

# Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1486



***All Things are Possible page 3***  
***Bible Reading Tables – pages 10 & 11***  
***Why I Believe the Bible – page 15***

# Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

125th Year

A09

1486

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

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### Bible Versions

*The version most used in this issue is the New King James Version (NKJV) but other versions are sometimes used.*

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# "All Things are Possible"

Crowds in Grant Park, Chicago during November heard the US President-elect, Barack Obama, say those very words. *"If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where **all things are possible**, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy – tonight is your answer"*.

More than 120 million American citizens had voted to elect him as their President, and Obama is the living proof that anything can happen in a country which gives everyone the opportunity to better themselves. Born in Hawaii, his father was a Kenyan and his mother an American of English and Irish descent. He went to Columbia University and Harvard Law School before becoming an attorney, serving three terms in the Illinois Senate and later being elected to the US Senate.

He then announced his intention to run for US President and after a long and costly campaign ended up by winning a landslide victory. The extent of the excitement caused by this achievement is expressed in one of his campaign slogans, chanted by hundreds of thousands of his supporters: *"Yes We Can!"*

## From Small Beginnings

It should encourage all of us to see that life offers us all great possibilities, whatever our background and our circumstances. Over the years many people have made similar achievements to those of Mr Obama, even if

they were less widely publicised. The farmhouse featured on this month's cover is located in a remote part of North Wales – in the upland valley of Wybrnant, Gwynedd. It was here in 1545 that William Morgan was born, the second of five children born to a tenant farmer and his wife. When he was twenty, William went to St John's College, Cambridge, where he obtained several degrees and also learned Hebrew and Greek.



*Frontispiece to the Welsh Bible of 1588*

By 1578 William had become Vicar of St Dogfan's church in the village of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, in Mid-Wales. It was here that he translated the Bible into Welsh, from its original languages, so that it could be read in his native tongue. Printed in London, it was first published in September 1588 – the year of the Spanish Armada!

Before this translation became available, the only Bibles available to people were in Latin – the language of the educated. Ordinary people could neither read nor understand Latin; no wonder that it was received in Wales with "unalloyed joy and praise".

## Working Class Home

We should never forget that when Almighty God sent His Son into the world, He did not arrange for him to be born and brought up by the rich and important. God chose a working class home and an ordinary village girl, who was clearly taken aback when she was told that she was to be the mother of the long-awaited Messiah. The angel Gabriel immediately reassured her by explaining how it would be accom-

plished, but you will notice one phrase in particular:

*“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.*

***For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:35-37).***

It is much to Mary’s credit that she responded with amazing faith, considering the circumstances, and declared herself ready to accept what God asked of her. For thirty years she had the privilege of having Jesus live with her and saw at first hand how he grew in grace and favour with God and with his fellows. For her the impossible became possible and, as she herself once declared:

*“He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty” (Luke 1:51-53).*

## **Upside-Down World**

That declaration by Mary showed clearly that she understood the significance of what was happening to her and the implications for mankind. If God had chosen her – an ordinary girl who lived in a poorly-regarded village in Galilee – He was showing that ordinary men and women the world over can also become part of His purpose.

When Jesus had left home and was busy fulfilling the great work he had come to accomplish, he too made the same observation. One day a rich young man came and asked what he could do to gain eternal life and Jesus told him that he must sell all he had and become one of his followers. The youth left sorrowfully, for he was very rich and it was too great a price to pay.

Just imagine the concern that this caused the disciples, for he must have seemed a very worthwhile addition to their number, especially as he was very rich! They came to ask Jesus about it

and he explained that nobody can buy their way into God’s favour, however big their bank balance. And when they asked who then could be saved, Jesus replied that God can make all things possible if we put our trust and faith in Him.

*“With men this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible**” (Matthew 19:26).*

However difficult things might be and however hard life is for us, God can do what would otherwise be impossible. He can save us from our sins and give us the hope of everlasting life in a perfect world.

This issue contains a Bible Reading Table (on pages 10 and 11) that can help you read right through God’s Word during the year. It makes it possible to read all that God has revealed to mankind, so that we can live with Him and be ready for the final stage of His gracious purpose, which is about to begin. Be sure to take full advantage of that opportunity while you can.

**Editor**

# The Book of Life

**There is one inescapable fact for all of us, no matter how our lives work out. Whoever we are and whatever we have made of life's myriad opportunities – whether success or failure – the one certainty is that one day we will die.**

Nobody can escape that but, not surprisingly, few of us can face that harsh fact. Death is rarely discussed or considered; instead we all put it to the back of our minds.

## The End of Everything

When we are young we feel immortal: “It can't happen to me!” But as we get older, our bodies begin to show evidence of starting to wear out. The eye muscles lose their ability to focus from the extremes of close sight – for reading – and for distance, so glasses are needed to read, and thus we become reliant on an artificial aid to continue our normal everyday life. Our stamina and suppleness very gradually decline. Our hearing may not be at the same standard as it was, although we may not recognise the fact.

These changes are slow, almost imperceptible, but very real. We may be able to slow down some of the physical changes with exercise, a good diet and a healthy lifestyle, but that's all we can do: slow some of the decay down. We don't like to face it, but these changes are the result of our bodies decaying or perishing; and the inevitable end of this decay – barring

illness or accident which might shorten the process – is the point where the body can no longer function. When it is no longer capable of supporting life and simply shuts down, we die.

## Any Hope?

That this is so difficult for men and women to accept is testified by the existence of the world's religions throughout the ages. All offer the hope that death is not the end, but teach that life continues, in some form or other, beyond the grave. But they cannot all be right, for they are self-contradictory. Sadly most of the world's religions are nothing more than the product of what people want to believe; they do not offer any real hope or certainty about the future. They only reflect the universal refusal to accept the inevitable. People will believe anything other than the simple truth – that our bodies are mortal and that they decay and perish with age.

Of course, people without any religious convictions are in a different situation. With the decline of religion in the lives of the general population, most people now have to recognise that death is the end of life. For them, the general acceptance of the theory of evolution has totally discounted the existence of a god, or of any creator. The scientific community accepts the theory of evolution without question. It is widely accepted as fact and is taught as such in our schools, even



though it is nothing more than a theory which, incidentally, has huge contradictions and problems, that cannot be satisfactorily explained. But that's another subject.

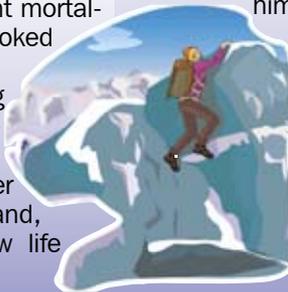
## **Not Responsible**

The belief that this present life is all that we have has had important consequences in terms of human attitude and behaviour. If life is our own, to do with as we please, we are not morally responsible to any superior Creator. So we can “eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die”. With this prevailing view, people have become self-indulgent and self-centred, attitudes which have the disastrous results we can see in society all around us. Moral restraints are disappearing and this tendency is increasing with each succeeding generation. The trouble is that we can only view life as we experience it around us, and view everything from that perspective unless there is some guidance from elsewhere. But where can we go to get a different point of view which we can really believe?

## **A Parable**

Imagine a situation where people had been working in a large steep-sided valley for generations until the land and its people were exhausted. But they carried on working, as the yields dropped and more and more effort was required just to survive. Their life expectancy fell sharply; infant mortality was increasing; things looked desperate.

Then one enterprising person climbed up the steep sides of the valley and discovered that there were other fertile valleys close at hand, which could give them new life and new hope.



It is just like that with many people today. They look for guidance about life from other people – whether scientists, pundits, politicians or religious leaders. But their opinions are really only the product of human minds; and human thinking will never give us the answer. We need opinion and guidance that is outside human thinking, if we are to get a proper perspective about things that are outside our experience. And that guidance has existed and has been among us for thousands of years.

## **God's Guidance**

The Bible is unique. There has never been, and there will never be, anything like it. It claims to be a message from God. It has been put to the test repeatedly and has never been found wanting. People have mocked it, challenged it, quarrelled with it, neglected it, and denied it. But *they* are long since dead and the Bible is still alive and well. For the Bible is the Word of God and there is nothing else to match it. The prophets of God were like people who climbed up out of the valley to get a higher and better perspective; for they got close to God and became His spokespeople.

Here is the testimony of one inspired apostle, whose life history is exposed in the gospel accounts. The apostle Peter often misunderstood Jesus, and sadly denied three times that he even knew him. But when God empowered him to see things clearly, this is what he wrote about God's revelation to mankind. In these extracts from his two letters to believers the apostle explains how important the Bible is. It is a Book of Life, designed to give us a true and living hope.

*“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:22-25).*

*“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3,4).*

*“We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:19-21).*

*“Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation - as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15,16).*

## **A Book Apart**

We need to read and understand God’s revelation, says the apostle, because the promises it contains can change our lives. God has inspired its writers – has moved or impelled them to reveal the truth. But we must not misunderstand it, or twist its message by importing our own beliefs or prejudices. And the Bible has been universally misunderstood, as men and women have tried to interpret its teaching from their own viewpoint.

We have to make sure, when we read it, that it is not read with eyes that are clouded by man’s thinking and aspirations. If we can remove the clouds of human confusion and teaching, and read it with an open mind, we will find it to be an amazing book. It’s not a book man would or could have written because, quite simply, it’s a message to us from God.

Just think about that claim! The Supreme Creator of the earth, the Master of the Universe has provided for His special creation – mankind – a guide book, a one-and-only set of written instructions for life. What an opportunity this gives us to see our puny existence from the perspective of God Himself; and what a marvellous thing it is to discover that He wants to give us everlasting life – He wants us to live forever!

This remarkable book tells us all we need to know about our origin and our nature and it comes from the universal all-powerful supreme intelligent power or being that we can know as “God”. He has given mankind a Book of Life.

Read it if you want to live forever.

**Barry Dray**

# Can Christians Speak with Tongues?

*In this examination of Bible teaching David Willey explores the Biblical text to see what speaking in tongues really means, and whether it was merely a first century phenomenon or something that was meant to endure for all believers.*

## Pentecost

In Acts chapter 2, verses 1 to 21 the events of the day of Pentecost are recorded. We are told, in verse 1, that “they were all with one accord in one place”. If you ask yourself to whom the word ‘they’ refers, it is obviously the twelve apostles, for the account reads like this:

*“They cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place...” (Acts 1:26-2:1).*

Chapter divisions can sometimes make things appear more complicated than they really are, so it pays to read across them. But it is also good to ask questions as you read. So, where was the “one place”? It was probably the upper room referred to in 1:13 – although we cannot be sure whether or not that was the Upper Room where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper. Perhaps it was.

Were the twelve apostles alone or were there other people with them? Again, we cannot dogmatise; it was certainly the twelve who were present, but the group could have included some or even all of the 120 people referred to in 1:15:

*“In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)”.*

## Filled with the Holy Spirit

In Acts 2, verses 2-3, we read of a sound like a “mighty rushing wind” and the “cloven (or ‘divided’) tongues like as of fire” and as verse 4 says, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit”. What effect did that have? Verse 4 explains that they “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”.

If we look back to Mark chapter 16, we find a list of what the followers of Jesus would be able to do when they had the power of the Spirit:

*“These signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything*

*deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17,18).*

They could not have done those things in the Upper Room, for obvious reasons. Instead they: “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”.



I don't imagine that they would have spoken with tongues in the Upper Room, although I suppose that they might have had the opportunity to practise their new ability whilst they were there. But, out in the city of Jerusalem, the whole city was crammed with Jews from all over the Roman Empire, because it was the day of Pentecost. So they were able to go out into the city immediately, and speak in 'new tongues' as they endeavoured to preach the good news about the risen Lord to the crowds that were thronging the streets. It was a golden opportunity to start preaching the Word of God to the people.

## **Speaking with Tongues**

If we read through Acts chapter 2 carefully, especially verses 6 to 12, we will see exactly what "speaking with tongues" entailed. The multitude were amazed and said:

*"Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:7-11).*

These words are very clear. We learn from them that 'speaking with tongues' enabled the apostles to speak in foreign languages. We cannot escape this conclusion. When the apostles 'spoke with tongues', those who heard them were able to hear the gospel message in their own different languages or dialects – and a list is given of the different places from which the visitors came to make it even clearer.

What was the purpose of this gift which enabled the apostles to speak with tongues? It enabled the apostles in the end to go to any place in the Roman Empire and to be sure that every person there would be able to understand what was said. The apostles had the facility to speak the local dialect, so the people there could hear the gospel in their native language .

## **Huge Advantage**

Think of the benefit that would accrue to us today if we could do that now. We have a Christadelphian Bible Mission that seeks to preach the word of God to all nations. It is relatively easy where the people understand English – but one of the greatest problems we encounter, for example in countries in Eastern Europe, is the language barrier. Without a translator, we can do absolutely nothing unless the recipients can speak English, or unless our missionary visitors have had the time and ability to learn the language.

The apostles had no such problem. Whatever country they went to, because they had the gift of the Spirit which enabled them to speak in new tongues, they could be understood in every place they went. It was a marvellous help in spreading the gospel message – one that would be very useful today, if it were available.

So it is clear from Acts chapter 2 that the Holy Spirit gift of 'speaking with tongues' was the ability to speak in different languages and dialects – and I suggest that this is completely different from the gift – of ecstatic utterance – that is claimed by many churches today.

**David Willey**

# Bible Reading

## JANUARY

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

## FEBRUARY

1	Exod. 5, 6	Psa. 58, 59	Rom. 10, 11
2	... 7, 8	... 60, 61	... 12
3	... 9	... 62, 63	... 13, 14
4	... 10	... 64, 65	... 15, 16
5	... 11, 12	... 66, 67	Mark 1
6	... 13, 14	... 68	... 2
7	... 15	... 69	... 3
8	... 16	... 70, 71	... 4
9	... 17, 18	... 72	... 5
10	... 19, 20	... 73	... 6
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19	... 30	... 87, 88	... 15, 16
20	... 31, 32	... 89	1 Cor. 1, 2
21	... 33, 34	... 90, 91	... 3
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26	... 39, 40	... 102	... 10
27	Lev. 1, 2	... 103	... 11
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2	... 7	... 106	... 15
3	... 8	... 107	... 16
4	... 9, 10	108, 109	2 Cor. 1, 2
5	... 11	110, 112	... 3, 4
6	... 12, 13	113, 114	... 5, 6, 7
7	... 14	115, 116	... 8, 9
8	... 15	117, 118	... 10, 11
9	... 16	119, v. 40	... 12, 13
10	... 17, 18	v. 41-80	Luke 1
11	... 19	v. 81-128	... 2
12	... 20	v. 129-176	... 3
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16	... 31	... 6	... 17
17	2 Sam. 1	... 7	... 18
18	... 2	... 8	... 19
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31	... 17	... 21	... 7, 8

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31	... 5	Lam. 1	... 12, 13

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

# Tables



## APRIL

1	Num.	15	Prov.	11	Luke	24
2	...	16	...	12	Gof.	1, 2
3	...	17, 18	...	13	...	3, 4
4	...	19	...	14	...	5, 6
5	...	20, 21	...	15	Eph.	1, 2
6	...	22, 23	...	16	...	3, 4
7	...	24, 25	...	17	...	5, 6
8	...	26	...	18	Phil.	1, 2
9	...	27	...	19	...	3, 4
10	...	28	...	20	John	1
11	...	29, 30	...	21	...	2, 3
12	...	31	...	22	...	4
13	...	32	...	23	...	5
14	...	33	...	24	...	6
15	...	34	...	25	...	7
16	...	35	...	26	...	8
17	...	36	...	27	...	9, 10
18	Deut.	1	...	28	...	11
19	...	2	...	29	...	12
20	...	3	...	30	...	13, 14
21	...	4	...	31	...	15, 16
22	...	5	Eccl.	1	...	17, 18
23	...	6, 7	...	2	...	19
24	...	8, 9	...	3	...	20, 21
25	...	10, 11	...	4	Acts	1
26	...	12	...	5	...	2
27	...	13, 14	...	6	...	3, 4
28	...	15	...	7	...	5, 6
29	...	16	...	8	...	7
30	...	17	...	9	...	8

## MAY

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

## JUNE

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

## OCTOBER

1	1 Chron.	15	Ezek.	27	Luke	24
2	...	16	...	28	Gof.	1, 2
3	...	17	...	29	...	3, 4
4	...	18, 19	...	30	...	5, 6
5	...	20, 21	...	31	Eph.	1, 2
6	...	22	...	32	...	3, 4
7	...	23	...	33	...	5, 6
8	...	24, 25	...	34	Phil.	1, 2
9	...	26	...	35	...	3, 4
10	...	27	...	36	John	1
11	...	28	...	37	...	2, 3
12	2 Chron.	1, 2	...	38	...	4
13	...	3, 4	...	39	...	5
14	...	5, 6	...	40	...	6
15	...	7	...	41	...	7
16	...	8	...	42	...	8
17	...	9	...	43	...	9, 10
18	...	10, 11	...	44	...	11
19	...	12, 13	...	45	...	12
20	...	14, 15	...	46	...	13, 14
21	...	16, 17	...	47	...	15, 16
22	...	18, 19	...	48	...	17, 18
23	...	20	...	49	...	19
24	...	21, 22	...	50	...	20, 21
25	...	23	...	51	Acts	1
26	...	24	...	52	...	2
27	...	25	...	53	...	3, 4
28	...	26	...	54	...	5, 6
29	...	27	...	55	...	7
30	...	28	...	56	...	8
31	...	29	...	57	...	9

## NOVEMBER

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

## DECEMBER

1	Esth.	9, 10	Jonah	1	Heb.	6, 7
2	Job	1, 2	...	2	...	8, 9
3	...	3, 4	...	3	...	10
4	...	5	Micah	1	...	11
5	...	6, 7	...	2	...	12
6	...	8	...	3	...	13
7	...	9	...	4	James	1
8	...	10	...	5	...	2
9	...	11	...	6	...	3, 4
10	...	12	Nahum	1, 2	...	5
11	...	13	...	3	1 Peter	1
12	...	14	Hab.	1	...	2
13	...	15	...	2	...	3, 4, 5
14	...	16, 17	...	3	2 Pet.	1, 2
15	...	18, 19	Zeph.	1	...	3
16	...	20	...	2	1 John	1, 2
17	...	21	...	3	...	3, 4
18	...	22	Hag.	1, 2	...	5
19	...	23, 24	Zech.	1, 2	2 & 3 John	
20	...	25, 27	...	3	Jude	
21	...	28	...	4, 5	Rev.	1, 2
22	...	29, 30	...	6, 7	...	3, 4
23	...	31, 32	...	8	...	5, 6
24	...	33	...	9	...	7, 8, 9
25	...	34	...	10	...	10, 11
26	...	35, 36	...	11	...	12, 13
27	...	37	...	12	...	14
28	...	38	...	13, 14	...	15, 16
29	...	39	Malachi	1	...	17, 18
30	...	40	...	2	...	19, 20
31	...	41, 42	...	3, 4	...	21, 22

By courtesy of The Christadelphian

# A Trip to Hospital

**Only the other day I made another frustrating visit to the hospital. It was a total waste of time and quite unnecessary, but one thing came out of it at least. While I was there I determined to share my experiences with others and write this diary.**

As I have regarded this whole experience as one that was under God's control, despite my personal frustration, it may well help others if I share some thoughts and spiritual ideas that have occurred along the way.

## It all started...

Where did it all begin? The story of my illness begins about five years ago when having returned from Africa following a Bible Mission visit one or two parts of my anatomy didn't seem to be functioning properly. A visit to the doctor was called for and he sent me off to the hospital for some tests. That time the tests were clear and since then I have been regularly monitored. But last year it appeared that something more sinister was happening.

Really though, I should start by putting my life itself into context. I am a Christadelphian who is trying to live life by faith based upon the teaching of the Bible, the Word of God. For my purpose this means acknowledging that God is sovereign as far as my life is concerned. His will should prevail in all things and so I seek to fulfil that

will, day by day. My life is in His hands, so it is His to give and His to take, should He so choose. I recognise that life is a gift to be used in ways which will give God pleasure: I should not simply be trying to find self-fulfilment.

I came to this conviction years ago, as my parents were Christadelphians. So as a teenager I heard the call of the gospel and followed the Lord Jesus Christ, by being baptized into him, as a believing adult.

Over the years I have had many minor illnesses, each one a reminder of human frailty, so I know only too well that we are mortal creatures. But to be diagnosed with a critical illness now is something else. When that happens – and that is what happened to me – you wonder “Is it the end?” Then, with second thoughts, you wonder “Is it the beginning of the end at least?” And the soul searching doesn't end there, for you then wonder if you have done anything that

might have met with God's disfavour. A critical diagnosis brings all the issues of life into sharp focus and at the same time the small things of everyday life have still to be dealt with. All this is part of the process of living by faith.

## The Waiting Room

Five months into the year, I had already visited the hospital at least



twice for the tests and now was the time for results and yet another examination by the surgeon. As I waited in the reception area, not really wanting to read the typical tatty magazines or the book I had brought, I had a drink of water from the dispenser in the corner. The room was stuffy and oppressive; those who were sharing the Waiting Room with me all looked uncomfortable and ill at ease. The drink was ice cold and refreshing.



It occurred to me that this was like the “waiting room of life”. Every one of us is waiting for something. Time is ticking by and one day we will be told that our time has run out. For we are all getting older, one day at a time.

We all waited – some chatting, some sitting stoically, some reading. It was as if time was standing still. Relief would come only with the summons to attend the doctor and he was running late. Apparently a patient had collapsed whilst with him and this had delayed things whilst the “crash team” had helped the patient to recover. An hour or so passed by. Then the steady stream of patients resumed their progression into clinics and consultations. What would be the message for me; would it be one of hope?

*“Yes, we can help you. It will take an operation, but at the end of the process you will be a new man. And there should be no problem. You are fit, aren’t you?”*

Or would the situation be hopeless?

*“We are very sorry but there is nothing we can do to help. We will of course make you as comfortable as possible,*

*and you should be all right for a few more months.”*

## **Life or Death?**

I guess this marks the two extremes – new life or certain death. Isn’t that where we all are? Life is like a waiting room, in which we try to find useful things to do with our lives. Out of that waiting room there is only one door. It may look as though it offers hope, but at

the end of the corridor there is the surgery with a doctor who actually offers only a postponement. The inevitable will come one day: we will all die and, without God’s help, we will die without hope. The apostle Paul once said to believers in Ephesus that before they had chosen to follow Jesus they were in this condition:

*“At that time you were 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).*

Then he added these encouraging words:

*“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ” (2:13).*

How, then, can we share that hope – real, lasting hope, which is guaranteed to bring that ‘new life’ solution we all crave? It can only come about when we bring God into the situation, and choose the Lord Jesus as our Master Physician. He, and he alone, can cure our deepest sicknesses.

## **Health and Peace**

There are no instant cures on offer, but

God can give us both hope and peace. Even believers know that they will die and that they will come to judgement, which could mean they will perish for ever. However, they have placed their lives in God's hands so that whatever happens to



them, He is in control, and everything is subject to His will. Our confidence is in His character, knowing that God will always act out of love. God always provides what is best for us as a loving Father (see Romans 8:28).

Whilst we are waiting for God's comprehensive cure for all human ills, we can wait in confidence and try to use our time usefully serving Him. That way, life becomes much more than a matter of 'marking time', for we have to take the opportunities of life as opportunities for service. Jesus taught that it matters as much how you do things as what you do and that motive and intention are every bit as important. Thus even the little things of life and service come to have meaning as we live by faith.

It makes a huge difference to know that our lives are in God's hands and that he cares for us. No matter how skilful the surgeon is, or how many mistakes his team might make, or how many hospital infections might be around, nothing can or will happen unintentionally. There may be difficulties to overcome; things from which we can learn; results we did not expect; and things we find hard to accept. But we can always be confident that what happens is what is right for each of us. The comforting assurance is that God knows best and always does what is best.

## Safe Hands

Once we place our lives in God's hands, everything belongs to another dimension. For God does not just want us to live here and now: He wants us to have eternal

life. This life, however good it feels to us, is limited in time – 70 years and then what?

Beyond the grave, God has promised believers the hope of life everlasting, eternal good health in His kingdom on earth, when Jesus comes. Jesus has already proved that he is a Master Physician. When he lived on earth he could heal the sick, forgive them their sins and even bring the dead back to life. So if he is interested in us we are in safe hands indeed.

All of this brings me to one simple conclusion when we are faced with a serious challenge, to our health or our well being. If we put our confidence in God and entrust our lives to His care, there is nothing to be afraid of!

**David Nightingale**

*To be continued*

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# Why I Believe the Bible

First of all I think I'd better explain what I mean when I say "believe".

☛ *Do I mean that every word in the Bible is literal truth and is to be taken precisely as it stands, without interpretation or question as to its meaning within its context?*

I'm not sure that Bible believers of that persuasion actually exist. More probably they're an invention of those who want to ridicule the whole idea of believing in such an old book.

☛ *Am I saying that I believe the Bible only to the extent that when I come across anything in it that's difficult to understand or appears to cut across conventional thinking, then I'm prepared to water it down or re-interpret it to make it more palatable?*

No, I'm not pushing either of those points of view. I'm saying that I believe what the Bible says about itself - that it is the inspired Word of God; that it is, as the Apostle Paul puts it, "able to make you wise for salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15). I trust its statements. I approach it, not from the point of view of asking it to justify itself, but rather seeking what it has to teach - not simply because it's true, but because it tells me how to order my life and it gives me hope for the future.

## Properly Interpreted

In the main, the Bible means what it says. I say, "in the main" because there is Bible language which is literal and must be interpreted literally and there is figurative language which has to be interpreted figuratively. Remem-

ber that a simile or metaphor does not detract from the underlying literal meaning. And there is symbolic language which must be interpreted symbolically. This symbolic language is normally clearly recognisable as such, but can be hard to understand without first obtaining knowledge of the underlying literal fundamentals. The Book of Revelation is the most obvious case where this applies.

Here are a few simple illustrations that might help.

→ **The New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ literally rose from the dead.** It tells us so in literal language, and there are strong reasons (which we'll come back to later) for believing this miraculous event to be literally true.

→ When the Bible describes, **as a matter of history**, the Babylonians taking Judah into captivity, it is a true historical record - with important moral lessons attached.

→ **The Lord Jesus Christ told a story** about a man going into a far country. This wasn't literally true, but was a parable with an important truth and a lesson which the story conveyed.

→ In the book of Daniel we read about **a conflict between a ram and a goat**. These animals are symbols, and we're actually told what they represent - two nations.

→ **In the Book of Revelation** we read about a woman seated upon seven hills. That's a literal impos-

sibility, but the description is a symbol which was designed to make the reader think of the city of Rome, which is situated on seven hills.

## Inspired Composition

I mentioned earlier the claims the Bible makes for itself. Some famous poets and composers are sometimes said to have been “inspired”, by which it is meant that they tapped into a stream of consciousness that was beyond their normal capability. The Bible’s claim to be inspired is explained in that it also claims to be the Word of God. Of course, anybody can claim anything, so the claim itself isn’t conclusive.

Bear in mind, however, that if this claim is fraudulent then the Bible’s teaching is most seriously devalued. If, however, the Bible’s claim is valid, then its teaching is of the utmost importance, surpassing that from any other source. It would be deserving of our very closest attention.

Time and again in the Old Testament you find sections prefaced with the words, “Thus says the Lord” or, “Hear the word of the Lord” or, “The word of the Lord came to me”.

These claims are very, very numerous, and they’re not limited to what writers say about themselves. The books of the Old Testament support and add authority to each other. What’s more, the books of the New Testament make constant reference back to those of the Old Testament. These are not just in isolated instances, but rather the Old Testament is woven right through the fabric of the New in such a way as to clearly

indicate that the Old Testament quotations and allusions are adding indispensable authority to what we read in the New Testament.

## Given by Inspiration

Here are two passages in the New Testament which testify to the inspired truth of the Old Testament:

*“From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:15-17).*

*“We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:19-21).*

This approach to the Old Testament Scriptures was very much a characteristic of the teaching of Christ himself. Just consider what he is recorded as saying to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead:

*“He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me.’ And he*



opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then he said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day...' (Luke 24:44-46).

As discussed earlier, none of this proves the Bible to be inspired. Nevertheless, the unity, harmony and coherence of both Old and New Testaments are phenomena you would expect to find in inspired writings. They are so well matched and dependent upon one another that they would have been extremely hard to produce without inspiration, particularly in works that were written over a period of 1500 years.

## **Endorsed by Jesus**

From those verses in Luke chapter 24 we can see just what the attitude of Jesus Christ was towards the Old Testament. In particular he understood that it had foretold the nature of his mission and what would happen to him. If you read through the Old Testament this is demonstrably true. In it you find many, many predictions about him:

- *the circumstances and the place of his birth;*
- *the purpose of his work and mission;*
- *descriptions of his demeanour and character;*
- *the attitude of people towards him;*
- *his final entry into Jerusalem;*
- *his betrayal;*
- *the way he was forsaken by his disciples;*
- *the harsh treatment he received*

*before being executed;*

- *the precise details of his death including the mode of execution (vivid descriptions that were written centuries before crucifixion was known as a method of execution);*
- *his resurrection from the dead and his ascension to heaven.*

In fact, a whole library of information was written down about Jesus Christ hundreds of years before the event. All those details can be found in the Old Testament. Of course, we read about them plainly in the New Testament, but this is what we can read about him in the Old Testament. It means that, hundreds of years beforehand, prophecies were written which were to be fulfilled to the letter by Christ. One writer aptly expressed this inter-dependence:

*The New is in the Old contained  
The Old is in the New explained  
The New is in the Old concealed  
The Old is in the New revealed  
The New is in the Old enfolded  
The Old is in the New unfolded.*

## **Human or Divine?**

So, is the Bible a book of merely human origin? True, the writers, the penmen, were human; but what about the mind behind them? Only a Divine mind could have made such accurate predictions. Bible prophecy is therefore one indication that the Bible is inspired. We have already noted how the life story of the Lord Jesus was foretold in very great detail, and Jesus is right at the centre of the revealed purpose of God. Here is another, albeit less important, example of how God can both foretell and control the future.

The people of the nation of Israel are styled in the Old Testament, "God's

witnesses". God, we are told, chose Israel not because of their importance but because He loved them. The Old and New Testaments contain an amazingly candid record of their history, with their flaws and failings plainly revealed. There was a consistent record of failure that no nation on earth would be willing to compile for themselves. The question is: Why did Israel preserve records that expose their faithlessness and corruption in such forthright terms? Other nations would have got rid of such unflattering material long ago. Why has Israel not dared to do so? The answer must be because they acknowledge that these writings emanated from God.

### **Scattered and Regathered**

We read in the Old Testament of interventions by God in Israel's history, scatterings and regatherings, declines and revivals. The Jewish people have survived persecutions, expulsions, massacres - indeed all attempts either to assimilate or exterminate them. Just ponder the astonishing growth of the number of Jewish people living in Palestine. In 1882 there were only 24,000; in 1917, the year of the Balfour Declaration, 55,000; by 1948, when the modern State of Israel was founded, 657,000; and today there are about 5 million Jews living in Israel. This regathering was foretold by Old Testament prophets. Here is the message God gave them:

*"...I am with you, says the Lord, to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11).*

*"He who scattered Israel will gather*

*him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock" (Jeremiah 31:10).*

*"...I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land" (Ezekiel 36:24).*

The USA is the only single nation still having more Jews living in it than there are in Israel. Clearly though, there's more revival and regathering to happen. Nevertheless, the regathering of Jews to Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel in the 20th century has been a most remarkable fulfilment of Bible prophecy. It has shown dramatically that such prophecy, far from being the forecasting of trivia or purposeless crystal-gazing, testifies to the existence of a purpose and plan with the earth that God is working out and will bring to fruition.

### **Conclusion**

There are many other ways of checking on the authenticity of the Bible which will be considered in a follow-up article. In this one we have looked at the internal consistency of the record (Old and New Testaments) and the remarkable way in which God has foretold the future. Bible prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ have come absolutely true as have those made about the nation of Israel and the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland.

This is the sort of evidence that makes me believe in the inspiration and accuracy of God's Word. These are reasons why I believe the Bible. I commend it to you as the Word of God and urge you to read it systematically and prayerfully, and to take its message to heart.

**Mark Sawyer**

# Sight and Blindness

Bible truths are often expressed in stark contrasts. One recurring theme is that of sight and blindness, and it is a powerful one because we can all appreciate the huge deprivation suffered by those who cannot see and the blessing of being able to see well.

## Seeing and Perceiving

The way the Bible uses this contrast is to focus upon blindness of the mind. We often say, "Oh I see", when we understand what someone has said. Conversely, when we don't follow the argument we say, "I don't see that". In the same way, God is more concerned about our perception or spiritual understanding than about our visual ability.

The Bible speaks of those who refuse to acknowledge the power and love of God as being blind. Referring particularly to the Jews who refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Messiah, Paul writes:

*"Their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ" (2 Corinthians 3:14).*

Jesus condemned the Scribes and Pharisees using the same idea for he said they were:

*"...blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).*

It was not that they could not see the things that God had revealed, but that they didn't want to see them, or to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. (See Matthew 13:14,15.)

## "Eyes to See"

Those who perceive and accept the saving grace of God through his Son are, however, described as "seeing" (Matthew 13:16). The disciples understood the spiritual meaning of Jesus' parables, whereas the Scribes and Pharisees "hardened their hearts." Consequently they could not perceive the deeper meaning. If they had acknowledged it they would have had to change their lives and they did not want to do that.

We choose to be blind or seeing, by deciding whether to open our eyes or not. If we choose to be blind, God will not force us to see His light. The choice is ours. We can be blind to spiritual things or we can open our minds to the glorious light of the gospel message which we can see if we read the Bible.

**Marion Buckler**

*Quotations from the KJV*

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