

# Glad Tidings

*Of The Kingdom Of God*

## Featured **Articles**

Contentment (p. 3)

This Man I Knew (p. 7)

Fear And Boldness (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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# Contentment

FROM HIS pauper's birth in a stable in Bethlehem, to his criminal's death on the cross outside Jerusalem, Jesus lived his life in poverty. He once said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20).

His was a voluntary poverty. It's very clear that someone with his gifts could have made themselves very comfortable, but instead he chose the life of a wandering teacher. In the Gospel records we get hints of how he and his band of disciples lived in the three years of their ministry: they travelled systematically through the land of Judea (Luke 4:43), accepting offers of hospitality when they were made (Luke 19:5), and there was a network of women who made it their business to see they were looked after (Luke 8:3). Jesus and his followers had a communal purse and it seems they never had much money because he was in the habit of giving any surplus away (John 13:29).

## Teaching of Jesus

In his teaching Jesus said much about money, and the right attitude to it. For example Matthew chapter 6 is part of a wide-ranging lesson on everyday life which is sometimes known as the 'sermon on the mount'. Money is one of the central themes of the chapter. He explains how to get life into perspective: "Do not lay up for

*yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (vs. 19–21). He compares money to a master who wants to rule your life—you can't serve God and money (v. 24).*



And he urges us to get our priorities right: "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'... 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" (vs. 31–33).

## Teaching of Paul

There's a saying, "Money is the root of all evil". Like many sayings we use, it comes from the Bible. Actually it's not quite

accurate—it’s a quote from the Apostle Paul’s letter to Timothy, and what he says is “*the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil*”. It’s not that money is intrinsically evil. Like the Lord Jesus, Paul is stressing the importance of priorities. This is the quote in context:

*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:6–10).*

## Human Nature

For many people in the world life is a struggle. Greed is not an issue, they’re simply focused on getting enough to get by. But it’s a fact of life that the desire to have more does not cease—even when we have enough. In fact it can be that the more we have, the more we want.

This is a hideous indictment of our human nature. Most of us know deep down that the size of our wallet does not correspond with the quality of our life. In fact, most of us will appreciate the truth of the Bible proverb: “*The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep*” (Ecclesiastes 5:12).

But somehow, knowing the principle does not stop us from telling ourselves that however much we have, it’s not quite enough—we just need a bit more...



So what is the key to contentment? Let’s return to those words of the Lord Jesus. “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” If our heart is set on our devices, our home, our bank balance, whatever else constitutes ‘treasure on earth’—we will never be content because they always come with worry. Will they be stolen, will they break, will they go out of date, has someone else got more than me?

The antidote to this worry is to cultivate treasure in heaven—a true relationship with God, and the anticipation of eternal life in His Kingdom. These do not bring worry, they bring peace of mind. This is “*godliness with contentment*”.

# The Good Shepherd

*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.*

IN JOHN chapter 10 Jesus presents a detailed parable in which he is represented by a shepherd, and his disciples are his sheep.

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers (John 10:1–5).*

The picture is of the traditional Middle Eastern sheepfold which is an enclosure with high stone walls and a single opening. When the sheep were inside one of the shepherds would guard the opening to



keep them safe from wild animals and thieves. In this parable Jesus is the good shepherd, the sheep are his disciples, and the doorkeeper is God.

## “I Am The Door”

Jesus then develops the parable to present himself as the door itself—the fold would not have a physical door, the shepherd standing guard would be the ‘door’:

*Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (vs. 7–9).*

Jesus is “the door of the sheep”—the sheep could only go in and out of the fold through him, there is no other way. As he said on another occasion, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6). Anyone who tries to get into the sheepfold by a different way has no place in his fold. These may be people who claim to be Jesus’ followers

but do not really follow him. The only way into the fold is to hear and obey the Gospel message.

There are warnings in the Bible about people who will try to get into the flock who are not really Jesus' followers. For example the Apostle Paul said to the elders of the Ephesian church, "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29–30).



### **"I Lay Down My Life"**

The parable continues: "I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by my own. As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:14–15).

Jesus' sheep are those who listen to him, obey and follow him. It follows that those who do not follow him are not his sheep. But for those who are his sheep, he has performed the ultimate act of love. Only

the most dedicated shepherd would lay down his life to save his sheep from harm. Jesus' mission was to be the sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins: "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He did just that, he died on the cross, the third day he rose again to eternal life and he is now in heaven waiting to return and give eternal life to his flock.

He continues: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (v. 16).

The sheepfold was primarily for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), but Gentiles (non-Jews) can also enter it if they respond to the Gospel call (Acts 13:46).

Jesus Christ is assembling his flock by calling people from all nations and all ages—people who listen to his voice and follow him. Will you be one of them? Are these words for you:

*Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32).*

**Grahame A Cooper**

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

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# This Man I Knew

THERE WAS A MAN I once knew. He was born towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to a poor family in Manchester. He and his fellow urchins wandered the streets barefoot, and they were always hungry. They lived in back-to-back terraces not far from the main route into the city markets, so they would lurk on the off chance that something edible might fall off the wagons as they jolted around corners. Well, actually they became very good at knocking off the occasional turnip or cabbage and skipping away to where they could be eaten in safety. I think they must have invented the phrase “it fell off the back of a wagon”.

Life was hard and he could have given up, but he made the most of the small amount of education he had, and managed to get an apprenticeship in a local garage. There he worked alongside its owners, Mr Charles Rolls and Mr Henry Royce.



1905 Rolls Royce

He was to work for their company for over 40 years, and he played his part in its development into the finest and most famous motor manufacturer in the world.

But what truly changed his life was an encounter with another man (whom I'll tell you about later), who taught him the Gospel. This man I knew lived a life of service to Jesus Christ which was far more important to him than his day-job. It was all a long time ago. Now he sleeps in his grave, awaiting the reward from his master:

*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord (Matthew 25:21).*

## Faithful Service

One afternoon clocking-off time approached, and as each man finished his tasks he cleaned up and reached for his coat—home, a couple of hours in the pub, a game of ‘footie’ beckoned. Rolls, or was it Royce, looked up from the car they were working on and said, “Unless you help us lads we’re not going to get this one on the road today.”

Not another word was spoken. Each man put his coat back on the hook, took up his tools and got back to work, and no one thought to leave until the job was completed.

Perhaps that was the attitude that built that legendary company. Certainly it was the attitude of this man I knew. He was faithful and diligent with his job, just as he was in his service to his Lord. Jesus said:

*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing (Matthew 24:45–46).*

## To the Land of Opportunity

In 1908 the company left Manchester and moved to a new purpose-built factory in Derby. His job became more mechanised, and this man I knew got itchy feet. He decided to leave for the Land of Opportunity. He worked his passage to the USA, as a stoker on a steamer. At first all went well—he found a good job and a wife. Then everything went wrong—his young wife died, he lost his job and lost everything. For the second time in his life he was wandering the streets, penniless.

He worked his way back to Britain on another steamer. Rolls Royce gave him his

old job back. Perhaps making those engine parts was to be his life's work after all.

A few days after he started, an inspector came to see him.

“Have you worked on this machine before?” the inspector asked.

“Yes sir, before I went to America.”

“I knew it,” the inspector said, “these parts were never as good whilst you were away, and now they're back to their previous standard. Carry on, my man, carry on!”

They chatted, and after work the inspector looked him out, this man I knew. He said he'd like to share something with him. And of all things, it wasn't a drink at the local pub, he invited him to a Bible talk. That's how he came to know the Gospel. In time he was baptised. He became a child of God, and the inspector became his brother.

*God... “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honour, and immortality (Romans 2:6–7).*



New York City, 1908



## One Man And His Clocks

This man I knew had a passion for grandfather clocks. When he retired he'd buy broken clocks, renovate them and sell them—it supplemented his pension. He would have half a dozen or so scattered around the house. He gave them all names, and when they all began to chime the hour—some slightly late, others slightly fast, few exactly on time—you needed ear plugs.

My mother used to clean for him. He would leave notes for her, along the lines of:

*"Dear Dorothy, have lost a sprocket from Jemima. Please watch out for it as you clean. Jonah has the right time. Thank you. Pop."*

He would only sell a clock when he was content that it was in as good condition as he could possibly make it. He worked on them with the same loving care which had in time past been applied to the engine parts.

That dedication, that thoughtful skill, that carefulness was applied to his Christian faith as well. His life was centred on the Bible, which taught him all he needed:

*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).*

## Discipline And Dignity

I used to mow his lawn to earn myself some pocket money. I cycled the four miles to his house. I used a lawnmower which he had rebuilt. When I'd finished my job he would lovingly clean and service the mower. I learnt a lot from him about machinery.

As I set off for home his parting message was always "It's a discipline, lad, a discipline!"

He and his wife could stand in the garden and call, and a succession of birds—a robin, pheasants and others—would fly out of the wood to be fed from their hands. He also had a device for scaring off the pigeons from his vegetable plot, rigged so that he could operate it while lying in bed.

Why is it that when we're young we feel so awkward around older, wiser people? Why is it we don't avidly learn everything we can from them? This man lived with such simple dignity and thoughtfulness. He was content. It seems to me that his was a life which epitomised the Apostle's words:

*Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4: 5–7).*

## The Good Life

I can see them now in my mind's eye, this man and his diminutive wife in their customary places a couple of rows from the front in the Christadelphian hall in Derby.



Derby Christadelphian hall

When they sang hymns they would stand bolt upright, engrossed in their worship—they didn't bother with hymn books, they seemed to know all the hymns by heart.

He was a quiet man, always in the background, but he served his Lord and his brothers and sisters in many ways, and he knew how to speak a 'word in season' (2 Timothy 4:2).

In Christadelphian meetings there are no ministers, every duty is done by one of the members. As a young and inexperienced brother made his way to the front of the hall to give a talk, this man I knew would grasp his hand with a firm and friendly greeting: "Keep within the pages of the

Book, brother." And so, many a young man learned the invaluable lesson—the congregation was there, not to listen to him but to listen to the Bible.

This man I knew, he lived a life which gave glory to God:

*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14–16).*

**David Nightingale**

g l ea n ing s

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# Jonah

ISRAEL'S ENEMY at this time was the great Assyrian power in the north-east, whose capital was Nineveh.

## Jonah's Mission

When God told the prophet Jonah to go and warn the Ninevites of coming judgement, he tried to escape by boarding a ship to flee to the far west (1:3). However, a storm at sea prevented his escape. Thrown into the deep, Jonah was swallowed by a great fish which God had prepared. After three days the fish cast him out on to the shore (2:10).

Jonah was again instructed to go and warn the people of Nineveh (3:2). The people of that great city repented when they heard the message from the 'risen' prophet. So God too 'repented' (that is, He altered His intention to punish Nineveh—3:10).

The prophet's human reaction was to be displeased: he was angry that the people of Nineveh (Israel's enemy) were to be spared (4:11). God used an incident with a gourd plant, which was shading Jonah from the

sun, to show how His pity for Nineveh contrasted with the prophet's impatience.

## Jesus—Greater Than Jonah

Some 800 years later, Jesus of Nazareth preached to the people of Israel. But they put him to death! Jesus had said, however, that just as Jonah was raised from his 'grave' after three days, so he too would be raised (Matthew 12:40).

After his resurrection, the message Jesus had preached was to be extended to all nations (Mark 16:15–16). Those who would repent, believe and be baptized would be spared by God from eternal death. That message is still true for us today, no matter who we are.

## Norman Owen

*By kind permission of 'The Christadelphian'*



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

- ◆ Jonah 1:3—see Acts 10:32–43.
- ◆ Jonah 1:17—see Matthew 12:40–41.
- ◆ Jonah 3:10; 4:11—see 2 Peter 3:9.



# Rahab

*The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give lists of the ancestors of Jesus Christ. Only five women are mentioned. These were all very special individuals. In this series we're looking at them in turn—this month we consider Rahab.*

THE ACCOUNT of Rahab is a really lovely story of faith and works. This is, she not only had faith in God, she put that faith into action. The story is recorded in Joshua chapters 2 and 6.

## Into Jericho

The Israelites were poised to enter the Promised Land, after their escape from Egypt and their journey through the wilderness. Joshua their leader sent two men over the River Jordan to spy out Jericho, which would be their first city to conquer. The spies entered Rahab's house, built on the city walls, as it probably had an entrance close to the city gate. Many cities in Bible days had very wide walls, often having an inner and outer wall of brick or stone and the cavity filled with rubble. It was quite usual therefore for houses to be built 'on the city walls'.

Rahab is known in the Bible as 'Rahab the harlot'. She probably ran a sort of lodging house. The spies possibly thought they could be anonymous there until they could further search out the city. But the men had been spotted, and Rahab was challenged

by the king's messengers to bring out the spies. She whisked the spies up to her flat roof and hid them under the bundles of flax drying there. She then sent the king's men off in the wrong direction, so that she could save the spies' lives.



Rahab hiding the spies

She told the spies of her faith in Israel's God, and that she fully realised that Israel would conquer the country (see Joshua 2:8–13). This provides us with a wonderful statement of her faith, which without doubt showed the Jewish spies the depth of her belief in Israel's God. They agreed to save her and her family alive when they came to conquer Jericho, provided she tied a red cord in her window to help them identify her house, and she had to keep all her family in her house (2:17–20). She let the spies down through a window on the outside of the wall, and they safely returned to Joshua and the camp.

If Rahab was a practising harlot, or prostitute, that would almost certainly change if she had to bring her parents into her house on the wall, while they waited for Israel's soldiers to come and take the city. So she showed her faith and her works. From then on she was a totally reformed character.

## Suspense

After the people of Israel crossed the River Jordan and entered the Promised Land, they camped for several days, then at God's direction the armed men walked around Jericho's walls once a day for six days in complete silence. The priests carrying the holy golden box called 'the ark' followed the army, and the only sound was seven priests blowing trumpets. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times, and at the signal from Joshua they all shouted at the top of their voices, and the city walls fell down. The army could then go straight ahead and capture the city.

God's invisible knife cut through the walls either side of Rahab's house, so that hers was the only part of the wall left standing. The spies did not need the red cord in her window—only one house remained!

What a terrifying suspense must have built up inside the city. The inhabitants would have had no idea what this walking around

their walls would mean. You can imagine the tension growing each day as the army walked in silence around their walls, but I suspect the tension would be worse in Rahab's house, built on the wall itself. She must have been a very persuasive person, insisting that all her relatives never went down the stairs and out into the street.

Jericho was the first city to be conquered by Israel when they entered the Promised Land. God's law stated that the 'firstfruits' of people, animals and harvest were to be devoted to God (Deuteronomy 26:1–11), so Jericho was burnt to the ground (and by implication given to God) as the firstfruits of their new country.

## Safe

Joshua had told the two spies to go and rescue Rahab and her family, and to bring them to safety. She had kept her part of the agreement, and demonstrated once again her complete trust in Israel's God. She was adopted into the nation of Israel, and according to Matthew 1:5 she married Salmon—who was possibly one of the spies that went to her house. She is there in the line of David, and Jesus Christ, obviously having completely turned away from her previous way of life.

**David Simpson**



Jericho today

# Fear And Boldness

THERE ARE MANY profound and practical lessons we can learn from meditating upon the first pages of the Bible—the beginning of the book of Genesis. The origin of temptation, the shame and fear which follows sin, and how to deal with these problems are themes from the lives of Adam and Eve which are all brought out in the New Testament in the first letter of John. By increasing our understanding of these themes, we can learn much about what it means to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

## The First Temptation

Adam and Eve were the first people. Their creation is described in Genesis 1 and 2. They were created ‘very good’ (Genesis 1:31), but they were both capable (like all of us) of experiencing lust and temptation. They were given a test: the



serpent challenged Eve to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. “So when the woman

*saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Genesis 3:6).*

Eve was tempted by what she saw—the fruit is described as being ‘pleasant to the eyes’. But everything changed when she broke God’s law, and now all her descendants have an inbuilt tendency to ‘do our own thing’. We learn in John’s letter that this set of desires does not come from God but from our fallen human nature: “*For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).*

When we give in to the lust of the eyes and sin against God, we can experience fear. This began with Adam:

*And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:8–10).*

## Hiding From God

Elsewhere in the Bible we are told that the respectful fear of God is a positive and

necessary attribute (for example Exodus 20:20), but this is a different type of fear. Adam's fear caused him to hide from God: the very opposite of the relationship God desires to have with His children. When we know we have done wrong in God's sight, we can feel like hiding from Him—not praying to Him, not reading the Bible, and turning away from His ways. This is not the solution.

John provides the solution:

*But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, that when he appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2:27–28).*

This is not easy language. What is the 'anointing' he's speaking of? Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit was to be given to the disciples in order to teach them (John 14:26). Guided by the Spirit the New Testament was written, so the 'anointing' is a lovely description of the operation of the Word of God in the believer's life. If you 'abide' (if you live) in the teaching of the Holy Spirit, there will be no reason to be ashamed when Christ returns.

Adam was afraid at the 'coming' of God in the garden, because he did not abide in the teaching which God had given him to follow (to avoid the forbidden fruit). For those who abide in the teaching of God,

there will be no reason to be afraid at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ—even though there will be a judgement when he comes (2 Timothy 4:1).

## Perfect Love

Fear of Christ's return is damaging. How can the disciple tackle such a detrimental emotion? Again, John provides the solution:

*God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love (1 John 4:16–18).*

Adam did not have boldness when the Father questioned him; he was afraid. The solution to Adam's response to sin is 'perfect love'. Perfect love can only come about through abiding in God's teaching, thereby dwelling in God. The result of this is that fear will be cast out, and replaced by boldness.

**Stephen Blake**

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## 2. Text And Context

*The Bible can be a daunting book. In this series we look at what it is, and how to read it.*



### 1. Direct Statements

Direct statements in the Bible are statements that say exactly what they mean. The basis of the Gospel message can be easily described by putting together direct statements from the Bible. Here are some examples:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).*

*Hear O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4).*

*No one has seen God at any time (John 1:18).*

*There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).*

*No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven (John 3:13).*

*“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing*

*up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).*

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

*Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (James 1:13–15).*

All these verses have one thing in common, they are straightforward and say what they mean. They will help build a foundation for some of the parts of the Bible that are more difficult to understand.

So when you read the Bible, look out for direct statements. Perhaps write them down, and compare them with each other to build the bigger picture. But always make sure you understand the context.

### 2. Context

It is important to know where you are in a book, and who is speaking and about what. It is possible to turn many a statement into something else if it is taken out of context.



As a slightly silly example to explain the importance of context, let's look at the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:17): "If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!"

Out of context you could argue that Paul is saying that Christianity is pointless because Christ is dead. But if you read the context (from verses 12 to 20) you'll see that he is actually arguing strenuously that Christ is in fact risen from the dead. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20).

An obvious book where context is important is the book of Job. The book is written at least superficially in the form of a play. The second section of the book records the dialogue between Job and his three (dubious) friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

It is important to understand who is speaking when quoting verses from this book because in the last chapter we read:

*And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has" (Job 42:7).*

It is unsafe therefore to quote anything the three friends say in order to establish a Bible principle.

Another example where context is important is in the book of Isaiah. There is

a colourful description of someone called Lucifer in chapter 14:

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit (Isaiah 14:12-15).*

This passage is often used by those who believe that the devil is a fallen angel. However, the context shows Lucifer's true identity: "You will

*take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: 'How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!'" (v. 4).*



The name Lucifer means 'light-bringer', and historically it was the name for the planet Venus, which rises quickly to prominence in the morning sky then fades from view. This was an illustration of the rise and fall of Babylon.

In summary, two rules for reading the Bible—look out for direct statements, and always make sure you read the context.

**James Hardy**



## Why did Jesus have to die?

JESUS DIED BECAUSE he was killed by people who thought that he was a risk to their livelihood, status, and power. The Roman governor (Pontius Pilate) understood that Jesus' accusers were jealous of him (Mark 15:10).

Jesus had spent his life doing good, teaching, and healing people; showing them how to live in a way that pleases God. It is said of him, and of him alone, that he *"committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth"* (1 Peter 2:22). Yet he was crucified. So, the death of Jesus shows us what sin is like at its starkest and darkest. As the apostle Peter said accusingly: *"Him ... you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death"* (Acts 2:23).

Yet here is the remarkable thing. The full quotation reads: *"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death"* (Acts 2:23).

Jesus was the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. He came into the world

to save humankind from sin, and its inevitable outcome death. God loved the world so much that Jesus came to save those who believe in him and who follow him (John 3:16). Jesus was completely obedient to his Father's requests, choosing to lay down his life as a mark of his total obedience. The Bible says it was a case of the just (Jesus) giving his life for the unjust (all of mankind), so that he can bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18).

Because of what Jesus has done, by living a sinless life and then dying as a sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:26), we can—through belief and baptism, by being fully immersed in water—start to live as members of God's family, modelling our lives upon the example that Jesus has given us.

Jesus died to rescue us, but we must want to be rescued. He died to give us a new life, but we must be willing to stop living for ourselves and start living for God, and with God. That's the challenge!

## Jesus: The Good Shepherd

OF THE 25 words in this Wordsearch, 22 are from the words of Jesus in John 10:1-18.

Which are the three extra words?

One was irrelevant to shepherds in Bible times. The other two, while important to the shepherds in Israel, are not mentioned in this parable of Jesus.



DESTROY  
DOG  
DOOR  
FLEE  
FLOCK  
FOLD  
FOLLOW  
GOOD  
HEAR  
KILL  
LEADS  
LIFE  
NAME  
PASTURE  
ROBBER  
ROD  
SCATTERS  
SHEEP  
SHEPHERD  
STEAL  
STRANGER  
THIEF  
VOICE  
WOLF  
WOOL

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

(The Wordsearch uses the New King James version of the Bible. If you're using another version some words may not be quite the same.)

Anna Hart

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