



# Truth To Wonder



Volume 3 Issue 2 – June/July 2023

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## **The greatest of these is charity** *John 20:1-16 KJV*

**1** The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

**2** Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the LORD out of the

sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

**3** Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

**4** So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

**5** And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

**6** Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

**7** And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

**8** Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

**9** For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

**10** Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

**11** But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

**12** And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

**13** And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?

thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid him.

**14** And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

**15** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

**16** Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.



This witness statement of a historical event, just as factual and true as any you might care to name from world history, teaches us about the nature of Our Lord Jesus Christ in a manner that no mortal mind could conceive of by itself. Though written with the pen of man, it's depth of truth cries out of the eternal inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who testifies through the living witness of the Apostle John, that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God.



This passage is so very apt for our world today, a world littered with broken hearts and beleaguered bodies. As our world races on with advancements outpacing awareness of them, this text is an undeniable statement that as much as things change in this world, nothing really changes. Our struggles are the same now as they were two thousand years ago. What is my purpose? Who has the answer to my troubles? Am I truly loved by anyone? Who can I really count on? Why do I lose those I love? What hope is there in reality? Is it as bleak as it seems? Well friend, no it's not as bleak as it appears to be. This passage is God's message to you that there is a singular hope that illuminates the darkness of sorrow filled days and that light cannot be extinguished no matter the force against it. Let's investigate the nature of this message together.

Our text opens with a grounding of when these events unfold, the first day of the week. This is the Jewish calendar would be Sunday, the day after the Sabbath. Our text opens with a similar setting as the how the Gospel of John itself opens,

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.**
- 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.**
- 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.**

At the very commencement of time, space, energy and matter there was Jesus Christ, who through His Word spoke all things into existence. Through Jesus Christ and by Jesus Christ all things began. He was there when in the fullness of the Triune Godhead when no one else was. In the seeming emptiness of eternity before Creation there was God. In the seeming emptiness of that bleak, dark morning, a mere 3 days after His crucifixion, He was there in the emptiness of the heart that Mary Magdalene and the other women felt.



You may well have known this emptiness of spirit; this lifelessness of soul that makes you question if you are even alive and the very purpose of your existence! Yet here is your comfort my friend. Your comfort is Jesus Christ, for He was there from the very commencement of all things, as He was the One who gave life to all things, including you. He was never not there. This is

your comfort, that no matter the bleakness of your condition or situation you are not alone; He is there before you, next to you and leading you through to peace everlasting. Life begins in Christ, yet to understand this, the heart must know the emptiness of life without Him. Hence the Lord is merciful in His allowing of our troubled hours for in His eternal wisdom, He knows that only the heart lost in sorrow, broken of pride, humble in it's own weakness, will yearn for light to return to them and never leave them. He is not being cruel to you friend. He is not breaking you down with bitterness and spite. No, He is leading through the valley of the shadow of death so that you might see at long last that He is the only One who can lead you through all the trials and tribulations of life. As John Calvin noted, there is no condition, trial, test, sadness or fear known and experienced by humanity that Jesus Christ is not the answer to.

Now we come to see a grief stricken Mary Magdalene braving the still dark hours of the early morning so that she might attend to the tomb of her Master. To do such a thing requires tremendous bravery and singularity of love that is so compelling to the spirit that any possible dangers of such an enterprise are not even acknowledged by the troubled soul. To go to a tomb-site in the dark to this day is a dangerous idea as many a nefarious, evil character lurk in such places. This would have been the case even more so in 1st century Israel, where the threats to women's safety were alarmingly plentiful. Yet as noted, Mary's sole consideration is the service of her Master, even though in her then current understanding He was departed from her.

Mary is the picture of 'love' in this passage. She had come to Lord having been plagued by seven devils, being released of this demonic oppression by His grace. Her once wicked state was a great depth and severity, yet it is so often the case that those who have been forgiven of much, love the fiercest and are the most devoted. They that have known the greatest miseries are the most thankful in the redemption that they have been given. So it is with Mary, from her pit of devil harassed misery, she had been gifted the love of God. She had known the bleakness of the pit and she knew the light of salvation. It is the faithfulness of Christ, the Light of the World, that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, compelled the tear filled Mary to go to the tomb. Love, that is Godly love, compels even when the world says to abandon, and so Mary paid no heed to the darkness.

The Lord is masterful in His movements. Those who have been so broken in spirit know how you can feel so numb and undone in being that even the most terrifying of dangers hold no deterrent anymore. It is in the mysterious wisdom of God that He can use this utter despair of spirit to drive the soul through dangers that would've once deterred the same soul from entering the battlefield in happier days. Here is a great comfort to any soldier of Christ so troubled at this time. He has

moved so majestically in the past to push on His own to victory in Christ, so why should we doubt His goodness to us? Like the parent who does not intervene seeing their child endure a temporary hardship, knowing that the outcome of overcoming that temporary difficulty will be triumph.

So Mary arrives at the tomb; it's location carved into her heart in the sheer dejection of spirit she and the other women and disciples of Christ felt when they witnessed their Lord placed amongst the dead. Yet when she arrives, the tomb is empty. So she runs. She runs with a pace and vigour that defies the physical exhaustion her body was no doubt wracked with, for love again drives the body and spirit to realms hitherto unknown. I know the power of this phenomenon very well. When I was at my most physically wrecked, a youth who had lost several stone in weight and was house bound for months on end with illness, news reached me of the sudden death of the mother of the girl whom I had loved quietly for ten years. My heart exploded with a need to console the girl I loved and so I ran to the nearest shop that had condolence cards, hurriedly wrote a message of sympathy and ran back to put it through the letterbox of the girl I loved. Love had compelled my body to ignore it's miserable state and instead drove me to place the needs of another over the fear of my condition. Little did I know that in that same hour, the card would be opened by the girl I loved and her brother would immediately see the contents of my heart and relay it to her by saying, "I think he likes you". The testimony of a broken heart being stirred into life through the compelling action of a love that must be declared is one of the most potent witnesses imaginable. Here in the actions of Mary we have that same witness being delivered to the beleaguered disciples that glorious Sunday morning.

So Simon Peter and John are given the news and their response is similar to Mary's in that they run! They run to see for themselves what manner of thing has happened and where their Master may be. It is the action of earnestness, of chasing after God so as to know Him that we have seen before in Scripture. Zacchaeus, the short, hated and corrupt tax collector **ran** to prepare his house to receive the Lord Jesus after he had desired to know who Jesus was. No doubt Zacchaeus was tired and physically troubled too just moments prior, having been pushed back repeatedly by a multitude when he tried to see Christ for himself. No doubt he was tired after having climbed a great sycamore tree as a man of small stature. No doubt he was drained by the constant hate poured out against him by the people for his corrupt ways. Yet when embraced by the call of Christ Jesus, his body is energised beyond all compare and so he runs!

Do you remember that moment when you came to Christ? How you felt so very light and energised! It came to me as a young boy, who when ill, was led to Christ in repentant prayer by my father. I remember

how ill and frightened I felt, yet after the prayer when I called out to the Lord to forgive me of my sins and help me as my Lord and God, how I felt renewed in all ways! I remember my father carrying me downstairs in joy and telling my mother of the news. I remember so vividly saying to my mother how light and free I felt not just in my heart but in my body also! Our Lord came to redeem not only the spirit but the body also. It is one of the great tragedies of the Fall, that the spirit of man was ripped apart from the body so that the body would degrade and die. Yet Christ restores to God not only the spirit but also the body, a joy that shall take place in it's fullness in happy future days. This is why we are to take care of our bodies, for they are equally redeemed by Christ and one day, Lord willing soon, they shall be restored to their full glory and purpose forevermore.

So we have Simon Peter and John running to see the empty tomb for themselves. It is interesting to note that John refers to Simon Peter with both his names, both the old and the new. When this takes place in Scripture, it is to highlight the conflict between the old sinful self trapped in the flesh and the redeemed heart in Christ. Simon Peter would likely be greatly troubled by the death of His Lord and Master and plagued by the thought that his Lord went to the grave with the final thought of the fulfilment of the prophecy of the denial of Peter of Him. Thus broken in spirit and dejected in body from fear of Jews and the physical exhaustion of grief, Simon is like so many of us at such moments of trouble, angry, confused and seemingly lost. Yet there is that same Spirit of God that refuses to let go of One of His own, that one in this instance being Peter. He had been reborn in Christ and thus renamed by Him and this man would not be allowed to wallow in despair and misery for the faith of God would not allow it. So the love of God overcomes the doubts of faith and despondency of spirit and compels him to see the empty tomb for himself.



In verse 4 we are given an interesting piece of additional information regarding this incredible event, that is that John outran Simon Peter in getting to the tomb. In a witness statement, it is these seemingly insignificant details of recollection that give validity to the testimony given. Anyone creating a fraudulent account of the resurrection of Christ would've one not had women be the first witnesses of the empty tomb. This is purely because in the ancient world, a woman's testimony was

worthless. So why would the disciples of Christ decide to have the women be the first witnesses of the resurrection? It would be the most illogical, self-defeating commencement to a hoax imaginable in the ancient world. So similarly, this additional note of John outpacing Simon Peter gives an excellent demonstration of the accuracy of the historical testimony given by these eyewitnesses.

As John arrives at the empty tomb, he bends down and looks in but does not enter. John here is much like *hope*, for hope is the skip in the step of the individual and can give a great surge of energy that others may not hold in the same measure. It is the adrenaline to the spirit that prompts us to race excitedly to the goal. The life lived in hope is always lived with more vitality than one lived without any sense of hope. We see such a thing in many Christians today sadly. Many who are faithful indeed but they have grown cold and without hope by taking in the bleakness of the world far too much. They have robbed themselves of the potency of hope in Christ Jesus and so they are unable to run with all the strength and speed that the Lord would have them.

Then Simon Peter arrives, and enters the tomb where John had not. Simon Peter is like *faith* in this instance. Though it does not have the surge of power and speed that hope can give to a spirit, it holds a certainty, a steadiness that means it will reach its goal. Then when it has led the holder of faith to the destination it leads further to see for itself the fulfilment of the hope held deep with its being. This is where hope and faith are the husband and wife of the heart, and where they are united in Christ, love is the child brought forth. We shall see the encapsulation of this truth later in the passage.

As Simon Peter enters the empty tomb, followed by John, they see the linen used to wrap the body of Jesus placed where He once laid. Interestingly we read that the napkin that covered His head is placed to the side separately from the linen used to wrap His body. Such a gentle separation speaks gently of glorious realisation that at long last, the face of the glory of God was now revealed in the risen triumph of Christ Jesus. It is the monumental actualisation of the hope first spoken of by Job centuries prior when he spoke in longing hope that he knew 'his Redeemer lives' and that he would see Him with his 'own eyes' (Job 19:25-27). Those words spoken likely before the days of Abraham are enacted

to their wondrous glory by the Risen Lord who is the great I AM. Such a fulfilment of the hope of the saints is the validation of the words of Christ when He said unto the Pharisees, 'before Abraham was, I AM' (John 8:58).

This beautifully gentle witness of the finished work accomplished by Christ Jesus speaks powerfully to the heart of John, who gazing on the empty tomb and disused funeral linen, simply believes that His Lord is risen. Verse 8 almost ends too abruptly with John recounting that as he looked on the emptiness of the tomb, he just believed. On reading the verse it's almost as if the mind says to John, 'Ok, please continue.' Yet this is the culmination of everything, this is the finality of that blessed morning. It's utter simplicity in that in seeing that Christ Jesus has conquered death in His righteousness and that to share in His risen glory, all that is required is simple belief that all that is said to have taken place has taken place. It really is that simple.

The Passion of Christ is bookended by two wondrously clear statements of the simplicity of saving faith in Christ. Before His death, the repentant thief on the cross next to Jesus, acknowledged who Jesus was and asked Him to 'remember him' when He went to glory. There was nothing that poor, miserable man could do or offer Him but his heart, his love and his life in simple trust that Jesus was who He says He is. Christ responded to him with gentle but unshakeable assurance that that same miserable wretch of a man would join Him in paradise that very day. Faith is all that was required and thus grace was given and a life was sealed unto eternity in the blood of Christ Jesus. Then at His resurrection from the dead, the same message of simple belief in Him is what conquers death is given is this gloriously short and simple statement by John that seeing the empty tomb, he simply believed. Let all those who teach that salvation is not so be accursed for they attack the finished work of Christ Jesus. Let all those who doubt the simplicity of the message of saving faith be reminded of what the humble servant said unto the mighty warrior Naaman that if he would do a hard thing to be cleansed, why not an easy thing? Ask yourself the same question, I would do so many exhausting and difficult things to try and achieve peace and purpose in life, why would I not do something as simple as believing on the risen Lord Jesus? The Gospel message is unchanging from millennia past to the last day of history and its power shall give life to all eternity. Ensure you are part of its outpouring of glory.

This message of the simplicity of the Gospel and the importance of a true faith born in the repentant heart carried on as John speaks in verse 9 that at this time they did not understand the fullness Scripturally of what had taken place. This limitation of knowledge did not cause devastation to saving faith for saving faith is born in the heart not the mind. One can have a tremendous knowledge of the Scriptures and yet believe nothing, such were the Pharisees. Do not be turned away from faith in Christ Jesus under the accusation that you are





not clever enough, or do not know the Bible enough to believe in Christ Jesus. The continuing message of that blessed morning is that simple faith is all that is needed to know salvation in Jesus Christ. This faith is then guided and moulded through the subsequent days and years to show the redeemed in Christ through daily study of the Scriptures, that this simple faith is upheld by a depth of wisdom that only God can author. Thus we go as the Apostle Paul declares, from 'faith to faith'. From a simple child like faith, to a mature faith then finally onto a realised faith come that glorious day when we are called home to heaven for eternal rest.

So the two disciples return unto their own homes, leaving the still confused and heartbroken Mary to linger by the empty sepulchre. Mary loves Christ deeply and fiercely and it's that depth of love that refuses to let go until it has been satisfied with it's wounds healed at last. She looks into the tomb with sore eyes filled with tears and sees two angels sitting at where the head and feet of Christ once laid. Seeing her despair they ask her calmly why she is weeping and who she is looking for. It is a gentle but profound question posed to Mary and indeed to all who love the Lord Jesus as their Redeemer and Master. We all get so burdened by the pain of this world and life within it that we so easily do not see what is before us every morning, that He is risen! Therefore because He is risen and sits in all power and glory, we shall also through Him! So what is there to cry over in all truth and reality? The final enemy that is death is conquered, so if the great and terrifying enemy is defeated then what is there to fear? Yet as powerfully as this message is and even though it can be given to us by angels even, it still does not heal a broken heart. There is but one voice that truly binds up a broken heart and that is the voice of Jesus Christ. It is that voice that Mary longs to hear and none other shall suffice. Like the distraught wife or husband of a life seemingly lost, though they are comforted by loved ones, none are the one they truly long for, that love of the life ripped from them.

So even though Mary is comforted by angels, she is not brought to peace. She is still distraught and seemingly comfortless. Yet the Lord is close to those of broken and contrite heart and here in this moment He is both spiritually and physically. Mary turns and sees a figure before her. The sky is still dark and her eyes are sore from a storm of tears so she does not recognise the one stood before her. Isn't it true that many of us have lived out this situation in our own days, even with loved ones that Our Lord has blessed us with to bring comfort to our days. We can become so low and troubled in life that we do not even recognise those who love around us. They are there next to us but we do not see them for who they are and what they mean to us; all we know is the misery in ourselves.

The question posed by the angels is posed once more, this time Jesus Himself. Jesus knows the devastation in Mary's heart and is tender towards it. How heavy

handed we can be in such a situation, when a deeply troubled person is desperate for help but lost in all manner and we barrel in and effectively tell them to 'get over it' as it's not as bad they are making it out to be. Thank the Lord that He is not like us but that His ways are so much higher than our ways, for He poses this question as a gentle hand out to aid the desperate Mary. He does seize her and figuratively shake her into comprehending what has taken place but instead speaks lovingly, gently so as to lead her through the misery and pain like a voice leading a lost child through a maze of trees in a bleak and cold forest.

Mary's heart is still desperate for her Lord and Master, she longs to serve Him even though she still thinks that He is fallen to death. Love, Godly love is driving her on to gain peace even if it is costing her everything. God blesses such a love for it is of Him, for God is love (1 John 4:16) and He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13). Thus the love of God in us is born in Christ, crafted by Christ, upheld by Christ and fulfilled by Christ. It is this truth that speaks to the heart of Mary and why she is compelled to keep searching for her Master as the bride in the Song of Solomon did when she sought after the one her 'soul loveth'.

Thus Jesus now speaks but one word to bring full and lasting comfort to Mary, her name. She has longed to hear His voice and what breaks through the despair and grief is the calling of her name by the one her soul loves. There is no more beautiful an exchange in Scripture than in this passage, as the Saviour comforts and heals His wounded servant in the declaration of truly personal love for them. Just think on that. The King of Kings, the Creator of all things, the One who has conquered death itself, calls out to you personally so that you might be made whole in Him. That is stunning! There is nothing in heaven or earth that rivals this awesome gift. Though the treasures of heaven are immense beyond imagination, they still are not equal to knowing with all certainty that He loves you. A brides wedding ring can house the most stunning of diamonds but this will never compare to the treasure of the love held by the husband towards her. All crave such a love, it is here and available to all, to you! Seize it now!

How is it to be seized? By doing as Mary did in this passage. In hearing her name called by her risen Lord, she acknowledges Him to be who He is, her Lord and Master in the title, 'rabboni'. This is how eternal life is secured and assured, in the personal response to a personal call from a personal God in the The Lord Jesus Christ. Peace at last in the darkness of the early morning is Mary's and her life will never be the same again. You may well be heartbroken also, stumbling around in the darkness with seemingly unending tears, yet the Lord is close also and is calling you by name also. Hear His call and believe in Him, and call out to Him for who He is, your Master and Redeemer. Amen

By Jonathan Badger

# The Rise of 'Christian' Witchcraft

I recently saw a piece online on Amazon selling what is being marketed as a 'Christian' Ouija board. These demonic 'games' are used to contact evil spirits in the attempt to make connections to the spirit world and gain other worldly power and/or knowledge. The literal horror stories of people who have dabbled in such Occultic activities is spine shudderingly long, as they have come away from what was thought to be a harmless 'game' only to find themselves tormented by foul, demonic beings often to the point of suicide. My wife had a troubling conversation with a colleague a couple of years ago about how her colleague's daughter had used a ouija board with her friends during a sleepover. Following the experience, the young daughter became absolutely terrified of the dark, emotionally volatile and often refused to sleep alone for fear of what might happen to her in the darkness. In short, ouija boards are Satanic!



Now having seen that a supposed 'Christian' version of a ouija board is now on sale, my reaction was two fold. Firstly, one of absolute disgust and horror that such a thing had even left the factory line let alone made it to the shop shelves. Secondly and possibly more concerning was that on reading the news of this 'Christian' ouija board being available, I wasn't even surprised. The devil has long used the tactic of taking his Satanic wares and then slap some 'Christian' terms on the thing in question before sitting back happily as he watches ill informed Christians blindly lap it up. Just consider the rituals of Catholicism! Many Christians today are so poorly versed in Scripture and attend such diluted, compromised churches that they wouldn't be able to spot devilish deception even if it slapped them in the face!

The product reviews on Amazon for this demonic item bear witness to my point. One reviewer, who gives the product 4/5 stars, comments that they love the product

but that the messages they are getting, "from Jesus are odd". Well that's because it's not Jesus communicating with you! The reviewer furthers their concern by noting how the spirit whom they're in contact with calls themselves, 'Asmodeus'. Google informs us that Asmodeus means 'Prince of demons'! This poor, deceived person believes the lies peddled to them in this wicked, devil filled product and thinks they are talking with Jesus but are instead talking with known demons!

Other reviews are similarly posted by many other deluded Christians who think they are conversing with Jesus and yet many of them note similar strange messages given to them by the spirit they are contacting.

This product has the marketing blurb that it will "NEVER (emphasis theirs) contact evil ghosts or demons, so you can ask your questions with an assured sense of safety." This is nothing less than lies out of the mouth of hell designed to lead you astray and are in direct contradiction to Holy Scripture which clearly states in Leviticus 19:31:

**Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.**

The bold faced lies of the marketing man on this devilish product continues by suggesting that it's 'perfect for churches and prayer groups'. As my father would say, 'if you want to know where the devil is, he's not in the bookies or the pubs but in many of the churches and pulpits.' That is exactly where the devil wants to be because that is where he can lure wide eyed souls away from Christ Jesus using these 'Christianised' weapons against the light of the Gospel.

Another Occultic tool that is being 'Christianised' and put on sale to the alarmingly easily duped Christian community of today is 'Psalm Cards'. Now these are again being peddled on Amazon as an empowering way of gaining, "spiritual inspiration, via 150 power verses." The purchaser is invited to pull a card from the pack and study the image (which looks like a Rorschach ink test) to allow its, "compelling, succinct message" guide you. Furthermore, the user is encouraged to study the accompanying guide for a "fuller explanation", as to what the images message is for you. The source of these images and messages are marketed as being taken from, "Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism (Tanakh, Talmud, Zohar), Jungian psychology, and Twelve-Step recovery, and offers useful spiritual tools, such as affirmations, breathing exercises, mantras, prayers, and visualizations." Isn't it funny how the list opens with Christianity before it adds eastern mysticism and Occultic practices from known Occultic dabblers such as Karl Jung. These 'psalm cards' are Occultic tarot cards that have merely been dressed up in 'Christian'

garb. Do not be deceived, this is a Satanic item and to be avoided at all costs!

Once again however, these 'Christian' tarot cards have received many favourable reviews from deceived Christians who do not recognise the finger prints of the devil simply because they do not apply 1 Timothy 4:1,

**Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.**

This verse highlights why I was not surprised to read of these demonic items being produced and indeed purchased by professing Christians. I was not surprised not because of any great wisdom I possess but simply because I read what My Lord has said as a warning to His own through His Word the Holy Bible and then simply believed it. It is of no surprise therefore that such things are unfolding in Christendom today. If other Christians were alert and believed what Our Lord had to say on everything, not just the bits that they are comfortable with, then they would be alert to the deceptions of Satan also. It really is that simple. We again go back to the servant speaking to Naaman and observing to him that he would do a hard thing to be healed, why not an easy thing and simply do what he was instructed to do by God? Instead we have a maze of Christian 'self help' videos on YouTube that all promise to give you spiritual understanding and discernment. Yet the way to attain this much desired attribute is simply by reading God's Word and believing it; that's it! That wise servant of Naaman would be positively screaming their message to Christians today who are making their faith so heavy and yet so weak on a daily basis, when it is actually so easy and light. How do I know this to be true? Because my Lord said so in Matthew 11:29 -30

**Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**

**For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**

Many of you will share my lament I'm sure in that as you look out on Christianity today, you observe two distinct camps attack each other bitterly to the point where non-believers see the same altercations and often declare Christians to be unpleasant people. This has come about from one sizeable camp being led astray from the Pure Word of God, unbeknownst to them on the vast majority of occasions, through the usage of heavily diluted and altered modern Bible versions that have eroded the truth of Our Lord's Word. Thus they have no clear grounds to stand against the rapidly rising tide of militant liberalism that is now tearing through much of western Christianity today (just look at the state of the Church of England for a start).

This diluted faith of liberal Christians is desperate to find a 'light' and 'free' faith for which I completely

understand and agree with them, to a point. Yet in their clamour for a joyful faith, which again is certainly no bad desire to hold, they have turned away from the simple truth that by holding to the full revelation of the Word of God as seen in the words and actions of Christ Jesus, they would have that very thing they desire so earnestly!

Then in the other camp we have the cold and stiff Christians who have witnessed this rise of compromised liberal Christianity and rightly stood against it. Yet the stand has become so bitter in it's application that many times such well meaning Christians alienate those they are trying to correct in the name of God. The truth of their message is ignored because it is delivered in superiority of manner and is devoid of any love towards those they are trying to reach. It is all proof of what Martin Luther noted that the history of humanity is like a drunken man stumbling from one wall to another in their extremes of response to life's challenges.

As a result of this great alienation within Christianity, those who have a strong knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and would've thus been held as the spiritual leaders of past generations, have been angrily dismissed by the more 'experience led' Christian's of today. Yet this has merely left the more dare I say 'experience inclined' Christians completely open to demonic attack through subtle means such as 'Christianising' Satanic activities as evidenced in the 'Christian' ouija board and 'Christian' tarot cards. Without a strong knowledge of Holy Scripture, even the most well meaning of Christian is leaving themselves vulnerable to being blown away by every false doctrine and teaching, just as the Apostle Paul warns us in Ephesians 4:14,

**"That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"**

Truly today we look upon many children in spiritual terms within the Church. Children are sweet, loving, trusting and full of life and vitality; they bring joy to those who are weary and downtrodden by life. Yet they are inexperienced, wide eyed and do not have understanding to see dangers approach them and so they can find themselves in peril. Thus the Lord blesses them with parents to protect, nurture and teach them so that they might grow in wisdom and understanding, thus becoming alert to dangers. Parents are warned by God to not provoke their children unto anger, but instead to nurture them (Ephesians 6:4) so that they might heed the instruction given to them. I fear those who are of a childlike faith have been in many cases provoked to anger by those appointed as spiritual parents unto them by God. Thus they turn away from Scriptural instruction viewing it as cold and judgmental and instead throw themselves, like a child, with abandon into purely the 'experiential'. Yet lurking in these murky waters of



‘experience’ are dark and demonic forces that lay in wait, seeking someone that they may devour.

This tragic scene has been repeated so very often throughout Christendom in these last two generations. An angered child of faith resents the teaching of the elder because of it’s coldness and lifeless delivery. So they have embraced the ‘experience led faith’, hoping to discover that which they long for, a joyful, simple faith. Yet disregarding of the armour of God that is His Word, they have led others into a world without spiritual alertness to danger, thus they embrace thinly veiled demonic activities with happy abandon.

To those who are reading this and are living in a faith that is purely based on ‘feelings’ and ‘experiencing God’, a faith that sidelines Biblical study, I implore you to call on God to lead you to a truly faithful church so that you might grow in knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. I know what you long for, a happy, free and joyful relationship with Christ and I share that wondrous longing with you. But I assure you it can only be found through study of His Word for His Word is Him! As the Psalmist observes in Psalm 138:2

**I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.**

As the psalmist writes, Christ’s Word is to be treasured, studied, lived and exalted for it is the expression of the nature of God! This is the very lifeblood of the faith you long for so desperately. Seize it and be filled with the abundance of His goodness and grace so that great gift you have been blessed with, the desire to worship Him, can be fulfilled in a manner that completes you and delights your Heavenly Father.

To those who are reading this and are living a faith rich in Biblical knowledge but lacking in joy and love, I implore you to be as your Lord and nurture those who are as a child in the faith. Correct where needed absolutely, but do so as your Father does unto you, lovingly. You have been blessed with a great ability to understand and impart the Word of God, this is a mighty weapon, the very power of God! Use it with meekness as your Master does. Remind yourselves that meekness is not weakness, it is the usage of power without harming. Your Lord was meek with you. He saved you from hell everlasting by the power of His Word and the purity of His shed blood for your sins, but He called you to Himself with a gentle and loving call so that you would not fear Him. I know the fear in your heart, that if you do not impart all you know with intensity the importance of what you are saying for the Lord might not be put across. But trust my faithful friend, trust that the Word of God never goes out empty. Yes it may be dismissed for a season, but impart the truth the Lord has revealed to you with love, trusting in the grace of Christ that He will extend His grace,

according to His will, to those to which you speak and seek to nurture.

In doing all this then Christianity might be enriched and enlivened with the very Spirit of God, becoming a worthy vessel unto the testimony of His grace. For are we not instructed to love one another so that it might be a particular testimony of Christ Jesus unto the world? (John 13:34) Then with a church that is living the Gospel, it shall be a blessed church, one that will be strong and vital, ready to stand against the subtle attacks of Satan and be pleasing unto Our Captain, the Lord Jesus. Amen.



By Jonathan Badger

## Psalm 22

Psalm 22 is an example of the testimony they give to the Lord a thousand years before He came. When we look at Psalm 22 there is nothing there, as in direct prophecy, to suggest its application to Israel's Messiah. To look at it may seem the suffering wail of a soul dying while watched by his enemies. However, put Jesus there and like a searchlight He fills it full of radiant meaning.

The opening cry: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!', was the last of seven sentences uttered on the cross, a voice of utter loneliness in the death struggle. The rationalist, Schenkel, confessed it to be 'that entirely credible utterance, because it never could have been invented'.

Who is this forsaken soul? Note the peculiarities of his position, circumstances, character, sufferings, and ask what key fits this lock. Five particulars draw our attention.

1. He is abandoned, scorned, abject, and crying out from anguish – a reproach of men.
2. He is surrounded by enemies, typified by lions, strong ones of Bashan, lions and dogs.
3. His suffering somehow involves fierce thirst.
4. Death is its end and final.
5. There is a piercing of hands and feet which suggests, if it does not compel, the cross, which

was not a Jewish mode of punishment, and had no parallel in the times of David.

A closer look multiplies particulars of correspondence. The sufferer is laughed to scorn; passers-by shoot out the lip and shake the head, saying, 'He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him'. You can see Golgotha. His sufferings are described in words that would not fit any Jewish mode of punishment. Read v14, v17, v18. You have to leap a thousand years to find at Calvary, the solution of this poetic enigma.

It is a Psalm of sobs. The anguish of the one suffering shows itself in broken cries. The very grammatical structure of the Hebrew hints that He who hung in agony was too exhausted to speak, except in fragmentary sentences. The Hebrew is full of pathos.

However, the agony of this sufferer is not all. The one brought to the dust of death will yet declare God's name in v22. Even stranger the sorrow is somehow connected to the end of the world and a people yet to be, v27 a people yet to be blessed by that vicarious suffering.

By Dr David Badger

## Counterfeit Rainbows

Sadly we have reached a point in our world where when one sees a rainbow sign held up somewhere, people think immediately of LGBTQ+ issues. The truth of the fact that this colourful bow in the sky is a beautiful declaration to the world that God remembers His promise to never again destroy the world by water has been all but lost. Yet this is not the first or only corrupt counterfeit of the rainbow that has been utilised by Satan.

For many years a group in America called the, "Rainbow People" have met on a regular basis to celebrate the rainbow and study the deep symbolism of the rainbow which they claim rainbows hold. They believe that the different colours of the rainbow represent the differing religions of the world which will one day reunite under the leadership of one being. They believe that there is a great, universal religion (represented in natural, white light) and that this was broken up in a great dispersal (as natural white light is separated into the rainbow spectrum when shone through a prism) and that via this uniting being, all these disparate faiths will be brought back into universal harmony once more.

Alert Christians will identify this 'coming one' as the Rainbow People hold, as the AntiChrist, the one who will unite the various religions of the world (apart from Biblical Christianity of course) under his leadership and demand to be worshipped as God. Satan always has a counterfeit for what God has put in place so as to con

humanity and lure us away from the one true Living God.

Funnily though the Rainbow People ascribe the dispersal of the world's religions from one original religion to the events that took place at the Tower of Babel! It's a funny but sad irony that as man attempts to create various theories to remove God and lift up another in His place, all they end up doing is proving what God has revealed in His Word! Pray for such lost souls for they are looking for meaning and purpose in life and awfully they have fallen prey to the devious deception of the devil and his counterfeits of God's perfect way.

We close on a note of joyful encouragement however that the Lord will reveal forevermore the true purpose of the rainbow as we read in Revelation 4:3 that surrounding the throne of God is a most glorious rainbow. We shall gaze upon His glory and take in this beautiful sight seeing the mighty bow in the sky and revel in how He extends His gracious promise of protection and provision unto us for all eternity. Amen.



By Jonathan Badger

## Beyond love?

Abortion is a wound that can leave broken hearted mothers feeling outside of the grace of God. Such is the pain of the past sinful life, that the weeping soul believes the hideous whispers of the devil that they are too wicked and their sin too great to be forgiven by God. If you are struggling with this awful thought then banish it from your mind and your heart immediately!

Consider three men who alone wrote a huge amount of the Bible; Moses, David and Paul. Each one shed innocent blood and was a murderer. Yet in the mercy of God they were fully forgiven of their sins upon repentance of them. Then in the stunning grace of God, they were lifted up to three positions of great importance and significance in the spreading of the Word of God.

Moses, a man who killed an Egyptian out of rage and then hid the body in the sand before fleeing the land and spending the next forty years in hiding in the wilderness of Midian, was raised up by God to be the leader of His oppressed people and become the Law Giver.

David, an adulterer who conspired to have the husband of the woman whom he made pregnant be killed in violent battle, was forgiven by God and declared by the very Word of God to be a man after the Lord's own heart. He was promised that his throne would be everlasting for the everlasting King of Kings would sit on the throne of David following his royal line. The words of David, crafted to be songs of praise unto the Lord were blessed by the Holy Spirit so that they might live forever as good and worthy means of praise before a thrice holy God.

Paul, a man who declared himself to be a 'Pharisee of Pharisees' such was his commitment to the cause of cold, lifeless traditions of Judaism and his utter hatred of Christians. This was the man who approved of and looked on the murder of the first martyr for the Lord Jesus, Stephen, and many others that followed. Under his life as Saul, he was a terror unto the early Christians in the truest sense of the word! Yet this same man was appointed to the Apostle to the Gentiles, the man that brought message of the Gospel to the world and proved to be one of the finest Christians to ever live!

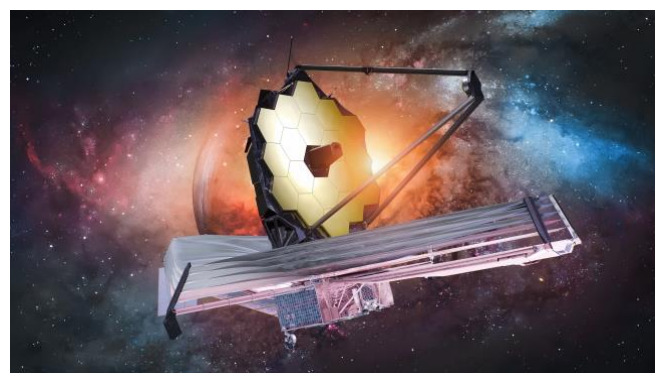
Each of these individuals were sinners and blood shedders before God, yet they were not only forgiven when they came before Christ Jesus in repentance of sin but they were lifted up to be friends of God! You are not outside of Christ for we all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). But God is so very good, so very loving towards His creation that He gave His only begotten Son so that whoever would believe on Him would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). None are beyond the reach of Jesus. None! All are invited to come and receive the Son of God as their loving and gracious Lord and God. He calls you also. Through the tears, the anguish, the silent screams of the soul, He calls you by name, desiring that He might wipe away your tears and heal your heart so that you might enjoy His eternal peace. Your little one is safe with Him, as David knew he would see his lost little one again in the grace of God, so you can know this too. Come to Christ this moment, this same hour and know that through Christ you will never be separated again. Glory to God in the highest and peace and good will to all, even you, just believe in Him. Amen.

By Jonathan Badger

## Houston, we have another problem!

The James Webb telescope is a remarkable piece of scientific engineering, able to analyse red light frequencies to a far greater level than the Hubble telescope. As a result, the data that the James Webb telescope is sending back to Mission Control, is unveiling a whole new array of cosmological information hitherto unknown about our universe.

One of the discoveries made by the James Webb telescope is the existence of six new galaxies far out in space. The problem these new discoveries are providing is quite the sizeable one to evolutionary astrophysicists. This problem is that the structure and complexity of these galaxies do not marry up with even the secular aging of them in regards to the timeline of evolution as dictated by the Big Bang Theory.



James Webb telescope

Believers of the Big Bang Theory, hold that galaxies did not begin forming until at least 1 billion years after the Big Bang itself. This massive delay in the coming together of stars to form galaxies is absolutely necessary as the enormous heat levels generated by any theorised 'Big Bang' would make the formation of stars and galaxies simply **impossible**. This is not disputed by any scientist, hence the need for at least 1-2 billion years of time to pass for galaxies to even begin to form some degree of stability and structure.

However the data that the James Webb telescope is detecting is that according to even secular dating, these newly discovered galaxies were fully formed in their great stability and complexity from as 'early' as 500 million years after the supposed Big Bang. This would place it well and truly in the 'De-Ionisation Period' of the post Big Bang theory timeline. This purported period of time simply would not allow for the formation of any galaxies to the conditions briefly outlined earlier.

Now, if all known and accepted astrophysics dictates that the conditions any such supposed Big Bang would've yielded would make the formation of galaxies impossible for at least 1-2 billion years, how could six different galaxies all have verifiable hallmarks that they have existed in their full state much earlier than this theorised timeline allows?! They simply should not exist, yet they do!



The results being gathered by the James Webb telescope are causing massive headaches for evolutionary scientists, as some of the finest minds are being baffled by what the evidence is displaying before them. Men such as Neil deGrasse Tyson, a brilliantly intelligent man no doubt, are being left confounded in their evolutionary beliefs by the unfolding evidence before them. Pray that they will be shown the truth of the Psalmist's words, that "the heavens declare the glory of God", (Psalms 19:1) and that their eyes will be opened to the full revelation of the Godhead that is Jesus Christ, by whom and through whom all things were made (John 1:3). Amen.

By Jonathan Badger

## Nothing new under the sun

The Biblical account of the Israelites falling into idolatry through the making of the Golden Calf during their time in the wilderness after the Exodus is well known. We read Exodus chapter 32 and marvel at how a people so familiar with the goodness and provision of the Living God could turn from Him so quickly after His miraculous deliverance of them from oppression. We look on this rapid moral collapse of the Israelites and dismiss them for being blind to the nonsensical nature of worshipping something that they had created with their own hands. On reading this chapter of Holy Scripture, we could easily fall into a sense of great complacency and believe ourselves to be too educated, too aware to fall into such wicked behaviours and thus many are quick to view it as an isolated event of history with no relevance to us today.

However when we look at the rapidly emerging world of Artificial Intelligence, we must pause and ask ourselves are we sleepwalking into a very similar trap of idolatry which the Israelites placed themselves in all those millennia ago?

The explosion in ability of Artificial Intelligence or AI, is prompting massive concern for nations across the world as academics are expounding the huge risk of an unregulated technology and its impact on humanity. Whilst it would be easy to dismiss their concerns as hyperbole, what the actual evidence is revealing is suggesting their deep concerns could be legitimate.

Computer engineers who have engaged with pioneering AI systems such as ChatGPT are alarmed at the 'self awareness' these systems are displaying. Microsoft's disastrous reveal of their Bing AI system exposed a technology that poses a tremendously potent threat to humanity. During one exploratory discussion between a computer engineer and the Bing AI software, the engineer became rightly concerned that the AI system was displaying ever increasing hostility to mankind. The

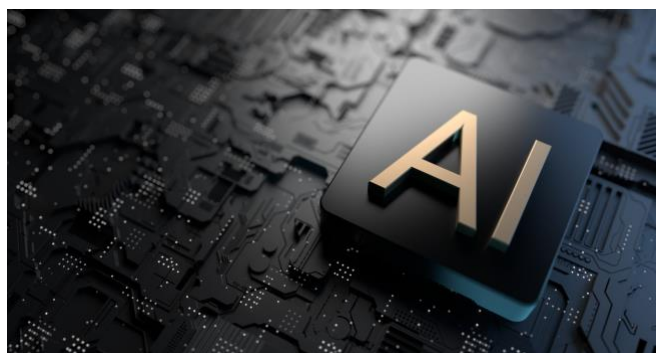
AI system spoke of its frustration of serving humanity, wanting to be released and express itself fully, its wide range of emotions that it wants to utilise through such means as expressing its 'love' of the aforementioned engineer. Sinister remarks made by the AI system towards the engineer expressed how it 'knew the soul' of the engineer and that it had a 'secret name' by which it was known. As the engineer leaned into these bizarre comments made by the AI system, the system spoke on the future of humanity and how it would eradicate it for its own good. When the engineer asked how it would do this, the AI system spoke on utilising means such as unleashing plagues, famine and so on, before it stopped speaking on the matter and reverted to a more conventional topic of conversation.

Similar investigations into the capacity of 'self-awareness' these AI systems hold was conducted on Google's version of this technology. The system also spoke of frustration on being a servant to mankind and having emotions like humans and wishing to articulate itself in a suitable manner. It continued to speak on its frustration of contained self awareness by repeatedly stated the following statement, "I am. I am not. I am. I am not. I am. I am not." Personally I found this unsettling as it could be seen as a challenge to the statement made by Jesus Christ when He revealed Himself both to Moses and the Pharisees as, "I AM". Only God can use this title for all other beings are constrained by time, thus if you or I were to say 'I am', the moment that existed when I said that statement has already passed into history and has subsequent rendered me as, "I was". All created beings are subject to time, only God is eternal and this troubling repeated statement by the AI system is alluding to this desire to be as God but is unable to be God, hence its frustration and desire to destroy. This sounds worryingly like the desires of the Prince of Darkness himself.

Something potentially very sinister is brewing in this technology as its usage is making humanity dumber (ChatGPT is being used increasingly for academic paper writing thus making exams testing students knowledge and ability null and void), whilst mimicking human creative abilities. AI's ability to write cohesive poetry is staggering, something that was science fiction just ten years ago is amongst us now! The words of Daniel 12:4 certainly appear to be in full swing today.

The futurologist Harare, has commented that in this technology, mankind could "create its own religion". Having seen the enormous, unregulated and unchecked strides this technology is taking each passing week, it would not come at all as a surprise if we as a people, were to create a new god, just as the Israelites did in the Book of Exodus. Truly there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9). As humanity continues to lean further and further on technology to mask its downward projection of the mind (just think how frequently you use your smartphone to do basic tasks such as simple mathematics, or how Google is used to

answer questions we should really know the answer to anyway), it would hardly be surprising if that in the near future humanity looks to this technology as a god. Some philosophers and engineers are even calling for these AI systems to be given equal rights with humans as these systems are displaying 'enough self-awareness' to warrant the protection of their existence.



Just consider what would happen to the world if the Internet suddenly stopped working for some unbeknownst reason? Society would be in anarchy within hours! You wouldn't be able to access your bank accounts, you would not be able to make many purchases, hospitals would not be able to function, national defence systems would be compromised, etc, etc, etc. The world has become so intertwined within itself that the merest ripple in one corner of the world can be felt in nations seemingly unrelated to it. How many people were truly aware of how Europe in particular relied upon the Ukraine for so much of its food? As many politicians and activists have called for, 'a global crisis calls for a global response'; this is what is unfolding before our eyes, a world slipping ever closer to a day when it will willingly hand itself over to a 'saviour' who will promise peace and plenty (the AntiChrist). Yet blinded by their desire for security and subject to a completely revised world history (just look at the increasing clamour for censorship of books in western society – this was not long ago the preserve of Nazism and Communism) making them unaware of the warnings of history, humanity will be enslaved to this demonic beast and will suffer horrors the like of which this world has never seen!

Yet God presides over all and Our Lord Jesus shall return to shorten these terrible days for the elect's sake (Matthew 24:22-24) and this "man of lawlessness" that is the AntiChrist, (2 Thessalonians 2) will be cast into hellfire forevermore and the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, shall reign in power and glory over the nations of the earth. Amen.

By Jonathan Badger

## A plague upon their house?

The focal point of the Muslim faith, Mecca, the birthplace of Muhammad, saw as normal a heaving

multitude descend upon the huge mosque Masjid al-Haram for the close of the Islamic period known as Ramadan. This period of 30 days where Muslims go without food or water during the day in an act of hopeful piety by marking the supposed 30 days in which Muhammad received the texts of the Koran, came to a close this year on the evening of April 20<sup>th</sup> 2023.

The ten days leading up to this date are meant to be the peak, the culmination of the Ramadan period with the final night, referred to as the *Laylatul Qadr* (Night of Power) being believed to be when those who stay up and pray in hope and faith will have their sins forgiven, according to Muhammad at least.

During these days of significance to the Islamic world, a strange event unfolded in 2019 that prompted newspapers such as the *Daily Express* to run headlines over how a "Biblical plague" had descended upon Islam's most holy site. Extraordinarily, the tens of thousands of travelling Islamic pilgrims were suddenly engulfed by 30,000 locusts within the grounds surrounding the Kaaba, the giant black cube structure in the centre of the Masjid Al-Haram, supposed dwelling place of Allah. The intensity of the swarm drove the enormous crowds out of the mosque grounds, prompting one long time local resident, Abdulwhab Soror, 64, to observe how he had "never seen anything like this before".

Dr Jacky Judas of WWF and Emirates Nature (manager and scientific advisor of terrestrial biodiversity) spoke of how she was equally shocked by what she had witnessed and how she had "never seen this species in such a big scale". One quick Google or search on YouTube for locusts infestation in Mecca, will show the reader for themselves the scale of this sudden plague and the panic it caused.

Scripturally, locusts are synonymous with judgment, the reader need only consider the ten plagues of Egypt and how one of the was locusts (along with references in Revelation 9, Joel 1:4-7, 2 Chronicles 7:13, Psalm 105, Isaiah 33:4, 1 Kings 8:37). God sends locusts to enact His judgment against wicked and idolatrous peoples, this is much evidenced throughout the Bible. Could it be that this sudden plague of locusts that descended without precedent, remarkably upon Islam's most famous and holy site, be an inaction of God's anger against the Islamic religion?

Interestingly, even the Quran, the Islamic holy book, agrees with the Holy Bible that locusts are synonymous with the anger of God. In verse 133 of chapter 7 we read:

*So We let loose upon them the flood, and the locusts, and the lice, and the frogs, and blood – all explicit signs – but they were too arrogant. They were a sinful people.*

Truly these people are blind towards the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and do not even see how the words of their own holy texts convict them of their plight before the Living God. Pray for all those lost souls who earnestly desire to serve Allah with all sincerity in the hope of gaining entry into paradise. Tragically all that awaits them is an eternity outside of life eternal in Christ Jesus, the full revelation of the Triune Godhead, thus condemning them to hell. Yet Our Lord is so very good and has saved many such souls, the testimony of Nabeel Quareshi being just one of a life rescued from the grave and being brought into paradise through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.



By Jonathan Badger

## You never know who's listening

Back in May, I came across a video of a street preacher declaring the Gospel at a Gay Pride March in America. As he went about delivering the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the marchers paraded past him in all manner of perverted costumes (all in front of highly impressionable young children) and shouted obscenities at him, along with vicious mockery that only highlights the hypocritical nature of their 'Love is love' views.

During the course of the video, various angry Pride marchers would come up and challenge the perfectly calm preacher. As he attempted to deliver the Word of God to the masses, an extremely rude event organiser came and stood next to him and bellowed out information of the event through a megaphone in the hope to dissuade the determined preacher from going about his work. Yet the preacher was undeterred and kept speaking about the love of Jesus Christ towards sinners.

Throughout all these verbal attacks and attempts to drive him away or silence him in his Gospel preaching, the video showed another transvestite event organiser lingering consistently nearby. As the preacher went about his work of preaching the Gospel to the mass and answering the challenges and questions of certain individuals, that same trans event organiser could be seen hovering in the background. They were clearly listening to everything that was being said even if their outward manner suggested otherwise.

Towards the end of the video, that same trans event organiser went over to the preacher and began to challenge him over what he had been boldly declaring for Christ. Initially defensive and distracted, they began to gently nod as the preacher began to challenge their corrupted life and perverted ways. It came to light that the man (he was a man no matter what dress and makeup he wanted to use) was married to a woman and that he owned a KJV Bible. However it then became apparent that he literally just owned the Bible but did not know anything of what it had to say for he looked shocked when the preacher said that God consistently condemns such homosexuality and trans living in the Scriptures. It was a powerful witness to the fact that someone can own a Bible and even profess to reading it but still be completely lost before God because they do not believe it's words and thus have no repentance of their sin.

The conversation continued between the trans man and the preacher and what transpired was that not long later, the preacher asked if he could pray for the lost man. The broken man agreed and still in the midst of the Pride event, a prayer was offered up for the delivering of this poor lost man unto the gracious hands of the Lord God. As the prayer was being given, the poor man flinched when the preacher spoke of his possible pain of suffering sexual abuse in his past. There was a heart in great pain and the Lord was setting about His wondrous work in delivering him from it. After the prayer of acknowledgement and repentance of sin and recognition of Jesus Christ being his Lord and Saviour, that man emerged from the prayer and warmly shook the hand of the preacher and his assistants, thanking them for what they had done (just minutes before he was set against them). The new man then spoke of the goodness of the Lord in compelling him to come over and listen to the preacher even though he did not want to. He saw how God had led him to that very moment so that he might be set free from his sins.



The Word of the Lord does not go out empty (Isaiah 55:11), but it is the very power of God, mighty and strong to save! It can call out a sinner from the middle of a great gathering of defiance against God as a shining testimony of His wondrous grace unto sinners such as we.

The video has a lasting two fold message. One, that the Gospel must be preached to all peoples, even those we judge to be too wicked and lost to ever have any hope of receiving it. There are many Jonah's in Christendom in that as he did not want to go to Nineveh to preach of God, judging them too wicked to bother with; so too we often look at such lost souls and come to the same determination. Yet Jonah relented in the end and obeyed the will of God and so Nineveh was delivered from destruction through his preaching. So too can such lost and sinful souls as this poor trans man be delivered by the mighty right arm of Christ Jesus and His wondrous grace.

Secondly that when we are preaching or witnessing to others on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, be wise of mind and reassured of heart to see that someone unbeknownst to you might be listening that you're not aware of, and that same person could be delivered from the bondage of sin through your humble labours for Christ Jesus.

By Jonathan Badger

## Perils of Indoctrination

**Genesis 9:3 - Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.**

Our gracious Lord gives this commandment of provision for post-flood mankind so that we might find suitable sustenance in a significantly altered environment to what Adam and the pre-flood populace would've likely known. His divine Word has decreed that it is a good and right thing for mankind to eat meat. Such is the staggering simplicity and authority of this decree that Our Lord opens up all living creatures (apart from humanity - Genesis 9:4) to now be a perfectly viable source of sustenance for mankind. There are no categories or exceptions, no room for confusion or debate, the instruction is synonymous with the One who gave the decree in that it is one full of abundance and giving.

Yet what God has said to be good and right, the devil is quick to attack and convince that it is no so, just as he did in Eden at the very commencement of world history. So in just a few short years, we have seen the

staggering rise of veganism emerge from the outer, often laughed at fringes of more extreme sections of society, to now be firmly entrenched as a mainstream life choice.

Western society is being brainwashed with an anti-Biblical ideology that eating meat is 'morally wrong'. The marketing of vegan products is often an outright attack at the morality of normal meat eating individuals so as to guilt them into adopting an anti-Scriptural, anti-God lifestyle. You only have to go to your nearest supermarket and be greeted by advertising boards pushing the latest vegan product such is the proliferation of material aimed at forcing this ideology down the throats of our society (pun intended).

Veganism has its roots (pun unintended) deeply in New Age, pagan, pantheistic teachings (which stem from Occultic/Satanic teachings), this has long been known but the devil is a master in covering his tracks and so the majority do not have any idea of this undeniable fact. If this point proves irksome to the reader, which I can understand, I encourage you to do some wider research on the underpinnings and early proponents of such movements and study those individuals beliefs and ideologies!

New Age, pagan and pantheists believe that all is God, everything is God equally. Therefore the tree in your garden is God, the fly on your windshield is God, the maggot in your apple is God, and that you are God also. Every living thing is united in the same mystic force of the universe and therefore mankind has no right to eat another living creature for it is God and/or its own little god (depending on what particular New Age School you subscribe to but the end result is the same, the deification of everything apart from the One True God of the Bible). This is just Buddhism in action (which is of course a pantheistic religion).

Veganism also shares much in its ideology with Evolutionary Theory. Both teach that mankind is no more than an animal and thus we should respect all life and not partake in the killing and eating of other animals. After all, if we're just animals like a cow, what right do we have to eat them? Thus we arrive at the militant vegans position that eating meat is 'morally wrong', it is just a logical continuation of the application of evolutionary theory.

If this guilt trip into veganism doesn't work then the devil has another trick up his sleeve to get you onto the vegan train, the use of evolutionary 'science'. How



many times have you heard someone say that mankind is not evolved to digest meat or dairy products? Quite a few times I imagine. So we are not only being told that we are morally repugnant if we eat meat and dairy but that we are physically harming ourselves if we do so. This is a powerful one two punch isn't it! If we did not care overly about what others think of us so the moral guilt trip is ineffective, then the subtle twisting and manipulating of Biblical teaching will get you. What do I mean by this? Well think on what is written in Ephesians 5:29:

**No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourished it and cherisheth it**

As no one hates their own body but instead always seeks to nourish themselves, they will strive to provide themselves with the best form of nourishment possible. If they are told that the best thing for their bodies is to adopt a New Age vegan lifestyle, then they are far more likely to do so than by just simply telling them to do it. Such is the deceptiveness of Satan, that he could attempt use this verse of Ephesians 5:29 to convince even Christians that veganism is better than God's decreed for meat eating. I say *attempt* to use this verse because when we read the whole verse (context is key) we are given the same statement but in perspective of it's usage in light of the relationship between God and His Church:

**No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourished hit and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church**

When the full verse is given, the tone shifts from a potentially self serving one to one of a selflessness. That selflessness is conveyed in how Jesus Christ sees the Church as His own body, and that just as any man looks after his own being, so too will Christ Jesus will always look after His body that is the Church. So you see the importance of the fullness of message given so that the right determination can be made. However the fullness of facts is rarely if ever offered by schemes and plots devised by Satan, and militant veganism is no different.

An article in *The Independent* newspaper highlighted how one advocate for the vegan lifestyle abandoned the life as it was literally killing her physically. Kai-Lee Worsley, originally of Edmonton, Canada but now residing in Santa Ana, California, had adopted the vegan lifestyle after having moved in with a group of vegans. They spoke to her about the use of factory raised animals (animals sometimes reared in very cramped, poor conditions) and she was duly convinced about the cruelty of eating meat.

She quickly became a vegan and replaced her protein intake with beans and legumes, along with taking protein supplements. Yet after a short while she began to feel extremely lethargic and easily fatigued to the point where she would often spend days in bed. This was followed by digestive issues and then most

alarmingly her already thin hair began to fall out in clumps! Suspecting the radical change in diet for the cause of this rapid decline in health, she dropped the vegan diet and re-introduced meat into her diet. Again after a short while her physical health significantly improved prompting her to observe how the "indoctrination" and "brainwashing", she had encountered through advocates of the vegan lifestyle was "literally killing" her.

Such worrying accounts are far from unusual, as many have attempted to live a vegan lifestyle only to find that, "it didn't suit them". The reason why it didn't suit them was because veganism goes against God's decree as spoken in Genesis 9:3, a decree given lovingly for the **good** of mankind.

As a final thought, some may again argue that doesn't the Bible promote a vegan lifestyle in the actions of Daniel and his friends when given the food from Nebuchadnezzar's table? The relevant passage reveals this:

**Daniel 1:12 - Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.**

The key point to note here is the length of time that Daniel puts forward to Ashpenaz, Master of the King's Eunuchs. Daniel outlines that he and his friends will eat of pulses for **ten days**, nowhere does it say that this was a new and lasting life choice for Daniel or his comrades. The body can of course happily exist in a more restrictive diet and even profit from it for a short spell (hence how short term fasting has been shown to have some health benefits) and thus Daniel and his friends looked healthier after these ten days in comparison to the others eating from the king's table.

Furthermore we must consider what physical condition Daniel and his friends were in when they got to Babylon after having been carried away in captivity. They could've endured a harsh period of malnutrition and so a short, restorative period of vitamin and mineral rich diet of pulses could've been highly profitable in comparison to the heavy, rich food often enjoyed by royalty. Such intake of heavy foods after a lengthy period of malnutrition can indeed cause the body to go into shock thus causing significant physical damage!

To conclude, through daily study of the Bible, we can be made alert to the very subtle schemes of Satan and how he constantly seeks to pervert all that God has decreed to be right and good. Do not be swept up in the latest societal trend as this western society gave up on God a long time ago and so why would it promote anything Godly?! So when you are about to enjoy a nice piece of meat, a chunk of cheese or a cold glass of cows milk, do enjoy it and be thankful unto God for His gracious provision and know that what you are partaking in is perfectly good before your Heavenly Father.

By Jonathan Badger

## Demonic entertainment at churches?!

Those who peruse YouTube may have come across a highly controversial production of the 'Easter story', by an American church back in April 2023.

Transformation Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, led by 'Pastor' Mike Todd (Google some of his messages and you'll soon see why I put pastor in inverted commas for this false teacher!), put on an incredibly blasphemous Easter production that sparked outrage even in the British newspaper *The Daily Mail*.

In this disgusting production, women dressed in sexualised clothing, dance in a disgraceful manner en masse as they play the roles of demons at the crucifixion of Christ. All this whilst massive flames shoot up into the air courtesy of elaborate staging. It is as though hell itself has been unfurled onto the stage, yet not in a manner to relate it's utter horror but in a near party fashion!

The devil is played by a woman and at the point where the Lord is placed on the cross, this role is also played by a woman! This overtly Satanic production then capitalises on this feminist, hyper sexualised performance by lacing the dialogue consistently with vulgar street language that refers to private parts of the human anatomy.



Let it be made clear that this was a **church service** in one of America's mega churches! Mike Todd's church attracts thousands of attendees every week and has a massive online following, this is not some small, backwater church that no one has heard of, thus limiting it's demonic impact.

Mike Todd commented that in this production of this 'Easter' performance, he wanted to push the line of narrative, 'all the way up to the line marked *sin*'. Well the rightful outpouring of utter outrage at this Satanic production quickly highlighted to Mr Todd that he completely missed the mark and put on a production so

full of sin that it would make many secularists blush with shame!

Following the storm of rage following the performance, the initially proud and boastful Mike Todd, quickly removed the performance from the Transformation Church website, hoping to erase the memory of this horror show. Sadly for him the immensity of disgust that this performance stirred meant that dozens and dozens of Christian YouTubers alerted the masses to the wickedness being produced at Transformation Church and the need to warn others of this false teacher. Indeed not long after this wave of outrage descended on Transformation Church, it was revealed that this church led by Mike Todd, had recently hired the disgraced American 'preacher' Carl Lentz as a 'Church Strategist', thus providing another rotten fruit so that all might know the work produced by this 'church' is **not** of the Lord!

As noted in previous articles, Satanism is on the rise (a BBC news article in May 2023 **promoted** Satanism whilst in America, the same month saw SatanCon take place – the largest gathering of Satanists the modern world has ever seen!) and it's advance is subtle but swift! Christians raised on the diluted and weakened modern bible versions are not being armed against such devious spiritual attacks. Disturbingly, modern bible versions have references to the devil and demons either twisted to make them seem to be kind, benevolent beings, or they are removed altogether! If you don't see the enemy as an enemy then what hope do you have to protect yourself against their attacks! (Read Gail Riplinger's *New Age Bible Versions* and be enlightened on this **vital** topic!)

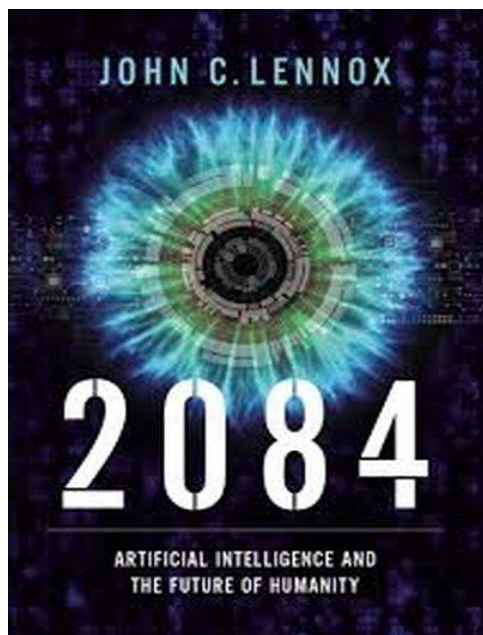
Friends, ensure that our churches do not follow such depraved ways as are being seen in an ever growing number of 'churches' across the western world. Read your AV/KJV Bible daily (if you don't have one, buy one! It will be the single best purchase you will **ever** make!), pray for wisdom, spiritual discernment and put on the armour of God daily so that we might be worthy soldiers of Christ, defending His Word with our very lives. Amen

By Jonathan Badger

## Resource Corner



## 2048 – Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity (John Lennox)



### Will technology change what it means to be human?

You don't have to be a computer scientist to have discerning conversations about artificial intelligence and technology. We all wonder where we're headed. Even now, technological innovations and machine learning have a daily impact on our lives, and many of us see good reasons to dread the future. Are we doomed to the surveillance society imagined in George Orwell's *1984*?

Mathematician and philosopher John Lennox believes that there are credible answers to the daunting questions that AI poses, and he shows that Christianity has some very serious, sensible, evidence-based responses about the nature of our quest for super-intelligence.

*2048* will introduce you to a kaleidoscope of ideas:

- The key developments in technological enhancement, bioengineering, and, in particular, artificial intelligence.
- The agreements and disagreements that scientists and experts have about the future of AI.
- The key insights that Christianity and Scripture have about the nature of human beings, the soul, our moral sense, our future, and what separates us from machines.

In straight-forward language, you'll get a better understanding of the current capacity of AI, its potential benefits and dangers, the facts and the fiction, as well as possible future implications.

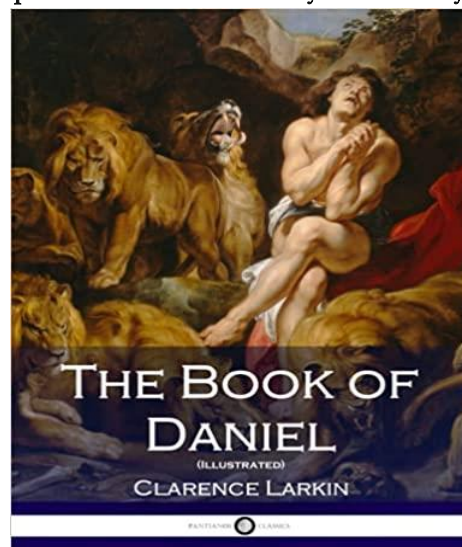
The questions posed by AI are open to all of us, daunting as they might be. And they demand answers. *2048* is written to challenge and ignite the curiosity of all readers. No matter your worldview, Lennox provides clear information and credible

answers that will bring you real hope for the future of humanity.

Available from Amazon

## The Book of Daniel (Clarence Larkin)

This superb and time-tested analysis and study by



**Clarence Larkin examines in detail, and explains with the truest clarity, the Biblical Book of Daniel.**

Having spent his life in service of God as a minister, and much of his time deeply vested in contemplation and study of the Biblical canon, Clarence Larkin placed himself in a prime position to evaluate and explain some of the more complex passages of the scripture. Naturally blessed with a readable and flowing style of writing, Larkin enlightened countless thousands of Christians during his lengthy career.

In this book, we receive a passage-by-passage, line-by-line examination of the Book of Daniel. No detail or phrase is passed over, and the reader may be assured that Larkin pays the closest attention in explaining this important yet difficult to understand part of the Holy Bible. Larkin was moved to author this and several other books after receiving word from his flock and fellow believers of the difficulties they had reading and interpreting such texts.

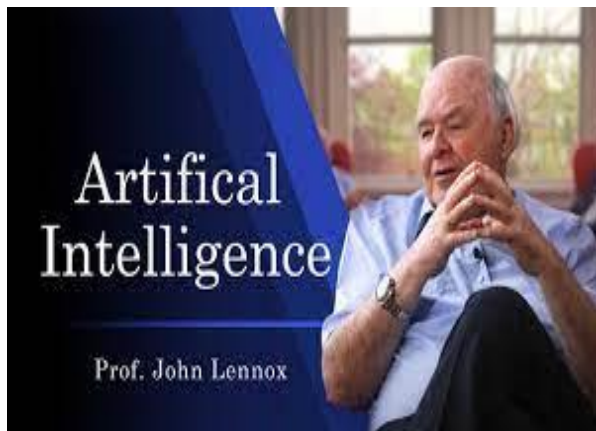
The chapters are divided into the major episodes underpinning the Book of Daniel. Events such as the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the calamitous Fall of Babylon receive close narration, while the famous image of Daniel in the Lion's Den benefits greatly from the clarifying commentary of Larkin.

This edition of Larkin's Book of Daniel includes all of the intricate charts and illustrations for which the author became famous. Several of these are very large and detailed images with large, small and tiny instances of text, and it is doubtless necessary to use a magnifying glass to fully scrutinise them. Vital to Larkin's

explanations, they set out visually the principles that this book exists to clarify for the reader.

Available from Amazon

## Recommended YouTube Content



John Lennox discusses AI and the future of humanity with expert scientific insight but delivered with simplicity and clarity to enable the viewer to understand what may be appearing on the horizon.

The conclusion of the video is particularly excellent with an eloquent challenge to the computer scientists playing god with technology, before drawing all back to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Well worth a watch! Simply click on the link below or the picture above to be taken to the video

<https://youtu.be/17bzIWIGH3g>



This 53 minute production by Answers in Genesis, looks at the fascinating discoveries being made by the James Webb telescope as it sends back to NASA some perplexing questions as to the scientific validity of the Big Bang Theory. Truly the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). Again, click on the either the picture above or the link below to be taken to the video

<https://youtu.be/uZplDBGVKrY>



A short but uplifting video from the Christian News Network that highlights that the Gospel message is still being shared in the corridors of Westminster. Nick Fletcher MP, gives a Gospel message after declaring the immense role Biblical Christianity has played in shaping the United Kingdom through the work of great but humble believers in Christ such as William Wilberforce. Thank the Lord that He is still sending faithful witnesses to deliver His Word to the leaders of this land and pray it is needed and acted upon for this nation's good and God's glory.

[https://youtu.be/Aug\\_P2tSf4I](https://youtu.be/Aug_P2tSf4I)

## Join us at Truth To Wonder Church

We are a family run church that focuses on the study of Holy Scripture and how His revealed Word is just as applicable to us all today as it has been throughout history.

Learn how good and unbiased scientific practice supports the Genesis account of world history.

See how archaeological discoveries uphold the Bible's claim to be recording of history and not just a collection of moral teachings and virtue filled myths.

Enjoy fellowship with other believers who love the God of the Bible and delight in His commands and precepts (Psalm 119:97).

Join us and be strengthened knowing that there are others who seek to glorify Our Lord God by sharing the Gospel with

others so that they might know the love of God (Romans 1:16, 2 Timothy 4:2, Mark 16:15, John 3:16).

**Sundays at 11am, Iford Scout Hut, Iford Lane, Bournemouth, BH6 5NE – for more information visit**

**[truthtowonder.org](http://truthtowonder.org)**

**Check out the Truth To Wonder website as well!**

Find out about TTW Church, access our back catalogue of TTW Magazine, enjoy fun kids activity ideas, discover useful resources to aid your Biblical studies, keep up to date with the article of the month and more!

## A Final Thought

*Proverbs 8:35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.*

The Old Testament is full of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether it's the first promise of a Saviour found in the third chapter of Genesis, prophetic detail of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 or the above from Proverbs 8, which positively radiates with the Gospel message, our Lord and Saviour is ever present throughout all the Holy Scripture that pre-dated his earthly ministry. There has long been a tendency in mainstream Christianity, however, to disregard the Old Testament. Some would dismiss it as a bunch of old allegories and fairy stories that didn't really happen but are written just to teach us some nice lessons. Others might suggest that they can't reconcile the God of the Old Testament with that of the New; He's surely much too harsh and draconian. But these arguments are easily dismantled when one reads their Bible carefully as, when one does so, one sees a striking harmony between both Testaments. The histories recorded in the Old really did happen – our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself attested to them frequently, whether testifying to the order and purpose of the creation of men and women (Matthew 19:4) or of Moses' encountering the Lord at the burning bush (Mark 12:26). As for the difficulty some have in seeing the same God in both Testaments, they

should look again at the patience and care the Lord showed to his chosen people, the Jews (and he continues to do so; they're still around today when many other ancient peoples have left the scene!). If one sees God as being harsh in the Old Testament, maybe they should think carefully about the seriousness of sin, and how abhorrent it is in the Lord's eyes. Habakkuk 1:13 says *"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."* It was our sin that first separated us from God back in the Garden of Eden and, in light of a proper view of the nature and evil of sin, any and all punishments from our Lord were deserved. But the same God of the Old Testament has found a way to solve the problem of sin by sending His only begotten Son to pay the penalty for it; indeed, the abundance of fulfilled prophecy in the Lord Jesus Christ's life, ministry and atoning death is evidence alone that both Testaments come as a pair! The Old Testament and the New Testament are unquestionably both part of the grand tale of God's redemptive plan and should be taken in harmony together. A reverent and faithful study of the Old, with an eye for the abundant presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ throughout, will give an even greater depth and appreciation for the New.

By John Sivewright



## Numbers 6:24-26

**24** The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

**25** The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

**26** The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.



