

# Glad Tidings

*Of The Kingdom Of God*



## Featured **Articles**

The Peril of Humanism (p. 3)

The Purpose of the Earth (p. 9)

The Revival of the Hebrew Language (p. 16)

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 humankind; to call attention to the divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn people that soon Christ will return to earth as judge and ruler of God's worldwide Kingdom.

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# The Peril of Humanism

CONSIDER these statements:

1. All people are born free.
2. All people are entitled to their human rights.
3. Using reason and empathy to guide our decisions and actions, we can lead lives that are ethical, fulfilling and meaningful.
4. The highest goal of anyone's life is the pursuit of the happiness and wellbeing of themselves and everyone.
5. The laws of a country must be made by its people, not imposed upon them. Democracy is the only legitimate form of government.
6. Using science and the pursuit of knowledge, we can solve the world's problems and bring about a just and prosperous society in which all can achieve their full potential.

That (I hope) is a fair appraisal of the beliefs and aims of the philosophy of Humanism. What do you think? Maybe you're thinking it doesn't sound particularly perilous. Maybe, even, you're thinking that sounds a lot like Christianity.

Humanism is the dominant philosophy in the western world. Perhaps the reason more people are not aware of it, is that it is so pervasive that it has come to be accepted simply as common sense.

Of course, Humanism has a lot to be said for it. Humanists who take their principles

seriously are good people: if there were more of them, the world would certainly be a better place.

The problem is, it is a fundamentally Godless philosophy. It is based on the assumption that this life is all there is. It denies the existence of God, and therefore elevates humans as the principal authority on life and how to live it. The clue is in the name. We can revisit each of those six points, and see how they each actually conflict with the Bible's world-view:

1. **Freedom.** The Bible is not particularly concerned with worldly status. Among the great people of faith in its pages you'll find slaves, servants and masters. Masters are commanded to treat well those for whom they are responsible, and slaves to respect their masters (Ephesians 6:5-9). The Bible is more concerned with our spiritual status. We're all slaves, either to our own sin or to God: '*Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?*' (Romans 6:16).
2. **Human rights.** The Bible sets great store by kindness. Jesus Christ prescribed the basis on which we should deal with each other: '*Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them*' (Matthew 7:12). But the Bible

says nothing of human rights, except our right to die because of our sin (Romans 6:23).

**3. Can we work out ourselves how to live good lives?** Certainly most of us have a sense of right and wrong; but the Bible is clear that there is an immense gulf between God's standards and ours. *'There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death' (Proverbs 14:12).*

**4. What makes for a "good life"?** Somebody once asked this of Jesus, and this was his reply: *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'* (Matthew 22:37–39). The primary focus of a good life is not yourself, or even your fellow humans, but God.

**5. Good government.** There was a period in Bible history, in the time of the Judges, when *'everyone did what was right in his own eyes' (Judges 21:25).* It was a torrid period of corruption and civic failure. Bible history is clear that good government only happened under godly leaders (such as King David)—and Bible prophecy shows that the world's destiny is the Kingdom of God, which will be imposed upon it by Jesus Christ returned as king (Luke 1:32–33).

**6. Can we solve our problems through the acquisition of knowledge?** Science and learning can provide huge benefits, but the Bible sees knowledge from a

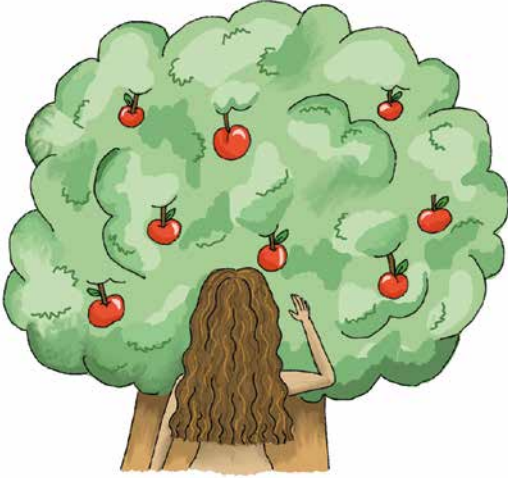
different perspective: *'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction' (Proverbs 1:7).*

So it's clear that there's an unbridgeable gulf between Humanism and the Christianity of the Bible. The two are not compatible. But it's worth asking the question—which is right? Given the choice, many people today prefer Humanism.

The last century and a half have seen a grand experiment in Humanism in the western world. In many ways it has triumphed: the pursuit of knowledge in all forms has been elevated to the highest importance; science has advanced at a bewildering pace, and provided many undeniable benefits; democracy is the dominant form of government; religious ethics have been replaced by human ethics, and we now decide right and wrong for ourselves; the motto "You only live once" is an axiom, and God has been relegated to a minority interest. But ask yourself this question—are we happier, better, safer people now? Are we really building utopia?

The Bible offers what Humanism cannot. It explains why people cannot live together in harmony—because we're fallen creatures. It shows that the universe is not a random accident, but the creation of God Who loves us and gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. It demonstrates its reliability by fulfilled prophecy, and its promises span into our future with its solid assurance of the return of Jesus Christ to rule the world. And it gives us confidence for the future: *'To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life' (Romans 2:7).*

# The Garden of Eden



THE FRUIT HUNG LOW on the branch, and it seemed to dance in the sunlight. It cried out to be eaten—smooth, luscious and ripe. The woman compared it with a peach, or a melon, or any other fruit that she had eaten, and she knew at once it was better than any of them. Then the mocking words of the serpent began to race round and round in her head: *'You will not surely die'* (Genesis 3:4).

She had not thought about it before—that the Lord God might not really mean what He said. The angels certainly knew good and evil, those wonderful beings with whom she and Adam were sometimes allowed to converse, and yet they were not dead. To be like them, so superior in every way, so gracious and intelligent and wise, and all for the eating of this fruit! Her heart pounded, and she felt dizzy with a strange blend of excitement and fear. In that

moment the warmth and beauty and soft rustling of the garden faded, and her whole world converged on this enticing tree. She took a step closer. The sweet smell of the fruit ran down her palate, her mouth began to water, and she felt very hungry. Suddenly something snapped inside her. Shaking with tension, she reached out and pulled it from the tree.

*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6).*

The record continues, *'Then the eyes of both were opened'* (v. 7). To this extent the serpent was right. Now Adam and his wife had passed from innocence to guilt; nothing could be the same. *'Knowing good and evil'* (v. 5) is a Bible expression that applies to us all as we grow up. It is used in Deuteronomy 1:39 to divide children from adults.

The awakening of conscience happens gradually to us. In the case of Adam and Eve it seems to have happened in a flash. They had challenged God by eating from the forbidden tree, and now they were afraid and hid themselves from His sight.

## The First Sin

The fall of our first parents carries deep lessons. It introduces us to the

phenomenon of sin. Adam and Eve had the same basic drives as the rest of us, in whom hunger and curiosity and pride are strong. In their world of delight, they could indulge their fancy, and do just what they liked without fear of upsetting anybody, with one exception. There was one line laid down, over which they must not cross. *'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,'* God had said, *'for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'* (Genesis 2:17). That line was the very first law. It put a curb on their hunger, curiosity and pride. This is true of any law.

Our parents lay down the first rules we faced—"you must never write on the wallpaper", "be back by 10 o'clock"—this sort of thing. When we grow up, we become responsible to the law of the country in which we live. This places many restrictions on our activities. It prevents us driving as fast as we like in a built-up area, or building a house in a beauty spot, because the lawmakers have decided it would not be for the common good.



Now, if we read the Bible, we cannot dodge the fact that God, too, has laid

down His rules to control our lives. When we break God's rules, the Bible calls that sin. *'Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practises lawlessness; sin is lawlessness'* writes the Apostle John (1 John 3:4). Even though people persuade themselves they can reject the right of God as Creator to intrude into their lives, this does not lessen their guilt, just as the criminal who challenges the right of the court to try him is still condemned.

The unfortunate thing is that even when we do believe in God and want to keep His laws, we still find ourselves guilty of breaking them every day. However we try, we find ourselves forgetting or failing to obey God all the time. Even Paul, the great apostle, had to admit: *'I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing'* (Romans 7:19).

The inescapable conclusion is that whether we are Christians or Communists, believers or agnostics, in practice we are all guilty of sin. We stand bracketed with Adam and Eve, awaiting the decision of God.

But what will God say? To break the rules implies a risk of punishment. Adam had been told *'in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'* (Genesis 2:17). Did God mean what He said? Or was the serpent right? What does God do about sinners, wilful or otherwise? We must consider the answer carefully, because the outcome affects us all.

## Human Nature

We can all remember waiting for Mum or Dad to come home when we had been naughty. There was the gnawing fear of punishment—no going out to play, or

being denied some treat. There was also another, deeper dread. We knew that what we had done would upset them. We had imperilled that precious bond of understanding and affection that links us to our parents and gives us security and peace of mind. They would send us away, out of the room, and we would be cut off. So, the moment they discovered our mischief, we would try to soften the blow. "It wasn't my fault", we would say, clutching at any excuse to remove the sternness from that penetrating gaze.

Human nature does not change. Adam and his wife had broken God's only rule, and they hid to avoid being found out. Eating from the forbidden tree had not brought the benefits the serpent had promised. Far from feeling like the angels of God, they could not face them, and waited in an agony of apprehension to see what was to happen to them. Typically, when each was accused, they tried to shift the blame:

*He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:11–13).*

Trembling and silent, they awaited the decision of the Judge of all the earth.

The measured words of the Creator in that hour have shaped the destiny of every person that ever lived. First, He cursed the serpent for urging Eve to disobey. Then He condemned the two sinners to a life

marred with sorrow. To the woman: *'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'* And to the man: *'Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground'* (vs. 16–19).

## Consequences

Finally, He thrust them out, shutting them off from their birthplace of happiness and fellowship with the angels, to till the ground in a harsh and inhospitable world.



What are we to make of the judgment of the Lord? We must admit it fits the facts. Though life has many joys, and there are few that have no happy memories at all, the clouds of sorrow are never far away. The pain of childbearing goes beyond the ordeal of the birth to compass the sadness of watching children grow up and

fly away from the nest. The worry and effort of bread-winning weighs heavily. Disease and accident cause an endless rain of tears. Then there is the greed and brutality of people themselves that lead to war and crime. Above all looms the grim inevitability of death, which snatches our loved ones from our arms and awaits each one of us. *'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards'* (Job 5:7).



## Justice

Was God right to punish people so? The sentence may seem to us to strike harshly. But God had made plain what would be the penalty for breaking His law. To overlook the offence would have been morally wrong, and God is Himself the very standard of justice. We know from experience that when rules are broken with impunity, misconduct spreads and the rule maker is soon despised.

Think of the emergency brake handle in a railway carriage. Our safety depends on the knowledge that the notice next to it means

what it says—if we pull the handle without good cause we shall have to pay a stiff fine. If the rail operator did not bother to bring to court those who used the handle improperly, or if the courts just waived the fine, people would be stopping trains for any excuse. The service would be disrupted and accidents would proliferate.

Adam, then, must learn that God was not to be mocked. He had been warned, in the graphic terms of the Hebrew original, *'in the day you eat of it, dying you will die'* (Genesis 2:17). The penalty was exacted forthwith. An irreversible change took place inside Adam and his wife. Their lives, and those of their offspring, were thenceforward programmed to a pattern of growth in youth, stability through their middle years, and an inevitable decline in old age.

But God, in His mercy, did not leave it at that. He immediately set about the process of undoing the evil that our first parents had done.

**David Pearce**  
(to be continued)

**Questions? Comments?**  
**We'd love to hear from you!**

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# The Purpose of the Earth

GOD TELLS US that He created the earth (Genesis 1:1). If we recognise that, it is reasonable to ask why, and what is His purpose with it.

The first indication is in the Bible's first chapter:

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Genesis 1:26).*



Our history began in paradise, in the Garden of Eden. But in chapter 3 we see the fall of humankind, the introduction of the curse, and the expulsion of our first parents from paradise. The Apostle Paul puts it thus: *'The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope' (Romans 8:20).*

## Paradise Lost

Had God's purpose with the earth failed? No—it was 'subjected in hope'. The earth became the arena on which is being worked out God's plan for redemption, which includes both humankind and the earth itself. When Adam sinned, both he and his world were cursed; this curse will be undone by his descendant and successor, Jesus Christ.

*For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.*

*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:21–22).*

The Bible tells of the process of undoing the curse. It was imposed at the beginning, and it will be removed at the end: *'No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him' (Revelation*

*22:3).*

There is a suggestion that God's purpose is not with the earth—that our destiny is to spend eternity in heaven, and therefore the earth is expendable. God tells us otherwise: *'The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea' (Habakkuk 2:14).*

This suffering world will yet be saved and glorified. And we are given details of the Kingdom to come. Look at these promises of God. To the patriarch Abraham: *'I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God' (Genesis 17:8).*

This promise was reaffirmed to his son Isaac (Genesis 26:1–5) and Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13).

The promises strengthened these great men in their pilgrimage. *'By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise' (Hebrews 11:8-9).*

And the promises will be literally fulfilled when they are raised from the dead at the return of Jesus Christ: *'I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 8:11).*

### Paradise Regained

Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28), and the Bible story is largely concerned with the nation that are his descendants. *'They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises' (Romans 9:4).* But the promises to the patriarchs had their focus in the singular offspring, as the Apostle Paul points out: *'Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings", referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring", who is Christ' (Galatians 3:16).*

It is Jesus Christ who is the heir of all the earth. He is the

last Adam, through whom the curse will be lifted. It is he who will *'possess the gate of his enemies'*, and in whom shall *'all the nations of the earth be blessed'* (Genesis 22:17-18). It is written of him, *'The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel"' (Psalm 2:7-9).* When he returns we should not expect the nations of the earth to submit willingly to him.

The promise of glory is also extended to us: *'The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father' (Revelation 2:26-27).* As Jesus said elsewhere, *'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5).*

It is evident then that a glorious future awaits the earth. God's creation will not be in vain. *'For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the LORD, and there is no other' (Isaiah 45:18).* The redemption of this suffering, war-torn, polluted and ravaged world will be realised when Jesus Christ returns to be its king. And we each can share in that glorious age.

**From *Thus Saith the Lord***

**H**igh over lashing waves our God is throned:  
Proud billows bide their wrath at His command.

Lofty as hills, roll on your restive might:

Fling, seas, in thunder, 'gainst the granite height:

Yet shall you lie like glass beneath His hand.

*Psalm 93:4*

*Jeremiah 5:22*

*Revelation 15:2*

Thrones, realms, dominions, flaunt their fleeting day:

Base men arise, and fall to long decay:

Tumultuous peoples roar like ocean tide:

Nations in rage the suffering earth divide:

Yet all unknown He rules their ceaseless fray.

*Isaiah 57:20*

*Daniel 4:17*

His day shall dawn, His golden beam content

Those limpid waters' depth, their fury spent.

Like sun in bounty, healing, blessing, free,

Love's gaze shall fathom all the restless sea,

And joy glow back through all His firmament.

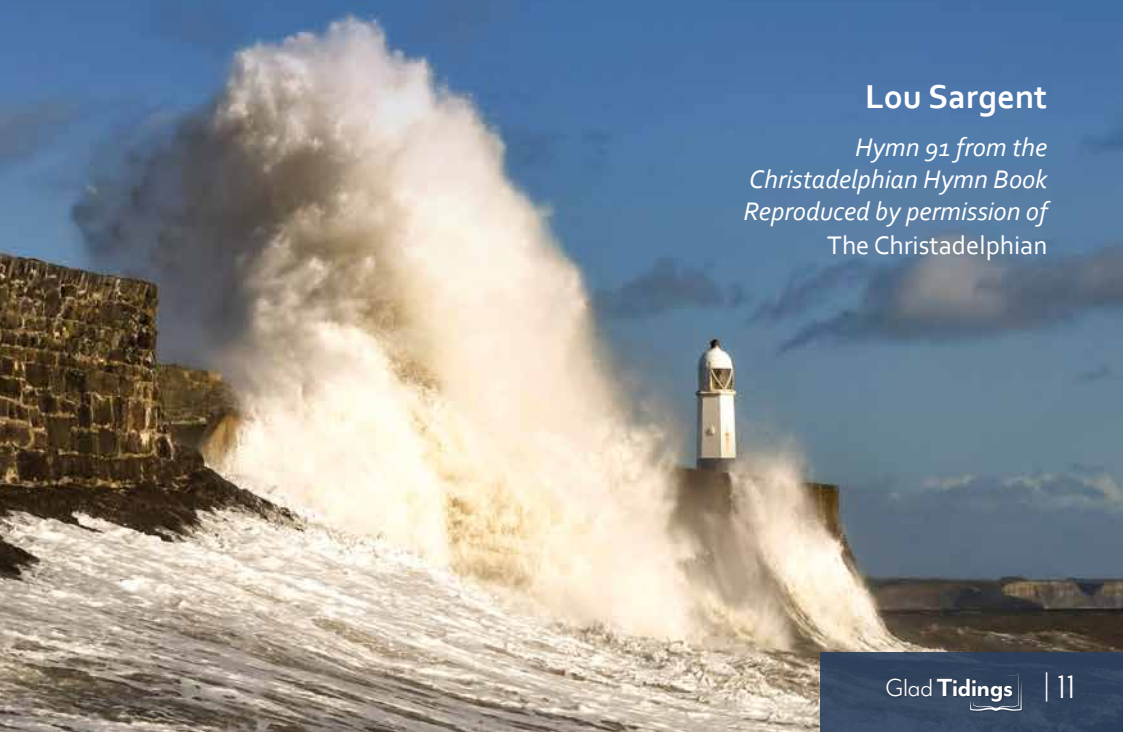
*Psalm 65:7*

*Mark 4:39*

*Matthew 6:10*

## Lou Sargent

*Hymn 91 from the  
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# The Lord Jesus Christ

JESUS CHRIST was unique. In fact, he was the greatest human being who ever lived. His Gospel message of the Kingdom of God and resurrection from the dead changed the Roman Empire and the world.

The New Testament in the Bible contains the record of Jesus' life, work and resurrection. It is found in the four gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all of which give us the good news (that is, the Gospel) of the Kingdom of God and the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 28:31).

## His Origin

In Israel's ancient history there was a great king of Israel whom God had called 'a man after his own heart' (1 Samuel 13:14). He loved God, and wrote many of the psalms in the book of Psalms, several being prophecies of his descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

King David looked to the future when this descendant would set up an everlasting

kingdom upon earth, for example when he wrote '*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool"*' (Psalm 110:1). Jesus recognised this psalm as prophetic of himself, the Son of God; he asked the Pharisees:

*"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:42-45).*

## His Birth

Mary was told by the angel Gabriel she was to have a son and she was to call his name JESUS (Luke 1:27, 31).

The angel told her, '*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever,*



*and of his kingdom there will be no end'* (vs. 32–33).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, some shepherds were visited by an angel who said to them, *'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord'* (Luke 2:10–11). Jesus was very special: he was destined to be the saviour of both Jews and Gentiles.



## His Life

The four gospels are the only source we have which tells us about the life of Jesus.

The gospel of Luke gives us a brief picture of Jesus' early life. Chapter 2 tells us of his circumcision, when he was presented in the temple as a baby, and of how at the age of 12 he stayed behind in the temple listening to the teachers and asking questions, whilst his family spent three days searching for him (Luke 2:43–48). When they found him Mary said to him, *"Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."* And he said to them, *"Why were you looking*

*for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"* (vs. 48–49). At the time Mary and Joseph failed to understand what he had said (v. 50)—but we know he meant his Father in heaven, the Lord God.

Jesus was baptised (Luke 3:21–22), then he went into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights *'being tempted by the devil'* (Luke 4:1–12). He overcame the temptations he was subjected to (v. 13).

## Preaching and Healing

After his temptations, Jesus began preaching in the region of Galilee, starting in Nazareth where he'd grown up (Luke 4:16). He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and read a portion of the prophecy of Isaiah (vs. 18–19, see Isaiah 61:1–2). He told the people this prophecy was about him and had been fulfilled (v. 21). However, they didn't believe his words, saying: *'Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?'* (Matthew 13:55–56). Their unbelief was such that Jesus could not perform many miracles there.

Jesus spent three years preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and repentance (Mark 1:14–15). He did this largely by using parables. He chose 12 disciples and made a point of explaining his parables to them so they would understand his message. The majority of the people were not spiritual enough to understand his parables. The disciples had to understand, they were to teach the world the Gospel after he had left them.

He also performed many acts of healing, which served to verify his claim to be the Son of God, the Christ (that is, the Messiah)—which Peter affirmed when Jesus asked his disciples, *"But who do you say that I am?"* And Peter answered, *"The Christ of God."* (Luke 9:20).

There are many examples of Jesus' miracles of healing found in the gospels. This is a notable example of the remarkable power he had.

*There was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."* (Mark 5:25–34).

The greatest acts of healing by the Lord Jesus were when he raised the dead to life. Most notably was when he raised his friend Lazarus to life after being dead four days (John 11).

## His Death

Jesus knew that he must die; he told this to his disciples many times. At first they failed to register what he was telling them, it was later on when they finally understood.

Peter tried to dissuade him from going to his death: *"Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man"* (Matthew 16:22–23).

Jesus' sinless life and sacrificial death were the main objectives of his ministry. Without it there would have been no resurrection, no forgiveness of sins, no redemption, and no reconciliation to God for anyone.



Jesus 'the only son of God' (John 3:18) was a sinless sacrifice, he was 'the bread of life' (John 6:35), which God gave for the life of the world (v. 51). His shed blood 'cleanses us from all sin' if we accept his offer of salvation (1 John 1:7).

He died by crucifixion just as he prophesied: *'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so*



*must the Son of Man be lifted up' (John 3:14).*

*'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life' (v. 16). If we believe in him and keep his commandments, he calls us his friends: 'Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you' (John 15:13–14).*

## His Resurrection

Jesus died on the cross and was laid in a rock tomb, but in three days he was raised to life again (Matthew 20:18–19). It was this momentous event which sparked the rise of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. The disciples initially did not believe Jesus had risen from the dead, but were convinced after he had appeared to them on several occasions.

The first chapter of Acts contains the record of Christ's last days on earth, which he spent with his disciples, before he was taken up into heaven. *'He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God'*

*(Acts 1:3). As he was taken into heaven the angels gave his disciples this message: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven' (v. 11).*

When he returns he will establish the Kingdom of God to rule the world in righteousness. He will resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who have been faithful (Daniel 12:1–3).

Although the Bible is an ancient book, it has a message for all people on earth today. It is a real message of hope in a hopeless world.

## Grahame A Cooper

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תור

# The Revival of the Hebrew Language

SINCE THEIR EXPULSION from the land of Israel by the Romans, the Jewish people have wandered the world in exile for nearly 2000 years. They spoke the language of every place where they settled. Their ancient language Hebrew was kept alive in their Bible (what we know as the Old Testament), and in religious literature. Its use was reserved for special occasions, prayers, religious study and blessings, and for literary and official purposes.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century a version of pidgin Hebrew was in use in the markets of Jerusalem—it was developed by the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews in order to understand each other, but it was not a proper language. Hebrew had long since ceased to be the language of the common Jew.

## Zionism

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, galvanised by increasing anti-semitism throughout Europe, the Jewish visionary Theodor Herzl promoted the idea of the Jews returning to Palestine to establish a state of their own. The movement which he spearheaded became known as Zionism, and led eventually to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

What would be the official language of this new state? Not Hebrew: Herzl saw the revival of Hebrew as not only impossible,

but impracticable. A language that had stopped developing 2000 years ago was not compatible with the modern world. He suggested that they should speak German, the language of modernisation.

But other Zionists disagreed. How can a nation be considered a nation if it doesn't have its own language? One of these was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a Russian-Jewish journalist. He and an energetic group of followers made it their goal to revive the ancient language of the Jewish people, and make it the everyday language of the new state for which they were striving.



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his wife Hemda Jonas

They encountered resistance from all sides—ultra-Orthodox Jews said Hebrew was a holy language and should be reserved for holy purposes only; secular Jews said there was no need to speak an out-dated language; many simply doubted that it was possible.



קראל סידוהיה לש תתרח  
 לש תומשגתה התייה סהיתובא  
 והימרי לשמל) תובר ך"נת תואובנ

## The Language Reborn

On 13<sup>th</sup> October 1881, in Paris, Ben Yehuda and some friends held what is believed to be the first modern conversation in Hebrew. Soon afterwards he relocated to Jerusalem. He determined that his family would only speak Hebrew, raising his son Itamar Ben-Avi to be the first native speaker of Modern Hebrew, and attempting to convince other families to do likewise. He founded associations for speaking Hebrew, and published a Hebrew newspaper, *HaZvi*. Hebrew schools were established in Jewish settlements in Palestine, and for a while Ben Yehuda worked as a teacher. He also compiled a dictionary of modern Hebrew.

At first progress was slow. In 1902, over two decades after their arrival in Jerusalem, Ben Yehuda's wife recorded that she baked a cake for the tenth family to agree to speak only Hebrew. But during the next two decades the movement grew exponentially. In 1921 the British, who administered the mandate for Palestine, recognised Hebrew as one of the country's three official languages, along with Arabic and English. Ben Yehuda died in 1922.

Hebrew is now accepted as Israel's national language. The process of its return to regular usage is unique and could hardly have been foreseen: a sacred language which was effectively dead, without any native speakers, becoming the first language of a nation.

## Imaginative Words

During the process of modernisation, old Hebrew words sometimes took on different meanings altogether.

Modern word	Meaning	Derivation
<i>kavīš</i>	street, road	Aramaic adjective meaning "trodden down", "a blazoned trail"
<i>tapuz</i>	citrus orange	Combination of <i>tapuach</i> ("apple") + <i>zahav</i> ("golden")—literally "golden apple"
<i>hasmal</i>	electricity	"the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire" (see Ezekiel 1:4)

The return of the Jews to their ancestral land was a fulfilment of many Bible prophecies (for example Jeremiah 31:8–10). But the nation of Israel is still self-confident and largely godless, and so it will be until they are finally confronted by their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10).

The prophet Zephaniah looks forward, beyond this present time of trouble, to the Kingdom of God which Jesus Christ will establish on his return. It will be a time of peace and blessing for all nations. And it very much seems as though the project of reviving the ancient Bible language which Ben Yehuda and his associates began with such enthusiasm, will be brought to a fruition which even they did not imagine: *'At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord'* (Zephaniah 3:9).

**Tom Ingham**

**IE** Which comes first, being born again or being baptised?

**Ed** Jesus explained to Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler, what it means to be born again:

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).*

In order to be a follower of Christ you need to be born of both water and the spirit. What does that mean? 'Born of water' is clear, it means baptism. But what does it mean to be born of the spirit?

The Apostle Paul explains how baptism works. When you're dipped into the water, you show that you want to share in Christ's sacrifice and his resurrection. *'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,*

*we too might walk in newness of life' (Romans 6:3-4).* When you're baptised, it needs to be the result of belief and repentance, and it needs to be the beginning of a new life with God. If it's not, then your baptism is just a bath.

Paul goes on to explain about this new life. He contrasts the new life with the old life; life as a follower of God, versus life without God. He calls the two mindsets 'spirit' and 'flesh'.

*Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you (Romans 8:5-9).*

To be born of water and the spirit is to be baptised and to change your life around so you're following Christ. To be born again is not a single identifiable experience, it's a process of transformation which centres on your baptism.

# Jesus in Isaiah's Prophecy

LUKE 4:16–22 records Jesus reading in public words from Isaiah 61:1–2 and commenting on them. He said that they were written about him.

The grid contains the answers to the following 12 questions. In each case the number in brackets () indicates the number of letters in the answer.

**1** In which town was Jesus when he read these words? (8)

**2** In what building was he? (9)

**3** What day of the week was it? (7)

**4** What did Jesus do before reading? (5, 2)

**5** Who found the actual passage in the book? (5)

**6** How does the passage describe him (Jesus) as a

result of having the Spirit of the Lord? (8)

**7** To what sort of people would the Gospel (good news/glad tidings) be preached? (4)

**8** What sort of people would be healed? (5)

**9** Which people would be set free? (9)

**10** What would he do about the year of the Lord's favour (the acceptable year)? (8)

**11** How did Jesus describe the words to show that he thought them holy? (9)

**12** What did Jesus say about the words in relation to himself? (9)

D V D M N D Z S C B U G  
 P E G E N A M Y Z B S Y  
 R S L I T P Z N Y K C R  
 O Y L L M N S A L U R N  
 C B Y O I A I G R O I J  
 L K Z D B F T O Q E P D  
 A M W B C J L G N F T P  
 I G A R E M J U U A U H  
 M T O S R P M E F I R L  
 H P U D O O T S X D E A  
 U S I D O J O C A Y K M  
 D W O P P R E S S E D N

Answers: NAZARETH, SYNAGOGUE, SABBATH, STOOD UP, JESUS, ANOINTED, POOR, BLIND, OPPRESSED, PROCLAIM, SCRIPTURE, FILLED

Anna Hart

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