

# Glad Tidings

*Of The Kingdom Of God*



## Featured Articles

Get A Grip! (p.3)

Baptism – Right and Wrong (p.8)

The Bible and Mindfulness (p.12)

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

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

## Table Of Contents

Get a Grip!		3
Judgement on Ahaziah		5
Baptism – Right and Wrong		8
Mindfulness		12
The Flood		15
2 Samuel		16
Amen, Amen		17

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# Get a Grip!

THE STRIKING monument on the cover records an event where people literally took a grip on life.

In 1995 a French catamaran struck rocks off the island of Jersey in treacherous conditions. 307 passengers and crew were in danger of their lives. Thankfully, the emergency services, supported by local ships, were able to save them all. The monument thanks ‘the help of God and of many strong arms’.

We sometimes use this expression about relatively trivial things. When someone has failed to complete a task or refuses to take something seriously, we might tell them to ‘get a grip’. They probably won’t like it, but they will know what we mean.

We may even tell ourselves to ‘get a grip’ if we feel we are letting ourselves down.

There are more serious aspects though. Do you ever feel like you are losing your grip on life? Sometimes it appears that there is nothing solid in life. Jobs change, friends and colleagues come and go, and even our most loved ones pass away and leave us on our own. At times it can feel like there is nothing permanent and reliable in our life.

## Gripping Something Solid

The Bible is solid, permanent and reliable. It doesn’t change and we can trust it. In

it we find prophecies which were written thousands of years ago, now coming to life in front of our eyes.

Over 2500 years ago, God’s prophet spoke to the nation of Israel, who were taken into captivity. His message was:

*O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves (Ezekiel 37:12–13).*

The State of Israel was established in 1948, we can visit it, and we see it in the news.

Similarly, the message of God’s Kingdom on earth and the fact that He wants you in it is the same now as it was when Jesus preached about it two thousand years ago. He hasn’t changed His promise or His purpose with this world.

## A Hold on Life

In the New Testament, we find repeated encouragements to take a grip on eternal life – the promise of a place in God’s Kingdom. Paul wrote this to a young man, Timothy:

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12).*



The expression to ‘lay hold’ means to grip something, to hold it tight, even wrestle it to the ground. Maybe a rugby tackle is a good visual example! That is the strong grip that we should be taking on God’s promise.

How do we do this? Well, more of Paul’s words may help:

*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 1:13).*

By holding tight to the Word of God, which Paul taught, we are anchoring ourselves to something solid. God’s Word is unchanging, it tells us about His plan and how He wants us to live with Him. We can trust it.

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast (Hebrews 6:19).*

## Getting that Grip

This is a lifelong opportunity, to take hold of God’s Word, His promises and the hope He offers. Writing in Philippians chapter 3, Paul described his goal:

*That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:10–11).*

The effort he put in, the way he focused on that goal, are described in the following verses:

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (v12–14).*

The language is strong. The words highlighted in blue mean to seize, possess or arrest someone. The words in green are translated elsewhere as to ‘persecute’. Paul was previously the main persecutor of Christians, killing them and sending them to prison. So he knew just how powerful it was to seize something – and now he was seizing the hope of God’s Kingdom.

The Bible is our opportunity to understand God’s offer, and to take hold of it ourselves. Let’s read it and get a grip on a real future.

# Judgement on Ahaziah

AHAB, the wicked king of Israel, had been killed in battle. He was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who seemed determined to try and outdo his father in wickedness. The Bible record is most emphatic:

*He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin (1 Kings 22:52).*

A little later it says that he provoked the Lord God in all the ways his father had done. It does not take much imagination to see that everything Ahaziah was doing would be abhorrent to God. There is only one encouraging comment about Ahaziah's life: that he only reigned for two years.

## Another Wrong Choice

The way in which Ahaziah was removed is very instructive. He apparently met with an accident.

*Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured (2 Kings 1:2).*

The record suggests that Ahaziah was leaning though a lattice or window, perhaps over the windowsill, and had overbalanced and fallen. The fall was sufficiently serious to make him very ill,

and he decided to ask Baal-Zebub, the idol of Ekron, whether he would recover. Baal-Zebub means 'the lord of the flies', and he appears in the New Testament as Beelzebul, or the prince of demons.

It was a deliberate snub to the Lord God to consult an idol about his recovery. Had he asked the living God, He would have been able to answer properly.

Once again, Elijah was asked to intervene. An angel told him to meet the messengers and ask a direct question:

*Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?" (v3).*

There was a God in Israel, the living God, in contrast to the gods of all the surrounding nations. Those idols were made of wood or stone, and of course were unable to help in any way at all.

Elijah not only had a question for the messengers, he also had an answer for Ahaziah:

*Now therefore, thus says the LORD: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die' (v4).*

It was a death sentence and a clear condemnation of Ahaziah and all that he

stood for. He had decided to oppose God and continued to do so even when he was mortally sick. It was because of this that his life was shortened.

## A Leather Belt

The messengers returned to the king and relayed Elijah's message. It had taken them less time than expected, as they had not needed to go all the way to Ekron. They had to explain what had happened to them and the message they had been given. However, they did not recognise the man who had met them as Elijah.

Ahaziah sensed immediately who this was likely to be. He asked his messengers about the kind of man who had met them, to receive this response:

*"A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist."* And he said, *"It is Elijah the Tishbite"* (v8).

The king was in no doubt about the prophet's identity.

## More Poor Judgement

For some reason, the king felt it necessary to consult Elijah further. Perhaps he wanted to know if there was anything he could do to change the sentence of death which Elijah had pronounced.

He did so by sending one of his army captains with his fifty men to demand that Elijah return to Samaria with them to speak to the king. There was nothing subtle about the approach or the message,

it was calculated to put Elijah in his place. Ahaziah was forgetting (or ignoring the fact) that Elijah was a prophet, the representative of the Lord God in heaven.

*Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!'" (v9).*

We must remember that what happened next was not to establish Elijah's position, but God's. It was not for the king to command a prophet of God. Hence the devastating reply from Elijah.

*So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.* (v10).

Fifty-one men lay dead, a testimony to how King Ahaziah had failed to take note of the respect due to a representative of God.

Somehow the news reached the king that his messengers were dead, and that they had not been able to persuade Elijah to return with them. Undaunted he sent a second captain with his men to summon Elijah to come to see him. This captain had learned nothing from the disastrous events which had overtaken his predecessor. His words were almost identical:

*Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!'* (v11).

Not surprisingly Elijah acted in exactly the same way. This was not the way to



approach a prophet of God, less still the Lord God himself.

*"If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty (v12).*

Now 102 men had been consumed by fire because they had not come reverently before the representative of the Lord God.

## Humility Pays

Ahaziah tried a third time, but fortunately the captain of the third fifty seems to have learned the lessons of his two predecessors. When he reached Elijah, he acknowledged his position and was much more humble in his approach:

*Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your*

*sight. Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight (v13–14).*

It was a more reverential and respectful approach, which acknowledged Elijah's position as the prophet of God. There were to be no more deaths of Ahaziah's messengers.

## Judgement on the King

Elijah received assurance from the angel that he should go with this captain and his fifty. He came to the king with a stark message. He had ignored God when he could have listened to Him; now God was to let him suffer the consequences of his sin.

*Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die' (v16).*

Ahaziah may be seen as an obscure king of Israel, but his life teaches an important lesson. The Lord God must be approached with reverence, in the way He demands. We cannot expect Him to look after us if we constantly and wilfully ignore Him and His wishes.

This was the last mission of Elijah. Shortly he was to complete the handover to Elisha, preparation for which had started after they first met.

**Mark Sheppard**

# Baptism – Right and Wrong

The terms ‘baptism’ and ‘sprinkling’ are often used interchangeably. The following article shows that, in fact, they are quite different. It looks at the various issues from a biblical viewpoint.

## The Commandment of Jesus

There can hardly be a more emphatic statement than the following words of Jesus:

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

He clearly linked the issues of belief and baptism with salvation, and taught that both are essential if we hope to be ‘saved’.

At the age of about 30, Jesus himself was baptised “to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Then he sent the twelve disciples to baptise on his behalf (John 4:1–2). After his resurrection Jesus commanded them to go and:

*Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).*

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles tells us time after time that, when people arrived at a clear understanding of the Gospel, they obeyed it by being baptised:

*Those who gladly received his word were baptised (Acts 2:41).*



**Early baptismal bath excavated in Ephesus**

*When they believed the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised (Acts 8:12).*

To do this, they “went down into the water” (as in Acts 8:36–38). The people being baptised went under the surface of the water and were fully immersed in it.

## How do we Know What is Right?

So why do many people today say that babies should be baptised, or ‘christened’?

Babies are too young to receive or understand the message from God; they can't even understand human speech or read. Why is it said that the baptism of adults is a mere ritual and is unnecessary – or maybe optional? Or that a few drops of water are enough to constitute baptism?

The answer lies in our attitude to the Bible. We need to be clear whether we believe that it is inspired by God, as it claims:

*Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).*

If so, we'll believe that it really is God message to us that every word is true. We'll also have no doubt that its message is as relevant to us today as it ever was. It follows therefore that Biblical baptism is as essential in the twenty-first<sup>†</sup> century as it was in the first.

The Bible explains what baptism is, what it is for and for whom it is intended in the following ways. These are four 'R's:

## 1. Remission

The Apostle Peter told his listeners:

*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).*

Remission of sins means the forgiveness for those times when we disobey God. This is only possible because God has accepted the death of His Son as the one sacrifice by which He is able to 'remit' our sins.

It's no different today. One way of describing forgiveness is 'washing' or

'cleansing' from sin. At times we realise that we can only remove dirt from our bodies by taking a bath. In the same way, when we see how sinful we are in God's eyes, we know that we need to be cleansed of our sin.

In this way, the Apostle Paul was told to "*be baptized, and wash away your sins*" (Acts 22:16).

## 2. Resurrection

Baptism symbolises a new start in life. In Romans 6:1–11 Paul wrote to those who had already been baptised and compared the event to a death and a resurrection.

*We were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).*

Jesus' mortal life ended in the grave, from which he rose three days later and was made immortal. The experience of new believers is modelled on this. They 'die' in a watery grave and 'rise' seconds later to a new way of life.

Paul wrote to some more believers that they'd been:

*...buried with [Jesus] in baptism, in which you also were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).*

This is what Jesus meant when he said:

*The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live (John 5:25).*

### 3. Release

Back in Romans 6 Paul continued in verses 12–23 to say that, when they were baptised, they had renounced sin. He reminded them that, having been “slaves of sin ... you became slaves of righteousness”.

It was an idea more familiar to them than to us, as many of them could have been slaves, servants or masters. Today most of us are either employees or employers, so we can understand it too.

Baptism symbolises an end and a beginning in another way – freedom from a cruel slave-owner. Sin has no hold over those who are baptised – they fare set free from it and their sins are forgiven.

### 4. Rebirth

*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).*

When Nicodemus heard the Lord Jesus say this, he failed to understand him. He asked, “How can a man be born when he is old?” (v4). Jesus explained that, by being “born again”, he meant “born of water and the Spirit” (v5).

Being “born of the Spirit” is the change that occurs in someone’s thinking and attitude as a result of reading the Word of God (the Bible, which has been given to us via the Holy Spirit).

Peter describes this process as being “born again ... through the word of God” (1 Peter 1:23). But Jesus also stressed that being

“born of water” is an essential requirement of those who seek eternal life in God’s Kingdom.

Rising from the waters of baptism, that person is now a child of God – the latest new arrival in God’s family. Paul wrote:

*You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3:26–27).*

Faith alone is not enough – we must be baptised to demonstrate that faith.

There is a popular misconception that we’re all the children of God from birth. Instead, the Bible teaches us that it is a status that is given to us when we believe and are born of God by immersion in water:

*As many as received him [Jesus], to them he gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12–13).*

In one of his letters John rejoices:

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1).*



## Real Baptism

Remission of sins, resurrection, release, and rebirth – they're all part of Bible baptism. But they're not involved in the sprinkling of children, which was neither taught nor practised in New Testament days.

There's no suggestion in early Christian writings until about 200 AD that children should be baptised, and it's clear from these that this was new thinking. It was gradually adopted. Not until the fifth century AD is there evidence that immersion in water was being replaced by sprinkling.

## What About Children?

It's good that parents should be concerned about their children's spiritual welfare. But this concern mustn't override God's commandments. The best thing that a parent can do is to give them a good education in God's Word. As Paul wrote:

*Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).*

Then, when they're mature enough to understand and make up their own minds, let them choose to ask for baptism without any pressure.

These words of Jesus are often quoted with regard to this:

*Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them (Luke 18:16).*

He explained what he meant in the next verse: it was his way of teaching that we must become 'child-like', with simple trust



in God. But there's no suggestion that he advocated baptising children.

Similarly, the fact that the jailer and his household at Philippi in Acts 16 were baptised should not be taken to imply he had young children who were baptised with him. We are told that they all believed (verse 34). We don't even know whether he had children. His 'household' was probably his servants.

## A Vital Truth

Baptism is for those who, having reached maturity, decide to commit themselves to Christ in hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The correct form of baptism is vital, too. It should be a complete submersion in water, not a sprinkling on the head, which does not follow Bible teaching. It's not up to us to replace Bible teaching with our own ideas of what is best.

Baptism is essential to salvation – let's get it right.

**Rod Hale**

# Mindfulness

Mindfulness crashed on to the scene some time ago as the new stress-buster, a way to overcome the anxious feelings that may sweep over us at times. I don't know if our lives are any more stressful now than they've ever been. We certainly now live in a culture where everything, or so it appears, must be done instantly, immediately, not a moment to lose! That IS stressful.

Books on mindfulness advocate different exercises, often trying to get us to focus on just one simple thing. One of the more interesting and entertaining exercises involves chocolate, as outlined below:

**Take a square of chocolate.**  
**Look carefully at it.**  
**Turn it over and examine the other side.**  
**Smell it.**  
**Pop it on your tongue and suck it (DON'T bite it!)**  
**Feel the sensation of melting chocolate on your tongue and around your mouth.**  
**GORGEOUS!!!**

This exercise is rather fun – but the main idea of doing it is to get a person to focus on just one thing for a relatively short time.

One constant about our lives is our breathing. We breathe in and out all day long without noticing it or giving it much thought. And so, we are advised to take a few minutes to think about nothing but our breathing, in order to calm ourselves down. If we are stressed, we may be taking shallow, quick breaths which affect our energy levels, and cause our hearts to beat faster. If we take a moment to slow our breathing down by consciously thinking about it then our hearts will, in turn, beat slower, and we will become less agitated.

## Focus on the Right Thing

Now all this is very well and good and may be quite useful. But how will this help with our spiritual health, getting to know God and His Son, the Lord Jesus, any better?

Well there is nothing new under the sun, and there is certainly nothing new about the concepts around mindfulness.

Job is told to, “Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God” (Job 37:14).

God is talking to Job about His creation, how everything in nature is just right, whether it's the weather system, the heavens, the earth's surface, plant life, the animal kingdom, or humankind.

Stop what you're doing, Job. Stop worrying about what is happening to you and

around you, because God created it and is in control of it all. And when you consider this, you will know there is nothing to worry about. Focus on that one thing.

Easy to say – much harder to do. We can find more examples like this in the Bible.

## Jacob Gains Peace of Mind

In the book of Genesis, we have the account of two brothers, Jacob and Esau, who fell out. Jacob was rightly afraid that Esau would kill him, and he ran away from his family to live many miles away with his uncle. All the time he was travelling he must have been looking over his shoulder to see if his older, stronger brother was coming after him.

His journey would not have been a leisurely affair: it would have been frantic, full of anxiety and fear. However, no matter how worried he was, he had to stop and sleep. So, using a stone for a pillow, he settled down to try and rest for a few hours. No doubt his night's sleep would not be terribly restful, being so worried.

He had a very strange dream in which he saw a ladder stretching up to heaven. Climbing up and down it were angels, and at the top was the Lord God. He told Jacob that He was the God of his father and grandfather, and would be his God too. He would bless him and his descendants.

When Jacob woke up he realised that he was not alone but that God was with him. He also realised that God's promise to bless him included his descendants

too, which meant he must be going to live long enough in order to marry and have children. He had no doubt planned to leave as soon as he awoke, to put more miles between him and his angry brother.

Instead he stopped, considered what he had dreamed and its meaning, and then took the time to use his stone pillow as an altar on which he poured oil in honour of the Lord God and His promise. He still travelled on to his uncle's, but in a much better frame of mind.

## Moses Stands Still

Moses had been commissioned by God to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt where they had been slaves for many years. After several incidents, the Pharaoh of Egypt had reluctantly let them leave but shortly afterwards changed his mind and sent his army after them.

Moses and the people had arrived between what we would call now 'a rock and a hard place'. In front of them was the wide spread of the Red Sea and behind them was the army of Egypt which was gaining ground all the time. What were they to do? Drown or be captured and returned to work as slaves in Egypt, some of them being slaughtered in the process?

But Moses had complete faith in the Lord God who had told him that he would successfully lead the people into their own promised land.

*Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD,*

*which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever*" (Exodus 14:13).

I'm sure you've seen pictures or even the film which showed how the waters of the Red Sea parted and the people walked safely through, as promised.



So here is another example of spiritual mindfulness, just standing firm, taking stock, and believing that God will help when we ask in faith.

## **Jesus Prays**

At the worst time of his life, when he knew he had only hours to live, Jesus went apart from his disciples in order to ... what? Plan his escape? Plan a counter-attack? Give in to the demands of the religious leaders and stop preaching? No, none of those things.

Jesus had eaten the meal we now call 'The Last Supper' with his disciples and gone into a garden. In Matthew 26:37 we see

that he is described as being '*sorrowful and deeply distressed*'. In this frame of mind, he prayed to his Heavenly Father.

He did what all of us might have done – asked that he be saved from the dreadful things that were going to happen to him. But he also said that whatever God needed him to do, he would do it. Jesus went to a quiet place; he was alone (the disciples had fallen asleep, so unaware were they of the events that were about to occur); he thought; he considered; and he prayed.

## **Spiritual Mindfulness**

We all, sometimes, feel overwhelmed by life, the things that happen to us, the things that are happening around us. We may feel helpless and can become anxious.

When this happens, taking a few quiet minutes away from everyone else, and thinking about your breathing so that you can slow your heart rate down and become calmer, may help.

More powerfully, we can adopt the Bible's advice and examples. Consider God's power and His care for men and women. Be ready to see God at work, doing what you can but accepting that His power is so far above ours. Pray for a way to deal with whatever is worrying you, accepting that God's will is supreme.

Perhaps, if you can't find your own words, use the Lord's prayer. God will hear you and help you if you let Him.

**Jenny Bateman**

# The Flood

ACCORDING to the Bible (Genesis chapters 6–9), some 4500 years ago the earth was devastated by a flood. The only survivors were Noah, his family and the animals aboard the ark which he made.

Common opinion these days is that the account of Noah's Flood is a myth, perhaps based on the experience of a local flood.

But when we look at the archaeological record, we see consistency in the accounts in ancient writings from many different cultures. They describe a great flood which destroyed the world. For example:

- ◆ The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is a story written on clay tablets by the Sumerians. In it a man called Utnapishtim tells how the god Ea told him to build a huge vessel to save himself, his family and friends and the animals from a flood that would destroy the world. Many details closely match the Genesis account.
- ◆ In his *Timaeus*, the Greek philosopher Plato tells how the god Zeus was angry with the violence of mankind and

decided to flood the world. The god Prometheus warned his son Deucalion, who built a floating chest. He and his wife were the sole human survivors.

- ◆ The *Popol Vuh* is the creation story of South American Mayans. It relates the attempts by the gods to create people who would worship them. After they failed, the gods washed the people away by a flood.

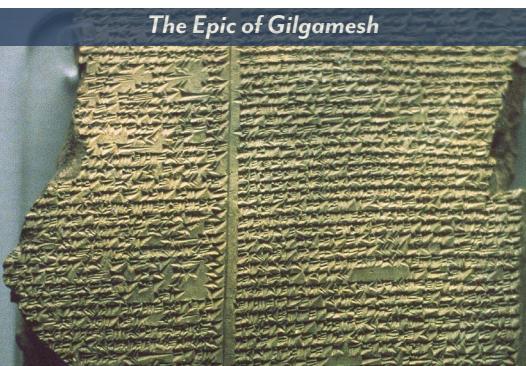
Academics have suggested various theories to explain why the flood story should be so deeply ingrained in cultural memories all over the world. But surely the most reasonable explanation is the most obvious – the flood was an historical event!

Inevitably the story was gradually changed in the telling over many years – but the actual account is preserved in the Bible.

The fact of the flood is stressed throughout the Bible – not just as an historical account, but as a warning for us! These are words of Jesus Christ about his second coming:

*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all... Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:26–30).*

**Chris Parkin**



# 2 Samuel

2 SAMUEL recounts the reign of King David over God's kingdom in Israel.

The opening chapter contains the record of the death in battle of Saul and his son Jonathan. While Saul had treated David as an enemy, David had honoured Saul as God's anointed king, and Jonathan had been a close friend whose death David laments in chapter 1.

## The King Blessed by God

After the death of Saul, David became king in Hebron (for seven years) and later in Jerusalem (for thirty-three years). With God's help, the surrounding enemy nations were subdued. David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem (chapter 6).

David had built himself a house, and wanted to provide a more permanent resting-place for the ark of God – a centre for Israel's worship to take the place of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Through the prophet Nathan, God told David that “your seed after you ... shall build a house for my name” (7:12,13): that was to be Solomon.

But the prophecy was not limited to Solomon. God promised David that, although he would not have the privilege of building God's house, “the *LORD* tells you that *He will make you a house*”; moreover, speaking of David's descendant, “*I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*”

(7:11–13). This greater “Son of David” is Jesus Christ (see Luke 1:32,33; 18:38).

## David's Sin

In chapter 11 we read about David's great sin in taking Bathsheba, another man's wife. Bathsheba bore a baby son, who in spite of David's prayers, died; but then she bore Solomon, who was to succeed David.

David repented of his sin (see his plea for God's mercy in Psalm 51), and God forgave him. However, he suffered at the hands of his own family. His son Absalom rebelled, taking the throne temporarily, and David had to flee. Later he was able to return to Jerusalem. Chapters 22 and 23 contain prophecies of Christ's future reign.

**Norman Owen**

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## Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

2 Samuel 7:12 – see Isaiah 9:6;  
Luke 1:32,33.

2 Samuel 12:13 – see Psalm 32:1;  
51:1–17; Acts 2:38.

2 Samuel 23:3–5 – see Isaiah 32:1;  
Zechariah 9:9

# Amen, Amen

JESUS said: “*If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31–32).

This ‘freedom’ is from the law of sin and death. It is the removal of the otherwise inevitable rule that sin (disobedience to God) brings death:

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 6:23).

Jesus also said that he spoke the truth (John 8:45–46). In fact, the word ‘truth’ occurs over 20 times in the Gospel record of John.

Truth is a full declaration, unmodified, unified and complete. God’s truth is His unchanging, eternal Word. Jesus said:

*He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s Who sent me* (14:24).

[In prayer to God] *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth* (17:17).

Jesus is clearly identified with this truth:

*...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ* (John 1:17).

*I am the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6).

## Amen – Truly

In the Gospel records Jesus often speaks using the emphasis ‘I tell you the truth’.

A more accurate translation would be, ‘Amen; I tell you...’ but this same phrase in the Greek is translated in various different ways even in the same English version of the Bible. In his Gospel, Luke sometimes translates the Hebrew word ‘amen’ into the Greek ‘in truth’.

The phrase occurs 30 times in Matthew, 14 times in Mark and 6 times in Luke. In the Gospel of John, the phrase is always ‘Amen Amen’ and this occurs 25 times. In the New King James version, the translations are ‘assuredly’ and ‘most assuredly’ respectively. (And ‘truly’ in the passages where Luke has already translated ‘amen’.)

The phrase is often associated with prophecies, warnings about judgement and advice on how to please God. All the words of Jesus are important and significant, but the context made Jesus use this word to emphasize some key messages.

## The Vital Truth

Some typical examples are given in the table overleaf, in no order of importance. Please look them up. There most certainly is such a thing as ‘truth’. So there are also untruths. God has revealed His truth in the Bible and especially in the words of His son Jesus the Christ. We do well to believe and to tell the truth.

**Marian Canoles**

Reference	The Words of Jesus
Matthew 6:2–18	Assuredly [Amen], I say to you, they have their reward.
Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:]*	Assuredly [Amen], I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.
Matthew 24:2	... Assuredly [Amen], I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
Matthew 25:12, 40, 45	Assuredly [Amen], I say to you, I do not know you/inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these/inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these.
Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17	Assuredly [Amen], I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.
Mark 12:43*	Assuredly [Amen], I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all...
Luke 23:43	Assuredly [Amen], I say to you today you will be with me in paradise.
John 3:5	Most assuredly [Amen amen], I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
John 10:7	Most assuredly [Amen amen], I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.
John 13:15	I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly [Amen amen], I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master.

\*In his account of these sayings Luke translates ‘amen’ as ‘truly’.

## The Message

This repeated truth is about half-hearted believers: in relation to hypocrisy, Christian charity, prayer and fasting.

Christ's prediction of his transfiguration. This truth is a revelation of what happens when Christ returns. The transfiguration was a prelude of what lay in the future. Peter, James and John are given a glimpse of immortality in the transformed figure of Jesus.

Truth about the prophecy of the destruction of the temple (fulfilled in AD 70 by the Romans).

Truth about judgement – Jesus' words to different people. When the Son of Man comes and all his holy angels with him, he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Truth about faith. In life, the child who does all he can to please his parent gives supreme joy; the same holds true in man's relationship to God.

Truth about giving: a widow giving the little that she had was a perfect example of the kind of devotion Jesus sought.

Truth about a special dispensation for a thief who repented, made by Jesus while dying on the cross.

Truth about the vital need for adult baptism and spiritual rebirth for anyone who wants to be part of God's promises.

Truth about Christian discipleship. The gate is narrow, but open to all who embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

Truth about service. A beautiful example as Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.

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