

Needed Truth

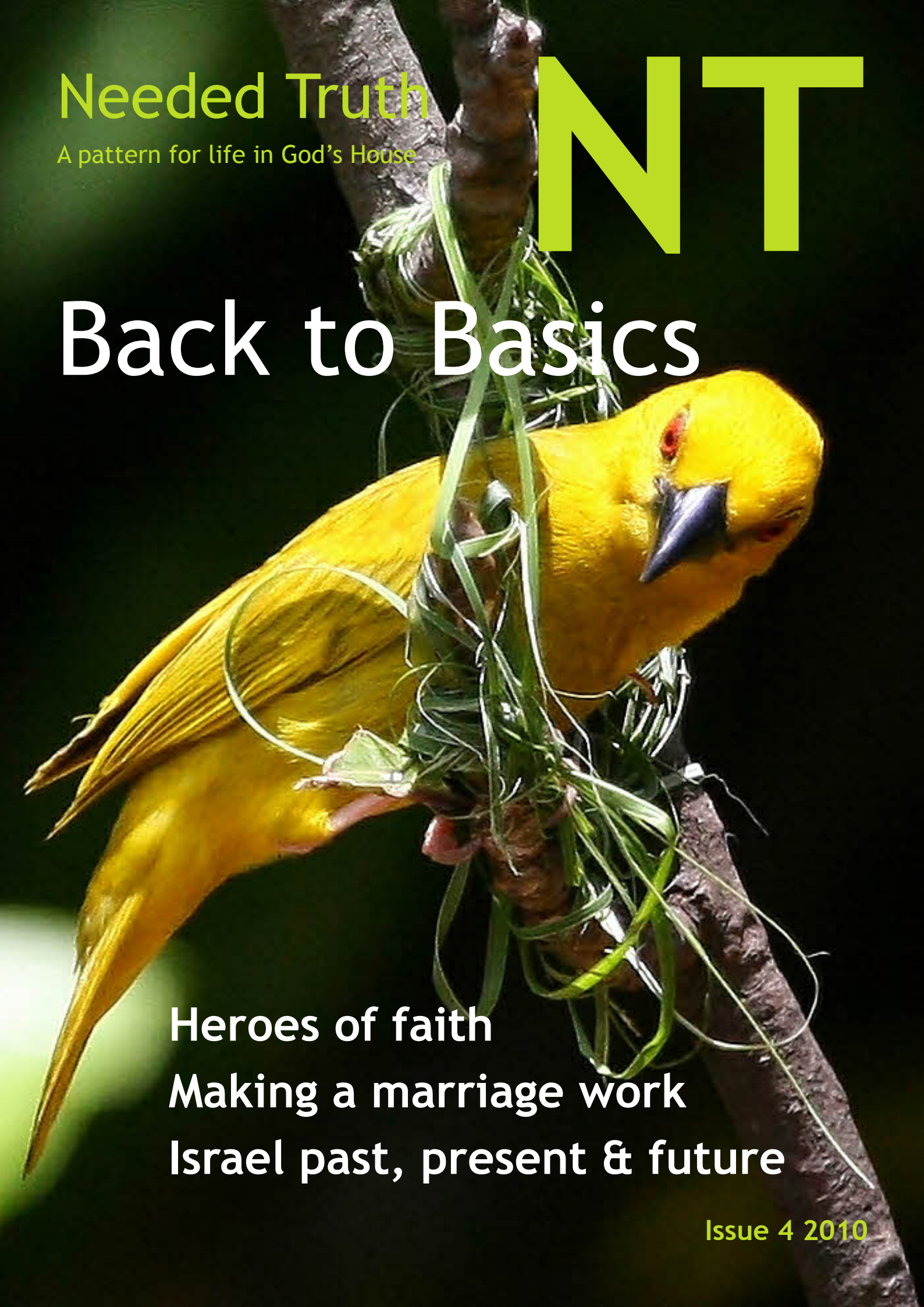
A pattern for life in God's House

NT

Back to Basics

**Heroes of faith
Making a marriage work
Israel past, present & future**

Issue 4 2010



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From the Editors' desk

Turning the tide

Some of our regular readers will perhaps want to turn first to the next in our series on Marriage, this time contributed by Greg Neely. Others may be following the study by Andy McIlree of the garments of the high priest, with its lovely insight into the glories of Christ. And there is the usual mix of devotional and challenging articles, for instance those considering the lives of famous people recorded in the Bible. We happily commend our content to you, but this introductory editorial will veer off in another direction!

As this issue goes to press, war continues to take human life almost indiscriminately, but obviously not unintentionally. Does God share accountability for lives lost in such conflicts? Recent landslides in China and awful flooding in Pakistan have reminded us of the power of the elements to take away treasured possessions and even life itself. King Canute may have commanded the tide to turn, but without divine intervention it would not happen. So atheists and agnostics appear to consider this their strong suit: why shouldn't believers expect their God to do something miraculous that would justify faith in Him? Reversing the tide would do nicely. However, we can confidently assert that one of the greatest miracles of all time was the resurrection of Christ; greater than averting war, turning the tide or reversing the flow of a landslide. It is therefore appropriate for God to expect us to remember this on the first day of every week (the day Christ arose from the dead). So attention is directed to the articles in this issue on this very important Christian ordinance.



Christ declared that if people won't believe what God has said, they will not believe what He does, even if someone unexpectedly rises from the dead (Luke 16:30-31). In similar vein, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (better known by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego) adopted the correct stance when faced with the prospect of death in a burning fiery furnace; they simply said that whether God intervened or not to save them, they believed the choice to do so or not was properly His, and His expectation of their obedience did not require Him to deliver them from death (Dan. 3:17-18).

Each reader faces his or her own individual challenges. Hopefully this magazine will be used to help in strengthening faith and spiritual vision. Not just to argue about what we may expect of God, but to clarify what He expects of us!

Geoff

Know your enemy

Victory begins in the secret place

by George Thompson, Barry, Wales

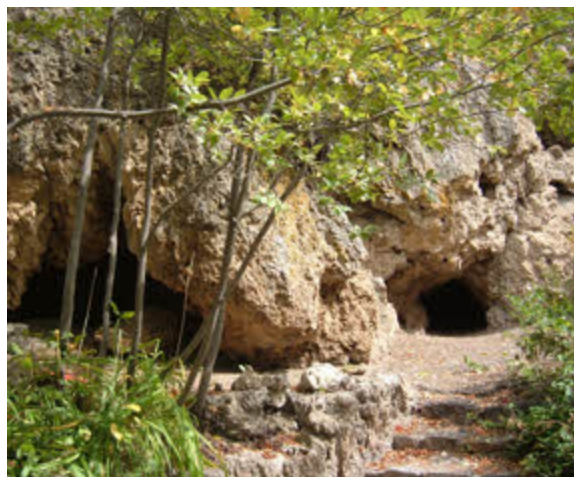
When Field Marshal Lord Montgomery 'was assigned to lead the North Africa campaign of the Allies against the Germans in World War II, his main subject of study was not the terrain on which they would fight, but the character, background and outlook of his opposite number, General Rommel'.¹ 'Monty' realized how important it is in any battle to know your enemy. By considering Gideon's resistance to the Midianite oppression in Israel long ago, we can study our enemy the Devil and his tactics against the Lord's people, even to the present day.

Chapter 6 of Judges begins with the book's familiar refrain: *the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.* It was because they 'did evil'. We are also vulnerable to attack when we live spiritually careless lives.

Seven years of enemy oppression had brought the people of Israel very low. Fear had replaced faith. There had been a successful takeover bid by the adversary until at last, swamped by a triple foe (v.3), the people were forced to take refuge in mountain dens and caves. The people faced a triple enemy then, in that the Midianites, the Amalekites and 'the children from the east' came into the land to destroy it. We, similarly, face a triple foe in terms of sin, the flesh, and the Devil.²

Living in the enjoyment of the fullness of their inheritance had been replaced by dwelling in dens and caves. Instead of thriving, the people merely existed – which was a poor advertisement for God, for His people and for the place into which they had been brought. Our Adversary, too, tries to rob us of the fullness of all that is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ.³

They left no sustenance for Israel; the people were left powerless. We have enemies – not physical enemies, but spiritual in our case – described in Ephesians 6:12 as the *spiritual hosts of wickedness*. Our enemy wants to leave us powerless as far as our service for God is concerned. We all have problems to face in our lives. With some it might be pride, temper, a lack of ability to meditate on God's Word – or maybe prayer is a problem. We need to be aware of these things and apply for the strength and help available from our Saviour.



Instead of thriving, the people merely existed – which was a poor advertisement for God

Against the above background, the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon as he beat out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. Gideon was determined that there should be food for himself and the people. The winepress was below ground, whereas the threshing floor would normally be situated above ground where the breeze could blow freely to separate the wheat from the chaff. The ears of wheat were usually beaten out with a stick or flail, something which takes time to do.

Gideon was in a secret place beating out wheat so that he would have something with which to feed his people. We, too, need the experience of being alone with God in the 'secret place', taking the time and effort to meditate on His Word, firstly for our own spiritual growth, and also for the help of others. It will take time, not just a cursory reading of the Word, but thinking about it, appreciating its meaning, and being touched by the fragrance of the Man of whom it speaks. Part of the armour which God provides for us is *the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God*.⁴

*The Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valour!"*⁵ This was a beautifully personal encouragement, and that same personal word from the Lord comes to us today whatever our needs.⁶

References:

- (1) J.Oswald Sanders, 'Satan is no Myth'
 (2) Rom. 7:17; 8:12; Jas. 4:7 (3) Rom. 15:29; Eph. 1:18; Col. 2:9,10 (4) Eph. 6:17 (5) Judg. 6:12 (6) Mat. 28:20; Ps. 23:4; Rom. 8:37

Bible quotations from the NKJV

HEROES OF FAITH

Rahab Seeing God at work

by Angus McIlvenna, Middlesbrough, England

A prostitute! How was it that someone of such ill-repute could be used for the purposes of God? Rahab was not the only one. Years later Jesus said to someone similar, “Your faith has saved you, go in peace.”¹

From Joshua 2 we learn the word on the street of Jericho was that God was with His people.² A sea had been parted and kings destroyed. Morale and courage were low. It was God’s will that life was about to change for the inhabitants in Jericho and Rahab knew that.

We don’t know the background or circumstances which led to Rahab living the life of a prostitute, but despite this she could, in faith, see

God at work: *By faith ... she welcomed the spies.*³ At that point, it was her faith that mattered to God. Rahab showed by welcoming, protecting and helping His representatives, that she could trust that God in heaven would give His reward. Protection was promised to her and to those dear to her.

With faith came courage. The giving of lodging and sending the spies off in a different direction was *considered righteous.*⁴ She was no longer classified with all those *who were disobedient.*⁵ Brazen Rahab had been used by God to protect the men and to bring about His purposes. God was at work.



The scarlet cord showed that her faith was not a one-off, but ongoing while God’s purposes for Jericho were being fully accomplished.

Rahab put her faith in God. She acted as one of God’s own and asked to be treated in the same way. Her faith was duly rewarded by salvation and a secure home amongst the people of God.⁶

References:

- (1) Luke 7:50 (2) Josh. 2 (3) Heb. 11:31 (4) Jas. 2:25 (5) Heb. 11:31 (6) Josh. 6:25; Mat. 1:5

Bible quotes from NIV

The people of Israel A collective faith

by Stephen McCabe, Belfast, N. Ireland

*By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.*¹

This short verse refers to the people of Israel conquering the city of Jericho by God’s power.² Several points are salient after a consideration of these passages. First, the faith that was exhibited was that of the people – collectively expressed. They believed that God would conquer if they followed. Second, and linked inextricably to the act of faith, was the collective obedience of the people – they listened, and they followed the plan through to the fine details. The word of the Lord was given to Joshua, a strong leader, and he passed it on to the people with clarity. Third, the ark was present as they marched round the walls – in fact it was the focal

point of the procession. Covered in its blue cloth, it would have been strikingly visible to the people watching from the besieged city. It was not carried by a single individual, but by the group and it contained, for the people, the basis of their covenant with God. They acted in obedience to the commands, in faith. The walls fell.

Similarly, our faith within Churches of God has a collective aspect. It is inextricably linked to obedience – listening to the Word of God, passed on with clarity by strong leaders. We must then, by faith, put that Word into action, down to the fine details. And, crucially, Christ must be present – in fact, the focal point of all we do. His presence among us as the people of God should be strikingly visible to those looking on – in



keeping with the type seen in the ark, Christ is still being borne on the shoulders of dedicated disciples for others around to see.³ Collective faith and obedience, together with Christ being upheld as the focal point of our service – this is what will make walls, divisions, barriers and obstacles all tumble down by God’s power.

References:

- (1) Heb. 11:30 (ESV) (2) Josh. 6 (3) Ferguson, J.L. 2010. *The Parable of the Tabernacle* (2nd edition). Hayes Press, Flaxlands.

HEROES OF FAITH

Jesus

An incomparable leader

by Andy Seddon, Swindon, England

A great cloud

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.¹

In this series we have been considering just a few of the great ‘heroes of faith’ we read about in God’s Word; ordinary people through whom God achieved great things because of their faith. Are we inspired?

When we study characters in the Bible such as Abraham, Moses and Joseph, not to mention the many great women of faith, it is easy to think that we are nothing like them. They were special, and our lives today are very different, perhaps quite mundane, compared to theirs. This is not the case.

In this Bible passage the writer to the Hebrews concludes his list of heroes. He now paints the picture of Christians participating as if in the ancient Greek games with a stadium of spectators surrounding us like a cloud spurring us on! These spectators knew what it is like to be where we are; they were there before, and have conquered. Abraham believed against the odds, Moses turned his back on sinful pleasures, Joseph endured injustice, and Rahab risked her very life.

As we seek to follow our Lord Jesus we often hold onto things needlessly which only slow us down or throw us off course; perhaps our reputation, our possessions, our sinful desires, our comfort? The shout from the

cloud of witnesses is: “let go”, and “run”!

The secret of these heroes was that they were focused on something incomparably better. The same was true of Paul in the New Testament when he looked at his reputable life and considered *everything a loss, compared to... knowing Christ Jesus ...²*

A great leader

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.³

Whilst we have innumerable spectators at our side, we have an incomparable leader in front who dominates our gaze. One thing that all the heroes of faith had in common, like us, was that they failed at some point. But we praise God that this was not true of our Lord.

Jesus is the ‘author’ (or leader, captain, pioneer) of our faith. His experiences in His body on earth were complete. He did not just dip His feet into the ocean of human experience. He swam in its deepest and darkest depths. He was *tempted [or tested] in every way,⁴ he learned obedience from what he suffered⁵* and He was made perfect by what he suffered.⁶ Therefore, Jesus has run the same race that He now marks out for us. He took no short cuts, and He committed no sin. What a glorious Saviour!



Jesus has run the same race that He now marks out for us

His perfect life meant that He was the perfect sacrifice on the cross. This guarantees our salvation through faith, and not by us trying to live an impossibly perfect life.

Jesus is also the ‘perfecter’ (or finisher) of our faith. Paul reminds us that *he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.⁷* God’s great purpose for our life is that, through the Holy Spirit who lives within us, we should be transformed increasingly into the likeness of Christ Himself.

If we ‘fix our eyes on Jesus’, that is if we study His Word, meditate on His splendour, and wholeheartedly obey His commands, then our own character will certainly change. This amazing process will see its final completion on the day that Jesus appears again. John refers to this: *What we will be has not yet been made known. But ... when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.⁸* What an incredible prospect!

References:

(1) Heb. 12:1 (2) Phil. 3:8 (3) Heb. 12:2-3 (4) Heb. 4:15 (5) Heb. 5:8 (6) Heb. 2:10 (7) Phil. 1:6 (8) 1 John 3:2

Bible quotes from NIV

BACK TO BASICS

The Lord's Supper

Breaking the bread

by James Needham, Birmingham, England

In the dark hour of His betrayal, the Lord of the Sabbath broke a loaf and issued a command to resonate in the hearts of His disciples throughout the age to come: 'do this in remembrance of Me'.¹

Today, the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread remains the focal point of the service of those who love God. Disciples in churches of God today meet together to break bread on the first day of each week. In this vital, weekly remembrance, some see similarities with the Jewish Sabbath and claim that, in continuity with the Old Covenant pattern, this collective remembrance should be undertaken every Saturday. Observance of the Sabbath was imperative to God's Old Covenant people, commanded by God as one of the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20. Did the New Testament practice, therefore, change the day for collective weekly devotion, or has Christian practice over the centuries taken us away from Sabbath observance and obedience to God?

Importance of the Sabbath

The Sabbath had its beginning at the very beginning of time. In six days, God created the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested in the glory of His finished work. In His rest God found refreshment² and He set apart the seventh day, making it holy.³

Many years passed before manna appeared on the ground to feed the people of God in their wilderness journey. Certainly, faithful men and women had long kept holy the seventh day in honour of what God had declared in Genesis 2, although the Scriptures contain no mention of the weekly Sabbath until it is confirmed in Exodus 16. In the Law which bound God's people, the seventh day was again sanctified as a collective memorial for the holy nation. Its purpose was that work would cease and rest be granted to all – both rich and poor, servant and master, Israelite and stranger; its expression was found in the people of God together devoting themselves in the thrill of His service in holy assembly to the Lord.⁴



The breaking of the bread remains the focal point of the service of those who love God

On the seventh day, the people of God both shared God's rest⁵ and remembered their own which came in redemption from His hand.⁶ By the grace of God, all were to be 'refreshed' in Him, literally 'taking breath' from the toil which sin had brought to the earth.

New Testament practice

In the bright and early days which followed the coming of the Holy Spirit, as the gospel spread with fervour and churches of God were established throughout the ancient world, a new practice of weekly remembrance emerged in which disciples of the Lord Jesus met together on the first day of the week⁷ to break bread in accordance with the pattern for church practice delivered to them by the apostles in obedience to the Lord's commands.⁸ Initially, Jewish Christians would observe 'the Lord's Supper' as an evening event,⁹ as the first day of the week began according to the divine calendar at sundown.¹⁰ When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire it seems the breaking of the bread eventually moved to the morning of the first day of the Roman week (the word 'supper' signified 'main meal' not necessarily an evening meal).

In this precious gathering, similarities could be seen with the Jewish Sabbath: it was a weekly assembly;¹¹ a remembrance of a finished work of redemption which affected all creation;¹² and it was something commanded by and for God.¹³ As to the Sabbath, it was a shadow, here was the substance which 'is of Christ'.¹⁴

With a new covenant and a new ordinance came a new day for its observance. On the last day of the week, the Sabbath had been about looking back on a finished work with restful satisfaction. On the first day of the week – the day on which the last enemy was vanquished¹⁵ – the breaking of the bread looks forward through sorrowful remembrance to the glorious hope of all that His work has accomplished, which shall be revealed throughout the eternal ages¹⁶ and was secured by His resurrection on the first day of the week.¹⁷ So we remember a triumphant Saviour, giving God His rightful portion as the very first church activity of our week.

Sharing in the rest of God

For all the similarities between the Sabbath and the breaking of the bread, it is in the collective rest of the people of God that the shadow truly finds its substance. The Lord Jesus' claim to lordship of the Sabbath¹⁸ – an outright claim to deity – follows immediately the divine invitation to rest for all those who labour and are heavy laden.¹⁹ 'Rest' in Matthew 11:28 is *anapano*, the word denoting the once-for-all and eternal refreshment for the weary sinner in laying his heavy burden of sin at the feet of the Saviour. This rest is developed in verse 29 where the word is *anapausis*, signifying an ongoing Sabbath rest for the soul, not in inactivity, but in the satisfaction of sharing His yoke of service and a lifetime learning of Him who is meek and lowly in heart.

As the writer to the Hebrews leads us into a contemplation of collective service, the Holy Spirit presents a third word for 'rest'. In Hebrews 3, the unbelief of Israel is presented as a warning to us: 'So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest"'.²⁰ The origin of the oath is Psalm 95:11, where the Hebrew word 'rest' is associated with 'abode' or 'resting-place' and is used elsewhere to describe the resting place of God in His house.²¹ Guided by the Holy Spirit, the writer to the Hebrews maintains a consistent theme, for the rest of the people of God is *katapausis*, meaning a 'settling down' or 'making an abode'. The only other recorded use of this word in the New Testament is in Acts 7:49 where Stephen cited Isaiah 66 in respect of the rest associated with God's dwelling-place.

The promise remains to God's people to enter into the rest associated with His house,²² today made up of 'living stones' – baptised disciples built together according to the pattern of divine teaching to form a spiritual house in which God is pleased to dwell.²³ In the breaking of the bread, His people enter through the veil²⁴ to

appear before Him in answer to the Lord's own command in the Upper Room, and to exercise the high privilege of holy priesthood service, offering 'spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'.²⁵ Readers desiring more explanation of this truth are invited to contact editors for free literature giving more in-depth treatment.

By this means we enter into God's rest, in which the substance and purpose of the Sabbath is revealed in all its grace, for the rest of God in Hebrews 3-4 is also a *Sabbath-rest for the people of God*.²⁶ Here the Greek word is *sabbatismos* in which the Sabbath-keeping of the Old Covenant blossoms in purpose to the Sabbath-keeping of the New. Matthew 11 speaks of rest for the sinner and rest for the servant; Hebrews 4 presents Sabbath-rest for the people of God who Christ Himself leads in their obedience of faith into God's dwelling to worship Him for His Son, so powerfully portrayed in the loaf and cup.

The Sabbath initially marked a finished creation; our Sabbath-rest now marks a perfect redemption in which God rests once more, perfectly satisfied with the work of Calvary. Again, He calls men to share His rest, no more a shadow of good things to come, but entering into the very presence of God in the sanctuary, a prelude only to the rest which is eternally ours in Christ.

As the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,²⁷ so God wants us to enjoy the rest which comes from being in His presence. Here is something crafted to meet man's spiritual need. The 'holy convocation' of Leviticus 23 is not lost, but fulfilled as the purchased and sanctified people of God assemble and ascend, their hearts full, in worship for the person and work of the triune God in creation and, above all, in glorious redemption.

References:

- (1) Luke 22:19 (2) Ex. 31:17 (3) Gen. 2:2-3
- (4) Lev. 23:3; Is. 58:13-14 (5) Ex. 20:11
- (6) Deut. 5:15 (7) 1 Cor. 16:2 (8) Luke 22:19;
- Acts 1:3; 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:23,24 (9) cf 1 Cor.
- 11:20; Acts 20:7 (10) Gen. 1:5 (11) Lev.
- 23:3; Acts 20:7 (12) Ex. 20:11; Deut. 5:15;
- Mat. 26:27-28; Rom. 8:20-21 (13) Lev. 23:3;
- Heb. 10:25; 1 Pet. 2:5 (14) Col. 2:16-17
- (15) 1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10 (16) Eph. 2:7
- (17) John 20:1 (18) Mat. 12:8 (19) Mat.
- 11:28-29 (20) Heb. 3:11 (21) 1 Chron. 28:2;
- Ps. 132:8,14; Is. 66:1 (22) Heb. 4:1 (23) 1
- Pet. 2:4-5 (24) Heb. 10:19-25 (25) 1 Pet. 2:5
- (26) Heb. 4:9 NIV (27) Mark 2:27

Bible quotes from NKJV

BACK TO BASICS

“Do this until I come”

Back to the future

by Don Williamson, Littleton, USA

How often have you heard or even said the phrase “We will never forget”? I’m sure the older you are the more familiar you are with events that have inspired such a phrase. Those who remember the atrocities against the Jewish people in Poland and Germany during the Second World War will apply the phrase to the various memorials for the victims of these death camps. I remember visiting the Vietnam memorial in Washington, D.C. several years ago and the feeling I had in contemplating the death of 58,195 American soldiers – lives taken at the prime of their youth – was an overwhelming feeling of sadness, and my response was silence. A more recent and more personal tragedy was the loss of life at Columbine High School, Colorado, U.S.A. when twelve students and one teacher were killed in the rage of hatred and darkness. Waiting to hear if your son is still alive, or later walking around the memorial and reading quotes from those who lost their lives, brings meaning to ‘Never Forgotten’. All of these are remembering the past, and give us an awareness of the cost of human failure and sin.

In remembrance of Me

As we remember events, places, or people we do so from the perspective of our individual knowledge and appreciation. The Lord Jesus gave us these precious words just before going out to the Garden of Gethsemane, “*Do this in remembrance of Me.*”¹ He did this expecting that the disciples would think about all of their experiences with Him, and that the years they spent with Him would be seen in the context of the event that was to come in a few hours. Yes, the symbols that they were to eat and drink were a reminder of the physical presence of the Lord Jesus on earth, but there was going to be much more significance in taking them as the reality of God's glorious salvation would be revealed. We can imagine the feelings of the disciples as they saw the Lord taken away at the hands of an angry mob, the sense of loss, hopes dashed. It would even be more intense as they saw their Master crucified, taken down and placed in a new



We don't just remember the past, we also anticipate the future

tomb, which was then sealed by the Roman authorities.² But that wasn't the end of the story. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we remember an event different from the ones mentioned earlier. As time goes on April 20, the day of the Columbine massacre, is remembered as a tragedy of the past: our feelings change and we don't give it as much thought. That is just what we are like as people. The children of Israel were to celebrate the Passover feast once a year on the fourteenth day of the first month.³ Why? God did not want them to forget what He had done for them, and He wanted them to pass it on to their children.

There are many facets to the powerfully appealing words of the Lord as He appeals to us to remember Him. He knew what was going to happen that day and had lived His life to fulfil it. He also knew that He was going to be victorious over sin, death and Satan's power! The full context of the remembrance of the Lord Jesus is in His life, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and His coming again. We don't just remember the past, we also anticipate the future.

Proclaiming!

Paul gives us a wonderful picture of God's will for us in his letter to the Corinthian saints, *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*⁴ This verse tells us a great deal about our responsibilities and realities. Let us focus on the realities. We are reminded again of the death of the Lord Jesus. The reason that lovely life had to end in such brutal death would have been known to the

Corinthians, as Paul explained *For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*⁵ He further explains to them that they were bought with a price. The death of Christ is not simply an event of history, but one of personal delivery from sin. This verse brings responsibilities: *For as often as you ...* Two things come to mind: first is the expression ‘as often’ and then the personal appeal as ‘you’. The early disciples, being led by the Spirit of God, practised the breaking of bread on the first day of the week.⁶ In order for us to fulfil this pattern of the early church, we must ‘gather together’, an action for which each of us is responsible. If you are not there, the ‘you’ of verse 26 is missing and the scripture cannot be personally accomplished. Remember the phrase ‘never forgotten’. It takes action to implement this; it takes focus and purpose with resolve. Is it your resolve to be faithful and obedient to the command of the Lord? When gathered together with a church of God we are to eat the bread and drink the cup for a particular purpose. It is to ‘proclaim’; meaning to announce, declare, promulgate, and make known.⁷ This happens by our presence and by our participation in praise and worship. It is part of our witness! What an exciting thought that each week we are coming together in worship and in witness.

Until He comes

The sadness that I felt at the Vietnam Memorial is in stark contrast to the experience we have each Sunday in our remembrance of the Lord Jesus. Of course, it is a solemn occasion requiring personal reverence as we meet before our God, but we are meeting in the glorious reality of Christ's victory and of His coming back for His Church. Again, two things come to my mind. First we are confronted with the word ‘until’. This is a word of faith and not sight. Peter speaks of mockers that are saying *“Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”*⁸ Each

time we are together to remember the Lord we are performing an act of faith and living out the words ‘one time more and one time less’; meaning, of course, that what we do is one time more than the last time, and one time less before He comes for us. Do we face the same mockers today? Maybe not to our face, but as the world moves on with no regard to the Lord's Day, as God is taken out of institutions and the acknowledgment of men, we are to be faithful in our proclaiming of our Lord and Saviour with the resolve to continue ‘until He comes’.

As believers in the Lord Jesus, we are to be living in His promises. Promises are personal! When the Lord Jesus died on the cross He died for you and for me. He also gives us a personal promise about His coming: *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”*⁹ Each week we are to be living in the anticipation of His coming, knowing that God will not repent of His gifts and promises. We could think about all the changes that are taking place in this world and all the signs that point to the imminent coming of the Lord to the air, but I would appeal to you that it was the promise of seeing Christ again that appealed to the disciples. After His resurrection, the Lord revealed Himself to two disciples as they travelled to a village called Emmaus. After listening to the Lord explain to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures, here was their response: *Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?”*¹⁰ He is to be the focus of our hearts. They should overflow as we anticipate the Breaking of Bread – until He comes!

References:

(1) Luke 22:19 (2) Mat. 27:64-66 (3) Num. 9:5 (4) 1 Cor. 11:26 (5) 1 Cor. 1:18 (6) Acts 20:7 & 1 Cor. 16:2 (7) Thayer's Lexicon (8) 2 Pet. 3:4 (9) John 14:3 (10) Luke 24:32

Bible quotes from NASB

STUDY FEATURE



1. What similarities and differences can you find between the observance of the former Sabbath and the Lord's Supper today?

2. The 4th commandment is the only one not to be endorsed in the New Testament, what instead gives substance to it in the New Testament?

3. Describe in your own words the 3-fold rest from sin's slavery, in service, and in the spiritual house. Reflect on how the latter revelation is designed to promote a settled Christian lifestyle.

4. What distinguishes remembering the Lord and His death from the remembrance of other violent deaths?

Making a marriage work

Unselfishness and loyalty

by Greg Neely, Toronto, Canada

Solomon gave excellent counsel when he said: *By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*¹ Good advice for a marriage too! And integral to putting these into practice are the imperatives of unselfishness and loyalty to one another and to the Lord. Marriage is after all a three-way union and the Lord's foundational place in it is ignored or minimized to our detriment.

The Lord's unselfishness, as our example, is memorably described by Paul. Christ is one who is equal with God, but who did not cling to or grasp that position. Instead He ... *emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and ... humbled Himself.*² There is no better definition of an unselfish mindset, nor example of unselfish behaviour. We do well to imitate it: not thinking of ourselves first, but thinking of our spouse; not merely looking out for our own personal interests, but also for the interests of our life partner.³ Of course, this is to be true of all our relationships; how much more vital in the one that is to be closest of all earthly ones! Be willing to be humble.

Paul was not married, but he certainly had the principles figured out! And the best principles in this case are actually the best practices! To the Corinthians he wrote: *but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife ... how she may please her husband.*⁴ This is as it ought to be in a marriage where unselfishness is a characteristic. Of course, we all need to have as our ambition, our aim, to please the Lord,⁵ whether married or not. But part of that responsibility in a marriage is pleasing our spouse, not merely ourselves, as we serve together. Do you know what really pleases your spouse? Is it flowers, just because; or is it putting the toothpaste cap on the countertop so there is no ring of paste left? Is it cleaning the whiskers out of the sink after you shave?! So often in relationships, as in life, it can be the smallest of kindnesses that makes the most impact.

Not only so, but our loyalty to our marriage partner must be unwavering and absolute. The cleaving of the man to his wife and the two becoming one flesh is how the divine designer put this relationship together.⁶ To 'cleave'



If we selflessly and loyally complement our spouses, we are an example to the world of the unselfishness and loyalty of Jesus Christ

(KJV) is to be 'glued together'. It is to be indissoluble: it is not to be chipped away at or cracked by a lack of commitment by either husband or wife. That's why the wife is to be subject to her husband and to respect him.⁷ That takes loyalty (and humility) for the woman, particularly when her husband does not deserve it. That's why the husband is to love his own wife as his own body (v.28), nourishing and cherishing her. The words in Greek can read 'love their own wives as being their own body'. That's what being loyal involves: treating your own wife as your own body. And again, the Lord Jesus is our supreme example – we are members of His body and He nourishes us and cherishes us, just as He also is submissive to God, being entirely equal!

When your spouse walks into a crowded room, do you sense that the room just got brighter and warmer? Are you kind and supportive in your speech and your actions? Do others wish they had a relationship like you have? Are you a good example, a role model, someone to imitate?

Wisdom will build or restore a relationship. Understanding one another will establish it, will set it in order. Knowing each other intimately will fill to overflowing the relationship with precious and pleasant riches. This honours the Lord who is to be entwined in the very fabric of Christian marriage. And as we submit to each other and selflessly and loyally complement our spouses, we are an example to the world of the unselfishness and loyalty of Jesus Christ to us!

References:

- (1) Prov. 24:3-4 (2) Phil. 2:7-8 (3) Phil. 2:4
(4) 1 Cor. 7:33-34 (5) 2 Cor. 5:9 (6) Mat. 19:5
(7) Eph. 5:22,33

Bible quotes from NASB

Israel past, present and future

A nation reborn

by Peter Hickling, Cromer, England

This article does not seek to consider the Biblical history of the nation of Israel, but to review the way in which it has been re-established in modern times, that is, in the 20th and 21st centuries, and to examine the way in which Biblical prophecy has been and will be fulfilled.

Return to the Land

After the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 AD, the land of Israel fell under the rule of a number of conquerors, concluding in the Ottoman Empire, which ruled the region from 1516 until the 20th century. This resulted in the dispersion (Diaspora) of Jews over many countries, where they often suffered persecution, and many aspired to return to the Land and Zion. The first large wave of modern immigration began in 1881, and Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl is credited with founding political Zionism. There was still no nation of Israel, but in 1917 the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued what became known as the Balfour Declaration:

‘His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people’,

and in 1922 The League of Nations granted Britain a mandate over Palestine. However, at that time the area was predominantly Arab and Muslim, with only 11% Jews, but the rise of Nazism led to large numbers of immigrants, so that by the end of World War II the Jewish population had risen to 33% of the total. This caused so much racial tension that in 1947 the British government withdrew from the Palestine mandate, and on the day before this expired, 14th May 1948, the Jewish Agency declared independence, naming the country

Israel. Thus the nation was reborn, in preparation for the renewal of God's purposes through her. The scriptural promise says *the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.*¹ The complete fulfilment of this is conditional on a return to the Lord, but the regathering is a remarkable first step, which would have been thought impossible fifty years prior to that.

Israel today

Israel today is a developed country with an economy the 41st largest in the world, in spite of its small size. It is advanced in science and technology, and a trusted financial centre. Again, apart from Biblical prophecy this development would never have been thought of 60 years ago. Since the very beginning the nation has had to fight for its existence, and it has extended its borders beyond those originally allocated. The West Bank area, annexed by Jordan in 1948, was occupied by Israel in 1967, following the Six Day War, as were the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip, now governed by Hamas. Dispute, sometimes to the extent of guerilla warfare, continues over them. The latest incident involved Israeli interception of a ship bound for Gaza, claimed to be bringing humanitarian relief. In August 2010 Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu defended the action before an enquiry, saying that the ship carried Iranian rockets intended for Hamas, to be fired into Israel from Gaza. The Iranian president once said that Israel should be wiped off the map, and even the United States, which has poured billions of dollars of mostly military aid into Israel, is cooling



The time may be approaching when the whole world is against Israel

its relationship under President Obama. Thus the time may be approaching when the whole world is against Israel.

The future

This is precisely what the Bible predicts. There are many intervening events, which cannot be catalogued here, but in the final great battle God says, *I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped ... Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.*² When Israel can do nothing for herself, the Lord will fight for her, saying, *“And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”*³ Israel will recognise the Christ whom they had rejected, and God will resume His purposes with them.

References: (1) Deut. 30:3 (2) Zech. 14:2-3 (3) Zech. 12:9-10

Bible quotes from ESV

Garments for glory

The Urim and Thummim

by Andy McIlree, Greenock, Scotland

Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Deut. 33:8

Twelve stones on the breastplate emphasise the huge difference between obligation and option. When the numbers one to twelve are multiplied by each other the resulting permutations are a staggering 479,001,600 yet God stipulated their order and 479,001,599 options were not even considered! For our own day, there is another valuable calculation which shows that the God of the Old Testament has given His New Testament order, and seven aspects of discipleship¹ convince us that the God who had order on the breastplate still does. Once again, it is worth noting that He has not left us to multiply the numbers one to seven or conclude that 5,039 options were considered by Him. Having set His people around the tabernacle, He now shows how we should be set within His churches where salvation, baptism and addition must precede a whole lifetime of dedicated service to the Lord. In spite of this, men have juggled with His sevenfold calling and set them in whatever order appeals to their own ecclesiastical preferences. Some get baptized without being saved; others break bread without being baptized; and so it goes on until we are faced with a host of changes that have been made to the order He initially set.

Aaron is normally depicted with the generally accepted four parallel rows of three making up the twelve stones, but does it not make more sense to present them as the artist has done? When considering an alternative layout, we must look for scriptural significance, but before giving suggestions of this it is worth noting that four parallel rows of three can be mistaken for three rows of four, neither of which is spiritually significant.

The table of showbread² had twelve loaves in two rows of six, and the word *ma'arakah* which implies a pile indicates that the rows were vertical. Another consideration is that there was not enough room on the table for two horizontal rows of large loaves according to their given measure. When the house of God was



The heart of a high priest was in touch with the heart of God and God's desire was made known

Picture taken from a painting by Norman Miller. Used with permission

rebuilt in Jerusalem³ with foundations made from three rows of stones and one of timber, it is evident that these were horizontal, thus the word used is *nidbak* meaning a layer. However, when He asked for 'four rows of stones' on the breastplate the word *tuwr* replaced the others, significantly meaning a wall. The four rows therefore formed a wall reflecting the layout of the encampment, which was like a wall protecting His dwelling place; and the breastplate was a vivid reminder of where they lived, and that He was protecting them. They were committed to the tabernacle of God, and the God of the tabernacle was committed to them. The striking similarity between the order of the stones and that of the encampment added another dimension, of course, to the camp being a valuable part of the copy and shadow of things in heaven, that is of the angelic host surrounding the throne.

When Moses fastened the breastplate on Aaron's chest he inserted the only things that were allowed to be inside his God-given empty pocket: the Urim and Thummim. No description of these is given and, unlike everything else Aaron wore, we search our Bibles in vain for any details of what they were made from or how they were obtained. God is silent, and, accepting this as intentional, we do not try to guess what they were; rather we try to grasp what they were for. They gave the breastplate a new message: on the outside were the names of the people of God, on the inside there was the nature of the God of the people, so the inside added importance to the outside. This must have assured them that God had

equipped a man to relate to them, and that they had a man who could relate to God.

If they were two stones – black and white, as some suggest⁴ – then the decision process was as simple as casting lots. If this were true, casting lots would have become redundant in the Old Testament, especially in connection with the high priest. When two goats were taken on the Day of Atonement, Aaron chose which one should be killed swiftly, while the other was led into the wilderness to die slowly. How did he decide? He cast lots.⁵ He did not depend on the Urim and Thummim, so the lot was available for a yes/no answer.

Undoubtedly, God was consulted by means of Urim and Thummim for these kinds of decisions, David being an example,⁶ but wider consultation seems to be implied in the days of Saul when, having inquired of the Lord, no answer was given *by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets*.⁷ Similarly, Ezra and Nehemiah appear to refer to deeper consultation than a one-word reply.⁸ Undoubtedly, there were other occasions when the mind of God was relayed by means of these inexplicable Urim and Thummim, when the heart of a high priest was in touch with the heart of God and His desire was made known through an unusually equipped priestly heart.

Both names are untranslated Hebrew words meaning ‘Lights and Perfections’ – the character of God revealed in His Son. All the garments speak of His holiness, glory and beauty, and it is consistent that we view the Urim and Thummim as allowing Aaron to possess a unique portrayal of the lights and perfections of Christ as great High Priest. Urim conveys the thought of a flame, to set on fire, to be luminous, or the illumination. It is possible that Aaron’s name came from a similar Hebrew root, the enlightener or illuminator, yet he needed to be enlightened through the illumination of the Urim. In such a miraculous way, a man who was unaware of the mind of God on particular matters became enlightened, and those who consulted him waited for answers that came from a perfect source.

God’s Word is indispensable and ought to be the mainstay of all prayerful consultation in a disciple’s life, and we should be alert to the dangers of resorting to questionable alternatives. Humanistic counselling claims that the answers lie within us and not with God. We may even stoop farther by dabbling in horoscopes which the media thrusts at us every day. Then there are Ouija boards, tarot card and tea-cup readers, the palmist and the charmer. Wherever we live, there are peddlers of such things, yet God’s Word shouts loudly, “*but as*

for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.”⁹ The word ‘charmer’ comes from the Hebrew *chaaber w^a chobeer* which means to be joined or to have fellowship, and the psalmist used it when he asked God, *Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You?*¹⁰ Governments compromise His standards by introducing legislation that accommodates man’s immorality; His holiness is assaulted by the sinfulness of their laws, and believers can follow a similar course. Where others compromise politically, we can do it morally, ethically and spiritually, all the time drifting away from Him. He calls us to abstain from these,¹¹ to shun them altogether for they cannot have fellowship with Him, and to focus our attention on the lights and perfections of Christ. James, the Lord’s brother, reminds us that *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights* – our Urim – *with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*.¹² His perfection is unchangeable: He is our Thummim, too, made available in the person of our Lord and Saviour.

As Moses blessed the tribes, he said, “*Let your Thummim and your Urim be with your holy One*” or as the RV footnote renders it, *Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with him whom thou lovest*. How delightful this is for those whose Holy One is not merely a godly man, but God in all His Perfections and Light. The One whom we love! Even though we will never know what the Urim and Thummim were in the Old Testament, our confidence is that ours are found as the Spirit of God uses the inspired Word to reveal the incarnate Word. He always works in harmony with the Word, and together they will enrich us through the revelation of Christ as we learn from these garments of ministry,¹³ garments of worship,¹⁴ garments of holiness.¹⁵

Truly, garments ... for glory!

References:

- (1) Acts 2:41-42 (2) Lev. 24:5-7 (3) Ezra 6:3-4 (4) C.W. Slemming, *These are the garments* pp. 150, 152 (5) Lev. 16:8 (6) 1 Sam. 30:7-8 (7) 1 Sam. 28:6 (8) Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65 (9) Deut. 18:14 (10) Ps. 94:20 (11) 1 Pet. 2:11 (12) Jas. 1:17 (13) Ex. 31:10 (14) Ex.31:10 LXX cited in Keil and Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament* (15) Ex.28:2 LXX cited in Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown *Commentary*. Bible quotes from NKJV



One effect of the present electronic age is the general lack of the daily reading of scripture

The benefit of experience

An interview with Norman Kernaghan of Toronto, Canada

Norman, you have just celebrated your 90th birthday; how long have you been in a church of God?

Someone else asked me how long I had been in a church of God. Without thinking I replied, "As long as I can remember!" Sixty years, after all, is a long time. But in all of those years I can truly say that the Lord has been with me and I have known in a very real sense His blessing all the way.

You are an overseer in the church of God in Toronto, but you have undertaken many roles over the decades of your service for the Lord. What role has been the most challenging, and why?

Over the years there have been many experiences, but one is outstanding. This did not occur in Toronto, but at the other end of the world. A call for help was made for an overseer to go out to Christchurch, New Zealand for at least six months to care for the little assembly there. The next nearest church of God was at Melbourne, Australia, several hours by plane over the Tasmanian Sea. It was a daunting challenge, but I felt a real thrust and knew the Lord was moving me.

You lived through the years of World War II. What were the most memorable experiences of those difficult years?

To recount the years during 1939-45 would possibly occupy an entire volume rather than a brief paragraph. However having spent those awful years at sea on merchant vessels crossing the Atlantic Ocean many times, being attacked by German U-boats, seeing many ships torpedoed and sunk with loss of entire crews was witnessing things I will never eradicate from my memory. I continually thank my heavenly Father for His preserving care in bringing me through alive from this dreadful ordeal.

What are the most significant changes you have noticed in the churches of God since you were baptized?

I have difficulty in relating the present electronic age to that of, say, 30 years ago. One effect of this, I feel, is the general lack of the daily reading of scripture. It comes all digested and packaged on the screen which takes away to some extent the personal study of the Word itself. Prayerful study of the Scriptures is necessary as enlightened by the Spirit.

From the benefit of your experiences, what are the most important things that you would want younger disciples to consider?

My life has been governed by the guideposts which I will pass on to younger Christians as a light to their path towards the goal:

- 1) *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on you own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*¹
- 2) *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*²
- 3) *Those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed*³
- 4) *Give attention to reading,*⁴ for growth is then guaranteed!
- 5) Then you can say at the end of the race say with the beloved Paul: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*⁵

References:

- (1) Prov. 3:5-6 (2) Mat. 6:33 (3) 1 Sam. 2:30 (4) 1 Tim. 4:13 (5) 2 Tim. 4:7

Bible quotes from NKJV

Does God use evil?

When bad things happen to good people

by Bob Butler, Halifax, England

Was it uncaring of God to hand such a man as Job over to Satan and so allow him to suffer a mental and physical trial of such immense proportions? The answer must be 'no', since the outcome would be to Job's benefit in that he would gain a fuller understanding of God.

A test of Job's faith. Job had friends who believed his suffering was God's punishment for wrongdoing.¹ That was an incorrect assessment; but they were right to believe that God had some purpose in it. But why should God permit evil to befall him? The test was of Job's faith. Would he keep faith after the loss of family, worldly goods and health or choose to renounce God? The latter is what Satan believed he would do, and Job certainly did have that choice. Previously, Job had only experienced God's blessing in health and prosperity; but now, even though he was going through severe trial, the reason for which he did not know, he did not relinquish his faith.

God does not lose control. God is absolutely sovereign over the events of our lives. This applies to good or wicked people. Some things take place by divine decree (His prescriptive will), others because God allows them to occur (His permissive will). Is this to say God uses evil to accomplish His plan? The answer to this needs great care. We first need to be clear that we are using the term 'evil' as the Bible itself uses it to encompass both manmade and natural calamity,² as well as moral failure. God is not the author of the latter (sin and wickedness), and cannot be so charged. Nevertheless, He has controlled evil in events such as famines, wars, and in instances of personal suffering in order to achieve His good and wise purposes, as well as to over-rule in events by making them serve as His judgements. God permitted Satan to tempt and influence the choice of our first parents, saying to Eve: "*you will be like God, knowing good and evil*".³ In 1 Kings 22:20-23 we find a 'deceiving spirit' given permission to go into the mouth of the prophets, who would then entice King Ahab to go up to Ramoth-Gilead where he would meet his death. We must therefore keep in view that even morally evil beings are subject to the God who Himself abhors sin; that abhorrence does not prevent Him from controlling the outcome of moral evil for His righteous purposes. It is not just an example of the end justifying the means, for God remains morally righteous in all His actions; He doesn't tell a lie to achieve a good end but rather controls the teller of the lie so that their morally evil purposes are surrendered to His righteous ones. Genesis 50:20 shows how God uses evil to accomplish His purpose. Joseph said to his brothers: "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but*

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God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive". We must never accuse God of perpetrating evil; even while observing that He sometimes directs it for our ultimate benefit, and for His own glory.

God Himself has endured evil. A consideration of how God worked through evil to bring salvation must have an effect on a believer's heart that should cause him or her to bow down and worship. The greatest evil that has ever taken place on this earth was when men took the Son of God and nailed Him to a tree; yet, that event took place according to "*the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God*".⁴ It was in the plan of God that His Son should suffer the malicious torture activated by sin, so that those very sinners might be forgiven. God permitted wicked and lawless men to crucify Him, overruling their acts for His own glory and to bring redemption. We can only thank our ever-loving, sovereign God for the outcome of His Son's suffering.

In Job we witness a man who, after a horrific experience of evil times and a subsequent revelation of his God, could say, "*I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You*".⁵ Previously, he had known about God; now his perception is deeper; he knows and loves Him. May it be that we, like Job, may learn to trust God through bad circumstances, and to look for that deeper, loving relationship with Him which He aims to bring about.

References:

- (1) Job 4:8 (2) Is. 45:7; Jer. 18:11; Amos 3:6 (where the KJV uses 'evil') (3) Gen. 3:5 (4) Acts 2:23 (5) Job 42:5

Bible quotes from NASB

‘By Faith’

by David Woods, Manchester, England

In April 2010 over 190 people from all over the UK, with some Nigerian visitors too, came together for PIONEER 2010 ‘By Faith’ (held at the Pioneer Centre in Shropshire, England) to enjoy a long weekend of fellowship, Bible study, prayer and praise. These are the very aspects of Christian community life that the organisers, Project 242, see in Acts 2:42: *they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers* (ESV), and their burden to promote these has resulted in a series of special residential and day events over the last 16 years.

‘By Faith’ was an event to explore the realities of living by faith, to appreciate the power of faith and to realise that faith and works are inextricably linked in the lives of those who please God. Everyone was challenged by examples of ‘faith in action’, taught about the ‘gift of faith’, encouraged by a consideration of ‘faith greatly enlarged’ and inspired by the ‘Author and Finisher of our faith.’ It’s impossible to study such a subject without regularly enjoying something of the lives and experiences of those men and women of faith highlighted by God in Hebrews 11 – God can, and does, use individuals to His glory when we live ‘by faith.’ A life of faith is a victorious life!

The mixed-programme style (keynote speakers giving teaching ministry, seminar discussions and presentations, praise times, prayer focus in the mornings, ‘drop-in’ sessions, free-time sports and fun activities using the excellent outdoor pursuit activities provided by the Pioneer Centre) worked very well, providing appropriate access to Scripture teaching for all ages and stages and contributing to a superb atmosphere. It’s great to see people of all ages coming together with a real desire to know more of God’s purposes and will for them and then watching how that collective aspiration results in excellent fellowship, friendship and fun!

Over recent years Project 242 residential events have sought to cater for the whole family, to allow parents some ‘freedom’ from looking after their children so that they can enjoy keynote talks and seminars while, at the same time, their children enjoy their own special programme of events. It was delightful to see and hear how much the fifteen or so ‘PIONEER KIDS’ enjoyed their time! We’re so thankful that there are skilled and



dedicated youth workers able to take control of this valuable work. It’s often quoted, but Proverbs 22:6 – *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it* – is so appropriate.

The renewing of old friendships and the making of new ones is an important aspect of large number attendee events, and this helps to foster even closer links between individuals from and associated with the Churches of God. God’s great revealed desire is for Christian believers to be found in Churches of God, which together form the house of God, and to enjoy the privileges associated with being His people and serving Him in His house. The organisers seek to confirm this to everyone attending Project 242 events, whether they are already in a Church of God or not. Today, it might appear that there are many different church groups for a Christian to ‘choose’ from, so it’s vitally important that we look for God’s revealed will through careful understanding and appreciation of His Word. God will guide us to His house.¹

The highest privilege of all for the people of God is weekly worship in the holy place and this was the culmination of PIONEER 242 ‘By Faith’ when the Church of God in Birmingham welcomed us on Sunday morning to remember the Lord Jesus and to worship and thank our God for His grace and love toward us. By faith we lay hold of God’s great promises and Hebrews 10:19-20 NASB tells us that *we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh where we offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*²

The original vision and burden of Project 242 will continue, God willing, with further Convention day-events and residential weekend events in the coming years. www.project242.co.uk is worth visiting to keep up to date with new events.

References:

(1) see 1 Pet. 2:4-5; Eph. 2:19-22 (2) 1 Pet. 2:5