

volume02

TIMES OF
Restoration[®]
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THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD // WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

IT IS WRITTEN // THE BIBLE: IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

RESTORED: A FOCUS ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

ISSN 1757-8035



9 1771757 803008

The church is growing more rapidly today than any other time in history. Times of Restoration brings you the good news of what is happening in our world, giving fresh teaching on what the Spirit of God is saying to his church today. We believe that restoration is still a key need for the church and that Christ continues bringing us to completeness, ready for his glorious return.

We are committed to bringing you a magazine that builds your faith, establishes firm spiritual foundations and spurs you on to full maturity in Christ. We will present teaching that affirms Christ's standard for his church, and re-establish kingdom principles for this generation and the generation to come.

The magazine is a collaborative expression of ministries without borders®, and interrelated Christian churches, who are committed to serving the purposes of God. We seek to build on the inheritance we have received to shape the church into that which will herald the return of the King.

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Times of Restoration wishes to thank the following photographers for their kind contributions:

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Published by ministries without borders®

Reg. charity no. 1095446

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ISSN 1757- 8035



FROM THE EDITOR *Many years ago I sat with an elderly minister whose teaching had had a great influence on me. He was rapidly coming to the end of his earthly life and his wife had permitted me to see him. His body was frail yet his mind remained sharp. I asked him the following question, ‘what do you think will be the main challenge for me in ministry in the days to*

come?’ His answer surprised me. Reaching out with his fragile hand for his Bible, he picked it up and said, ‘for you, in your days of ministry, you will have to decide if you are prepared to let the culture of your day interpret this book, or allow the Bible to interpret your culture.’ These were his final words to me. He went to be with his Lord soon after our meeting.

A great deal of time has elapsed since that encounter, but the minister’s answer has great implications for us. The Bible – known as the Scriptures and the Word of God – is under scrutiny; its authority and its relevance for faith, life and conduct is being questioned.

Across the world I see the growth of Islam and observe a faith where its adherents hold strongly to the Koran with an absolute belief in its authority for their faith and life. Their submission to its teaching is absolute. Why? Because they believe the Koran is the final word of God to mankind as given to the prophet Mohammed. Is there any correlation with the growth of Islam and the adherence of its followers to their scriptures? I believe so.

In contrast, one sees the removal of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God regarding faith and practice in the Christian church. There is also a void within society as to the absolutes regarding right and wrong, as well as the lack of someone or somebody upholding true moral standards.

How therefore should we view and regard the Bible? Has it relevance for today? Is it a book that takes us beyond itself to reveal its subject, namely Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour of men and Lord of Heaven and Earth? Is it a book that transcends time and culture? Does it speak to us the words of God necessary for personal life and corporate society?

The following articles will, I believe, help us to know the truth and show us a way forward through the labyrinth of a dysfunctional culture.

Enjoy,

Ken

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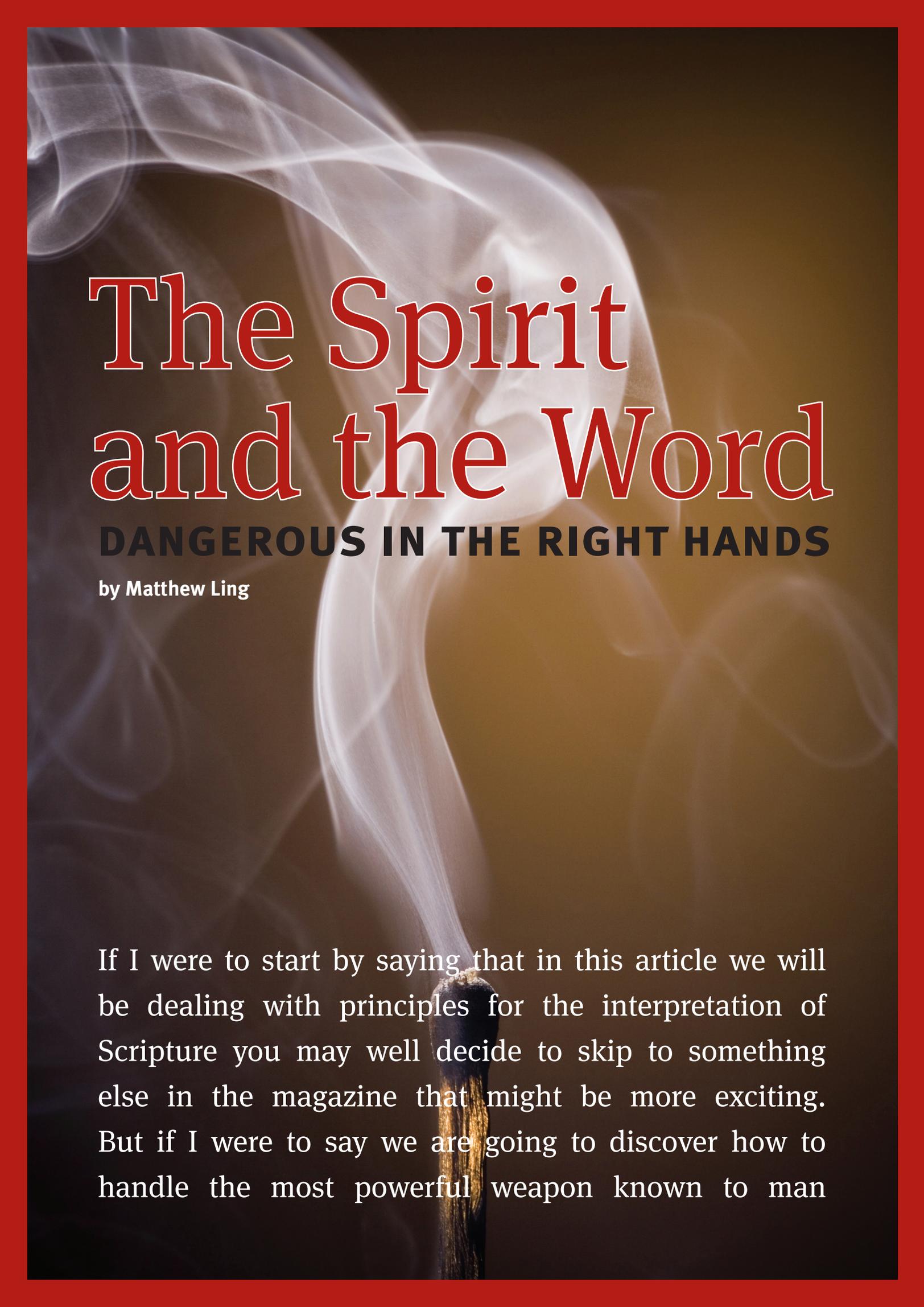
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BEHIND THE SONG:
You Reign For Ever More

A lit matchstick is positioned vertically at the bottom center of the page. From the tip of the match, a thick, white plume of smoke rises and drifts upwards and to the left, filling the upper half of the frame. The background is a dark, gradient brown, and the entire image is framed by a solid red border.

The Spirit and the Word

DANGEROUS IN THE RIGHT HANDS

by Matthew Ling

If I were to start by saying that in this article we will be dealing with principles for the interpretation of Scripture you may well decide to skip to something else in the magazine that might be more exciting. But if I were to say we are going to discover how to handle the most powerful weapon known to man

you may, hopefully, decide to read on. And that will be our quest!

When we speak of interpretation some might say, ‘*We don’t need to interpret the Bible, we should just do what it says.*’ Whilst it is true that we must obey the Word of God, this statement misunderstands the nature and power of words. A word is ‘*a speech sound or series of speech sounds that symbolizes and communicates a meaning*;¹ so at a natural level words are abstract carriers of concrete ideas. In order to communicate effectively both the speaker and the listener need to assign the same meanings to the same words, and this is where interpretation comes in.

When it comes to the Bible, however, we are not dealing with merely natural words but with spiritual words, words that ‘*are spirit and and life.*’² God does not merely convey meaning by his Word, he conveys his very self. With this in mind, interpreting Scripture ceases to be a dusty academic exercise and becomes a vital life-imparting activity: and so it is meant to be.

Paul encourages Timothy to do his best to be someone ‘*who correctly handles the word of truth.*’³ It’s interesting to see that Paul places God’s Word in Timothy’s hands, not his mind. This is our first discovery about correctly handling God’s Word: it’s to be handled not thought about. The idea behind the Greek word translated ‘*handling*’ in this verse is to ‘*cut straight*’ or to make or follow a straight path.⁴ Correctly handling the Word of God means using it to cut through and make an unimpeded way for God to bring about what he intends by his Word: the transmission and communication of himself.

THE NATURE OF THE WORD

What, in essence, is God’s Word? The Bible itself tells us, ‘*All Scripture is breathed out by God.*’⁵ Scripture was created when God breathed out. Throughout the Bible we find that the breath of God imparts life,⁶ creates,⁷ executes judgement and salvation,⁸ and brings death to those who oppose him.⁹ God’s breath is portrayed as a living manifestation of his own divine being: the movement of his tangible presence from one place to another. ‘*All Scripture is breathed out by God,*’ means that Scripture is an external manifestation and

communication of the inward being of God.

Remember Jesus, the Eternal Living Word, said, ‘*The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*’¹⁰ The Word of God is a spiritual thing; that is, it comes by the Spirit. There is a pattern that is easily traced through Scripture of the Spirit birthing the Word. David says, ‘*The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue.*’¹¹ Wisdom promises, ‘*If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.*’¹² Through Isaiah the Lord speaks of, ‘*my Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth.*’¹³ Zechariah speaks of ‘*the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets.*’¹⁴ The Word of God comes by the Spirit of God.

The ultimate expression of this principle is found not in the composition of Scripture, but in the Incarnation. The angel appeared to Joseph and told him, ‘*Do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit.*’¹⁵ ‘*So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us.*’¹⁶

CONTINUING INSPIRATION

Traditionally theologians have made much of the fact that the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and rightly so. But if our conception of inspiration causes us only to look back to how the Holy Spirit moved on the original authors as they wrote then we only have half the picture. For the same Holy Spirit who inspired those authors wants to actively and intimately bring inspiration to us when we read God’s Word: he wants to be the Interpreter as well as the Author. John Wesley said:

*The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote [the Scripture], but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those that read it with earnest prayer.*¹⁷

Jesus said that the proof of our love for him was that we keep his Word.¹⁸ This could seem like a tall order, especially considering that the disciples to whom he first said this often had difficulty understanding what Jesus meant by his words! However, this command of Jesus came with a promise of certain help:

These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I

1. Merriam Webster Dictionary.

2. John 6:63 ESV.

3. 2Timothy 2:15.

4. W.E. Vine, Merrill E. Unger, William White, Jr., Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (AMG, 1998), p289.

5. 2Timothy 3:16 ESV.

6. Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Isaiah 42:5; Revelation 11:11.

7. Psalm 33:6.

8. Psalm 18:15; Isaiah 30:33, 40:7; 2Thessalonians 2:8.

9. Job 4:9.

10. John 6:63 ESV.

11. 2Samuel 23:2 ESV.

12. Proverbs 1:23 ESV.

13. Isaiah 59:21 ESV.

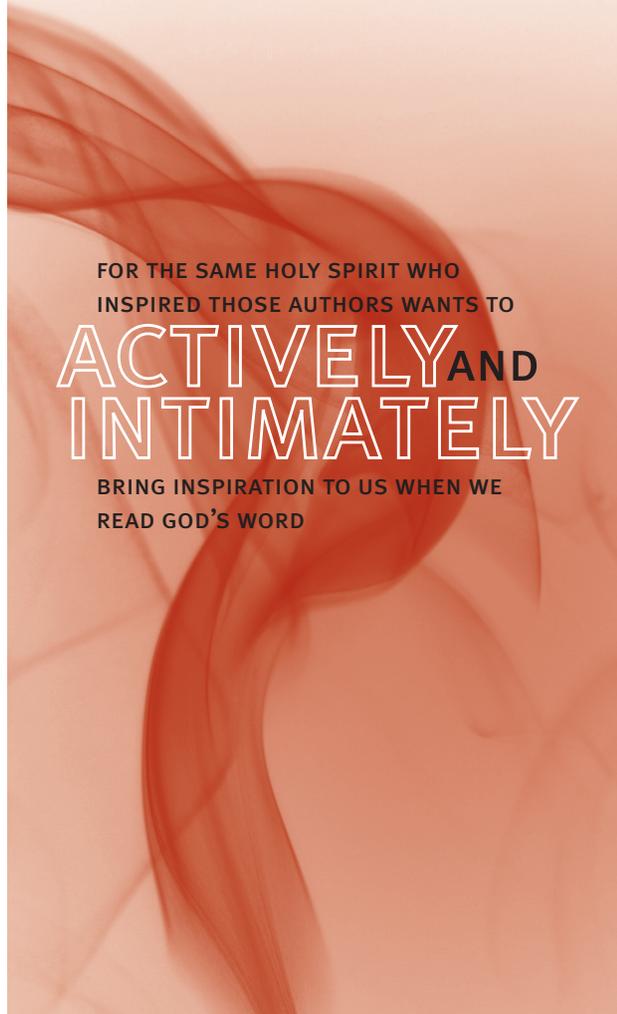
14. Zechariah 7:12 ESV.

15. Matthew 1:20 NLT.

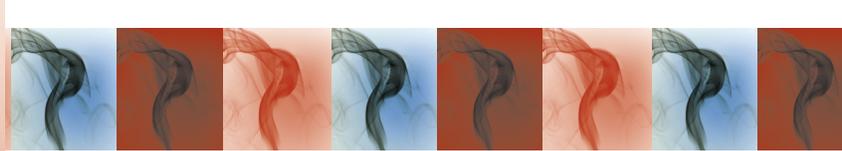
16. John 1:14 NLT.

17. John Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (Lane & Scott, 1850), p.554.

18. John 14:23.



FOR THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT WHO
INSPIRED THOSE AUTHORS WANTS TO
ACTIVELY AND
INTIMATELY
BRING INSPIRATION TO US WHEN WE
READ GOD'S WORD



What we are talking about is more than an orthodox understanding of the Word of God; it is that by correctly handling the Word we might receive an impartation of the God of the Word. To do this it is essential that we are full of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough just to believe in the gifts of the Spirit, it is vital that we are continually being filled with the Holy Spirit, according to the promise and command of God.

How do we do this? The Bible gives a number of simple spiritual exercises that will cause us to continue to be filled with the Spirit: singing to one another, worshiping, giving thanks, submitting to one another,²³ speaking in tongues,²⁴ and praying²⁵ all cause us to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit. When approaching God's Word it is good to engage in these exercises and so be confident that we are full of the Spirit.

'IRRATIONAL' REVELATION

Hold on tight now, here comes the scary part. When the Holy Spirit begins to bring the Word of God into your life, it will often seem irrational: that is, it won't be what our natural minds are expecting. The Bible itself tells us this,

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 'For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ.²⁶

The natural, unrenewed, mind reacts against the Word and the ways of God. This is why our minds must come under the control of the Holy Spirit.²⁷ The mind under the direction of the Spirit is the mind of Christ: we are only in our right minds when the Spirit is Lord in our lives, for *'the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.'*²⁸ The mind under the lordship of the Spirit is the mind that is truly free to think in the way God intended. In this state of affairs the Word of God explodes off the page and into our lives imparting not merely knowledge and understanding but all *'the things freely given us by God.'*

As we grow up in Christ we are *'transformed by the renewing of [our] minds,'*²⁹ and the ways of the Spirit become less of

have said to you.¹⁹

The Holy Spirit is not only the Author and Interpreter of the Word; he also is our Teacher and Abiding Reminder of the Word of God. John tells us, *'As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.'*²⁰ So does this mean that Bible teachers are unbiblical? Not at all; the context here is John helping God's people resist and avoid antichrist deception.

The spirit of antichrist is the satanic force which works to oppose the work of the Holy Spirit. Remember: Satan is the deceiver, and his greatest attempt at deception is to separate the people of God from the power of the Holy Spirit. What John is saying is, *'You don't need to worry about being deceived if you stay in the anointing.'* When we hear the truth of the Word being taught by our brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit in us says, *'Amen'* to the Word, and so we also say *'Amen'*²¹ and so the Word becomes a living revelation in our lives, and the realities of which it speaks become substance for us.

This is why it is essential that our understanding of God's Word comes by the Spirit of God and not from natural intellect or worldly wisdom. Job's young friend Elihu, appalled at the lack of wisdom produced by the advanced years of Job's other comforters declares, *'It is the Spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.'*²²

19. John 14:25-26 ESV.

20. 1John 2:27.

21. See 2Corinthians 1:20-22.

22. Job 32:8 NIV margin.

23. Ephesians 5:18-21.

24. 1Corinthians 14:4.

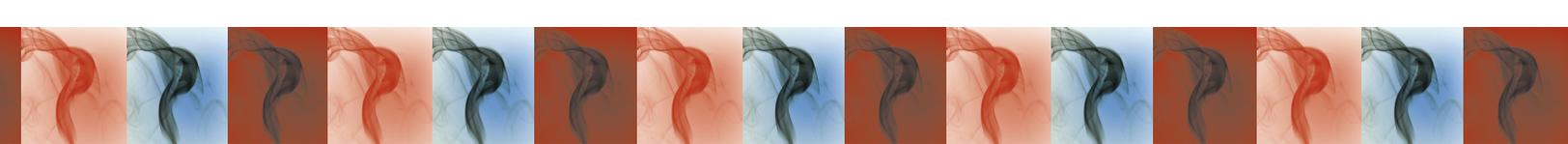
25. Acts 4:23ff.

26. 1Corinthians 2:12-16 ESV.

27. Romans 8:6.

28. 2Corinthians 3:17 ESV.

29. Romans 12:2 ESV.



a shock to our sanctified thought processes. The mind is brought into its rightful place of serving the Spirit. Then not only are we able to receive the blessing of the Word as we ourselves read it, but also affirm and receive it from others when it is taught or preached. Paul, confident in his own revelation, says, *'If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.'*³⁰ And the Spirit of God within us says, *'Amen, yes they are!'*

PUFFED UP OR BLOWN ALONG?

Good doctrine can only be developed under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The first apostles quickly developed sound doctrine that would serve as a foundation for the Church by the impulse of the Holy Spirit bringing forth revelation from the Old Testament scriptures. About nine percent of the New Testament is quotation from the Old Testament, much of the remainder is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of those scriptures in the light of the revealing of Jesus, the Son of God.

This process begins in earnest on the day of Pentecost. When all heaven breaks loose, Peter, freshly filled with the Holy Spirit, moves in a realm of revelation previously unknown and declares, *'This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.'*³¹ Likewise Paul takes a law ostensibly concerning animal welfare and declares, *'Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us,'*³² and uses this as his proof-text for the financial support of ministers of the gospel. A large part of the New Testament is made up of such expositions of the Old Testament, and this was the mechanism for the development of the apostolic doctrine.

The apostle Paul, always zealous for sound doctrine declares, *'If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.'*³³ Much of the content of the epistles is concerned with refuting wrong teaching – teaching finding its source in the minds of men which consequently *'puffs up'* rather than building up the body of Christ.

In contrast with this, Peter describes the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing revelation by saying, *'No prophetic scripture allows a man to interpret it by himself; for prophecy never came by human impulse, it was when carried away by the holy Spirit that the holy men of God spoke.'*³⁴ The phrase translated here 'carried away' is the same phrase used to describe the driving force of the *'tempestuous wind'* which for fourteen days violently blew the ship in which Paul was travelling to Rome.³⁵

30. 1Corinthians 14:37 ESV.

31. Acts 2:16.

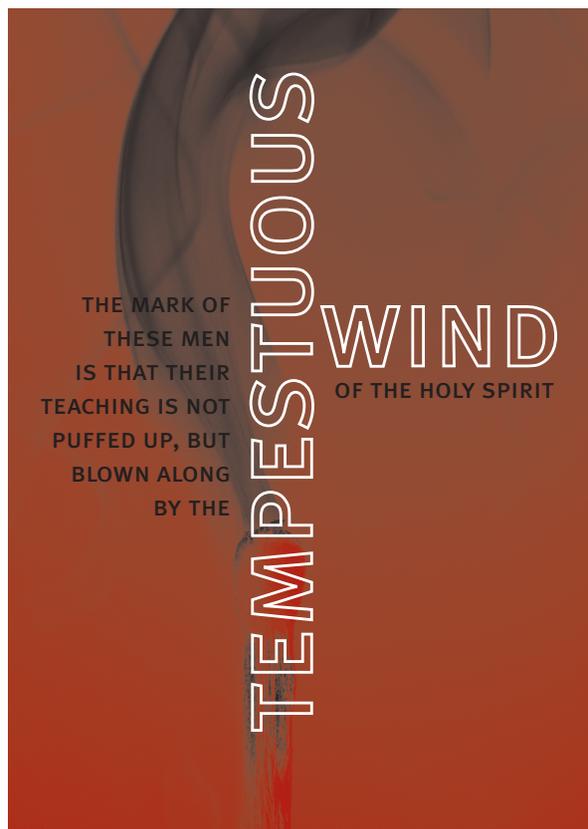
32. 1Corinthians 9:9-10.

33. 1Timothy 6:3-4 ESV.

34. 2Peter 1:20-21 Moffat Bible.

35. See Acts 27.

Today the establishing of doctrine is still the purview of apostles; not in the sense of creating new Scripture, but in forming and honing a vibrant, practical body of teaching from the scriptures under the dynamic influence of the Holy Spirit: teaching that will communicate not just truth, but the God who is truth, into the lives of believers. The mark of these men is that their teaching is not puffed up, but blown along by the tempestuous wind of the Holy Spirit.



DEEPENING DEVOTION

At an individual level, the Holy Spirit works with the Word to bring us into a dynamic encounter with Jesus Christ. In the days of the Judges, when *'the word of the Lord was rare,'*³⁶ the Holy Spirit longed to bring revelation through the scriptures. In Samuel he found a young man, a boy in fact, who would be sensitive to his voice. Consequently, *'the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.'*³⁷ See what happened – *'the Lord appeared'* – the revelation Samuel received by reading the scriptures (in his time just the Pentateuch and the books of Joshua and Job) was not a blessed thought, or a little tingle down the spine, it was God manifesting himself – *'the Lord appeared.'*

This is the kind of devotional time the Holy Spirit intends for us whenever we come to the Word. In the Word we meet with Jesus: he reveals himself, not just things about himself. Through the Word we commune deeply with him.

The Word of God in the life of the believer cuts like a sword, it

36. 1Samuel 3:1 ESV.

37. 1Samuel 3:21 NKJV.

alone *'penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit.'*³⁸ Not only does the Spirit open the Word of God for us to fellowship with God, but in turn the Word opens us to the deepest examination by the Spirit, bringing insight not possible by any other means. And so we are able to know what in our lives is of the divine Spirit and what of the human soul. We then, seeing clearly that which is of God and that which is not, can choose to walk by the Spirit³⁹ and so know what it means to be washed by the Word.⁴⁰

THE 'NOW' WORD

Without the abiding anointing of the Spirit, the truth of God's Word falls on deaf ears. Jesus taught in parables so that, *'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.'*⁴¹ He frequently stated, *'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'*⁴² His disciples, at the time, were in no different a condition from the perplexed crowds; fortunately for them Jesus explained many of his parables privately to them, explaining, *'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.'*⁴³

The secrets of the Kingdom were revealed by Jesus to the disciples in the same way that the secrets of the Kingdom were soon to be revealed to all believers by *'another Helper'*⁴⁴ the Holy Spirit. When the risen, enthroned Christ writes letters to his Church in Revelation 2 and 3, he repeats this call, adding the emphasis that this hearing is by the Spirit: *'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'*⁴⁵

Today the call from the throne is the same: *'hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches!'* The Holy Spirit, the Interpreter of God's eternal Word, speaks through the Word in fresh and new ways, making the eternal Word the 'now' word. This is the prophetic word, a proclamation of God's kingdom purpose, setting a course and direction for the people of God in their continuing advance of the kingdom.

Whenever we come to the Scripture, whether for teaching, fellowship with God or direction in life and the church, the Holy Spirit's desire is to blow afresh through the God-breathed eternal Word to impart the life of God to us. And by this wonderful communion we will *'be thoroughly equipped for every good work'*⁴⁶ to the glory of God.

TODAY THE CALL FROM THE THRONE IS THE SAME

HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING TO THE CHURCHES

38. Hebrews 4:12.

39. Galatians 5:15.

40. Ephesians 5:26.

41. Matthew 13:13.

42. e.g. Matthew 11:15, 13:9,13:43; Mark 4:9, 4:23; Luke 8:8.

43. Matthew 13:11 ESV.

44. John 14:26 ESV.

45. Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22.

46. 2 Timothy 3:17.

A RESTORED LIFE



Controlled by a disease named multiple sclerosis, my life felt like a time bomb waiting to explode. My days were filled with uncertainty - not knowing what would be, what could be or what was around the corner. The diagnosis destroyed everything there was about me. It was eating me from within, both physically and mentally. Afraid of reaction, and sceptical of pity, the disease forced me into a lonely, secret world and it seemed that my life wasn't really worth living. As a result of the disease, I hated what I had become. I felt angry and robbed of everything. I could see no future. This diagnosis resulted in me attempting to take my own life.

So, what happens when you share this load with a very dear friend? They come up with something I could never have dreamed of. They offered to pray for me to be healed. I was surprised as no one had ever offered to 'pray with me'. Could this really help? Would God really do this for me? What could I expect? What if this really was the answer to my situation? I had so many questions; I was overwhelmed and, yet, I had a great sense of hope.

In an attempt to check things out, I attended two church meetings. What is prayer? What do people mean when they say 'Can I pray with you?'. I went. I observed. I was surprised. Admittedly, I didn't know what to expect but decided that if prayer could work, I needed to go for it.

After a week of quizzing my friend and hearing about the love that Jesus had for me, I decided to join her for a Sunday morning

church meeting. The speaker was telling me exactly the same things as my friend had all week! Jesus loves me! If I had sickness, Jesus wanted to heal me ... with no strings attached.

As we stood in this meeting, the church extended their hands to those that needed healing – we were going to pray. My friend's hand extended in my direction and I grabbed it. Together with



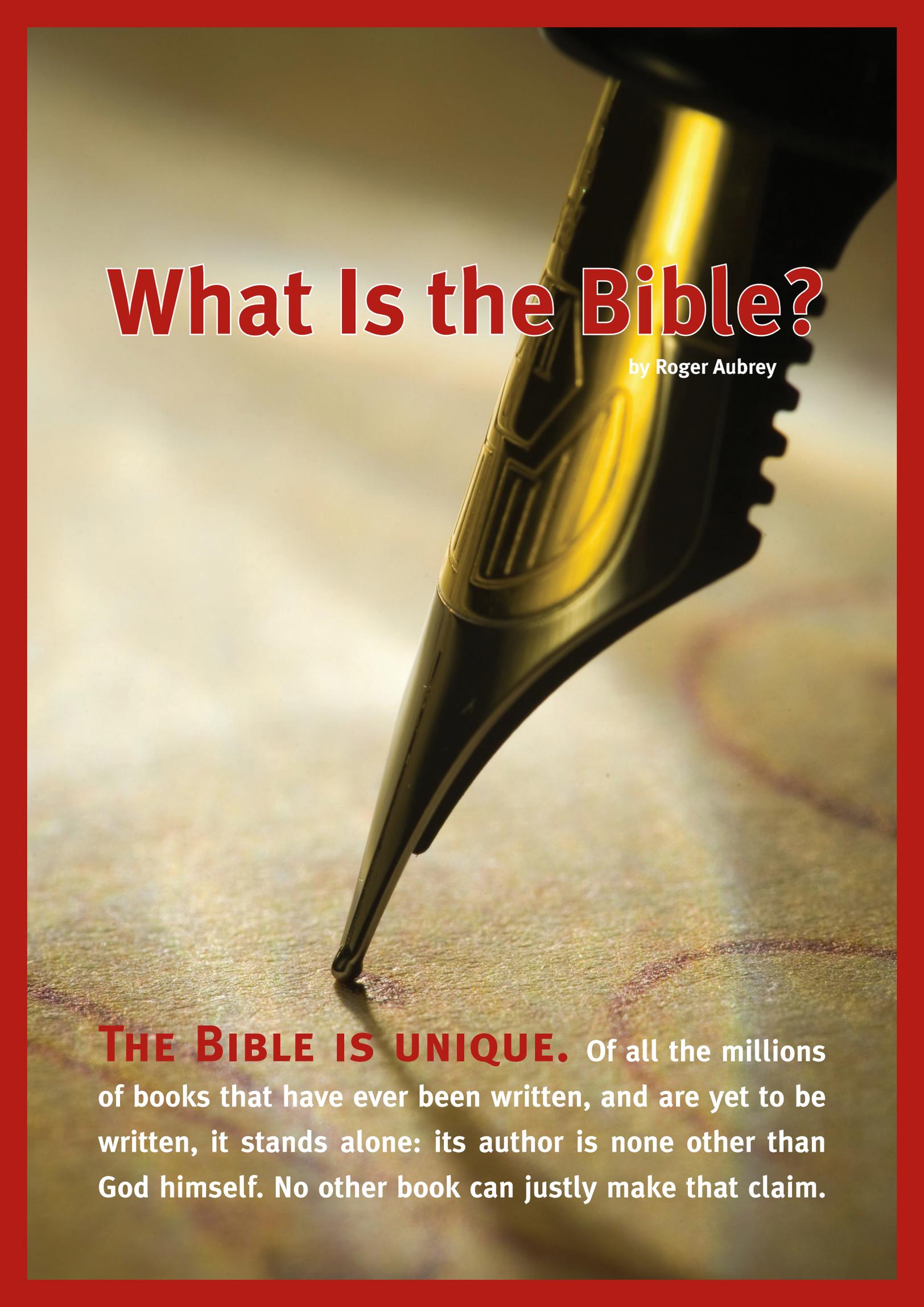
the speaker, she prayed and agreed with me that I would be released from multiple sclerosis, that I would know God's restoration in my body and in my life. The prayer ended – the deal was done. The meeting closed – I walked away. But I had the weirdest feeling: I felt absolutely amazing – I couldn't explain it all! I felt like I had butterflies in my stomach, like I'd fallen in love for the first time. How ridiculous! I had a renewed sense of energy and I was extremely happy.

As the days went by this feeling escalated – I knew something had happened. I knew I had met someone amazing and that he had done something inside my life that I just couldn't explain. I felt so great that, in a very short space of time, I reduced my medication by 50%, with no side effects – so I stopped taking them completely! This was not normal. I regained hand-eye coordination. I regained mobility. I was no longer fatigued but had renewed vitality. I was no longer flat in my spirit: I was euphoric. My mood was so different that I was encouraged to get myself checked out by a mental health

practitioner – who confirmed my mental health as stable. I hadn't 'lost it', I was not going mad. This was really happening! To follow things up, my annual examination was already scheduled with my consultant – he confirmed that the MS was in remission but that I should continue taking my medications. By this time I had been off them for 5 weeks without side effects and felt physically amazing.

Such kindness had been shown to me from an invisible God, a God who was choosing to make himself known to me in a very tangible way. I just couldn't walk away. I was gripped by his kindness and gripped by his love. I felt I wanted to respond to him and, with a little help from my friends, I asked the person that had healed my body to clean me up completely and steer my whole life. Jesus Christ has healed me in spirit, soul and body and I love him for it!

“I was gripped by his kindness and gripped by his love.”



What Is the Bible?

by Roger Aubrey

THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE. Of all the millions of books that have ever been written, and are yet to be written, it stands alone: its author is none other than God himself. No other book can justly make that claim.

The Bible is a collection of sixty six books (the word ‘Bible’ comes from the Greek word for books). They were written over a period of approximately one thousand five hundred years, beginning with the writings of Moses around 1400 BC, and culminating with the letters of the apostle John around 90 AD. Here we have the great wonder of the Bible: men wrote the words but the author was God. Let us begin by investigating that further; it will help us appreciate what the Bible really is: the spoken Word of God written down.

THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED: IT IS GOD-BREATHED

The Bible itself tells us something very important about its origin and nature:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.¹

While more modern translations have the term ‘God-breathed’, older translations, such as the King James Version, have the word ‘inspired’. The Greek word used here is ‘theopneustos’, which literally means ‘breathed out by God’. The Bible is more than an inspiring book which stirs us. This passage tells us that the Bible originated within God himself; it came to us from within his being. God breathed out the Bible; he breathed through the human authors by his Holy Spirit. Therefore, when we say that the Bible is inspired we describe the:

activity of the Spirit of God in which he superintended the human authors of Scripture so that their writings became a transcript of God’s Word to man.²

The Bible is not merely a collection of human writings containing people’s ideas of God. It is not just a book about God; it is a book by God. God did not discover an already existing book that best described him, deciding to give it his divine approval by bestowing on it extra inspiring quality. God is a God who speaks; he reveals himself by speaking. He created the entire universe out of nothing by speaking it into existence.³ God’s words are creative and powerful. Therefore, when God breathed out the Bible he breathed out words which were just as powerful as those which brought Creation into being. Those words are the actual words we have on the pages of our Bibles. The Bible is, therefore, the spoken Word of God written down. We can define the inspiration of the Bible thus:

Inspiration is to be defined as a supernatural, providential influence of God’s Holy Spirit upon the

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

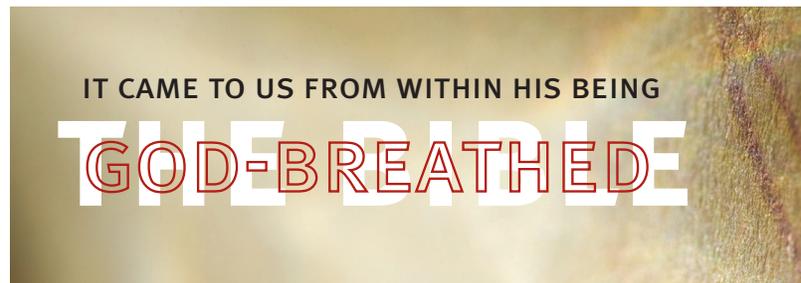
2. Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A handbook of Christian belief* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1982), p.34.

3. Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3.

human authors which caused them to write what he wished to be written for the communication of revealed truth to others [...] a divine activity which [...] effectively secured the written transmission of saving truth.⁴

It was the Holy Spirit himself who worked in and through the various human authors. The New Testament explains how he did it:

You must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.⁵



That phrase ‘prophecy of scripture’ refers to the writings of the Old Testament prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah. This passage tells us that these men wrote as they were ‘carried along’ by the Holy Spirit. That same term is used in Acts when Paul was caught in a terrible storm at sea:

The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along.⁶

This powerful imagery of the ship being driven along by the wind reveals to us just how forceful the activity of the Holy Spirit was in the production of the Bible through its human authors. How did the Holy Spirit do it?

God sovereignly supervised and ordered the background, heredity and circumstances of the individual writers; as a result, when they recorded events, meditations or sermons in writing, the words used were consciously the free composition of the authors and at the same time the very Word of God.⁷

God chose those people he had sovereignly appointed to write down his Word. He arranged when and where they would live. He fashioned them to be the people he wanted so they would write what precisely he wanted. Their personality, outlook, culture, position in society, and writing

4. J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), p.77.

5. 2 Peter 1:20:21.

6. Acts 27:15.

7. Milne, p.37.

the spoken Word of

style were sovereignly controlled by the Holy Spirit. Some of the authors understood this:

The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."⁸

God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles.⁹

Jeremiah and Paul both recognised that God had chosen them for a specific purpose. In the process of breathing out his Word through the human authors, the Holy Spirit did not bypass their personalities or cultures. Even though some of them received what they wrote while in heightened awareness of the supernatural – the book of Revelation or parts of Ezekiel, for instance – they were not human typewriters, transcribing in a trance-like state what God dictated to them. Luke, for example, undertook a thorough investigation and decided to write his account of Jesus for his friend and benefactor, Theophilus.¹⁰ Neither did God accommodate himself to the human frailties and limitations of the authors. Some believe that, because people wrote the Bible, it is inevitably full of human faults, errors, even contradictions. But that is not the case. The transmission of God's Word to us was such an important task for God that he took great care in ensuring that what we have today is what he spoke through these men. Thus, he controlled their lives in such a way that what was produced was a divine-human product:

Thus the Holy Spirit allowed the writers free play of their personalities, vocabulary and training, while at the same time guiding them to make an infallible record of truth infallibly revealed.¹¹

Some might think that seems unfair to the human authors, that they were controlled by God in such a manner. Well, they do not seem to have had a problem with it: there is

8. Jeremiah 1:4-5.

9. Galatians 1:15.

10. Luke 1:3.

11. Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1973), III.18.

no evidence in the Bible that the authors were reluctant to produce what they did.

The classic presentation of how God breathed his Word through the human authors is made by Benjamin Warfield:

there is the preparation of the men to write these books to be considered, a preparation physical, intellectual, spiritual, which must have attended them throughout their whole lives, and, indeed, must have had its beginning in their remote ancestors, and the effect of which was to bring the right men to the right places at the right times, with the right endowments, impulses, acquirements, to write just the books which were designed for them [...] Representations are sometimes made as if, when God wished to produce sacred books which would incorporate his will – a series of letters like those of Paul, for example – he was reduced to the necessity of going down to earth and painfully scrutinising the men he found there, seeking anxiously for the one, who, on the whole, promised best for his purpose; and then violently forcing the material he wished expressed through Paul, against his natural bent [...] nothing of the sort took place. If God wished to give his people a series of letters like Paul's, he prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul he brought to the task

God written down

was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters.¹²

ALL EQUALLY INSPIRED

We might have favourite books of the Bible – and some might appear to be more inspired than others – but every book is equally inspired, and every word is also equally inspired. For example, Paul’s letter to the Romans might appear more inspired than his letter to Philemon, but Philemon is just as inspired as Romans. It might not be as significant – Romans contains major material about our new life in Christ – nevertheless, Philemon was breathed out by God in exactly the same way as Romans, and with the same degree of inspiration. They are both equally the Word of God. Furthermore, Philemon has its own unique place within the Bible and without it the Word of God would be incomplete.

This principle also applies to the actual words in the Bible. Words are important, and God breathed out the actual words he wanted on the pages of his Word, not just ideas or concepts to which the writers added their own words. The whole of the Bible from beginning to end, including each individual word, has come from God himself. So we can say with complete confidence that the Bible is the spoken Word of God written down.

INFALLIBLE & WITHOUT ERROR

Since the Bible is God’s spoken Word written down, it is also infallible and without error. When we say that the Bible is infallible we mean that it does not deceive or mislead us. It is completely trustworthy. Of course, this assumes that we treat each part of the Bible in the light of the whole Bible; and the whole Bible in the light of each of its parts. That means we have to learn how to handle the Bible properly. It is important that we view whatever part we are reading in its proper context within the rest of the Bible. It is dangerous to take passages of the Bible out of context. An extreme example of this is where Festus speaks about ‘a dead man named Jesus’.¹³ While this verse says that Jesus is dead, the rest of the Bible states unequivocally that Jesus is very much alive!

12. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948), p.155.

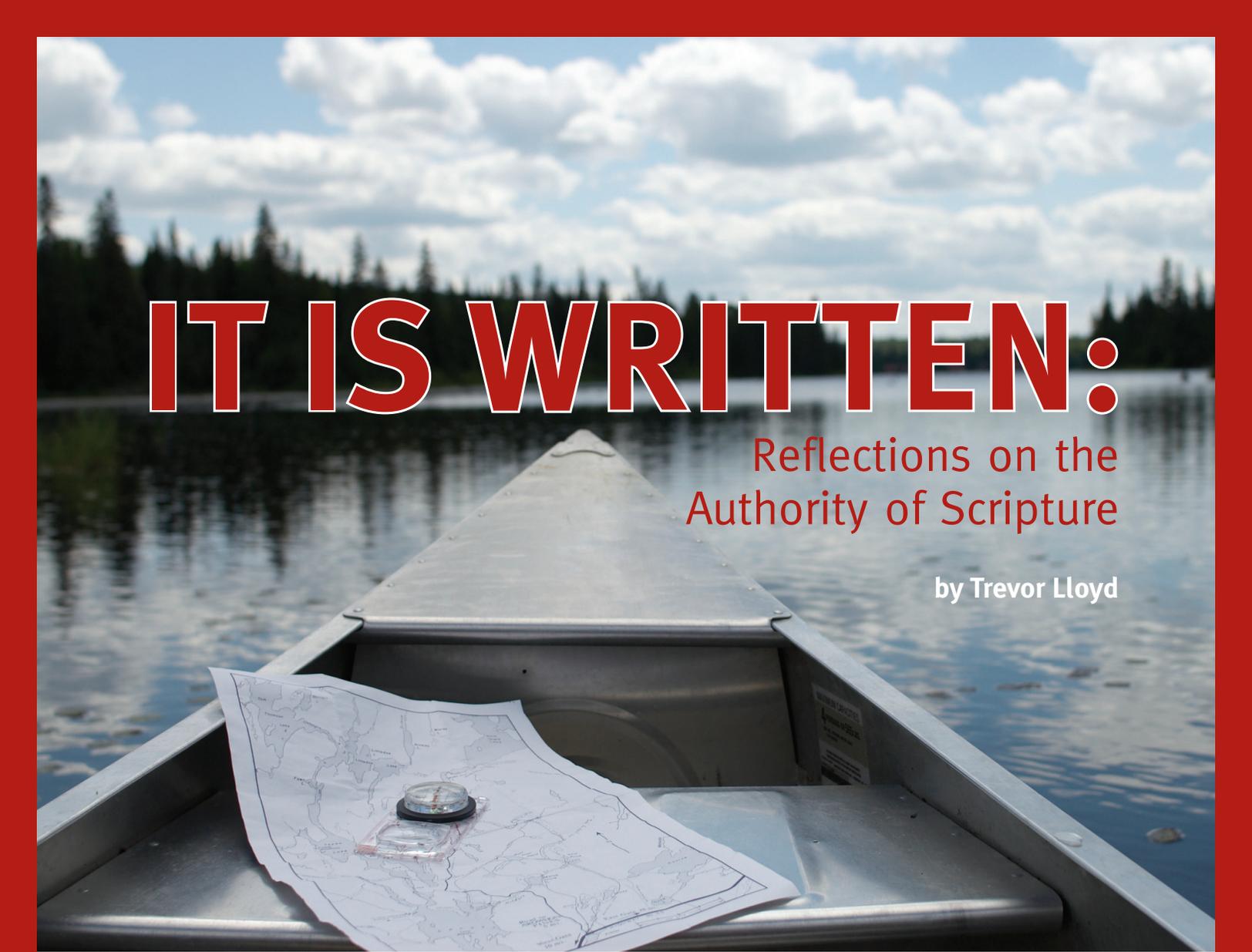
13. Acts 25:19.

Closely allied to infallibility is inerrancy: the Bible contains no errors or contradictions. Specifically, this means firstly that the Bible is true concerning doctrine – what we believe and therefore practise. For instance, what the Bible says about Jesus Christ is true. He is the God who made the world; he became a real man; he really died on the Cross; he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; he will come again; he is the only way to God the Father. Secondly, inerrancy means that historical events which the Bible says are true, are true; they really happened. The Red Sea parted; the walls of Jericho fell down; Balaam’s donkey really spoke; Jesus walked on water. The stories of the Bible are not myths; they are historical facts. Thirdly, and this is a major factor today, inerrancy means that what the Bible says is right and wrong is actually right and wrong. It is inerrant concerning morality. Its ethical standards are eternal. What the Bible teaches about marriage and sexuality were not just for Bible times. Paul’s views of morality were not the prejudices of a man of his times. He wrote what the eternal God has to say about an eternal truth. Homosexuality was a sin then and it is still a sin now. Adultery was also a sin then and is a sin now. Marriage between a man and a woman was the God ordained pattern in Bible times; it still is today. What Proverbs teaches about disciplining children when necessary still is necessary today, even though such a stance is directly at odds with the laws of some countries. Governments which pass such laws are acting contrary to God’s Word; they are wrong to do so. The Bible is not a cultural book; it is an eternal book because it was written by the eternal God. If we interpret the Bible through the eyes of our culture or the prevailing morality of our time, we make it less than it is. We must, instead, interpret culture through the Word of God.

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

I trust that you will appreciate more and more in the days to come the wonderful book you have in your possession: it is the life changing, dynamic truth. It is the Word of God, contains the power of God and every time you read it, God will speak to you. But don’t only read it: do what it says, put it into practice. As you do so, you will discover that God is true to every word he has spoken and is written in the Bible. You can trust it completely because God is behind his Word; it is his integrity.

the greatest story

A photograph of a canoe on a lake. The canoe is in the foreground, with a map and a compass resting on the seat. The background shows a calm lake reflecting the sky and a line of trees on the shore under a blue sky with white clouds.

IT IS WRITTEN:

Reflections on the Authority of Scripture

by Trevor Lloyd

From the moment I became a Christian, I knew the Bible was the Word of God. As a student, I listened to lecturers who questioned and undermined it, asserting that it was a flawed human book. They argued that we couldn't take its claims about miracles, the divinity of Christ, or his resurrection and his return, seriously. But I knew God spoke to me and changed my life through it: I knew he had told me I could trust it, follow it and would grow by nourishing my spirit on it. So, thankfully, I didn't listen to my lecturers but, instead, to God. Sadly, however, many have listened to such misleading notions and have shipwrecked their faith as a result. It is important, therefore, that

we know that we can trust the Bible as the Word of God. We need to be convinced that it has the authority to govern us and the power to change us. When we submit our hearts and minds to its authority, we can experience the impact of its power.

IT IS WRITTEN!

The idea of a written testimony and instruction coming directly from God goes right back to the inscribing of the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone:

The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.¹

Equally, the idea of men producing a written record under God's direction and inspiration is common throughout the Bible itself.² Prophets were not only to hear and speak the Word of God but they were to 'write down the revelation and make it plain.'³ Such Scriptures were central to the life of the people of God. Under the reign of Josiah, for example, the rediscovery of the book of the law – written documents – resulted in a revival.⁴ When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he responded to the devil with the authority of the Word of God, not by saying 'I have heard it said' or 'according to our tradition', but with the clear and unequivocal 'it is written.'⁵ We can be thankful that when we come to speak about the Word of God, we are also able to say 'it is written.'

ACCEPTING THE BIBLE'S AUTHORITY

Traditionally, the church has held to several main reasons for accepting the authority of the Bible:

- **The Bible is its own witness.** The Scripture itself frequently testifies to God communicating his Word in written form (see insert box).
- **The Holy Spirit within us.** We come to recognise, know and accept the authority of Scripture because the Spirit witnesses within our spirit and we find its words to be words of life to us. By faith we understand it is God's Word.
- **The testimony of God's people.** The church over the centuries has overwhelmingly recognised the authority of the Bible, even if it hasn't always allowed itself to be governed by it.
- **It makes sense.** The God who created us for himself and desires to save us would understandably communicate with us in a clear and meaningful way.

We have good reason, then, to accept the Bible as the Word of God. Rather than question it, we should sing the praises of the God who has not left us in the dark, but who has spoken; who has not only communicated clearly with us, but whose words are living words, having the power to impart eternal life.⁶ And we should approach the Scriptures with wonder, humility, gratitude and faith.

1. Exodus 32:16.

2. Exodus 34:1, 27-28; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9.

3. Habakkuk 2:2.

4. 2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 34-35.

5. Luke 4:4, 8.

6. Luke 24:32; John 6:63, 68; Acts 7:38; Hebrews 4:12.

HOW CHRISTIANS UNDERMINE THE BIBLE'S AUTHORITY

It is possible, however, for a Christian to have a very clear understanding and acceptance of the Bible's authority but, in practice, to nullify its authority. Of course, in ultimate terms, no-one can affect the Bible's authority. It has unchanging, divine authority, no matter what people may think or do. But, in terms of its application to our lives and our churches, we can fail to live under it because of certain common and confused mindsets. They creep into the way we approach the Bible, affecting our perspectives and practices as individuals and churches. The following are just some of the ways that it seems to me that Christians do this.

1. CONFUSION OVER PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

It is possible to believe in the authority of the Bible and yet effectively act as one who doesn't because of how we interpret it. One writer put it like this:

There is no more important issue in the church today than how the Bible should be interpreted [...] No matter how correct one's doctrine of the Bible is, if one's way of interpreting it is wrong enough, it will completely destroy biblical authority.⁷

The Bible exhorts us to 'correctly handle the word of truth',⁸ and failure in the area of interpretation can undermine its authority.

In interpreting the Bible, we have to deal with the fact that God chose to reveal his Word to us through human writers who wrote over a number of centuries, in actual historical settings, using different genres, with different styles of writing, and within a variety of contexts. However, I sometimes detect a tendency for certain Christians to avoid the teachings of the Bible, which are unpalatable to modern readers, by over-emphasizing the human dimension and historical context so that they can dismiss what it says as no longer relevant. But if we take the truth of inspiration and therefore the divine authorship of the Bible seriously, we will be careful not to let our supposed knowledge of historical context usurp the authority of the Bible itself. In the present day, for example, the church is walking into a minefield in the area of gender roles and sexuality because of our failure to get clear on this issue of interpretation.

I can think of few areas more important for the church in the present time than to come to a place of clarity and conviction about how God intends for us to interpret the Scriptures. At the top of the list must be the need to recognise that 'the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself.'⁹ In other words, we must allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, having faith in the unity and consistency of its message. There also needs to be a greater understanding of

7. Samuel E. Waldron, *The End Times Made Simple* (Calvary Press, 2003), p.83.

8. 2 Timothy 2:15.

9. Westminster Confession, I, ix. Quoted in J.I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.40.

A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating the TO BELIEVERS AND THE EFFECT OF THIS ON OUR INTERPRETATION

the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating the Scriptures to believers and the effect of this on our interpretation. The study of the Bible has often been too much of an academic activity and not enough of a spiritual one.

2. OVEREMPHASISING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In the exciting days in which we live, there is an increased emphasis in the church on experiencing the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, on signs and wonders, on healing, on revivalism and on the activities of angels and of demons. This is to be welcomed – and certainly we want to experience God, not just have concepts about him. It has been well said that:

any revelation from God's Word that does not lead us to an encounter with God only serves to make us more religious.¹⁰

At the same time, we must be careful and discriminating. Historically, one of the main causes of people drifting away from biblical teaching has been an overemphasis on personal and subjective experience at the expense of the Scripture's objective teaching.

It is true that ultimate authority rests with God and that the Holy Spirit is God. But it is foolish to use this as a reason to set *'what the Spirit says to the churches'* against the teaching of Scripture.¹¹ The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible and its authority is an expression of his authority. The Spirit will therefore not contradict the Scripture.

This does not mean that we have to find chapter and verse for every claimed phenomena of the Spirit. But it does mean that we must allow the living Word of the Bible to form and shape our judgment by the constant application of its principles so that we become mature, able to discern accurately, reject what is wrong, and hold on to the good.¹²

3. OVERLOOKING THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT

We must also realise, however, that it is vital that we are filled with and led by the Holy Spirit if we are going to understand the Bible correctly, because:

the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.¹³

We may have the mental ability to read the Bible but, unless the

10. Bill Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth* (Destiny Image, 2003), p.87.

11. Revelation 2:7.

12. Hebrews 5:14; 1Thessalonians 5:19-21.

13. 1Corinthians 2:14.

Holy Spirit unseals its meaning for us, it remains a closed book.¹⁴ There are hundreds of biblical scholars who haven't a clue what the Bible is saying because they don't know the Holy Spirit. We cannot understand the Bible if we are not rightly related to God because:

the entire Bible was written with this assumption: only those who have a personal relationship with God will truly be able to understand it.¹⁵

Truth is ultimately revealed to the spirit of man. P.T. Forsyth wrote that:

the authority of the Bible speaks not to the critical faculty that handles evidence but to the soul that makes response. The Bible witness of salvation in Christ is felt immediately to have authority by every soul pining for redemption. It is not so much food for the rationally healthy, but it is medicine for the sick, and life for the dead.¹⁶

Of course we use our minds in the study of Scripture, but understanding of its truth, and therefore submission to its authority, is primarily a spiritual issue.

4. UNBELIEF

Closely connected to the previous point is the issue of unbelief. Too often in arguments about the authority of Scripture, Christians have allowed *'the certainty of faith to be supplanted by the certainty of intellect.'*¹⁷ They intellectualize their arguments for its authority and so they intellectualize the way they read it. I have already said that we accept the authority of the Bible ultimately on the basis of a faith response that is quickened in our spirits by the Spirit of God. We understand it on the same basis. Therefore, when we allow unbelief to infect our hearts as we read the Bible, we inevitably distort its meaning and so avoid its authority.

It is a tragedy that so many Christians spend so much effort coming up with theories about how the Bible doesn't really mean what it actually says; that Christ hasn't really provided the basis for physical healing on the cross;¹⁸ that we won't really do greater things than he did;¹⁹ that the gospel won't

14. Isaiah 29:11-12.

15. Bill Johnson, *Face to Face with God* (Charisma House 2007), p.71.

16. Quoted in Philip E. Hughes, 'The Truth of Scripture and the Problem of Historical Relativity', in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Baker Books, 1983), pp. 173-196 (176).

17. Hughes, p.193.

18. Matthew 8:15-16.

19. John 14:12.

The Scriptures

really be accompanied with signs and wonders.²⁰ By the time they have applied so many conditions to the words of the Bible, the truth has died the death of a thousand qualifications. However sound our doctrine on the authority of Scripture, if we read the Bible without faith we are actually failing to accept its authority.

5. ALLOWING TRADITIONS TO DOMINATE

Jesus confronted the Pharisees with the statement, ‘you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition’,²¹ and religious leaders have continued to do this over the centuries. They have replaced the vital principles of Scripture with hard-set religious traditions. This happens not just in the obvious unbiblical rituals and practices, such as infant baptism or the clergy-laity divide, but in wrong concepts and mindsets. Paul warns:

See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.²²

We must be careful of pointing the finger at the most obvious of unbiblical religious traditions and then maintaining an attitude or mindset which is just as bad. When we say things like ‘that’s the way we do things here’, or when we are unprepared to re-examine why we do things the way that we do, then we are in danger of giving access to a subtle and creeping form of religious tradition. If we are truly submitted to the authority of the Word and the Spirit then we will hold on to eternal, unchanging truths and principles, but be flexible about changing our methods and practices according to what the Holy Spirit says and does at a particular time. We will continue to reform and reexamine our practices with a willingness to jettison anything that we find to be unbiblical.

6. EMPHASIZING PERSONAL INTERPRETATION

At the time of the Reformation, Martin Luther was critical of the Roman Catholic Church for allowing unbiblical traditions to multiply. This happened, they argued, because it was the teachings and traditions of the Church’s hierarchy, epitomized in the figure of the Pope, which determined its practices rather than the Bible. Luther and others sought to bring the church back to ‘Scripture alone’ as the basis for all its beliefs and practices, believing that ordinary people could read and understand the Bible for themselves. This was a good thing; but it has often been said that in getting rid of one Pope, the Reformation replaced it with millions of others. Each man became his own pope as he was free to decide for himself what the Scriptures meant. This belief in the freedom of the individual to interpret the Bible has reigned in the evangelical world since. With the internet and the present popularity of blogging, every Christian

20. Acts 14:3; Hebrews 2:4.

21. Matthew 15:6.

22. Colossians 2:8.

can now broadcast his or her opinion and interpretation.

Although I certainly don’t want to turn to religious, institutional authorities as arbiters of truth, and I believe that all Christians are accountable to Scripture, the church must learn how the Christ-given ministry gifts, which the Spirit has been restoring to the church in recent years, function in leading us into an understanding of truth. We have to realize how the foundational and revelatory ministries of apostles and prophets²³ as well as teachers, will function in bringing the church into the knowledge of the truth, to unity of faith and to corporate maturity. Until we do so, the church will continue to be blown about by every wind of teaching and remain immature.²⁴

Jesus warned against those who speak on their own authority:

He who speaks on his own does so to gain honour for himself, but he who works for the honour of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.²⁵

Although in this context Jesus is speaking about himself being sent by and accountable to the Father, he is also illustrating a spiritual principle. A Christian who prides himself on being independent-minded in interpreting the Scriptures may actually be one who ‘speaks on his own’ without any accountability or recognition of those who Christ has given as gifts to the church. Ironically, he may end up undermining the authority of the Scripture that he is so anxious to defend.

These are just some of the ways that Christians, who are not careful, can undermine the authority of the Bible. But let us end by positively affirming what a staggeringly awesome thing it is that God has spoken to us. And how wonderful that he has spoken to us in such a clear way – through the inspired writings of Scripture. That is why we must honour it. We do this not only by holding to a clear doctrinal position on its authority, but in the way we practically handle it and allow it to govern our lives and our churches. Only then will we realise the full impact of its power and authority.



23. Ephesians 3:1-6, 4:11-13.

24. Ephesians 4:14.

25. John 7:16-18.

FROM YORK • UK

A RESTORED BODY



I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 2000; the medical professional I saw suggested that I had probably had it for much longer. Diabetes had run in my family for many years. My late mother had it and my younger brother was diagnosed with it before me.

Following the diagnosis, I basically had to watch my diet whilst undergoing a course of tablets, however in July 2006 I had a heart attack which required major surgery. The hospital staff attempted to stabilise my blood sugar level with insulin and supplied me with an insulin injection pen and blood sugar meter, but even after I was discharged from hospital, following bypass surgery, I had to continue insulin use with injections before breakfast and each evening meal.

Diabetes is caused by an inability to produce sufficient natural insulin, an essential component in the process whereby sugar is converted into energy. This results in high levels of sugar in the blood that can lead to complications with eyesight, kidney function and peripheral blood circulation. A key symptom is a thirst and frequent visits to the bathroom. The lack of energy is marked by tiredness, fatigue and loss of mental alertness. For me this was evidenced by frequent sick leave and several ill health reviews at work. Diabetes is a thief of time and energy and mine was partly responsible for my choice of early retirement.

On Monday evening at this year's Bible Week in July the prophetic words that came were powerful

and spoke of God's aggressive stance against the enemy and His will to restore all that had been stolen. Andrew Hughes responded by calling out for prayer people who wished to see radical restoration in many different areas of life. The first call was for those with diabetes and I reckon I was the first out to the front.

After the meeting I had no doubt that I was healed. Over the last two years with prayerful attention and good management and advice from my GP I have been able to reduce my injection volumes by 25%. My dilemma was whether this process would continue or was my healing total? If total it would be unwise to inject insulin as this could precipitate hypoglaecemia, an undesirable condition especially if it occurs during sleep. I elected not to inject. Tuesday morning I was overjoyed when my blood sugar levels appeared within the normal range. I chose again not to inject and have not had a single dose of insulin since. I have had two thorough medical checks since the conference and have received medical confirmation of the great work God has graciously performed in my body.



“the great work God has graciously performed in my body.”



YORK:

The Living Word. *York is one of Britain's most treasured historic cities; from the city walls and the keep of the Norman Castle to the charming cobbled streets and candlelit churches, it's a well preserved example of a medieval city. York has been the spiritual capital of the North for more than 2000 years and following hot on the heels of the Romans, Saxons and Vikings, Living Word Church is leaving its footprint in history.*

'What kind of church do we want to be part of?' That was the question we asked ourselves as a church at the beginning of 2005. The answers that people gave excited and thrilled us:

'We want to be part of a church that believes and applies God's Word to every area of our lives without compromise.'

'We want to be part of a family where love, forgiveness and grace are the hallmark of our relationships together.'

We want to be a people who live and move in the power of the Holy Spirit.'

'We want to be a people who are actively seeking the kingdom of God together and seeing it established and extended in our city and the world we live in.'

At that time we also revisited the prophetic words that had come to the church in the preceding years as we began to draw up our blue print for the months and years ahead.

Over three years on from that time of prayer and planning we have begun to see our vision take shape, as the church in York has changed, grown and developed. We have seen many new faces arrive during that period, as individuals and families have come to join us from different parts of

the country and also different church backgrounds. With a strong emphasis on faith and grace, we have seen the church mature and come to a greater understanding of who we are in Christ, what he has already provided for us, and what we can accomplish as his Spirit filled people. This has caused an atmosphere of excitement and expectation in our times together as we have seen God move among us in miracles, healings, answered prayers and met needs.

In early 2008 we received a word from God. The word came that we would be a 'house of blessing in the city in three particular ways: finance, healing and revelation.' This lined up perfectly with the vision that God had already given us. God's word says that 'All who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith' (Galatians 3:9). The blessing that came upon Abraham was given not only so that he and his family would be blessed in every way, but also for that blessing to extend to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12). As a people we want to live in the fullness of God's blessing, but also to be a blessing to those we meet. We are taking every opportunity we can, wherever we are, to see this word become a reality. Our mission field is not confined to Sunday morning meetings, but we are being the face of God in our workplaces, at the school gates, in our local shops and through our times of exercise. God is making us his living word. As a result we have witnessed dramatic healings, miraculous provision, church growth and great spiritual progress in many lives.



to be that house of blessing

Two years ago, Jon and Jude Knight moved with their two young children from Swansea, South Wales, to be part of the church in York. Jude is a gifted musician and leader in worship, while Jon serves as the church treasurer..

'We have always believed that building the kingdom is the number one goal of the believer. Jesus said, "if you make his kingdom your primary concern all the other things will be taken care of." So when we felt God call us to York we stepped out in confidence. Our vision was and is simply to build the kingdom. When we moved God took care of the "things" and we have a good home, a good school for our children and good jobs. Living Word Church is a place where the Word of God is taught and we can raise our children in an atmosphere of faith. It's a happy place because, despite the circumstances of life, we know that we are blessed and that God has a good plan for our lives. We believe that we can take hold of all that he has for us by faith.'

Mark and Terri Rothery have been part of the church in York for over fifteen years, having joined as students. Mark is a science teacher and Terri is a busy housewife, with two young children to look after. They have seen many changes in the church during that time.

'Over the last three years in the church we have seen a new focus, a renewed excitement and particularly a more secure knowledge of God's Word and his will. Our vision has been to build a church of faith and we are certainly achieving that aim as every member of the church is united in speaking and believing God's Word. For us personally, this is particularly important as nearly two years ago, our son Joel was diagnosed with a life shortening, progressive muscle disorder for which there is no known medical cure. Since then, our church family has only ever spoken words of faith to us and about Joel. The teaching we receive here and the God focused worship help to keep us strong in our trust and faith in God. We will stand firm until we see the full manifestation of all that God has promised and achieved in Jesus. Then the Lord will get all the glory and we'll have the biggest party ever!'



in the heart of the city

Paul and Lucy Beales met while at University and have been married for nearly seventeen years. Both are scientists and have worked in the UK and overseas. They became part of Living Word Church almost two years ago and now lead one of our midweek home groups.

'We both come from Pentecostal and House Church backgrounds. However over the years we became dissatisfied with the disparity we saw between the modern church and the church we saw in the book of Acts. When we moved to York we looked for a church that we could feel a part of. We felt a very warm welcome on our first visit to Living Word Church, and soon became aware of the unity that existed there. The teaching we receive is excellent and we have learned so much since joining the church. We have been particularly blessed by the emphasis on God's love, grace and the complete work of Jesus sacrifice. On the basis of this foundation we feel encouraged in our faith. Rather than trying to earn God's favour we now see that he is for us. This belief results in our ability to take hold of the things that he has prepared for us, such as healing, freedom and miracles. We are also urged to come to maturity as Christians, but this is without condemnation. There is a common excitement among us that God is very much active in our generation and that his manifest presence will impact York through our church.'

Over the last three years much emphasis has been placed on the foundational truths that we hold to: the authority of God's Word, the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit, God's unconditional love for us, and his glorious plan for his church. We are a people who look to the future with excitement and confidence in our God.

In the next twelve months we will be launching our own internet radio station, which over time, we plan to expand into a full blown Christian station broadcasting across the city. We are also planning a citywide outreach to those caught in various addictions with the message of 'freedom for the captives.' We will be hosting our first major conference in the city, 'Grace and Faith 09,' at which we are expecting over 700 delegates coming to worship with us and hear the life changing message of international speaker, Andrew Wommack.

The next year promises to be a significant time in the life and development of Living Word Church, as we continue in our vision to be that 'house of blessing in the heart of the city.'

RESTORED: A FOCUS ON

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF



AFRICA CONGO (DRC)

BY DAVID EMMETT



THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IS BEING BOLDLY PROCLAIMED AND DEMONSTRATED IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO. HERE IN THE HEART OF AFRICA AN EVER-GROWING COMPANY OF BELIEVERS ARE EXPERIENCING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY THAT CAN ONLY BE FOUND THROUGH LIFE LIVED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE HOPE FOR THIS NATION.





THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO IS THE SAME SIZE AS THE WHOLE OF WESTERN EUROPE. TRAVELLING FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER WOULD BE THE EQUIVALENT OF TRAVELLING FROM LONDON TO MOSCOW. THE DRC BORDERS THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND SUDAN ON THE NORTH, UGANDA, RWANDA, AND BURUNDI ON THE EAST, ZAMBIA AND ANGOLA ON THE SOUTH, THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO ON THE WEST, AND IS SEPARATED FROM TANZANIA BY LAKE TANGANYIKA ON THE EAST.

HISTORY

Formerly called the Belgian Congo, the country's post-independence name was the Republic of the Congo until August 1, 1964, when it was changed to Democratic Republic of the Congo (to distinguish it from the neighbouring Republic of the Congo). On October 27, 1971, President Mobutu renamed the country Zaire.

The **First Congo War** started in 1996 and led to the overthrow of Mobutu in 1997 after thirty-two years in power. The country was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mobutu was one of the richest men in the world and one of Africa's most corrupt political leaders. He had deliberately chosen not to invest in the infrastructure of the country as a means to keeping himself in power. For example, despite its size and its vast wealth in terms of diamonds, copper, gold, zinc, uranium, oil and cobalt, the country only has four hundred miles of tarmac roads.

From 1998 to 2003, the country suffered greatly from the devastating **Second Congo War** (sometimes referred to as the "African World War"). The International Rescue Committee has put the number of deaths resulting from this war at 5.4 million.¹ Tear Fund compares the death toll in the DRC with an Asian Tsunami every 6 months.² Related fighting still continues in the east of the country.

HOPE

In a country that has been ravaged by civil war and is one of the poorest in the world, the gospel of the kingdom is the only hope.

In the centre of the DRC you come to the geographical heart of Africa and a town called Kabinda. The existence of the church there shows that despite the DRC being one of the poorest countries in the world, despite the legacy of a bloody five-year civil war, despite rampant corruption, the kingdom of God has come. Yambalu Mposhi leads a group of thriving churches that he has planted in the last four years. Those churches are mainly among the Basongye tribe of Congo in the Kasai provinces, and this area in itself is the size of the UK.

YAMBALU MPOSHI.

In August 1981, I came to the middle of Congo to teach English

1. see <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2008/01/mil-080122-voa04.htm>.

2. see <http://www.tearfund.org/Praying/Urgent+prayer+news/Church+plays+ital+role+in+post+war+DRC.htm>.

and French in a church secondary school. I remember asking myself, had the Lord really called me to this task? Was any good going to come from this? The questions didn't go away when I met my class of third year pupils. One boy, Yambalu Mposhi, was particularly...well, let's say it politely...a real pain! Most teachers new to any school have dreams about how life would be so much better if just that one pupil had never come to school. Of all the schools in all the world Yambalu had to be in this one! He was the one who was absent in all of my dreams!

We used to have a *Youth for Christ* meeting every Saturday morning and one of the teachers would preach the gospel to the whole school. After preaching on one occasion, a boy came to my mud brick house wanting to give his life to the Lord. It was Yambalu. 'The villain,' I thought to myself, as I led him through a prayer of repentance. 'He's only doing this to get out of a detention.' I led him in the most radical prayer of giving up bad habits; renouncing disrespectful attitudes to those in authority over him; vowing to never talk while his teacher was talking; never missing another detention ... nothing was missed out!

A few weeks later I organised a meeting for pupils wanting to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Many were filled with Holy Spirit that day in what was truly a powerful and memorable time. Yambalu was the first one to receive that day and had to be helped to stop worshipping the Lord with his new found gift of tongues. He was shaking and couldn't stop. His life had been well and truly spoiled for anything less than knowing submission to the glorious rule of King Jesus through his indwelling Spirit.

The Spirit changed Yambalu dramatically. He was keen to accompany me on weekend evangelistic trips to outlying villages. This entailed taking a group of Christian pupils from the school and spending a night in a village with the students lighting a fire and singing before I preached to the crowd of interested on-lookers. We saw many become Christians, and Yambalu was among several boys who were keen to have a go at this preaching to the lost. He loved it when people responded and gave their lives to the Lord.

Yambalu left the secondary school with excellent grades. By this time, I was its Headmaster and, as soon as possible, I employed him as teacher within the school. He worked with me and would regularly preach at the Youth for Christ meetings, organise meetings for those wanting to be baptised in the Spirit and go out with me on weekend evangelistic outings. One thing both he and I came to see as lacking in many of the villages where we preached the gospel message was clear teaching of the Word of God. As I went back to the UK to be equipped to do this at a Bible School near Bradford, Yambalu went and studied to get a degree in Theology in Congo's second city, Lubumbashi.

I returned to the UK in 1991 but kept in contact with Yambalu. He felt called to do further study and obtain his Master's degree in Theology from a university in the UK. He wasn't

4 years=214

IN FOUR YEARS, YAMBALU HAS OVERSEEN THE
PLANTING OF OVER TWO HUNDRED LOCAL CHURCHES.

sure why he had to do this, but believed it was the will of God. King's Church Manchester supported him in this.

In 2004 Yambalu was led to start the church in Kabinda. The hand of God was upon that church and it grew rapidly. From that church he trained a team of evangelists over a three month period on what the gospel of the kingdom really is. They started going into different villages, preaching the gospel and seeing people turn from their sin, being baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit.

Yambalu is based in Kabinda. The church building there was opened in September 2007 to seat one thousand people. Money from King's Church Manchester and ministries without borders contributed to the building. It is the largest one for hundreds of miles around; it has always been full and overflowing for every single Sunday meeting since that date with literally hundreds sitting outside and near to windows.

From that church, the work has grown and there has been a determined and consistent preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. In four years, Yambalu has overseen the planting of over two hundred fourteen local churches.

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR

The gospel preached really is the gospel of the kingdom. There is a real understanding of the church being the means to bring the kingdom to this poor nation. As well as seeing people pass from darkness to light, being baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit, Yambalu's churches have together embarked on agricultural projects, fish farming, pig farming, and fruit and crop production to feed the poor and hungry. They care for war orphans and widows. They have opened three medical centers staffed by nurses, three carpentry schools and three sewing schools.

EDUCATION

During the five-year civil war, schools were closed and the educational system collapsed. Illiteracy today is, therefore, higher than in previous years, and affects not just the elderly but also younger people. King's Church Wakefield provided a motorbike for a fulltime literacy worker to train volunteers among the two hundred churches to teach the illiterate to read and write. Living Word Church York is providing on-going support for his salary and fuel expenses.

BLESSING THE DESPISED

There is huge joy when someone is able to read after following one of these literacy classes. It is wonderful to be able to read the Word of God in their language. The literacy work has generally been among the areas where there have been churches planted, but it took on the form of outreach when the same thing was done in an area deep in the rainforest where non-Christian pygmies lived. In the last three years, the churches there have opened seven nursery schools, eleven primary schools and sixteen secondary schools, all staffed by members of the churches. They are educating 4,759 pupils and plan to open more schools.

PROMOTION COMES FROM THE LORD

The church in Congo has seen the favour of God upon it in terms of influencing the politics of the nation. Here Bruno Kazadi tells his story.



Bruno Kazadi (right) with Yambalu Mpsoshi in Yambalu's home in Kabinda.

In 2004, as well as being an elder alongside Yambalu in the newly started church in Kabinda, I was working for a secular agricultural company. I remember at that time asking Yambalu to pray for me that I would be successful and reach a position of influence in the region for the kingdom. I was surprised when shortly after this I was falsely accused of irregularities in my agricultural work. I had to go to the capital, Kinshasa, in an attempt to get justice from the main office there. I lost my case and I was unjustly dismissed from my job in Kabinda. There was no employment left for me. The door had closed; I had to leave.

On my last Sunday in the church, Yambalu had me, along with my wife and children, kneel before the whole congregation. I was crying as I didn't understand what was happening in my life. I'll never forget Psalm 23 being read over me and my family and the peace of God that swept over us and the congregation. After reading this, Yambalu prophesied saying that while we might not know the reason why we were leaving Kabinda now, the day was coming very soon when we would all understand clearly.

It did not take long for that prophetic word to be fulfilled. Within a few months, not only had I been elected as a member of parliament, but I had also been named as Vice Governor of the Kasai Province. (The Kasai provinces are similar in size to the UK and the role of Vice Governor is only surpassed by that of Governor in that area). I have been able to exercise an influence for the kingdom from my position within local government and I have been able to help the church in Kabinda.

4,759 pupils

THEY ARE EDUCATING 4,759 PUPILS
AND PLAN TO OPEN MORE SCHOOLS.

We now understand why I lost my job in Kabinda. Promotion comes from the Lord!

What's more, let me tell you of other members of the church in Kabinda who were prayed for around this time have also been promoted: a government minister; an advisor to the President; two mayors of major cities (one having a population of four million); and also a general in the army. All of these people came from one local church. Promotion really does come from the Lord!

Next year, Kabinda is due to be upgraded to be the capital of a new region under a reorganisation of local government in the nation of Congo. The very existence of a true church shows the kingdom has come. It is wonderful to know that as a new political region is created, that right at the heart, at the

very centre the ever-increasing kingdom is already there.

BELONGING TO A GLORIOUS CHURCH

Yambalu and the Christians he leads love to hear of what is happening all over the world. The church in Congo has sent finance to be laid at the feet of Keri from time to time. They apologise for it not being much, yet their heart is to be part of what is going on across the world. One of their offerings had been put to supporting a student at the Bible school in Jaipur in India. When they were told that the students in India that had graduated had gone out and planted churches, they went wild with excitement. They do not see themselves as poor, but as partners in the gospel with brothers and sisters across the world. It is a joy that in all that they do in Congo, wherever we might live, we are part of what they are doing. In all that we do, they are part of us.

IT IS A JOY THAT IN ALL THAT THEY DO IN CONGO, WHEREVER WE MIGHT LIVE, WE ARE PART OF WHAT THEY ARE DOING. IN ALL THAT WE DO,

they are part of us.





SOUTHPORT: Positioned for Purpose.

A seaside town without the sea seems like a contradiction in terms – but such is Southport. Even its pier, the second longest in the UK, seldom gets its feet wet as the tide struggles to cross the miles of golden sands. If you’re looking for a place to ride the waves on your surf board you may be better giving the town a miss. However, if you’re looking for a place where the Holy Spirit is breaking upon the church, then Southport is unmissable.

Not long after we bought the premises that we now occupy, God spoke to us saying that we would be ‘bursting at the seams’ within a few years, and we are now getting close. For some years we operated through three congregations, but it became clear that our resources were becoming so stretched that we needed to change. The picture given to us was of a military commander, wanting to advance but recognising that the troops are too spread out. He calls them back together so as to regroup for a renewed forward movement.

This coming together for advance has resulted in growth, not just numerically but in the lives of the individual members, with increased faith and expectation that the God who manifests his presence with us in our meetings is the same God who works through us in our day-to-day lives.

Because of this we are seeing a greater number of people coming to faith, even in the areas where we once had congregations. Our passionate desire to see him glorified in our midst has seen worship times break into new levels and Jesus manifesting himself in healings and deliverance.

Releasing the finance we once spent on renting schools for the congregations has enabled us to take on to the staff a youth and schools worker. This has resulted in a move of God among our own youth and also in bringing new young people among us. Their uninhibited style of praise and worship and their willingness to pray for anything that moves is very refreshing! Our sons and our daughters are indeed prophesying; they’re also laying their hands on

the sick, seeing them recover and taking the gospel of the kingdom into their schools, colleges and universities.

Keri Jones once used the phrase “*Evangelism or extinction.*” We describe ourselves as an ‘out there’ church; we believe in the gospel, we preach the gospel and more than ever we are seeing people of all ages responding to the gospel. In recent times, God has given us increased faith to see that the fields are ripe for harvest and we are regularly seeing people saved. We have seen the harvest coming in via friendships, Holy Spirit promptings, Auntie Wainwright’s (our Seniors Group), Alpha courses, youth activities and even where people have just come into our building off the streets. It is really exciting not just to see people coming to Jesus, but also to see them baptised, and receive baptism in the Spirit straight after salvation.

God has shown us recently it is time to launch midweek meetings where all the church can be together for an open time of worship, impartation and an expectation of the Holy Spirit moving in salvation, deliverance and healing power. Very soon after we had decided to go ahead with that change, we received a prophetic word, from someone unaware of this decision, that we were going to have meetings that were notable for ‘worship and impartation.’

Community is important to us as the Community Church. We are part of the family of God. We recently redesigned our Connect Groups not to be one-size fits all, but rather to understand that a young mum may connect into the church



WE HAVE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF
 MINISTRY AREAS, INCLUDING HEALING ROOMS,
 THROUGH WHICH WE SEEK TO EXTEND THE
**POWER &
 COMPASSION**
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family in a different way from a senior or a young person. We have an aim that everyone is ‘connected’ not just via Sunday mornings but by relationships in small groups and/or areas of service, to see everyone fulfilled in family, friendship and function.

Another word that God spoke to us some years ago was that we would influence the nations for the kingdom. In two particular ways we are currently seeking to fulfill that word. Southport has a sizeable Polish population as well as people of many other nationalities. We are planning an international friendship ministry to reach out to them in practical ways. We have also had involvement in mission work in the Philippines and in 2009 we are planning for teams to go again to the Philippines, where ministries without borders has established such an effective work, and to Zambia, to help in the work of Rainbow Trust.

We have an increasing number of ministry areas, including Healing Rooms, through which we seek to extend the power and compassion of God into the community.

BABY JOSEPH

Baby Joseph was critically ill with his heart and lungs in desperately poor condition in Pendlebury Children’s Hospital, Manchester. It was suggested to his father Ebenezer that the last rites be administered to Joseph, but he refused, saying that he and his wife Agatha wanted somebody to speak words of life, not words of death, over their son.

He found the Healing Rooms link on the Community Church’s website and rang the church office. The call then went out to Ben and Maureen McMaster, directors of the Southport Healing Rooms. They went to the hospital, laid hands on Joseph and spoke words of healing in line with what the Bible says.

Two months went by before Ben received another phone call from Ebenezer. ‘Would you like to come over and see Joseph?’ When they arrived, they witnessed a miracle. Baby Joseph was alert, active, a picture of health.

Joseph was still on the list for a heart transplant at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, so an appointment was made for him to go there and have his condition checked. When the doctors carried out all their tests, they said, ‘We are removing him from the heart transplant list, because he is perfectly healthy.’ And the latest news is that the little boy is continuing to do well.

SHEELA TUAZON

Sheela Tuazon works as a nurse, so when the doctor told her that the results of her smear test were positive, she knew exactly what that meant. It would be so easy to let her mind absorb all the ‘what if’ questions so often associated with a diagnosis of cancer, but she and husband Allan were determined to focus on God and his promises and not allow fear to dominate their lives.

They brought this need to the church one Sunday morning and the leaders laid hands on Sheela and prayed for her healing and for full health. They also encouraged the church to maintain a confidence in God that he would enable Sheela, Allan and their two children to live without fear.

Three months later, Sheela once again stood up on a Sunday morning. She had had the results of further tests and this time they were absolutely clear. She was also able to testify to the fact that God had kept the family free from fear during the weeks of waiting and wondering.

I want to share with others how my life has changed dramatically for the better after experiencing the goodness of God.

JULIE DUNNING'S TESTIMONY

I am 43, married to Ian and have two beautiful girls, Rebecca, 15, and Hannah, 13. We live very happily in the village of Banks, just north of Southport and feel very much part of the village community.

I grew up in Southport, very shy and found it extremely difficult to make friends. I was severely bullied as a teenager and though I did have friends, I never spoke out to them or my parents about the bullying. I suffered torment and low self-esteem and was a very negative person but enjoyed venture scouting and made some special friends there for life. I never really thought too much about God but I always believed in him. When Ian and I got married we moved to Solihull because of our jobs. I worked many years in a do-it-yourself store and suffered severe damage to my back as a result.

In 1995, after giving birth to Hannah I collapsed with full-blown eclampsia and nearly died; as a result I suffered a nervous breakdown, panic attacks and trauma. In 1997 my back was getting much worse, so we moved back to Southport to be nearer family. At this time I was suffering post-natal depression, anxiety, insecurity, drinking too much and feeling ashamed of my other weaknesses. I had some help from friends and neighbours, one of whom (next door) even put my shoes on for me.

My fears made me search for answers. I asked a friend about God and she gave me a booklet on how to become a Christian. It said that I needed to put my trust in Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I said a prayer but at that time I did not notice any change; however, I now know that God heard me and I have been under his protection ever since.

In 1998 a bulging disc in my back burst, crushing 75% of the nerves in my spinal column and pressing on my bladder – a hospital Consultant informed me that scan results showed that I needed immediate surgery or I would be completely paralysed. I had no option – I was glad of the chance of the operation. Carol, a lady in the next room, visited and shared her faith with me. I was really humbled by this as she was dying of a brain tumour but was more concerned for me, a complete stranger. I had a real peace that everything would be all right. The operation was a success but I was left with nerve damage affecting my right leg and scar tissue that

caused daily pain. The fear of more surgery hung over me with the possibility of further degeneration in my remaining discs.

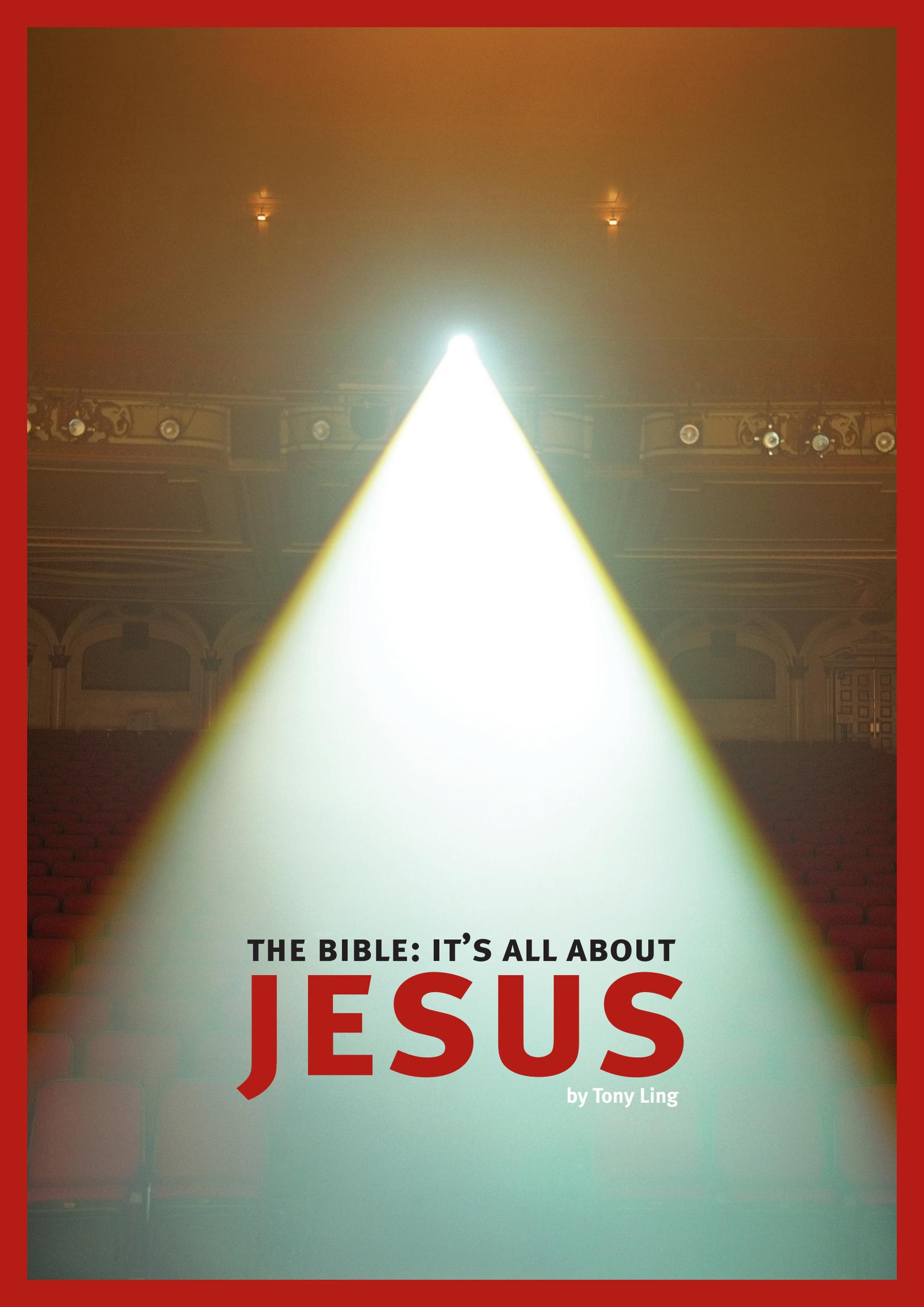
In 2002, my cousin, who is a Jehovah's Witness, had long discussions with me about the Bible. I really wanted answers. When she told me there was no Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit united as one God – I thought about it a lot but I felt that this was a teaching I could not believe in. Eventually, however, I decided to trust what I saw the Bible to be saying – that God sent Jesus, his one and only son, to die for my sins. That night I reached out to God, giving him my heart. I had never felt such love and peace before. I was amazed at how loving and wonderful his presence felt; it was a true encounter with my Father in heaven and I felt cleansed and set free from all my guilt through the joy of the Holy Spirit. Never again would I doubt God's existence – this was so real and amazing!

I went on an Alpha course and on the day when the topic was healing, I received full healing in my back and leg and have not had any pain there since. My mind has been restored too, thanks to the loving prayers of friends and the Healing Rooms at the Community Church in Southport. I am full of peace, feeling so positive and I love sharing the love of God with others.

I currently serve in Playaway Mother & Toddler group at the Community Church with a fantastic team and I am also a part of the wonderful Healing Rooms team at Ash Street and love being part of the church family. My future with my family at home is filled with hope. I am very proud of my husband Ian, who is a lovely dad to my two bright, confident, beautiful girls.

I give all my thanks to God and thank him for the friends who have prayed for me to help me through trials to victory. I pray that my story may help others to put their trust in Him too.

I pray that my story may help others put their trust in Him too.



THE BIBLE: IT'S ALL ABOUT
JESUS

by Tony Ling

*We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*¹

These are the excited words of Philip, spoken to his friend Nathaniel, when Philip had been called by Jesus to follow him. It shows that from the beginning of his ministry, Jesus was recognised as the one with whom the whole Scripture was concerned. This understanding became the basis of the preaching of the good news of the kingdom of God. The New Testament is ‘marinated’ in the Old Testament and carries its flavour in all its rich truth and revelation. This was the ground of controversy between Jesus and the religious leaders throughout his ministry:

*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.*²

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared incognito to two disciples as they walked the Emmaus Road:

*and beginning with Moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*³

The whole of the Old Testament proclaimed and prepared the way for Jesus:

It Speaks of His Birth⁴

It Speaks of His Ministry⁵

It Speaks of His Suffering and Death⁶

It Speaks of His Resurrection⁷

It Speaks of His Redeeming Grace⁸

Although the scriptures referenced above are far from exhaustive, they provide ample evidence to demonstrate the conviction of the apostles in their revelation of Jesus. Such a revelation, they claimed, was the clear and unmistakable unfolding of the wisdom of God declared by his Old Testament servants.

The opening chapters of the Gospels introduce us to a fellowship of faithful expectation: the righteous and kindly Joseph and his fiancée Mary; Mary’s cousin, the elderly and barren Elizabeth and her old husband, the prayerful priest Zechariah; Simeon, with the promise that he would see

1. John 1:45.

2. John 5:39.

3. Luke 24:27.

4. Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 2:5-6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:15; Hosea 11:1.

5. Luke 4:17-20; Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 8:16-17; Isaiah 53:4.

6. John 13:18; Psalm 41:9; John 19:23-24; Psalm 22:18; John 19:28-29; Psalm 69:21; John 19:36; Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20; John 19:37; Zechariah 12:10.

7. Luke 24:26-27; 1Peter 1:10-12; Acts 2:25-32; Psalm 18:8-11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

8. 1 Corinthians 15:3; Acts 8:27-39; Isaiah 53; Galatians 3:13.

the Lord’s Christ before he died; Anna, the prophetess who stayed at the temple in prayer and fasting.⁹ Even the simple fishermen of Galilee had a sense of expectation: ‘*we have found the one [...] we have found the Messiah.*’¹⁰ For all of them, faith and expectation were securely founded on the promises in the law and the prophets. According to David Baker:

*the New Testament proclaims the occurrence of a new unprecedented act of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet a central aspect of this proclamation is that Jesus is the fulfilment of the hopes and expectations of the Old Testament.*¹¹

The apostle Paul with uncompromised honesty could say: ‘I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets;’¹² and Peter understood that, ‘*all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.*’¹³ There is a unanimous prophetic voice, claimed the apostles. It spoke of one person and one purpose. It was focused on and fulfilled in Christ:

*we tell you the good news: what God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.*¹⁴

And so it was that Paul would reason with his hearers from the scriptures, ‘*explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead,*’¹⁵ and Apollos, with a thorough knowledge of the scriptures, was effective in ‘*proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*’¹⁶ We must remember also that the text from which they preached and proved the Messiahship of Jesus was the Old Testament.¹⁷ Paul’s exhortation to Timothy is, therefore, remarkable:

*From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ.*¹⁸

The Old Testament, read in the spirit of faith and expectation, believing that its first priority is to reveal Jesus, is transformed from irrelevant history and Jewish exclusivity into ‘*the living and enduring word of God.*’¹⁹

There are numerous comparisons that can be made between

9. Luke 1-2.

10. John 1:45, 41.

11. David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), p29.

12. Acts 24:14.

13. Acts 3:24.

14. Acts 13:32.

15. Acts 17:3.

16. Acts 18:28.

17. The only exception to this use of ‘scriptures’ is Peter equating Paul’s writing to scripture (2Peter 3:15-16), but Paul’s letters would be few and largely inaccessible at the time, while everyone had access to the Old Testament – even in the Greek language.

18. 2Timothy 3:15.

19. 1Peter 1:23.

Jesus and Old Testament characters and conditions. In fact, they are far more than mere comparisons, for we discover that the picture or person had as its first purpose a truth about Jesus.

A PROPHET LIKE MOSES

*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.*²⁰

This promise became one of the strong strands of Messianic expectation down through Israel's history. The New Testament sees its complete fulfilment in Jesus.

After healing the man at the Beautiful gate of the temple, Peter declared the resurrection of Jesus and the prophetic promises fulfilled through his suffering as the means of this great miracle, and says:

*Moses said, "the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you."*²¹

Recounting God's gracious works of redemption in bringing Israel out of Egypt, Stephen said of Moses:

*He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and for forty years in the desert. This is that Moses who told the Israelites, "God will send you a prophet like me from among your own people."*²²

Moses provided a 'type' of him who was to come. Outstanding in his own ministry and miracles, he yet pointed to the one greater than he.

Jesus deliberately portrayed himself as the source of demonstration and declaration that went beyond Moses' miracles in the wilderness.

After feeding the multitude, Jesus used this creative miracle to illustrate who he really was:

*I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*²³

In the following chapter Jesus reveals himself also as the rock from which water flowed in the desert. Part of the celebration of the Feast of Booths was the pouring out of water to symbolise the streams from the rock. Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice:

*if any man is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believe in him were later to receive.*²⁴

Those who witnessed the bread miracle said, 'surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world';²⁵ and those who heard the water message said, 'surely this man is the Prophet.'²⁶ This was the prophet of whom Moses spoke and who, in a measure, he symbolised: 'the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.'²⁷

THE PASSOVER LAMB

*'Each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.'*²⁸

*'They are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs.'*²⁹

*'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.'*³⁰

It was this meal that Jesus transformed into the Lord's Supper which graphically represents his broken body and shed blood. The early church understood the connection and the significance for Paul tells us 'Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.'³¹

Jesus – 'without sin'³² – is the only one who could accomplish such a redeeming sacrifice, for the lamb must be 'without defect.'³³

*'You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed [...] but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.'*³⁴

THE OFFERING LAMB

Jesus is foreshadowed in all the Old Testament sacrifices, and they all speak of him. Like the Passover lamb, they too had to be 'without defect.'³⁵

This scripture reveals the unfolding message of the Lamb of God:

24. John 7:37-39.

25. John 6:14.

26. John 7:40.

27. John 1:17.

28. Exodus 12:3.

29. Exodus 12:7.

30. Exodus 12:13.

31. 1Corinthians 5:7.

32. Hebrews 4:15.

33. Exodus 12:5.

34. 1Peter 1:18-19.

35. see Leviticus 1:3; 3:1; Numbers 6:14; 28:3; and note Deuteronomy 15:21; 17:1; Malachi 1:7-14).

20. Deuteronomy 18:15.

21. Acts 3:22.

22. Acts 7:36.

23. John 6:32-33.

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God.³⁶

Jesus is the Prescribed Lamb – the only acceptable way into God’s presence; a revelation that Abel had.³⁷ He is the Provided Lamb – of whom Abraham prophesied and who was substituted for Isaac on Mount Moriah.³⁸ He is the Passover Lamb – as we have seen. And he is the Prophetic Lamb – spoken of by Isaiah, a guilt offering carrying our infirmities and sorrows.³⁹

All these are fulfilled in Jesus, *‘the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’⁴⁰*

THE SUSTAINING PRESENCE AND THE SNAKE IN THE DESERT

We have noted that Jesus is the true manna and the water of life prefigured in the wilderness:

I am the bread of life.⁴¹

They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.⁴²

There is another wilderness image that Jesus himself used to illustrate his redeeming work:

just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.⁴³

The emphasis here is not on the snake but on being ‘lifted up’, as a later passage in John confirms:

“but I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.⁴⁴

While this is obviously the main comparison, it is not

36. Hebrews 9:13-14.

37. Genesis 4:4.

38. Genesis 22:1-19.

39. Isaiah 53.

40. John 1:29.

41. John 6:35.

42. 1Corinthians 10:3-4.

43. John 3:14-15.

44. John 12:32-33.

the only one. God’s rebellious people were plagued by venomous snakes: *‘we should not test the Lord as some of them did – and were killed by snakes.’⁴⁵* The only cure for the poisonous bites was to look to the bronze serpent that Moses had erected in the camp: *‘when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.’⁴⁶* No wonder the hymn writer could take up this theme and interpret it as a prophetic drama declaring the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Look to Jesus and be saved. See him hanging on the tree. Guilty art thou, and enslaved. But he bears thy guilt for thee.

[...]Look to Jesus, look and live. He has died thy death for thee.⁴⁷

THE TABERNACLE AND THE TEMPLE

Both these Old Testament sanctuaries of God’s presence speak of Jesus:

The word became flesh and made his dwelling (lit. tabernacled) among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.⁴⁸

“Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days” [...] the temple he had spoken of was his body.⁴⁹

Certainly, *‘one greater than the temple is here.’⁵⁰*

Both tabernacle and temple were filled with God’s glory;⁵¹ and while within them God could be located: *‘I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.’⁵²* In neither could he be contained.

Will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built.⁵³

Prescribed
Provided
Passover
Prophetic

LAMB

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE WAY INTO GOD’S PRESENCE

45. 1Corinthians 10:9.

46. Numbers 21:9.

47. W Hay Aitken, ‘Look to Jesus and be saved’.

48. John 1:14.

49. John 2:19-21.

50. Matthew 12:6.

51. Exodus 40:35; 2 Chronicles 5:14.

52. Leviticus 16:2.

53. 2Chronicles 6:18.

This is what the Lord says: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build me?"⁵⁴

But of Jesus – ‘Immanuel – which means, God with us⁵⁵ – it is said, ‘God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,’ and, ‘in Christ all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form.’⁵⁶

THE REJECTED STONE

In the parable of the vineyard tenants Jesus told the story of repeated rejection and mistreatment of the landowner’s servants sent to collect his dues. They were beaten, stoned and killed, echoing Israel’s constant treatment of God’s prophets. The landlord finally sent his son and heir, whom the tenants threw out of his own possession and killed. Obviously referring to his own reception, Jesus quotes the psalms: ‘the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone (or cornerstone).’⁵⁷

The disciples took up this theme in their preaching and teaching:

it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is the stone you builders rejected which has become the capstone.⁵⁸

As you come to him, the living stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him ... now to you who believe this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.⁵⁹

Paul tells us that in their rejection of Christ the religious leaders of Israel were fulfilling the very scriptures they claimed to defend: ‘in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.’⁶⁰

DAVID’S SON – DAVID’S LORD

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord? For he says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." If then David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" No-one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no-one dared to ask him any more questions.⁶¹

54. Isaiah 66:1.

55. Matthew 1:23.

56. Colossians 1:19, 2:9.

57. Matthew 21:33-46; Psalm 118:22-23.

58. Acts 4:10-11.

59. 1 Peter 2:4-8.

60. Acts 13:27.

61. Matthew 22:41-46.

This provocative and enigmatic challenge by Jesus to the Pharisees emphasises his own understanding of the Old Testament. John Bright writes:

The New Testament saw Jesus – as, we believe, he saw himself – as the Christ, the promised Messiah who had come to set up his kingdom. It hailed him as the fulfilment of law and prophecy. It affirms with one voice that all the hopes of Israel, in all its variegated patterns had found its realization in Christ and his kingdom.⁶²

The scripture Jesus quoted to the Pharisees became the anthem of the kingdom of God, the marching song of the army of the Lord.⁶³ It is the most frequently quoted or alluded to Old Testament scripture in the New Testament.⁶⁴

Jesus himself claims to be both ‘the Root and Offspring of David,’⁶⁵ emphasising the glorious mystery that while he is truly David’s Lord, he is also the longed for son of David.

SOME RANDOM GLIMPSES

The New Testament surprises us from time to time by reading back into historic incidents great inspirations of revelation and insight. For example, Abraham heard the gospel, saw the day of Christ and looked forward to his city.⁶⁶ Moses suffered disgrace for the sake of Christ, and persevered because he saw him who is invisible.⁶⁷ David saw what was ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ.⁶⁸ Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory and spoke of him.⁶⁹ All the prophets were inspired by the Spirit of Christ in them and predicted his sufferings and glory.⁷⁰

Augustine said, ‘the Old is in the New revealed; the New is in the Old concealed.’⁷¹ To understand the Old Testament demands that we read it from a New Testament perspective, to recognise that it is all about Jesus. For in this light only can it shed its truth and be seen to fulfil expectations, provide explanations and inspire us toward the ultimate expression of Christ and his kingdom on earth.

62. John Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (Abingdon Press, 1981), p193.

63. Psalm 110:1.

64. Apart from Matthew 22, the same incident is recorded in Mark 12 and Luke 20. The same verse is quoted in Acts 2:23-24; Acts 5:31 and Hebrews 1:13. It is somewhat paraphrased and applied to the priestly ministry of Jesus in Hebrews 10:12-13. The truth of Jesus being at God’s right hand is in Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3; 12:2; Matthew 26:64 (Mark 14:62); Luke 22:69; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 8:1 and 1 Peter 3:22. And his enemies under his feet in 1 Corinthians 15:25-27 and Ephesians 1:22.

65. Revelation 22:16.

66. Galatians 3:8; John 5:56; Hebrews 11:10.

67. Hebrews 11:26-27.

68. Acts 2:3.

69. John 12:41.

70. 1 Peter 1:10-12.

71. Quoted in J. Gerald Janzen, *Exodus* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) p.259.

Outlines of **RESTORATION**

WE SET OUT TO TRACE GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

*In this series of Bible outlines, we set out to trace God's eternal plan for "the restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21) throughout the Scriptures, book by book. As well as giving an outline of the book and identifying its main characters, we will show what it reveals about God's plan, which is unfolded gradually through the Bible. Because the Bible is all about Jesus and because he is at the heart of God's plan for **restoration**, we will also highlight where Christ appears in each book. The Bible also uses recurring themes and images to teach important truths about God's purpose and about the spiritual life, so we will also identify some of these in each book that we consider. You will get most out of this outline if, as well as reading it, you use it as a study guide, looking up the verses referenced on the characters and themes that interest you as a starting point for further study.*

We continue our series of Bible outlines which trace God's eternal plan for 'the restoration of all things' (Acts 3:21) throughout the Scriptures, book by book. In this study, we are looking at the book of Exodus.

EXODUS REVEALS GOD AS A DELIVERER, A LAW-GIVER AND AS THE GOD WHO DESIRES TO LIVE AMONG HIS PEOPLE. IT RECEIVES ITS TITLE FROM A WORD WHICH MEANS 'WAY OUT' OR 'DEPARTURE' AND ITS FIRST PART RECORDS THE DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT. IN TERMS OF GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN, IT TEACHES US THAT RESTORATION BEGINS WITH REDEMPTION. WE HAVE TO BE RESCUED FROM SLAVERY, THROUGH THE PAYING OF A PRICE, BEFORE WE CAN BECOME ALL THAT GOD DESIRES FOR US TO BECOME. THE EXCITING STORY OF THIS GREAT EXODUS PROVIDES US WITH A DYNAMIC ILLUSTRATION OF OUR SPIRITUAL DELIVERANCE FROM SLAVERY TO SIN. ITS SECOND PART INTRODUCES THE LAW OF MOSES, WHICH GOD IS GOING TO USE TO TEACH US OF OUR NEED FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SIN. THE FINAL PART IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE THROUGH WHICH GOD INDICATES HIS ETERNAL

INTENTION TO LIVE AMONG A PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN SET APART FOR HIMSELF.

GOD'S UNFOLDING PLAN

"In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

Exodus 15:13 (NIV)

In the last study we saw that, since Adam first rebelled, God began a process whereby he was going to save people from their lost state and restore them to his original purpose. It began with the calling of Abraham and carries on here with the continuing story of his natural descendants. The Israelites have become slaves in Egypt and so God raises up a deliverer for them, as he had promised. Moses is used by God to deliver them, to lead them towards the Promised Land and to give God's law to them. As well as protecting the people from whom the ultimate redeemer would come, God uses the story of the children of Israel to illustrate spiritual

OUTLINE

THE EXODUS – GOD’S POWER (1-17)

- Enslaved
- The condition of the people (1-2)
- The call of the prophet (3-4)
- Saved
- Divine confrontation – the Judgement of God (5-11)
- Passover – the Cross (12-13)
- Crossing the Red Sea – Baptism (14-15)
- Sustained
- Bread from heaven - the Word (16)
- Water from the rock & victory in battle – the Spirit (17)

THE LAW – GOD’S PRECEPTS (18-24)

- The people prepared (18-19)
- The law revealed (20-23)
- The covenant confirmed (24)

THE TABERNACLE – GOD’S PRESENCE (25-40)

- God’s instructions for the tabernacle (25-31)
- The Israelites defection – the worship of false gods (32-34)
- The construction of the tabernacle (35-40)

KEY CHARACTERS IN EXODUS

- **MOSES** (Exodus 2-4; Acts 7:20-39; Hebrews 11:23-28)
- **AARON**, brother of Moses (Exodus 4:14-17, 27-31; 6:23; 28-29, 32)
- **PHARAOH**, ruler of Egypt and a picture of the devil as ruler of this world (Exodus 1:22; 5:2, 15-21; 10:16-20; 14:4; Psalm 135:9-10; Ezekiel 29:1-6; 31-32; Ephesians 2:1-2; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 11:7-8; 12:9)
- **ZIPPORAH**, wife of Moses (Exodus 2:16-22; 4:21-24; 18:2-6; Numbers 12:1)
- **JETHRO**, Moses’ father-in-law (Exodus 3:1; 4:18; 18; Numbers 10:29-33)

principles for us today.

Humankind is enslaved to sin and under the dominion of Satan (who is pictured in Exodus by Pharaoh). God has sent a deliverer, Jesus, and, through the paying of a price by his own blood – illustrated by the Passover lamb (12) - he redeems us (1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). All this illustrates that the only hope of restoration is based on the substitutionary death of Christ. The passing through the sea (baptism in water) and being led by the cloud (baptism in the Spirit) also show us that the restored life is one that is ‘in Christ’ and ‘in the Spirit.’

God leads the people to Mount Sinai where he gives the Law to Moses for him to pass on to the people. Although the giving of the Law expresses the fact that God is a holy and righteous God who requires obedience and demands holy living, the Bible will go on to reveal that such righteousness cannot be achieved by the Law. The main purpose of the Law will be to demonstrate that man, in his natural state, cannot please God (Romans 3:20; 5:20; 7:7; Galatians 3:19-20). It reveals the need for grace, which is provided in Christ, and which empowers us to obey God and to live holy lives (Romans 6:14; Titus 2:11-12). Restoration living depends on a revelation of grace.

God delivered the Israelites so that they could worship him (Exodus 8:1), and we are redeemed so that we might worship God (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 14:3). The construction of the tabernacle continues a motif that began in the garden of God’s presence and was also suggested by the building of altars. God wants a place where he can meet with his people, and ultimately dwell among them. We are made for the presence of God. Man foolishly seeks his religious alternatives – the false gods – and the rebellion over the golden calf (Exodus 32) is a culmination of the people’s continuous murmuring and complaining against God, despite his gracious deliverance and care of them. When the people finally follow God in all the arrangements for the priesthood, the tabernacle and the law, we are told that his glory filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34). In future studies we will go on to see that this is a recurring theme and that the purpose of God in restoration

EXODUS & GOSPEL

A major part of Exodus concerns the giving of the Law, sometimes referred to as the Mosaic covenant. In the gospels, Jesus introduces a new covenant. It is worth comparing Exodus with what is introduced in the gospel message.

Exodus	Gospel
Israel ‘redeemed’ from Egypt	Offer of redemption to all people, from sin
Redemption based on the blood of the Passover Lamb	Redemption based on the blood of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world
Passover meal instituted	The Lord’s supper instituted
Law of Moses given at Mount Sinai	Beatitudes of Jesus given in the Sermon on the Mount
Old way of the written code	New way of life in the Spirit
The Law condemns	Grace justifies and liberates

is to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of his glory (Habakkuk 2:14).

CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES

Moses – Moses points to Jesus because Jesus is our ultimate redeemer and deliverer, and he is the shepherd-leader of God’s people (John 10:1-18). Jesus is also a prophet like Moses (Acts 7:37). However, he is also contrasted to Moses as Moses brought the Law, whereas Jesus brings grace and truth in the gospel (John 1:17).

The Passover Lamb – this points to the sinless perfection of Jesus, as the lamb had to be without blemish or defect (Exodus 12:3,5-6). It also points to the substitutionary death of Jesus, his blood being shed for our sins (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The tabernacle – the tabernacle is the place where God dwells among his people. He does this supremely in Christ who is said to have made his dwelling (John 1:14; literally, ‘to tabernacle’) among us.

Access to **the Most Holy Place** – the physical tabernacle pointed to the heavenly one where Jesus presents himself as a sacrifice, his blood enabling us to go right into the Most Holy Place. His body was torn like the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, so that we might have open access into God’s presence (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Priesthood – Jesus is our priest, the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). This will be developed more in our study of Leviticus, but it is important that we recognise Christ as our high priest (Hebrews 4-9).

PRINCIPLES & PICTURES

The following are just a few of the many recurring themes, images and motifs in Exodus:

01. EGYPT – the powerful and oppressive Egyptian empire becomes a picture in the Bible for this world system, which is in rebellion against God (Isaiah 30:1-5; Revelation 11:7-8). The Christian is in this world but not of it. Exodus shows us that while we are in this world God will protect and prosper us (Exodus 1:12; 8:23; 9:4; 11:7), but that ultimately we are redeemed from this world system (Galatians 4:3-4; 6:14; Colossians 2:20).

02. “LET MY PEOPLE GO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP...” (Exodus 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3) – this was the call of Moses to Pharaoh and it echoes prophetically down through the ages to speak of all who are enslaved by sin and Satan. We are set free ultimately for the purpose of worshipping God. That is why there is a ‘new song’ that only the redeemed can sing (Revelation 14:3)

03. BEGINNINGS AND THE BASICS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – just as the Exodus began with the spilling of the blood of the

Passover Lamb, the Christian life begins with experiencing redemption through the forgiveness of sins on the basis of Christ’s blood (Exodus 12:13; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7). This is followed by baptism in water and in the Spirit, (Exodus 14:21-31; 1 Corinthians 10:1-2); and the Christian life is sustained through feeding on the Word and drinking from the Spirit (Exodus 16; 17:1-7; 1 Corinthians 10:3-4).

04. RED SEA/BAPTISM – passing through the Red Sea is a picture of water baptism (1 Corinthians 10:2); this story emphasises that in baptism we are cut off from the world (Egypt) and from all the enemies that pursue us and try to enslave us again – habits, negative attitudes, guilt, fear etc.

05. THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD – Moses first received his call in an encounter with God, on the mountain (Exodus 3:1,12). After the Exodus, he is to lead the people to worship on that mountain (Exodus 3:12). God speaks to him from the mountain (Exodus 19), and it is from the mountain-top he receives the law and the directions for the tabernacle (Exodus 24:12; 25:40). God’s glory covered the mountain (Exodus 24:15-17). The mountain is that higher place which often, in Scripture, speaks of God’s presence or the place of encounter with him.

06. ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN – the tabernacle had to be built strictly according to the directions given to Moses on the mountain (Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8). Everything in our life and churches must be according to God’s direction through his Word and Spirit. We must be governed by what is revealed to us in the presence of God.

07. OTHER PRINCIPLES AND PICTURES: God makes us great in Egypt (Exodus 1:12; 8:23; 9:4; 11:7); God is exalted above false gods (Exodus 12:12; 15:11; 18:11); God remembers his covenant (Exodus 2:24; 6:2-5); holy fire (Exodus 19:18-19; 24:17-18; Hebrews 12:18,29); the glory of the Lord (Exodus 4:4; 15:11; 16:10; 24:15-16; 33:12-23; 40:34-35).

Key Words

We continue here to build up our glossary of key words and terms that are central to understanding God's restoration purpose.

REDEMPTION: Being set free through the paying of a price. It refers ultimately to our deliverance from sin and into salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The process of restoration must begin with this because we have to be set free in order to be able to go on to become all that God intends.

LAW AND GRACE: the Law was a major part of the old covenant and was a written code of commands which the Israelites had to obey in order to be right with God, to receive blessings and avoid curses. All such a written code served to do, however, was to highlight how naturally sinful we were, incapable of reaching God's standard. Although grace is evident throughout the old covenant, it is given its full expression in the new covenant in the work of Christ. Our relationship with God is now no longer based on what we do for God but on what God has done for us. Grace worked for us on the cross to justify us, and continues to work within us by the Spirit to transform us.

GLORY: the glory for God is the visible, or tangible expression of what God is like in all his purity and brilliance. His glory was pictured in various ways in the Old Testament, most often in the form of a cloud or fire, and sometimes simply as a tangible sense of God's presence or a demonstration of his power. It is God's purpose, however, for his glory to be seen in people – supremely in Christ, who is the radiance of God's glory, and through his church. This is how the knowledge of God's glory will fill the earth.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

01. Choose 1-2 of the themes, principles or pictures highlighted in the study and read through the book of Exodus in 3-4 sessions, noting how these themes develop throughout the whole book.

02. With the help of a concordance, trace the use of the word 'glory' in the book of Exodus and note what you learn about this important concept.

03. Read the last verses of the book of Exodus – 40:34-38 - and think about what significance it has for the church today. What does it teach us about God's purpose and about what our priorities should be?



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RESTORED SENSES



Jackin was the only child born to Vinod and Saroj. As their son grew, it was confirmed that Jackin was bereft of the power of speech and hearing. Living in a culture who believes infirmities like these are God's curse, Vinod and Saroj knew that their child's future would be tough. As he grew, Jackin's two sisters struggled to communicate with him. In school, teachers and students struggled to understand him. Jackin's intelligence, skills and abilities were largely overlooked simply because he was deaf and unable to speak. Distanced from his community and increasingly separated from his family, Jackin faced a lot of challenges.

Each crying to God for help, Vinod and Saroj began to attend Christian church meetings in Nadiad. They soon learned that each Wednesday the church held a healing meeting. At their next opportunity they arrived with their son Jackin. God was already healing many people that night and, in a step of faith, they presented Jackin before God to ask for his healing. The church prayed and suddenly, in the presence of God, Jackin began to speak and



hear! Vinod & Saroj were very excited about this miracle "All glory be to the powerful name of Jesus!" No longer overlooked or underestimated, Jackin is now a joyful 12 year old who is studying in year 7 at school. He is very talkative, greeting everybody he meets and smiles for God's goodness upon him. But the story doesn't end here ...

Vinod has three brothers. One of his brothers, named Navin, used to take 80 to 90 sleeping pills on a daily basis. His life had lost its meaning and was in a chaotic condition and many times he was found lying unconscious by the roadside. However, Navin's life was transformed when he met students from the Bible school in Nadiad. They introduced Navin to the Lord Jesus Christ and with prayer and proclamation saw him freed from an addiction to drugs! So great was the transformation that all three brothers of Vinod, along with their families, have since received Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and are increasing in their faith. At present, more than fifty new believers meet to fellowship at their home every week!

SPEAK AND HEAR

"testifying to others in the community about the greatness of God"



No Credit Crunch in Heaven

BY GAVIN WHITE

*'The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.'*¹

Recent news is full of banks losing money on the stock market, house prices falling and general confidence in the financial systems of the world running pretty low. The media have called this a 'credit crunch'. Things are moving quickly in the financial markets of the world and we need to pray for wisdom and sound judgment for the leaders of our nations in this time.²

As the financial systems of the world undergo this current shaking and upheaval, how do we respond in faith and wisdom to all that we see portrayed in the media? The news, no matter the outlet, is not the truth and basis by which we should live. Our lives should be based on the timeless truth of the Word of God. The finances of our families are in the hands of God, in the economy of heaven where there is no credit crunch, no cash-flow crisis and no financial meltdown. When everything is shaking in the world around us, we need to know where the solid rock and foundation of our faith is found. Our lives are rooted in Christ. He is our sure foundation. He is the rock of salvation.³

As Christians, we may see our gas and electric bills go up like everyone else. Petrol still costs the same whether you know Jesus Christ or not, but there is a truth and a vision beyond these costs that mean the foundation of our financial status is radically different from everyone else who does not know God. God's people are not immune or detached from the potential increase in living costs associated with rising inflation, but we do have a wonderful solution: the promise of tithing and the

1. Oswald Chambers, *The Complete Works of Oswald Chambers* (Discovery House Publishers, 2000), p.537. Quote used by kind permission of Oswald Chambers Publications Association.

2. see 1Timothy 2:1-4.

3. see 1Corinthians 10:3-4.

practice of sowing and reaping. When we align our lives and our finances with these biblical principles, we release the peace and prosperity of heaven into our lives and into our homes here on earth.

I have sat with people who have said to me, ‘*we simply cannot afford to tithe.*’ My response has always been, ‘*you cannot afford **not** to tithe.*’ The biblical teaching of tithing is clear. We bring to God what belongs to God. We bring the best of what he gives us, whether that be our time, energy or finances. God deserves the best. The kingdom of God should be our passion and our primary concern.⁴ The practice and promise of tithing for our lives is established in the Old Testament, and confirmed and developed in the New Testament. Jesus said that we should tithe and that we should give to God what belongs to God.⁵ Tithing reflects a heart of obedience to the Word of God. We joyfully bring to God what belongs to him not because we have to, but because we want to. We tithe, not out of a sense of duty or law, but as an expression of love and adoration for who God is and all that he has done in our lives.

In relation to bringing our tithes, the only instance of God allowing us to test him is seen in the book of Malachi:

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”⁶

In a time of testing, we need to make sure we put the Word of God into practice. When we test our lives against the purity of the Word of God, we are refined and transformed into people that bring ever increasing glory to Jesus in all that we do. The wonderful truth is that we can glorify God in our finances, even in the middle of a ‘credit crunch’ and an economic slowdown. Jesus said many insightful things about finance and our attitude towards it. He said, for example, ‘*where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*’⁷ In other words, ‘*show me your bank statement, and I’ll tell you where your heart, priorities and passions are.*’ There is no escaping the fact that the handling of finance is linked to our hearts and to our emotions.

Tithing teaches us and leads us. It takes us from a place of fearing for the future to a place of fearing God that brings true peace, life and wisdom.

Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship.....Doing this will teach you always to fear the Lord your God.⁸

4. Matthew 6:33.

5. Matthew 23:23; Matthew 21:21.

6. Malachi 3:10.

7. Luke 12:48.

8. Deuteronomy 14:23 NLT.

When we tithe, we show that we fear God. When we tithe, we decide to live our lives supernaturally. When we tithe, we align our lives with the realities of heaven.

If I plant an apple seed, I expect to reap a tree with many juicy apples on it. In the same way, when we sow our finances into the kingdom, we can expect to reap kingdom fruit. God has given us seed to sow, and bread to eat.⁹ The Holy Spirit will give us wisdom in these critical times to ensure we can continue to sow and that we can continue to put food on our meal tables. God’s promise is that we will always be able to do both of these vital aspects of life as we see all of our finances through the eye of faith, and from the perspective of heaven.

There is no credit crunch in the economy of heaven. When we fear God, there is no need to fear anything else, including the financial provision for our lives and families. My testimony and that of my family is that when you put your life and finances into the hands of God, he will care for you, provide for you and prosper you.

FINANCE HEALTH CHECK

1. Apply the Word of God to every area of your finances. Confess the truth of the Word of God over your bank balance, your payslip and your cheque book.

2. Make sure you have a written budget for your personal finances or that of your family. Ask someone who you respect in this area to help you prepare it and then review it with you on a regular basis. To help with this, record all your spending for one month to see how much you *actually* spend.

3. If you find yourself in debt, ask for help *now*. Don’t ignore debt; it just gets bigger and bigger. Many creditors will offer flexible re-payments terms to suit your income levels if you talk with them direct.

4. Spend less than you earn every month.

5. Be accountable in your accounting. Find someone who you trust. Sit down with them regularly to talk about your finances and how things are going.



9. 2Corinthians 9:10.



behind the song

This issue's song is written by Ezekiel Shibemba. Here's the story of how it was written:

You Reign For Ever More

Ezekiel Shibemba
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♩=60

A Bm A/C# A¹¹ D A/C# Bm

You reign for ever more ex- alt - ed ov - er all

6 A/C# C#7 F#m G D/F#

just- ice and right - eous- ness. are the found - a - tions of Your

9 E A Bm A/C# A¹¹ D A/C# Bm

throne in splen- dour and ma- jes- ty for ev - er glo - ri- fied You

14 A/C# C#7 F#m G D/F# E A/C#

rule ov- er ev - 'ry - thing in your hands are strength and pow'r You

18 D E/D D/F# E/G# A D

reign You reign You reign for ev - er more You reign You

23 E/D D/F# E/G# A D

reign You reign forev- er more Your king- dom come

27 E/D D/F# E/G# A

Your will be done on earth as it is in hea- ven

'You reign forever more' is a song that I wrote about 4 years ago. As you would sometimes do, I was playing the guitar at home, worshipping and then started to sing the chorus. In that time I had perceived something of the Kingly rule of Jesus, his splendor and majesty. I must have sung it forever! It became a chorus I used in private worship regularly.

Reading through 1 Chronicles 29, I found David's prayer which suggested he may have had a similar perception of the majesty, splendor and kingly rule of God... and I thought aspects of his prayer, with my own, worked for the first verse! While we were in a worship service, Rosy Cole added the bridge as a prophetic song, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.





Roger Aubrey is an elder in All Nations Church, Cardiff. An acknowledged and popular teacher, Roger is the author of “The Circle of Life” and “Discovering God.” He and his wife Dianne have two children.



Keri Jones is editor-in-chief of Times of Restoration. He works with churches across the United Kingdom and in Norway, India, North and Latin America. Keri is also Chairman of the Board of Governors of Covenant School of Ministries. He and his wife Carol have five children and five grandchildren.



Matthew Ling is an elder in Living Rock Church, Coventry. He has a prophetic ministry and is a gifted musician and leader in worship. Director of Covenant School of Ministries: School of Worship, his songs include “Shepherd of my Soul” and “Pilgrim Heart.” He and his wife Ruth have four children.



Tony Ling’s prophetic ministry has been of great significance to churches across the world. The founder of Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Prophets, Tony is the author of “Stay or Move?” and “The Lion and the Lamb.” He has two sons and five grandchildren.



Trevor Lloyd is an elder in the Community Church, Huddersfield and serves on the faculty of Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Word. He is the author of “The Word of God,” an introduction to the Bible. He and his wife Alison have four children.



V:02