

Glad Tidings

Of The Kingdom Of God



Featured **Articles**

Eternal Reality (p. 3)

The Bible and the Internet (p. 5)

For Those who have Lost their Sheen (p. 13)

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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Eternal Reality

SOMEONE WAS WALKING along the street when they saw black smoke billowing from a house window. Instinctively they whipped out their phone. They took a photo, and uploaded it to their social media platform as they walked on.

It happened that the secretary of the house's landlord was cruising social media at the time. She saw the post, recognised the house and called the emergency services, who arrived and put the fire out.

Life On Screen

An increasing proportion of the world's population is spending an increasing proportion of their time looking at screens—for work, for play and for conducting day-to-day life. For some this is a cause for concern. There has been relatively little research into the potential hazards of prolonged exposure to electric and magnetic fields, the physiological risks associated with spending long periods in restricted postures making repetitive hand movements, and the strain on the visual system caused by staring at a small backlit screen. We were designed to lead active outdoor lives, and most people agree that we would be physically and mentally healthier if we spent less time on devices.

Another cause for concern is the peculiar fact that we appear to be shifting our focus

away from reality. It seems that the person who saw the fire was so engaged in their online world that they had forgotten how to respond to a real-life situation. Most people would agree that virtual reality is a poor substitute for living in the present.



Interestingly, the Bible presents to us another alternative reality—and it urges us to live in it! These are words of the Apostle Paul: *“We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Corinthians 4:18).

What does he mean by ‘eternal things’? The answer is in Hebrews chapter 11. This is sometimes called the ‘faith chapter’, because it’s a catalogue of great people in the Bible who were characterised by a particular way of thinking. They looked beyond the present world. There was Abraham (v. 8) who left his comfortable life in the sophisticated city of Ur, to go wandering in the outback of Canaan

because God had promised that one day he would inherit it; Moses (v. 24) who turned his back on the life of an Egyptian prince and threw in his lot with the downtrodden Israelites, because he believed the promises God had made to them; and many others. Of these faithful people the writer says:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland (vs. 13–14).

That ‘homeland’ is the Kingdom of God, which is to be established at Christ’s return—the goal of all godly people throughout the ages.

Jesus Christ urges us to get our lives into perspective: *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:31–33).*

Followers of Christ have their lives in perspective. They realise that this present life, with all its excitement and pleasures and dangers and difficulties, is only temporary. What really matters is the eternal life which God has promised to those who come to Him. And because their desire is focused on that wonderful

time when God’s glory will fill the earth (Habakkuk 2:14), it’s natural that they want to live their lives now in a way that gives glory to God. This is what it means to *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”*.

How do you cultivate this new perspective on life? Of course it’s by reading God’s Word the Bible, which tells us all we need to know about the Kingdom which is coming and the kind of people who will inherit it.

Degrees of Reality

There is life onscreen, which is exciting and absorbing and easy. It’s tailored to our desires and convenience—as you’d expect, because it’s largely created by people who want stuff from us (either our money or other things). Then there’s real life—the wide vibrant world which we experience with all our senses, where we interact with other people and operate in the way for which we were designed. It’s a beautiful world, but it’s flawed: life can be painful, difficult and unfulfilling. Then there’s eternal life—the life of God’s Kingdom. We don’t literally possess eternal life now: that will be a gift for those who have been faithful, when Christ returns and when *“this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:54)*. It is a gift which will be given to those who have shown they want it, by trying now to live the life of the Kingdom—those who *“walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)*.

The Bible and The Internet

THE BIBLE CLAIMS to be God's Word—His message to us. In its first chapter (Genesis 1) it says ten times: *"and God said"*.

Now this must be true or it must be just someone's idea, or a group of people who cooked up these things for their own reasons in the dim and distant past.

The Bible is either an elaborate fabrication, or it has been given to the human race by Someone real and all-powerful. That is what I believe: God has spoken, caused His words to be recorded, and then caused the message to be transmitted through the ages until our time.

Genesis is just the beginning. There are a total of 66 books within the one volume we call the Bible. They were written over a period of at least 1500 years by many different writers, in different countries and different social circumstances. We have history, biography, theology, poetry, prophecy, philosophy, adventure stories, travel and romance. Most of the writers had little contact with each other and yet when the writings are put together they all have the same message, agreeing in belief, teaching and prophecy. The Bible has been regarded as a complete volume for 2000 years and yet still it reaches



through the ages to our own time. It contains an urgent message from the One who first spoke about 6000 years ago, and since that time has spoken in all manner of different human circumstances, appealing to men and women to listen to Him.

The Bible is a *"still small voice"* (1 Kings 19:12), *"crying in the wilderness"* of modern life (Matthew 3:3). We are surrounded by a plethora of media, all contending for our attention. Isn't it all confusing?

Consider the internet—with its many different opportunities for communicating, sharing and accessing information. Some information is true, some is false; it's often difficult to tell what is 'fake news'. Some content is constructive, some is destructive, but it's always presented in a way that's very alluring. It is so easy to become 'hooked' on an artificial world, a universe of trivia and counterfeit knowledge. But in the midst of it there is just the possibility of finding something good and wholesome.

Good Apples—Bad Apples

Near where we live there are several old apple trees which grow wild in the

hedgerows—at some point they were deliberately planted. No one bothers with them now, but there they are full of fruit every year in early autumn. There are also brambles in the hedgerows. Every autumn we collect the apples and blackberries and make what we call ‘forage pie’.



Most of the apples simply fall to the ground and are trampled, or eaten by insects, and the fruit eventually rots away. But think for a moment of three apples from one of these trees. One is good, one looks good but has a grub already laid inside, and one has definitely gone bad.

The good one, with some work on our part will be fit for the ‘forage pie’. We may be tempted to try and work with the second apple, although much has to be cut away. The bad apple—definitely no good and we probably kick it back under the hedgerow.

So what now? A Bible is like the good apple, there to be foraged and turned into something really useful which, in this case, will feed your heart and mind. Some would say that the internet is like the bad apple—not worth the effort. Perhaps it’s really like

the second apple—there are good parts to it, but you need to avoid the rottenness.

Perhaps the best thing about the internet is the fact that it makes the Bible freely available. (Although as a matter of preference my wife and I keep to our paper Bibles. They make it easier to focus in that time of the day which we set aside to read and discuss God’s Word.)

Inspired Words

May I suggest now that you reach for a Bible—either a paper copy, or find one online—and read the third chapter of Paul’s second letter to Timothy. I’m just going to quote from two verses.

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 3:16–17).

Look at that first phrase: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*”

When we are thinking about God and inspiration, we are being told that all of the Scriptures (that is, the Bible) which we have in our hands to read today are as close to God as breathing is to us.

I guess, whilst reading this article you have not thought about breathing at all! Just do so now—nice deep breaths! We know that if we don’t breathe we will die. Breath is vital to us! God’s message is His personal message to us—and He always keeps His Word.

But now look what it is useful for:

- doctrine**, the foundation mind-set of living
- reproof**, the Greek word here means providing evidence
- correction**, putting us back on the right track
- instruction in righteousness**, showing us how we can have a life which will bring us close to God
- being complete**, being whole people
- being thoroughly equipped for every good work**.

This last in the list deserves special attention. Imagine a sailing ship—newly finished ready for its maiden voyage. It won't stand long at the dockside. It will be loaded by its crew and go adventuring on



the high seas, and hopefully in the not too distant future will reach its desired haven.

We are here—we have to live our lives, it can't be evaded. God has given us His personal Scriptures so that we can be thoroughly equipped for

whatever storms of life there might be. We can ride them out and come at the last to His Kingdom which is to be established when Jesus returns.

Our world abounds with information—some of it is useful, much of it is not. Amidst all this information, God has given us His written Word. This raises a big question for each of us. If He spoke directly you really would be compelled to listen—wouldn't you? Are you prepared to really consider His message to you?

David Nightingale

g l e a n i n g s

Gleanings is a 40-page braille magazine which contains a selection of *Glad Tidings* articles along with Bible studies and encouraging meditations.

It is published bi-monthly and can be sent free of charge to anyone who is registered blind.

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The Choice

MOSES STARED AGHAST at the bright blood seeping into the sand. He had killed a man. For a moment he stood still, paralysed by the enormity of his deed, and then, panicking, fell to his knees and began to scabble a shallow grave. Soon the Egyptian taskmaster's body was covered from sight, and only the footmarks showed where they had fought in the hot sun.

It had been a fateful day for Moses. He was 40 years old, in his prime, strong, resourceful and self-confident. Brought up as the foster child of Pharaoh's daughter, he had enjoyed the privileges of his station, and a real taste for luxury and power. Lately, however, a change had come over him. Although the crowds cheered as enthusiastically as ever when he drove out

in his splendid chariot, he hardly seemed to hear them. He found himself drawn repeatedly to the new cities his foster grandfather was building. Rameses was a great man for monuments, and Moses' fellow courtiers would rave over the soaring towers and buildings. But Moses saw only the grimy, cursing, toiling slaves who heaved the huge blocks and pillars into place.

He felt strangely uncomfortable. He kept telling himself they were his own people. Why was he not amongst them? While he was still being brought up by his true parents, before entering Pharaoh's house, Moses had learnt that he had the blood of Abraham in his veins. His father had recited to him the great adventures of his forefathers, and how the God of Israel had rescued them from many dangers. He knew his people had a land of their own, far away across the desert. We know he remembered those lessons well, because years later he named his own son to commemorate his father's faith: 'Eliezer', which means 'the God of my father was my help' (Exodus 18:4).

Joseph the Saviour

Of those stories his parents had told him, there was one which he would find particularly meaningful now as he



compared his soft life with that of his fellow countrymen. Joseph, the son of Jacob, had been an Israelite in Pharaoh's court, centuries before. Guided by God and His wisdom he had delivered the people from starvation during a great seven-year famine. Moses' father believed that Joseph had been put there by God to keep Abraham's descendants alive. Moses could not help wondering at the strange circumstances behind his own upbringing. He had been snatched from the cradle into the palace and elevated to a key position in the kingdom.

Seeing the brutality inflicted by the Egyptians upon people of his own flesh and blood, he felt compelled to believe that he must have been put where he was so that he could deliver his people from their bondage.

One striking prophecy had been given to Father Abraham. His descendants, the angel had told him, would be settlers in a foreign land, and would be slaves there, and oppressed (Genesis 15:13). Undoubtedly this prophecy had come true. But it went on to say that in the fourth generation they would come back to the land of Canaan (verse 16). By any reckoning, that event was now due.

Moses was in a turmoil. Nightly he considered what he should do. Should he break with the court, defy Pharaoh, and go out to his people to tell them he was their champion? Or should he stay put, stifling his conscience, and enjoy the pleasures, the power and the status that

were his royal heritage? The decision was not easy. To rebel would be an insult to his adopted family, after all they had done for him. Pharaoh would be furious. Suppose the attempt failed! Suppose the God of his father let him down, and he was ignominiously arrested! It was a tremendous risk to take.

The Reproach of Christ

To his eternal credit, Moses made a decision. He compared the future that lay before him in Egypt with the reward that the God of Israel had offered to his forefathers, and chose the latter as more worthwhile.

We know from the book of Hebrews exactly what went through his mind: *“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches*



than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward” (Hebrews 11:24–26). Moses never knew Jesus Christ as a person, but he was prepared to suffer the same hatred from his contemporaries as the Christian Jews to whom the book of the Hebrews was written. They knew what it was to suffer for Christ, and Moses trod the same path before them.

What the writer of the Hebrews is emphasizing in this passage is the difference between the two rewards. ‘The passing pleasures of sin’ is a telling description of the sensuous delights that awaited a grown man in Pharaoh’s household. But pleasures inevitably cloy, and degenerate into the emptiness and disillusionment of old age. The Pharaohs were embalmed to preserve their bodies and buried with dazzling splendour and priceless treasures—but when their graves are opened, the treasures are there for the taking and their bodies are shrivelled. The Pharaoh’s death was no less final than the death of anyone else.



Moses weighed up the value of both rewards. He decided that treasures and pleasures alike were worth nothing compared with the promise of God to His faithful children (Genesis 12:1–3). With vision and courage, Moses chose to strip off his robes and step out to visit his people.

That step is one we must all make, if we wish to please God. As Jesus said, we cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24). There has to come a day of departure, a turning of our back on an old life of sin, and a standing up to be counted with the people of God.

Moses the Saviour

Moses’ opportunity came when he saw a lonely Israelite slave being savagely beaten by his overseer. The helplessness in the man’s eyes and the gross injustice of his case stirred Moses’ anger. The record says “he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand” (Exodus 2:12). So far as we know from the Bible account, it was the first and the last time he ever killed a man. But he had made his point. He went home to let the news spread through the Israelite encampment that he was on their side. For the moment he was safe from the Egyptians, because he had concealed his victim. Though the overseer would be missed at nightfall, time was on his side.

The next day was the worst Moses ever experienced. He went out again full of hope, to visit his people. He really believed they would rally round him, and accept

him as their God-given saviour. Recalling the event two thousand years later the martyr Stephen declared *“he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand”* (Acts 7:25). His faith in human nature, and in God, was rudely shattered. This is what happened: seeing two Israelites quarrelling, he tried to separate them, only to receive a mouthful of abuse: *“Who made you a prince and a judge over us?”* shouted the man who was in the wrong. *“Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?”* (Exodus 2:14). It was a stinging blow to his pride. They knew the risk he had taken for them, but they had no respect for him at all, and were not prepared to have him as their leader. The news of the murder was out. He realised the Israelites would not support him, and the Egyptians would soon be seeking retribution. Bitter, disillusioned, and in turn afraid, he crept out of the field, gathered a few essentials together, and set out for the wilderness where he would be safe from Pharaoh’s wrath.

The Fugitive

Pity him, as he fled friendless and alone. Many great men of God started their

careers with disaster dashing their faith. Joseph, David, the Apostle Paul—they all found their self-confidence eliminated so that they would learn to depend on God. Faith is a painful virtue to acquire, and Moses, at age 40, had hardly begun to know the God of Israel Who had seemed to fail him in the hour of need. If you feel depressed or low because God seems to be silent and your life is in ruins, take heart. In time Moses became one of the greatest Bible characters. It would be another 40 years before he was both wise and humble enough to lead his people from slavery, but those decades of waiting in the wilderness were crucial to the making of the man. Ponder Moses’ own Psalm, in which he speaks of the affliction we all have to suffer, and the secret of waiting for God:

So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom... Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days! Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil (Psalm 90:12–15).

David M Pearce



Matthew

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW is the first book in the New Testament. The four Gospels are separate accounts of the life of Jesus. Matthew puts particular emphasis on Jesus being Israel's promised Messiah and coming King.

Matthew the Tax Collector

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem the Romans were ruling the world. An Edomite king, Herod, ruled as the puppet head of state in Israel. The Jews were allowed a measure of religious freedom, but they had to



pay taxes to Rome and obey Roman rule (see Matthew 17:24–27 and 22:17–21 for the teaching of Jesus about obeying rulers).

The writer of this Gospel record was Matthew (sometimes called Levi), a tax collector working for the Romans. Such men were hated by their fellow Jews, but Jesus saw his potential and called him to his service (Matthew 9:9).

Matthew's record from God, concerning the life and teachings of Jesus, concentrates

on God's appeal to the Jews. There are abundant references to the Old Testament. Jesus is proclaimed as the "Son of David" (the Old Testament King of Israel). It is Matthew's account which tells of the search of the wise men for "he who has been born King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2). It records the words of Jesus about his future kingship (25:31). The inscription "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS", was placed above his head when he was crucified (27:37).

Matthew's Gospel features many parables of Jesus. These simple stories were intended to instruct the faithful and confound the hardhearted (13:13–15). Most of the parables are about the Kingdom of God and the need for us to respond to God's word if we are to enter that Kingdom.

Norman Owen

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Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible:

- ◆ Matthew 1:1—see 2 Samuel 7:12–16; Romans 1:3.
- ◆ Matthew 5:35—see Psalm 48:2; 87:3; Isaiah 2:3.
- ◆ Matthew 16:27; 26:64—see Psalm 110:1; Daniel 7:13; Revelation 1:7.

For Those who have Lost their Sheen

LOTS OF US are kind of broken. We've been through things in our lives we'd rather forget. If I was a car, I'd be the one with the scratched and dented bodywork and some trouble starting up.



For people like us, there are words of Jesus which will come like music to our ears: “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavour, how shall it be seasoned?” (Luke 14:34).

For other people, the ones with pristine bodywork and an engine that starts first time, this might go straight over their heads. If they are paying attention, they may simply think: “If salt has lost its flavour you'd just throw it out, wouldn't you?”

But it was those whose lives had lost their sheen to whom Jesus spoke: “Then all the

tax collectors and the sinners drew near to him to hear him” (Luke 15:1). It's obvious, isn't it, that words about salt becoming salty again would appeal to those who had themselves lost their flavour.

Lost Sheep

I was once in that place. I had been brought up to be a good and well behaved Bible believer. I had gone to Sunday School, read my Bible, gone to Church every Sunday, said my prayers every night before bed. Yet when it was time to grow up, I lost my way somewhat, and my rather pristine bodywork got rearranged to look more like a scrapyard reject.

For us, the words of Jesus are like a clarion call. We who have fallen want so desperately for things to be made right again. To have a second chance.

Which is precisely why Jesus went ahead with his very next words and told the story of the lost sheep:

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together

his friends and neighbours, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!” I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:4–7).



For those who know they are salt which has lost its flavour—who worry that they have no hope of returning to a right relationship with God—this is oh so wonderful. To see through this parable that Jesus is out looking for us, and both willing to restore us and capable of restoring us, is the most blessed cool balm for our sores.

He tells us: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). In other words, it is only those who recognise their lack of righteousness, and yet are gasping to regain it, to whom the gift of righteousness will be given.

Righteousness is a perfect moral character. In God’s eyes none of us is righteous by our own merits, but He will give it to those who really want it.

Which means, really, that you and I qualify, and those whose bodywork is pristine do not:

When Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Mark 2:17).

It is sinners, and only sinners, who can be saved. Isn’t that wonderful? Here we were, thinking that we could never be good enough for God’s love, and then Jesus tells us that we’re precisely the kind of people he wants!

Jesus wants to fix up the bashed, bruised, scuffed and dented individuals. He wants to save sinners like you and me. And what’s even more marvellous is that he wants to give righteousness as a gift to those who believe it.

How to Be Righteous

Here is the great man Abraham receiving that same promise, and notice that it has nothing to do with his pristine track record:

And behold, the word of the LORD came to him... Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:4–6).

The righteousness was ‘accounted’ to Abraham because of his belief that what God promised, He was going to perform.



When it says ‘accounted’ it means it was given to him.

And this is the same way it will be for us, if we hunger and thirst for that righteousness, despite our failings:

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness” (Romans 4:3–5).

Coming to God involves accepting that we are sinners, repenting, being baptised and leading a new life in which we try to follow Jesus. We will not be righteous by our own merits any more than Abraham was, but

our faith in Jesus Christ will be accounted to us for righteousness.

If we recognise our sin and shortcomings, then this can happen. If we say we have a pristine moral character, and think we can retain it by our own merits, then we have no hope. Recognising our lack of perfection is necessary for obtaining salvation. So if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we will be filled.

Robin de Jongh

“ *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, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”*

(Isaiah 57:15)

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The Maidservant of the Lord

ABIGAIL stands out in the Bible as an example of wisdom, humility and courage. There are many practical lessons we can learn from her story, and she also provides an inspiring parable of the relationship between the Lord Jesus and his followers.

David had been anointed as future King of Israel by God's prophet, but he was on the run from the present king Saul. In 1 Samuel 25 we see David and his men in the wilderness of Carmel. They found themselves

neighbours to the sizeable flocks of a man called Nabal, and they made it their business to look out for Nabal's shepherds and keep the sheep from harm. At the time of the shearing celebrations David sent to Nabal with the request, "Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David" (v. 8). It was a reasonable request, but Nabal cantankerously refused.

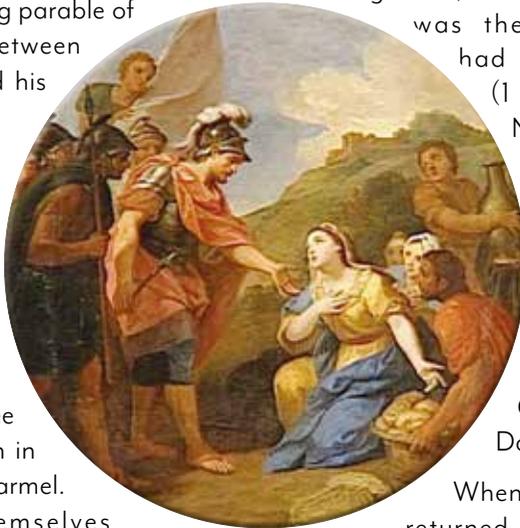
Nabal is presented as a contrast to his wife Abigail: "She was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance;

but the man was harsh and evil in his doings" (v. 3).

Nabal had no regard for David as a neighbour, or for the fact that he was the one whom God had chosen to be king (1 Sam 16). In short, Nabal had no regard for the promises of God. This sharply contrasts with Abigail, who understood, believed and acted upon the promises God had made to David.

When David's messengers returned with the news that Nabal had snubbed his request for a gift, David rashly ordered his men to prepare for a fight (v. 13). Nabal was feasting and drinking himself senseless, but his servants came and told Abigail. She immediately acted to save the household. She gathered together a gift for David and his men and went to meet him (vs. 18-19).

Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be!



And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal... Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal... Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days. Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel, that this will be no grief to you, nor offence of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant” (vs. 23–31).

Because of Abigail’s discernment and courage she kept David from wrongly executing vengeance. Notice how she humbly acknowledged that “*the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed*”. Notice too her confidence in God’s purpose with David, “*the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house*”. And notice the

way she described herself and David: she repeatedly referred to him as her lord, and to herself as his maidservant. This was not an empty cry of “*Lord, lord!*” (Matthew 7:21)—it was a declaration of allegiance to the future king.

Nabal died shortly afterwards, possibly of a stroke (vs. 37–38). When David heard of it he sent to ask Abigail to marry him (v. 39). Again we see the humility of this wealthy and powerful woman: she left to join David, attended by five of her own servants, declaring “*Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord*” (vs. 41–42).

One of the pictures the Bible paints of Jesus Christ and his followers is the picture of a bridegroom and his bride (for example Revelation 21:9). The arrival of the Kingdom of God is the marriage feast, when they will be united (Revelation 19:7). The story of David and Abigail is surely a wonderful parable about the attitude we must have if we want to be united with the Lord Jesus Christ in his Kingdom.

Stephen Blake

Questions? Comments?
We’d love to hear from you!

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NA

I want to be able to find stuff in the Bible. Sometimes there's a quote and I'm not sure it's from the Bible and I want to check. Sometimes I just want to look what it says about things. Is there an index?

Ed

THE BIBLE IS probably the most thoroughly indexed book in the world. If you know how to look it's quick and easy to find whatever you need.

The four centuries since the King James Version of the Bible first appeared in 1611 saw the publication of various concordances (alphabetical lists of important words, with references to the chapters and verses where those words occur). Perhaps the best known is the *Exhaustive Concordance* which was published by Professor James Strong in 1890. It lists every English word in the King James Bible, alongside the original Hebrew or Greek word from which it was translated, and every place where it occurs. It also contains a dictionary which gives a definition of each Hebrew and Greek word.

Generations of Bible readers have spent countless hours enthusiastically trawling through Strong's Concordance, finding passages, finding other passages which are connected with them, looking up the meanings of words, and gleaning greater insights into the messages of the Bible. Concordances have also been produced for a number of modern Bible versions.

Then along came the digital age. Computers are ideally suited to the handling of data. If you have access to the internet you have at your fingertips a massively powerful search and analysis facility which the likes of James Strong would not have believed possible.

Tap something like 'online Bible' into your search engine, and before long you'll find web sites which contain the entire Bible, either to download for free or to read online. You'll find a choice of many different Bible versions, and you'll find sites where the text is searchable. Also if you delve deeper you'll find Bible study resources such as dictionaries and commentaries. Bear in mind that these are the work of fallible people and are not always reliable.

Digital technology has made Bible searches quick, easy and accurate. It is a brilliant aid to Bible study. However, be aware that (as with many other areas of the internet) the availability of instant information can encourage the unproductive habit of 'grazing'—skimming through pages, picking over snippets of information without stopping to think about them.

The Psalmist said of his Bible, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*" (*Psalms 119:105*). The Bible should be read reverently, prayerfully and with focus—it is a guide for life. The best way to become familiar with its contents is to read it!

People in the Gospels

THIS IS A LIST of 12 people who are mentioned in the Gospel records. All the names are hidden in the grid.

Only three of them are mentioned in Matthew. Which three?

(The answer is on the back cover.)

ANNA

BARTIMAEUS

ELIZABETH

HERODIAS

JAIRUS

LAZARUS

MARTHA

NICODEMUS

PHILIP

SALOME

SIMEON

THOMAS

E S S S T H O M A S

L U U X I C D H V H

I M E R L M T V X E

Z E A R I R E Y O R

A D M C A A E O E O

B O I M R M J C N D

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Anna Hart

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