

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1459



On the Move – page 3

He is “King of Kings” – page 14

The Failure of Humanism – page 17

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OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world. Its objectives are – to encourage study of the Bible as God's inspired message to 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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United Kingdom – Cilla Palmer (Mrs), "Highlands", 78 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Ely, Cambs, England CB7 5NR Tel: (01638) 723959 (24 hrs & Fax) cilla@gladtidings.fsnet.co.uk

Australia – K.G.Quixley, 22 Narallah Grove, Box Hill North, Victoria, Australia, 3129 gladtidings@optusnet.com.au

Canada – Vivian Thorp (Mrs), 5377 Birdcage Walk, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, L7L 3K5

New Zealand – Christadelphian Witness, P.O. Box 15-457, New Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand

South Africa – A. J. Oosthuizen, P.O.Box 50357, Musgrave Road, Durban 4062, South Africa antoost@mwweb.co.za

U.S.A. – Pat Hemingray (Mrs), 3079 Kilburn West, Rochester Hills, MI 48306, USA.

Other Countries – Geoff Maycock, 8 Hale End, Bracknell, Berks., England, RG12 9YH gmaycock@fish.co.uk

Local information is also available from:

Fiji – Bible Mission, Box 1012, G.P.O., Suva, Indonesia
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India – T. Galbraith, G.P.O. Box 159, Hyderabad 500001, India

Bangladesh – Christadelphian Bible Students, PO Box 9052, Banani, Dhaka 1213

Editor: Owen Tecwyn Morgan

26 The Crescent, Hampton-in-Arden, Solihull, B92 0BP, England, UK
glad.tidings@virgin.net

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On the Move

The year 2005 will go down as one of the worst hurricane seasons ever in the North Atlantic, one which follows an awfully rough 2004. Hurricanes in the Atlantic are getting stronger, more frequent and more destructive.

Hurricane “Katrina” was followed within weeks by “Rita”, then by Hurricane “Wilma” and there were fierce Atlantic storms in between that never made it to land. Those that hit land – that smashed through New Orleans, Florida, Cuba and Mexico – left a trail of devastation and death.

Where to Go?

Nobody would relish having to respond to the challenge posed by an on-coming Hurricane. After the huge loss of life in New Orleans it is understandable that the authorities were quick to advise evacuation.

But leaving your home and possessions to head off into the unknown is easier said than done. Who knows what might be left, if anything, once the danger is past? What the storm has not taken, looters might have helped themselves to.

And even when people set out on the highway, travelling north from Hurricane Rita, the massive traffic jams made it impossible to make progress and fuel shortages led many people to abandon their vehicles and leave all their posses-



sions behind.

At times like this people are forced to assess what is really important to them: what really matters in life. Some decided to stay at home, regardless of what might happen, and some of them died at home, drowned by the flood waters. Others took to the road regarding their life as their most important asset, treating everything else as disposable and recoverable. If they lost everything they owned – as many did – they would still have an opportunity to rebuild and recover.

Ancient Challenge

A man living in a developed and sophisticated city in the Middle East was once challenged by God to leave it all behind and to get on the move. Abram was 70 years old at the time and, great man that he was, he obeyed God even though he did not know where he would end up. Five years later he and his family reached the land of Canaan and one day God invited him to survey the land; whereupon He made this promise:

“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).

More than five years had passed between God’s challenge to Abram to

leave Ur, a city in Mesopotamia, and that remarkable promise – one of seven such promises that Abram was given in all (you can find them between Genesis chapters 12 and 22). Those promises were about the land of Canaan – which we now know as Israel; a people who would descend from Abram, relating to him both by blood and through faith; and about one special Descendant who would bring the blessing of forgiveness to all who were willing to follow in Abram’s faithful footsteps. That was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Massive Shake-Up

Abram’s journey was so remarkable because there was nothing to make him get on the road. He went because God asked him to, which is why that journey is regarded as a supreme act of faith (see Hebrews 11:8). He didn’t know where he was going, or what it was all about, but Abram went just the same. He left his comfortable life to become a nomad and a tent dweller – a shepherd who was forced to move from one area of common land to another, as the needs of his flocks and herds dictated. He became someone who showed that worldly possessions and a settled life are not everything. What God asks of us is what really matters.

In parts of Pakistan and India – in the region of Kashmir – a huge earthquake recently brought tremendous destruction and loss of life and livelihood. People have been forced to become tent dwellers because all previous structures have been thrown down. Many people have lost everything, even their lives. They had no chance to flee. There was no advance warning of impending destruction. The earthquake just came and that was that.



Given some warning, children would have rushed out of their schools, families from their homes, workers from their factories, all to safety. But there was no warning.

Early Warning

Long ago the Bible predicted that the end of the world will be accompanied by unrest and upheaval on a massive scale and the indications are that this is what is now beginning to happen. Jesus spoke about:

“signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken” (Luke 21:25,26).

Sometimes those words are understood to indicate political and social upheaval on a massive scale, which is also happening. But the Lord’s warning includes such things as hurricanes, earthquakes and widespread disease, which is specifically mentioned. So we can’t say we haven’t been warned about coming disaster: Jesus made that prediction nearly 2000 years ago. Instead we should take notice and understand that a time is coming when we have to move out and move on.

This age is coming to an end – it is to be replaced by the Kingdom of God which Jesus will restore to earth at his Coming. It takes faith to believe what God has promised and courage to re-order our lives, but that is the challenge we have to face if we want to live forever in God’s perfect world.

Editor

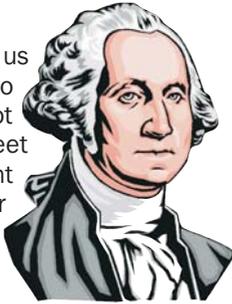
Do I Have to Grow Old?

To make me look younger I can buy numerous anti-ageing products – face creams, hair dyes and toning creams – to name but a few.

If I want a really youthful look, and am prepared to pay, I can have a ‘chin tuck’, a ‘nose job’ or even improve my failing eyesight with laser treatment. But all this doesn’t stop me growing older. So, I ask, why do we all have to grow old?

No Escape

Old age happens to us until finally we die. No one escapes death, not one; you never meet somebody who fought against Napoleon, or heard a speech by George Washington



do you? That’s because everybody dies - but do I have to physically grow old? Can’t I get to 21 and stay like that until I fade away at 75, 85 or whatever? Why does my body have to degenerate?

Well, one thing that ageing makes us do – if we stop to think about it – is to face up to the issue of death. If you always looked 21 you might be tempted to think you were going to live on for ever. But every wrinkle and every grey hair is God’s wake-up call to us. It reminds us that we won’t last forever in our present state.

What God Intended

Death is not the end; it can be just the beginning. When God created the earth and placed man on it, he didn’t design it so that we would die after a mere 70 or so years in which we could enjoy his wonder-

ful creation. No. Death came into the world as a punishment, not as the gateway to heaven, as some people wrongly think. God said to Adam:

“Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:17-19).

Death was a punishment for disobedience and death is there defined as a return to dust. That’s what happens when we die – we cease to exist – unless we do something about it.

“Man who is in honour, yet does not understand, is like the beasts that perish” (Psalm 49:20);

“Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish” (Psalm 146:3,4);

“They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore you have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish” (Isaiah 26:14)

Live Forever?

It doesn’t have to be like that, if you don’t want it to be. When God made the earth, he made it as a place in which people would live forever. That’s probably why we

all instinctively don't want to die or even grow old – because we know deep inside that there is something better with God. And there is!

It was an Old Testament prophet who explained:

"I have made the earth, and created man on it. It was I - My hands that stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded ... Israel shall be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you shall not be ashamed or disgraced forever and ever. For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:12,17-18).

If this idea is new to you, ask what Jesus meant when he said:

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Or why did King David promise, in the same terms, that:

"Yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look diligently for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:10-11; see also verses 22 and 29).

For Ever and Ever?

So how do we get to live forever? It's easy when you know how:

- 1 Find out what God's purpose was in sending Jesus to the earth, and what he really taught;

- 2 When you're convinced about that:
- 3 Change your way of life by taking God into account and doing what He requires; that way you get to:
- 4 Learn to live with a real and lasting hope.

"Follow Me"

It's that simple. Once you resolve to follow the Lord Jesus, the perspective you once had on your existence will be hugely changed. You'll find you have a new purpose in life and the world's trivialities fade in their importance to you. Getting older will not matter anything like the same. You may even get accustomed to the idea of getting older gracefully, because getting older isn't so much a sign of the end of existence. It's a pointer to the fact that another and better life is to start after you are raised from the dead at the Coming to earth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All the creams science can produce won't save us from death. All they can do is help to make us look younger than we really are. But Jesus wants to give us life forever, and that is a promise that he most certainly can and will deliver.

Joan Lewis



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John's Urgent Message

The apostle John must have been over ninety years of age when he wrote his three Epistles – 1, 2 and 3 John. It is assumed that they were written around the same time, since they are very similar in character and content, and they all deal with problems that were confronting the early church, as **Cyril Tennant** now explains.

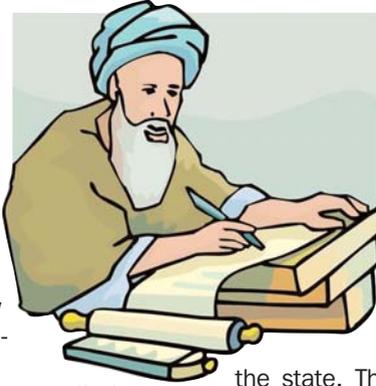
Believers under Attack

The early churches – the ecclesias – were in crisis. Just as the apostle Paul had warned – that after his departure people would depart from the faith (Acts 20:29-30) – those times had now come! There was a three-fold attack underway.

People who were later called “**Gnostics**” – because they claimed to have “*knowledge*” of the deepest things – were arising and their pernicious teaching was that the body and spirit were entirely separate things. The conclusion they drew was that therefore it did not matter what was done in the body provided the spirit was right! This led to all kinds of licentious behaviour and would have been very damaging to the ecclesias had it permeated their ranks.

Then there were the **Judaisers** – people who believed that you had to stick with the Old Testament teaching, as they interpreted it. These had followed Paul wherever he established an ecclesia and taught that he was a heretic and did not teach the whole truth, especially in the matter of circumcision.

So successful were they that Paul was once driven to exclaim “*all those in Asia have turned away from me*” (2 Timothy 1:15). Such teaching led Paul to write the



Epistle to the Galatians, the most devastating attack on Judaism ever written. If the ecclesias to which John was writing did not see Judaism for what it was and resist it, they would be allowing the true gospel to be totally undermined.

Thirdly, the early believers were under attack from

the state. The Roman Empire – which was at that time Pagan – launched a severe attack upon all Christians. John saw urgent need to warn the ecclesias of these dangers and to counsel them how to hold fast to the truth.

Written to Whom?

This article is not intended to be an exposition of the three Epistles. Instead it is an attempt to pick out their main theme.

The **First Epistle** was written for general reading as the title suggests. It would have been circulated as widely as possible but, in particular, to the seven churches in Asia which constituted the circuit of John who was based in Ephesus. His warning was for all! He also wrote to an Elect Lady and to a faithful young man named Gaius to ensure the message reached as many as possible in the shortest time.

Some have said that the **Second Epistle** was not written to a person but to a church under the guise of a personal letter to a lady, to avoid the persecution ram-

part in those times. In support of this 1 Peter 5:13 is quoted which in one rendering reads “The church or the sister that is in Babylon, elect” (Revised Version margin). Thus it is suggested that the letter was to the church in Babylon, but this can hardly be supported by the text of John’s Second Epistle

The Elect Lady

There we read of the lady and her children and also of her sister and her children. Most devastating of all to that idea is that, in verse twelve, John states that he hopes to visit her and speak to her “face to face”.

Can we imagine that John – who was already turned 90 years of age – was looking to some time in the future when he would make the very long and hazardous journey from Ephesus to Babylon? That would have been a journey far longer than any made by the apostle Paul, who had been a much younger man at the time!

So we are left with the text which states that the Epistle was written to a lady and her children. Possibly she was a very influential lady whose teaching would be respected – someone like Miriam who, when after the crossing of the Red Sea gathered together the women and led them in songs of praise and thanksgiving. John would be sure that his message would be safely transmitted by this lady to the group which knew her well.

The **Third Epistle** was written to Gaius who was well known as a faithful witness. Thus John was ensuring that his warning which was so urgent, reached as many

brethren and sisters as possible and as soon as possible.

Sober Warnings

John grouped together all the enemies of Christ who did not believe that Jesus was the son of God and described them as ‘antichrists’ (1 John 2:18,19; 4:3). The first of these two references refers to the Judaisers, an influential group who are described as follows:

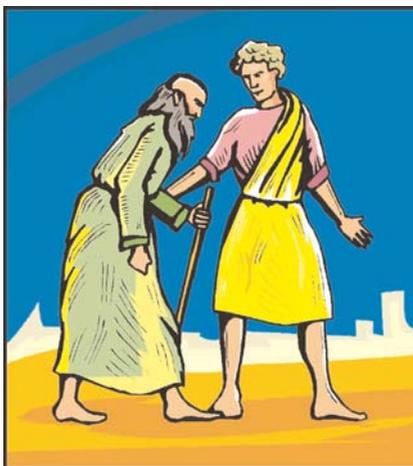
“We have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’ – to whom we gave no such commandment” (Acts 15:24).

These men were actually baptised believers who could not leave the Law of Moses behind and, because the apostle Paul did not teach adherence to the law in addition to the Gospel, they said that he was guilty of preaching a partial gospel and labelled him a heretic.

John had one simple answer to all their problems – it was to concentrate on the miraculous birth of Jesus who was God’s revelation of Himself. The passage of time has made it relatively easy for us to accept that Jesus was born miraculously, but for those who had lived with Jesus this was no easy matter.

Son of God

To be told that a man who had walked among them, fulfilling all the natural functions of life and experiencing weariness and pain as all men do, was in fact the Son of God, would be a fundamental test



of faith! So great a step was this that when Peter made the astounding confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus declared that he had been helped to this conclusion by God:

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

It was an understanding and belief in this miraculous birth of Jesus which, John said, separated true and false believers. The true were begotten of God; the false were antichrists (1 John 2:22; 4:3,15,16). So John commenced his first epistle by laying this foundation.

God Revealed in Jesus

Turning to the first three verses of Chapter One, we note John's concise and yet full description of God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. John had, of course, already dealt fully with this subject in the first chapter of his Gospel, so his readers would be acquainted with his teaching. But here John is going to show the practical import of this astounding teaching. Note first of all what John refers to in his opening clause:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to



you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us" (1 John 1:1,2).

God's Way of Life

What John is introducing is God's way of life and he shows how different it is from human life. He goes on to show that it is the life to which mankind is called, but to which he can only aspire through rebirth. He calls it "eternal life" because of its

unique quality. It is constructive, positive and motivated by love. By its very nature it is "eternal", whereas man's way of life by its very nature is mortal; it is destructive, negative, and motivated by self.

How was God's way of life manifested? First by the miraculous birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and then by the way in which it was demonstrated in his life day-by-day. The life had been witnessed by the Apostles who had been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry right up to his sad but necessary death on the cross. Note the certainty of this – "we have heard", "we have seen", we have looked upon", "our hands have handled". "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you".

There was no doubt about the manifestation of God's way of life in Jesus, for the Apostles had been close witnesses of it for three and a half years. They had seen and handled the risen Lord and they had witnessed His ascension into heaven. It was this way of Life that John was now going to reveal to his readers so that they could have fellowship with the Father and His Son –

“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full” (1 John 1:3,4).

“The Life was Manifested”

If we follow John’s use of the word translated ‘*manifested*’ in 1 John 1 verse 2, we shall notice the fundamental importance of this revelation. The word is translated differently on some occasions in the Epistle, but the times when it is translated ‘*manifested*’ are sufficient for our purpose.

☛ The first occasion as we have already noted is in 1 John 1:1-3, where we are told that God’s way of life which was from the beginning was revealed in the miraculous birth of His son.

➔ The second time is – *“And you know that he was **manifested** to take away our sins, and in him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).* There was purpose in God’s revelation of Himself; it was that we might ultimately be partakers of His own nature! It was no mere exhibition of His own majesty and creative power, though that is something of which we must always be conscious and for which we must give God constant praise; for He is a God of abounding love.

The first step after revealing Himself in Jesus is that God wants to take away our sins. He wants to make it possible for us to be reckoned righteous through the Lord Jesus Christ. No sinner can be a partaker of God’s own nature! Those sins must be taken away! But it is not sufficient just to forgive sins for the sinner sins continually because of his human nature. The root cause of sin must also be removed.

➔➔ So we come to the third occurrence of the word –

*“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was **manifested**, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (3:8).*

The same truth was expressed by the apostle Paul in slightly different language when he said:

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

Sins must be taken away but the root cause of those sins – the devil, which is a term Scripture uses to describe human nature – must also be destroyed. So it was that God was manifested in Jesus who possessed our nature and, by his sinless life, overcame and destroyed its power. Thus he slew the devil.

↕ This leads to the next occasion where the word is used in the First Epistle –

*“In this the love of God was **manifested** toward us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (4:9).*

This will only be true in its fullest sense when, by God’s mercy, we are made partakers of His own nature. But, in the meantime, it is this quality of life which we must try to adopt as our lifestyle.

John’s concern for us is that we should understand what eternal life is really like and how we should behave if we are to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Cyril Tennant

Part Two – A Love Story

Free Food and a New Family

Ruth had arrived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi. Naomi was a Jewess, and had been out of the Promised Land over ten years, while a famine gripped the land. Now a widow, and having lost both her sons, she would have been destitute and alone, were it not for her daughter-in-law.

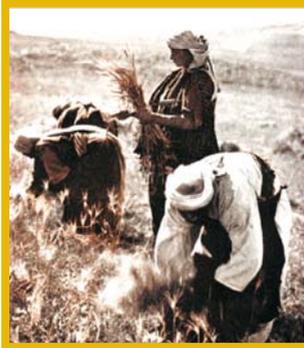
Ruth had taken on the Jewish faith, and had left Moab – her own land – to come to the land of Israel with Naomi. She had been allowed to glean barley in a farmer's field, whose name was Boaz. The harvest had only just begun, and so there was several months' work ahead, with the blessing of free food if she collected enough to feed them both.

The barley harvest was first, coming about Passover time (equivalent to our Easter time). God's law permitted the poor to glean in the harvest fields, after the reapers had collected the main sheaves of corn.

God's Providential Care

On her first day at work Ruth felt really blessed. After beating out the grain, she had collected enough barley to feed Naomi and herself for almost a week. Then came another surprise. It turned out that Boaz, the prosperous farmer, was a close relative of Naomi's late husband. Naomi's fertile mind soon got to work and very soon she realised that it really was God's hand which had guided her and Ruth back to Bethlehem, and that He was providing for her now. There's a wonderfully comforting verse which says:

"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).



If we live the sort of life God would like us to, then we too can be aware of His angels camping around about us, as Psalm 34, verse 7, promises will be the case.

Even More Care

Some time later that summer, Naomi decided it was time for action. The Law of Moses provided that a widow should be allowed to raise a family by marrying her late husband's brother, or close relative.

"It shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel" (Deuteronomy 25:6).

Naomi must have thought about this for months, now that Ruth had become a Jewess herself. Naomi was past child-bearing age, so she decided to see if Ruth could marry into her husband's family. Giving her daughter-in-law careful instruction, Naomi sent her on a challenging mission, being sure that God's Will would be

done – whatever that was. Obediently, Ruth went to Boaz’s threshing floor that evening, now that the harvesting was completed, and at midnight she had a chance to ask her favour.

“Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a near kinsman.” Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman” (Ruth 3:9-11).

Notice that there must have been quite an age difference between them, as a prospective husband does not usually call his girl “my daughter”!

There is a lovely type of the Lord Jesus here. Ruth, we are told, had washed herself, and put on her best clothes, so that she looked her best. She then lay down at Boaz’s feet. Ruth is a symbol of the true bride of Christ. She humbled herself in his presence, and begged for mercy. So we too must come to our Lord, and ask to be protected. We must realise our need to join the family of Christ, and we must be prepared to ask him to take us under his protective care.

Another Relative

Boaz went on to explain to Ruth that actually there was a closer relative, who by law should redeem Naomi’s lands, and marry her. But, he said, if he couldn’t, or wouldn’t, then Boaz himself would love to! You can imagine how delighted Naomi was

when Ruth returned and told her all that had happened. She reassured Ruth that Boaz wouldn’t rest “until he has concluded the matter this day” (Ruth 3:18). Here’s another fine example of a person being known by his actions. The farmer was a God-fearing reliable man, who didn’t put off things. What he could do today, he did, which is a challenge to all of us!

Boaz then proceeded to follow the matter up. He asked a group of ten men to be his witnesses, and waited until the other near relative came by. Then he told him all about Naomi and Ruth, and asked him if

he was willing to help Naomi get back her possessions. Fields were no good to Naomi, so the idea was that the land should be sold, and Naomi would have the money. “Yes,” he said, “no problem. I’ll do that.” But Boaz hadn’t finished. “Ah,

but do you realise that if you redeem the land you must, by law, also marry Ruth the Moabitess. Your firstborn son will then continue the name of Elimelech, Naomi’s late husband.”

But this was too much. “No, sorry,” said the man, “I can’t go that far, lest I ruin my own inheritance.”

His mind was set on HIS name, and HIS future.

Here’s another fine lesson for us. What was the name of this man? We don’t know. The Scripture doesn’t tell us. That’s how important HE was. He was someone who was willing to go a little way for God, but not too far! Such a half-hearted man didn’t even achieve the honour of having his name recorded in God’s Book. So much for HIS inheritance!



A Baby Boy!

The way was now open for Boaz to marry Ruth. And he did! Boaz was blessed by his townsfolk, and everyone was delighted that the godly farmer had found such a good wife. It didn't matter that she was a Gentile, or that she was a widow. She was now an Israelite by faith, having made clear to Naomi at the very start:



“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God” (Ruth 1:16).

So it is with us. Provided we join God's family, our background doesn't matter. God is no respecter of persons. This is surely what the Lord God said to Abraham all those years before: *“In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3).*

Boaz – Son of Rahab

The lessons go back even further. Boaz himself had been the son of Salmon and Rahab. Salmon was an Israelite, but Rahab had been a Gentile harlot. Rahab was, in a sense, the farthest from God you could possibly get, in the Old Testament era. She was a woman, and a Gentile prostitute at that! God usually dealt with the Jews and as He had sanctified marriage right from the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, any activity which openly flouted marriage was clearly forbidden.

But nothing is impossible for God. Rahab had shown her belief by helping Joshua's men, and she had spoken of her faith in Israel's God. She reformed her ways, and was accepted by God. No won-

der that her son, Boaz, was happy to take a Moabite wife – especially one who had shown such faith in God. He must have been the least racially prejudiced of all the men of Israel, given his background! He knew that non-Jews could come to God, provided they changed their ways. And so can we! Boaz accepted Ruth for what she was, a born-again Israelite. She was now, like him, an heir of the promises made by God to Abraham.

Baby Obed

Boaz and Ruth had a baby boy they named Obed. When Obed grew up his son was called Jesse, and Jesse's son was David. David was first a shepherd boy and later he became David the King. And a thousand years later, Mary was born of David's line. And we all know that she became the mother of the Son of God.

What a wonderful end to the story of Ruth. She, like many of us, was a stranger “from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). But she changed. She learnt the truth about the promises to Abraham, and decided that these would be her future. God richly rewarded her, and He has promised us the same reward. If we believe what God has promised and make Him our God, as Ruth did, through belief and baptism this can be true for us:

“If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29).

David Simpson

He is “King of Kings”

From the time of the French Revolution the world has seen monarchies replaced by republics. Presidents are preferred to Kings in many countries. But towards the end of the 20th century a movement started to reinstate some of these exiled royal families.

- ❖ There have even been rumours that a member of the Romanov family – who were the Tsars in Russia – might be invited back.
- ❖ Recently when the Taliban regime of Afghanistan was overturned a rather elderly ex-king of Afghanistan was put forward as a possible leader to reunite the peoples of that country.
- ❖ In Europe several countries like Greece, Italy and Romania have allowed their ex-royals to return and,
- ❖ With the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq there were suggestions that Prince Hassan of Jordan might be a possible leader of Iraq, as the Hashimite Kingdom previously ruled that area of the Middle East.

However, none of these ‘kings’ have been welcomed back to take up their thrones – they have no power or authority to offer their countries. If they are accepted back from exile, it will be as citizens of the democratically elected government, who will exercise the power of rulership.

King for Ever

The Bible tells us that God once prom-

ised King David that he would have a son who would reign over Israel for ever. That promised son was Jesus the Christ.

Most people think of Jesus as a healer and teacher and of course he was. But the fact that he could properly claim the title “King of the Jews” is often forgotten. When Jesus was born the wise men asked Herod “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” Nobody



laughed at their request. For the Jewish priests knew from the Scriptures that one day a King would be born in Bethlehem who would be God-provided, so it was to that little town the wise men were directed:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the One to be ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting ... And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth” (Micah 5:2,4).

King of Israel

- ☆ When Jesus first encountered the men who were to become his disciples he met Nathanael who, after talking with him, said: “Rabbi, you

are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49);

- ☆ When Jesus rode into Jerusalem the people shouted "Hosanna! 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!" (John 12:13);
- ☆ When Jesus was brought before Pilate he asked him "Are you the King of the Jews?" to which Jesus replied "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world" (John 18:37). So it was that Pilate wrote a sign that was put on the cross – "Jesus of Nazareth - The King of the Jews" (John 19:19).
- ☆ When Jesus was raised from the dead he spoke to his disciples about the things concerning the kingdom of God and their last question to him was "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Now a kingdom, by definition, must have a King.

Not Then, but Now!

We know, because of the passage of time, that it was not God's will at that time for Jesus to become King over Israel. The Gospel had first to be preached to the entire world, as it now



has been. But that does not mean that Jesus will not be King over Israel. From the time of Zedekiah – the last King of Judah – right up to our present day, the nation of Israel has never had a king. But that doesn't mean that this will be the case in the future.

The Bible tells us that when Jesus returns his claim to the throne of his father David will not be like those kings we see in our world today – Jesus will have the authority and power to lay claim to the throne. The Bible tells us that the Jewish people will mourn because they will recognise that they failed to acknowledge Jesus as their King when he was with them 2,000 years ago. They will then be willing to accept him as their King and the question the disciples asked "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" will then be fulfilled.

Consider the Facts

Look at this further evidence for Jesus' claim to be the King of the Jews:

- 📖 Jesus is able to claim direct descent from King David through his mother's genealogy (Luke 3: 23). (The genealogy recorded in Matthew shows the line through Mary's husband Joseph.)
- 📖 Before Jesus was born, his mother Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she would have a son – "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).
- 📖 Jesus said of himself that he would rule over all the nations when he comes again. Please read Matthew 25:31-34.

Divine Rule

How will the reign of Jesus be different from the rulers we see in our world today?

- 📖 He will have power and authority from his Father so that he will be able to rule in righteousness, truth, justice, and mercy (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-11).
- 📖 He demonstrated during his life on earth that he has the ability to understand what people are thinking and to see into their hearts (Matthew 9:4, Luke 9:47).
- 📖 He will not be able to be bribed or corrupted; his judgment will always be true. (See the temptations of Jesus Matthew 4:1-10.)
- 📖 When the soldiers went to arrest Jesus, they returned empty-handed with the excuse "Never man spoke like this man". By the power of his words, everyone will know that Jesus always speaks the truth (John 7:46).
- 📖 Jesus is immortal; so his rule will never end. Even though the Queen of the United Kingdom has reigned for over 50 years, she will die one day and her reign will end. Jesus the King of the Jews will never have

to fear the assassin's bullet or the frailty of old age.

Real and Living Hope

What a wonderful hope these Bible passages give for our world. It will not always be in the sad state that we see today – where the power of the gun or the influence of corrupt rulers holds sway over millions of sick and dying people. The Bible teaches us that we can have that hope ourselves and that we will then have an opportunity to help Jesus when he returns. But we have to do something about it now. We need to understand, believe and be baptised, if we are to live forever with Jesus in the world to come, when he reigns as King.

This is what the apostle Paul said right at the end of his life, when he explained what he was looking forward to. It was not to a life in heaven, but to a new life on earth – when he would be raised from the dead at the Coming of King Jesus:

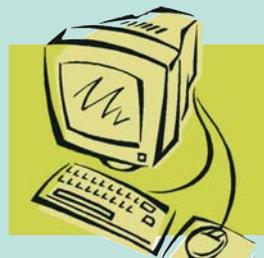
"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

Wendy Sykes

Get Help On-Line

If you have a computer, or can access one, here are some sites you might find helpful in furthering your understanding of Bible truth –

gladtidingsmagazine.org
christadelphians.org
one-gospel.org
dailyreadings.org.uk



All at: <http://www.>

Part Two

The Failure of Humanism

In this series **Malcolm Edwards** explains why human achievements are doomed to fail unless God is brought into account. Mankind's achievements are marvelled at every day, but many people are still concerned about the way things are going in the world and where everything will end.. So what is at the root of human discontent with a belief-system which leaves God out of the picture?

Where Are We Going?

Switch on the television most nights after 9 pm and before long, you are likely to witness some form of violence – savage fist fights, a gory murder or two and perhaps a fiery car smash.

Almost certainly there will be a portrayal of marital unfaithfulness and, quite possibly, explicit sex scenes.

All these are considered so disturbing as to be unsuitable for child viewing – which is why authorities have introduced the idea of a “watershed”: a time after which such things might be broadcast.

Is this sort of “adult entertainment” what the majority of the public are demanding, or are people being manipulated by forces that operate mainly for human greed, regardless of the damage being done to the basic moral structure of Society? It's difficult to avoid the conclusion that the latter is likely to be the case.

Morals in Decline

If Humanist thinking is now shaping future morals, rather than religious influence, we should at least expect to be shown emerging patterns of human behaviour which are advantageous to the ultimate peace and tranquillity of the species. This is by no means so. Instead people are now very worried about copy-cat action and the

influence of exposure to a diet of violence, sex and general wrong-doing, which is glorified in the way it is presented.

Humanism is clearly not working. It appears to be a convenient cloak for influential people of the media to do whatever they like. With censorship increasingly frowned upon as ‘detrimental to true humanistic progress’, the media is driven by the dictates of the mighty dollar to influence human behaviour towards a future of “Who Cares?”

In his book *“The Battle for the Mind”*, American writer Tim LaHaye addresses these very problems with considerable urgency, and much force. Writing from the standpoint of Biblical morality, he attacks Humanism as a festering evil in our society, and produces some interesting statistics. Under the heading of *“The Moral Majority”*, LaHaye complains that the largely humanist-controlled media in the USA is outrageously disproportionate in a country where Humanists are outnumbered by “Committed Christians” by about 250 to 1, not to mention other religions.

Media Manipulation

It is the constant complaint of Christian groups in Australia, and in other countries too, that they are consistently denied



proportional exposure in the media – who just don't want to know the Christian point of view about anything, especially on the subject of Creation. This closed-shop attitude towards Christian thinking strongly suggests that humanistic pressure quietly prevails.

This raises the question as to exactly where we are heading; does anyone really know? Are we being led by the nose on a trial-and-error experiment at the variable whim of so-called experts? Has society become an unsuspecting guinea pig? In fact, do the secular authorities of education and government have any clear plan of where we are going? It rather seems not.

Civilisation Wrecked

The prologue of the book by John Carroll entitled *“Humanism – The Wreck of Western Culture”* begins:

“We live amidst the ruins of the great five-hundred-year epoch of humanism. Around us is that ‘colossal wreck’. Our culture is a flat expanse of rubble.”

In case opponents of humanism dismiss this as typical cynicism, hear the view of a well-known humanist on the matter:

“Science seems to be leading us not to Utopia, but to greater social misery, if not to the ‘final solution’ of Nuclear war ... We have to face the world drift to disaster, for drift it is. There is today no world policy or deliberate direction. No one can say, as we did, half a century ago, that having repudiated the medieval picture of celestial paradise, Mankind has decided to march forwards to a Heaven upon earth” (Kingsley Martin – *“Is Humanism Utopian?”*, 1963).



H G Wells the writer

In a later paragraph the same writer felt it to be no longer clear that the progress of science means the progress of mankind and points out, that Aldous Huxley, in his book *“Brave New World”*, suggested that science could be used not to liberate, men and women, but to enslave them.

“End of its Tether”

H.G Wells was a renowned believer in Humanism. His

books express great optimism about Man's ability to eventually solve his many problems. Some titles were: *“Mankind in the Making”* (1903), *“Modern Utopia”* (1905) and *“New Worlds for Old”* (1908). Following World War I, Well's optimism seems to have waned somewhat, but it revived in 1931 with, *“The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind”*. Then came World War II and Hiroshima. In 1945, a disillusioned HG Wells, shortly before his death, wrote a pessimistic last book entitled *“Mind at The End of Its Tether”*, a bleak prophecy about nature ultimately rejecting man, and destroying him.

If man is driven only by a selfish need to survive, which inevitably must clash with that same need in others, then it is not surprising that conflict will eventually result. It should be obvious that selfishness is the root of the trouble. This is a problem which Christianity addresses – by encouraging selflessness and love for others – but Humanism does not. Indeed there are so many aspects of Humanism that appear primitive compared with the higher and more mature ideals of Christianity.

Malcolm Edwards

What Will Happen Tomorrow?

We may make our plans from day to day – even hour by hour – but we can never be sure exactly what will happen next.

Think about the Asian tsunami, terrorist bombings, and the more recent earthquake in Pakistan, all of which ended the lives of thousands and changed the lives of countless more.

The unexpected can happen at any time. That is why we take out insurance policies – to try and safeguard against the unexpected. But what else should we be doing for the future?

Nobody likes to think about the day of their own departure, and all the more so if there is no belief in a life beyond the grave. Do you believe in an afterlife? Many people sincerely believe there is life beyond the grave. Is this just wishful thinking or a means to take some of the pain away from bereavement? If you do believe in an afterlife, how sure are you?

The Life Beyond

Suppose that one day you met a man you knew well, whose agonising death you had witnessed and whose burial you attended. What would you think if, a few days later, you saw him alive, with the marks of his terrible injuries still apparent? Would you then believe in the resurrection of the dead? I'm sure you would!

This was exactly what happened when Jesus of Nazareth, having been brutally executed by crucifixion and then buried, appeared three days later to those with

whom he had lived and worked for more than three years. His death had come to them as a great shock. Before that they had believed that he was the Christ – the Son of God. They lost that hope, when he died. Now they regained it, confronted by the evidence that he was very much alive. And they came to believe that he will come again to reign on earth, because that is what he promised.

Believe The Evidence?

That record is part of the Bible. These people really did believe they had seen Jesus of Nazareth, raised from the dead. Remember this. Many of them later preached it and faced persecution and death for that belief. Please read these documents for yourself. Be critical and weigh the evidence, recognising that one of the strongest evidences is the fact that the Old Testament (written centuries before Jesus was born) predicted both his death and resurrection.

Then ask yourself these questions.

- ⊕ **Do you believe God raised his Son from the dead?**
- ⊕ **Do you believe he will Return to reign on earth?**
- ⊕ **Are you 'in Christ' and do you 'belong to him'?**

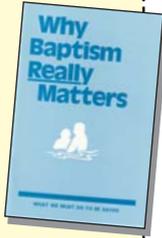
Your answers to these questions will tell you whether or not you are prepared for tomorrow – and remember, tomorrow will come, whether or not you have prepared for it.

David Ogden

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Fred Pearce

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