. Recovery will take years and cost millions.

□ **Famine** in vast areas of Africa produces familiar pictures of men, women and children holding out pleading hands for food and drink. Locations are often remote and difficult to access. Aid agencies struggle to help and constantly appeal for increased financial support.

□ **AIDS** is the problem disease world-wide. Thousands are dying daily and many infected children will only have very short lives. Doctors and scientists bend all their energies and resources towards producing an adequate remedy and persuading governments to provide the support and will to tackle the problem.

□ **War** is an ever-present part of news reporting every day. It is impossible to forecast where tensions and strife between and within nations will break out next. Notably nations around Israel in the Middle East are beset with problems.

This part of the world features in a very important way with regard to the coming of Jesus as King, for Jesus went



on to say that the city of Jerusalem was to be occupied by many nations – except by the Jews – until the time of his Coming was near:

“There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people (the Jews). They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (21:23,24).

Now that there are Jews back in Jerusalem the scene is set for the final events that will herald in the New Age – the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth.

Birth Pangs

Distressing as all these things certainly are, they are pointers to something

better that is now at hand. In a parallel account to Luke chapter 21, Jesus said this about all the problems that now beset our world:

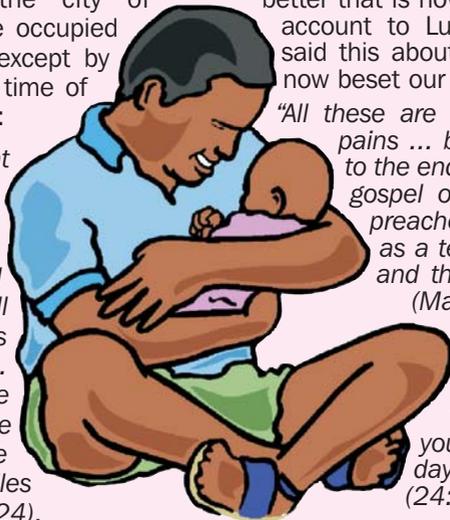
“All these are the beginning of birth pains ... but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:8-14).

His advice to all who want to know what they should do was: *“keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come” (24:42).*

We must watch world events, embrace the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, understand the *“gospel of the kingdom”*, and prepare ourselves to meet the King!

Peter Edwards

Quotations from the NIV



The Kingdom

The wolf shall dwell alongside the lamb
And the cow and the bear shall feed
Their young ones shall lie down together
And a little child shall lead.

The leopard shall lie down with the kid
And the lion, like the ox, shall eat straw
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God
And none shall hurt or destroy any more.



Peggy Rawson

A Closer Look at Bible Prophecy

*In this article **Andy Bownes** examines the way in which the Jewish people are an important signpost to the continuing purpose of God with the earth. He shows, by examining their origins and their present position, that Scripture places Israel at the forefront of events which must take place, prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.*

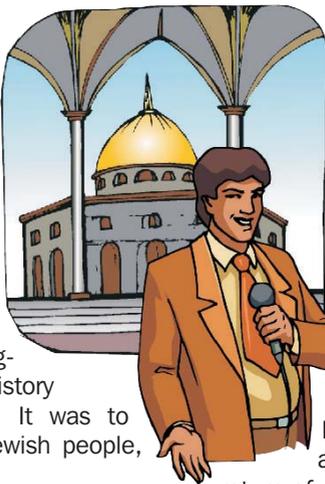
Jews in the News

The nation of Israel has continually suffered conflict, of one sort or another, from many nations, not least from its Arab neighbours. In the last century that came to a climax with the atrocities of the Holocaust. But still the Jews are with us, and still they are in the news. They have long-established roots and their history goes back to Bible times. It was to Abram, the father of the Jewish people, that God once said:

“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:2,3).

Children of Abraham

Later, in Genesis 16, it is recorded that an angel visited Abraham and confirmed that he was to have an heir. His wife Sarah, who was then “well stricken in years” believed that she was too old to have children, so she asked Abraham to marry her maidservant Hagar, thinking that the seed he had been promised must be provided by another woman. Hagar gave



birth to a son, Ishmael, but it was Isaac – indeed born to Sarah, albeit late in her life – who was declared the child of promise (Genesis 17:16; Galatians 4:22,23).

Isaac and Ishmael never got on well together and, thousands of years later, we still see the conflict between Jew and Arab. Despite the best efforts of many leaders in many countries to resolve the conflict, the Bible says there will never be a permanent solution until the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

A Nation Scattered

Scripture tells of God’s many attempts to encourage the descendants of Abraham to be obedient to His law and it faithfully records their many failures over many generations. Moses had warned them of the dire consequences if they persisted in disobedience, including the loss of their land and national existence:

“Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known – wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a

resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life” (Deuteronomy 28:64-66).

That was precisely what happened in the course of time. First dispersed to Babylon, then, from 70 AD, the Jewish people were scattered all around the world. The events of 70 AD and later, documented by many historians, give accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the suffering and scattering of the Jews. It was the start of much national suffering and persecution throughout the ages.

A Nation Regathered

Of all the many events in Israel's history which have thrilled the Bible student over the generations, some happenings in the last century were particularly significant. The long-promised return of the Jews became a reality. The events of World War I brought about the Balfour declaration, stating that the British government supported a Jewish presence in their ancient land.

Later, in 1947, following the atrocities of World War II, the United Nations agreed that Palestine should be divided into Jewish and Palestinian parts, finally giving the Jews their own land again. So in 1948 the Jewish nation was reborn, exactly as the prophets had predicted. This is what just one of them had said would happen – some 2500 years before it came about:

Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and

will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again” (Ezekiel 37:21,22).

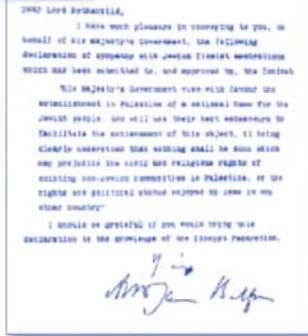
This prophecy has only been partly fulfilled so far. The nation is indeed back in the land – as a Republic but not as a Kingdom. They have a president and a prime minister, but no King, as yet. That will happen when the Lord Jesus comes to save them from their enemies and is then accepted by the nation as their long-awaited Messiah.

The Future of Israel

Despite having their own land, there has been continual unrest from hostile neighbouring countries, just as the prophets said there would be. This is destined to come to a climax when a confederacy of nations attacks the land of Israel, events which are still future. The very same prophet who accurately predicted their return from national exile and dispersion goes on to describe what is due to happen:

“You will come up against my people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the

latter days that I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.” Thus says the Lord God: “Are you he of whom I have spoken in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those



days that I would bring you against them? "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord God, "that my fury will show in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel'" (Ezekiel 38:16-19).



of many nations, not just those in the Middle East. It will be centred in the land of Israel and it is part of the process of fulfilling the final phase of Ezekiel's predictions.

A King is coming to reign on earth, from Jerusalem. The Bible details things which have now happened, and things which are to happen in the

future. Those things which have already happened are proofs of the existence and activity of the God of Israel.

The Jews are a living witness to His existence and their future experiences are the secret to a better future for the world. That time will come when the final part of Ezekiel 37:22 will be fulfilled – One king, the Lord Jesus Christ, will indeed be "king to them all". Are you watching and preparing for that time to come?

Andy Bownes

International Involvement

Ezekiel 38, verse 3, tells us that "Gog" is the Chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal. The "Chief Prince" which is mentioned is translated elsewhere as "Prince of Ros", and "Ros" is an early name for Russia. Similarly, the names "Meshech" and "Tubal" are early names for Moscow and Tobolski. Another nation mentioned with Gog is Persia (Iran). So the Bible shows us that there is due to be a major conflict, in the future which will see the involvement

Britain's Role in Resettling the Jews in Palestine

But to what part of the world shall we look for a power whose interests will make it willing, as it is able, to plant the ensign of civilization upon the mountains of Israel? I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt. The present decisions of "statesmen" are destitute of stability. A shooting star in the political firmament is sufficient to disturb all the forces of their system; and to stultify all the theories of their political astronomy. The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded, and which her counsellors will not only be willing, but eager, to adopt when the crisis comes upon them.

John Thomas – "Elpis Israel" – written in 1849

Mary Jones and Her Bible

*In the year 1800 a 15 year old Welsh girl walked 25 miles from her home in Abergynolwyn to Bala, a small market town in Mid Wales, to get her own Bible. This story was a beginning – not just of obtaining a Bible for a young Welsh girl, but of a project to make Bibles available in all languages and for people everywhere in the world. In this article **Margaret and Alan Fowler** explain how all this came about.*

Poor Folk

It all begins in Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, a small country village in a valley at the bottom of a mountain called Cader Idris in Mid Wales. It was here that Mary Jones was born, in December 1784, in a poor wool-weaver's cottage called "Tyn-y-ddol", by the banks of a tumbling stream.

At that time people in the Welsh countryside were very poor. There were no real schools and very few people could read. Before Mary was five years old her father died, so her mother had a hard struggle to make ends meet. Mary would have worked in the small garden growing vegetables, and looking after chickens. She had no school to go to, but as she grew up she wanted to know more about God. It was also at this time that more people in Wales started getting very interested in the Bible.

This was because a religious revival was taking place, led by Methodist preachers. Mary and her mother attended meetings for Bible reading and prayer led by William Hugh of Llechwedd. These meetings gave Mary a great love for the Bible which sadly

she could not read. It was not until she was 10 years of age that she learnt to read, at one of the schools, in near-by Abergynolwyn, that had been set up by Thomas Charles, a well known preacher from the town of Bala.

Mary's Wish

Even when Mary could read there was still a problem. Welsh Bibles were far too expensive for Mary's mother to buy. Mrs Evans who lived at Penybryniau farm, about two miles from Mary's home, heard about Mary's love for the Bible. She offered for Mary to visit her farm so that she could read from their Bible. Mary would walk to Penybryniau every week in all weathers to read and learn passages from the Bible in Mrs Evans's parlour.

Mary's dearest wish was to have a Bible of her own and she decided to save hard to buy one. This was a difficult task because in those days you needed a lot of money to buy a Bible. Mary saved every penny she got from the neighbours she helped, but it was not until she was 15 that she had saved enough money to buy a Bible.



Mary Jones in the clothes of the time

Not Enough Bibles

Now there was another problem. There were very few Welsh Bibles, and they were often very difficult to get hold of. This was because at that time the King's printers in London were the only ones who were allowed to print Bibles, and they demanded to be paid for the Welsh Bibles before printing them, because they knew that most Welsh people could not afford them. Printing of Bibles for use at home needed a lot of money to start it off. This was provided from sponsors and organisations such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Religious Tract Society. For example, the first Welsh Bible for the home (rather than the big Church Bibles) was printed in 1630. This was made possible by the then huge sum of £1000, given by two Welshmen living in London.



so long as I took my clogs off. I told him that I was saving up every halfpenny this long time to get a Bible but that I did not know where to get one. The gentleman was 'Charles of Bala', he told me to come to Bala at a certain time, that he was expecting some from London and that I should have one from him.

*When the time came my mother put the money and a little bread and cheese in one end of the 'wallet' and my clogs in the other, and I set off for Bala on a fine morning, resting where there was a stream of clear water, to eat the bread and cheese. I came to Bala trembling and knocked at the door of Mr Charles' house. I asked for Mr Charles and was told that he was in his study at the back of the house. I was allowed to go to him and he told me that the Bibles had not arrived. I started to cry because I did not know where to stay. He sent me to stay with an old servant of his who had a house at the bottom of his garden, until the Bibles came. When they came Mr Charles gave me three for the price of one. I set off home with my precious burden. I ran a great part of the way, I was so glad of my Bible". (K. Monica Davies, *Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, Vol.3 Oct. 1967 pgs. 74-80.)*

Mary's Own Story

The story of how Mary Jones obtained her Bible from Thomas Charles can best be told in Mary's own words, spoken to Lizzie Rowlands. As a young lady Lizzie used to read the Bible to Mary when she was old and blind. This is Mary's account:

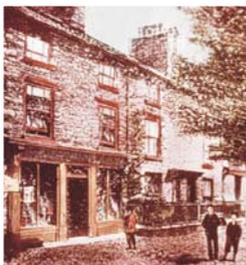
"One stormy Monday morning as I was walking to a farmhouse about two miles from my home, a gentleman riding on a white horse and wearing a cloth cape came to meet me and asked me where I was going through such wind and rain. I said I was going to a farmhouse where there was a Bible, that there wasn't one nearer my home, and that the mistress of the farm said that I could see the Bible, which she kept on a table in the parlour,

The Rest of Mary's Story

Mary read from her Bible daily until she died in 1864, at the age of 80. She is buried in the graveyard of Bethlehem Chapel, Bryncrug, but her story does not end there. The evident need for Bibles, which Mary Jones and others like her had, showed that something had to be done. The stock of Bibles published by the SPCK in 1799 was soon exhausted and Thomas Charles decided to go to London and beg

for more Bibles for Wales.

On December 7th 1802 he attended a meeting of the Religious Tract Society held in a warehouse on Swan Wharf, near London Bridge, owned by Thomas



House of Thomas Charles in Bala

Hardcastle. At that time there were wars taking place in Europe and the fear of war was hanging over England also. It was not a good time to talk of new ideas, but the men who met that morning were not afraid of new initiatives.

“If for Wales, why not for England; why not for the whole world?” said one of them. And so, in 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded. It turned out that Thomas Charles had started something bigger than the printing of Bibles for his own country. Since then the Bible Societies have printed millions of Bibles. Today the Bible is printed in over 2,230 languages.

Excitement in Wales

When the first copies of the Bible Societies Welsh New Testament reached Bala in September 1806 there was jubilation. The newspapers of the time record that from early morning groups of people could be seen gathering from the outlying country, and when news came that the load was approaching the town, crowds rushed out to meet it. The horse was taken from the cart and strong young men took her place and pulled the cartload joyfully into town, where they received a wonderful welcome from the crowds gathered in the



streets. Thomas Charles hardly had time to unload the Bibles before they were all sold; such was the people's need for God's Word at that time.

Life-Long Treasure

Later Mary married a weaver, Thomas Jones, and settled in Bryn-crug, where she had six children. All except a son, Ioan, died in infancy or childhood. Ioan and his family emigrated to America and in about 1852 Thomas Jones died, so Mary spent the last twelve years of her life alone and in poverty. Today a memorial stands in the ruins of Tynyddol, the cottage where Mary grew up. Mary kept and cherished her Bible to the end of her days and later it was passed on to the British and Foreign Bible Society and is now kept in the Bible Society library in Cambridge University. One of the other Bibles obtained by Mary Jones went to her aunt and was later given to Mary's friend Lizzie Rowlands. It is now in the National Library of Wales. The third Bible has disappeared but was probably taken to America by Ioan.

What about Us?

What lessons can we learn from this wonderful story of Mary's love for the Bible, the Word of God? Think about how much she was prepared to do to buy her Bible, and how valuable it was to her. It surely puts us to shame! For now we can all get Bibles, they are cheap and plentiful. But do we read them? Do we long to have this Word of life in our hands and treasure its message of hope and light in a dark

world?

Mary Jones read through her Bible many times. Why not start reading yours today?

Margaret and Alan Fowler

Jew and Arab to Find Lasting Peace

Nobody is sure about a lasting peace in the Middle East. Politicians all over the world are uncertain, even though America is now taking more interest than before.

There have been so many false trails and so many dashed hopes. In Israel and among the Palestinians people remain sceptical even if there is a grudging admission that the death of Chairman Arafat has given the peace process another chance. Many feel that we have been here before and that nothing happened then; so why should it work out better now?

War after War

From the moment that Israel declared itself a nation again they were at war. Arab forces closed in almost immediately the UN had declared their intention with the aim of removing all vestiges of the existing provisional state. Humanly speaking they should have succeeded, for they had the arms, the organisation, the trained soldiers and the momentum. The forces arraigned against them were the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. But the Jews were fighting for their lives and, with their backs against the wall, they managed to push back their adversaries and survive.

Several other attempts were made over the years by Arab forces to achieve the same objective. Whilst Israel grew as a nation and absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants, the

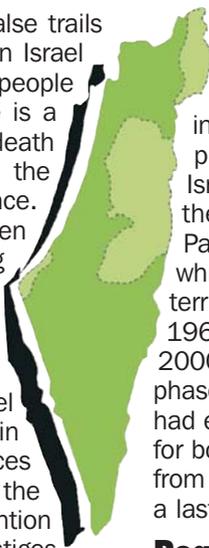
Arabs who had fled Israel remained as refugees and thus kept the Palestinian issue open.

There were wars in 1956 (the Suez crisis); 1967 (the Six-Day war); 1973 (the Yom Kippur War) and in 1982 the

Invasion of Lebanon was initiated by Israel to seek to stamp out terrorist attacks launched from there against Jewish settlements in Galilee. That change of strategy prefaced a more difficult time in Israel. Terrorist attacks from across the border were followed by the Palestinian uprising – the “Intifada” – which began in 1987, within the territories administered by Israel since 1967, and resumed in September 2000. As this struggle intensified a new phase began – suicide bombing, which had enormous consequences and costs for both sides. Now a Jewish withdrawal from Gaza is underway, to try to achieve a lasting political settlement.

Peace Prospects

Peace has been made at various times, especially following the various wars. Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in Washington in 1979 which ended the 30 year-long war that had existed between the two countries. There was a Middle East peace conference in Madrid in 1991 with American and Soviet involvement. The PLO and Israel exchanged letters in 1993 committing both to an attempted peaceful resolution of their conflict and an agreement for Palestinian self-government of some of their territories was signed in 1994. That year also saw



a peace treaty signed between Israel and Jordan. But, those agreements apart, a huge amount of hostility remains in the Arab world to the very existence of Israel and violence could erupt at any time. Israel has to maintain a high level of vigilance and security against the possibility of attack. Far from lowering defences, the nation has been building a security wall to physically separate Israeli and Palestinian areas and that partition has further aggravated the situation. So where will it end?

There will be peace in Israel between Jew and Arab, and all nations will benefit from that, for the Bible predicts that happy outcome. But it will only come after things have got even worse than they are at present. For the prophets tell of a coming invasion of the land and the overthrow of the present regime. That may seem an unlikely outcome given the strength of the Israeli army – said to be the fourth most powerful armed force in the world – but unlikely things happen. Nobody forecast the collapse of Communism or the breaking down of the Berlin Wall; or 9/11; the insurgency in Iraq following the Iraq war; or the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean. Nobody knows the instability that lies ahead for the world, except God, and He is quite clear about the coming trouble. He has not orchestrated it, but He has warned us about it through His prophets.



Jacob's Trouble

The very same prophets who forecast the return of the Jews from their worldwide dispersion also predict that troublesome times lie ahead.

'For behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will bring back from captivity my people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it' ... Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labour with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labour, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 'For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them'" (Jeremiah 30:3-8).

Several prophets combine to paint a picture of a widespread series of attacks, both from near and far. The prophet Joel describes a locust-like invasion which renders the fertile land desolate. Zechariah, who tells how the new nation would at first triumph over all her opponents (12:6), also describes the coming invasion of Jerusalem, its overthrow, and displacement of its Jewish inhabitants (14:1-2). Ezekiel explains the involvement of many nations who engage in hostile action against a people brought back from dispersion (38:1-9).

Quite how or when all this is to happen remains to be seen. Bible

Prophecy is not given so that we can plan our lives around coming events, but to warn us to be ready for God's intervention in our lives at any time. But the accuracy with which past events have been predicted should assure us that these things will happen exactly as they are predicted.

Peace with God

The key development so far as the nation of Israel is concerned is that the nation must make peace with God before they will find peace with their neighbours. Now, in complete self-reliance and godlessness, before they can again be classed as "God's people" and can be grafted back onto their ancient spiritual stem (Romans 11:17-24), they have to learn their need of God and recognise the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. It is just the same for us, and for all believers. The most important thing for individuals and for nations is that they make their peace with God. We do that by:

- Finding out about and then believing the promises of God;
- Being baptised – by immersion in water – to show that we want to make a new start with God; then
- Living in a way which is pleasing to God.

Israel will come to that realisation when they encounter Jesus and accept him as their King. We can make that true for us now if we realise that, just like them –

- We are in desperate need of God's help to rescue us from sin and death;

- He alone can give us a real and living hope; and that
- We need to find peace with God, by accepting the saving work of God in Jesus Christ.

This is what the Bible says to us:

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans



5:1,2);

"Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made both one ... so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near" (Ephesians 2:13-17).

Jesus is the peacemaker who can unite both Jew and Gentile in one harmonious and happy family – the family of God. All of us need to find that peace of mind and harmony of life. Personal peace is the pathway to political peace. What we can learn for ourselves, quietly and thoughtfully, the nations of the world will also learn following hard fought battles and a great cost in human life and personal tragedy. Two different paths exist – Jesus called them the broad and narrow ways. We should choose the one that leads through understanding to the hope of everlasting life in the coming Kingdom of God.

Tecwyn Morgan

Part Three

Three Steps to a Happier Life

So far in this series, **Sarah and Andy Joiner** have considered the first step to happiness – to Believe in the True Gospel. This gospel was summarised in their article in Issue 1451 and now they consider the second step on that path – Baptism – what it is and what it means.

Key Points

There are a few key points about baptism that we need to understand at the outset:

- *The Greek word for baptism is “baptizo” and means – to fully wet – in other words a total immersion in water.*
- *In the Bible, only adults who are able to believe and repent are baptised – not babies or children.*
- *Jesus says that baptism is Essential for Salvation – it’s not just an optional extra.*
- *Baptism is commanded by God, so to refuse to be baptized, or to put it off, once we believe, is to disobey God’s command.*
- *True baptism brings about the forgiveness of sins.*

Belief and Baptism

We have already stressed the importance of proper Belief. That goes with Baptism. It’s no use believing a false gospel and being baptised. In Scripture there are examples of people who were baptised, but didn’t fully understand the gospel – so they were baptised again, once they understood the truth (Acts chapter 19). So we must believe the true gospel before we are baptised.

The importance of baptism is made clear in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Acts basically records the spread of the gospel around the world. What is absolutely clear is that all those who truly believed were baptised.

The above table shows that all the people who believed, repented or

Example	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Baptized
3,000	2:37,41	2:38		2:41
Samaritans	8:12			8:12
Simon	8:13			8:13
Eunuch	8:37		8:37	8:38
Paul	22:8,10	22:10	22:10	22:16
Cornelius				10:48
Lydia	16:14			16:15
Jailer	16:31	16:30		16:33
Corinthians	18:8			18:8
Ephesians	19:2			19:5

confessed that they wanted to follow Jesus, were all baptised without exception. All of those who were regarded as true followers submitted to baptism. They knew that it was essential for salvation. As Jesus said:



“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Here, Jesus makes it quite clear that a person must be born of water – in other words, be baptised – in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus goes on to emphasize:

“He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

Clearly, this verse shows that belief on its own is not enough. We must be baptized in order to be saved. If you still have any doubts or think that God doesn't really want us to be baptised, take a look at Matthew chapter 3:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptised by him. And John tried to prevent him, saying, “I have need to be baptised by you, and are you coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.” Then he allowed him (Matthew 3:13-15).

Jesus himself was baptised, so we must do this if we really want to follow him. He even tells us that this is what God commands us to do; he says in effect: *“In this way we shall do all that God*

requires”. So baptism is an act of faith which God absolutely requires.

Act of Obedience

Baptism shows our obedience to God. It shows that we recognise that we are sinners, and know that God will forgive us our sins when we are baptised. It is also a

powerful symbol:

“Do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised 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” (Romans 6:3,4).

So when we go down into the waters of baptism, it is as if we are dying with Jesus on the cross. Christ died for our sins, and by associating ourselves with Jesus' death we are granted forgiveness of sins through his sacrifice. When we come up from the water, we now lead new lives in Jesus. And this idea of a “new life” leads us on to the third step to true happiness – the way we Behave once we have started a new life in Christ.

Don't just take our word for it on the importance of baptism. Get your Bible out and start reading and checking whether this is what it really says. Test everything by the Bible - including what we say. God's Word – the Bible – is the only authority. Reading the Bible for ourselves is the way to find a happier life. Don't miss out!

Sarah & Andy Joiner

Two Free Offers

Vital Message

From the teaching of the Bible one thing becomes clear. The message it contains is vital to us all, for if we take no notice of it, we shall perish. That is why its message is called "*the Gospel*", that is "the good news". No wonder the apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, said: "*the gospel of Christ ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*" (Romans 1:16).



Fred Pearce

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