

# Glad Tidings

*Of The Kingdom Of God*



NO BALL  
GAMES

NO  
RUNNING

NO  
SHOUTING

NO  
WHISTLING



KEEP OFF  
THE GRASS

## Featured **Articles**

The Problem With Rules (p. 3)

The Meaning of Conversion (p. 5)

“I Am the Bread of Life” (p. 14)

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.

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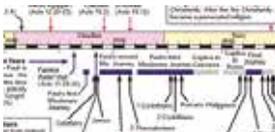
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# The Problem With Rules

RULES are essential. They show us what's right and what's wrong, they show us the boundaries of good behaviour, they make it possible for us to live together. Imagine a school without rules—it would be dominated by the few students who could thump the hardest, and nobody would learn much. Imagine roads without rules—nobody would be safe. Without rules, society could not function.

There are rules in the Bible, as you'd expect. For example 'You shall not murder' and 'You shall not steal'.

These are two of the Ten Commandments, the fundamental rules which God gave to His people Israel as a basis for their society (you can read them all in Exodus 20). They're part of the system of laws called the Law of Moses, which is contained in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

There's an odd thing about the Law of Moses, which sets it apart from most other systems of law. And that is, it's concerned not just with what you do, but the way you think. For example in the instructions about treating immigrants, you don't just get the law but you get the reason as



well: *"You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:21).* And again in legislation about personal relationships: *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:17-18).*

The Law was not just a system of rules. God is not just concerned with obedience, He wants us to think about what we do. The purpose of the Law which He gave to His people was that they should learn about Him, and become like Him: *"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!" (Psalm 119:1-2).*

## Jesus and the Rule-Makers

By the time of Jesus Christ, 2000 years after the Law was given, things were in a bad state. The Law was administered by religious elites—scribes, Pharisees and lawyers—they loved rules and they'd added many others besides the ones God had given. Their religion was all about following rules, and not at all about reforming their

thinking. Jesus was frequently exasperated by the way they abused the Law.

On one occasion they found fault with Jesus' disciples because they weren't properly following the lawyers' rules. Jesus rounded on them, quoting the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honours Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men' (Mark 7:6-7).*

'Hypocrite' is a Greek word, it means 'actor'. These rule-keepers were just pretending to worship God. Their heart was not in it.



The lawyers insisted on keeping the letter of the Law, but Jesus urged people to think about its spirit. He taught that we should think what was behind the commandments: *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the*

*judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment... You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"* (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28).

## Transformation

It's easier to follow rules than change your thinking. You can tick rules off when you've done them. You can congratulate yourself when you haven't broken one. You can bend a rule, and tell yourself that you're still OK because you haven't exactly broken it. You can compare yourself with other people who may not keep the rules as well as you, and feel good about yourself. You can be as selfish, spiteful and lecherous as you want, and as long as you don't actually break a rule you're all right. If your religion is about keeping rules, you can tell yourself that you've earned its reward. Christianity is not like that.

The Christian life is about being changed. The Bible does contain rules, such as 'You shall not murder' and 'You shall not steal', and it's necessary that followers of Christ try their best to keep them all—but the rules are not an end in themselves, what they do is help us in the process of change.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).*

# The Meaning of Conversion

CONVERSION is a word that Christians often use. The root meaning of the word is 'to turn around'. Conversion is about a change of direction.

Very often in the Bible the Christian life is described as a journey, following a certain course. We read of 'walking in the spirit'; 'running the race'; 'finishing the course'; 'pressing forward towards the goal'. Always going forward in a certain direction.

## Two Ways

When Jesus was teaching he directed his hearers' attention to the fact that there are two ways in which people can walk, two roads along which they can travel, two directions they can choose.

*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matthew 7:13–14).*

Let's consider first the broad way. Its gate is so wide that it is easily entered without knowing that you have passed through. There's no footpath—it's a roomy, spacious thoroughfare on which you can travel however you like. All kinds of people walk along this road. On one side of it are the

cheats and the brawlers, the self-indulgent and the greedy. On the other side are the upright religious people, whose outward lives seem to be above reproach and who thank God that they are not like other people (see Luke 18:9–14). They rejoice in their own respectability and have faith in their own goodness. You'd scarcely believe that it is the same road. Those on different sides would not appear to have anything in common with each other—save that they are going in the same direction. And in the centre—there the moderate people are



to be found. Those who are decently self-satisfied. Those who are as good as their neighbours and are confident that they're a lot better than some.

You will see that there are vast differences in the travellers. In one thing only perhaps are they all alike: they are all going in the

same direction, some more slowly and some more rapidly, towards the same destination. Jesus called it destruction.

Fortunately it is possible to forsake the broad and easy road, with all its seeming comfort and safety, which leads to destruction and death. It is possible to turn about upon that road and make your way out of the wide gate, and to seek for the narrow gate that is the entrance to the difficult way which leads to life and God.



How wide is the narrow way of which Jesus spoke? It is as wide as he is himself, for he said *“I am the way”* (John 14:6). Was his life narrow? From one point of view it was—in the ungodly things of life Jesus had no interest. But in another way his life was supremely wide. He lived all his life in a large family and among friends and crowds. He was always accessible; he showed a genuine interest in the concerns of others; he spoke about money, about buildings, about sheep and goats, about vines and fig trees; about fishers and farmers and kings and tax collectors; about life and

death, about sin and salvation, and about God. Jesus Christ is ‘the way’, and the way is as wide as him. It is wide enough to take every class and condition of people.

The rich did not find it easy to enter, but some did find it. Beggars were led to it. Thieves and harlots, Pharisees and tax collectors. Three thousand entered it in one day (Acts 2:41), amongst whom were some who had helped to crucify Christ. All these varieties of class and character found room to walk in it. We must not ever imagine that the way is too narrow for anyone.

Remember Jesus said that there are few who find the narrow gate. No one will find that gate by chance, you must look for it. *“Seek, and you will find”* (Luke 11:9).

## **A Change of Direction**

Conversion may seem to be a very simple thing when you understand it, but it is a truth and an experience which can be easily overlooked and lost. Conversion is a turning about, a deliberate change in direction. It is not enough to have good intentions. It is not enough to know the Gospel, to lead a moral life. God must be your Saviour.

And that brings us to the central theme of conversion. Some have thought of conversion as knowledge or learning. If only people can know, they will be converted. Jesus never taught that a clear intellect will give you a right heart, but rather he taught that an earnest desire to find and do the will of God will give you a clear intellect.

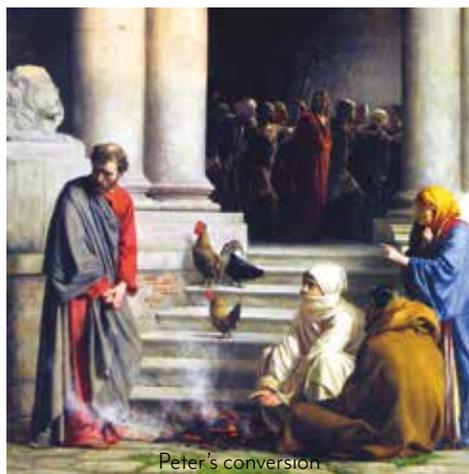
If the certainty of truth depended upon the proof of miracles and prophecy, or the discoveries of science, then truth would be in the reach chiefly of those who can analyse evidence, investigate history, learn languages and study by experiment. But in the Bible we learn this: *“The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way”* (Psalm 25:9). *“For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit’”* (Isaiah 57:15).

Conversion is not only knowing about God and His salvation, but believing it. For the day will come when life gets hard; when the soul is as it were unfixed from its mooring and drifting aimlessly over the waste of uncertainty. The person whose faith rests only on head knowledge will find their conversion crack and they will be left alone on a narrow road and they will realise they’re not sure where it leads. Knowledge is in the head but faith is in the heart. Both are essential to conversion, but especially faith.

## Examples of Conversion

Once when Jesus was preaching he called a little child to him, *“set him in the midst of them, and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven’”* (Matthew 18:2–4). The humility which embodies the trust of a child, is the spirit of conversion.

At the end of his ministry Jesus foretold that he would die and his disciples would desert him. *“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren’”* (Luke 22:31–32). Simon Peter insisted that he would never deny his master. But so it happened: Jesus was arrested and stood trial, Peter looked on helpless and his courage failed him. Later in the same chapter (verses 54–62) we see how three times that night Peter denied that he knew Jesus.



Peter's conversion

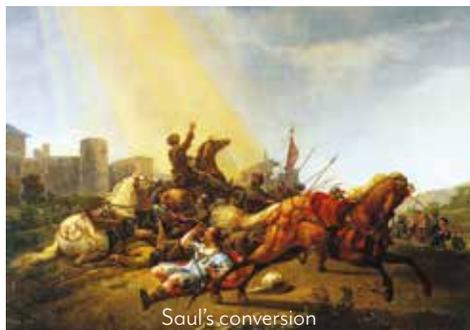
Then he remembered Jesus' words, and *“went out and wept bitterly”*. That was his conversion: previously he had insisted on his strength and loyalty, now he realized his weakness and was ready to be the leader his brothers needed.

Some time afterwards Peter healed a lame man in the Temple, and told the startled

crowd that this miracle had been done through faith in the name of Jesus. And he said, *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”* (Acts 3:19). ‘Repent’ means ‘turn again’: repent and be converted, turn again and turn around!

Conversion is what happens when you have come to know and understand the truth with regard to God and His purpose. It is a recognition that Jesus Christ is Lord; a surrender to God’s will; a yielding to his teaching in all things. Christ is the King reigning in the heart of the converted.

You may have heard that conversion is all about feelings—that is not true. Experiences are not important, facts are important. Experiences vary with temperament, education and circumstances. With some, conversion is sudden and with all the upheaval of an earthquake; with others it is gradual and gentle.



Saul's conversion

Saul the enemy of the Christians was struck down on the road and was blind for days (Acts 9). The Roman jailor in Philippi was

converted amid the convulsions of an earthquake (Acts 16); but in that same chapter we see the conversion of Lydia the businesswoman, whose heart was opened gently by the Lord.

I could give my own testimony. It took me a long time to render full obedience to the Gospel, but I can well remember when I was converted—it happened between Saturday lunchtime and Sunday night, over the space of a weekend.

These are the accidents of conversion. The one fact common to them all is the change that conversion makes. Your eyes are opened. You see God all around you. There is a sense in which the earth, in spite of all its evil, for you becomes filled with the glory of the Lord. You realize that more than anything else in the world you want to be a child of God, to be a brother or sister of Jesus Christ, to be part of their family, and your absolute priority in life is to be baptized.

Everyone is either in Christ or out of Christ; a child of God or not. No one is too bad to pass through the narrow gate, and no one can follow Christ unless they do so. The Gospel of salvation is for all. And Christ is able to save anyone, but he cannot compel. We must come to him.

*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out* (John 6:37).

**Dennis Gillett**

# Chronology of Acts

AD30

*This is the sixth in a series in which we examine this fascinating Bible book. You can catch up with the previous articles at [www.gladtidingsmagazine.org](http://www.gladtidingsmagazine.org).*

WHEN WE study the New Testament (the second part of the Bible which deals with the life of Jesus and the activities of the early church), it's useful to determine the date at which each of the documents in it was written. This is an involved study, but it leads to a very clear picture of how the letters in the New Testament were written and what was going on at the time that each was written.

The study of the chronology of the New Testament involves comparing details in the letters with events in the book of Acts, and other historical events whose date can be established from archaeology or reference to ancient documents outside the Bible. The result is that we can be confident of the date of almost all of the letters to within a single year, and many of them to within a couple of months.

The single fact that makes it relatively simple to identify the dates in Acts is that travel became almost impossible in the winter. Ships would not sail for more than very short distances because of the problem of navigation in poor visibility,

and it was very difficult to travel overland because the winter rain swelled the rivers and rendered them impossible to ford. The apostles would be forced to stay where they were in the winter.

## The Time Framework

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Two key events which are mentioned in Acts and for which we have definite dates from archaeology are the edict of Claudius expelling Jews from Rome, which was made in early 49AD, and the accession of Gallio as governor of Achaia, which happened in 51AD. The edict of Claudius is mentioned in Acts 18:1–2 and the accession of Gallio appears in Acts 18:12. This fits in well with Acts 18:11 which tells us that Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months before he appeared before Gallio.

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We can put this together with the narrative in Acts to show that Paul arrived back in Antioch at the end of 51AD and then set off for Ephesus on his third missionary journey in 52AD. He spent around two and a half years in Ephesus (Acts 19:8–10) which takes us to the winter of 54AD. Early in 55AD he sent out Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19:22); he then left shortly after Pentecost (late May) (1 Corinthians 16:5–6).

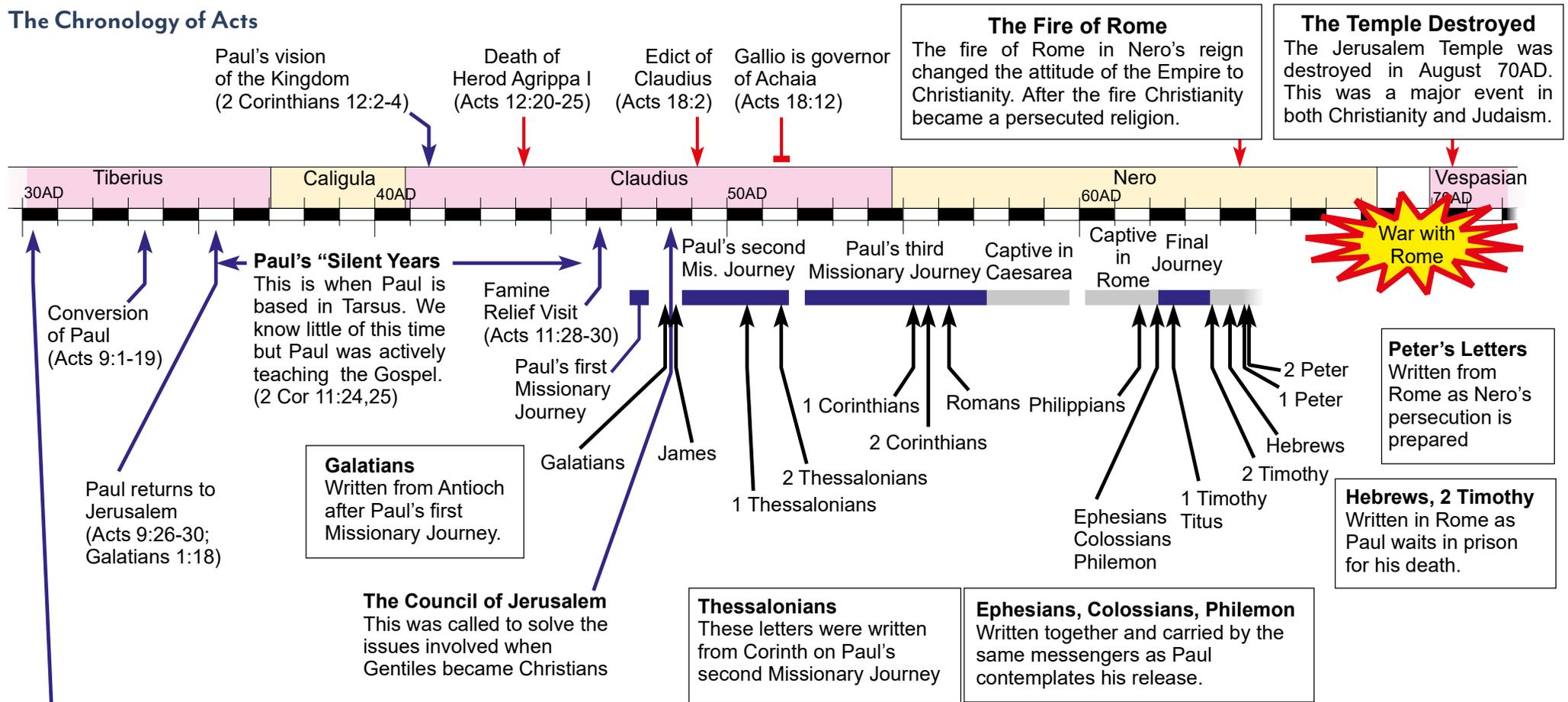
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Paul returned to Jerusalem in the spring of 57AD; he was hoping to arrive there before

70



# The Chronology of Acts



Book	Date	Book	Date	Book	Date
Romans	56 Spring	1 Timothy	62 Autumn	Matthew	60-66AD?
1 Corinthians	55 Spring	2 Timothy	63 Autumn	Mark	50-55AD
2 Corinthians	55 Summer	Titus	62 Autumn	Luke	58-61AD
Galatians	48 Spring	Philemon	62 Spring	John	64-66AD
Ephesians	62 Spring	Hebrews	64 Spring	Acts	62 Spring
Philippians	61 Autumn	James	48 Summer		
Colossians	62 Spring	1 Peter	64 Autumn		
1 Thessalonians	50 Summer	2 Peter, Jude	64 Autumn		
2 Thessalonians	51 Summer	John's Letters	64-66		

**The Date of Acts**  
Acts ends in 62AD at a point where nothing particular happens and leaves out significant events later in that year. This suggests a publication date early in 62AD.

For a more in-depth study of the subject and to see the reasoning behind the dates in this chart, visit [biblethink.org.uk](http://biblethink.org.uk) and follow the links to *Dating the New Testament*.

Pentecost (Acts 20:16). He was arrested in Jerusalem and taken to Caesarea, which takes us to 59AD. At this point the governor Felix handed him over to Festus and later in the year Paul was sent on his voyage to Rome. He was shipwrecked at the end of the travelling season of 59AD and arrived in Rome in the early spring of 60AD. Acts 28:30 tells us that he spent two years in Rome; it seems that Acts was written at this point, which is the spring of 62AD.

The earlier part of Acts can be dated by a similar process. There was famine in Judea in 46 and 47AD; Paul and Barnabas went on a visit to Judea to relieve this famine (Acts 11:28–30). They would return to Antioch in the autumn of 46AD, having visited Jerusalem, and set out on the first missionary journey in 47AD, returning the same year. This leaves 48AD for the Council of Jerusalem. Paul would set off for his second missionary journey the same year and overwinter in Galatia, probably in Antioch in Pisidia.

## 60 Dating the Letters

The date of the letters in the New Testament can be established by comparing the details in them with this framework. For example, we can date 1 Corinthians by noting that it was written after Timothy and Erastus had left Paul in the spring in which he left Ephesus, that he had not left yet, and that he hoped to leave shortly after Pentecost (1 Corinthians 16:5–8). This places 1 Corinthians in the period between

Passover and Pentecost, 55AD, as Paul was preparing to leave Ephesus.

The date of Galatians can be worked out from its references to Paul's visits to Jerusalem. He made one visit three years after his conversion (Galatians 1:18) and a second visit 14 years after his conversion (Galatians 2:1); this would be the famine relief visit. No other visits are listed, which means that Galatians was written before the Council of Jerusalem. As Paul founded the congregations in Galatia on his first missionary journey, the year before the Council of Jerusalem, the letter must have been written either late in the year of 47AD or early in 48AD.

This enables us to date Paul's visits to Jerusalem. We know that the famine relief visit must have been in 46AD; this is described as being 14 years after Paul's conversion. Given that the ancient convention often involves counting in parts of years and including the first year in the count, this would place Paul's conversion in 33AD and his first visit to Jerusalem after this in 35AD.

The study of the chronology of the New Testament involves paying tremendous attention to the details in the text. The fact that the letters do fit into the framework of Acts with such precision is itself a witness to the accuracy with which Acts is recorded, and the fidelity with which it has been copied and passed down to us since that time.

**John Thorpe**



# Christ's Second Coming

ANDY WAS standing in the street with a placard saying “We’re watching for Christ’s return”. Many people passed by, some making sarcastic comments: “Where’s he coming from?” “Why? Does he owe you money?”

They didn’t want to engage in conversation. However, Andy would have been happy to explain had they stopped to talk. He was saddened that people could be so scathing about Jesus Christ.

He reflected on the irony of the money joke. Jesus owes us nothing, but we owe him everything: he died an excruciating death to save us from destruction (Ephesians 1:7). The Bible tells believers that they have been ‘purchased’ with Jesus’ own blood (Acts 20:28). There never has been a greater gift and nor can there ever be.

## The Reality of Christ’s Return

The Bible tells us that Jesus is in heaven now, with complete power and authority (1 Peter 3:21–22), but one day he will return to the earth (Acts 1:11) to judge and then rule with justice (Isaiah 11:1–4). “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matthew 25:13). When he comes, all nations will conform to his righteous government (Zechariah 14:16–17).

The Apostle Peter gave this warning: *Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:3–4).*

But Peter went on to assure us that God keeps all His promises. Jesus will come and we need to be ready.

The Apostle Paul wrote to his friend Timothy: “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:1). The message is clear. Jesus will return to earth from heaven, and there will be no doubt when it happens—it will not be some mystical event, but the bodily presence of the glorified and immortal Christ judging and ruling on earth.

Paul continued: “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). Christ’s second coming is a reality. For those who are watching, it will be the answer to their prayers; for those who mock, it will be too late.

**Anna Hart**

# “I Am the Bread of Life”

*The Gospel of John records a number of sayings of Jesus which begin “I am ...” In this series we think about some of the profound things he said about himself.*

JOHN CHAPTER 6 contains the account of one of Jesus’ most amazing miracles. On the shore of the Sea of Galilee he fed 5,000 men, plus women and children, using only five loaves of bread and two small fish.



The feeding of the five thousand

The miracle was so impressive that the people were fired with adulation, and the situation could have taken a turn which Jesus did not want. *“Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again to the mountain by himself alone” (John 6:15).* It must have been

a temptation for him to ride the wave of his popularity and use it for his self-gratification. He resisted the temptation and dealt with it, then retreated to be by himself where he could pray to his Father in heaven.

His solitary prayers gave him strength, and later that night we see another miracle. His disciples had left by boat to cross the lake, and he walked after them over the water to catch them up (verses 18–21).

They arrived in the town of Capernaum, and the following morning they met some of the people who had shared in the Feeding of the Five Thousand the day before. They were keen to see him, and probably they were after another miraculous feast. But the purpose of that feast had not been simply to fill their stomachs, it had been to teach them an important lesson. They had failed to see this. He said to them, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on him” (vs. 26–27).*

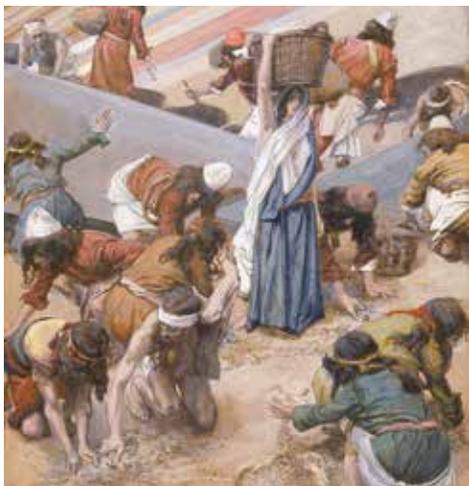
Jesus was ‘sealed’ by God his Father, which meant everything he did had the

agreement and the authority of God, everything he said and did had his Father's blessing. Jesus' words were truth and he therefore deserved to be heard and not only heard—but believed: *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom He sent'"* (v. 29).

What was the lesson Jesus was keen to teach them?

## Bread From Heaven

*"Do not labour for the food which perishes,"* Jesus said. Their thoughts were on food. Clearly, he had performed a very notable miracle, but the people who spoke to him could not see or understand its spiritual message. They said, *"What sign will you perform then, that we may see it and believe you? What work will you do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'"* (vs. 30–31).



Collecting manna in the wilderness

The 'manna' was the food which God provided for the nation of Israel as they walked through the desert to the Promised Land: the account is in Exodus 16. Jesus replied, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"* (John 6:32–33).

This was the spiritual meaning of what Jesus did when he fed them the previous day. In their journey through the wilderness God had given His people miraculous bread to sustain them; now He has provided another miraculous feast to sustain all of His people in their journey of life. *"And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst'"* (v. 35).

Jesus knew there were a few in his audience who did believe in him. He said, *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day"* (vs. 37–39).

He is the Messiah and he will raise the faithful (who endure to the end), from the dead and give them eternal life.

But there were many listening who did not like what he was saying. *"The Jews then*

complained about him, because he said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.' And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, "I have come down from heaven"?' (vs. 41–42).

Jesus said he came down from heaven, in the same way that the manna in the wilderness came from heaven—it was given by God. They thought he was saying that he had actually descended from heaven.



## Bread of Life

He spelled out for them the spiritual meaning of what he was telling them: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die" (vs. 47–50).

The manna which God gave His people in the wilderness was an illustration of Jesus. Jesus is the true bread, the bread of life.

Still his hearers didn't understand. "The Jews therefore quarrelled among themselves,

saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'" (v. 52).

Jesus continued. He made it clearer for them, but not easier:

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him... This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever'" (vs. 53–58).

Still they could only take him literally, and they were appalled. Even some of his own followers were perplexed: "Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?'" (v. 60).

So Jesus explained: "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples complained about this, he said to them... 'It is the spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life'" (vs. 61–63).

There were two types of people listening: those who tried to appreciate the spiritual meaning of what he was saying, and those who did not.

To be a follower of Jesus Christ means to feast on him, spiritually. To absorb him into your life, and be nourished by him.

This is done by watching and listening to the things he did and said, as we read about them in the Bible, thinking on him, and prayerfully allowing him to change us. And the key part of this process is the feast which his followers share, which is sometimes called the ‘communion’ or ‘memorial feast’ or ‘love feast’.



## The Memorial Feast

On the evening before he died, Jesus shared his last supper with his disciples.

*Then he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:17–19).*

This ‘feast’ has been kept ever since by Jesus’ followers, in obedience to his command. It’s a time to remember him and the sacrifice he made, and taste again the joy of forgiveness and ‘communion’ with God that Jesus’ sacrifice enables. Evidence suggests that in the early church the feast

was held on the first day of each week, and this is still the common practice.

When a person is baptised, they have taken the first step in committing their lives to Christ. From then on, they must feed on him, and that’s how they grow. It’s a lifelong process, and the central part of it is the memorial feast.

Those who faithfully do this can echo the words of the Apostle Paul:

*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).*

**Grahame A Cooper**

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# Jeremiah

JEREMIAH lived in the last years of the Jewish kingdom, when the nation was growing increasingly godless and wicked.

Judah was under threat from the empire of Babylon. Many Jews at the time wanted to seek the aid of the king of Egypt, but Jeremiah told them to submit to the king of Babylon instead, because this was in God's purpose. He foretold the overthrow of Judah and surrounding nations.

For preaching such a message, Jeremiah was cast into a muddy dungeon and left to die (38:6), but he was saved by a friend.



Jeremiah in the  
dungeon

## The 70 Years Captivity

Jeremiah prophesied a period of captivity for Judah:

*And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation' (Jeremiah 25:11–12).*

This happened just as Jeremiah said. His prophecies also speak of another greater

period of scattering and persecution followed by a regathering (for example chapters 31–33) which brings us to our modern era: in the First Century AD Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were scattered by the Romans, then in 1948 the nation of Israel was re-established.

## The Divine Potter

God told Jeremiah to go and watch a potter at work. The vessel the potter was making went wrong, so he remade it. God explained that He is like the potter, and His people are like the clay. He is able to mould them into shape, if they will let Him. On the other hand, He will destroy those who become so hardened that they cannot be changed (19:11, 15).

## Norman Owen

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### Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

- ◆ Jeremiah 14:8; 17:13—see Zechariah 9:12; Acts 28:20.
- ◆ Jeremiah 17:8—see Psalm 1:3; Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 22:2.
- ◆ Jeremiah 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16—see Zechariah 6:12; Revelation 3:12.

**Across**

1 The father of Jeremiah (7) (*Jeremiah 1:1*)

5 Close (4) (*Jeremiah 25:26*)

6 Jeremiah said that he could not do this as he was a youth (5) (*Jeremiah 1:6*)

8 Wickedness (4) (*Jeremiah 38:9*)

11 Jeremiah did this in the mire (4) (*Jeremiah 38:6*)

14 A drought would cause the waters to be this (5) (*Jeremiah 50:38*)

15 Jeremiah was shown two baskets of these (4) (*Jeremiah 24:1*)

16 Jeremiah was cast into this, after he had proclaimed the words of the LORD (7) (*Jeremiah 38:6*)

1		2				3			4
5					6				
				7					
		8			9				10
				11			12		
				13					
14						15			
				16					

**Down**

1 The cause of 14 down (6) (*Jeremiah 38:9*)

2 To depart from (5) (*Jeremiah 9:2*)

3 Blessed is the man "whose ... is the LORD" (4) (*Jeremiah 17:7*)

4 Baruch used this to write in the book (3) (*Jeremiah 36:18*)

7 The the LORD put forth ... hand (3) (*Jeremiah 1:9*)

9 To place (3) (*Jeremiah 6:21*)

10 Jeremiah was here until Jerusalem was captured (6) (*Jeremiah 38:28*)

12 The king used this to cut up the scroll (5) (*Jeremiah 36:23*)

13 Jehudi did this to the words of Jeremiah in the hearing of the king (4) (*Jeremiah 36:21*)

14 Ebed-Melech warned that this would happen to Jeremiah (3) (*Jeremiah 38:9*)

(These clues use the New King James version of the Bible. If you're using another version some words may not be quite the same.)

**Colin Jannaway**

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