

# Truth to Wonder

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## Welcome to Truth To Wonder

Welcome all to this bumper November 2020 issue of Truth To Wonder. By God's grace and mercy He has brought us together again in study of His eternal word and praise of His heavenly glory. Before we begin such a humbling yet renewing time, let's draw near to Our Heavenly Father in a prayer of thanksgiving.



### Opening Prayer

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, we come humbly before your throne of grace with hearts full of joyful thanksgiving and reverent wonder at your abundant love towards we sinful beings.

Yet Lord before we can even begin to offer our thanks unto you, we first plead for forgiveness for our infrequency of thanksgiving. We stumble through each day taking for granted all too often the daily care and provision you grant each one of us every moment of every day. In our weakness of devotion we rarely pause and reflect on the boundless abundance of your blessings and mercies towards us.

We are as foolish children Lord, running through each hour, happily enjoying the security, provision and love afforded to us by loving parents, with seldom a thought of it's magnitude of sacrifice and love. So do we happily enjoy the blessings of your love towards us with rarely a truly humble thanksgiving. So Lord we pray you'll forgive our childish nature of faith and ask that you'll guide us into maturity of faith through the

Holy Spirit, so that we can move into a greater knowledge and love of you Lord, where thanksgiving shall flow from our hearts like a peaceful yet mighty river.

So Lord we have a joy of heart in knowing that as we are children indeed in faith, you are our Heavenly Father, the Father of Lights and giver of good gifts unto His beloved children. We rest contentedly as the weary child does at night, sleeping soundly in the knowledge that they are loved and watched over. So do we sleep contentedly Lord, sure of heart in the care and provision of your gracious love towards we your adopted sons and daughters; redeemed and brought close into your embrace by the blood of your only begotten Son, Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

So Lord we do not offer thanksgiving for the bountiful blessings of our days in fear and worry of your changing moods or fickle love towards us as other blindly enslaved followers of false gods do. No Lord, we offer our thanks with hearts anchored in the rock of ages, Jesus Christ. We come to you in thanksgiving in His glorious name, for we know that you are unchanging of nature, unchanging of love towards we sinful creatures, faithful in devotion to us and rich in grace and mercy to all repentant hearts. Ah Lord, what a joy it is to offer thanksgiving unto you! In this joyful and humbling act we see how truly loved we are of you, Our Heavenly Father. For you gave up your only begotten Son so that we might be restored unto you as you so longed us to be. By the power of the Holy Spirit and the devotion of the Son to your righteous will, we are restored to you our Father, our eternal Father; whose love for us is forever.

So Lord we ask that you'll continue to care and provide for us each day as the dark mornings and evenings draw in. Yet we rest as children do, safe in the knowledge that they are always cared for for they are loved as we are by you, with a love that the tongue of man cannot begin to express in all it's splendour and beauty. This we do pray with joy and thanksgiving, in Jesus name, amen.

## It Is Well With My Soul

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials  
should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious  
thought!—

My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:  
If Jordan above me shall roll,  
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life  
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we  
wait,  
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall  
be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall  
descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.



## A History of *It Is Well With My Soul*

As James McClelland states in his excellent book *The Stories Behind Great Hymns*, “Unclouded skies and gentle winds do nothing to test our vessel of faith. It takes the storm and tempest to prove the strength of our trust in the Almighty.” This proving of trust in God is encapsulated in Horacio G. Spafford’s hymn *It Is well with my soul*.

In 1873, Spafford, a lawyer by profession and a devoted follower of Christ, stood at the quayside in Chicago bidding farewell to his family of wife and four daughters as they began their journey to visit relatives in Europe. Tragically this would be the last time he would see most of them.

A few days later, as they made their way to Le Havre, the ship the mother and daughters were on collided with another ship and quickly sank into the depths of the Atlantic Ocean. Before it sank however, Mrs Spafford was able to lead her daughters in prayer and commit them all into the mercy of the Lord. Mrs Spafford was spotted and rescued by a lifeboat, however her four daughters had died. She sent a heartbreaking telegram to her husband that read “Saved alone.”

Horatio was grief stricken yet immediately set out for England to comfort his wife. The great American evangelist D.L Moody was in Edinburgh at the time and was a personal friend of the Spafford’s. On hearing the tragic news, Moody travelled to London to offer his help and condolences. Yet in their conversations, they found their faith to be remarkably strong and were able to say through the tears, “It is well; the will of God be done.”

Three years later, Spafford wrote the now much beloved hymn in memory of his dear daughters. His great comfort was in knowing that he would be reunited with them all as they all came to Christ before they went to their final slumber before awaking in glory through their Saviour Jesus Christ.

## Book of Ruth – Part Two

As we saw last month, context is crucial in establishing the truth and depth of any text and is even more so with the word of God. Having considered the historical context of the events depicted in the beautiful Book of Ruth, we shall with the aid of the God, begin our study of the narrative.

The scene is set as we are introduced to a land of famine during the time of the Judges, as Israel is gripped by hard times leaving it's people struggling to find adequate physical nourishment. Whether this famine was an act of judgement from God against the Israelites for their wandering faith and adoption of foreign gods, we do not know. This omission is a telling one in itself, as many from the days of Job, through the era of the Pharisees to this very day, wrongly ascribe all hardships in life to being an act of divine judgement.

In the middle of this famine that was ravaging the whole land of Israel, the narrative focuses in on a single Israelite from Bethlehem-Judah and his wife and two sons. Within the first verse however, a grave mistake is made by this man as he takes his family to "sojourn in the country of Moab." (Ruth 1:1)

Leaving the land promised to his people by the Lord himself, this man who is identified as Elimelech in verse two, turns his back on the land assigned by divine will as he seeks to find provision for his family by moving them to neighbouring Moab. One may consider this to be an understandable decision, the man of the family is making the necessary decision to provide for his family in a difficult period. However with the eye of faith, we begin to see the scale of error that Elimelech has undertaken. As we have already stated, Elimelech (meaning 'My God is King') displays no faith in the power of the God of his people to provide for himself and his family in their hour of need. Leaning upon his own understanding and failing to humble himself before the Lord in earnest prayer, Elimelech abandons his home of Bethlehem-Judah (tragically he seems to have dispensed with

trust in the meaning of it's naming of 'house of bread') and is turned wayward by the plenty available in Moab.

As we noted last month, the land of Moab was an extremely wicked and godless nation, always warring with Israel and thus a poor choice for an Israelite to seek sanctuary, especially when disposing with faith in the provision afforded by God to His chosen people.



***Elimelech leading his family into Moab***

No doubt Elimelech did not plan to stay for long in the land of Moab, probably only planning a temporary stay whilst the worst of the famine struck his homeland. However, as many a man has sadly found, what starts out as a temporary partnership with those who do not know and love the Lord, will always become a tale of tragedy. As Lot experienced in Sodom, where he initially camped near the city, he soon found himself dwelling within it's debauched and sin filled walls. When any deal is struck with evil, it corrupts without fail and tragedy as already stated, will always come.

This is what soon happens as Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion enter the land of Moab. By the end of verse 3, we read that whilst living in Moab, far away from his home and promised land, Elimelech dies. Yet worse lies in wait for the grief stricken Naomi and her sons and we read on in verse 4 and see that Mahlon and Chilion take Moabite wives. The two sons, compound the error of their father in not trusting and adhering to the will of God as

they take wives not of their own people, but of their godless enemy.

Yet still the errors flow from the men of the house of Elimelech as we read again in verse 4 that they dwell in Moab with their respective wives Orpah and Ruth “about ten years.” They do not lead their new wives home to the promised land of their people, where no doubt the famine had ended, but instead remain in Moab for ten years.

So again, tragedy strikes the house of Elimelech, as both Mahlon and Chilion both die, leaving Naomi grief stricken and without “her two sons and her husband” (Ruth 1:5).



***Ruth accompanies Naomi back to Bethlehem***

Naomi, without any male protection or provision in a foreign land, decides to leave Moab and return to her home in Bethlehem having heard that plentiful harvests had come once again by the hand of God (Ruth 1:6). It is a tear rending act of mercy and grace that God provides immediately for the broken Naomi and her daughters in law by leading her home where she will find plenty. It is also interesting to note the tone of the text in verse six. After Elimelech had abandoned his home, fearing that God had left his people, we are shown that God never leaves those He loves and provides for them in their hour of desperation, a truth that sadly eluded Elimelech.

In verse seven we read that both Orpah and Ruth begin the journey back to Bethlehem with their dear mother-in-law. However in verse eight we see a grief stricken Naomi turn to her similarly grief laden daughters in law and instructs them to go back to their own

mothers, giving a blessing to them both in thanksgiving for the kindness they have shown to herself through the trials and heartbreak. In this we begin to see the character of Ruth and indeed Orpah as well. Both women according to the text in verse eight, have demonstrated a wonderful consistent spirit of kindness even in the midst of their own grief. Such a thing is not to be taken lightly, as all those who have experienced loss of loved ones will know, death of dear ones can easily stir up angry and embittered hearts.

Naomi’s instruction for them to return is born out of consideration for the future of her two daughters in law, placing their welfare above her own as it would’ve been very easy and understandable for her to accept the company of her two daughters in law and simply return home to Bethlehem without any further consideration.

Naomi tells the two young ladies in verse nine to return to their mothers house and find husbands who can protect and provide for them. Orpah and Ruth on hearing this instruction both cry out in sadness and weep openly, for no doubt such an instruction would’ve caused enormous confusion and strain of thought on their own tragic situation. So we see in verse ten how both Ruth and Orpah initially reject this imploring of Naomi and instead reply that they shall go with her to Bethlehem. Such a rejection of a heartfelt instruction born out of love from Naomi, even at the detriment of Orpah and Ruth, displays the kindness that Naomi had shown to both Ruth and Orpah throughout their relationship. An important lesson to note herein, the underpinning of the instruction given by Christ to all in the Book of Matthew, treat others as you would have them treat you, for in this sacrifice there will be returned to you a great reward.

Seeing the rejection of her plea, Naomi continues in verses eleven to thirteen to implore Ruth and Orpah to return to their own mothers. She notes in despair how she is too old to bear more sons for them to marry



or even for herself to marry such is her age. Naomi again knowing the importance of a young woman in the Near East in this period of history to have the protection and provision of a husband, instructs Ruth and Orpah to go home.

If we pause and note at the end of verse thirteen that Naomi is grieved greatly for the sake of Orpah and Ruth “that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.” Could it be that in the depths of Naomi’s heartbreak and despair, her heart has been awakened to the grave error of judgement her late husband Elimelech had made in leading the family out of the promised land and into a land of godless, warmongering idolatry? Perhaps seeing this judgement, Naomi expresses her great sadness that Ruth and Orpah have been pulled into this tragic scene. Furthermore, the text here uses the full rendering of LORD in capitals. This is to reflect the full sovereign power of the Almighty God, suggesting that Naomi is indeed aware that these events are at the ordination of the all powerful, sovereign God. This is the first step in the healing of any grief stricken, broken heart. For as we read earlier in the origin of the hymn *It Is Well With My Soul*, when the tear filled eyes are lifted up heavenward, the full glory of Christ is revealed and then his perfect peace is granted to the broken hearted.

In verse fourteen we see the separation of hearts that only the Lord can discern. At this final plea of Naomi, Orpah (who remember has been blessed along with Ruth by Naomi for her kindness to Naomi throughout the tragic events) kisses Naomi goodbye and returns home to her own mother. Only the Lord knows if it was fearing that Naomi’s word of the Lord being against Naomi led to Orpah leaving her and returning home. Yet if this were so, it would be a sad yet truthful depiction of a fearful yet ultimately disbelieving and faithless heart that countless billions have displayed throughout history. Here we have the depiction of the heart that hears of the terrible reality of the judgement of God and so believes they can outrun it’s implementing. Such a thought was the root of

the error of Elimelech himself, and so history as it so often does, repeats itself within a single generation.

Yet Ruth “clave unto” Naomi (verse fourteen). Such is the ferocity of Ruth’s conviction in staying with Naomi that she refuses to be separated from her dear mother-in-law. She heard the same plea from Naomi that Orpah did, yet her heart is not troubled in the same manner as Orpah’s was. Instead Ruth makes an extraordinary declaration of devotion to Naomi that we read of in verses sixteen and seventeen. Ruth says that she will follow Naomi wherever and that Naomi’s people will become her people and most importantly Naomi’s God will be her God. She continues in her declaration of faith that wherever Naomi is laid to rest, so shall the same be done to her by the will of the Lord. Such a bold declaration is not crafted by the human tongue but shaped by the Holy Spirit in the halls of heaven and gifted to the soft heart of the humble and repentant. Ruth unlike Orpah, trusts in the mercy of God towards repentant sinners and instead of fleeing the Lord, she throws herself at His feet, humbling herself before Him so much that she is willing to give up her life for the safe caring of Naomi. Such an act is sincere indeed and is a demonstration of the Christ’s words that, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

Seeing this declaration of faith that is born of the Spirit of God within Ruth, Naomi relents and allows Ruth to journey back home to Bethlehem with her.

Dear friend, if you are heart broken or grief stricken, be as Ruth and throw yourself at the feet of Christ Jesus, trusting that He turns away none that come to Him in repentance of sin. Dark hours will always come in this life, yet never forget that which Naomi spoke of, that God is Almighty and that His will is perfect and one day He will wipe away all tears. With this knowledge you can stand in the greatest storm and say ‘It is well with my soul.’  
*By Jonathan Badger*

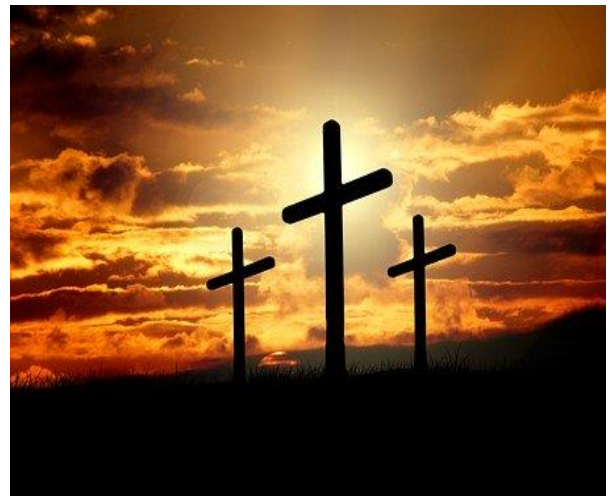
## Challenging Questions of Faith - Sincerity of belief is key in faith

A key argument of the new age pantheistic religion is that it does not matter which 'version of god' you believe in, all that matters is the sincerity you hold in your faith.

Sincerity of faith does not deliver one from judgement and lead to eternal life but instead it is whom one has faith in that gives eternal life. Many wicked people have conducted atrocious acts of pure evil in great sincerity of heart. Those who hijacked the planes and flew them into the Twin Towers in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, were acting in great sincerity of faith that Allah would be pleased with their massacre of the infidel and so grant them paradise in eternity for a successful holy war or 'jihad' waged against the non-believer. Hitler believed with great sincerity that the Jews were sub human and the scourge of humanity and thus he was merely acting out survival of the fittest philosophy by exterminating them in horrendous genocide. Stalin acted in great sincerity that he was doing good for the communist cause by eradicating 40 million of his own people who did not adhere to his ideals.

As you can see, sincerity of faith does not preclude a correct faith. A correct faith is founded on whom the faith is held in. This was seen in the life of Cain in The Book of Genesis. Cain's faith was ultimately founded on himself as he wrongly believed that his offerings, determined to be sufficient according to his standards, would be acceptable to God. He refused to acknowledge the standard that God had given in His demand for the shedding of blood for the covering of sins. Cain was indeed sincere in his adherence to the belief that he was correct, this belief led to the first murder. Abel on the other hand understood that it was who he had faith in that was crucial, as forgiveness of sins and eternal life is given solely upon the offering of pure, spotless and sinless blood that only Jesus can fulfil.

No other world religion offers such a God as the Lord Jesus as all other world religions and faiths (and yes atheism is a faith as it is rooted in humanism the belief that man is the pinnacle of all things) are grounded in a works based salvation. This has led tragically to many men rising up who have acted cruelly in the sincere belief that they are working themselves to eternal rest. They refused the offering of grace as pride governed the heart as it does in their father the devil.



When a repentant, humble heart throws itself at the feet of Jesus, sincerity of faith is given to them by the work of God, for we are told that Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2) The Holy Scriptures make it perfectly clear that saving faith is given in His grace, for it was His sincerity of love towards we sinful wretches that led Him to the cross to offer himself as a perfect and final atonement for the sins of man.

Therefore it is the sincerity, the faithfulness of Christ that is crucial in salvation, and therefore it is whom we believe in that is the cornerstone of our faith. In this understanding and thankfulness, we are gifted through the work of the Holy Spirit a faith that is indeed sincere to the point that we place our eternity into the pierced hands of Our Redeemer Christ Jesus.

By Jonathan Badger

## Generation Fear

**Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10**

Our Lord's mighty reassurance to all those who know and adore Him as their Lord and Saviour is a source of tremendous comfort in a rapidly unraveling world.

Yet think of those poor souls who do not have such an enduring promise anchored deep in their heart by the Holy Spirit. Think of the young who are embarking into a world where great fear is laced into every moment of everyday. They are fearful of the much publicised and argued calamity of climate change, a global pandemic is carving it's way through every aspect of modern life; social media is just a click away from some ill thought out or non-PC tweet or instagram that could cause a career to be crushed before it's established; an economy where no job security exists and record public debt is crippling every nation; social unrest across the globe; wars and rumours of wars circulated across the media within seconds and the threat that any news reported could be the product of 'fake news.'

It's no wonder then that the young are terrified to a point where suicide is one of the highest causes of death in western countries, and mental health is the mantra of the millennial. I refer to a song written just a couple of years ago by a popular band called Twenty One Pilots. The song is called *Car Radio* and it tells of the mental disintegration of a young person after their car radio is stolen leaving them in silence as they drive. As they sit in the silence however, their mind is no longer numbed by the musical distraction and so deep, troubling questions of existence begin to affect the poor soul.

The song is not sung, it is spoken in a quick, melancholic, depressive manner that reflects the inner, painful workings of so many a

young mind today. Here are some of the very revealing lyrics:

*I ponder of something terrifying  
'Cause this time there's no sound to hide behind  
I find over the course of our human existence  
One thing consists of consistence  
And it's that we're all battling fear  
Oh dear, I don't know if we know why we're here  
Oh my,  
Too deep  
Please stop thinking  
I liked it better when my car had sound*

*There are things we can do  
But from the things that work there are only two  
And from the two that we choose to do  
Peace will win  
And fear will lose  
There's faith and there's sleep  
We need to pick one please because  
Faith is to be awake  
And to be awake is for us to think  
And for us to think is to be alive  
And I will try with every rhyme  
To come across like I am dying  
To let you know you need to try to think*

Heartbreaking words aren't they. Yet many of us will remember a time when we would've identified with such a troubled song. The energy and vibrancy of youth is ripe for a thousand distractions with which Satan is all too happy to provide so as to lead any hopeful soul away from peace in Christ Jesus.

The young are all very aware of the misery of their existence yet the as this same song reads in an earlier line "Sometimes quiet is violent," the youthful heart though brazen and full of pride and bravado, runs from this battle of self. This is a battlefield where one will certainly die if it is to be fought to it's conclusion. The death of self will at the foot of the cross after a most violent struggle against the Holy Spirit is the war that so many run from. It is only by the grace of God that you were compelled by the Holy Spirit to resist the



panicked fleeing from the fight and were redeemed by the blood of Christ as a result. Yet for the lost, the violence of silence is so terrifying as the heart knows what belongs in such silence, questions such as why are we here? Who am I? Where am I going in life? What happens when I die, do I just stop existing? Do I have meaning and value? These are terrifying questions to any heart and so we run head first into distractions so as to 'stop the thinking' as the song notes.

So the human heart is left with two choices on how to quell this violent silence of the heart. The song puts the two choices as 'faith and sleep.' The song writer continues in a plea that we must pick one of the two in order to merely exist. As he notes, faith involves being 'awake', awake to the woes of the world, awake to the woes of the soul, awake to the need for a lasting remedy of this great sickness of the heart and soul. What and who this faith should be in however we are left in ironic silence over by the song writer as he too is sadly just as lost as the listener of the tune. Such is the depressing nature of the spiral into sinful madness that is provided by the wisdom of the world. Only the fount of all wisdom that is Jesus can provide peace and satisfaction to all of our greatest questions, hopes and fears.

The alternative is to sleep. In sleep we are given temporary refuge from the pain of the world and indeed the greater pain of our own sinful souls. It is also a state of permanent sleep of the soul in that such a choice inevitably leads to a turning off of the heart to all sensitivity of existence in order to protect oneself from the pain and hardships of life. Such a choice however is fraught with empty promises. Just because you may be sleep walking through life, seemingly pushing pain and suffering out of your life does not mean that you will escape it forever. It will come crashing into your life with such ferocity that even the deepest sleeper of spirit will be roused into alertness of tragedy.

Even in sleep, peace is not granted to the lost soul, as the song writer says in the same song "reminding me of who I killed inside my dream." Could this murder be the murder of oneself when a willing decision to sleepwalk through life and as a result indulge in every sin imaginable to continue the numbing distractions of sin? Indeed I think this is very much the case. So many broken hearted youths (and indeed older hearts) have been lead to a bed of suicide by this tormenting of spirit that comes from sinful indulgence in an attempt to silence the crying soul. We are all too aware when we have killed our own heart and so we scream out in fear that we have completely unravelled as an individual. Furthermore, such soul sleep and indulgence of sin does indeed lead to eternal death, for the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and so each heart wrapped in fear, trapped in sin does tragically condemn itself into eternal hellfire.

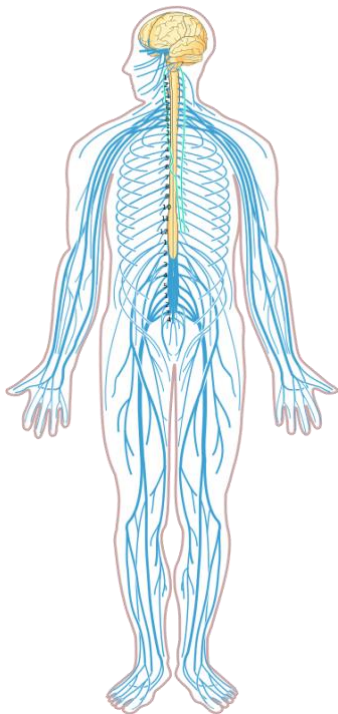
Yet there is a great hope to all such fearful souls, whether young or old. This is found in faith, this is found in the faith of the way, the truth and the life that is Jesus Christ. When we come to Christ in faith, we are awakened from our sleep, quickened from death and given eternal rest in His boundless grace (Romans 6:23 beautifully illustrates the stark contrast of fates for the sinner and the faithful). Armed with such a faith, we need fear nothing and no one save the Almighty God, for all creation is held in His mighty hand. Yet seeing our trembling fear at His sovereign power, He bids us come boldly unto His throne of grace so that we may be restored to God as beloved children, returned to Our Heavenly Father by the atonement of our sins made by the firstborn of God the Father that is Jesus Christ. So any who may be fearful of so many things this day, cast your fears on the Lord Jesus and He shall comfort you, He shall forgive you, He shall place in you a new heart to walk in peace throughout all your days and you shall know the eternal love of God.

*By Jonathan Badger*

## Body of Evidence – The Nervous System Part Two

As we saw in last month's issue, the central nervous system is, along with the rest of the human body, an irreducibly complex piece of design that bears constant testimony to the unparalleled engineering skills of Our Lord and Creator.

The peripheral nervous system is no less staggering in its design and execution, as its intricate web of nerves branches out through each part of the body as you can see in the diagram below.



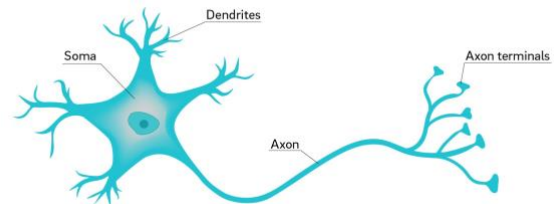
The total length of the peripheral nervous system in our bodies comes to 93,000 miles or 150,000 km! It is truly astounding to think that most people sadly believe that such an enormous and intricate system could've possibly evolved by random chance.

Motor nerves take electrical signals to our organs and muscles, as opposed to sensory nerves that transmit signals to the brain. However some nerves are known as mixed nerves as they are able to send signals in both directions. As you will have no doubt guessed, sensory nerves send information regarding

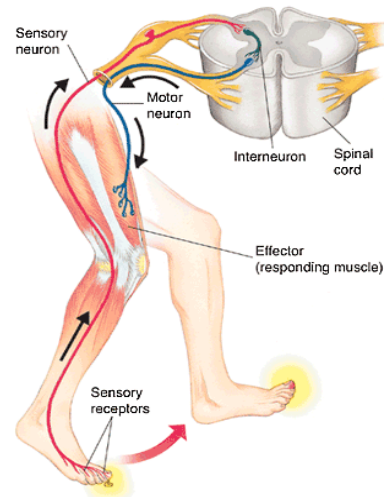
our senses such as sight, sound, touch, smell, taste, pain and temperature.

Nerves contain neurones, these are specifically engineered to send signals in the manner of electrochemical waves. A standard neuron has a soma (cell body), dendrites and an axon. Below is an example of a typical neuron.

Neuron



The axon holds the property of carrying a signal over distances that can vary significantly in length. For example, sensory neurons can contain axons that can extend from the posterior column of the spinal cord to the toes, a distance of 4.9ft or 1.5m in the adult human. This makes it by far the longest type of cell in the human body.



***Sensory neuron running from the spinal column to the toe***

As is clear to all who will see, the complexity of design and execution of the nervous system is a glorious testament to the power of the Lord who but spoke such intricacy into existence by the power of His Word.

*By Jonathan Badger*

## The Mummification of Jacob and Joseph

The Egyptian mummy is one of the most instantly recognisable artefacts of ancient world history. The incredible skills of ancient man in the preservation of the deceased still staggers many today.

To the ancient Egyptians, the process of mummification was an important part of the navigation of the deceased into the afterlife. This suitable preservation of the body was all the more crucial in the ensuring of royalty a worthy place in the afterlife according to Egyptian beliefs at the time.

As Jan Assmann observes, to the Ancient Egyptians, 'The mummy was more than a corpse; it was an image of the God Osiris and a sort of hieroglyph of the entire person.' In this quote you can see the distortion of the original Biblical truth that we are made in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). No doubt this deep, innate, God given awareness of our created nature was not lost on the Egyptians, who attached great significance to the human body, yet sadly giving homage to the false god Osiris rather than the Lord God.



By preserving the body in a mummified state, this made the deceased visible in a symbolic form so that they could exist happily in the afterlife. One can see the threads of human desperation in its own achievements and

pride in that we can succeed in gaining a peaceful eternity through our own efforts. In stark contrast of this methodology and indeed contemporary of the Ancient Egyptians, Job of the Bible, has faith that he will see his redeemer with his own eyes even though his body will be destroyed by worms, as he trusts his Redeemer will gift him eternal life with a glorified body (Job 19:25,26).

The process of mummification was documented in greatest detail by Herodotus (484-425 BC) and Diodorus Siculus who wrote his histories between 60 and 30 B.C. These detailed accounts confirm the accuracy of the records that Moses gives in Genesis 50:2,3 over one thousand years beforehand. This should hardly come as a surprise given that as a prince of Egypt spending the first forty years of his life in Egypt, Moses would've been well aware of the mummification process. Furthermore with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit guiding the pen of Moses, such an accurate history of mummification is exactly what any believer in Christ would expect.

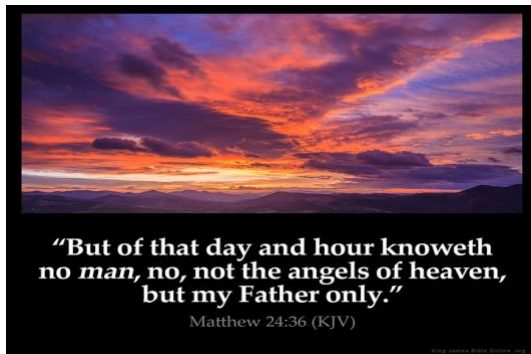
Both Jacob and Joseph were mummified, with Jacob's mummified body carried approximately 404 miles from Egypt to the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in the land of Canaan (Genesis 50:13). Such a long journey in the heat of the region would've made mummification a desirable method of preserving the body of Jacob before it could be suitably buried in the homeland of Jacob and the promised land of his people the Jews back in the land of Canaan.

Joseph meanwhile, although also being mummified, was originally entombed in Egypt, doubtless due to his high office and regard in the land of Egypt for his exemplary leadership as Governor of the land. However, before his death, Joseph requested that his body be taken home to the promised land when his people the Jews, were to return to their God given land. Joseph showed great trust in the promise of God that was given to his father, Grandfather and Great- Grandfather, that the land of Canaan would be their's forever (Genesis 24-26).



It is also fascinating and wonderful to see how Joseph, a wealthy, powerful man who had the love and respect of a grateful nation all around him, did not hold onto this temporary adulation of man. No, he trusted and held his heart on the certain hope that he was the Lord's servant and that as a result, he would enjoy the promised blessing of a God given eternal homeland.

Such is the faithfulness of God towards his own, that centuries later, God did deliver his people out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. Thus, the mummified body of Joseph, beautifully preserved would be still be in good condition to endure the long journey through a hot climate out of Egypt, through desert wilderness and into Canaan once more.



God is never slack in his promises to his dear ones (2 Peter 3:9) and so having provided for the suitable care and provision of the bodies of his dear servants Jacob and Joseph, so to we know that Our Lord does care and preserve us also each and every day. Therefore we are to go about His work busily, minding the late hour of this world's existence, for the time of the gathering of His children is close at hand. Be as Joseph and do not rest your heart in the immediate pleasures and adulation of a flattering, sinful world; instead look to heavenly things, for though they seem far away now, no man knows the hour when we shall be transformed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52). Not preserved unto death but glorified unto life eternal, with bodies as of the Lord Jesus himself (Matthew 24:36).

By Jonathan Badger

## The Saint Must Walk Alone

Sermon online via YouTube – search *The Saint Must Walk Alone* – A.W Tozer/Classic Christian Audio Books

This short message (approximately 11 minutes long) taken as an extract from the book *Man The Dwelling Place of God* by A.W Tozer, is a masterful eleven minute insight into the often felt struggles of the believer in Christ. Tozer's rare insight into the lonely existence of the follower of Jesus brings reassurance to the beleaguered servant of God as well as deeply challenging to the worldly Christian who is too fond of the comforts of the world to know the heart of God.



Tozer realigns the mind and heart of the wayward Christian, reaffirming their conviction of faith that loneliness in the name of Christ is to be expected in this world, for many saints have known this sorrow. Indeed as Tozer so rightly notes, Our Lord and Saviour suffered so heavily in this torment in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion.

I highly recommend to the reader that you set aside a mere eleven minutes to devote to this message and ponder on it thoroughly. It's challenging yet reassuring message is sure to bring strength and comfort to many.

## The Messenger Of The Coming Messiah

As we approach the Christmas season, thoughts will begin to fill the anxious mind of the busyness of the festive period. Yet before the storm of poorly cut wrapping paper and split cello tape fills out houses, let's pause and consider just a small taste of the richness of Old Testament prophecy that details the events of the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus. Then we shall briefly look at the amazing fulfilment of these prophecies hundreds of years later within the New Testament.

In Malachi 3:1 we are given by the minor prophet Malachi, an incredible prophecy of a then to be future messenger who will prepare the way for the coming Lord Jesus. The text is as follows:

*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*

The purpose of this coming messenger as we have noted is to prepare the way for the coming Messiah. As an aside, observe how Malachi speaks on how the Messiah shall come "suddenly" into his temple, as though a warning to the people to be ready and watch for this day. Why? The answer lies within the declarer of this future event which is of course, God, who is referred to under the title of LORD of hosts. When the title of LORD is written in full capitals, it depicts the referencing of God as the Almighty God, full of mighty sovereign power. When coupled with 'host' we have a rendering of the one who is giving this message is the Almighty God who is Lord of the heavenly army of angels. A fearful rendering indeed but one that fits the following verses of Malachi, as God warns the Israelites of fearful judgement the coming Messiah will render as he will "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of

Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years." (Malachi 2-4) The coming Messiah will judge righteously his people the Jews (hence the reference to Judah and Jerusalem) purging them of their wickedness before him and then their offering will please him as it did long ago. It is a message of warning to the Israelites to prepare themselves for their coming Messiah. They shall know this arrival will be imminent when God has sent his messenger to prepare his way before him.

The fulfilment of this prophecy is seen hundreds of years later in Matthew 11:10, as we read, "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." Who does this text speak of? John the Baptist.

Yet how would the Israelites recognise this messenger so that they would know their Messiah was soon to be among them? Further on in Malachi 4:5 we read, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the father to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

The coming messenger would be in the spirit of Elijah, strong, powerful and devoted servant of God who would stand alone as a voice in the wilderness, declaring the impending arrival of the Messiah. Before we look at the fulfilling text in the New Testament, again we turn aside for a moment and note how in Malachi 4:5, the tone of the prophecy is one of dread and the threat of a curse upon those who will turn away from this coming Messiah that is Jesus Christ, of whom John the Baptist will be the messenger of. Remember also, Malachi is addressing his own people the Jews, who would indeed go on to reject their Messiah. Yet hope also lies within the warning, in that Malachi speaks of how the coming Messiah will have many who will follow him and their lives will be redeemed by his eternal love towards them, and he will make just the disobedient.

## Provision for a Nation - Part 3

In Luke 1:16,17 we find the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy of the messenger who will prepare the way for the coming Messiah that is Jesus Christ. The text reads, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Luke's report tells of how Zacharias in seeing an angel within the temple, is told by the angel that he will have a son who will do exactly as Malachi prophesied centuries prior, in that he will prepare a way for the Lord and turn many to the Lord their God. This son that Zacharias was to father would be John The Baptist.

Although a mere messenger of the Lord that John the Baptist was, Jesus spoke these words of praise for John, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." (Matthew 11:11). Such was the devotion, conviction and faithfulness of John the Baptist towards his Lord, that his Lord Jesus gave such mighty praise. Friends, though none of us are of a manner like unto John the Baptist, this should not discourage us in a God given mission to go out into all the world and herald the coming return of Jesus Christ. Like John, we are to be voices in the wilderness of a violently sinful world; speaking boldly in the spirit of Elijah, warning all those who will listen, that the Almighty Lord of hosts that is Jesus is indeed returning, and we must be a John was, busy preparing a people ready for his return. For no man knows the hour of his return, but do not doubt dear friend as the Almighty Lord of hosts spoke to Malachi, he speaks to each of hearts today "he shall come." *By Jonathan Badger*

### Matthew 11:11

King James Version

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

In this the third part of the series we will be looking at the next 6 verses of Genesis chapter 37. And what a wealth of detail these verses contain in terms of Joseph's thinking, his future, the brothers ability to discern the meaning of the dreams, and Jacobs own discernment and reactions to the second dream on two levels – his rebuke of Joseph and his own thoughts. Just utterly fascinating!

And so we move into the first time we meet Joseph as a prophetic dream receiver; dreams divinely guided so as to give him foreknowledge of his future role in the family but without the knowledge of the personal trials yet to come, before the content of the dreams come to pass.

Starting with Verse 5 – "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren; and they hated him yet the more".

Joseph in his innocence and simplicity decides to tell his brothers about a dream that he has received. I use the word "received" rather than "had" as it has prophetic contents. This is not just another dream that suits Josephs feelings of superiority over his brethren encouraged by his fathers favouritism as some higher critical authors would have us believe. What happens in the dream comes to pass and the symbolism in the dream has a direct relation to the context of the scene that is to play out many years in the future.

One might have thought that telling his brethren of these dreams in verses 5 to 11 was somewhat ill advised given that as we discussed last time, it was unlikely that he was unaware of the fermenting hatred from his brothers. Joseph was taken with enthusiasm, and curiosity as we all are, to tell a dream that



appears to have context and meaning. We all want to tell people dreams we have especially those that involve the people to whom we are talking! This however did nothing but fan the flames of hatred with an almighty wind!

Just as an interesting note, this verse is unnecessarily critically altered in the text of the Septuagint and other related translations. The second half of the verse is removed “and they hated him yet the more”, as it is claimed that this would be a premature statement by the author as the dream had not yet been told. However this form of text is far from uncommon in the Bible, where a summary statement is given before the detail.

Verses 6-8 “And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.”

There is so much here. You can almost imagine Joseph in his coat gathering his brothers together so as to specifically tell them this dream, with innocent enthusiasm. I don't like the concept that Joseph was egotistical in his presentation, though it wouldn't be human not to present such a dream without some sense of ego or pride. That is simply human nature to which even the greatest men of God are not immune. However if he did recount his dreams in the purest of innocence that was certainly not the way his brothers saw it. The meaning of the dream was so utterly transparent that they understood the

connotations instantly and were no less than mortified. How dare Joseph inflate his superiority to the point that they are showing deferential respect unto him?! Bowing down unto him?! The elders reigned over by the younger, the one holding dominion over the many? But has this not been, and still is the feeling, of the unbelieving world to our saviour Jesus Christ? It is distasteful to the unbeliever to be under or ruled over by anyone, they despise the very thought.

Then we have the symbolism of the dream, not only showing the act of obeisance, but also through the image of the sheaves defining for us the reader who sees the whole story, the exact reason or timing of the act; the fact that the brothers would bow before Joseph in need of food. Their empty sheaves bowing before Joseph's full one capable of feeding them all. No doubt when the event in Egypt in Genesis 42 verse 6 actually occurred, they remembered and relived the telling of this dream that they had indeed fulfilled and acted out to the letter.

But by the end of verse 8 they had gotten to the point where they just about wanted to throttle Joseph every time he opened his mouth. He had seemingly had other dreams that he had spoken to them of as the plural is used. He was fast becoming the social misfit, the brother on the outside. But as we discussed last time this is our place as believers. On the outside of the world, social misfits if you will, not partaking in the activities and mischief of the carnal worldly unbeliever. (John 15 vs18-19)

Verse 9 and 10 “And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven

stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou has dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

The next dream occurred at some point after the last dream he related to his brothers, whether this be the next night or some time later we are not told. Again the meaning of the dream is obvious to the family – and it lies in Joseph's preferment over the others of the family and their being willingly beholden unto him. But this dream goes a step further in the content with not only the eleven brothers being present represented by the eleven stars, but also the primary heavenly bodies, the sun and moon, which in the next verse Jacob immediately interprets as representing himself and Joseph's mother. We have no reason to believe that Jacob believed the moon represented anyone other than Rachel, even though at this point she had been dead for some time. Some have suggested the moon here represents the surviving wife Leah, but in verse 10 Jacob refers to "thy mother" directly to Joseph. Other authors have lost all sense of reality and have decided that the eleven represent the signs of the zodiac and formulate a theory known as the astral myth theory of the patriarchs. If one needs to point out the problems with this (and really I shouldn't need to) the first obvious one is that the signs of the zodiac are twelve not eleven and they are constellations not individual stars not to mention the occultic / pagan origins of the zodiac. It is another satanic attempt to reduce the word of God to the level of another human book of human authorship.

The sun moon and stars signify that the whole family will be beholden to him and dependant

upon him. The improbabilities of a situation and our own misinterpretation do not stop God's ability to carry out his will and work regardless of whether we understand or not. See Isaiah 55:8 –

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD".

Jacob also refers to "coming" to bow down. Joseph in the dream does not appear to be part of this heavenly body scene but rather a remains a man on earth. Jacob appears to have recognised the need to travel to bow to Joseph and one could take this to represent the journey that the whole family had to eventually make to Egypt to bring themselves before Joseph in their time of need, though to be clear this is interpretive.

Because of this Jacob feels the need to rebuke Joseph. It was out of place, indeed the entirely the wrong way round for the father to bow himself to the son. There may have even been an aspect to his rebuke aimed to lessen the effect Joseph was having on his brothers. The father putting the favoured child in his place would have been agreeable to the siblings and Jacob may have been trying to lessen this building hatred. However one must not underestimate in the ancient middle east the un-palatability of the father bowing to the son. Whilst Jacob had observably favoured Joseph as a ruler over the other brothers at no point had he intimated this was to be the case over him as well!

But verse 11 shed some other light on the thoughts of Jacob. "And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying"

Jacob had had his own dreams, and recognised a dream that appeared to foreshadow coming events. He must also have recognised that these events portrayed aligned with his own favouring over the brothers and the intimation of rulership in the gift of the coat. So whilst vocally he brushed it off as a youthful dream of exaggerated self importance, he paid more attention to it than he let on.

Rather like Mary in Luke 2 verse 51, on listening to her then young son Jesus's reply upon finding him in the temple – Jacob kept these sayings in his heart and like the brothers no doubt remembered the dream upon its coming to fruition.

As a final note, God doesn't see fit to include in Josephs' dreams the hardship which lay ahead of him before the events depicted in the dreams take place. No dreams of his betrayal, or of his fathers' grief, or of his imprisonment. God finds ways to give us as Christians comfort and strengthens us in ways we may not even be aware of before times of trouble. He gives us sight of the end joys, and saves us from the foreknowledge of the troubles ahead. In doing so it helps us as Christians to draw closer to God in times of hardship because we know of his promise to keep us. So we will end with Romans 8 verse 38 and 39 which Joseph did not have the benefit as we have of reading and rereading at his lowest points;

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord". Amen.

*By David J Badger*

## A Spirit of Thanksgiving



The advent season has become a season of expectancy rather than thanksgiving to the modern world. Once where the Pilgrim Fathers held a true thanksgiving meal in praise of the Lord's ceaseless provision for them in a hard new life in the Americas in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; today the majority of us will be busily hurrying about preparing a season of celebrations and gifts that meet others expectations.

The American holiday of Thanksgiving, even though corrupted by the extravagances of consumerism and secular whitewashing of it's Christian roots, remains a much needed reminder to all believers in Christ that we are to be truly thankful unto Our Lord for his rich mercies and provisions throughout our days.

Many of us trudge through life, joyless in our faith as we greet each day with a weary expression. Banish this malaise with a spirit of thanksgiving, for through the atonement made by Jesus for our many sins, we are able to "come before his presence." (Psalm 95:2). Such a truly mighty, gracious gift in itself is more than any of us deserve, yet Our Gracious Lord blesses us even further with a measure of health, clothing, food, a warm home, friends and family, so the list goes on! Therefore devote regular time to truly express your heartfelt thanks unto your Lord God and sing joyful praises unto him.

*By Jonathan Badger*

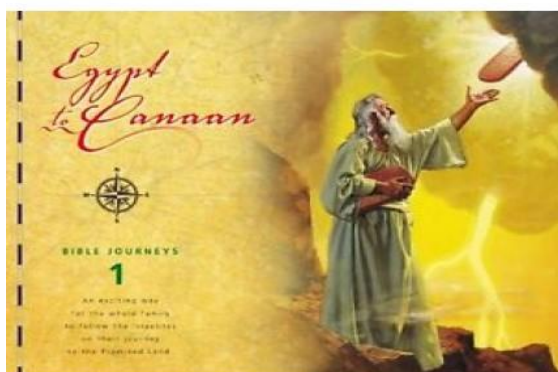


## Resource Corner

**Egypt to Canaan Board Game - available at [Keithjones.co.uk](http://Keithjones.co.uk)**

This simple yet educational board game brings the family together to gently challenge each other in their knowledge of the events recorded in the Old Testament.

The first in a series, this classic game has been



brought back with a new updated look. This colourful and challenging board game tests your knowledge of the people and events of the Bible.

Learn about the travels of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. Includes game board, playing pieces, and question cards. For two to six players, ages 8 to adult.

Egypt to Canaan is a fun way of becoming familiar with Bible people and places at a time in history when God was leading His people to the Promised Land.

Selecting a pawn, each player moves out of Egypt on a fascinating journey toward Canaan as he answers in turn the questions on the cards.

Both the pathway followed and the events en route are geographically and chronologically correct. Equally appealing to both young people and adults.

## The Red Sea Miracle Part One - DVD



Are miracles like the Red Sea even possible? Tim Mahoney retraces the steps of Moses, looking for answers and finding them! Patterns of Evidence: The Red Sea Miracle, is the first in a two-part film series.

After leaving Egypt, the Bible describes the Israelites crossing a deep sea that was miraculously split with walls of water on their right and left. When the Egyptians and their chariot force pursued, the water came crashing back down to destroy the entire army. Are miracles of this kind even possible? Tim Mahoney retraces the steps of Moses, looking for answers and finding them!

(This special release includes bonus footage with the panel discussion shot at the world premiere at the Ark Encounter! Panelists include: Todd Starnes, Kay Arthur, Jeremy Lyon, Janet Mefford, and AiG founder Ken Ham.)

Currently on sale at the special price of £13.99

Available from [answersingenesis.co.uk](http://answersingenesis.co.uk)

## Family Bible Quiz

- 1: Who were the wives of Elkanah? (1 Samuel 1)
- 2: How many children did Hannah have besides Samuel? (1 Samuel 2)
- 3: Who was Eli? (1 Samuel 1)
- 4: Why did Eli think that Hannah was drunk? (1 Samuel 1)
- 5: Were the sons of Eli Godly men also? (1 Samuel 2)
- 6: How often did Hannah give Samuel a new coat? (1 Samuel 2)
- 7: What were the names of Eli's sons? (1 Samuel 2)
- 8: How many times did God call Samuel in the night? (1 Samuel 3)
- 9: Did Samuel keep God's anointing of him as Eli's replacement a secret from Eli? (1 Samuel 3)
- 10: The sons of Eli died in battle against the Philistines, true or false? (1 Samuel 4)
- 11: How did Eli die? (1 Samuel 4)
- 12: How many years did Eli judge Israel? (1 Samuel 4)



***Eli with the young Samuel***

**Answers:** 1) Two, Hannah and Peninah 2) 6 3) Priest of the Lord 4) She prayed with moving lips but no sound 5) No, they were ungodly, wicked men 6) Once a year 7) Hophni and Phinehas 8) Four times 9) No, he told Eli everything at Eli's request 10) True 11) He fell back off his seat and broke his neck at the news of the death of his sons 12) 40 years

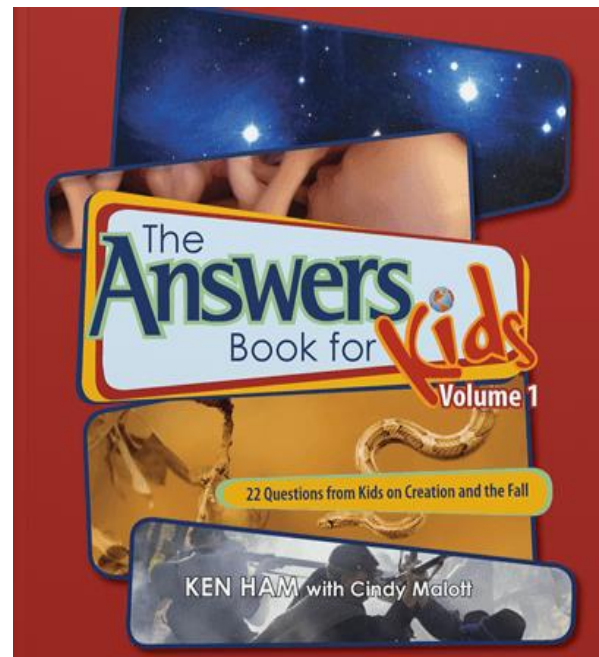
## Children's Book of the Month

*Selected and reviewed by Naomi Badger, age 11*

### The Answers Book for Kids Volume 1

This month's children's book of the month is *The Answers Book For Kids (Volume 1)*.

This is the first in an eight volume series, with volumes one to six being produced nearly thirteen years ago, whilst volumes seven and eight were added three years ago.



In this the first volume, twenty two questions on matters of faith and Bible content are put forward by children aged 5-11. The focus of the questions in this first volume centre on Creation and the fall of mankind.

This book has been selected because of its informative answers that draw on lots of Biblical quotes to back up its points.

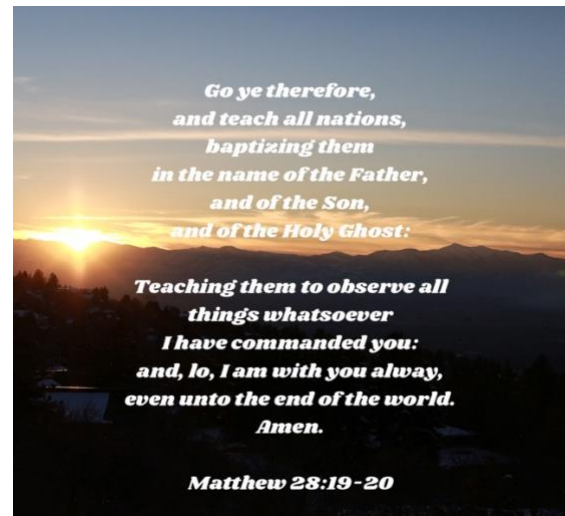
Even though the questions are given by children and this book is aimed at children, the questions and answers are still really relevant and helpful to adults.

However much you know, whatever your age, I would strongly recommend for you to read it.

## Bible Verses of Thanksgiving

- [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#) In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
- [Philippians 4:6](#) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
- [Psalms 7:17](#) I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.
- [Psalms 107:1](#) O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- [Ephesians 5:20](#) Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- [James 1:17](#) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
- [Psalms 100:1-5](#) Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture ...
- [Hebrews 13:15](#) By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
- [Psalms 116:12](#) What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
- [2 Corinthians 2:14](#) Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.
- [Colossians 3:15](#) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

## A Final Thought



It is most interesting to note that the Lord Jesus Christ's final exhortation to his disciples before his ascension to the right hand of the Father saw him highlight the importance of observing the Trinity. The three persons of our one Lord is one that demands our reverence, and we must always be mindful of not neglecting any of the three persons of the Godhead. As we come towards the Christmas season, where the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is to be joyfully honoured, let us not forget the role of our Father and the Holy Spirit in this time of celebration and reverence. Just as the Lord Jesus highlighted the Trinity as he left this world, let us recall the importance of it as he was born into it. It was the great redemptive plan of our glorious Father in the heavens that the Word would take the form of a man and dwell among us (John 1:14), to live the sinless life we are incapable of doing ourselves and to bear our sins on Calvary's tree, ensuring that all who believe in him should have everlasting life (John 3:16). It was by the work of the Holy Spirit that Mary came to be with child (Matthew 1:20), thus fulfilling the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, that he should be born of the line of David. The Father's redemptive plan, the Son's sinless life, the Holy Spirit's working; let us keep the working of all members of the Holy Trinity in mind as we come near to the Christmas season, bringing glory and praise to the Lord

. By John Sivewright

