



# Truth To Wonder

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# Contents

|  |
|--|
| Power In The Tongue - pg 3   |
| Countless Blessings Of Living For Christ Alone - pg 4                  |
| Runic Revelations - pg 5   |
| Erasing Disappointment - pg 6  |
| For The Joy Set Before Him - pg 8                                      |
| Finishing Well - pg 9  |
| Clarity Of Vision - pg 11  |
| Wealth Reallocated - pg 12   |
| The Problem Of Pain - pg 14  |
| No Blind Faith Required - pg 15  |
| The Impact Of One Life - pg 16   |
| The Glory Of The Gospel Foreshadowed - pg 17                           |
| What Blessed Worship Looks Like - pg 18                                |
| A Body Of Evidence - pg 19   |
| Wine At Communion? - pg 20   |
| Lessons From The Shunamite Woman - Part Three - pg 21                  |
| Why Do Birds Suddenly Appear... - pg 23                                |
| Why Was English The Language Chosen For The Kings James Bible? - pg 24 |
| A Garden Of Sorrows - pg 25  |
| Rainbow Of Truth - pg 28   |
| Resource Corner - pg 29  |

## Power In The Tongue

We all have our favourite verses and passages of the Holy Bible. One of mine is when our risen Lord Jesus comforts the grief-stricken Mary Magdalene. Her eyes are filled with tears over the thought that the body of her Lord has been taken away. To break the sorrow and dry the tears of her grief, Christ simply utters her name as He says, "Mary". How my heart both breaks and is elated in a single moment, as I consider what she would've felt in that astonishing moment. Can you imagine the amazement, the shock, the extreme joy and the breathless relief that would've flood Mary's heart when she heard the voice of her Master! That voice that she likely thought she would not hear again in her mortal flesh, was speaking her name lovingly just as she'd known before.



There is great power in the tongue, power of life and death as we read in Proverbs 18:21. A person's spirit can be crushed by a cruel word, or it can be given life and hope with a loving and tender word. I shudder to think of how many potentially wonderful lives have been shattered by a vicious and evil word spoken against them. Each life so grievously affected stirs the just wrath of God, for it destroys a life made in His image and likeness.

I came across an account of one such life that threatened to be lost to the restless winds of evil. By the grace and mercy of God however, the words of life that are the Gospel of Jesus Christ, delivered that life from certain destruction. That life was of a young lady in America. She had risen to prominence in the world of pornography, and had abused her body greatly for many years. She had been raised by an alcoholic mother who taught her that her worth laid in her body, and that by using her body she could have a better life. So that young girl grew up and placed herself in the adult film world, where she quickly rose in popularity.

After several years lost in a world of debauchery and heavy drug use, the young lady was truly lost in a pit of self-loathing and utter despair. She had looked for a way to silence the wounds of her childhood by following the evil words of her alcoholic mother. She didn't value her life or her body, and so she allowed herself to become a lusted after plaything. In this world, she gave up her real name and became a performer, and so her life spiralled further and further into the misery of deep sin. She became a producer in the adult film world, using her prominence and wealth to further what she thought would be her success. Yet as the power and wealth accumulated, so did the drug abuse and misery of the soul.

By the grace of God, her eyes were opened to her self-destructive ways, and she left that evil world as she was unable to bear the weight of her conscience anymore. Still lost in her miseries of sin, she began to go to a local church where she heard the good news of the Gospel. Finally, she was hearing words of power, and of love that offered to give her a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7), after so many years of confusion and self-loathing. These were the words of life that Peter clung to (John 6:68), and that Mary Magdalene held with deepest love and thankfulness. At long last, that poor woman heard her real name being used again with love and compassion. Like Mary Magdalene, all she had known was an existence as a plaything for others. Who she is as person was an irrelevance. She was an object of physical desire and that was all she was. Yet now, in Christ Jesus, she was being seen for who she was again. And as she saw that He did not turn her away despite all her sins, she found her souls rest at last. She heard her true name being called with power and love, just as Mary did that Easter morning, and her pains and sorrows were healed by the same Saviour.

That young lady went on to become a pastor's wife, and still humbly serves her Saviour today. She now shares her incredible testimony with thousands across the USA. Her shame has been conquered by His love, a love that showed its strength when He rose in triumph that blessed Easter Sunday morning.

There truly is power of life and death in the tongue. That power must be read correctly and rightly divided (2 Timothy 2:15), for history has proven repeatedly that lives can be easily destroyed by a careless word. You

may have known this yourself, how a person's thoughtless comment has broken you deeply, unbeknownst to them. Yet have hope my friend, for there is an even greater power of eternal life that springs forth from the throne of Christ Jesus. It is a certain and tender calling of your name from He who sits upon that mighty throne. Those words of the King of kings calling you by name to know His peace and provision forever. So, listen out for His call and do not push it away when it comes. It is the call that will set you free forever. Amen.

## Countless Blessings Of Living For Christ Alone

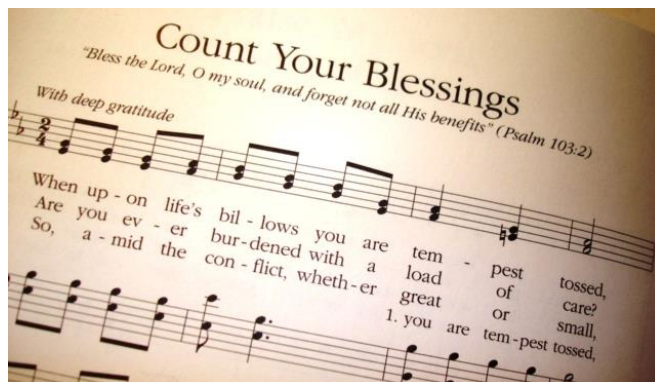
Living in someone's shadow is a hard and heavy life. The great impact a parent, sibling or relative makes upon the world can stir up a child to look to emulate those achievements. Oftentimes, they will look to directly follow that impressive person's life, not trusting that they themselves are a unique individual with talents and gifts given to them to serve the Lord. I have known this well, as when I joined secondary school, my older brother was in Year 11. He was a very accomplished student and highly regarded by the school staff. So, when I entered Year 7, I was greeted by each teacher with, "Oh your David's brother are you? I hope you're as good as him!" My new form tutor made me feel at great ease (I say sarcastically) when on my induction day he looked me in the eye and said, "I pulled a lot of strings to get you in my class. You'd better not disappoint." Quite the thing to hear on your first day at 'big school'!

So, after several days of hearing the same thing from every new teacher, I felt like I was going to be forever under my brother's shadow. Yet an unexpected tonic came my way from the head of the P.E department. I remember it distinctly. I was sat on a gym bench waiting for my turn on the badminton court, when the physically imposing P.E teacher walked up to me. He proceeded to sit down next to me and began what I thought was going to be another statement of how I'd better live up to my brother's standards. Instead, he looked at me and said, "So you're David's brother, are you?" I nodded hesitantly. "Well, I want you to remember something. You are your own person, you're not your brother. Use the talents that you've been given." And with that, he got up and walked away. Those words have never left me, and it has further shown to me the power of words to make or break a life. When I felt compelled to live in another person's shadow, I do believe the Lord moved that P.E teacher to remind me I am here to serve Him, not the shadow of someone else.

Yet stepping out of someone's shadow can take years, even decades. The hymn writer Johnston Oatman experienced this back in the late 1800's. Johnston grew up in Lumberton, New Jersey. His father was a successful local merchant and was a highly regarded and popular man, renowned for his amazing singing voice. Johnston's father held a faith in Christ Jesus, and on hearing his father sing hymns powerfully, along with his successful business life, the young boy understandably wanted to make his father proud. And so, Johnston became a junior member of the family firm; yet this didn't satisfy his deeply seated religious ambitions. So, Johnston studied to become a Methodist preacher and was duly ordained years later.

Looking to emulate his father's success and reputation, along with a desire to serve the Lord in ministry, Johnston soon found that he felt constrained in one pulpit. So, Johnston set about to become a travelling preacher. Johnston was taking every opportunity that seemed to present itself to become a successful man, and yet still there was a deep sense that he hadn't found his calling for Christ.

It wasn't until he reached the age of 36, that Johnston found his true talent and calling in life. After years of trying to sing like his father, Johnston finally concluded that as much as he wanted to be like his father, he was not him. Yet the longing to serve Christ remained, along with an affection for music that his father had unknowingly instilled. So, Johnston began to write hymns for others blessed with better voices to sing. Whilst he may not have been blessed with a wonderful singing voice to move others like his father, Johnston hoped that his hymns would act as a form of preaching to those he'd never see in his lifetime.



It was in 1892 that Johnston began to write hymns, and it wasn't long before thousands across the world were singing his pieces unto the receiving ear of the Lord God. Hymns such as '*Count your blessings*', '*There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus*' and '*Lord, plant my feet on higher ground*', are still known to many across the world today.

The hymn '*Count your blessings*' was written by Johnston in 1897, with many regarding it as his masterpiece. It was set to music composed by E.O Excell, with its beauty of message and melody causing the great evangelist Gypsy Smith to note "men sing it, boys whistle it...and women rock their babies to sleep to it." Johnston had written a hymn that brought all ages together in thankful song unto the goodness of the Lord. What a glory unto God!

Johnston was a prolific writer, penning some 200 hymns every year, with his total output exceeding 5000. When publishers approached Johnston asking him to name his price for his work, such was the power and popularity of his writing, it is said that he refused to accept any more than 1 dollar a song. His desire was for untold millions to have access to the songs, as he had written them using the gifts given to him by His dear Lord and Saviour.

Johnston died at Mount Pleasant, New Jersey in 1936. After many, many years of searching for his life's work, he had found his calling. After stepping out of his father's shadow, he was released to utilise his God given talents for His glory, as millions across the globe sang his humble hymns of praise. It is incredible to consider what can be realised when we live for Christ and no other. So many of us place great limitations on what we can do with our lives. Sometimes this is because of a great shadow we live under, yet we are to remember we are a unique creation blessed with different talents and skills distinct from others. This rich variety of giftings comes from our dear Lord and God, all so that we might live purposeful and fulfilled lives for his glory. After decades of living in shadows, I am only just beginning to see what God can do with a single life when it's lived for Him alone. It is so exciting, and I pray many of you will find that same excitement for life. Then, each day we can greet the rising sun with childlike wonder as we think, 'What glories will the Lord perform today?!

## Runic Revelations

Mysterious carvings have been found deep in the forests near Ottawa, Canada. Many miles from any historic trade route, strange engravings on large rocky slabs have left scholars perplexed as to who made these carvings. The mystery comes from the fact that the language seen in the seemingly ancient carving, is a long disused Germanic Runic language known as Elder Futhark. This old language was used in Scandinavia and Germanic regions from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century, before it fell out of use. Indeed, the abandonment of the language was so complete, that the language had been forgotten by the Medieval era and was only rediscovered by linguists in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The inscription on the large rocks deep in the Ottawa forests was revealed after a storm caused a tree to collapse and scrape off a thick layer of soil and vegetation that had covered the carvings. When news of the discovery reached local experts, they reached out to experts in Runic languages to see if the writing could be deciphered. It duly was thanks to the rediscovery of Elder Futhark in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the carvings were revealed to be a recording of the Lord's Prayer! Furthermore, on another nearby rock, is a carving of a ship that looks very similar to Viking longships. In this carving, 16 people are drawn in the boat, with 14 cross symbols nearby.



This discovery has baffled historians. They are perplexed as to how a group of clearly Scandinavian/Germanic peoples had reached such a deep part of the Ottawa forest, many miles away from all known historic travel and trade routes. Furthermore, how this group used a long-forgotten language that easily and substantially predates the accepted dates of when it is believed Christian Europeans reached the Americas. Indeed, the shock has been so immense that some have attempted to declare the carvings as a hoax, although this theory is not gathering widespread support amongst experts of Runic languages. This is because of the extremely obscure use of Elder Futhark, who only a handful of people past 800 A.D seem to have been familiar with

or able to write a perfect rendition of the Lord's Prayer (see picture).

Such a discovery should cause us to question the 'accepted timeline' of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. It should also cause us to question the 'accepted timeline' of when Biblical Christianity reached the various nations of the world. Such evidence supports the ancient documents that remain buried deep in the British Library. Those ancient records of Nennius and others, that tell of nations having been well versed in the Word of God long before Roman Catholic bishops came to 'Christianise' the nations.

It is an extremely exciting time as more and more evidence is being discovered that points to the fact that the Gospel exploded across the nations. Records are increasingly showing that the good news of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the Cross for the sins of the world, raced like a beam of light piercing into a darkened room with speed and intensity. Why would we expect anything else than such a movement of God?! It speaks to our weakness of understanding of the power of His Word, when we hold to unsubstantiated theories of the slow spread of Christianity across the globe. Lord willing, many more discoveries will further show the world how the Gospel of Jesus Christ was eagerly taken up by a world ensnared in the horrors and sufferings of sin.

## Erasing Disappointment

### Luke 19:37-38

<sup>37</sup> And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

<sup>38</sup> Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

Disappointment affects us all. Even the most faithful of Christians can find themselves feeling disappointed with life. Whether it be missing out on a job you really wanted; a friend or family member lets us down; a project that we put great effort into doesn't work out, we are all familiar with that ugly sense of disappointment.

Disappointment arises from a desire that has not been fulfilled; a want that has not been satisfied. Disappointment in its deepest form can destroy a life, and yet its arrival to us at various points in life seems unavoidable. Is there any hope in the face of this inevitable enemy to our peace? Well, yes. And as always, it rests in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The land of Judea during the time of Jesus' earthly walk, was populated with an array of hardships that many will understand today. High taxes forced the majority of the populace to work long, hard hours, often in physically demanding jobs, just to be able to afford basic living requirements. In those days, most families would live in a one roomed home, often with four or five people crammed into that small dwelling. Everything

was done in that one room: cooking, childcare, caring for the sick, sleeping, storing of clothes and goods, and everything else an average day would demand to be done.

Outside of those cramped dwelling quarters, the people would hurry to and fro from their workplace, all whilst keenly aware of brutal Roman forces who oversaw the occupancy of the land. If they were blessed to live in the security of a walled town or city, workers who would often labour long hours in the Middle Eastern sun, would have to hurry home before sundown. If they didn't make it in time, the gates to the town/city would be firmly shut, locking out the exhausted labourer from the rest of their meagre home.

Most villages/towns and cities had no form of emergency services that we take for granted today. Only the grandest of cities in the Roman Empire would have a band of men known as *Vigiles* to respond to emergencies such as fires. These fires would often be frequent and devastating, as the often tightly packed houses that would host burning stoves each day, would easily catch fire, with the flames leaping quickly from building to building.

Going outside at night was often a hazardous trip, as again precious few cities had any recognisable form of law enforcement. The prospect of having to travel from one town/city to another, would have to consider the possibility of violent bandit attack. This anxiety of possible violence would heighten the strain of often arduous trips on foot or by donkey for the common Judean.

Taking all this into account, it is understandable to read of the Jews excitement of the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem. He who had shown such power and authority for three blessed years across the land of Judea, was coming into Jerusalem for the Passover week. The tired, frightened but hopeful people of Israel were looking



to Jesus to be the Messiah. He who would deliver them from the misery of their lives under Roman rule. Palm leaves were waved to greet a conquering King, as 'Hosanna' was cried out by the people. They who looked to Jesus with expectancy to save them from their worldly sorrows. Yet, as we all know, just a week later, the people's disappointment that Jesus was not the Messiah they thought He was going to be, moved them to follow the murderous demands of the Sanhedrin.

The people's disappointment changed the course of history, such is the enormity of impact that disappointment can have on a life/lives. Their disappointment though was rooted in the fact that they didn't truly understand who Jesus was and why He had come. Many believed on Him because of the mighty miracles He had performed over the three years of His ministry. However, this only led them to desire that Christ's power be used to relieve them of what they thought they needed relieving of, their worldly troubles.

We often shake our heads at the spiritual blindness of those Judeans, but we are no different to them. Many of us have seen for ourselves the amazing power, love and grace of Christ Jesus in action, and we often call on Him to aid us in our struggles. Yet most of the time, it is a plea for His deliverance of us from our worldly stresses and strains. We are just like those ancient Judeans of Jesus' time. Yes, the Lord may answer those prayers in His goodness and grace. Yet when we only go to Him for relief from the problems we have determined to be bad for us, we have missed the glory of who He is, just as those Judeans did.

Many of the people in Jerusalem that celebrated the triumphal entry of Jesus into the city, looked upon Him and saw a deliverer from their earthly woes. Yes, He can do such wonders of grace if it be His will, but He is so much more than this! He is the one who is uniquely able to deliver our very souls from eternal hellfire! The miseries of this life are real and often heavy, but they are nothing in comparison to the torment of everlasting damnation in Hell! Christ Jesus came to deliver us from this terror! A terror of God's just judgement for your sins and mine. He came to fulfil the will of the Father, that being that none should perish, but that all may find redemption through repentance of sin and the placing of faith in His Son, Christ Jesus!

Yet here is the heart of the issue. We often do not look for the will of God, we only consider our will. Those Judeans are no different to you and I, in that we look at our existing struggles, look upon the power and goodness of Jesus Christ, and cry out to Him to aid us in our physical sorrows! Oh, in His grace and mercy He often does so, even though in all His eternal wisdom, He knows that we are not calling on Him to rescue us from far greater threats. Our will often considers only the temporal, the worldly, matters of the flesh. Yet even though our Lord doesn't dismiss these needs in His goodness, He also looks upon the matters of the soul! These are the matters that truly matter! You may have 70 years of misery of mortal life. But what will it matter when weighed against an eternity of glory!

Thus, in His wisdom, God will not always lift the sufferings of this mortal life from us. Our prayers may go unanswered. Not because God does not hear them. But because He sees a greater threat to us that we are blind to. A threat to our very eternal destination! This is what He secured through the life, death and resurrection of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ! It is a truly glorious will that we are often are blind to. We are often blind to this majestic grace of God because we have decided our will, a will that is fixated on the mortal needs, is better than His eternal will. And so, we become disappointed when that mortal will of ours is denied.

Here though is the hope. When we see that all disappointment resides in a desire to realise our own fallen, mortal will, we can evade the poison of disappointment to our lives. When we see that our will is trash in all reality, for it is deeply corrupted by the stain of sin, and that God's will is perfect, we have a remedy to our ills within reach! When we live in daily communion with God through prayer, careful study of His Word, and effective living of our faith, we are brought into the will of God. We no longer look to have our will be done, for we at long last see that His will is so, so much better for us!

The sorrows will still come to us. The worrying doctor's diagnosis will still come. The sting of betrayal of a loved one may still strike at us. The loss of a beloved will come to our door. Yet if we look upon all these things with a view to see the will of God throughout it all, we see that it is for our good. We may not understand it, but He does! We are to have faith as of a child. A little child doesn't understand at all how their parent operates a car, but they don't sit in worry, fear and doubt every time they are sat in the car with their parent. They are trusting that whilst they don't understand, their parent does, and that's all they need to know! Oh, if we could just live so freely before God! To live in such loving trust of who He is would be the single best life we could ever live! We would have the freest of all lives, for even the bitterest of news would be greeted with a peaceful smile that God loves me and knows what's best for me.

This is a hard task for sure. Every day, the enemy will look to stir up our own fallen, mortal will in us. The aim is to set us at odds with God, so that when God does not yield to our worldly will, we will become disappointed in heart. A disappointed heart is fertile ground for the growing of the crops of sin! So, pray that God strengthens your faith so that you seek to do His will. Pray for others that they too are similarly blessed. For in such a life as that lived in the will of God, it is the best life you could ever know!

### **For The Joy Set Before Him**

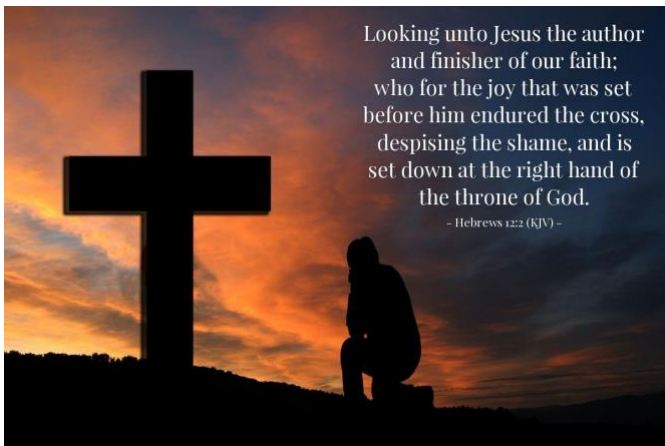
Isn't our Lord Jesus so very good in all manner of ways! Isn't His love the greatest and strongest wonder in all existence! I struggle to comprehend the immensity of the power of His love, so much so that it renders me prayerful that He forgives me for having such a poor understanding of Him!

When I consider the horrors of the Cross, and all our Lord endured on that cursed tree for my sins and yours, I am astonished. I am astonished at how He could do so great a thing for such a wretched sinner as me!

When I consider His depth of suffering for my sake, I am staggered to then think on Hebrews 12:2. For in this verse, we read of how as all the agonies of our sin were endured by Him, He saw a joy before Him. As I think on what may have filled His mind in those terrible hours of suffering, I think on how He saw me in my sins whilst He struggled to fill His weary lungs. I think on how He knew all the muck and filth of sinful men

and women from all generations, as the nails were driven into Him. Maybe He thought on the bloodshed caused by David; the harlotry of Rahab; the anger of Jonah; the lies of Jacob, or the cowardice of Gideon. Maybe He thought on those who had turned away from Him in heart for a season, just as the disciples had fled from Him in His darkest hour. Maybe He thought on you, and all you would do, think and say against Him in sin.

Yet then I consider how Scripture says that in the midst of His suffering, He endured it all because of the joy that was set before Him. I cannot begin to fathom how any mere mortal could endure such horrors, such torments, such loneliness, such agonies of body and soul, and do so in hope of a coming joy! And yet our Lord Jesus did exactly this. He endured the punishment we deserve for our sins, with a certain hope. A hope that by His suffering and substitutionary death, all those who had fallen in sin, could be delivered by His sacrifice, if they would repent and believe on Him.



Think on how those same lives that had caused Him to need to give Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, He held in His heart with joy. He saw how in His sacrifice, the bloodshed by David was forgiven; how the harlotry of Rahab was wiped clean; how the anger of Jonah was soothed with the peace of God; how the lies of Jacob were righted by the truth of His Word, and how the cowardice of Gideon was overcome by His courage to battle death itself and emerge victorious!

When I consider this awesome truth of God, I am filled with a praise filled heart that pleads for my tongue to stay silent. Only silence can allow the mind to consider

in true reverence the strength of His love! How marvellous it is, that as He endured such horrors of the Cross, He looked upon the joy that was to come that was your deliverance and mine! He saw the filth of my life and knew it would soon be removed from my weak shoulders. He saw how by His sacrifice, a child He gave life to and loved deeply when I did not love Him, was to be returned to His Father's embrace. This was the joy that was set before Him! A conquering of the chains that had tormented His elect for so many painful years. A joy that was set before Him of the open invitation to all to hear of His atoning sacrifice, so that none need perish! Oh, what a joy set before Him, that the miseries of sin and death would soon be overcome, when He would stride forth from the tomb before ascending to the right hand of the Father.

And so, at Easter time, let us consider the sufferings of our Lord because of our sins. Let us be humbled by His love, in that He willingly gave His life for we who were once set against Him. Then let us marvel in awe filled reverence at the strength of His love; by the power of His devotion; so that in the midst of the greatest battle ever known, He saw the coming joy that was our salvation through His shed blood. Oh, what a Saviour we have! So let our hearts be glad and our lips sing His worthy praise, not just this Easter weekend, but every day of our lives! Amen.

## Finishing Well

The Apostle Paul speaks of the life of a believer like being that of an athlete. As an older man, Paul reflects on his days knowing his time in this world to soon be at an end, and notes that he has 'finished the course' (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Speaking in such terms, Paul is observing how life is much like a race. We push and we strain each day seeking to be the best we can be for the Lord, much like a runner exerting themselves fully in each stride. We are to do this in the sure hope that when we cross the finish line of life, we shall receive our eternal reward, much like an athlete achieves triumph at the end of a well-run race.

Yet how are we to know that we have ‘run a good race’? Can we be sure of receiving a rapturous welcome into Heaven in the manner of which the Apostle Peter speaks in 2 Peter 1:11? In short, what does it mean to ‘finish well’ as a Christian?

This imposing question was put to Professor John Lennox in a recent interview. As Professor Lennox approaches his closing years of mortal life, this question was particularly personal to him. He answered with a wonderful hope that witnesses of his sure faith in his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Firstly, Professor Lennox commented on how in his advanced years, he has seen many good and faithful servants of God, become bitter, opinionated and angry old men. Such lives, he observed, have needlessly harmed others faith in the Lord. He reflected on his desire to emulate King David, in seeking after God to not let his sometimes sinful ways become a hindrance to the faith of others. Professor Lennox observed how this often befalls a man when he shuts himself off from life and others, in the belief that they know it all. The remedy to such a damaging predicament, is to remain in daily study of the Scriptures; live in heartfelt prayer and remain open to correction. This is something Professor Lennox noted that few men in old age are prepared to do, even Christian men, particularly in the last point.

Professor Lennox spoke on how many older people, particularly men, can become arrogant in their assumptions on life and others, and then decide to offer constant criticism. Such a manner is fed by their cutting off from life and being entrenched in a thought that they have learnt everything there is to learn on faith. Professor Lennox made a wonderful counterpoint to such a critical and negative approach lived by such souls, when he reflected on the breakfast on the beach in John chapter 21. He observed how Christ first prepared a nourishing meal for His disciples, before He corrected Peter on His previous denials of Him, and then prophesied on Peter’s manner of death. Professor Lennox’s observation was that we should be prepared to help and provide for those we are about to correct, otherwise all we do is cause them pain and personal devastation. In short, we are to do as Jesus did! Christ showed Peter His continued love and miraculous provision was unchanged despite Peter’s previous denial of Him, and then He moved to correct Peter’s actions. Too many times, those in advanced years (and younger years in fairness) can look to correct or criticise first, and then possibly look to build up again. The problem being that by the time the possible attempt at building up again is taking place, the person that’s received the hostility has turned themselves against the criticiser out of pain, sadness or even anger!



Such a deeply unpleasant manner or situation between people can arise simply out of cognitive decline. Professor Lennox noted that in advanced years, the sad reality is that most people will not have the same level of cognitive ability that they enjoyed in younger years. This can affect the behaviour of the individual, making them cantankerous and angry. There is nothing weakening in their faith, it is purely cognitive decline that is affecting them. Yet in that affected person’s pride, they refuse to admit this, and so others subjected to their unpleasant

ways and manner then assume it’s because of a weakening/problem with their faith. This then causes the younger Christian to dismiss the older affected Christian. They wrongly assume that the older person has simply become a bitter and nasty old soul whose faith has become barren. All this could have been avoided if pride was not succumbed to in both parties.

Professor Lennox commented that when advanced years come upon us, it is often a sensible course of action to withdraw from prominent roles. This is so that probable cognitive decline doesn’t cause needless harm to all parties involved. Yet this needn’t mean that an old soul should ‘retire’ from witnessing/preaching. Far from it. Professor Lennox spoke with a joyful skip in his voice, that what keeps him young at heart is the still fresh joy of witnessing to others of Jesus Christ! Indeed, such a joyful witness in old age is a truly powerful testimony of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! In such times of witnessing to the lost, the old heart is reminded of the amazing grace that they have known and enjoyed for many years. It gives a freshness of faith that is truly inspirational to all generations. Indeed, as I sat watching the sparkle in Professor Lennox’s eye, and the child like smile on his face as he spoke of the Lord, I was renewed in my own spirit.

This joy of faith is to be visible in all believers, not just the young. Again, as Professor Lennox noted, “As you get older, you should get happier”. Why is this to be the case? Because you know the finish line of life is getting closer, and soon you will have your reward for a race well run for Christ! This joy in old age should be a powerful witness for Christ. A witness that stands against the fear and gloom of the non-believer as they approach the end of their days. What good is an angry, grumpy, critical old soul for the glory of the Gospel? Such a manner puts off people from seeking after Christ and can even damage the existing faith of those who do believe! Sadly, I’ve seen this happen, and I imagine some of you reading this have seen such a sad situation unfold also.

Such considerations are easily said when imminent death is not at our door. It is easy to say to the old in years, ‘Be merry and live the joy of your faith!’ Yet the Lord is truly gracious in how He can use the closing witness of many a faithful life, to confirm that we can indeed be joyful in life right up to the final inhale of breath. As an example, a dear, old friend of Professor Lennox called him one day and told him he was dying. His time was short, and he was calling to ask his dear friend John, if he would speak at his funeral. Professor Lennox shocked by the sad news given to him by his longtime friend asked, “What am I to say at the funeral?” His friend replied hopefully, “Tell them to do what we did as students. To live in the pages of the Holy Bible and look for the Lord’s face until they see it. And when they do, they’ll have plenty to say!”

I cannot recount that story without my eyes filling with hopeful tears, and marvel at the hope and joy that moves through a life that belongs to Jesus, even when it’s close to the end. I remember my Nana, whom I was the last person in my immediate family to see before she went to glory. As I entered the hospital room, my grandfather and my two uncles were there crying. I approached my Nana and held her hand and said gently, “Hi Nana, it’s Jonathan.” No words were returned, she was close to slipping away. She merely squeezed my hand as best she could, and smiled a faint, peaceful smile that showed a heart ready to go home. So, I said quietly, “Bye Nana. I love you and I’ll see you soon.” Minutes later she was with the Lord she loves. I saw a faithful life, lived well and exiting this mortal world with a knowledge that she had fought the good fight. She was kind and gentle, filled with hope every day as she slowly grew weaker and weaker in the body. That same life of joyful faith, her daughter, my mother, lived as she closed her days a few years later. Both great women of God, finished well and set the tone for those they left behind.

At the close of the interview, Professor Lennox was asked, “At 82, what are you looking forward to?” Professor Lennox replied with eyes sparkling and crackling like a freshly fuelled fire, “I’m looking forward to seeing the Lord. And it’s going to happen.” His face and his voice sung the sweetness of his words with great harmony, as his tone was fixed and sure, yet laced with childlike excitement and hope. In those few words I understood why the New Jerusalem will be so stunning to the eye. It will shimmer and glisten with the splendour of the twelve precious stones of God’s own choosing, as the light from the Lord Jesus bursts through them, emitting a most beautiful sight. And yet, I think on how even this sight may not match the beauty and wonder of the eyes of the redeemed, as they sparkle in joy and excitement at seeing the Lord they have known and loved in their days. This splendour of what awaits us should be visible in our eyes now, and it should be alive in our gaze in the hope that through the faithfulness of Christ Jesus, our lives will also finish well. Amen.

## Clarity Of Vision

I recently saw a heart-warming short video of a little child getting glasses for the first time. The child was around two years old and was clearly unsure as to the whole setup of being at an opticians. When the optometrist gently placed the new glasses on the child for the first time, there was a moment of resistance from the unsure little one. Yet, what took place next brought a happy tear to my eye.

As the optometrist stepped away from the child, the expression of the child suddenly changed. Their eyes grew wide as they paused for a moment and took in a whole new world of clear vision. Having spent all their infant days in a hazy blur, suddenly this little one could see everything with brilliant clarity! Their amazement

continued as they looked around the room in wide eyed wonder, sharing a palpable sense of their excitement and joy!

As I watched that short video, it made me think on how we believers in Christ are likely to react when we see our Redeemer with our own eyes for the first time. Having closed our eyes in this mortal realm for the last time, we will next open them and be greeted with a vision of glorified clarity. All of our previous days in this sinful world, will be as though we've lived in a hazy blur of existence. When we get to glory, we will see with utter clarity!

With this wondrous and flawless sight, our eyes will lock in wide eyed awe upon the one who brought us home by His righteousness. We will be like that dear little child, as we gaze upon the one our soul loves with truly joyful surprise and unmatched excitement! Our eyes will confirm to us that we're safe at last, and that we are home.

We often don't think on the coming glory that awaits all God's children. We get caught up in the blurred and hazy world of this life, and we forget the brilliance of existence that will soon be ours through our risen Lord Jesus. Little reminders of this joy of salvation are available for every believer in Christ to see each day. All we need to do to see them is to seek first the Kingdom of God. Then we will be refreshed by the promise of the amazing things our Lord is preparing for us. Amen.

## Wealth Reallocated

**Proverbs 13: 22** **A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.**

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I, was one extended witness of the providential care of God for this once godly nation. The nation, though officially Protestant following the establishment of the Church of England under the once devout Roman Catholic that was Henry VIII, was still populated by a large Catholic contingent. Many of these Catholics were only Catholic by name, having merely gone along with the violently imposed religion under the previous rules of wicked monarchs such as Bloody Mary. And so, many followed the new Queens call for the nation to become a Protestant land, having seen for themselves the terror and bloodshed caused by a violent Catholic monarchy. This was coupled with an explosion of interest in the printed Word of God, a Word that had been kept away from the people by the Papacy.

So, whilst many people happily abandoned Catholicism in Elizabethan England, many (particularly the wealthy and some nobility) refused to accept that England was now a free nation to serve God according to His Pure Word. And so, Elizabeth faced numerous assassination plots, the most famous being the Babington Plot. By the grace of God, Elizabeth had been given Sir Francis Walsingham as a close ally. Sir Francis was a pioneer in counter spy/terrorism, and he constantly laboured to protect the Protestant monarch that was Elizabeth. This meant that this land could rise to become a true light for the Word of God across the globe, and indeed for many generations to follow.

Given the clear and present danger to the crown throughout Elizabeth's reign, we could assume that Elizabeth must have done something drastic to stir up such animosity from the Catholic stalwarts. Yet, the reign of Elizabeth is still regarded by non-partisan historians, as one that showed remarkable religious tolerance. For instance, there were fines put in place for those who continued to perform Catholic rites such as confession or the Mass in their homes, although these were very rarely ever administered. Heavier fines were given to those who openly practised their Catholic faith in public, a move that was the preserve of the wealthy elites at that time. These fines were more regularly administered, and many of the wealthy Catholic elites continued to pay the sizeable fines even after being punished multiple times. Let it be said, that the punishment given out under Bloody Mary for those who refused to stop being Protestants was death by burning at the stake, not a mere fine!

What was remarkable about all this though, was how God was moving through a wise and patient monarch that was Elizabeth I. At the time of Elizabeth's ascension to the throne, England was in truly dire straits financially. The awful reign of the staunchly Catholic Bloody Mary, had devastated the land socially, politically and economically. Throughout that horrendous period of English history, where Protestant men, women and children were brutally tortured and publicly executed for their faith in the Jesus Christ, Elizabeth was effectively kept under house arrest by her half-sister Queen Mary (along with a period in the Tower of London). Elizabeth's movements were closely monitored, and she was well aware that her life was under constant threat from the terrors of the wicked Queen that was Mary. In that time, Elizabeth learnt the much-needed political shrewdness that would be needed to lead the nation after the calamitous rule of her half-sister Mary.

So, having come to the throne, Elizabeth set about to bring religious freedom to a land that had been terrorised by Catholic zealots. Along with this, she sought to protect her nation from a livid Papacy who were encouraging the devout Catholic king of Spain, Phillip II, to invade England and reclaim 'Mary's dowry' (the term used by the Papacy to lay claim to ruling England). Furthermore, Elizabeth looked to bring some economic stability to a nation that had been ruined by the rule of Mary, along with numerous outbreaks of plague and years of bad harvests. In short, England was in a bad way and was a sitting duck for any potential invader!



Yet here comes the wisdom of God to be seen in the political movements of Queen Elizabeth I. Those heavy fines that were imposed on the defiant Catholic elites of the land, were utilised by the court of Elizabeth to rearm the nation. Elizabeth ensured that the navy was rapidly expanded so as to take advantage of the new trade links opened up by the

colonisation of the New World. This rapidly expanded navy would become the frontline defence against the Spanish Armada, a truly colossal invasion force sent by the Catholic Phillip of Spain. The purpose of this invasion was to kill Elizabeth and install her Catholic relation, Mary Queen of Scots as the new Queen of England, thereby making England a Catholic nation once more. By the wisdom and providential care of God, Elizabeth used Scripture as seen in Proverbs 13:22, to take the wealth of the sinner so that the just could be defended. In effect, the stubborn Catholic elites of England had unwittingly funded the destruction of the Armada they had longed for! God has a tremendous sense of irony!

For years of Elizabeth's reign, it had seemed that her patience with the defiant Catholic elites was of little success. Some of her allies even suggested to her that her approach to the matter was dangerous. Yet, having learnt the importance of being as wise as the serpent but as harmless as the dove in those miserable years of house arrest, Elizabeth held her course. Those years of patience, allowed the nation's military defences to be renewed, and so be ready to crush the Catholic invasion that was looking to drag England back into spiritual darkness. Not only that, but those years of patience and trusting in the truth of God's Word as seen in Proverbs 13:22, meant that that same supreme navy, became the backbone of the emerging British Empire. An empire upon which the sun never set, and by its spread across the globe, billions of lives received the Gospel through the work of Britain's faithful missionaries.

So, when it seems as though a patient and steady course of action is not working, hold true to the promises of God. If you do so, all those years of waiting will more than come good. You will see the grace of God move through to honour the trust you placed in His Word. Amen.

## The Problem Of Pain

Professor John Lennox was given the challenge as to how can a loving God allow terrible diseases affect little children? Or how can God allow a faithful servant of His to become riddled with awful conditions like Dementia? In his response, Professor Lennox spoke honestly and said he didn't have a magic formula of explanation to give that would provide a clear solution to such a heavy question. There is of course the noted importance that pain and suffering can play in a persons life to guard it from potentially greater evils. Nerves send signals to the brain when a hand is close to a flame to alert the person to remove their hand quickly before incurring severe damage. Also, as C.S Lewis and many other intellectuals have observed, God uses painful times both physically and emotionally, to alert the individual to their deep spiritual need of coming to Him for help and healing. As C.S Lewis noted, pain is 'God's megaphone' to alert us to a great danger to our very souls, which of course follows what Scripture tells us in 1 Corinthians 5:5.

There are some instances though, where it seems as though the suffering of a person seems unfair or disproportionate, just as we outlined in our opening thought. Professor Lennox spoke on how in the God of the Holy Bible, we have a God who is not distinct from the sufferings of humanity, but came in the flesh to experience all the deepest miseries of life. God experienced this on the cross in the form of the Son, as He endured a horrifically, torturous death. Not only did He experience them on the Cross, but also in the bitter agonies of Gethsemane. Here Christ wrestled with the weight of what was to come, the bitter cup of suffering that He asked to pass from Him. In Christ Jesus, we see the only truly innocent life suffer all the horrors that life can afford. So in this, we have a Saviour who sits with those who suffer so unfairly in our eyes, for He suffered so greatly when He was perfect in all ways.

Professor Lennox noted that if this was where the story ended, in sadness of death, Christians would have no better an answer to the sufferings of humanity than the atheist. In this, Professor Lennox echoed the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:14-19. So, Professor Lennox continued in that same line of truth that Paul spoke of, that the Christian has the hope of the fact that yes, Christ suffered on the cross, but that He also rose from the dead. In this, we have hope that though the suffering is real and truly awful, it isn't the end of the story.

Professor Lennox noted that Christians believe that God is a God of compensation. That there will be a day of judgment, where all things will be rightly weighed and measured. Where punishments and rewards will be correctly given to all lives ever lived, so much so that none will be able to say that He has not judged well. This is wonderful news for the believer in Christ. For we may have to endure awful situations in life, even as believers. Professor Lennox noted he watched his 22 year old niece, die from a brain tumour. Though she was a believer, she was not spared this awful experience. But Professor Lennox spoke on how in those final days, she was filled with real hope that she was going home.

This is the hope all Christians have, a hope that is available to all in this world. It is the hope that if we are to experience tragic and truly miserable days in this life, the compensation that God has set aside, will more than cover what was lost. Indeed, the reward will be so great, that those so blessed will spend all eternity in marvellous praise of His grace and generosity of giving.

The atheist does not have this hope, yet they still have the awful experiences of this life to deal with and explain. They are left with an empty existence that ultimately doesn't mean anything and will be forgotten by history in a few generations. Yet to all those who believe on the risen Lord Jesus, we have the knowledge that though the sufferings of this life can be great, they are not the end of the story. The end of the story is that we will be where our Lord is, in peace and glory forevermore, never to know any pain or sadness ever again.

## No Blind Faith Required

The Lord does not require anyone to accept the truth that He exists or that Jesus is the Son of God, by mere blind faith. Since that blessed first Easter morning, when the angels invited the women to see for themselves that Jesus was not in the tomb but was risen to life (Matthew 28:6), God has provided many evidences of the truth of His Word.

Some of these evidences can be seen in archaeology, where each year dozens of new discoveries are corroborating the Biblical record. This is so much the case, that renowned archaeologist Nelson Glueck commented, 'It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.'

Furthermore, Sir Fredrick Kenyan, former director of the British Museum and one of the worlds great experts on ancient documents said, 'The last foundations for any doubt that the Scriptures come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.'

One of those books of the New Testament that is now rightly regarded by scholars as a great record of history, is the Gospel of Luke. Sir William Ramsey, D.C.L., Litt D., D.D., one time Professor of Classical Art and Architecture at Oxford University, and then later Regius Professor of Humanity at Aberdeen commented regarding the Gospel of Luke, 'Luke is an historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements trustworthy...this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians...Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness.'



Quite the scholarly endorsement of the truth and accuracy of the Biblical record! Yet there's more evidence from the world of ancient manuscripts that upholds the validity of the Bible. Many of the great works of antiquity are scant number in terms of the amount of old copies we have of them. For example, we have 643 copies of Homer's Iliad; 10 copies of Caesars Gallic War (58-50 BC); 20 copies of Livy's Roman History (59 BC-17 AD); 7 copies of the Histories of Pliny the Younger (AD 61-113), and only 2 copies of Histories and Annals by Tacitus (AD 55-120). Yet we have well over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament in its original Greek.

Building on this wealth of evidence to the historical validity of the Biblical accounts, we have to bear another point in mind relating to these other ancient works just listed. These copies we have of the works done by Homer, Pliny, Livy etc, are from many centuries after they lived. For example, only one copy of Livy's Roman History was written closer than 400 years after he actually lived. Regarding Caesar's Gallic War, there is a gap of 1,100 years between his life and original work, to our earliest known copy of it today. Yet no scholar dares question as to whether Caesar actually wrote this work, or if any of the ancient literary greats were actually the authors of the works prescribed to them. Yet some strangely argue that the various writers of the books of the Bible were not those declared within the Scriptures. This bizarre claim flies in disregard of the immense numbers of ancient copies we possess of the New Testament in particular, and the close proximity of writing to the events recorded in the texts. Many of these New Testament manuscripts can be placed within a few years/decades of the lives of the Apostles themselves!

The volume and proximity to the lifetimes of the original writers of many of the ancient Biblical manuscripts we possess, is far superior than any that can be claimed by the great works of the secular world. God has provided an abundance of verifiable historical evidence that His Word is ancient and trustworthy. Through His Word, His invitation to each of us remains unchanged from that first Easter morning. For He bids all to come and see for themselves the truth of His Word. In doing so, they may know the one who is the Truth, and thereby be brought from death unto life eternal.

## The Impact Of One Life

Many will write off the impact one life can have on such a huge world, with so many billions of lives filling its shores. So, many lives are lived in mediocrity out of a belief that anything impactful is the reserve of other people. Yet, we forget just what one life, lived some 2000 years ago accomplished on the world's stage. The effects of that one life has pulled the events of history to orbit it like a brilliant and massive star pulls planets into it's orbit. That one life of course, is the life of Jesus Christ.

It was once said, 'He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never travelled more than 200 miles from the place where He was born. He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...Twenty centuries have come and gone and today He is the central figure of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on earth as much as that one solitary life!'

The impact of that one life, the life of Jesus Christ, causes even those who stand against Him to admit the immensity of His life and ministry (proving Proverbs 16:7). The atheist historian and writer H.G Wells said about Christ Jesus: 'I am a historian, I am not a believer. But this penniless preacher from Galilee is irresistibly the centre of history.' Furthermore, non-believer Kenneth Scott Latourette noted, 'As the centuries pass evidence is accumulating that, measured by his effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet.'



The impact of such a humble life is one of the greatest evidences that Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed He was, the Son of God. When we hold to this truth, and live daily following Him with devotion of heart, earnestness of prayer, and diligence of Bible study, we are made bold for the Gospel. The timid are made strong, the fearful are made courageous, the lowly are made mighty. Thereby, through the strength of Christ Jesus, and in remembrance of who He is, we can do all things so as to serve the will of God (Philippians 4:13)

But what if you say that the life of Jesus is a mere myth, and therefore cannot be truly inspirational to lives today? Or maybe you believe that Jesus did live, but that He was only a great teacher, and that He did not rise from the tomb on that first Easter Day. Well, many highly gifted and qualified men and women do not hold the view that Jesus is a mythical figure. Renowned lawyer, Sir Edward Clarke K.C once wrote, 'As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the first Easter Day. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured a verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling.'

Knowing this then, don't ever write off a life as insignificant or irrelevant, for every life is made in the image of God. If you are feeling insignificant or doubtful of what impact little old you can make on a big, wide world, remember the Lord Jesus. His life was truly humble in all the measures of greatness erected by the world. But He exposed the wisdom of the world to be foolishness, and showed what a humble and lowly heart can do when it seeks only to do the work and will of God.

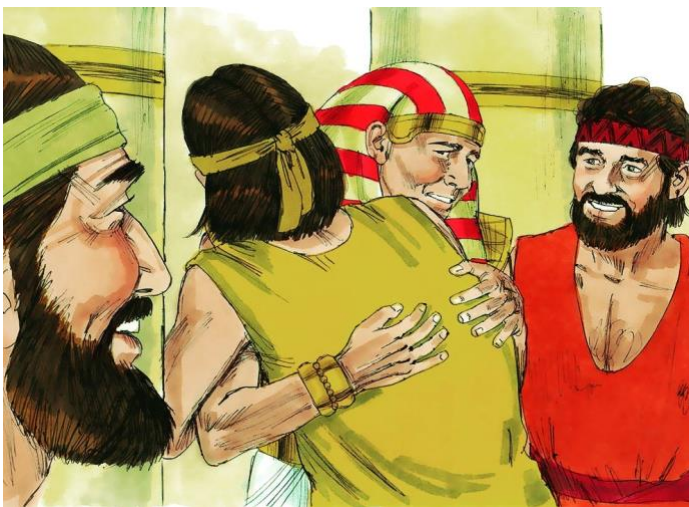
## The Glory Of The Gospel Foreshadowed

In the account of Joseph, we see a wonderful foreshadowing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Genesis chapter 45, we can bear witness to the marvellous consistency of the method of salvation gifted to all generations of men by the grace of God. For in verses 4-8, we read of Joseph soothing the troubled hearts of his repentant brothers as they stand in fear of him having just revealed his true identity to them. Fearing reprisal for their betrayal of Joseph many years prior, their bodies were frozen in a state of terror of impending judgement. So it is with the sinful heart made aware of its wickedness by the witness of the Holy Spirit. In such times, we see

the thrice holy glory of God in light of our own evil. Rightly seeing the power of Christ Jesus as the Almighty Son of God, our spirits are greatly troubled as we know we are deserving of His judgement. Yet, just as Joseph invited his repentant brothers to come to him and receive his forgiveness for their evils committed against him, so too does the Lord Jesus move towards repentant hearts. He sees the broken heart made aware of its perilous position before God, and He bids it to come to Him. He calls out to His brothers, those who dwell in the same houses of clay that He took on in His Incarnation in the flesh of man, to find peace in His forgiving embrace.

In the midst of the joyful reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, we see the pointing towards an even more joyful reconciliation. That between God and man made possible by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary. This reconciliation was sealed in power and authority, for Joseph brought peace and provision to his family through his position as governor of Egypt, second only behind Pharaoh. This pointed towards Christ Jesus, who in His position as the second member of the Trinity, and mighty Governor so prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 9:6). In His power and authority, He swept away the debts of sin incurred by the repentant sinner, and became the Mediator between God and man. Thereby, reconciling a bond shattered by Adam in the Garden of Eden.

As the tears flowed from the relieved hearts of Joseph's brothers, it is likely deep regret and a painful spirit threatened to rob them of their newly gifted joy. The repentant but forgiven sinner knows this feeling well. That moment when the joy of release of the burden of sin is challenged by sorrow. A sorrow of knowing what horrors of sin we have committed against one so good and pure in all ways and attributes. In Joseph's compassionate response to his brothers, we see again the nature of Christ Jesus foreshadowed. Likely seeing the waves of emotion threaten to consume his brothers at such a happy hour, Joseph looked to heal the wounds of their sins on their own hearts. His manner is selfless, not seeking any revenge, only the healing of those who had once betrayed him so cruelly. This all speaks of Christ Jesus, who gave such grace to not just a few brothers who had done one great evil to Him, but to untold millions, all who had done many evils against His perfect love.



Joseph soothes the troubled spirits of his brothers by pointing towards the glorious and redemptive will of God, as seen in Genesis 45:5. Joseph tells his brothers that though they were guilty of the crimes against him, God used it as a means of preserving them in their hour greatest need. Didn't our wonderful Saviour Christ Jesus do such a thing for all sinners that first Easter long ago! Though each of us is responsible for the horrors Christ experienced at the Cross of Calvary, the plan of salvation was moved by God to be so long before each of us took our first breath. For the plan of the redemption of repentant hearts was forged in the heart of God before the foundations of the earth! He foresaw the betrayal of Adam and the Fall of mankind, but moved to provide a means of preservation from the fires of Hell. This being a just place of punishment for an eternal crime committed against an eternal God. This preservation was through the atoning sacrifice of His only begotten Son on the Cross, and His triumphant victory over death in His rising again from the grave. Thereby, all those who turn from their sinful ways and call on the Lord Jesus to be the Saviour, will be delivered into an eternity where they will know the blessed provision of God forevermore.

The brothers of Joseph had known suffering for only two years, as five more years of famine were to trouble the land. This heavy truth had only been revealed to Joseph by the will of God. His brothers were unaware of the imminent worsening of conditions, just as we blind and sinful beings are before God. We go through this life, often through times of true suffering, blind to the fate that awaits all those who die without Christ as their Saviour. Such lost souls will go from temporal suffering to eternal torment. And yet in the timing of the arrival of Joseph's brothers before him, we see a picture of the grace of God in action. For they stand before their brother Joseph with five years of famine yet to come. The number five in the Scriptures often represents the grace of God. And so it was that Joseph was gracious to his repentant brothers in giving them safety and provision whilst many would suffer terribly. So too has the Lord Jesus provided a message and act of grace in providing a means of deliverance from the fires of Hell. He has provided such a gracious gift to all those who are like the brothers of Joseph, repentant of their wicked ways and deeds.

Yet the mercies of God are further foreshadowed in the ways of Joseph towards his brothers. Joseph seeks to give his brothers a continued posterity on the earth (Genesis 45:7). Will not our Lord Jesus do such a thing for His own heavenly family, those redeemed souls saved by His own pierced hands?! For Christ Jesus shall establish His rule upon this earth, and the saints of God shall reign with Him. This joy shall be crowned to eternal glories when He blesses all the redeemed with a new heaven and a new earth, in which we shall dwell with Him in peace and glory forever! As plentiful in goodness the land of Goshen was for the family of Joseph, it pales into comparison to the land set aside for the beloved of God!

Genesis 45:8 closes with Joseph stating how by the will and authority of God, he has been made lord of all the house of Pharaoh, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. This mighty rise from slave to ruler that Joseph experienced by the hand of God, only points to the even mightier exaltation of a servant to a great King that is seen in Christ Jesus! For the day will come, when Christ Jesus shall reign over the world in peace and power (Egypt is commonly used as an image of this truth throughout the Holy Scriptures), and He will be Lord over all the earth. The kings and 'pharaohs' of this world will bow down to the one who is the Lord, provider and King.

## What Blessed Worship Looks Like

**Genesis 22:5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.**

There is a great deal of discussion in modern Christendom as to what appropriate worship looks like. As always, the answer to many questions of faith is to be found all the way back in Genesis, the foundation stone of the Holy Scriptures.

Given that Genesis was written by Moses, and penned in Hebrew, we must look at what the Hebrew word for 'worship' tells us on this important matter. The Hebrew word for 'worship' is *shachah*, meaning to 'bow down', or to submit to the God's will. Such a considered and awe filled reverence of God, would stand in the greatest of contrasts to the customary manners of worship of false gods in the ancient world. Such pagan worship, even at subdued levels, would be filled with chanting, loud and physical gesticulations and manipulations of emotional states. These would be designed to whip the participants into a giddy euphoric frenzy, craftily leading minds away from considered submission to the will of God. It lent on physical enjoyment of the self, rather than humbly delighting in the authority and love of God.

This is where the worship of Abraham at a time of testing of his faith, shows us how we are to correctly worship the Lord God. It is to be done with a knowing, calm and considered submission to His perfect will. It is to be done with a fearful reverence of His power and authority, led by a heart of truest trust of His eternal goodness. Such worship is consistent in its sincerity, as it can be done in times of joyful blessing, or in times of deepest worry and sadness. It reflects the unchanging nature of God, displaying His glory to all who bear witness of the depth and consistency of communion between Redeemer and His redeemed.

Further, consider how in this same passage of speech by Abraham, he instructs the two servants to not follow himself and Isaac as they go on to worship God. Here we see another marker as to the nature of God blessed worship. It is to be done with a heart that is firmly fixed on its objective, to commune directly with God. Today, much of worship is often unintentionally fixated on the collective experience of fellowship. Whilst this can be a wonderful thing, the joy of uniting ‘horizontally’ in worship with other believers, as Voddie Baucham used to observe, should never rival the joy of uniting ‘vertically’ with God in worship. This is the very purpose of worship. Not to commune with other believers, but to commune with our Lord and God. If we are blessed to enjoy such correct worship with other true believers then all the better, but it should never be the source of our desire to worship God.



**Showing  
Reverence  
During  
Worship**

This is where we have robbed ourselves of so much joy that can be experienced in correct worship of God. In modern Christianity, worship has often become linked with large scaled events/services, and so we only experience its blessings in weekly meetings at best. In Genesis 22:5, we see that Abraham saw no issue of worshipping God when it was merely his son and himself. No large congregation to support his worship. No live band to lead his submission to God. Just two hearts humbly bowing down to the will of God. Doesn't such a

manner speak of what Christ said in Matthew 18:20, when He said, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'

Such a Biblical truth is to be a great source of joy for the humble church; the little house gathering; the small family that have come together in reverent and thoughtful praise of their Lord and God. God doesn't require impressive staging, or the song of hundreds to please Him. He asks for a heart that understands Him and willingly submits to His perfect will. For such a heart shows it truly loves Him. This is the manner of God blessed worship, a communion of hearts that lives the heavenly plea of 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.'

## A Body Of Evidence

The Winter Olympics was quite the spectacle of physical prowess. Watching some of the incredible, physical feats accomplished in events such as the Snowboarding Half-Pipe event, or the Big Air Skiing, was jaw-dropping at points. Seeing men and women hurtle their bodies through the air with power and precision, twisting and contorting their bodies into all manner of tricks, shatters the notion that those same bodies are the product of Evolution.

The expertly designed equipment these athletes use is all just that, designed expertly. No one would be stupid enough to argue that the ski's carrying the athlete, came about by chance and of themselves in the athlete's shed one day! Yet, many will happily believe that the human body, something a million times more complex than a piece of designed skiing equipment, came about by chance over millions of years! When we look at it all objectively, such a notion is undeniably ludicrous! Yet countless billions believe that Evolution is true!

Praise the Lord that He is so good to the world, that He provides ample, daily evidence to us of how we have been lovingly created by Him. The world of sports declares the amazing beauty of God's Creation every time we enjoy such activities. For any sport to be played, a series of complex physical properties and skills must combine to amazing levels of precision. Sadly though, we often engage in such happy sporting activities so easily, that we don't stop and think on how many physical systems are combining so effectively. Even when something goes wrong in times of injury, we never pause and think on how we need expert medical knowledge to heal the wound. If the body that was injured was the result of random chance and evolution, why do we need such complex medical care to fix an ailment?

Every time we take part in a sport, we are wielding a proof that we are created fearfully and wonderfully (Psalm 139:14). Praise the Lord that He has opened our eyes to such a powerful truth. Let us use our bodies well and with daily thanksgiving, knowing that it is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and that it has been bought with a price. That price being the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. So, let's use our days and our bodies for the glory of God; trusting that one day, we will receive a glorified body through our risen Lord Jesus! Amen.

## Wine At Communion?



Holy Communion or the Lord's Table, 'has become a perpetual testimony to the authenticity of the Christian faith', as Dr Henry Morris observes. It is important to note what components are used for partaking in this act of remembrance. Some churches will happily use wine as the representation of the Lord's blood as first referred to in Matthew 26:27-29. However, if we are to refer to the text, at no point in this passage does it refer to 'wine' being used at the Lord's Supper. Only 'fruit of the vine' or grape juice, is referred to, as Dr Henry Morris rightly observed.

When we consult other Scriptural references to Communion, we do not see any reference to wine in any of them. Three times 'fruit of the vine' is used (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18), and 'cup' is used twelve times (Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17,20; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 1 Corinthians 11:25-28). Now consider that the term 'wine' is used many times in the AV/KJV Bible, two hundred and thirty-one times in fact. Yet none of those repeated references are ever used in relation to Communion/Lord's Table. Clearly, God is sending us a message here.

In the aforementioned two numbers of three and twelve (references to 'fruit of the vine' and 'cup' in AV/KJV Bible), we see a beautiful picture of the Lord and His atoning sacrifice at Calvary. Who else but Christ Jesus is referred to in Holy Scripture as 'the true vine' (John 15). All those who are redeemed in Christ, are branches of the true vine, and thus their labours for Christ and the Gospel are the fruit they bear in their lives. This image is referred to three times in reference to Holy Communion, thus reflecting the Triune nature of God and His thrice holiness. Thereby, through the true vine that is Christ Jesus, we are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). By this we mean that we are brought into the love of the Godhead through Christ Jesus. He whose sacrifice we remember with reverence and thanksgiving at Holy Communion/the Lord's Table.

Yet this deep and wonderful Scriptural link is lost if 'wine' is substituted for 'fruit of the vine'. For if we were to do this, we are substituting the purity of fresh grape juice, with all its well-known healthy properties, for a fermented liquid. Anything subject to fermentation is consistently referred to in Holy Scripture as a symbol of the presence of sin. Hence why this act of Communion was instituted at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (bread without yeast) and the Passover, as seen in Matthew 26:17. For a fermented fluid to be used alongside an unfermented bread would undermine the whole symbolism of the feast!

To inject 'wine' into the Scriptural references to Holy Communion/the Lord's Table, is to bring in a fluid that is symbolically linked to sin and corruption. How can this be in an act that is to remember the cost of how we are able to know communion with God, through the pure sacrifice of Christ Jesus at Calvary?

Furthermore, consider how the word 'cup' is referred to twelve times in passages relating to Holy Communion/the Lord's Table. The Lord Jesus asked the Father three times for the 'cup' of suffering to pass

from Him. Yet He obeyed the will of the Father, and in doing so, He completed the task of bearing the weight of God's wrath against our sins. Twelve consistently symbolises completion or perfection in Holy Scripture. So, Jesus' taking up of the 'cup' of suffering was complete (seen in the twelve references to 'cup' in passages relating to Holy Communion), and therefore we are again able to commune with God. All because Jesus suffered for our sins in our place. This gift we remember at the Lord's Table/Holy Communion.

When we study carefully the depths of the Holy Bible, and we honour the Pure Word of God, we see heavenly wonders leap from the pages. We see that there are delicate patterns of God's love and redemptive grace, weaving in and out of each line of Holy Scripture. We see that each action of Christ Jesus was wonderfully purposeful. That purpose was to reveal the love of God towards repentant sinners such as you and I. How can we not adore such a gracious God?! Let us remember such heavenly wonders and approach the Lord's Table/Holy Communion with the reverence we are instructed to within God's Word.

### **Lessons From The Shunamite Woman - Part Three**

The bitterness of death and the joy of life reborn is witnessed in 2 Kings 4:29-37. The Shunamite woman had been blessed by God to embrace a much longed for son, only to cradle her child in her arms as he died. She had shown great strength of faith to hurry to the presence of the man of God that was Elisha, he who had spoken the blessing of the child she now mourned over. Having reached Elisha, the Shunamite woman poured out her broken heart to him. Her words repeated countless times over throughout time by grief filled parents unto the tender ear of the Lord God.

On seeing the heavy tears stream down the face of his great friend, she who had given him rest and shelter as he lived in service of God, Elisha is quick and purposeful to bring hope to her. So is the manner of the Lord God. He who moves swiftly to bring His peace to all His beloved. Those who rush to His aid in their hour of great suffering. Elisha commands his servant Gehazi to go quickly to the home of the Shunamite woman, and to take Elisha's staff with him. Gehazi is instructed to not be distracted in this task but go with utmost urgency. This is how the Lord Jesus moves to care for His redeemed friends, when they are in the midst of days of trouble. He strides with urgent haste to attend to our wounds; His heart fixed on bringing us the soothing balm that is His eternal peace.

The instruction to Gehazi continues, as Elisha instructs him that when he gets to the home of the Shunamite woman, he is to place Elisha's staff on the deceased child's face. A seemingly strange command to our mortal eyes, yet seen with the eyes of faith, a blurry image of the Gospel itself begins to emerge on the horizon. The staff was a picture of the Law, that which was sweeter than honey unto the Psalmist (Psalm 119:97-103). The hope being that this picture of the Law of God that was the staff of Elisha, may bring the sweetness of life back to the deceased child.

The Shunamite woman shows a clarity of thought that refuses to yield to grief. This is a curious but inescapable proof of a heart truly living in faith unto God. For whilst all other souls are lost to winds of sorrow, bitterness, confusion or anger in times of devastating loss, the true Christian pushes on with purpose. The tears will still flow, yet the mind is still sound (2 Timothy 1:7) as it rests in its exhaustion upon the power and love of God. An everlasting love that is preached to the spirit by the Holy Spirit Himself. The Comforter who rushes to our side in such moments of grief, and ministers to us of the love of God. By this heavenly witness, the Shunamite woman declares that she will not leave Elisha's side. She will see her faith through, even when great sadness would cause many to collapse into a pit of despair. She stands as a monument to us all today, that in such times of testing, we must rush to our Lord's feet and refuse to leave Him until we have our hearts rest again. We are to pursue Him and knock at the Door that is Christ Jesus. We are to do so with the fullness of our broken heart in truest hope that He will honour His promise. That promise that all those who seek Him will find Him, and His door of peace and hope will be opened to them (Matthew 7:7-8).

And so Gehazi rushes on to the body of the deceased child. He places the staff of Elisha upon the child's face, just as he had been instructed...and yet, nothing happens. Death is still the occupant of that room. For though the Law of God is sweeter than honey indeed, its sweetness is only known by a tongue of grace. Without grace, the Law of God condemns all who have sinned, leaving no hope for peace. For all fall short of the glory of God, for all have sinned. And the wages of our sin is death (Romans 6:23). And so, the staff, that picture of the Law, was weak in its task to restore life, just as we read in Romans 8:3. How likely confused and dejected was the heart of Gehazi at this sight. He had followed his master's instructions, but no life had returned to the child he knew well. So, it has been for many lives throughout history. Lives such as Martin Luther and John Wesley. Such lives had been lived in earnestness to enact the Law of God and appease His just wrath by holy living. Yet until grace had come upon their troubled brows, their tear strewn faces would find no rest from the burden of their sins. Grace had to come to them for their spirits to be restored to life. And so it is for every life, even the son of the Shunamite woman who laid cold in death upon the bed of Elisha.

Having caught up with his youthful servant, Elisha enters the room and sees the child still wrapped in the solemn chill of death. He instructs both the child's mother and Gehazi to leave the room, and he shuts the door after them. This points to the sacrifice of Christ Jesus at Calvary for the sins of the world. Death was to be confronted and overcome by Him and Him alone. No one else could enter this battle, for the battle is the Lord's (1 Samuel 17:47).

Elisha places his body, warm with life and faith in his Lord and God, and lays upon the cold and lifeless body of the child. His body matches the position of the deceased child, as Elisha seeks to give his own life to restore the life of the child. How this so amazingly speaks of Christ at Calvary. For His body, His Spirit, filled with eternal life as the Son of God, was placed against the dead, lifeless spirit of each of us. His breath He gave to revive us from our deadness of spirit, so that our souls may be warmed to newness of existence, just as the child received from Elisha.

Yet Elisha is but a picture of the sacrifice of Christ Jesus on the cross. Whereas the offering of Christ Jesus at Calvary was full and sufficient in but one act, Elisha needed to attend to the needs of the deceased child twice. Though we may find our hearts warmed, as the lifeless child was warmed by the body of Elisha, this is not enough to restore life unto a dead spirit before God. It must be a receiving of the Word of God as the words of life themselves. It must be a rebirth of the heart so that life can thrive where death once reigned.

And so, on the second attempt by Elisha, the child is restored to life! Before the child opens his eyes to restored life, he sneezes seven times. A curious picture of the perfection of removal of irritants to the life of the child; for this is the purpose of sneezing, to remove irritants from us. There surely is no greater irritant to life than the poison of sin! Yet in a heart reborn in Christ Jesus; in a soul found in the King of kings; and in a spirit risen to life by the eternal Living God, the great irritant that is our sins is fully removed from us! This fullness of purging of our sin, is seen in the seven sneezes of the child, with seven being the number of completeness and perfection. In this completeness of restoration, the child opened his eyes to life! So it is, that when we are reborn of heart, completely cleansed of our sins, our eyes are opened to life in Christ Jesus! A life filled with the love and promises of God, not just for these mortal days, but for all eternity!

With life restored, Elisha calls in the child's mother and his servant Gehazi. He lovingly invites the Shunamite woman to embrace her son, a son she thought was lost to death. Oh, how glorious will be the day when lives separated by death will be reunited in glory through Christ Jesus! The Shunamite woman does not rush to hug her son, but first gives thanks to Elisha and most of all unto the God who restored the life of her dear son. Let this be a testimony to each of us today. That when the Lord answers our heart broken prayers with glorious deeds, let us first give our truest thanks, our most reverent praise unto His grace and mercy. Then we are to delight in the gifts given unto us, and only then. And so, it was with this correct order of things, that the Shunamite woman's grief is wiped away.

Through this truly sorrow filled affair, the love of God had revealed itself to the Shunamite woman in mysterious ways. For it was her service to the will of God, along with her love lived towards the brethren, that meant she was rewarded with the gift of a much longed for son. This speaks of the honouring of the two great commandments given by our Lord (Matthew 22:40). Yet, that faithful service did not render her immune to

the pains and sorrows of mortal life. She, like many faithful servants of God, would experience bitter pains and great losses that would break many entirely.

However, in the sorrow and pain, she experienced the faithfulness of God for herself. A faithfulness that witnessed to her in the deepest pits of sadness and loss, that God was with her, and that her tears would be wiped away in His perfect timing. She learnt that God does not only give life but can restore it too. Now she knew by her own experience, that when she or her son went to the grave in years to come, it would be but a short while before they would be restored to one another through the grace of Christ Jesus.

### Why Do Birds Suddenly Appear...

As the lighter mornings emerge from their wintry slumber, I have been woken up frequently by the birds as they sing their morning chorus. Yet as my eyes creak open to follow the music stirring my ears, I see the dark night skies still peep through the gaps in the bedroom curtains. As I lay there somewhat bemused by nature's clunky timekeeping, I wonder why birds are singing to greet the morning when the rising sun remains an hour away?

Well, it turns out there is an amazing reason why birds sing to greet the morning when the darkness still surrounds them. Morning birdsong hits a particular frequency that stimulates the stomata in the bottom of a plant's leaf to let the plant start 'breathing' deeply. In other words, that frequency struck by the bird's song, is what triggers plant life to expand its respiratory processes for the day, by stimulating the leaf's pores or stomata to increase in size. This behaves much like those satisfying deep breaths of fresh air that can truly invigorate an awakening person after a night of rest.

By stimulating the stomata to increase its rates of respiration, the plant is ready to fully capitalise on the emerging light after many hours of darkness, thus maximising photosynthesis rates. Healthy plant life then sustains the insect world, a rich source of sustenance for birds alongside nuts and berries. This all takes place



with the alarm clock of nature that is birdsong. Also, isn't it amazing, that something as beautiful as birdsong, plays an important part of stimulating the production of what will prove to be the birds' nourishment. It's a wonderful physical reminder of Matthew 6:33!

But then this begs the question, how do birds know when the time is right to begin their morning chorus? Well, this is another remarkable demonstration of the complexity of design and intricacy of relationships between ecosystems. Birds know when to start their morning song through their internal circadian rhythms. These are triggered by low melatonin levels after a long night of darkness. These in-built circadian rhythms, responding to low levels of melatonin in the bird's body, prompt the birds to sing.

These songs' purpose is two-fold. Firstly, they can be used to establish territory and secondly, they are used to attract a mate. What is also remarkable, is that all this takes place at the exact time of night when the air is at its calmest. This allows the song to carry further than what it would do just a couple of hours earlier or later.

What has been discovered from these studies of birdsong, is that the same frequency used by birds that stimulates the opening of a plant's stomata, has also been detected in classical music. Numerous studies have shown that plants grow significantly stronger and larger when they are exposed to classical music. This isn't due to their refined and cultured musical appreciation, but because the same frequencies are being hit as in

birdsong. As all classical music has a composer keenly working to strike those beautiful frequencies to stimulate life, so too does all Creation require a composer to write its symphony of existence.

It is truly incredible how God has built into nature, a living witness to the truth of Holy Scripture. The truth that it is by hearing the eternal melody of the spiritual birdsong that is the Gospel, that we have new life breathed into us by God. After such a long period of dwelling in spiritual darkness, it is the song of those who have been sent to relay the Gospel to all who will hear, that draws a soul into the light of Christ. It is that song of the Gospel, that prepares a heart to be reborn in Christ Jesus; He that is the light of the world (John 8:12).

## Why Was English The Language Chosen For The Kings James Bible?

Why did God bring together His Pure Word in English, during the Elizabethan era? Why wasn't German used, as this was the land that started the Reformation under Luther after all? Or perhaps Spanish, seeing that Spain was the dominant power of that era. God however, moved to use English, particularly Jacobean English as the foundation of the Bible that would bring the Gospel to the world's stage.

Many English professors will point out that Elizabethan era English, or Jacobean English as it can be known, was the height of the English language. The reason for this, was that Jacobean English had the most even split of its roots from other languages, compared to that of English from any other era. This allowed all advantages of each root language to come together to be fully felt equally, and to effectively cancel out any disadvantages of other root languages. The linguistic roots of Jacobean English are listed below:

### Roots on Jacobean English:

- 28-29 per cent Latin
- 28-29 per cent French
- 25-26 per cent Germanic/English
- 5 per cent Ancient Greek
- 1-2 per cent Dutch/Low German

Below is a table that briefly shows how Jacobean English, used its rich linguistic heritage to bring about a Bible translation that is by far the best and most effective language to reflect all the truths of Holy Scripture.

| Language       | Advantages   | Disadvantages  |
|----------------|--|--|
| <b>French</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for greater language density, cuts out unneeded language/punctuation (Bible does not include 'filler' details)</li> <li>• Allows for faster metaphorical connections and more poetic grasp</li> <li>• Enables effective translation of non-tangible ideas and traits throughout the Bible</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't have the linguistic measures to portray complex theological arguments easily</li> <li>• Lack of dense grammatical instruction doesn't provide steadfast enough definitions</li> </ul> |
| <b>German:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dense grasp of grammatical and sun tactical structure allows for easier comprehension</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But doesn't have the semantic weight, and can't pick up on poetic themes as easily as italic languages</li> </ul>   |

|              |   |  |
|--------------|---|--|
|              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also allows for faster reading without losing meaning (this is due to language density)</li> <li>• Allows for effortless reading</li> <li>• Complex theological arguments easier to understand</li> <li>• Easier to hold in memory than Italic Indo-European languages (French, Spanish, Italian)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written with very literal meanings, leaving out the beauty of the symbolism in the Latin Bible</li> </ul> |
| <b>Greek</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides nuanced distinctions between terminology for logic and ethics (as seen with <i>agapē</i>, <i>phileo</i>, <i>storge</i> and <i>eros</i> definitions of love)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inflected nature of Greek makes for an extremely clunky translation into English</li> </ul>               |
| <b>Dutch</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides everyday terminology, which enables for all to comprehend</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not contribute any theological or poetical meaning</li> </ul>  |

You can see, any one language’s disadvantages, is cancelled out by another language’s advantages, such as French & German. This is why God chose Jacobean English to have the world’s main Bible written in. It has the greatest linguistical balance, shown both through the precise linguistics and the maths involved. Such precision, combined with its poetic beauty and rhythms of language, makes the King James Bible the best of all Bible translations.

By Naomi & Jonathan Badger

### A Garden Of Sorrows

At Easter, we often think on the sufferings of Christ Jesus as being somewhat confined to the agony and humiliation of the Cross. However, the man of sorrows that was Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:3), experienced great sorrows hours before the horrors of the Cross. The stirrings of sorrows were emerging in the Last Supper, as we read in Luke 22:15 of Christ’s earnestness to join His beloved disciples in their sharing of the Passover meal. Christ’s words, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer’, speak poignantly of a heart that is heavy with the knowledge of what will soon take place. Yet the repetition of ‘desire’ declares Christ’s unrelenting passion to teach, guide and protect His disciples, even in His closing hours with them. Such is the nature of Godly love, it seeks to better the weaker vessel, even at cost to itself.

Christ’s heart must have been heavy, to know that after three years of blessed fellowship with the twelve disciples, this was the last time He would break bread with them. How good the Lord is in that He does not share with us the knowledge of when shall be the last time we enjoy blessed moments in our mortal frames. There is a last time you will kiss your beloved. There is a last time you will say goodnight to your child. There is a last time you will share a meal with a loved one. There is a last time you will embrace someone dear to you. Yet the heartbreak of knowing that it is the last time, we are often spared in His grace. No such mercy was granted to the man of sorrows that is Jesus Christ, however. For He was appointed to know all the deepest miseries of the Curse for our sake, even though He was without fault.

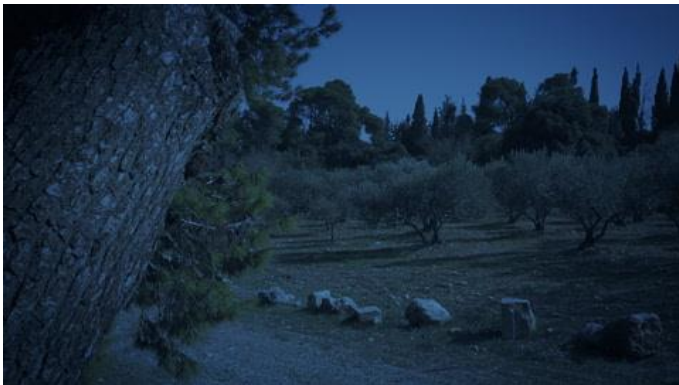
Now consider how this heavy knowledge was made truly bitter to the soul, as that last meal with His beloved disciples was marred by the presence of a traitor. What awful unease of spirit would have plagued Jesus at the

table. Knowing the horrors that were soon to come to Him, He could not truly rest in the blessed time of fellowship, for the devil was in the midst of them. Whilst eleven faithful disciples were dining with their Lord, unaware of the truly evil presence amongst them, Jesus knew that presence well. That traitor was of course, the cursed Judas Iscariot.

Judas had been entrusted to be one of the twelve disciples, and so would've seen for himself the power, truth, love, grace, mercy of Jesus every day for three years. Judas appears to have been the most unlikely of candidates for betrayal. As Spurgeon noted, Judas was not impulsive and hot headed like Peter. He wasn't overtly ambitious like the sons of Zebedee that were James and John. He appeared calm, consistent, sensible, and responsible, so much so that he was entrusted with the groups limited funds. Yet, as Jesus noted, Judas was a devil from the start.

So as the twelve and Jesus dined together for the last time, Judas would stretch out his hand to dip his food in the dish at the same moment as Jesus. A seemingly innocuous act that revealed the desire of Satan that lurked within the body of Judas. A desire to be as God (Isaiah 14:14), a desire to be exalted as God that had caused Satan's casting from Heaven. How the eyes of Christ and Judas would've likely met at that moment. When the meekness of Christ Jesus stared back at a soul given over to true evil. If there were any hope of remorse to be stirred within the heart of Judas, here was a time to seize it! Judas would've likely gazed into the eyes of He who is mercy, grace and love. Yet, Judas' eyes were blinded by the evil of his sins of pride and greed that had allowed the entry of Satan in the first place.

The traitor revealed, Judas is instructed to do what he must do quickly. It is the will of God that Judas should betray Christ Jesus, yet the pain of seeing one who had seen the embodiment of God turn away from Him, would've still no doubt have burnt heavily in Jesus' heart. Jesus would've known the soon to be horrific demise of his once disciple, and yet despite Judas' treachery, Christ would've taken no joy in it (Ezekiel 33:11).



And so, the remaining disciples and Jesus left the upper room and walked the short distance to the Garden of Gethsemane, having sung psalms of praise and thankfulness to God. Gethsemane was a familiar retreat for the Lord. Many times, He had found refreshment from His physical fatigue in the flesh of man in those shaded steps. Yet that night, His peace would be severely assaulted. Assaulted like no other soul has endured before or since. It was a fitting location of an olive press, that the Son of God would be crushed in spirit by the agonies of what was soon to

come to Him. The strain upon His mortal shoulders caused Him to sweat great drops of blood, as He sought a means of stepping away from drinking the bitter cup before Him. A cup filled with the full wrath of God towards the sins of the world. The strain upon His mortal frame was beyond measure, and so a ministering angel was sent to strengthen Him. With His body laid low and exhausted under the spiritual strain, His face already carrying His precious blood from the sweat released in His sufferings, He took up the cup of suffering that the Father had appointed unto Him. Oh, what manner of strength is this! To endure such miseries! To know such agony of body and soul to be laid flat out in suffering; only to march on with unrelenting love and obedience to the eternal will of the Father! Surely here, in Gethsemane, we witness the fullness of the nature of the God-Man that is Jesus Christ, in action! The full knowledge of the sufferings of man, yet the full power and strength of Almighty God, come together to march on to the securing of salvation for the repentant heart!

Whilst this epic act of God was unfolding, the disciples had fallen asleep in their weakness of the flesh. How their Lord suffered whilst they rested. How poignant an act took place in the garden that would reflect the nature of Saviour and sinner through the generations. Whilst we sleep on in the weakness of our sins, Christ suffered for us, so that we might awake not to death everlasting, but unto life eternal!

So, our Lord suffered so greatly in a place of where peace should have reigned. Yet as the first Adam failed in his obedience to the will of God in a garden, the last Adam would succeed in a garden. In those few short

hours, Christ Jesus had suffered so much pain and agony of heart that the mortal mind cannot even begin to fathom it! Yet, by His strength; by His faithfulness; by His righteousness; by His everlasting love, He stepped forward through the miseries and took up the bitter cup of the full wrath of God, for your sins and mine. He would drink that cup deeply. Missing no drop, for each drop was to be a redeemed sinner, appointed to everlasting glory by the grace of God. Oh, how He was crushed in heart like the humble olive in Gethsemane! Yet the crushing of an olive is done to release its precious oil. An oil used throughout all the kingly line of Israel, to anoint the chosen King. In Gethsemane, the heraldry of a King was erected on the horizons of eternity. By His grace, we will look upon that banner that are the eyes of our Redeemer, for He lives, just as Job foretold oh so long ago!

Christ Jesus spent His final moments in Gethsemane with renewed peace. Having found refreshment in the shady steps of the garden for many years, He would walk out of its grounds with a heart fixed on the joy set before Him. Having refused to deny the cup of suffering that was His to bear in our place, His resolve to open the gates of Heaven through Himself was certain. When asked by those sent to arrest Him like a thief, which of He and His disciples was the one they called Jesus, He strode forward and spoke as He had done to Moses in the burning bush. Those blessed words of "I am..", would be heard by mortal man once more (John 18:5). Here, in the garden, Jesus stepped forward into the battle to guard His beloved disciples. A mighty act of love that again, the first Adam failed to enact in the Garden of Eden. Yet when the first Adam failed in his task of protecting Eve, God gave a spiritual kiss of hope to the souls of mankind, when He promised a deliverer would come to redeem the repentant of heart (Genesis 3:15). When the last Adam succeeded in protecting His beloved in a garden, He received a traitorous kiss to His cheek that would've teared deep into His heart. The pure and loving Creator who had shown only love and provision to Judas, was to be betrayed with the sweetest of expressions of the mortal frame, a kiss. Oh, how putrid is the nature of sin in that it corrupts even the most gentle and pure expressions of love!

The sight of such treachery and the callous nature of the taking of the Good Shepherd enraged the disciple, Peter. His fiery temper was set alight at the injustice he was bearing witness to, and so he swung his sword with clumsiness. The blow cut off the ear of one of those sent to arrest his blessed Master. Who could know even the pain of the Master when He saw His disciple act in such a violent manner! Had His dear friend learnt nothing in His time at the feet of his Lord? Had not His calm manner spoken of His authority over all that was taking place in the garden that night? Had not His meekness in the face of such aggression displayed His power of it all? Peter had witnessed Him stop mighty tempests with a word. Peter had witnessed Him heal countless lives riddled with all manner of physical miseries. Peter had seen those tormented with devils be released from their chains by the command of the Lord. Peter had seen Him restore life to Lazarus. So what need had the Lord of Peter's sword at this hour?! It was not purity of love that moved Peter's arm to strike, but rage and fear. We in our frail knowledge of love may deem Peter's act motivated purely by his love of his Master, but love does not move so. Love and fear cannot move together in sweetness of union. One resists the presence of the other, though its passions can appear similar to the Fallen eye. The purity of Godly love casts out fear. Such is the love of God, pure. It was this love of God that Christ had not only displayed to Peter for three years, but also was in Himself! To see it forgotten so quickly when tested must have further troubled the heart of Jesus in the moment.

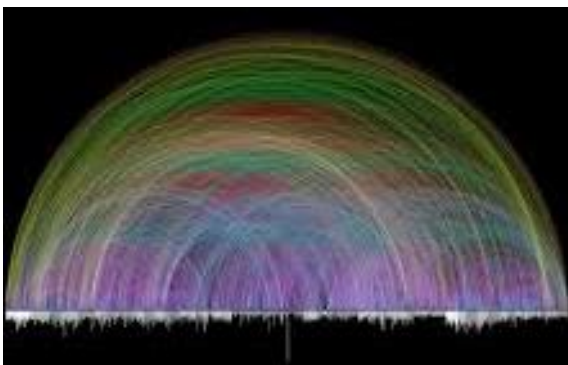
However, Christ Jesus was fixed on the task to come. His peace was assured, knowing that though suffering would come, triumph would soon follow it. Christ was resolved to secure that love He had known with the Father and the Holy Ghost from eternity past, so that one day, Peter would know it for himself. One day, Peter would know for himself the purity of the love of God, so that no longer would he act in such fearful ways. Yet to know this precious gift, Peter must hear the message of forgiveness. This message that was to be relayed to the heart of Peter via the ear of hearing, was symbolised in the healing of Malchus' ear. He whose ear had been cut off by the wild swing of Peter's sword, was restored by the power of Christ Jesus. So, a lasting message was given to Peter, and to all through the generations, that rage and fear will seek to cut off the way to hearing the good news of the Gospel. Yet it is by the power of God, that the ear of our hearts is pricked by the Word of God, so that we can know for ourselves the power of Christ's grace. This message was given through the healing of an enemy, not a friend. Christ lived His words as He made whole one who had come to arrest Him. Has he not done the same to countless lives through the generations of humanity?! He has made whole those who have often come to Him in anger and fear of heart, such is His grace! How vile we are of nature,

how unlike the blessed Lord Jesus we are when we give such cruel words and bitter deeds back towards those who seek to harm us in their ignorance. We often return evil with evil, whilst Christ returned evil with healing. I cannot see another God so mighty in His love, so glorious in His ways in all the gods of time and history!!!

So, the Lord Jesus is taken away as captive from the garden, a place He loved to visit. Yet He went willingly, with a heart fixed on the task of the securing of eternity for all those that would believe on Him. He gave no struggle against the binding of His hands. As Issac went willingly to the site of his sacrifice all those centuries prior, so too did Jesus go, with a heart filled with hope and peace. Peace in that he was fulfilling the will of the Father. A will that was majestic and radiant in its love towards the world. And hope, that His sacrifice would be a full and final atoning sacrifice for your sins and mine. Hope, an assured and certain hope that by His shed blood, those who believed on Him throughout all the generations of mankind, would be washed clean of their sins. Hope, that death would have no claim to Him, and that He would take up His life, just as willingly as He would lay it down. Hope, that where He would soon be, in risen glory, He would lead all His beloved to join Him.

And with that heart of purpose, calmness, hope, love and courage, Jesus stepped out of Gethsemane a final time. A place that had seen Him enjoy blessed times of refreshing of spirit, and heavy times of immense sorrows of spirit. Such is the way of mortal life. We enjoy by the grace of God, blessed days of peace and happiness. Yet there are also days of great sorrows. One day we too will step out of this place, this world in which we dwell. We can also step out of it with purpose, calmness, hope, love and courage, just as our Lord did, because we know the way in which we step. We step in the footprints of our Lord Jesus, who has gone before us. He who stands in glory and has erected the flags of that glory in Heaven for us to look towards and see the way home. Those flags cannot be seen with the eyes of the flesh, but my goodness they are visible to the faithful eyes of the renewed spirit in Christ Jesus! Press on dear brother, march on faithful sister, and keep those eyes fixed on that happy banner of your mighty Lord! For it reads 'He is risen!' And by those words fixed for all eternity, so too will you rise again to glory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Rainbow Of Truth



Take a look at the picture to the left. It's striking isn't it. The trails of colour arcing beautifully, leaving a colourful rainbow made up a many thousands of vibrant threads. What would you think if I told you that colourful scene was not some piece of modern art, but was a visual representation of Biblical truth? You see the image of this thread filled rainbow, is a colour-coded visual chart of all the cross-references made within the Holy Bible! Each colour rich line speaks of how God has fulfilled His Word time and time again throughout history. He has done this over the course of the compiling of His eternal word, which spanned some 1500 years of history; 40 different writers; all spread out over three different continents. Despite these immensities of differences of time, geography, cultures and people, all the pages of the Holy Bible converge to form one, consistent, logical narrative.

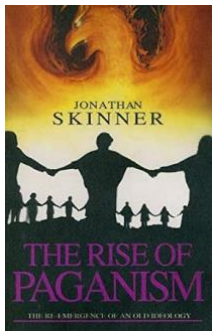
Each of the colourful lines in the picture above, shows us how those gulfs of time, geography, culture and persons, are all interwoven so perfectly by God. So perfectly in fact, that men living in Roman occupied Israel, could link their eyewitness accounts of the Son of God without any blemish or error, to men who lived centuries before them. Furthermore, a man who lived not long after the Tower of Babel, (Job) could refer to 'knowing his Redeemer lives', in a manner that was so exquisitely fulfilled in a distant land some 1800 years later, when Jesus Christ came rose from the tomb.

These are but two extremely brief examples of countless thousands of intricate Biblical cross-references, that declare that the Holy Bible is exactly that, Holy! Though physically written by men, it was authored by God,

and such incredible intricacies in consistency of narrative over such chasms of time, geography, culture and personnel, confirm this truth!

When we look at the amazing picture again considering all this, we see the beautiful rainbow in a different light. We do not see it as merely a visually pleasing sight, but rather a statement of truth. We can gaze upon it and see a wonderful glimpse of something eternal. That being the rainbow that stands over the very throne of God (Revelation 4:3). Wouldn't it be fitting in many ways, if that eternal splendour of light and colour at the throne of God, was actually made of the rich hues of His own eternal Word, much like the much-discussed picture reflects. How wonderful it would be, if the shimmering colours of that heavenly rainbow, were made up of the surging shafts of colours, all resulting from the glorious sharing of the interlinked truth of His Pure Word! How eternity would then have a majestic witness of the unique truth of the Word of God forever! How beautiful it would be then, that when we gazed upon the throne of our Lord and God, we could forever gaze upon the stunning effects of His Pure Word. For it was by that same Pure Word, that we came to know Him. We will find out such mysteries in Heaven. I for one, cannot wait to be amazed by what glories He will show all His redeemed.

## Resource Corner



### The Rise Of Paganism

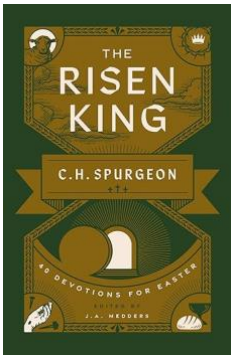
Cataclysmic changes are occurring in our society - and at a rate that is astounding. The religious and spiritual outlook of our generation is undergoing seismic shifts that would have been undreamt of a few decades ago. People are becoming spiritually hungry, but instead of looking in the direction of Christianity, or indeed even the major religions of the world, they are delving in areas almost unknown for at least one, if not two, thousand years. Citizens of the Western World are revisiting paganism - and in phenomenal numbers. This book examines its comeback.



### Look What's Missing

Publishers are removing things from new Bibles! Publishers of modern Bible versions have been removing words, phrases, and even whole verses, but their readers are often unaware of it. Few people know the Bible well enough to notice when something has been taken out. But the results are hard to believe. The removal of one tiny word turns Jesus into a liar. Callers into Christian talk shows have even used this to say that it's okay for a Christian to lie. After all, they say, Jesus did it. A verse that's completely missing from some of the most popular Bibles available today completely removes one of the basic doctrines found in every evangelical church. When David Daniels shows this one to people they just stand with their mouths open and say, "I can't believe it!" In another case, Jesus' own words are removed, taking out a famous phrase in which Jesus explains why He came to earth. People react with: "They took out Jesus words! How can they do that?" This information has been right under our noses for years, but no one has ever taken the time to cull through this many Bible versions and find the missing parts. Author David Daniels did the research and now releases his results for the Christian world to see what is really missing. How about your Bible? Is it on the list of Bibles with pieces taken out? You might be surprised when you look at what's missing.

Available from Amazon



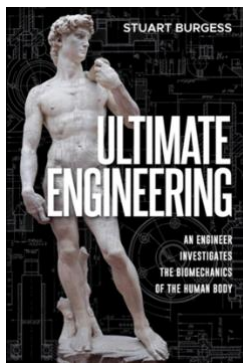
## The Risen King: 40 Devotions for Easter from C.H. Spurgeon

These short and profound reflections on the life and teaching of Jesus have been carefully compiled and edited by Jeff Medders from a collection of Spurgeon's sermons. Some of the language has been modernised to make them accessible to a wide range of readers.

Each day features a theme verse, rich content from the teaching of Spurgeon, a prayer and reflection questions, helping readers meditate on the cross in the run-up to Easter.

Whether you're new to Spurgeon or have enjoyed his writing for many years, you will find encouragement, inspiration and delight in the pages of this devotional.

Available from Amazon

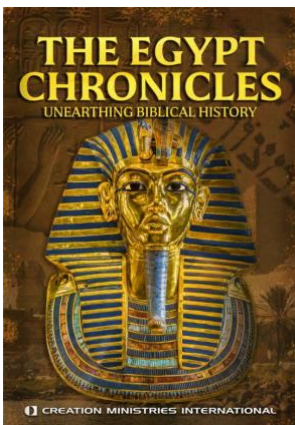


## Ultimate Engineering

Who first invented fibre optic cables? Or camera shutters? Or truss structures? Or double wishbone suspensions? Or block-style Roman arches? What about laser beams? As award-winning British engineer and designer Stuart Burgess reveals, the original inventor of these and countless other ingenious devices was no human inventor. Instead, the "first to market" was the designing force behind the living world.

Evolutionary theory predicts a living world crowded with substandard designs. But as Burgess shows in *Ultimate Engineering*, the latest science has discovered just the opposite—designs so advanced they are at the limit of the possible, precisely as proponents of the theory of intelligent design anticipated. As Burgess also details, he and other researchers are taking the discovery of these advanced designs and using them to inspire fresh technological breakthroughs—a revolution known as biomimetics.

Available from Answers in Genesis UK



## Egypt Chronicles - 7 video Unlimited Streaming pack

Ancient Egypt stands as one of history's most magnificent civilizations and provides one of the Bible's most important backdrops. Discover how monuments, inscriptions, and artifacts from the land of the pharaohs confirm Scripture's reliability. Across seven engaging sessions, Gary Bates, Keaton Halley, and Dr. Robert Carter guide you through more than 1,500 years of Egyptian history. Each episode is packed with archaeological insights that illuminate Scripture: from the Hebrews' arrival and enslavement, through the dramatic Exodus and conquest of Canaan, to the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies in Egypt's final centuries before Christ.

Join us on this journey to discover how archaeology provides powerful evidence for the accuracy of Scripture!

### 1. Ancient Egypt and the Arrival of the Hebrews

Examine the compelling evidence connecting biblical history to ancient Egypt and discover how overlooked details about chariots, shepherds, and unnamed pharaohs reveal a dramatically different timeline that makes Scripture and archaeology finally align.

Presenter: Gary Bates, 50 min

### 2. The Amazing Engineering of Ancient Egypt

Join Dr. Robert Carter as he reveals how the Egyptians progressed from simple mud bricks to the Great Pyramid in just generations, moved 80-ton granite blocks down the Nile, and aligned temples to capture

sunlight on specific days, all while modern science still struggles to explain their methods.  
Presenter: Dr Robert Carter, 60min

### **3. The Length of the Hebrew Sojourn**

Discover how a careful examination of biblical genealogies, Egyptian archaeological evidence, and a crucial verse in Galatians reveals a timeline that resolves one of the most debated questions in biblical chronology.  
Presenter: Dr Robert Carter, 53 min

### **4. The Exodus Pharaohs Revealed**

Explore how Egyptian chronology, royal succession records, and archaeological evidence converge to identify the specific pharaohs who enslaved the Hebrews, attempted to kill Moses, and faced the ten plagues.  
Presenter: Gary Bates, 58 min

### **5. Evidence for the Hebrew Conquest from Israel and Egypt**

Uncover how Egyptian records, ancient correspondence between Canaanite kings, and archaeological discoveries from the Late Bronze Age reveal the history of the Hebrews after their Exodus from Egypt.  
Presenter: Keaton Halley, 61 min

### **6. The Named Pharaohs of the Bible**

Discover how the five pharaohs explicitly named in Scripture provide crucial anchor points that synchronize Egyptian chronology with biblical events, and how important archaeological findings are reshaping our understanding of ancient Egypt.  
Presenter: Dr Robert Carter, 54 min

### **7. Daniel's Prophecies Confirmed in Egypt**

Discover how Daniel chapter 11 contains detailed prophecies about the Ptolemaic pharaohs who ruled Egypt between the Old and New Testaments, and how temples, inscriptions, and artifacts throughout Egypt bring these obscure biblical references to life.  
Presenter: Keaton Halley, 63 min

Available from Creation Ministries International UK



### **Biblical Foods (YouTube Video)**

[https://youtu.be/IvZUx3Ap\\_MM?si=G8nBrt4fP-rK6omW](https://youtu.be/IvZUx3Ap_MM?si=G8nBrt4fP-rK6omW)

The common grace of the Lord unto all people, is clearly seen throughout the amazing array of foods He provides. This video explores many of the foods listed in the Holy Bible and provides a short overview of the many nutritional benefits that each offering provides. Whilst these foods may not 'heal' instantly, they can certainly help look after the physical body that we are called to care for by the Lord.

**Truthtowonder.org**