

TTW Truth To Wonder

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Welcome

At the time of writing this piece, the sun is slowly warming what has been a surprisingly cold start to an early Spring day. Whilst the morning had started brightly, the tail end of a wintry chill had left it's touch on car windscreens with a thin but evident blanket of frost.

Such a scene of a slow but deliberate warming of inhospitable life reminded me of how many times in life Our Lord also moves slowly (at least to our time constrained estimations) but deliberately in bringing the welcome warmth of gracious gifts into our days. It is that very deliberateness about the movements of Our Lord that we all too often forget or doubt. Frequently in our poorly constructed imaginings of the nature of God, we appeal to Him in prayer for help or guidance in a manner as though we are informing Him of our predicament. Prayer is not an informing action, we are not providing new knowledge to God. Instead we are displaying our willing submission to Him; we are acting upon our faith and trust in Him by sharing our inner most thoughts/hopes/worries with Him. Thereby we are displaying a deep love and trust in who He is not just what He can do.

Then the wonder begins, the mysteries of the movements of God begin to unfold as He sets out to answer the heartfelt prayers of those who love Him for His glorious nature. The deliberateness and purposefulness of His movements stir our hearts to look for His gracious hand at work and we begin to feel His love and provision and not just see it. This is much like the warming sun of which we opened with earlier. Though the sunlight was evident, the cold was bitter and so doubt as to the ability of the warmth of the suns rays began to cast doubt and trouble hopes for the days forecast. So we too see the how God is so very good to so many of us; we see His provisions for others; we see the glory of His Creation; yet we feel cold in our bones as though untouched by the warmth of His presence. But we are to wait on the Lord, knowing that He is purposeful in the fulfilment of His will. We are to trust His goodness, His faithfulness, knowing that by waiting on the fullness of time according to His will, we shall feel the welcome warmth of His blessings once more.

By living in such a manner, we are brought on from strength to strength by the Holy Ghost, so that we again adore Him for who He is not just what He can do. This is real bond, a real and vital love. Consider it this way; when someone asks you why you love your spouse, how do you reply? If you are like me you stumble for an eloquent answer. You can't describe 'why', yet you know

you do, that is under no doubt for you. There may be many attributes or characteristics you love and admire but no singular reason exists as to why. It is something deep within, a love that defies materialism.

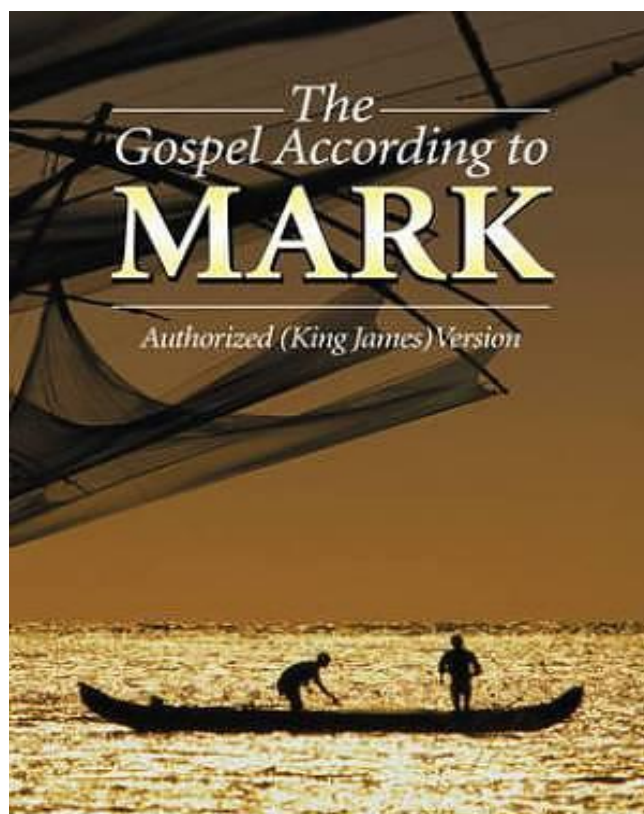
It is this same bond that the redeemed feel towards Jesus Christ. It is a deep and vital bond that you could spend all hours of the day describing and detailing and yet still you would know that you hadn't hit the mark. Nor could you, and you wouldn't want to. It is that very indescribable aspect of it that makes it so rare and valuable to you. It is this very thing that confuses the world. It is this very thing that other believers in Christ however, knowingly nod and smile at. They understand fully. They know His warmth, His life and how vital it is to them and that they share with the words of Peter, that if they were to turn and leave Him where else would they go? Jesus Christ alone has the words that lead to life.

So we are to trust in the faithfulness of God. We are to wait on the fullness of time in the fulfilment of His will. Yes this may be hard when cold and hard times are upon us but we are to be patient and to have faith that He will move all things for good for those who love Him, all to His eternal glory. Amen.

The Purposefulness of Christ – Part One

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the Gospels. It's concise narrative is packed with fascinating recordings of the actions of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is this sense of purpose that is the hallmark of a life led by the Holy Ghost. A life held with such intensity of purpose, ferocity of devotion and obedience to God that is a living and breathing testament to the whole world that Christianity is no intellectual assent or morality teaching. True scriptural Christian faith is powerful, purposeful, deliberate and strong, full of drive and action and not just empty ordinances, fine oratory, stirring music or philosophic meanderings. The Gospel of Mark is the unfolding of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ that sets the tone for all believers throughout all time. It is a message of urgency, direction, devotion and constant communion and dependency on God. Indeed the Gospel of Mark uses the word "immediately" or other similar

words at least 40 times, placing great emphasis on the urgency of the ministry of Christ. This urgency we must also reflect not just in easy words but in strong actions.



Whilst being the shortest of the Gospels, it is generally considered to be the oldest (written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D), with John Mark, son of Mary (Acts 12:12), a relative of Barnabas (Col 4:10) recognised as it's writer. Likely a disciple of Jesus but not one of the twelve, Mark also accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, later becoming a valuable aid to the Apostle Peter also.

The Book opens with a direct and powerful statement as to the very deity of Jesus Christ. Verse one makes it quite clear that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Here the foundation stone for all ministry work, all preaching is laid prominently by Mark; that Jesus is non other than the Son of God. I have heard an increasing number of preachers deliver their sermons in a manner that befits a spy thriller or murder mystery novel. They try to hook the listener with a tantalising question as to 'who is Jesus?' Then they add clue by clue as the sermon continues as though this is some great mystery to solve and that all the pieces need to be placed together before Poirot can work his magic and deduce that Jesus is the Son

of God. Such preachers would do well to mind the words of the opening of the Gospel of Mark. Clearly Mark is absolutely convicted and certain that Jesus is the Son of God as otherwise he wouldn't open his words with such a bold claim! It is this cast iron certainty that lends power and validity to all the words that then follow. Consider it in this manner; if you had a new boss at work and their opening line at a staff meeting was, "Hi, I suppose I'm your new boss, I have some experience in the role but um...any questions?" You wouldn't feel terribly confident in their abilities would you. This is not the tone set out here by Mark as he opens.

To further this confident opening, Mark doubles down on the confidence in the claim of Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, that he lays out how His ministry was prepared for as prophesied in the Old Testament, by the work of John the Baptist. Mark uses well known Scripture to confirm his opening statement as perfectly truthful and valid. He quotes Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3, as validations that John the Baptist was used as the preparation for the work of Jesus Christ. Let it be known at this juncture that no other book contains such specific prophecies that have been so perfectly fulfilled as does the Holy Bible. Therefore Mark is opening with two massive but completely assured statements: that Jesus Christ IS the Son of God and the He and He alone is the One that all the Old Testament prophets pointed towards. Purposefulness begins with clarity. This is not some Eastern mysticism that dictates that you can hopefully reach your goal by beginning from a vague, undefined starting point as it all ultimately ends in the same destination anyway. This is Satanic pantheistic lies. The goal of eternity in paradise with God is gained only by acknowledging from the outset that Jesus is His Only Begotten Son and that He alone is the way to salvation.



In verses 3 to 8 of Mark chapter 1, we see a brief focus on the ministry of John the Baptist. It is a concise but magnificent overview of how the entire purpose of John's work was to "prepare the way" for the Lord Jesus. We read of how the whole nation was aware of the preaching of John (verse 5) and how many came to be baptised by him as they confessed of their sins (verse 5). Yet we are to make note of just what his country famous preaching contained. Did it contain positivity messages or talk of worldly prosperity? No it didn't. Did he use popular culture such as music or theatrical performances to grab the attention of a busy and uninterested public? No he didn't. He spoke plainly of the path to salvation being purely through repentance of sin for the remission of sin. This is the manner of how the lost soul is to be reached and then led to salvation through saving faith in Jesus Christ. It is this plain, this simple and this clear.

To lend a visual aid to this already obvious theological statement, Mark gives us a description of what John the Baptist looked and dressed like and even what he ate. The spartan and functional manner of his attire and diet reflected the simple and unmistakable nature of his preaching. You could not mistake John the Baptist for another preacher and you could not mistake his message for any other. It is this singular devotion to the Word of God that elevates John to such levels that Jesus Himself declared that there is none greater than John the Baptist!

John's preaching was always fixed upon the One, "whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." (Verse 7) His entire ministry was a living and breathing fulfilment of his words towards his disciples that on the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, his own work, his own name must decrease so that His might increase. It is again this deliberateness of action that states with assurance of a life being moved by the Holy Ghost. It is a life that sees it's purpose and is joyful in it's usage by the hand of God because all is by Him and all is for Him.

So John the Baptist can speak in such conviction and assurance of mission as he does in verse 9 when he notes that yes he has baptised people with water, but Jesus Christ baptises with the fire

of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ alone has the power to purge all sin from a soul, as fire purges clean all that water misses. This is why the earth shall be judged with fire ultimately, as it will be a full and final purging of evil at last.

As we enter verses 9-11 of Mark chapter 1, we witness the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the displaying of the wonder of the Triune Godhead in fullness. As Jesus rises from the water, fulfilling all requirements in the fulfilment as His fleshly ministry, we see the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a gentle dove upon the Lord Jesus. This wondrous anointing of the Son for His soon to begin ministry unto all the world and for all ages of man.

Then we read of how the voice of the Father was heard to speak lovingly of His Son Jesus Christ, as He spoke those immortal words, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This declaration of love by The Father unto His Son is the first time the word love is used in the Gospel of Mark. Similarly it is also the event when the word 'love' is first used in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. God is setting out the definition of love within this very specific parameter. Love is being defined by God in these three instances (note three – a Hebrew technique to denote the utmost significance, power and importance of a point) as being displayed in the act of a sacrificial and obedient love. Indeed the first instance of the word 'love' being recorded in the Old Testament is with Abraham being told to offer his son Issac up as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). Godly love therefore is the offering up of itself for the betterment of another even at great cost to the giver. This is highlighted in the famous verse of John 3:16, a verse of which even many non-believers are aware. Therefore we see that love is specific, narrow and centred on obedience and sacrifice. Is this the 'love' we see today in our society? Sadly it is not so. 'Love' has been rebranded to be free, open and ultimately best displayed in the bettering and fulfilment of the self as opposed to the bettering of another whose in need. The two are at odds with each other, they are opposed and shall always be so. When a society has degraded the very essence of love and attempted to reconfigure it's heavenly delineation then you know that that culture is

directly against all that is at the very heart of God.

Thus in the this heavenly declaration of the epitome of love, we bear witness to the approval of the Father unto the Son for His mission, to seek and save the lost. It is the grand culmination of a long hoped for Saviour; a hope that has existed since the first promise of the coming Redeemer spoken of to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. What a glorious moment when the Godhead reveals the commencement of this earthly mission of the redemption of repentant souls.

Now we enter the temptation of Jesus in verses 12 and 13. Just two verses are used by Mark to cover this event, whereas Matthew took 11 and Luke used 13 to depict what took place in the wilderness. Yet the brevity of this recording does not diminish this great spiritual testing of Jesus by the devil, far from it. One could easily argue that in the brevity of this record, a powerful message is being relayed by Mark. This message being in the untouchable supremacy and sovereignty of Christ over even Satan. When there is a great titanic battle between two well matched adversaries, the pages can be filled with how the conflict ebbed and flowed. We need only think Homer's classic work The Iliad to find such an example. Yet when we consider the tempting of Jesus, we know from the accounts of Matthew and Luke how greatly tested Jesus was. However the concise assuredness of Mark's record on the event emphasises how in control of all Jesus truly is and that His righteousness, His purity, His holiness though tested, was never in doubt.



The barren wilderness of Israel

This does not cast a shadow on the hope Our Lord's stand against Satan can give to us in facing temptation. On the contrary; the assuredness and power of Christ should give us strength in sheer

abundance in that we can call upon that same divine strength in our of testing and be confident that HE will overcome for our good and His glory.

This victory over Satan was brought about by the 'driving' of Jesus into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. As Spurgeon noted, it is so often that soon after the moment of great exaltation and praise, we are then taken into a time of great trial and testing. So as it was for our Master, so it shall be for us also. However many of us are frequently caught in surprise that a brief period of rest and blessing is brought to an abrupt end. This is why, as it was with the Master, so shall it be with the servants.

The immediacy of the driving of Jesus into the wilderness again speaks of the urgency of the ministry and fleshly life of Jesus. No time is wasted, for as the anointing is accomplished and the blessing given the work is engaged in and the suitability for the work is tested. For forty days Our Lord is tested. How many of us stumble into sin after forty minutes of testing and tempting. Let us be humbled by this awareness and sing of the power and glory of Our Lord Jesus as we see our own great failings.

It is only in Mark's account of the tempting of Jesus that we read of wild beasts in the wilderness around Jesus. It's this matter of fact style that adds to the weight of the burden experienced by Jesus in the wilderness. Not only was He undergoing enormous spiritual strain from the no less than Satan himself, but He was also physically exhausted from exposure and fasting, also going with being surrounded by ferocious wild beasts who would be happy to devour such physically weak looking prey. Mark conveys all of this in just two verses. It's this brilliant brevity and bluntness that should make us truly ashamed when we dare to say to God, 'you don't understand what it's like to be under these pressures and strains.' We should hang our heads in great shame, as we all felt and thought such things at some point in life. Yet how patient and loving Our Saviour is to us. The truth is WE don't understand the pressures and strain HE experienced, all for our deliverance. THAT is love is action. That is a love you can depend on, lean on, run to and find peace in.

By Jonathan Badger

A Fever Of The Spirit – Part One

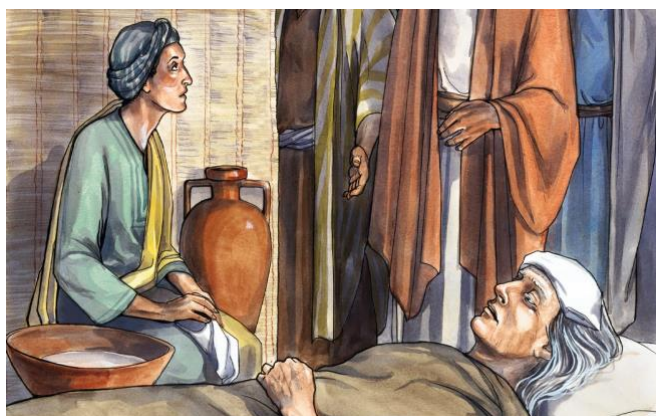
Luke 4:38-39 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Let us come together, readers, and consider one of the many remarkable miracles performed by the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry. The account of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, as recounted in the Gospel of Luke, is covered in only two verses but, as is often the case in the Holy Scriptures, we'll find that there is much to build us up and teach us in but a few brief words.

It is important, before we go further, that we remember the significance of the Miracles, and that we are to hold on to the recording of them as the documentation of real historical facts. Many opponents of scripture (some inside of the church, never mind outside) would be quick to dismiss the Miracles as being against nature, suggesting they couldn't possibly have happened, perhaps that they were mere legendary tales that we can learn some nice lessons from, but they're not to be taken seriously. Such attitudes, similar to those shown by those that try and explain away the Book of Genesis as fables, and not documented history, do much to undermine the authority of Scripture and, worse still, the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us remember that Jesus was very God as well as very man, and it is not at all unreasonable to accept that he could intervene in the natural laws and order of things to demonstrate his divine power.

Furthermore, much of the New Testament is historical witness from those that were there. Peter himself says in his sermon in the second chapter of Acts "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs." Or as John says in the

20th chapter of his Gospel “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that by believing ye might have life through His name.” The miracles are historical fact, demonstrations of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we should come to them with a sense of awe and reverence, humbled that our Lord would condescend to us in this way, and works such tremendous works in the presence of fallen, sinful man.



Peter's mother in law sick with a great fever

The Miracles that were recorded, much like the Parables of the Lord, were done so for teaching us and building us up. This particular one was recorded in three of the four Gospels, as we also find it in Mark chapter 1 and Matthew chapter 8. It therefore deserves close attention and meditation if we are to truly profit by it.

As we consider the cure of Peter's mother-in-law, let us first note who it was that was sick; Simon Peter's mother-in-law. A discerning reader of scripture would spot quite quickly here that Peter was married. The disciple whom the Roman Catholic Church, so dogmatic in their insistence on celibacy among the clergy, insisted was the first Pope! The alleged first Pope of a religion that promotes celibacy was, in fact, a married man. The errors of the Roman Catholic Church could well warrant a long article in itself, but that particular point is well worth a mention in passing.

While we read much in scripture of our Lord healing those he encountered during his travels, this was a case of the disciples seeking the healing hand of our Lord to help one of their own. As we read in verse 38 “They besought him for her”. The apostles knew of the saving power of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they had seen it first-hand. So they sought to bring the great physician to a sick patient that was near and dear to them. We would do well in our own lives to continually pray for deliverance for our close friends and family in their own sickness, be it poor physical health, or in spiritual infirmity, as we know from our own personal experience that the Lord Jesus Christ has great power to save. Do we pray enough for those close to us that are outside of Christ? Do we do enough to try and bring them to Christ through personal witness? Are we doing all we can to bring others to Christ, or are we relying on somebody else to do it? I remember all too well that before I was saved, Jonathan witnessed to me ardently for many years. I specifically recall, not long after he and Donna were very first married, we lived together for a time and, as I would be off out in town with work colleagues of a weekend, getting up all kinds of sinful activity, he would regularly witness to me and challenge me on my conduct and behaviour. He would also frequently invite me in to join he and Donna for prayers and reading of the scripture on a Sunday morning. While I probably found it a bit of a nuisance at the time, when the Lord turned my heart and mind towards Him, a lot Jonathan's witnessing from years ago came back to my mind. Are we being a bit of a nuisance to those that are outside of Christ? We should ever be praying for the spiritually sick and witnessing to them, as we never know when that seed we plant might be watered by the Lord and made to grow into saving faith.

Let us now go on to consider the sickness itself. Luke, who let's not forget was a physician, goes so far as to describe it as a great fever. And such a condition shows a most vivid picture of unsaved men and women living in their sin, in need of the great physician Himself, the physician of souls.

A fever such as Peter's mother-in-law had would likely display certain symptoms, which we find can be ever-present in those that are outside of Christ. The first symptom to consider is weakness. One can imagine a state of extreme physical weakness had gripped Peter's mother-in-law, and a great spiritual weakness can frequently be found in those that need a Saviour. When a man is spiritually weak, he has not the defences to ward off Satan and his legions, and that is when sin can infect him. Beyond God's common grace, he has no shield to protect him from the Prince of this World. Consider all the sins the Apostle Paul lists in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans...

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity..."

And Paul doesn't stop there. When a man is spiritually weak, he is susceptible to all of these and then some. We don't have to go far to see men and women helplessly under the influence of such sinful behaviour. Even those of us that know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour must daily ask in prayer to be delivered from such a condition of weakness of which we'd find many in the unsaved world.



Another symptom of a fever is restlessness. One could imagine Peter's mother-in-law in a restless state, perhaps tossing and turning as the fever grips her. And does this not speak to us of the restlessness that grips modern man as he lurches from one pleasure to the next? Be it the old vices of gambling and the drink, or more recent crazes like yoga, people are quick to throw themselves into a new pleasure that he thinks will give him that satisfaction he's after. But these are all but fleeting fancies and entertainments, they

offer no long-term cure for the restlessness of a lost soul. We all know people, don't we, who are running from one craze to the next, always seeking that joy that they can't ever seem to truly find.

On a similar note, a great fever can bring with it a tremendous thirst. Deep down in the heart of every man there is a craving, a thirst, that only the Lord Himself can quench. We all have the inner need to acknowledge and obey a power greater than ourselves. In a mania to quench that thirst, man has worshipped different things as God. Be it knowledge, or philosophy, or in recent times, man himself, as people seek to make themselves their own Gods, people go to great lengths to cure their burning throats, in a spiritual sense. One of the great troubles in our western world is this idea that everybody can be whatever they want to be, which sees many turn from the truths taught in scripture, as people start to call good evil and evil good. Is not this all just man trying to elevate himself above his maker, to quench that inner thirst that grips him so terribly?

And lastly, as to the symptoms of fever – much like any serious illness, it can bring a depression. As one doesn't know why they are as they are, nor when a cure may come, a real funk can kick in. We see as such today with people wondering why the world is as it is. People know that the world is broken, that things aren't right, and this can bring people to a confused and depressed state, wondering just what can be done to fix things and bring back a natural and right order. As people switch on the news right now and see the staggering footage of warfare in Eastern Europe, many might wonder just how things can come to this, how man can behave in such a way to man, and how things could get this broken. Oh, that they would understand that the world has been broken a long time, since the fall, and there is only one fix.

I'm sure we all know people that might be suffering from one or two of these symptoms, but with all four of them (weakness, restlessness, thirst depression) we see a great fever, as Luke puts it, and there are many people in this condition

today, that need a physician for their souls. Where then, are they to find a cure? Where are they to find deliverance from this debilitating spiritual fever? Lord willing, we will pick back up next month and consider Him who is the only cure for this great spiritual fever.

By John Sivewright

For Them That Honour Me I Will Honour

These are the words of Our Lord spoken in 1 Samuel 2:30. The words have been a strengthening comfort for many a believer as they consider whether or not they are to engage in spiritual battle against the powers and principalities of the air for Our Lord's namesake. I have thought of these blessed words on many occasions where I have sought a way out of confrontation, only for the Holy Spirit to remind me of the truth of God's word.

One such battle came and found me a few weeks ago when I collected my youngest daughter from school. After months of great thought, research and much prayer, my wife and I selected the school in question as it is a 'faith school' (not that that means much today sadly) attached to a local church. As part of my research on the school, I found that they were being taken over by a new Academic Trust. Curious as to the stance of this new Trust having been a Schools Trustee myself in the past, I was encouraged to read of their Biblical stance. I reached out to the main office of the Trust seeking further clarification on their mission statement and was very surprised to receive a swift email back from none other than the Trust CEO. He gave his personal reassurance as to the stance of the Trust and spoke of his own faith and how he valued support in his role from Christian families within the schools under his remit.

Several months passed from this encouraging interaction and as previously mentioned, a potential spiritual conflict arose one afternoon of picking my youngest daughter up from school. As

we walked away from the school grounds she informed me that they had done yoga in school. Now anyone who knows anything more than the mainstream marketed pitch that yoga is just 'stretching' is more than aware that yoga is an Occultic practice. Even the simplest stretches and poses are key Hindu worship practices as the body is contorted into positions designed to unlock the spirit and invite other entities to take hold.

So on returning home I immediately set about emailing the acting headmaster of the school laying out my objections to yoga being used in a Christian school. Yet the matter would not settle in the mind or heart as it was no light matter and of great spiritual importance! After much prayer on the matter, the following morning The Lord provided so wonderfully. My daughter's class teacher was off that day but the Head of Year was on the gates to greet parents. I approached him and spoke respectfully as to my objections to my daughter engaging in yoga. As I prepared myself for the irritated response that I was convinced was soon to flow from the staff member, I was stunned to hear him respond that it was absolutely no problem to have her removed from the activity and that he completely understood. After a briefest of pauses he then continued and said that he would just remove it from the teaching content in general! I was amazed at this announcement and just so greatly thankful unto God as it was clearly His hand at work!



Yoga – it's not just stretching!

That same day I collected my daughter from school and the same Head of Year thanked me for my highlighting of the issue and commented that

some of the staff weren't comfortable with having yoga in school and that my objection had highlighted why they felt uncomfortable.

The following day I received an email from the acting Headmaster which contained an apology that yoga (cosmic yoga no less, the devil is always upping the levels of evil once a foothold is established under subtle pretences) had been used in school and that he had issued an instruction that it was not to be used in the whole school. Again I was amazed at this response but equally so very humbled by God's power and provision as He had not only moved to keep my youngest safe from this Occultic practice but had moved to keep all the children in the school safe from it's reach.

I hope this acts as an encouragement to all reading this, that when a stand is made for the Lord and His Word, He moves mightily and cares for His own. It is so very, very easy to look at this world with it's rapidly escalating evil and determine, 'what's the point' in speaking up for God as no one is going to listen. Our Lord doesn't need our witness to bring glory to His name, but He has ordained that it is through our humble witness that others may be reached and that they too might find salvation in Jesus Christ. Honour the Lord God with your words and your deeds and He will honour you. God bless and fight the good fight.

By Jonathan Badger

The Fullness Of Love Displayed

As we enter the month of April many thoughts are rightly turned to the message of the Cross of Christ and His full and final sacrifice on Calvary Hill two thousand years ago for the sins of mankind. We attend Easter services and mark the wondrous grace of God in giving His only begotten Son to suffer the wages of sinful mankind so that we might be restored unto Him in eternal fellowship and love. Minds are correctly guided to think of the utter torment and agony that Jesus experienced on the cross, and how this torment

began hours before even in the heavy sorrows felt in the Garden of Gethsemane as He sweat blood from the strain of what He knew was soon to take place.

We are again rightly told/reminded at this time of the pain and grief that the Father knew in pouring out His righteous anger on His Son so that we sinful wretches might escape this terrifying judgement through saving faith in Christ Jesus.

Yet how many times do we stop and think of the unbreakable, eternal love that was on full display at this great and terrible hour? We must stop and ponder on the unfathomable depths of love known between the Father and the Son at this most horrific time. How the Father loved the Son so mightily as He watched Him give up His life in trust of His most perfect will, obeying through to the giving up of the spirit. We can't begin to comprehend the eternity stretching love that would've coursed through the heart of The Father for His only begotten Son at this moment.



Similarly think deeply on how the Son, Jesus Christ, loved the Father so very dearly even through the utter agony and torment that no soul save Him shall ever experience, as He adored the plan of redemption of His Creation crafted in the mists of eternity within the heart of the triune God. Think on how He loved the Father so tenderly yet so fiercely as He knew that His life would be restored to Him and that all power and glory would be gifted unto Him in joyous exaltation by His Own Father.

How can the mind of man begin to understand the fullness of emotion felt within the Godhead during this Easter time two thousand years ago? How can

we comprehend a God who acted so justly with sin, moved so graciously through the providing of the eternal blood of the Son, knew such sorrow that even the earth itself trembled in heartbreak; yet all the while loved so deeply and so joyfully as it looked on at the fulfilment of the plan of salvation through the atonement made by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

This is the wondrous joy that we are to have as Christians, followers of Christ Jesus. We have a God who knows all the fullness of emotions in a manner and depth that the human heart and mind even in its most pained, sorrowful, or even its most joyful and full of love cannot begin to understand in this fallen existence. At no point do we ever go to a God who does not know, does not understand or has felt first hand all that troubles or even delights our heart. This is the God of the Bible, a knowable God, far from the cold, unknowable, unreachable gods of all other false religions.

If you do not know this mighty yet knowable God of whom I speak then turn to His Word, the Holy Bible and read of Him. Read of Jesus Christ, the full revelation of the Godhead and see the depths of love of which you are held by Him. See of how God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that through belief in Him, you might not perish but gain everlasting life (John 3:16).

We all long for fullness, that sense of completeness and purposefulness. We all desire to be valued and loved. Here is the greatest value that can be ever given to a life, the pure blood of Jesus Christ offered in sacrifice for you, so that you might escape hell and join Him in paradise. This is the value placed upon you, not by your skills or accomplishments but by the sheer love of God. So come to Him now, call upon Him for forgiveness of your sins, turn away from the wicked life you have led and believe in the risen Lord Jesus, the One who conquered death so that you too might live eternally as He does in power in glory.

So whilst you may be cracking open several chocolate Easter eggs, stop and ask God to crack open the darkness of your sinful heart so that the

light of Christ might fill it with the fullness of His love and give you life, a life filled with abundance, the abundance of heaven, all to the glory of God.

By Jonathan Badger

Spring Chaos

The American city of Miami, sees a huge influx of young students at this time of year for the notorious 'Spring-break', a time of wild parties and riotous behaviour. Whilst this 'tradition' has been an annual event in Miami for decades, this year has witnessed a deeply troubling shift in the nature of the event.

Reported on Sky News on 22nd March, Miami city officials had been forced to announce a state of emergency with the imposing of a city wide curfew in an attempt to control the chaotic scenes.

Last year 1000 arrests were made during the Spring-break period due to the excessive drinking and violence amongst the young party goers. Yet this year has seen an escalation on even these scenes hence the enforced city wide curfew. At the point of writing, five people had been injured in shootings with over 100 guns seized by police. All this took place with over 400 police officers being deployed across the city to try and limit the violence.

Chaotic scenes such as these should not surprise anyone sadly as we have seen a widespread erosion of respect for any position of authority, particularly lawmakers and enforcers such as the police.



As our western world no longer holds the traditional belief in absolute truth and instead has subscribed to the relativity of truth, there are no final grounds to determine what is right and what is wrong morally and ethically. Under the banner of relative truth, anyone and everyone can claim their actions are consistent with their own determination of 'their truth'. We are seeing this worldview becoming ever more popular especially amongst younger people. Therefore each of the partygoers in Miami are able to act exactly how they want under the self appointed determination that they are living 'their truth'.

This is exactly the manner of living we read of during the wicked era that Israel fell into during the time of the Judges as it abandoned the God of it's fathers. As we read in Judges 21:25, at this time where there was no ruler and the people had abandoned faith in God, "each man did what was right in his own eyes".

Our western society is beginning to harvest the rotten fruits of sinful seeds sown years prior by a rebellious spirit that was determined to rid itself of God from it's midst. Whilst reading such headlines is concerning we should not be surprised as this is what we are told to expect in the last days before Our Lord's return. In Matthew 24:37, we are warned that in the last days, the world will be as it was in the days of Noah. We are starting to see troubling signs of these wicked storm-clouds circling overhead. However seeing such increasing wickedness we should mark the times and look up, being watchful for Our Lord's return. As we await that glorious hour let us be busy about Our Master's work, being moved with compassion to the lost sinner as we were once such as they (1 Corinthians 6:11). Yet in the grace of Christ we were washed clean of our sins by His precious blood and let us seek to tell others of this wondrous free gift that is open to them also.

By Jonathan Badger

Dating Problems

Many Christians are sadly flummoxed by 'scientific evidences' against the Biblical record of Creation. Arguments hinging on the dating of rock layers in the earth are used as 'proof' that the earth is not a few thousand years old as outlined by the Bible but billions of years instead.

Well before we get worried about such 'inescapable proofs' of an old earth, let's look at the accuracy of radiometric dating and see it's outcomes are reliable.

Below are three different geological events of which we KNOW when they took place as they were witnessed in recent history. Yet just look at the dates given through radiometric dating of when these same events apparently took place:

Mt St Helens rock – from 1986 eruption – dated at being 300,000 – 400,000 years old!

Mt Etna basalt – formed in 1964 – dated at being 690,000 – 710,000 years old!

Hualalai, Hawaii basalt – formed 1800-1801 – dated 6,300,000 – 39,300,000 years old!

As you can see, radiometric dating is very far from being an accurate provider of the age of geological data. The use of these flawed findings is based upon three massive assumptions and are as follows:

- 1) The original amount of 'parent and daughter' atoms contained within the rock in question are known when the rock is formed.
- 2) The rate of decay of these atoms has remained constant in line with the decay rate we experience today.
- 3) The sample has not been contaminated by the addition or removal of parent or daughter atoms since the formation of the rock in question.

These three huge assumptions provide an extremely poor and wildly unreliable foundation for the dating of any geological sample. As we weren't able to know the beginning amount of parent and daughter atoms that were first contained in a rock sample as we weren't there, how can we accurately determine this? We simply can't, it's a guessing game.



Mt St Helens 1986 eruption

The rates of decay for differing atoms is open to great variation through water erosion, atmospheric conditions and so just because we experience a decay rate of an element at a certain pace today under today's conditions, doesn't mean by any means that this has been the same throughout the entire existence of the rock in question!

Thirdly as we haven't witnessed the conditions the rock/s have been subjected to since it's formation, we simply have no idea if it has been contaminated with the addition/reduction of atoms. This in itself makes any accurate radiometric dating of rock layers extremely difficult purely on it's own even without considering the previous two assumptions!

Furthermore, the unreliability of radiometric dating becomes ever more evident when we look at the dating of adjacent items in geologic samples. Such samples from the exact same location can produce wildly differing dates. For example:

- 1) Wood buried in basalt (New Zealand, Mt Rangitito – Wood dated at 225 years old, the basalt dated at 465,000 years old! If that's the case then how did the wood get

inside the basalt so many hundreds of years later?!

- 2) Wood buried under basalt (Australia, Crinum-Emerald) – wood dated at 37,500 years old, basalt dated at 36.7 million years old! Again if this is accurate, how did the wood get underneath the basalt when it had been laying in place for 36.7 million years already?!

As we can see radiometric dating is far from being a reliable means of dating geological layers. However most people are simply not aware of these clear but simple scientific facts and so are easily led to believe that these 'evidences' are valid.

Yet when we consider the Genesis account, we read of a historical event that would've provided a means for rock layers to undergo massive rates of variation of decay and contamination of existing atoms - Noah's Flood. As the Earth has undergone it's change from the pre-flood environment to the current one (with various times of climate change as seen in last 1000 years via the great period of 'warming' seen during the Renaissance era that was followed by a mini ice age), these decay rates would've gone under further change thus giving an unstable platform for radiometric dating to commence from.

A far more reliable form of dating is the Bible, as it is an eye witness account of the universes creation and existence. Then as we test this account, we can see how all the scientific evidence that surrounds us daily does indeed point to the verification of this claimed authority of which the Holy Bible holds. So be encouraged my fellow believers in Christ, the evidence is on your side.

By Jonathan Badger

Marvel and DC's War Against God

In the pop culture of today, few things have had the impact on a global scale that the Marvel movie

All of us boys will have been exposed to the superhero comic books at some point in our childhood. Wanting to be Spiderman or Superman or Batman was a seminal part of growing up for me and many hundreds of thousands of boys in school playgrounds all over the world. But as a result of the recent advent of Marvel and DC comics cinematic behemoth chewing up the celluloid, this culture of superhero's and villains is reaching audiences never before touched by the comic world; girls as well as boys, men as well as women. People are becoming obsessed with this subculture more than ever before and we should ask ourselves why.

Are you aware that many of the leading comic book writers are practicing occultists, encouraging through their storylines occultic practices from their readers. Or the maltheist beliefs of several writers, acknowledging the presence of a biblical God but with a wilful desire to portray him either directly or through a cover character as evil and deserving of destruction by mankind's hands.

Lets start by taking a look at a few of the main characters of the Superhero world and their ties to the occultic agenda.

We all know of Superman, the red and blue, underpants over the trousers, cape wearing alien from another planet who has the alter ego of Clark Kent – roving reporter for the Daily Planet news paper. But did you know that Superman’s first outing in comics by the pen of his originator Jerry Segal in 1933 was actually as an evil supervillain bent on world domination? Superman’s comic origin was as a vagrant in a bread line, given a potion by a mad scientist which gives him telepathic powers with which he embarks on a reign of terror in order to rule the world.

Skip forward to the 21st century and Grant Morrison – a highly acclaimed writer for DC comics and open practitioner of Aleister Crowley’s occultic magic, and vocal advocate of children and teens taking up Crowlian practices – has given Superman a new story line. Morrison depicts Superman as Horus, the Egyptian hawk headed god, in human form. Aleister Crowley in his satanic text – the Book of the Law – states that Horus would wipe out Christianity and usher in a new

race of superhuman occultists under the leadership of the Antichrist.

As a brief aside, Aleister Crowley appears to be a deeply rooted influence in the Marvel and DC universe. Born in 1875 in Leamington Spa to Plymouth Brethren parents, he was to reject his upbringing in the most uncertain terms, becoming one of the most notorious and influential occultists of modern times, even appearing in the crowd on the cover of Sargent Peppers Lonely Hearts Club LP by the Beatles. His most famous work – though he was a prolific author, was the Book of the Law, the “sacred” text of his occultic religion “Thelema”. The most famous phrase from this book (the content of which was supposedly revealed to him by a spirit called Aiwass whilst on his honeymoon in Egypt) is “Do what thou wilt”. This phrase has literally been taken on as the motto of modern day Satanism as popularised by Anton LaVey.

Back to Superman! Much of Christs earthy history was knowingly and deliberately given to Superman as direct parallels by the comics writers and movie directors. He is a counterfeit Christ. For example, the screenwriter for the first Superman film starring Christopher Reeve, Tom Mankiewicz admits he deliberately made Superman an allegory of Christ, With Jar El, Superman’s father sending Kal El (Superman) as his only begotten son to save mankind. In an excerpt from the film Jar El says:

“Live as one of them Kal El to discover where your strength and your power are needed. Always hold in your heart the pride of your special heritage. They can be a great people Kal El; they wish to be. They only lack the light to show the way. For this reason above all, their capacity for good, I have sent them you, my only son”.

As blasphemous as this is – this is only the beginning. In the movie, Kal El’s spaceship that transported him to earth was made to resemble the star of Bethlehem and one must not miss the use of the term El in his name – a Hebrew term for God.

Zack Snyder – the director of the films Superman Man of Steel, Batman vs Superman and the Justice League, stated, “Christ like parallels, I didn’t make that stuff up. That is the tried and true Superman metaphor”.

And more still – David Nutter the director of the Smallville Superman spin off said of the episode where Clark Kent is hung up on a scarecrow pole in a manner resembling a crucifixion, “I thought there were a lot of metaphors between Clark and Jesus actually; and I tried to throw in as many as I could”.

Batman

When discussing the origin of Batman – his co creator Bob Kane revealed that he and his friends were big horror fans and Batman was inspired by the 1930 horror film “The Bat Whispers”. The dark foreboding city depicted in this film was even used as the prototype of Gotham – the fictitious home of Batman.



Dennis O’Neil – widely regarded as the number one Batman writer and editor of all time, openly admits that Batman has the iconography of the Devil – “He is all about Darkness”. He also stated, “We have a fascination with evil....so he has the iconography, the bat wings, the dark visage, the dark clothing of a demon or some kind of evil entity. But he is on your side. It’s a great example of having your cake and eating it”.

Grant Morrison said: “So then I got to thinking about characters like Batman.....ultimately I

thought that all tracks back to Milton's Satan to be honest". Here he is referencing the famous poem Paradise Lost.

In an edition of Batman comics featuring Azrael, in and of himself a highly occultic character who rises from the dead, the story line feature a plot where Jesus's resurrection is denied – apparently being disproven by DNA evidence and that in-fact Jesus never died on the cross at all.

Robert Patterson, most recent actor to portray Batman in the 2022 film, revealed that he used the darker portraits of the Dark Knight detective from the "Batman Shaman" and the "Man who Falls" comic series as his inspiration. Interestingly both of these comics were written by Dennis O'Neil referenced above. In an interview Robert Patterson stated that after reading the comic he decided to play / embody Batman as a form of witch doctor and that in doing so he was amazed by how fluidly he found he could move, likening himself to a wraith (a ghostly image of a person – especially seen before or after their death).

Next month we will continue our investigation on this serious matter by looking at the world of Marvel Comics/movies and its increasingly flagrant attack against God.

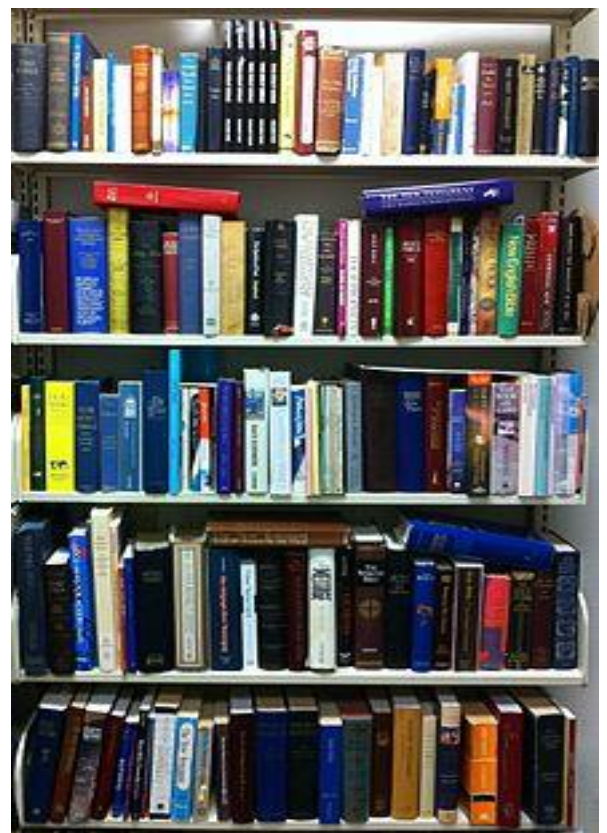
By David J Badger

The Great Deception - Part 8

All modern bible translations, but especially those translated by "dynamic equivalence", are generally design for "dynamic reading". The person who reads is not recovering a word from God once-for-all-time in the past, but is trying to hear for the voice of God speak to them from a collection of words that have no fixed meaning. Those words could say one thing to one person and something else to another. In fact they may say something different to the same person on another occasion. You see Truth is what the reader makes it. You haven't got an underlying set meaning. That leads you to no single bible reading being right or wrong, just different. You the reader

(supposedly), are not a passive recipient but become an active co-creator to whom the bible text provides reading cues.

Look, all true biblical understanding of language ties it immediately to an objective revelation of truth, something that can be known only when, with the aid of the Holy Spirit we "decode" the authentic scripture text accurately taking note of grammar and vocabulary. Modern translations, even those using the so called "formal equivalence" method are not designed to be read in this way.



A translation for every mood or inclination

Many readers today can find it difficult to read the AV Bible, not because it is "old" language, but because they have not been taught to read in the way the structure of the language demands. God, not the reader, is the creator of the meaning of scripture and He will speak to us by the Holy Spirit. If you open the scripture with any other conviction than this then you are going to find yourself in deep darkness. The FACT is contemporary linguistic methods cast a veil over the word of God.

By Dr David Badger

Resource Corner

Safari! With Buddy Davis (DVD)

Buddy's off on his most far-flung adventure yet! From his log cabin in rural Ohio, to the vast savannas of South Africa in search of some of the most amazing creatures God has made. Walk with lions (if you dare!), ride an elephant, and search for other exciting wildlife alongside your favourite adventurer. As you explore the wonders God has made, you'll enjoy original songs from Buddy, biblical worldview teaching, and Scripture tie-ins.

So fire up the all-terrain vehicle (you'll need it!), grab your camera, and prepare for another amazing adventure with Buddy Davis!

My family loved this fun filled adventure and is great light family viewing to come together and enjoy.

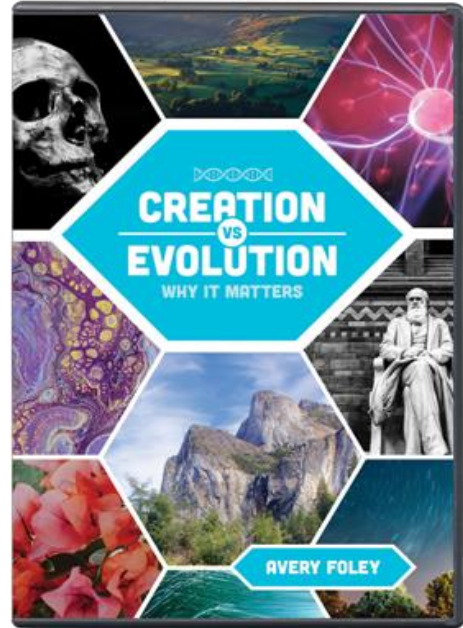
Available from Answers in Genesis



Creation Vs Evolution (DVD)

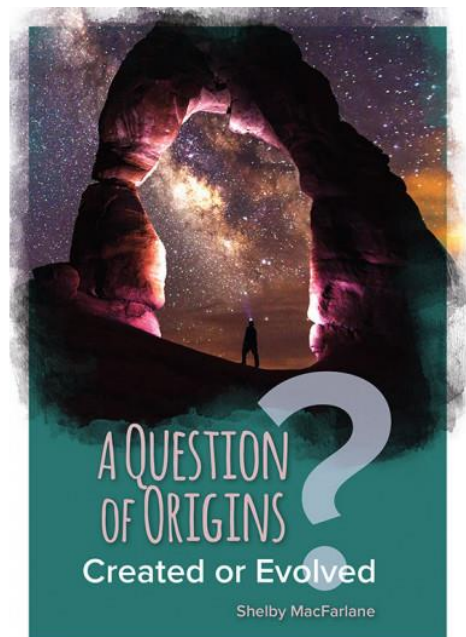
Many people believe that Genesis is of little importance in our world today—and they don't think it's accurate. Avery Foley shows why our view of creation or evolution and the age of the earth are ultimately biblical authority issues of huge significance. A proper understanding of

Genesis (especially chapters 1–11) is essential for a truly biblical worldview.



Available from Answers in Genesis

A Question Of Origins



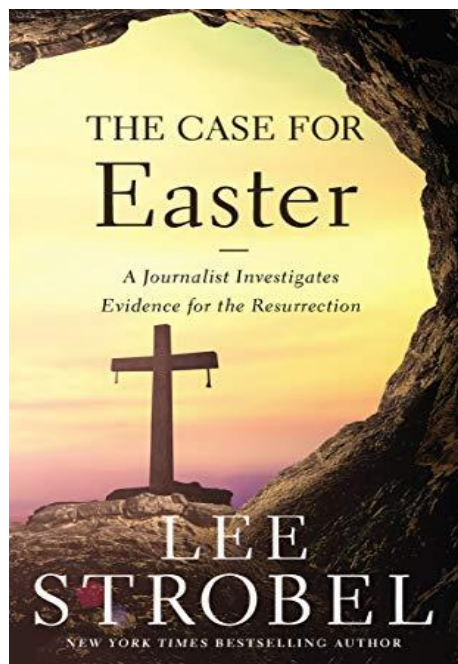
This high school age textbook gives students the tools they need to evaluate where we, life, and the universe came from. Richly illustrated in full colour, it fairly presents what evolutionists believe and why, but then makes the powerful scientific case for creation—a case that is ignored by secular textbooks. Students will learn to think critically as they examine the evidence for themselves, in a range of scientific fields. Topics

covered include genetics, the origin of life, fossils, missing links, plate tectonics, radiometric dating, embryology, the origin of man, and the implications of creation and evolution for our worldview.

Helpful review questions and short biographies of interest are sprinkled throughout. Plus, an extensive free companion workbook is available at creation.com/a-question-of-origins, with vocabulary reviews, chapter reviews, concept maps and exams.

Whether used in a classroom setting, home study or read for pleasure, students are sure to come away with a deeper understanding of what they believe about origins and why. Parents and teachers will find this book to be a valuable addition to their educational toolbox.

Available from Creation Ministries International



The Case For Easter

Of the many world religions, only one claims that its founder returned from the grave. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very cornerstone of Christianity.

But a dead man coming back to life? In our sophisticated age, when myth has given way to science, who can take such a claim seriously? Some argue that Jesus never died on the cross.

Conflicting accounts make the empty tomb seem suspect.

How credible is the evidence for--and against--the resurrection? Focusing his award-winning skills as a legal journalist on history's most compelling enigma, Lee Strobel retraces the startling findings that led him from atheism to belief. He examines:

The Medical Evidence: Was Jesus's death a sham and his resurrection a hoax?

The Evidence of the Missing Body: Was Jesus's body really absent from his tomb?

The Evidence of Appearances: Was Jesus seen alive after his death on the cross?

Written in a hard-hitting, journalistic style, *The Case for Easter* probes the core issues of the resurrection. Jesus Christ, risen from the dead: superstitious myth or life-changing reality? The evidence is in. The verdict is up to you.

Available from Amazon

Family Bible Quiz Corner

Wordsearch

E	M	P	T	Y	T	O	M	B	T
P	E	V	I	L	A	K	A	T	E
R	R	I	S	E	N	R	N	C	L
J	E	S	U	S	G	E	M	G	E
B	A	E	U	P	M	R	A	O	L
L	N	I	V	E	V	I	M	K	C
E	B	T	N	V	I	S	A	B	A
G	G	O	S	P	E	L	R	M	R
N	T	L	O	S	C	S	K	L	I
A	B	A	R	N	A	B	A	S	M

Risen, atonement, empty tomb, gospel, miracle, Mark, Barnabas, Angel, alive, Jesus

Junior Bible Quiz

- 1) What was Jesus doing during the storm on the Sea of Galilee? Mark 4:38
- 2) Where did the wise man build his house? Matthew 7:24
- 3) Who was Esthers's cousin? Esther 2:7
- 4) To which city was Jonah sent? Jonah 1:1-2
- 5) Who wouldn't believe Jesus was alive without seeing and touching Him? John 20:24-25
- 6) On what mountain did God give Moses the commandments? Exodus 19:20
- 7) What did God create on day 3 of creation? Genesis 1:9-13
- 8) What did Peter and John say they didn't have to the man begging outside the temple? Acts 3:6
- 9) How many of the ten healed lepers came back to say 'Thank you'? Luke 17:17
- 10) What miracle did Jesus perform at a wedding? John 2:9
- 11) Who was David's best friend? 1 Samuel 18:1
- 12) Which queen visited Solomon because he was famous for his wisdom and wealth? 1 Kings 10:1
- 13) Who was Ruth's mother in law? Ruth 1:8
- 14) God told Joshua to be strong and what? Joshua 1:6

Answers: 1) sleeping 2) on a rock 3) Mordecai 4) Nineveh 5) Thomas 6) Mt Sinai 7) Dry land & plants 8) Gold/money 9) One 10) turning water to wine 11) Jonathan 12) Queen of Sheba 13) Naomi 14) of a good courage

A Final Thought

At the time of writing, there is intense warfare in eastern Europe, and this may well be continuing at the time of publication of this magazine. It is a time of uncertainty and anxiety for many, not least those caught in the crossfires in Ukraine; some may be fleeing the country seeking refuge, while others might find themselves actively engaged in the dangerous exertions of conflict. For us in a safer haven, it is vital that we pray for our brothers and sisters that are caught up in the storm; to pray for their safety, for their spiritual strength to bear the trials and for their eventual deliverance by the Lord, if that is His will. As well as praying for them, we would do well to reflect on our own spiritual condition, and how we might bear up in such crises. While our western world has enjoyed times of large peace since the end of the Second World War, the bible says that as well as peace, there is a time for war (Ecclesiastes 3:8); will our own faith in the Lord and our trusting in Him to do His will stand up to sudden, unexpected affliction like that faced by our brethren abroad? Let us come to the Lord in earnest, reverent prayer, and ask him to build us up in faith, and equip us for trials and afflictions, as we know not when they may come upon us. Let us pray fervently for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine at this difficult time, and pray for our own spiritual reserves to be built up, as we never know when we too might be severely tested.

Psalm 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

By John Sivewright

Truthtowonder.org