

A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The waves are gentle, and the beach is visible in the foreground.

TTW Truth To Wonder

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Welcome

The beautiful and peaceful scenes of our cover page are a welcome reminder of the artistry of Our Lord when He created the heavens and the earth. The historical account of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 lay out the awesome power of Our Lord and God as He spoke the universe into existence. This incredible power of the LORD which is evident throughout all the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, has sadly been diluted so greatly that many Christians today believe in a weak and limited God.

One of the often missed ramifications of this diluting of the power of the God revealed to us in Scripture, is the great spiritual upheaval it causes to many well meaning and sincere Christians. For when troubled days arrive to torment the believer in Christ, their great refuge of certain hope is not held strong by an almighty God whose power and authority no being can defy, but by a timid and apologetic God who means well but struggles to uphold His own.

So the troubled Christian has no unwavering confidence in their Lord and is thus easily swayed by a sceptical and fallen world that seeks to undermine the faith of every Christian.

To calm this self inflicted wound to the soul, the Christian then seeks a remedy to their weakened faith by attending a church that whips up the emotions rather than strengthening the knowledge of God's Word. These short term highs of potent emotion are a happy balm to the spiritual uncertainty for a brief spell but do nothing to answer the great challenges to the faithful Christian walk through life. This attendance of the overly charged gatherings becomes disillusioning to the heart that feels no great and long lasting relief to their doubts of faith.

So many become bitter and angry against what they have understood to be real Christianity. However had they known true Biblical Christianity, they would know the awesome power and faithfulness of God and would be moved to reverential awe and praise of God. Their faith would be assured not by the quality of their intellect or character but by the grace of Christ. This would provide a gracious but unshakeable faith that is strong enough to lead the Christian through the world but remain distinct from it.

How truly sad it is to see so many Christians today have a poorly structured faith that subscribes to a weak and timid God who is afraid to judge what is good and what is evil. It is heartbreaking to see how the modern Christian robs themselves of this great assurance that is offered to them by simply believing what the Scriptures reveal to us in it's fullness. Instead of holding to this simple truth, they have thrown it away in an attempt to

placate a world that has always and will always hate God.

So the next time your at the beach, looking out at the waves, think deeply on the power of God and how He set their borders and said no further (Job 38). Meditate on how such mighty seas are held in place by but a word through His eternal power. When you consider the incredible power of God, then consider the stunning meekness of Christ, He who set aside glory for a season so that He might walk amongst us, knowing our struggles and give Himself as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. Think on how He, who holds the waves by the might of His word, calls you by name to know Him and love Him as your Saviour and Redeemer, so that you might escape the second death that is eternal death and suffering and instead be restored unto the Father forevermore.

Let us come now to Our God in prayer.

Opening Prayer

Dear gracious Lord and Heavenly Father, how thankful we are that you are such a mighty God; a God who upholds all things by the power of your Word. How comforting it is to our very soul that you are strong and able to lead each of your children through the troubled days of this sinful life and bring us home to you.

Yet Lord we lament for those who do not hold you so highly in their hearts. Those who sinfully dismiss your power, holiness and grace and so struggle so very greatly with battles of faith that you have long overcome in your grace and mercy towards we sinners. Lord speak to their hearts so that they might read of you in the Scriptures and see the fullness of your glory as revealed in Christ Jesus. Let their eyes be opened to the abundance of life that awaits them when they bow the reverential knee before Him. Pour out your blessing unto them, so that they are made humble and give all honour and glory to your wondrous name. In doing so they may see the goodness of service to such a mighty and holy God as thee and in doing so be moved to utter wonder that you have called us to be your friends forevermore.

This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Psalm 88 – A Commentary Part One

Christians are not exempt from great battles of the spirit and torments of the heart. Many great men and women of God throughout the centuries have struggled through great periods of depression. It is not a new problem and so the remedy does not lie in psychiatry or secular counselling but within the Word of God. The Psalmist knew of such great struggles of spirit and so speaks to us who suffer so today of where hope resides.

Psalm 88 was written by Heman the Ezrahite. This may have been the Heman noted in 1 Kings 4:31, a man noted for his wisdom and whom having experienced oppression in Egypt under Pharaoh, would be well versed in songs of pain and sorrow. Yet there was also a chief musician in the time of David and is recorded in 1 Chronicles 15:19; thus the specificity of Heman is unknown but the anguish contained within the Psalm is known by many of God's children.



Though the Psalm is intended to be a song, it's despairing tone and content makes the modern mind confused as to how such a piece could be considered a song. Yet we must reflect on the truth that faith does not just glory in times of joy and gladness but also in tribulations. For faith brings us to know the depth of wonder contained within Christ and that Christ is familiar with both wondrous joy and the most crushing of sorrows alike.

There are clear Messianic overtones within this Psalm. It does not take the believer long to see the heart rending pain of Our Lord Jesus foreshadowed in the unknowable despair and heaviness of spirit that Christ endured on the cross as He felt the full wrath of the Father poured out upon Him for the debt of sinful mankind. Yet today we shall be focusing on the despair often felt by the faithful servant of Christ, as we continue our consideration of our state of health in matters of faith before God, and how this is reflected in this most mournful of Psalms.

Let us begin with verse 1, as the Psalm opens with what could be considered the only ray of hope that pierces this funeral like dirge of despair. The Psalmist has salvation, this he is sure of as even though he sits in deepest sorrow, he still comes unto his God in prayer and declares his certainty of salvation by the faith of God. Surely it is as we have seen prior, a great gift to the weary heart that our salvation is held by Christ and not placed squarely on our bruised and battered shoulders. He continues by speaking of his continued prayer unto God at his time of great distress. What else do we have secured in life but the assurance of our salvation and access to God through prayer? We have nothing certain outside of these great gifts of grace and so the Psalmist leans on them when his spirit cannot stand any longer. He cries out to God hour after hour, chasing after his Lord seeking, yearning, longing for His smile to rest upon him once more. Those who have been so sorely tested know this feeling, that the despair lingers like a cold, heavy fog that refuses to make way for warming sun. Here is our lead, this is a guide for when we feel so greatly troubled; we are to chase after God and pray with ever greater fervour that He will be merciful unto us. As Jacob wrestled with God until he obtained His blessing, let us also run after Our Lord and God until we have obtained His blessing once more. Let us at this point however be careful to not consider God a cruel God who unleashes His anger against His children. Heaven forbid! His just and righteous anger has been satiated by the blood of Christ, the blood by which we have been washed clean of our sins. Instead such times of heavy sorrow for the believer are placed upon us in loving correction by God. He seeks as Our loving Father to bring us ever closer to Him, to mould us into the glorious image of His only begotten Son and in His perfect wisdom He knows that oftentimes this is most effectively fulfilled in times of great trial and sorrow.



The verse closes with “before thee”. The Psalmist prayers are aimed and have clear direction, to the very throne of God. This is where our prayers are to be directed, to the very heart of God who knows the secret groaning of the heart. This is against the outward and empty prayers of the Pharisees and self

righteous, those whose prayers are vague in the direction because of the pompous arrogance of their origin. The humble of spirit know that to achieve an outcome a target must be made clear, ours is to come close to the heart of Our Father.

Verse 2 continues with this great foundation of all spiritual and yes mental health, prayer. The Psalmist is all too aware of the poor efforts of our prayers, how they stumble in their aim with clumsy expression, broken trails of thought and so he pleads to God to have mercy on such weak pleas. He appeals to the grace and mercy of God to bend down and accept his weak offerings for his hope is not founded in his eloquence of prayer but in the mercy of God. What a hope this is to each of us, for who has not experienced times when prayer has seemed so very hard. When our words lack clarity or articulation of thought, yet do not despair in this, for even the weakest of prayers when spoken in all faith in the goodness and mercy of God are a sweet fragrance unto God.

As verse 2 flows into verse 3, we read that this prayer is no light one, it is a crying of the soul. It is a soul piercing lament that no one can understand save the Lord Himself. It is this seeming isolation that again many of us have experienced; when we feel so lonely and without hope that it feels as though it would be better to sink into the grave than continue this heartbreak. See the utter torment, the agony of the Psalmist as he speaks of his soul being full of troubles, not even a single speck of joy remains in him. Many of us have felt such dark hours where it feels as though life itself is draining away from our beings. We long for relief of weary spirit that death will bring, for in it we shall be home at last with Our Saviour. This is why Paul speaks of to die in Christ is gain as we shall be set free from such heavy misery at last. Do not ever doubt if Godly souls can endure such despondency, surely good men and women have been troubled by such depressed spirits and some even struggle with it all their days as did Spurgeon. So be compassionate towards them and pray for their swift release by the merciful hand of God.

Verse 4 reveals a most tragic of situations for the Psalmist that many of us may have known first hand. He considers himself half dead already, and others around him consider him so also for he has been abandoned by those around him. They may look on at his pitiful state and be at a loss as to how to assist him, or may consider it a punishment of God and so refuse compassion as Job experienced at the hands of his friends. It is a terrible and further heartbreaking thing to be so despondent and full of despair only to see those around you look blankly at you, offering

nothing in assistance or even walk away. Thus the psalmist strength has gone, where the spirit fails the body collapses quickly after, there is no scope for recovery. Some may see this as melodramatic but others will know all too well of what the psalmist speaks; I am such a one who knows this misery all too well. It is easy when fit and strong to ridicule such notions of complete despair but we must never mock or ridicule those who suffer so with nervous, anxious souls. As Spurgeon wrote, "their pain is real, though much of the evil lies in the imagination, it is not imaginary".

Verse 5 continues this bleak lament as the writer finds no comfort in life anymore and sees only the hopeful release of death as he considers himself killed by the vanishing of hope, the removal of the blessing of God. It is this tragic consideration that has troubled so very many to terrible ends. Yet it is only a thought, it is not truth, this is the hope to those believers who struggle so! The truth is that God never led any soul to the eternal grave, it is only our limited understanding that sees such hard times as this. No, God allows us to know such fierce despair to break us down from our sinful ways and manners so that He might build us up again in freeing reliance on His abundant grace. This is why Paul was told after his thrice repeated plea for freedom from his 'thorn in the flesh' that Christ's grace was sufficient.

Yet the redeemed can feel so dejected at times that they might even consider themselves forgotten by their God. Here we must note the anguish of Christ on the Cross as He cried out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me". To feel forgotten by God is the very climax of the desolation of the heart, a pain that cannot be equalled. Even the greatest physical pain can be dulled some measure by medication, there is no treatment for the spirit which feels it's been forgotten by the goodness of God. Such troubled souls feel as though the sustaining hand of God itself has been cut off from them; what a terrible thought to bear!

Verse 6 reveals a most solemn picture, one of God laying a man down into the grave. Now whilst we know in the strength of faith that though we are laid down to the grave it is but sleep in the eye of God, and that He shall awaken us refreshed and joyful for the eternity spread out before our glorified eyes. Yet in the depths of despair the Psalmist writes, he feels at this grief stricken moment as though the hand of God itself has put him into the grave. How true this would be without grace, for all are condemned under the Law and thus fit to die for their sins forevermore. So in the bleakness of spirit this is what overwhelms the heart of the struggling soul, this fear that God has

turned away from you and left you in the very pits of hell. For what is any existence without the presence of God but a pit of hell? Where the blessed light of Christ resides in all His most radiant glory there is heaven; and yet where it does not enter, this is but a pit in the blackest of nights. Our God though never lowers a soul into a pit without readying a throne as he did with Joseph. He never allows the darkest of trials to befall His own without revealing His covenant of life eternal unto them as He did with Abraham. He does not bring the soul to be swallowed up in darkness without appointing it's time to be returned into the light as He did with Jonah.



Verse 7 depicts the pitiable nature of the stricken soul as it laments the hard anger of God being unfurled upon it. Though we know for a certainty that the wrathful anger of God has been turned away from us by the blood of Christ, when in such malaise of spirit and mind this certainty is seemingly lost in the bleakness of the tearful eye. How the Psalmist communicates his tormented spirit in the image of him being buffeted by wave after wave of God's mighty anger like the swimmer pummelled by the awesomeness of the raging seas. As the swimmer who catches breath between each wave, so too in times of deepest lament experience a very brief interlude from our bitterest of thoughts and heartbreaks. Yet another wave comes smashing inwards, driving more strength out of our broken natures, making us feel all the more hopeless and cast adrift of God. In such tragedy of heart, there is a short lived moment of rest-bite, like the brief calm in breakdown of tears or the pause in the midst of the eye of the tornado, and here we read it in 'Selah', or rest. This brief pause of miseries can mislead those who look on at the sad state of the suffering, into believing that the war is over and peace has returned. Yet to the sufferer it is but a brief fainting spell between the surges of pain that have brought no real comfort or recovery.

Verse 8 reminds us of the lament of so many who have suffered the loss of friends at such a critical time. When utter misery has engulfed us and those around us have fled believing in falsehoods that a righteous man would not endure such trials. Job knew well of such bitter abandonment by his friends. The isolation

once feared by the soul in distress has now become a reality. How our Lord knew such loneliness in His hour of need when His disciples fled Him at His arrest, trial and crucifixion. Read these words and know the suffering of your Saviour, this is the depth of His love for you that He endured so much for such a wicked sinner as you and I. The Psalmist's very heart feels shut up, he is closed off in his own world of dejection and despair. He has not chosen it, it has found him. This is the great difference between the true sufferer and the pretender. The true sufferer longs to come out of their great inner prison, they see the world and know it but feel it's so very far away from them and so they slump down further into their misery.

Verse 9 is filled with the tears of unbroken weeping of the suffering soul and yet this is the flame of faith fuelled by Christ that refuses to be extinguished, as the weeping Psalmist continues in earnest prayer. He opens up his arms in full readying for guidance and comforting from the hands of his Lord even though he struggles so very deeply. So we are brought to search in earnestness of prayer in our days of darkest despair; we too are to open up ourselves in full humility so that we might be ready to receive the healing light and correction from Our Heavenly Father.

However we must ask ourselves with deepest honesty if we pray in such a manner? Many times our prayers though spoken in faith, are guarded still. Our sinful pride encourages us to keep something unspoken to God, whether the motivation be our thinking that a particular request is too trivial to bother Our Lord with, or that we simply cannot let go of our desire to play some part in the resolution of the matter. Many times I have prayed and rather than pouring out my heart, I have quietly withheld some matter from His gracious throne. The primary cause of this error is my deep seated pride that cannot surrender to placing all burdens on Christ. Though I am troubled the human spirit is so inclined to rebel against God that it will turn away His gracious hand even when in need. Thus the Psalmist speaks in such an expressive manner that reflects his utter brokenness of spirit, a deep sorrow that purges all remaining drops of pride so that all the contents of the heart are poured out unto God. How terrible it is that such heavy days of woe must befall us before we go to Our Lord in such trusting prayer.

Next month we will Lord willing conclude our look at Psalm 88 and see how the Lord is gracious to the woes of the soul and brings us through troubled days to renewed faith in Him.

By Jonathan Badger

WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU?

Part 2

When the Church moved into the 1970's and 80's a rapid change began to take place in Evangelicalism. There was a growing focus on the idea of Protestants and Catholics working together. In 1977 a Congress of Anglican Evangelicals state, 'Seeing ourselves and Roman Catholics as fellow Christians, we repent of attitudes that have seemed to deny it.' It wasn't long before anyone suggesting that Roman Catholics were not Christians was looked on as bigotry. Back to Rome was the call. It was expected by many that by the 1980's there would be a reunion. The final report in 1986 of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission approved by the Church of England Synod on matters of union didn't get a reply from Rome until 1991.

What then, in the reply was Rome seeking in these union talks? Well, among other things she wanted the acceptance that there was a propitiatory nature in the Mass in reference to the dead, plus the 'fact' that Christ is really present in the bread and the wine. By 1994 the Church of England was prepared to conform in these matters.

At the same time the ECT, Evangelicals and Catholics Together, were busy with the whole union business. Evangelical giants like Dr Packer using various twists and turns with words was approving things in general. That a theologian of Dr Packer's experience should favour in any way working with Rome was tragic. Some 'Names' tried to present his motives in the best light but he was wrong, he was dead wrong and he was dangerously wrong. There was a great deal of talk about many believing Catholics but who were/are they? Are we to accept that the Holy Spirit regenerated and still does a substantial amount of Roman Catholics and then leaves them in spiritual darkness? That is a grave charge against the Third Person of the Trinity. Does the Holy Spirit bring souls in number to regeneration and then leave them without true light? It is the Third Person of the Trinity's work to glorify the finished work of the Lord not to leave souls to imbibe falsehood. Yes, Catholics believe in justifying

grace, via baptism, a grace that then has to be sustained by Rome's sacraments. However, the grace that saves a man's soul is not imparted via baptism or sacraments. The Holy Spirit gives a man a heart to believe the gospel and the man so enabled to receive Christ, has the righteousness of Christ imparted to him. The Bible-believer rests on Christ's righteousness for he has no inherent righteousness of his own. No sacraments confer the grace of God.

Dr Packer had stated, 'Domestic differences about salvation and the Church should not hinder us from joint action....propagating the basic faith remains the crucial fact.' What basic faith? We are talking about two different gospels. This was the problem then and still is. Let us remind ourselves of Canon XI of the Council of Trent which states, 'If anyone saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins....let him be anathema.' Statements like this caused the Reformers to believe (rightly so), that Rome was in direct contradiction of the gospel. All these things and a thousand others cause us to oppose Rome, we are not engaged in nit-picking but major doctrinal disagreement that is of eternal consequences.

By Dr David Badger

Do You Have The Correct Time?

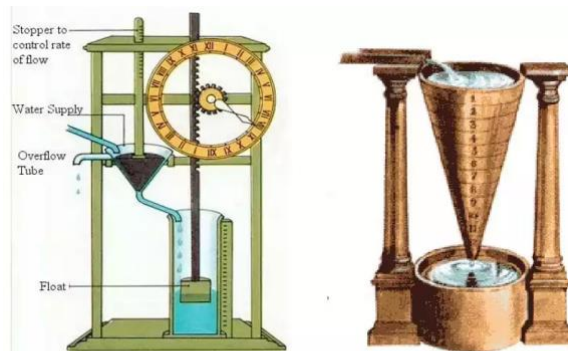
As we have seen over the past months, critics of the Bible and in particular the historicity of the Old Testament believe they have a long list of viable challenges to the claims of the Bible. However as we have seen repeatedly, these claims are easily rebuffed by anyone who knows more than the wafer thin secular history that is clumsily and poorly taught at schools today.

One of these challenges to the accuracy of the history of the Bible is the argument that the writers of the Old Testament would not have had access to an accurate method of timekeeping. Thus, the argument goes, that when Moses recorded in Exodus 12:40-41 that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years, it could not have been an accurate recording of time and is therefore merely symbolic.

Well anyone that knows of the amazing abilities of ancient man is well aware that the Ancient Egyptians for example (whose methods of astronomy could've easily influenced the Hebrews during their oppression) used a complex and highly accurate method of timekeeping using lunar cycles and the annual flooding of the River Nile.

Furthermore over four thousand years ago in Mesopotamia (the ancestral home of Abraham, father of the Hebrews), sexagesimal timekeeping (a method where 60 is used as the base of timekeeping – think 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour as we use today) was commonplace. It is very probable that these time keeping methods were used by Abraham, a native of Mesopotamia, and then passed on to the following generations of the Hebrews.

In returning to the Ancient Egyptians, we know that they used the large obelisks that still stand today as a form of time keeping by dividing the day into two portions of 12 hours according to the shadows cast by the obelisk during the course of the day much like a sundial. They were able to calculate times of day and the summer and winter solstices. To counteract the problem of a lack of sunlight to determine the time during the night hours, the Egyptians developed hourglasses, tracking of star movements and even water clocks. The earliest example of a water clock recorded in history is from a Babylonian inscription from 1700 B.C, a time not long before the Exodus itself. These water clocks used an intricately calibrated container which allowed water to flow out thus providing a measurement of time passed, as seen below.



Ancient Egyptian Water Clocks

Therefore bearing all this mind and applying the Biblical account that the Hebrews came from a patriarch who was very likely familiar with the timekeeping methods of the ancient Mesopotamians (Ur, the birthplace of Abraham was renowned for it's expertise in mathematics and astronomy), along with the expert education Moses would've received in the courts of Egyptian royalty, we must conclude that his ability to record time accurately is undoubted. Thus we can as always rest easy in trusting that the information recorded in the Bible is accurate history and not myth or legend as propagated by critics and secular historians.

By Jonathan Badger

Why A Ram?

Ever since I can remember I have always puzzled as to why God provided a ram instead of a lamb as a substitute for Isaac when God called on Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son.

If we turn to the passage in question, Genesis 22, we read in verses 7 and 8 of Isaac enquiring of his father Abraham as to the lack of the necessary lamb for sacrifice. Abraham responds in verse 8 by stating that God would provide the required lamb showing that both father and son knew the need of an atoning blood sacrifice for the covering of their sins. The significance of the lamb was a fascinating foreshadowing of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who would be offered up as an atonement for the sins of mankind some two thousand years later.

Doubtless many are familiar with the amazing account of the pre-incarnate Jesus stopping Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac, for He was pleased with the strength of Abraham's faith. This faith in the power of God to resurrect his beloved son spoke of the Father who would resurrect His Beloved Son after having not withheld Him as a propiation for the sins of the world (John 3:16).

In turning to verse 13, we read that God did very much provide the necessary substitute so as to complete the desired offering as Abraham had faithfully testified earlier; yet it was not a lamb but a ram. Is there any significance in this provision by God or is it a minor detail that



contains no great importance? I would contend that it holds a deep and wondrous significance to each and every soul that has ever been gifted life.

The ram was used by the Israelites as an offering for what was known as the 'Trepass Offering' as referred to in Leviticus chapter 5. In verse 15 we read that a ram would be offered if a person had sinned in ignorance against the Holy things of God. One may think that as the sin was committed in ignorance, maybe God would 'let it slide'. However God is a just God and does not turn a blind eye to any sin even if it was done in ignorance. Ignorance of the law does not absolve someone from breaking it. No judge would allow someone to walk free from a crime just because they 'didn't know' they were breaking the law. So it is with God as we read in verse 17 as the Word of God states, "though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity".

The frightening thought is that such heaviness of debt accumulated by any one soul in the breach of the holiness of God is absolutely immense! When we neglect or even forget to lift God up to His rightful position as the LORD Almighty in our hearts, our thoughts and our deeds, then we contravene this law and thereby we sin against Him. When we fail to go to Him in earnest prayer and we offer up poorly constructed, selfish, broken thought laced prayers we sin against His Holiness. When we disregard His commands as to how we are to worship Him and we instead use methods of the world in our worship (consider modern Christian 'worship' bands that use rock/hip hop music as its soundtrack), we sin against His holiness. When our very thoughts are unclean before Him we sin against His holiness. Let these considerations simmer for a moment and recognise how deserving of judgement even the most pious of men/women are, for all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Thus we are all in the most dire of situations, for we have all sinned against God's Holiness, even Abraham fell in this manner. So the ram was provided by God as a substitute for sinful mankind, to highlight that none are outside of the just wrath of God. Many will fool themselves by stating that they are a good person by observing that they have never murdered anyone, they have never stolen anything, they have never lied, they have always respected their parents etc, etc. Well putting aside for one moment the clear falsehood of such assertions according to the criteria laid out by Jesus Christ no less, in stating for example that one is guilty of adultery by simply looking at another person with lust. Yet we shall put this point momentarily aside as stated to consider that somehow someone has lived so purely in these matters, let us now ask them if they had given God His due glory in every thought, every act, every desire, every prayer, every moment of worship thereby honouring His Holiness? Not even the most ardent liar could argue this as no soul has ever not lifted itself up against the Holiness of God and put themselves in their own hearts as the chief of the love and purpose for being.

Surely then all are indeed guilty of sinning against the Holiness of God. Yes we have sinned in ignorance as the Apostle Paul stated but this does not excuse us from the judgement of the sin as we have already read from God's own revealed Word.

So if we cannot raise ourselves up to save ourselves from such grave sins, for this would be layering sin upon sin, what hope is there for any soul?! This is the importance held in the provision of the ram as given unto Abraham, for the ram signified that only One, a provision of God Himself would be deemed good enough, holy enough to satisfy the wrath of a just God.

The ram being given to Abraham and not a lamb signified that all are guilty before God but that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that those who believed in Him would not perish (John 3:16). To remove the sins of those who believed the Word of God, One would be given that would be sufficient for all who took shelter in His precious, perfect, holy blood. Abraham did not hold back his beloved son from

God but was not required to ultimately offer up his son's life as a sacrifice; yet God the Father did not hold back because of His love for sinful mankind and instead gave His beloved Son so that we might be restored unto Him.

Yet the significance does not end there in the provision of the ram to Abraham. A ram is an adult male sheep, depicting how Jesus would die as a fully grown man in the peak of His fleshly strength. This is why the ram was caught in the thicket or bush by its horns (representing power and honour) as it symbolised how a strong physical being who was Jesus in the flesh, would be ensared to a tree (cross) by the awful and large metal nails used by the Roman army. It is all a tremendous foreshadowing of how God would provide one whose spilt blood would be sufficient as an offering for the sins and trespasses of mankind. All this taking place in the very spot no less, than where the Holy of Holies would be built in Solomon's Temple centuries later on Mount Moriah. Do you see the amazing coming together of God's vision and plan?! How the provision of the ram, an offering later revealed through Moses, the Law Giver, would be a suitable sacrifice for the ignorant sins of fallen mankind against the Holiness of God. This offering then took place in the spot that would later house the Holy of Holies. Yet when Christ was offered up the offering was full and final thus rendering the need for covering sacrifice of the blood of an animal no longer needed! The Holy of Holies was opened up as shown in the tearing of the Temple Veil from top to bottom by God, highlighting that the way to God's presence was open by His grace in giving His Beloved Son. It is the Gospel in action in Genesis and highlights the wonder of God's grace long before the events recorded in the New Testament.

How awe inspiring it is to see such depths of eternal wisdom and majesty in but a few words of His Eternal Word. How much more stunning to the spirit is it to know that such majestic wonders of wisdom speak from every page of His Living Word!

Therefore go and study it earnestly, for by reading it and entrusting yourself through faithful prayer to the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, you will see how long cared for and provided for you have

always been. This all being so not because of any good you hold, but because of His eternal grace. Then go and be holy as He is holy. Amen

By Jonathan Badger

The Humble Bee

We are all familiar with the bumblebee, likely because when they circle around us they produce from us a very determined series of air slaps to try and drive them away such is our fear of their sting.

Yet the bumblebee is an amazing example of the brilliance of God's engineering skill, especially in how considering the relative bulk of the body of a bumblebee in comparison to its meagre wing size, means it should not be able to fly! However fly they certainly do, usually all around us as we try and enjoy a pleasant picnic on a summer's day.

So how do this awkwardly shaped insects actually manage to fly when their physical makeup seems to make such a feat extremely problematic if not impossible? Well the trick is in how the bumblebee twists its wings as they go through each beating cycle. On the upward stroke, a bumblebee will use what is known as *supination* (twisting of the wing upwards) to increase the thrust of the stroke. Then on the downwards stroke it uses *pronation* (twisting of the wing downwards) to again increase the power and thrust of the stroke. The combined use of supination and pronation significantly increases the amount of lift each series of beats each wing can produce, thereby producing a very able flying mechanism.

This incredible technique that all winged insects use (such as moths and butterflies) gives the Evolutionist an enormous headache when they try to explain how such a remarkably complex mechanism exists in insect life by pure random chance! Without both supination and pronation working in tandem the poor winged insect would not be able to fly. This would provide the poor creature with a drastically lowered chance of survival in being able to reach its required nutrition and thereby dramatically increasing its risk of extinction.

Furthermore we have evidence of 'pre-historic' bumblebees (there is no pre-history as The Bible records all history since the dawn of Creation) being no different in their physical makeup. The picture below shows a bee trapped in amber and 'dates' from 80-90 million years ago according to evolutionary timelines. As you will see however it is still very much a bee that we would recognise today and thus subject to the same physical needs of a complex flying mechanism in order to live and breed successfully. There are numerous examples of fossilised bees available to study and yet the message is clear and consistent throughout, a bee is a bee no matter how far back you go and thus in need of an irreducibly complex flying mechanism in order to live and breed fruitfully.



An ancient bee trapped in amber

Of course though the Creationist is not subject to this quandary of existence as the work of an all powerful and skilled Creator God explains perfectly how such a complex mechanism can exist throughout the millennia without any alteration or 'evolutionary progression'.

By Jonathan Badger

A History of *Guide Me Oh Thou Great Redeemer*

This stirring and passionate hymn will be known to many as the hymn sung by the masses at Welsh National Team rugby matches. It's hard not to be moved by the throngs of thousands as they sing loudly the lyrics to this popular hymn yet it is sadly heartbreaking also as the majority in this setting will have no idea as to the identity of the

Redeemer in which they are calling out to, namely Christ Jesus.

Written by William Williams (1717-91), William was converted after hearing the preaching of the great Welsh evangelist Howell Harris in 1737. William became a deacon in his local church before moving on to become Curate (Assistant Minister) at several parishes.

William travelled the Welsh land preaching throughout his life, giving the message of the Gospel to his country folk. By the grace of God his efforts brought many souls to Christ through his impassioned preaching. William also penned 800 hymns in his lifetime though this hymn is doubtless is most famous piece.

The hymn is themed on the Lord's guiding of His people the Israelites out from the land of Egypt as recorded in the book of Exodus. This theme is evident as the lyrics reflect the journeying of the people through the 'barren land' of the wilderness and being provided with manna for sustenance, thus depicted in the hymn as 'bread of heaven'.

The second verse highlights the pillar of cloud and fire that guided the Israelites by day and by night to the Promised Land. The 'crystal fountain' of the hymn reflects the striking of the rock by Moses which provided the Israelites with drinking water in the harsh and barren wilderness.

The final verse speaks of the Israelites crossing the Jordan and thereby being able to enter the Promised Land. To the Christian this image reflects our figurative crossing of the Jordan as we die but then reach our Promised Land of heaven through saving faith in Christ Jesus.

As with all good hymns there is clear Scriptural teaching contained within the lyrics and is therefore suitable praise to be given unto God. This is unlike many modern worship songs that fail to stir any great Biblical truths or teachings and rely on repetitive and ambiguous statements on God's love. A great worship song should instruct and teach much like a sermon, for the Psalms themselves are songs to be sung unto God and yet they are wondrous messages on the power, holiness, mercy, faithfulness,

righteousness, justice and love of God, all so that through studying them and singing them with great gusto and sincerity of heart, we might know Our Redeemer all the better.

By Jonathan Badger

Guide me, O Thou Great Redeemer

*Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer
Pilgrim through this barren land
I am weak but Thou art mighty
Hold me with thy powerful hand
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven
Feed me now and evermore
Feed me now and evermore*

*Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing streams do flow
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey though
Strong Deliverer, strong deliverer
Be Thou still my strength and shield
Be Thou still my strength and shield*

*When I tread the verge of Jordan
Bid my fears subside
Death of death and hell's destruction
Land me safe on Canaan's side
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee
I will ever give to thee*

A Study of Psalm 100 – Part Two

Last month we began to take a look at Psalm 100, 'A Psalm of Praise'. Reflecting upon the first two verses, we considered our responsibility to serve the Lord with gladness, to be joyful in our praise and thanksgiving and to remember the importance of singing as we try and draw nearer to the Lord. We shall now consider the remaining verses of this Psalm, and how we might profit from its study.

3: Know ye that the Lord, he is God: It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves; We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture
Note how this verse begin – know ye that the Lord, He is God. We know that there is a God. We know that he is an all-powerful creator, and that He is also a personal God, who takes an

interest in each of us. Our knowledge is not unscientific or baseless. It isn't by "blind faith" that we can be sure of God's existence, as so many that deride Christianity would ignorantly label it as. We all have an inbuilt understanding of God, as Paul notes in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans (1:19-20). We can come to a clear conclusion that God exists by simply observing the world around us. An intelligent designer is clearly behind much of what we see, e.g. the tooth enamel, as covered by Jonathan in a recent issue of this magazine, and also in what we don't see, such as the complex language found in all of our DNA. These things did not come around by mindless, unguided processes; indeed, to believe in that would definitely involve blind faith! The intelligent design we see around us everyday is the work of a great architect who knew exactly what He was doing. Our knowledge of the Lord is founded intellectually and on logic. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. These are such incredibly important words to consider during the times we live in. One needs to only consider issues that dominate the news and social media, with gender identity being a notable example. As God and the Bible have been removed from schools throughout the western world, and Darwinism, natural selection and billions of years has replaced it, we're now seeing the outworking of that coming to a tragic fruition, as generations of young people don't even know what they are and why they were made as they are.



As we know, when a man gets further from God, he is at risk of falling into a myriad of sins. But a less pondered point is that separation from God can also bring confusion upon man. As secular culture moves further away from the teachings of scripture, is it any wonder that so many are confused around issues such as gender? If we're no longer doing things God's way and it's now every man for himself, with everyone acting as

their own little god, it really oughtn't to be a shock that such confusion and anti-scriptural teachings and behaviours should abound. The Bible says "male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27); but in a secular world that has thrown out the scriptures, is it any surprise that people are turning away from God's plain teaching and inventing all kinds of alternative genders?

But rather than rush to anger on such matters, we ought first to sympathise with the lost state of so many around us. A sympathetic understanding of the times would go a long way towards more effective witnessing. There are resources that can help when going out and spreading the Good News to the people of today, a splendid example being Ken Ham's 'Gospel Reset', which details the lack of foundational Bible knowledge among young people and how to witness to them in a 21st century world. As we preach the Gospel to others, going back to basics, explaining who God is, how sin originated and why the world is in the state it's in are good starting points. It's no good simply telling people that Jesus loves them and can save them, as so many wishy-washy contemporary churches do, if they don't even know what they need to be saved from!

But this is hardly a new problem. Man not acknowledging God as the potter and himself as the clay is as old as time itself, finding its roots way back in the Garden of Eden. The world is as it is because of original sin; Adam and Eve went against their maker's instruction, wanting to be as Him. They wanted to make themselves little gods, just as people do today, rather than relying on the boundless love and endless provision of their Lord; some things never change. Looking at it in practical terms, as we see that it's the Lord that made us, we ought to remind ourselves daily that we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. He has called us out and redeemed us, though we've done nothing to deserve such amazing grace. This should fill us with a zeal to live for Him and follow His commands. Speaking for myself, I'm far happier to be a servant of God than of sin. It's not easy being a believer, it takes effort, but it certainly beats the life I was living before I got saved.

As we are the Lord's sheep, let's consider for a moment the relationship between ourselves and our shepherd.

The sheep follow their shepherd – we are taught in the Gospels that we are to take up our cross daily and follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sheep trust in their shepherd – we're taught in the third chapter of Proverbs (3:5) to "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

A shepherd protects his sheep – consider the words of Psalm 91:2, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress"

A shepherd feeds his sheep – the words of John 6:35 ring out, "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger"

Let us live out this analogy in our daily lives – follow the Lord, trust in Him, go to Him for protection and feed from Him as the bread of life.

4: Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

5: For the Lord is good: his Mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Do we enter into His gates with thanksgiving? When we attend church every week, we should do so with a thankful spirit, ready to praise God and bless His name. Where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, there He is in the midst of them. Do we feel the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ when we worship on a Sunday? That we do so should fill us with awe and wonder and manifest itself in us through an abundance of praise and thanksgiving.

Looking further ahead, let us consider the new heavens and the new earth, where Christ will reign as King forevermore. What a tremendous picture that will be! In His first advent, He who made us was the suffering servant, dying upon the cross the brutal death that we deserve for our sins. When He comes again, He will be the all-powerful conquering monarch. We will daily enter into His gates with thanksgiving as we reign with Him in eternal glory. We shall thank Him and bless Him for the rest of time, because He took a personal interest in us, saved us from our sins and gave us everlasting life.

The final verse assures us that He's not finished calling people out just yet. Our Lord's mercy is everlasting, His truth endures to all generations. We considered how young people today are in a more secular world, more separated from God than ever. The times might have changed, but God hasn't! He is as ready to call sinners to repentance through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ today than he was two thousand years ago; "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Isn't it a tremendous blessing and comfort that in this ever-changing world, where more and more people are calling good evil and evil good, that we have an unchanging, eternally consistent Heavenly Father that offers a free gift to all through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us ever praise the Lord, as we are instructed to in Psalm 100, serve Him with a humble spirit and a passion in our hearts, and witness to those around us, knowing that His power to save lost souls is as strong and reliable as ever.

By John Sivewright

Resource Corner

The Most Reluctant Convert

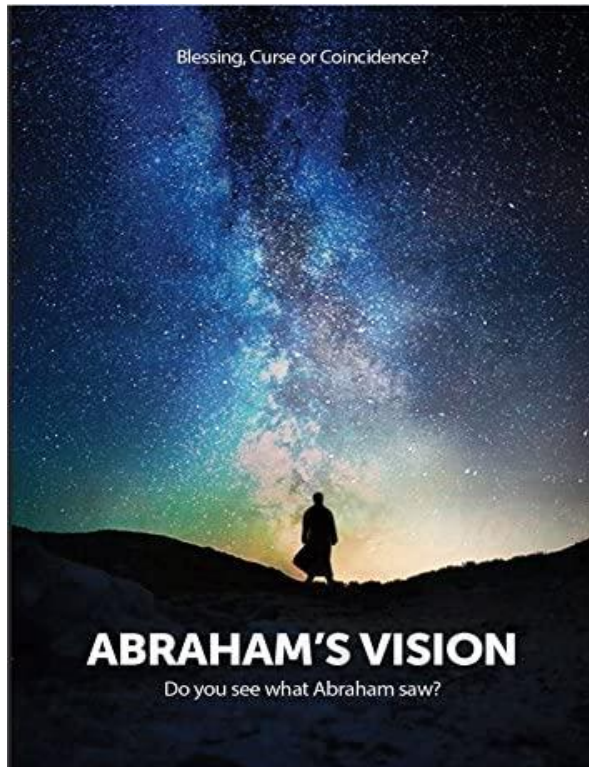


Experience C.S. Lewis' profound journey from vigorous debunker of Christianity to become, as he said, "the most reluctant convert in all England." Through Max McLean's detailed and masterful performance, Lewis' story of grief, loss and redemption comes to life on screen in his own magnificent words. Filmed in and around

Oxford, England, featuring Nicholas Ralph (All Creatures Great and Small) and directed by double BAFTA winner Norman Stone (BBC's Shadowlands).

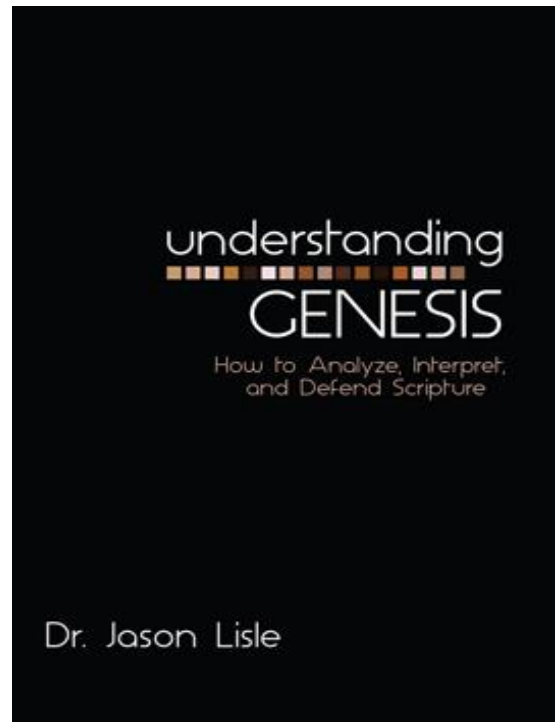
Available from Amazon

Abraham's Vision



Do you see what Abraham saw? In this multi-award winning documentary, Bible scholar Lance Lambert takes us on a journey through the historical implications of the Abrahamic Covenant, in which the Lord gave a three-fold promise to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as an everlasting inheritance. Learn of The Lord's promised protection for His covenant people, and the fulfillment of His purposes through them, in the declaration: "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you." (Genesis 12:3) Trace the outworking of this declaration through history, beginning with the Exodus from Egypt, and continuing through the Biblical era to the fall of the Roman Empire. Discover the covenant promises from both a Biblical and historical perspective in the purpose of God. This DVD is accompanied by Brief Bible Study notes for each chapter, which are suitable for individual or group study. Additional discussion worksheets are available for download from www.blessingcursecoincidence.com
Available from Amazon and Keithjones.co.uk

Understanding Genesis



There are many opinions and subsequent interpretations on the Book of Genesis. What did the author of Genesis intend and how can we possibly know, or is the important thing only what the Bible "means to you"?

In this book, Dr. Jason Lisle answers questions such as:

- What are the most common mistakes people make in trying to understand Genesis?
 - What are the necessary rules of biblical interpretation, and what is the proper role of science in understanding the Bible?
 - How does one identify the various types of biblical literature, and how do the rules of interpretation handle each type – poetic, prophetic, historical, etc.?
- Is there one correct interpretation of the Bible, or are there many?

Discover why alternative positions are rationally impossible. Unlock a powerful understanding of God's Word and equip yourself with a reasoned defense against those who distort the Word of God.

Available from Answers in Genesis

Family Bible Quiz Corner

Word search

R	E	D	E	A	M	E	R	C	A
N	E	X	O	D	U	S	U	U	L
O	L	D	R	M	R	C	T	R	I
L	B	S	E	G	L	A	P	S	B
E	S	I	C	E	B	S	T	E	M
E	N	O	C	H	M	A	P	L	L
L	M	N	Z	U	G	E	S	P	A
B	Z	A	G	H	T	U	R	T	S
I	O	X	D	U	P	N	A	E	P
B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	L	X

Redeemer, Blessing, Curse, Bible, Psalm, Enoch,
Ruth, Boaz, Altar, Exodus

Fill in the Blank – Hymns

Guide me oh, thou _ _
Pilgrim through this _ land,
I am _ but thou art _ ,
Hold me with thou _ hand,
Bread _ _ , bread _ _ ,
Feed me _ and evermore,
Feed me _ and evermore.

Which Psalm is this?

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the
counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way
of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in
his law doth he meditate day and night.
3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers
of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his
season; his leaf also shall not wither; and
whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff
which the wind driveth away.
5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the
judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the
righteous.
6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the
righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall
perish.

Answer: Psalm 1

A Final Thought

**1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from
idols. Amen.**

The more one reads the Bible, the more one will find short verses that manage to say a tremendous amount in just a few words. At the very end of the first epistle of the disciple whom Jesus loved, in what seems a mere passing comment in closing, John imparts some invaluable advice. We are told in the gospels to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37), which is the first and greatest commandment. Whatever is going on in our lives, the Lord must be at the centre of our thinking. He must hold the supreme place in our heart. It's easy to get pulled this way and that by other interests and fancies, even those that appear to be of great personal or spiritual value. Even indulging in the works of a great theological writer, or keeping company with a valued Christian acquaintance, can risk leading us astray if it takes the place of the time we should spend with the Lord and studying his word. Even the great affection we have for a loved one can become a snare if it exceeds the love ought to show our maker. We must make sure we continue reverently in prayer, studying the scriptures and meditating on the word of the Lord, keeping him firmly in the foreground and letting Him be our master. And let's be under no illusions; while some of us may feel the phrase "little children" doesn't apply to us in a spiritual sense, it certainly does when we're at the feet of an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the books of scripture are of tremendous importance and value, and the writings of this beloved Apostle have much to teach us indeed. Let us come to the Lord with the faith of children, ready to be taught, and refrain from letting anything else become an idol and interfere with the place He should have in our lives.

By John Sivewright

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