

Glad Tidings

Of The Kingdom Of God



Featured **Articles**

Dealing With Stress (p. 3)

Living By Faith (p. 5)

The Word Became Flesh (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 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.

Table Of Contents

Dealing With
Stress



3

Living By
Faith



5

Who
Would Have
Thought It?



8

Silas—
A Faithful
Brother



9

Worshipping
Creation



12

The Word
Became Flesh



13

Your
Questions



18

Bible Reader's
Crossword



19

Glad Tidings Distributors for orders and payments

United Kingdom
Becky Collard, 7 Lindridge Close,
Redditch, Worcs. B98 0QJ, UK
Tel: +44 (0)7521 079 190 (24 hrs)
orders-uk@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Australia
Ruth Morgan, 41 Dimboola Road,
Warracknabeal, VIC 3393, Australia
gladtidingsaustralia@gmail.com

Canada
Vivian Thorp, 5377 Birdcage Walk,
Burlington, ON L7L 3K5, Canada
vivianthorp@bell.net

New Zealand
Jenny Luxmoore, 47 Woodfern Crescent,
Titirangi, Auckland 0604,
New Zealand
delux@xtra.co.nz

U.S.A.
Pat Hemingray, 1244 Pennsylvania
Avenue, Oakmont, PA 15139, USA
orders-usa@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Other Countries
Andrew Johnson, 22 Hazel Drive,
Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5RJ, UK
orders-int@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Editor
Chris Parkin, 7 Thorntree Lane, Newhall,
Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 0LP, UK
editor@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Publisher
The Glad Tidings Publishing Association
A registered charity—Number 248352

Dealing With Stress

ACCORDING TO THE World Health Organization, stress is the 'epidemic of the 21st Century'. We live in a stressful world—a large proportion of its population suffer with hunger, disease and war. But bizarrely, the country with the highest level of stress-related disease is the relatively peaceful and prosperous United States. What is this phenomenon we call stress, and why is it so prevalent today?

Our bodies are marvellous things, brilliantly equipped for life. One of the mechanisms we have for dealing with difficult situations is called the 'fight or flight reaction'. When we're in danger, the body releases a hormone called adrenaline which boosts its systems and enables it to respond efficiently. For example, you're out walking and you come across a bear and you've never run so fast—that's adrenaline at work.



The body is designed for short bursts of adrenaline which dissipate when the danger is over. The problem with so

many people's lives in the modern world is that they contain low-level, ongoing stressors. When the danger is not a bear which you can run away from, but an over-complicated life or a job that causes anxiety or the niggling dread of what the world is coming to, the body experiences a long-term 'fight or flight' response which can develop into an ongoing condition. This is stress.

Severe stress can lead to physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, often called 'burn-out'. But more than this, medical research estimates that as much as 90 percent of illness and disease is stress-related—that is, it is caused (directly or indirectly) or exacerbated by stress.

There are many remedies available for this debilitating condition—practising mindfulness, getting more exercise, downshifting to a less demanding lifestyle... but this is a Bible magazine, so here are a couple of remedies which come as part of life as a follower of Christ.

Get Things in Perspective

Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And

which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:25–33).

This is the teaching of Jesus Christ. Maybe life was simpler in those days—they didn't have mortgages and credit cards and phones and climate change. But the principle is the same: it's about getting your life into perspective. The follower of Christ lives by faith. They're looking beyond themselves, at the bigger picture. *'We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal' (2 Corinthians 4:18).* Believers have their sight set on the coming Kingdom of God, and in preparation for that they're focused on trying to make His ways and His will a reality in their lives here and now. When life is in its correct perspective, the anxieties of the 'here and now' will diminish.

Take Problems to God

Do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6–7).

This advice was given by the Apostle Paul to the Christians in Philippi. The account of the formation of the congregation there is in Acts 16. It was a city steeped in Greek culture and religion. From the accounts in Acts and hints in Paul's letter it seems that the new Christian converts were deeply

unpopular and their lives were difficult. But look at the remedy Paul prescribes.

'Do not be anxious.' You and I know that can be easier said than done. But those aren't empty words—he tells us how it's done. Tell God about it in prayer; acknowledge your dependence on Him; be sure to ask with thanksgiving, remembering all His blessings; tell Him about your anxiety, and ask Him to deal with it. Then you can stop worrying about it.

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved (Psalm 55:22).

He may take the problem away, or He may not. With hindsight, it seems that God often deals with the causes of His children's fears and anxieties in surprising ways. It's often the case that He provides the problems in the first place, and uses them for His children's education (Romans 8:28). But the important thing is to lay it before Him in faith. They say a problem shared is a problem halved: a problem shared with God will be very much smaller!

Those are just two Bible remedies for the modern epidemic of stress. We were designed by God, and so it should be no surprise that He knows how we can live our best life.



Living By Faith

IT IS COMFORTING to know that in my life I have tried to walk with God. Along with the prophet Jeremiah, there is a fundamental fact of life that has guided me. It is this:

I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O LORD, but in justice; not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing (Jeremiah 10:23–24).

God corrects those who become His children by faith—but always in His gracious love, as my life testifies. God Himself says this:

Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practises steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD (Jeremiah 9:23–24).

All who are His by faith will not hesitate to proclaim this. Through the Lord Jesus Christ, He is the life-long companion of the way. He will never fail, He will always be there, especially in the most difficult times.

Where does Faith Come From?

It is by faith that those who belong to Jesus Christ have to learn to live out their lives, trusting that the Lord is with them in all the situations that have to be faced. It

means that each experience is committed to Him in prayer, each journey undertaken looking for God's hand at work in their lives, whether actual or spiritual.



There are some key principles:

- *'Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ' (Romans 10:17).* The Bible should be our guide throughout our life. Often the basic principles laid down in the Bible undergird the journey of life, and enable faith's decisions to be made.
- There is comfort available there in the words themselves. For example: *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God' (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).*

At this point I would simply remind you that the Greek word that is here translated 'to comfort' means 'to come alongside with strength'.

■ There is wonderful assurance: *'The angel of the LORD encamps round those who fear him, and delivers them'* (Psalm 34:7).

■ *'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'* (Matthew 4:7). The Lord cares for his people. It is so easy to take this fact for granted, that sometimes we may just put ourselves in a situation where he will not! For example—if we habitually break the speed limit when we're driving, then it should not surprise us if we have an accident.



■ *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'* (Matthew 4:4). Surely it is vital that daily we keep in touch with the Bible, which contains every word which God has spoken to us. These are the things which the Father most wants His children to know.

■ Finally, the hope of the Kingdom of God is always there shining brightly ahead: *'Truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD'* (Numbers 14:21).

Lives of Faith

I think of people whose lives I have been privileged to have touched, and whose memories I hold. With many of them I

shared a common faith and a common journey.

As a youngster I stood with my parents singing hymns during the service. At the time it was a welcome relief from the boredom of having to sit still. Now in older age, I can still hear the singing, see in my mind's eye various friends, 'uncles and aunts' in their places amid the congregation. These have become precious living memories. Most, of course, have completed their pilgrimage and now sleep in Christ, ranked amongst the living saints of old. As I sing those same hymns today, the memories flood back:

*O render thanks to God above,
The Fountain of eternal love,
Whose mercy firm through ages past
Has stood, and shall for ever last*

(Hymn 114, Christadelphian Hymn book).

There was one uncle whose false teeth rattled in his head as he sang with great gusto. He was once asked whether he sang the tune, tenor, bass, or alto. He replied that he sang horribly. But certainly his heartfelt praise would be acceptable to the Father.

This man had worked as a 'ganger' on the railways. Before his conversion he had been through the trenches in the First World War. He and his wife were poor, but there was no doubting their appreciation of the riches they had in Jesus Christ, the hope of everlasting life and the love they had received from their heavenly Father.

And his sense of humour never wavered. On one occasion he greeted me with a slip of paper about 15 centimetres long. He said, "You put your toe on one end and I'll

put mine on the other, and you won't be able to touch me". Of course he was right: if the paper was slipped under a closed door with him on one side and me on the other.

There is an important message here. There is no closed door, no barrier which can prevent us reaching out to God, by faith; and no barrier which can prevent Him reaching us—unless it is that we have closed the door of our hearts and minds.



Then my uncle's hand would slip into his pocket and he'd give me a mint and hiss, "Don't tell your Mam!"

Saints and Faithful Brothers

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers at Colosse he addressed them in this way:

To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father (Colossians 1:2).

'Saints' are not of the plaster statue variety, nor are they remote figures in heaven, but ordinary everyday living believers in their day and generation. 'Faithful brothers' (and of course sisters) are the same people, but the stress is on those who remain faithful in life to their calling.

Incidentally, that is the way Christadelphians refer to themselves—it's a Greek word that means 'brothers in Christ'.

Saints and faithful brothers never have been especially numerous. But if we have been baptised into Christ and joined their pilgrimage in the hope of life, we can acknowledge those Colossians and others in the First Century as brothers and sisters. They were and are our companions of the way.

And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect (Hebrews 11:39–40).

So it is, that down the ages the people of faith have come and gone, and now having died they rest in hope, awaiting the resurrection from the dead at the coming of the Lord Jesus to set up God's Kingdom upon the earth. We too in our day have the opportunity of sharing their resurrection hope, and in God's good time sharing in that glorious age to come. Then I look forward by God's grace to seeing again some of those I have known and loved, as well as meeting those I have only known in the pages of the Bible. I believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

David Nightingale

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

e-mail editor@gladtidingsmagazine.org

or connect with us via our web site
gladtidingsmagazine.org

or write to the Editor—address inside front cover

Who Would Have Thought It?

KESWICK is a small town in England's beautiful Lake District. The area is rich in graphite, and the world's first pencil was made there. Keswick was the home of the world-renowned Derwent pencil factory. This factory played an unexpected role in the Second World War: a select few workers (bound to secrecy under the Official Secrets Act) made pencils concealing secret tissue paper maps and tiny compasses, which were issued to RAF pilots as navigation aids should they find themselves in enemy territory. It's likely that many lives were saved by these pencils. They're so intricate and their manufacture was so secret that we're not sure now how they were made!

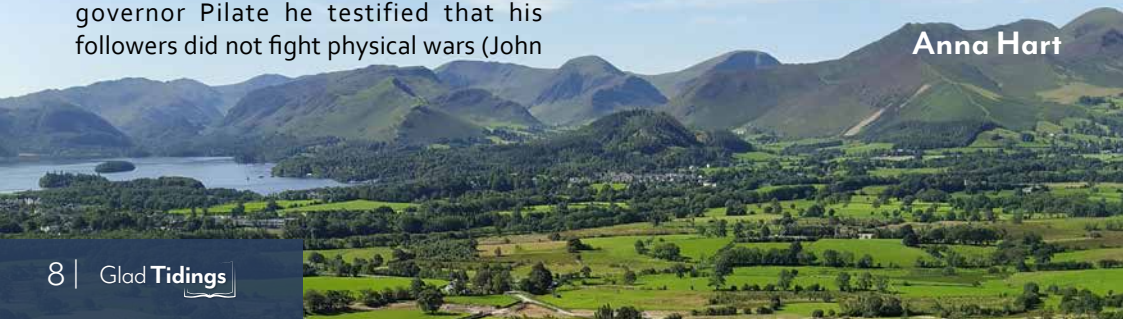
Israel is a small country at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. Bethlehem was small, but the birthplace of Jesus Christ (Matthew 2:1–6). Nazareth, where he grew up, was looked down on by his contemporaries (John 1:46). But Jesus turned the course of history. Details of his life and death are no secret, because Bibles are now available in many languages in most parts of the world. While Israel was not at war during the Lord's life on earth, it was in subjection to the Romans. However, when Jesus was on trial before the Roman governor Pilate he testified that his followers did not fight physical wars (John

18:36). Nonetheless Jesus won the hardest and most important war of all time—the battle against sin (John 16:33, Hebrews 9:26). He was tempted just like us but never, ever, did anything wrong (Hebrews 4:15). The Bible refers to this phenomenal achievement as '*destroying the devil*' (Hebrews 2:14). We are utterly incapable of doing anything like this.

As a result of Jesus Christ's supreme conquest we are offered eternal life in God's Kingdom. So his actions offer life to anyone prepared to follow him. And this is not just 70 or 50 years of life—it is life for evermore. Countless people have been and will be truly saved by him.

It is a mystery how the wartime pencils were made, and most of the pilots will by now have died. For centuries it was a mystery precisely how God would bring salvation to this world of trouble. This has now been revealed (Romans 16:25–27) in the work of Jesus who is now alive for ever (Romans 6:9). There are many marvellous and quirky things in the world. We should not only marvel but we should respond positively to God's offer to us of eternal life through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Anna Hart



Silas—A Faithful Brother

DURING MONUMENTAL moments of Bible history, prominent characters frequently took centre-stage. Sometimes we can forget that they weren't the only ones on the stage—a supporting cast was also present. For example, who was it who said they would not deny Jesus even if they had to die with him? If you answered "Peter" you'd be correct. However, it's easy to overlook the fact that *'all the disciples said the same'* (Matthew 26:35). As a further example, who was it who was not allowed into the Promised Land for disobeying God? If you answered "Moses", again you'd be correct. However, perhaps because it was Moses who struck the rock it can escape our attention that Aaron was equally culpable (Numbers 20:12, 24).

Conversely, Silas was a man who didn't have a 'starring role' in the phenomenal growth of the early church, in comparison with his renowned co-worker the Apostle Paul, but he was held in high regard by him and made a telling contribution to the work.

Tension in the Brotherhood

One of the most contentious issues facing the early disciples of Jesus was whether it was still necessary to observe the Law



of Moses. If you are not a Jew you will not know what it's like to be required to observe the Law, and you may find it difficult to appreciate the gravity of this controversy. However, when we take a different perspective from our own, the matter becomes a lot clearer to us.

The first Christians were Jews who had been taught from an early age the absolute necessity of keeping the Law of Moses; they had striven to keep this Law religiously (literally!) for their entire lives. It therefore involved a radical upheaval of their mindset to embrace the fact that observance of the Law was no longer required when they became followers of Christ. Understandably, certain disciples found this transition difficult and needed strong encouragement to choose Christ over the Law (these are central themes in New Testament letters such as those to the Hebrews, Galatians and Colossians). This is the essential context to the section of Acts in which we are first introduced to Silas.

Some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1).

Circumcision of men was commanded in the Law (Leviticus 12:3). There were Jewish disciples of Jesus who argued that if Gentiles wanted to become disciples, they had to adopt the Jewish Law.

The Jerusalem Council

When such a matter as salvation in Jesus Christ is concerned, passions will run high. But such erroneous teaching could not remain unchallenged. This predicament required men with wisdom, experience and assertiveness. A council was called in Jerusalem, where *'the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter'* (Acts 15:6). After much debate and scriptural reasoning, a practical course of action was decided upon in the form of written correspondence.

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings..." (vs. 22–23).

Judas and Silas were entrusted with the important work of delivering the letter to the Gentile congregations. Having faithfully delivered the letter to the brothers and sisters, they went beyond what was required of them in order to edify the recipients of the letter: *'And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words'* (v. 32).

Missionary Work

Silas was chosen by Paul to accompany him in the vitally important work of preaching the Gospel in places such as Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. Who was it who prayed and sang praises to God whilst in prison? If you answered "Paul", you'd be correct, but it was also Silas (Acts 16:25). Who was it whose preaching in Thessalonica persuaded *'a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women'* (Acts 17:4)? Or in Berea, who was it who evangelised *'not a few*



Greek women of high standing as well as men' (v. 12)? Again, if you answered "Paul" to these questions you'd be correct—but it was Silas too.

Silvanus

The last mention of Silas in the Bible is when he is left with Timothy in Corinth (Acts 18:1–5). However, a brother named Silvanus is mentioned four times, and he is almost certainly the same person.

'For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes' (2 Corinthians 1:19).

We have seen that Paul, Silas and Timothy were preaching together in Corinth (Acts 18). Either Silvanus was present with them but was not mentioned in Acts, or could it be that Silvanus and Silas were the same person?

If you were asked the question; “Who were the Letters to the Thessalonians from?” you might answer “the Apostle Paul”. This is correct, but they were also from Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1). As we have seen, Silas was with Paul when he preached



in Thessalonica, so this would make perfect sense as to why the letters to the Thessalonians were also from him.

When mentioned alongside Judas or Paul, Silas is never referred to first—it is always ‘Judas and Silas’ or ‘Paul and Silas’. However, on the three occasions in Acts when Silas is mentioned alongside Timothy, his name is referred to first (Acts 17:14–15, 18:5). This is interesting because on the three occasions Silvanus is mentioned alongside Paul and Timothy, he is referred to after Paul but before Timothy (2 Corinthians 1:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1). If this is not deliberate

it certainly strikes me as a highly unlikely coincidence.

Finally, and perhaps most persuasively, linguistic experts say that Silvanus and Silas are Latin names that share the same ‘root word’ (the word for ‘wood’). ‘Silas’ is probably the shortened form of ‘Silvanus’, just as ‘Rob’ is the shortened form of ‘Robert’.

The accounts of the First Century church in Acts and the letters of the New Testament combine to present a cohesive and consistent picture. Many characters play their part. Silas was a prominent disciple, a prophet and an evangelist. The Apostle Peter gives us an understated yet beautiful description of this man’s character:

By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it (1 Peter 5:12).

What better commendation could any of us hope for in this present life?

Stephen Blake

Visit us online for:

- topical blogs
- magazine subscriptions
- previous editions
- searchable articles
- video content
- links to other material

www.gladtidingsmagazine.org

[Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

click or search

‘Glad Tidings Magazine’

Worshipping Creation



I LOVE TO WATCH nature programmes on TV. Over recent years advances in film technology have enabled us to see the lives of plants and animals with incredible detail and beauty. But I have to admit, it's usually an experience which leaves me not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

The other day I watched a documentary about dragonflies. They are amazing creatures on so many levels, for instance the way they fly. Thanks to their four independently operated superbly engineered wings they can fly forwards, backwards, sideways, straight up, straight down, hover dead still in the strongest wind, and even glide.

The narrator told me that they developed this phenomenal agility all by themselves.

"Bravo!" I cried, "What clever little chaps! How ever did they manage that?" The answer, of course, is that despite the theories nobody really has much of an idea.

You see, to me it seems massively more logical to accept that the dragonflies themselves did not develop their ability to fly—they were simply designed that way.

I am put in mind of what the Apostle Paul said about people of his day:

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen (Romans 1:25).

When we ignore the existence of God and attribute to an insect or animal or plant the power to perform miraculous feats of evolution, are we not '*worshipping the creature rather than the Creator*'?

From our standpoint in the scientifically enlightened 21st Century we look back at the religions of past ages with bewildered amusement—how could they have worshipped beetles and birds and animals as gods? I believe that we are heading for a new age, which will be much more enlightened than this one. Maybe in the Kingdom of God, when the world's population is instructed in God's ways (Isaiah 2:1–4), they will keep copies of our nature programmes in the archives, and watch them with the same bewildered amusement!

Doug Potts

The Word Became Flesh

IN THE BEGINNING was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:1–5).

John's Gospel opens with echoes of the creation of the world itself. The first chapter of Genesis tells us how all things were called into being by the commands of God. And so *'By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host' (Psalm 33:6).*

God's Word was manifested powerfully throughout succeeding history, by means of His angels and prophets, and shone in the darkness of the world, calling people to come out and come to the light. Then, at length and in God's good time, something wonderful happened:

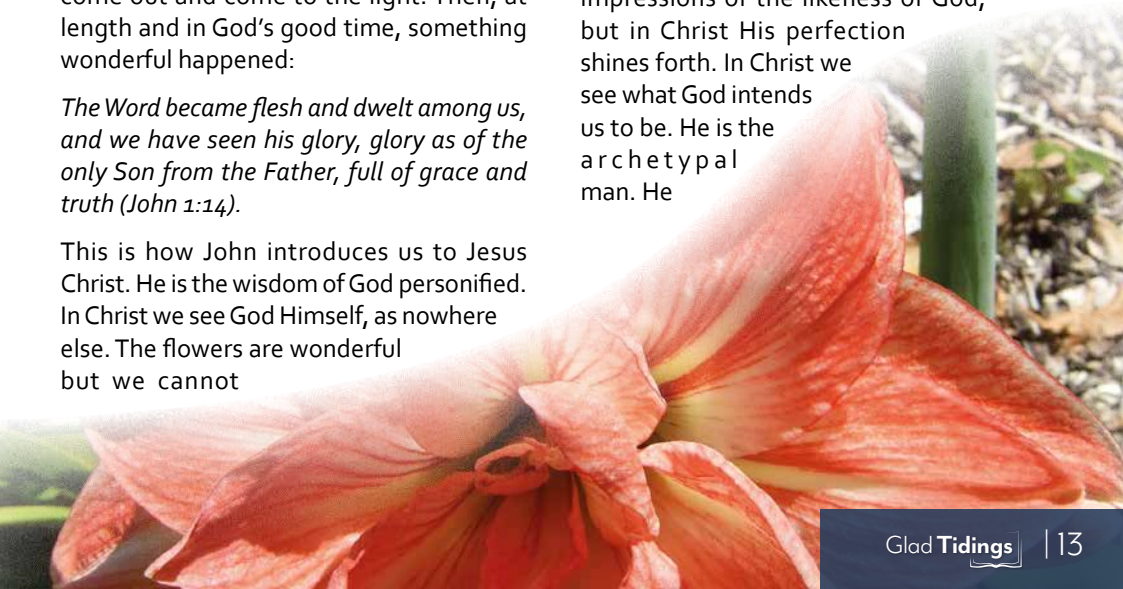
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

This is how John introduces us to Jesus Christ. He is the wisdom of God personified. In Christ we see God Himself, as nowhere else. The flowers are wonderful but we cannot

find God there. The sky has a mysterious beauty but we cannot find God there. I hear the thunder but that is not God in His perfection. But when I see the man from Nazareth, I know that God has come close to my consciousness. I do not say that God has come nearer to us in Jesus Christ – He is ever near us – I say He has come nearer to our consciousness.

Through the Word become flesh, God is made known in a unique way. Jesus Christ is the unveiling of God's goodness and the awfulness of His truth. The unfolding of the divine holiness in human form. The Word became flesh, and dwelt among the Galilean fishermen, and they beheld the glory of God.

When He created humans God said, *'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' (Genesis 1:26).* You and I are but imperfect impressions of the likeness of God, but in Christ His perfection shines forth. In Christ we see what God intends us to be. He is the archetypal man. He



was born as one of us. The Apostle John saw him, touched him, heard him speak, and declared that he had seen the glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Full of the beauty of holiness.

Full of Grace

When we come to know Jesus, we know that God is vitally interested in our plight. We know that God is susceptible to the feeling of our pain and our bruises and our weakness. We know that God cares about our needs. The light of heaven breaks upon the darkness of earth.



Jesus felt all the agony of the widow of Nain, and raised her son back to life (Luke 7:11–17). He looked on the man who had lain for 38 withered years, and made him stand up (John 5:1–17). The woman with the discharge of blood—emaciated, lonely, ostracised—found freedom and fellowship because she found him (Matthew 9:20–22). Those whose hearts were burdened by sin found forgiveness and restoration. Blind eyes were opened, and deaf ears were unstopped. The

perishing received the prospect of eternal life.

'Grace' means 'undeserved favour', and in Jesus Christ God's abundant grace is fully made known.

Full of Truth

In John chapter 2 we see Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem (vs. 13–22). The religious rulers had turned the House of God into a marketplace. The poor were being fleeced and the rich were being swindled. The place of prayer had become a den of robbers. The heart of Jesus was aflame with indignation. He made a whip of cords and drove them out of the temple. With clean windswept courage he did his Father's work—the crooks were routed and no man dared stand up to him.

When he spoke, people knew that it was urgent, imperative, categorical. '*Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*' (Luke 13:3). '*Everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart*' (Matthew 5:28). His word scorches the hypocrites and gives no comfort to the self-righteous. By his words we are unmasked—veils are rent, double faces are exposed. Our essential characters are revealed. We search ourselves in the light of the teaching of the Son of God, and we see that we are in desperate need of forgiveness.

We need grace and we need truth, and it would not be right to deceive us about ourselves. Jesus lays the measurement of God upon us. He shows us that we are sinners, and he shows us that God loves us nonetheless.



We Have Seen His Glory

The time came for the Lord to set his face towards Jerusalem, for the final Passover on which he knew he must die. With his disciples Peter, James and John he ascended a mountain to pray (Luke 9:28–36). It was preparation for the ordeal which lay ahead. He was strengthened by the very presence of two of his predecessors, those Old Testament giants of faith Moses and Elijah.

'And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white' (v. 29). Do you think that this was the shining upon him of light from heaven, or was it not rather the glory of his perfection shining out from himself? It was as though for a moment the Kingdom of God had come. For a moment, the glory of God in Jesus broke through the limitations of flesh and was manifested in all its splendour. The record says that his disciples *'saw his glory'* (v. 32).

Before the World Existed

As the time of his sacrifice approached, he spoke some enigmatic words to his Father in prayer: *'And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that*

I had with you before the world existed' (John 17:5). Jesus did not exist before his birth, so what did he mean? He said that he had the divine glory before he was born. This should be no surprise. God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9–10). The Apostle says to his faithful brothers and sisters that God *'chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him' (Ephesians 1:4).* From the beginning God chose His people, and He glorified His Son.

God said through the prophet, *'Truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD' (Numbers 14:21).* Was not this the glory which Christ had with his Father before the world existed?

Lamenting the faithlessness of the people, John quotes the prophet Isaiah: *"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them." Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him' (John 12:40–41).*

John is quoting Isaiah chapter 6, and it is in this very chapter that the prophet describes the vision he had by which he was called to

begin his prophetic work. *'In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple'* (v. 1). Isaiah was overawed: *'And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"'* (v. 5). He saw a vision of a King reigning in righteousness. He returned to the theme later in his prophecy: *'Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar'* (33:17). Was it the glory of God's Son as yet unborn that was revealed to Isaiah, as he began his long prophetic ministry in which he saw so many things concerning the Messiah's life, death and glory?

So then we retrace our steps to John 17. As Jesus was prepared for the road to Jerusalem by his glorification on the mountain, now the evening before the Passover had arrived he steeled himself for his ordeal. *'Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God'* (Hebrews 12:2). He was praying to experience the assurance of the glory which was his from the beginning.

Was his prayer answered?

Manifesting God

In the Garden of Gethsemane, as he contemplated his forthcoming ordeal, the Lord was full of sorrow to the point of sweating blood (Luke 22:44)—yet a little while later, in the presence of the very things he had dreaded, he was strong, majestic, fearless. In the great drama of

his various trials, he was the only one who was assured and composed! What had happened? I do not pretend to know—I feel my way and ask you to notice it.



In the prophet Isaiah's great prophecy about the suffering of the Messiah, he says, *'Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied'* (Isaiah 53:11). We read in the Gospels that during his trial in Gethsemane, an angel appeared and strengthened him (Luke 22:43). With what did the angel strengthen him? Did he receive a manifestation of the glory he had with his Father before the world was? It was that he had sought.

The sacrifice of the cross was the deed from which issued the fullest and noblest manifestation of God's glory in Jesus Christ. These are the Apostle Paul's majestic words:

Being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:8–9).



In another place Paul gives us an interpretation of that manifestation: *'In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily'* (Colossians 2:9). Let us be careful not to underestimate the meaning of these words. That word 'deity' is the Greek word 'deitas'. It is a deep and profound word which the Greeks used to express the essence of God. It is the only time the word is used in the Bible. You can find divinity all through nature. Every blade of grass and every flower bears the hallmark of its divine Creator, and therefore has some mark of divinity in it. But you cannot say that the fullness of the Deity is to be found in any of these things.

Paul says that all the fullness of the Deity dwells in Christ. And when he uses the word 'bodily', he does not mean just wholly. That's how we use it sometimes: we say for example that something went over the cliff bodily—we mean it went over in one whole. Paul does not mean that here. 'Bodily' here means 'in a body'.

The word 'fullness' is significant. It is the word 'pleroma' and was a favourite word of the Gnostic heretics of the First Century—that is, the Gnostic philosophers who infiltrated the community of Christians and

tried to reinterpret Bible truth according to their philosophical theories. They said that the fullness of God had its manifestation in hundreds of ways and the sum total of them conceived together was the 'pleroma'. It seems that Gnostic philosophy was causing problems in Colosse, and Paul tackles it from various angles in this letter. Here he takes the Gnostics' word 'pleroma' and uses it to proclaim that only in the glorified Jesus Christ is to be found the true fullness of the Deity.

Isaiah saw it, and said *'Woe is me!'* (Isaiah 6:5). Paul saw it and was blinded (Acts 9:3–8). John saw it and fell as one dead (Revelation 1:17).

This is not an interpretation of Paul's words—I have merely repeated his description of the glorified Son of God. *'In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.'* It is the fullest realisation of the glory which he had with God from the foundation of the world—and is now manifest in the man who sits at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:13), shortly to be manifest to the world when he returns in glory (Mark 8:38).

Dennis Gillett

GB What is the unforgivable sin, and how do I know if I've committed it?

Ed LET'S START WITH two basic Bible principles: first, we're all sinners and undeserving of God's grace; second, there's no sin that's so big God cannot forgive it. *'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3:23–24).*

When you're baptised as a follower of Christ, you are 'justified'—that is, made righteous. It's not your own righteousness, it's Christ's righteousness that's attributed to you. *'God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Romans 5:8–9).*

If there was a limit to the righteousness of Christ or the mercy of God, there might be a limit to the amount of forgiveness we could expect—but there isn't.

So what does the Apostle John mean when he writes, *'If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him*

life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death' (1 John 5:16–17). What is 'sin that leads to death'?

A key to the answer is God's instruction to the prophet Jeremiah: *'As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you. Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?... they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger' (Jeremiah 7:16–18).*

There was no point Jeremiah praying for God to forgive the people, because they didn't want to be forgiven.

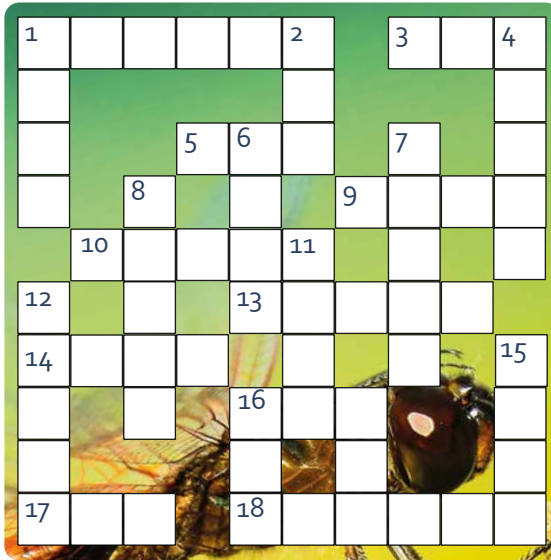
There's only one sin that can't be forgiven—that is the sin for which we don't ask forgiveness. Maybe we're too proud to repent, or maybe we think we're too bad for God to forgive, or maybe there's another reason. But the Bible principle stands true:

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9).

Across

Down

- 1 God separated the waters below and above the expanse on this day (Genesis 1:8)
- 3 Adam was told he could do this of every tree in the garden except one (Genesis 2:16)
- 5 God called the light this (Genesis 1:5)
- 9 This tree was in the midst of the garden (Genesis 2:9)
- 10 This flowed out of Eden to water the garden (Genesis 2:10)
- 13 God created this on the first day (Genesis 1:3)
- 14 Created (Genesis 1:25)
- 16 To enquire (Genesis 32:29)
- 17 The first woman (Genesis 3:20)
- 18 God said that he would put this between the serpent and the woman (Genesis 3:15)



- 1 The creatures which swam were to fill these (Genesis 1:22)
- 2 God called this land Earth (Genesis 1:10)
- 4 God made these on the third day (Genesis 1:11)
- 6 The first man to be murdered (Genesis 4:8)
- 7 God made the lesser light to rule this (Genesis 1:16)
- 8 God made these on the fifth day (Genesis 1:20)
- 11 God took one of these of Adam to create Eve (Genesis 2:21)
- 12 God created man in that of Himself (Genesis 1:27)
- 15 God blessed the seventh day and made it this (Genesis 2:3)
- 16 Adam and Eve did this to the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:6)

(These clues use the English Standard Version of the Bible. If you're using another version some words may not be quite the same.)

Colin Jannaway

Free Offer

If you would like to receive the Glad Tidings magazine FREE for 6 months—send your name and address to one of the addresses below. Or go to our website at: www.gladtidingsmagazine.org/free-magazines

Name

Address

Postcode

Country



Addresses for the Free Offer:

In the UK write to: FREEPOST GLADTIDINGS
(orders-uk@gladtidingsmagazine.org)

In Africa and Europe write to: Anne Bayley, 17
Chesterton Close, Hunt End, Redditch B97 5XS, UK

In other countries, to: Andrew Johnson, 22 Hazel
Drive, Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5RJ, UK
(orders-int@gladtidingsmagazine.org)

Contact Details:

To find out about your nearest Christadelphian meeting, or to request free Bible literature or a correspondence course, please write to the address nearest you.

United Kingdom

FREEPOST GLADTIDINGS
orders-uk@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Africa & Europe

Christadelphian Bible Mission,
404 Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham
B28 8SZ, UK
requests@cbm.org.uk

The Americas

CBMA, 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley,
CA 93065, USA
cbma.treasurer@gmail.com

Caribbean

CBMC, Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280,
101 Avenue, Surrey, BC, Canada V3R 0J7
philsnobelen@shaw.ca

India

T Galbraith, GPO Box 159, Hyderabad,
500001, India
tim@galbraithmail.com

South and East Asia

ACBM, PO Box 152 Cobbitty NSW,
Australia 2570
galway280@gmail.com

Picture Credits:

- p. 1: *istock.com/dragana991*
p. 3: *Cephas, CC BY-SA 3.0*
p. 4: *Karmen at Lithuanian Wikipedia (public domain)*
p. 6: *www.Pixel.la Free Stock Photos, CCo*
p. 9: *Eustache Le Sueur (public domain)*
ps. 10–11: *Giovanni Paolo Panini (public domain)*
p. 12: *Boris Smokrovic borisworkshop, CCo*
ps. 13, 17: *Terry Cannon*
p. 14: *James Tissot (public domain)*
p. 16: *Mihály Munkácsy (public domain)*

www.facebook.com/GladTidingsMagazine/
YouTube: search 'Glad Tidings Magazine'

Unless otherwise indicated all scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, Anglicised English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.