

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1524



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William Tyndale's Legacy – page 5
Why So Many Wars? – page 16

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OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world.

Its objectives are – to encourage the study of the Bible as God's inspired message to men; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God's world-wide Kingdom.

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Upside-Down World

Japan is one of the most orderly countries in the world. It may be small compared with some countries, but the Japanese economy is the third largest in the world. It makes most of the world's semiconductors and much of its electronic gadgetry. And it is a country which is as well prepared as any could be, should disaster strike.

Well Prepared

Because the country is prone to earthquakes, special precautions have been taken. Houses are often built of wood to be more flexible against sudden movement. An earthquake early-warning system exists and earthquake drills take place regularly, so that people know what to do should disaster strike. Because an earthquake at sea could trigger a tsunami, Japan has an elaborate tsunami-alert system and there are specific escape routes posted in strategic locations. Sea walls exist to protect coastal towns and special arrangements have been made to safeguard power stations on the coast.

But, as everyone now knows, none of that was enough to cope with what happened to northern Japan when a massive earthquake – measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale – triggered a 10 metre (30ft) high tsunami wave which swept across Japan's northern coastal regions sweeping cars, buildings and ships far inland. It was a devastating onslaught which caught everyone unprepared because of the ferocity of

the forces the earthquake unleashed.

The situation was made even worse when the tsunami breached the sea defences at the Fukushima nuclear power complex and drowned the backup generators needed to cool the reactors. As their temperatures increased, buildings exploded, some radiation began to leak, people were evacuated over a wide area, emergency measures were taken, and fears of a nuclear catastrophe became a worldwide concern. For if a problem of this magnitude could occur in a well prepared and extremely prosperous nation, people began to wonder how they would

cope should a similar crisis befall them.

Personal Disasters

For the Japanese people living in the localities concerned, every happening brought personal tragedy. It is estimated that about 25,000 people died. Entire villages were swept away and tens of thousands of survivors have lost everything – families, homes and all their possessions. Because of the threat of contamination and of airborne or waterborne radiation, people are afraid to eat, drink or even breathe. Nothing seems safe for parents or for their children.

Once again the fragile nature of our 21st century life is cruelly exposed and human vulnerability is laid bare. For all our apparent ability to cope, we are puny compared with the enormous



power of natural forces – including earthquakes, volcanoes, rainstorms and hurricanes. All of these things can turn our world upside down. And there are many other things in life which are capable of doing that. Illness, bereavement, accidents, broken relationships and the realisation that our belief-systems are wrongly based – all these things can be shattering.

Upside Down

When the apostle Paul reached Europe, he told them how they could be saved from sin and its effects. That was good news for some but a huge disturbance for others. People who had previously believed that their salvation lay elsewhere were now being asked to completely change their thinking and their understanding. Change of that sort is never easy and one community summed up their concerns in these striking words:

*‘These who have **turned the world upside down** have come here too’* (Acts 17:6).

Paul was in the town of Thessalonica, preaching the gospel of salvation, but it engendered fear and anxiety in the minds of some of the townsfolk. They found this teaching revolutionary. For Paul declared that idols were powerless; that there is only one true God and that His gracious purpose is centred in the saving work of Jesus Christ. Later, when writing to the believers at Thessalonica, the apostle emphasised, time and again, that they should be preparing for the Coming of Jesus Christ as King. In every chapter of the two letters he wrote, you can find such references. For example:

From you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place.

*Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and **to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come** (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10).*

Be Prepared!

It is one thing to try to be prepared against every contingency in life. The tragic experience of the Japanese people shows us that life often delivers the unexpected and that such things can leave us defenceless. But it is a quite different thing to know what is coming and to be prepared for it, as we should be. The apostle Paul once used the metaphor of a Roman soldier to urge his readers to be as alert and ready for action as combat soldiers have to be:

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14–15).

Truth, righteousness and the gospel of peace are the things that we need to pursue if we want to be ready for the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. His advent will indeed turn things upside down but, in this topsy-turvy world, that will amount to putting all the important things into their right place by helping men and women to live together in peace and harmony with God and with one another.

Editor

William Tyndale's Legacy

*In the latest article of this series, **Peter Moore** explained how William Tyndale resolved to translate the Bible from its original Hebrew and Greek into English, so that ordinary people could read it for themselves. He had been working as a private tutor in Gloucestershire, England, but now sets out to find sponsors and supporters to enable this important work to be done.*

To London

Tyndale left the relative comfort and safety of Gloucestershire to seek permission from the Bishop of London, so that he could continue his work as a translator. He was now unemployed, without either friends or any means of support and he desperately needed a sponsor. He started preaching in a church in Fleet Street, London, which was attended by Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy cloth merchant. Monmouth had connections with the secretive Christian Brethren and had links with the German trading merchants at a Steelyard near London Bridge.

The Christian Brethren and others were sympathetic to the new ideas coming out of Lutheran Germany and had imported the writings of reformers and the translation work of scholars. In 1522, Luther's translation of the New Testament into German was brought illegally to England, by these Steelyard merchants and this was how Tyndale's work would later reach England from the Continent.

In 1524, Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London

introduced a licensing system to control the importing of books and religious tracts, hoping to reinforce the church's authority over access to the Bible. Few London printers were prepared to risk the wrath of the church. However, many printers in Cologne, Antwerp and Germany, were willing to print for profit.

To Germany

The Renaissance of learning was making progress in Europe. Due to the enormous power of the English church, Tyndale concluded that he was not going to find support for his translation work in England. So in April 1524 he boarded a ship for Hamburg, Germany, never to return. He probably went to Wittenburg to complete his translation of the New Testament, where he would also have met Martin Luther.

Sadly, the excellent work that Tyndale did was not welcomed by Church authorities who wanted control of what people believed. Wherever he went, and he was forced to move on several times, Tyndale was pursued and was eventually betrayed and captured.

The primary source document for Tyndale's translation work was Erasmus' 1524 third



Sculpted Head Of William Tyndale from St Dunstan-in-the-West Church, London

edition Greek New Testament which was accompanied by the Latin translation and notes. Tyndale also had the Church's official 4th century Latin translation of the Bible by Jerome and Luther's 1521 September Testament.

Tyndale appears to have studied German at Wittenburg University where he registered as a student under the alias, 'Gillelmus Daltici ex Anglia'. Hidden from the authorities he learned German in order to benefit from the scholarship and works of Luther.

To Cologne

At Cologne in 1525 Tyndale met a Franciscan monk, William Roye from Greenwich, who was also hiding from the authorities and who also studied at Wittenburg under an alias. This was an important contact for Tyndale as here was someone with whom he could check phrases and the use of idioms in his translation.

The Archbishop of Cologne and others enforced the Papal bull of 1501 forbidding printing, publishing, possessing or reading the Bible in the mother tongue. Luther's books and tracts were burned publicly in 1520 in front of the cathedral in Cologne. However, Cologne had strong trading links with the Steelyard in London and other English ports enabling Tyndale to smuggle books to England and to receive funds from London. In 1525 he began printing the first pages of his English New Testament translation. Unfortunately, some drunken printers boasted that, 'the whole of England would soon be Lutheran'. The English Church, in collaboration with Cologne

authorities, retaliated with a raid and the confiscation of Tyndale's printed pages.

To Worms

Tyndale and Roye fled southwards taking printed pages of Matthew's Gospel and manuscripts with them and the work continued in the city of Worms. Due to the presence of a Jewish community, Worms was a good place to study Hebrew and work on the translation of the Old Testament.

The printing of Tyndale's New Testament was completed in 1525 and by February 1526 copies were being loaded onto Rhine barges destined for England where they were soon sold with the secretive support of London Steelyard merchants. In England, Thomas More led an armed raid on the London Steelyard, searching for heretical books and documents. Merchants suspected of collaborating with Tyndale were required to kneel and publicly beg for forgiveness for the error of their ways. In 1526, baskets of heretical books – including Tyndale's printed New Testaments – were confiscated and burnt at St Paul's Cross, outside London's old St Paul's Cathedral.

Unstoppable

Despite all these obstacles, the steady flow of smuggled New Testaments continued. Flat printed sheets and books were hidden in barrels and casks and in sacks of flour. At Gravesend, Kent customs men boarded boats before they went up to London ports to prevent them from taking cargoes



Purchasing Tyndale's New Testaments

ashore before they docked. So smugglers used the isolated creeks on the Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk coastlines to take their cargoes ashore at low tide. The flow of Bibles into England along the North Sea coast was unstoppable.

In 1526 a drought spoilt the English wheat harvest and hungry Londoners were close to rioting. Cardinal Wolsey therefore encouraged the Steelyard merchants to import grain from the Continent. Increased shipping movements created opportunities to smuggle even more Bibles into England, so perhaps it was another example of God controlling the weather to confound the plans of man:

Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds. And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them on the face of the whole earth. He causes it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy (Job 37:11–13).

Why Such Opposition?

To understand why the church authorities opposed the idea that ordinary people like us should be allowed to read the Bible in their own language we need to remember two things. There were two key principles of the English Reformation.

- 1 At a time when the Church authorities regarded themselves as the supreme authority on religious matters, the reformers regarded the Bible as supreme and all churchmen to be subject to it. As the New Testament says:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of

God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

- 2 When the King of England (in Tyndale's time, King Henry VIII) was claiming supremacy as the religious head of the Anglican Church, in opposition to the Pope, the Bible said that he too was subject to the law of God and that he was himself in need of salvation from sin:

I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

Important Changes

Tyndale's translation differed in some important respects from the Latin Vulgate, because he was translating directly from the original Greek language, rather than from a Latin translation. Here are some of those words, the translation of which may not seem that special to us, but which were very sensitive at the time.

❖ 'Congregation' not 'Church'

Tyndale correctly translated the meaning of the Greek word *ἐκκλησία* or *ecclesia* as 'congregation' instead of 'Church'. 'Ecclesia' means 'a body of people called out'. The word church originally meant a place of worship. In

the third century AD the Catholic authorities appropriated the word church to mean the organised body of the clergy. Tyndale's translation was a threat to that authority because the word 'congregation' recognised that it is the individual members who make up the body of Christ, not the clergy.

❖ 'Repent' not 'Penance'

Tyndale translated the Greek, *μετανοέω* or *metanoëo* as 'repent' and not, 'do penance'. This challenged the vested interests of the Church in the lucrative market for the sale of pardons and indulgences, which were real money-makers for them.

❖ 'Love' not 'Charity'

He also translated *αγαπε* or *agape* as 'love' instead of 'charity'. Again, the Church objected to this, because it might reduce lucrative donations and indulgences.

As we shall see later, the King James Version contains many words and phrases that came from the pen of Tyndale which are still in use today.

Persecution

The hunt by the Church authorities for Tyndale proved fruitless. In 1526, Cardinal Wolsey instructed Sir John Hackett, the English ambassador to the Low Countries to take legal action against printers, booksellers and shipping agents to prevent further printing and shipping of Bibles. In England, Archbishop Warham was buying up Tyndale's New Testaments for burning. High profile arrests of Cambridge scholars took place and in 1528 Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall began a campaign to arrest Lollards, Lutherans and readers of Tyndale's Bible.

In 1529, Tunstall visited the Low Countries and took the opportunity to bulk buy New Testaments for burning

in London. But this 'buy and burn' strategy only provided more funds for Tyndale to continue producing yet more Bibles! In 1530 a mediator was dispatched to find and try to persuade Tyndale to return to England under a guarantee by the Crown for his safe passage. Tyndale rejected this offer and kept himself well hidden. In 1534 he published his revised New Testament.

Friend?

By 1535, a man named Harry Philips had befriended Tyndale. Philips borrowed 40 shillings from Tyndale to take him out for a meal in Antwerp and as they returned, led him into the arms of his captors. Tyndale was taken to the castle of Vilvoorde where he remained for sixteen months before his execution in October 1536. He was partially strangled and still alive when the flames engulfed him at the stake. His last reported words were, "*Lord open the King of England's eyes*".



Tyndale's great self-sacrificing legacy, as we shall see in later articles, God Willing, was to give the English speaking world access to the priceless Word of God.

Peter Moore

Next: 16th Century Bibles

Jerusalem – Whose City?

The question of the true ownership of Jerusalem has often been posed and people who believe in the authority of the Bible as the Word of God will know that the real answer to this age-old query is to be found in the pages of Scripture. There, and there alone, we will find God's position on the matter.

Bible Passages

Here is a brief overview of some relevant passages. You might like to look them up for yourself to see the full wonder of the purpose of God with Jerusalem. The first is a passage with a location which is easy to remember:

Thus saith the Lord GOD; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her (Ezekiel 5:5).

God is speaking and here He states that HE has chosen the location of the city. Clearly it is HIS city and the Lord God Himself takes ownership of it. The passage does not say that Jerusalem is in the middle of hills and valleys, which would be true. Nor is the point that it is in the midst of villages and towns, which is also true. It states that God has set this city in the midst of 'nations and countries'. That gives the statement a truly international status which, as we shall see, is perfectly appropriate in the light of what is due to happen there.

This was said about Jerusalem at a time when cities such as London, New York, Paris and Moscow did not exist. Other great cities did: cities like



Babylon, Nineveh, Thebes and Alexandria. They each had been, were, or were becoming, great cities of the ancient world. Yet it is Jerusalem of which the prophet speaks. Perhaps we can imagine the scorn in the mind of some non-believers at that time that such a small and apparently insignificant city should be chosen.

Ownership

This one Bible passage answers the question which is now frequently asked: "Does Jerusalem belong to Arab, Jew, Palestinian or the Turk?" It becomes irrelevant when considered from a Biblical standpoint. Jerusalem belongs to the Creator of heaven and earth. He has chosen not only the city, but its location too and He is in control of its history and destiny.

Fascinating as it is to see how much is implied in a single short passage of Scripture, (illustrating the need for all of us to read the Bible carefully and attentively), it is necessary to consider more Scripture to get details of what God intends for the city. Here's the prophet Jeremiah:

At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart (Jeremiah 3:17).

This widens our knowledge of the plan of God with His chosen city. It will contain a throne and all nations will be gathered to it. This gives purpose to its position ‘in the midst of nations and countries’, for Jerusalem is strategically positioned between Africa, Europe and Asia. When will these events take place? No date is given, but a clue as to the time period is to be found in the phrase “At that time”, matching the words “and I will bring you to Zion” in verse 14. So the exaltation of Jerusalem to this new status will be when the Jewish people are in their land and have become obedient to God’s commands.

Teaching of Jesus

Some words of the Lord Jesus Christ add more detail to this prophetic scenario, for he once said this:

I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King (Matthew 5:34,35).

Jerusalem has a colourful history. The city started its history, as recorded in Scripture, under the name of Jebus, (meaning, ‘trodden down’). It was captured by the Israelites under the

leadership of Joshua, when God helped them to conquer the land, its name then being changed to Jerusalem, (*city of peace*). Yet it has seldom been a city of peace – even nowadays. But, as Jesus was indicating, its future destiny is that it will become the centre of world control, (when *all nations are gathered to it*), and the throne to be established there will be called *the throne of the LORD*. That is the one upon which the Lord Jesus Christ – “*the great King*” – will sit, when he is in control of all lands.

God loves Jerusalem

Here’s another quotation to broaden our view further:

The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God (Psalm 87:2,3).

God not only chose Jerusalem, but he loves it. (Zion is a part of the city of Jerusalem.) This deserves our close attention. God loves Zion, therefore it ought to be highly esteemed by people who wish to align themselves with the purpose that Almighty God has for the earth.

Another Bible passage adds to our knowledge of this important city in the



following words:

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge (Psalm 48:1-3).

Our attention here is drawn to the purpose of God to make Jerusalem *the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great king*, words alluded to by the Lord Jesus, as quoted in the earlier passage (Matthew 5:35). The word *situation* in this passage means *elevation*. God's intention is to elevate the city as capital of the world.

Pray about it

With these passages in view it becomes clear that the ownership and destiny of Jerusalem is in no doubt. And there is something positive that

we can do as we await the fulfilment of these great promises. For the Psalmist says:

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces (Psalm 122:6,7).

Since the ultimate peace of Jerusalem is assured, we should pray for its peace in order to align our minds with the Divine mind and purpose, as declared in His Word, the Bible. By praying for the peace of Jerusalem we are showing that our hopes are in the fulfilment of the purpose of God on earth. It is the same when uttering the Lord's Prayer, and saying *Thy kingdom come*. What we are asking for is that God's Kingdom will be set up on earth and that in God's mercy we may have a part in it.

David Radford

Quotations are from the KJV

Truth is Beautiful

I ask you now to pause awhile,
To consider all that is around:
The joyfulness expressed in sound,
Such beauty in the colours found,
And shapes alive; so ne'er be bound –
Just let your face express a smile!

It's something you will ne'er regret,
To know the truth of what you've seen,
To be fully aware of what has been
And exercise senses so serene,
Aware of Him on whom we lean,
Believing truth is beautiful even yet!

Bill Guy



Bible Echoes

One of the things I find so amazing about the Bible is the way it links together in unexpected ways.



I use a Bible Reading plan every day – the Bible Companion – which allocates a portion to read from three different books of the Bible and I’ve noticed that there are often similar ideas in all three readings. A few years ago, I began noting any common themes that appeared in the back of my Bible, and now I have quite a long list.

This Reminds Me...

Sometimes I read a verse and think, “That reminds me of something...” Here’s an example.

One from the crowd said to (Jesus), “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” (Luke 12:13–14).

Jesus then used this incident to explain that we ought to look beyond material things to spiritual things, because money and goods don’t last. However, the thing that caught my attention was “*who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?*”

We know that Jesus will judge the world at his return to the earth (e.g. Acts 17:31), but the time for that sort of judgement had not yet come. The inheritance the man was speaking about was not a lasting one, but had to

do with this life and its possessions. When Jesus judges us, he will give those who he chooses an eternal inheritance.

Unexpected Turn

The verse this reminded me of was a bit unexpected. If you turn to Exodus chapter 2, you read about the early life of Moses in Egypt. An inci-

dent recorded there doesn’t seem to be in any way related to the passage in Luke.

When (Moses) went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” (Exodus 2:13–14).

Jesus knew his Old Testament so well. I don’t believe it was a coincidence that he used such a similar phrase to the one used by the Hebrew against Moses: “*Who made you a prince and a judge over us?*”

Perhaps the man he spoke to should have recognised those words. Moses was a prince of Egypt at that time. Yet the Hebrew was questioning his authority, perhaps knowing that he was not really an Egyptian.

Eternal Possession

The man who wanted Jesus to divide the family inheritance was giving Jesus

authority, but for the wrong reasons. He was focusing on the wrong things. He wanted Jesus to sort out his material possessions and was forgetting that Jesus paid little attention to such things. He once said:

“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (Matthew 8:20).

It was the same with Moses. He turned his back on material things, when he left Egypt. If the Hebrew who challenged Moses was still alive forty years later, he would have been one of the thousands who followed Moses out of Egypt into the wilderness. At long last he would have come to accept that God had given Moses authority to do this task, although he no longer looked like a prince.



Authority

Jesus did not look like a prince. He was an ordinary working man. The work he had come to do, in obedience to his Father, would not make people rich in terms of possessions. But it would give them the hope of everlasting life, a prospect which constitutes true riches indeed. Yet the man with the question about his inheritance saw something in Jesus that made him

trust his authority.

Probably it was the fact that Jesus was not trying to gain anything for himself, and his conduct reflected his teaching. And his teaching was very powerful for *“he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”* (Matthew 7:29).

Making a Choice

The task Moses was given was to bring the people of Israel to the Promised Land, where God had promised an everlasting inheritance to the seed of Abraham. Had he stayed in Egypt he would have been a much richer man, in this world's goods, but he would have missed out on the true riches that God offers.

One Bible writer sums up the choice that faced Moses, a choice which now faces us every day:

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward (Hebrews 11:24–26).

Echoes like this are given to us to remind us that the Bible is the Word of God. He was there when the Hebrew spoke to Moses and when the man spoke to Jesus. It was part of God's plan that Moses should lead His people out of Egypt into a promised possession and it is equally part of that great plan that Jesus is leading people out of the slavery of Sin and towards the promise of God's Kingdom, which is to be set up on earth when Jesus returns as God's appointed King.

Rachel Yuile

Deuteronomy - Moses Says Farewell

The title of the fifth book of the Old Testament, Deuteronomy, means 'repetitions' and they come at a strategic time in Moses' life. He was now 120 years old and had brought the infant nation of Israel right to the borders of the Promised Land, though he had been told that neither he nor his brother Aaron would be allowed to enter (Numbers 20:12). So he knew his life was ending and that posed a problem for him.

Forgetful People

Moses knew from bitter experience that without his firm hand on the reins, the people he had encouraged in the way of the Lord would rebel and go back to idol worship. To give them the benefit of his vast experience in the hope they would remember and act upon it, Moses decided to run through all the important points of the Law for a second time, and finish with a song, that would perhaps lodge his warnings in their memory. We can imagine them gathered in front of the old man, tears in their eyes, as he spoke to them for the last time.

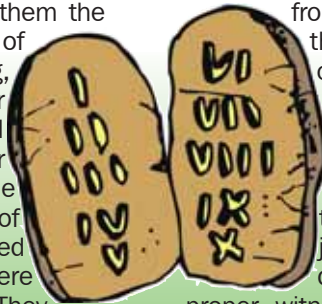
First he summarised for them the events of the forty years of the wilderness wandering, listing the places they (or their parents) had seen and reminding them of their many lapses of faith. He explained that the laws of God, which he had handed down to them at Sinai, were the best laws on earth. They

would bring them happiness and prosperity, if they kept them, and to sink to the evil practices of the nations around them would be a disaster.

It was their duty to teach God's way to their children. Then he explained to them that the long journey and the occasional hardships they had suffered were God's way of testing them to see if they would still believe in Him when times were tough. Soon they would leave their tents behind and live in comfort in the Land. It would be easy then to forget that God had delivered them from slavery and given them the Land. They should remember that they were not being given it because they were particularly good people, but because the present inhabitants were unworthy and their religious practices unacceptable to God. They must not intermarry with them or copy their idolatry.

More Explanations

Moses took them through the principal commandments of God's law, and the rules of inheritance by which every family was guaranteed a livelihood from the soil. He looked at the feasts they must observe as part of their worship, and laid down a code of conduct for a King, should they ever be given one. He underlined the importance of true justice. Murder must be dealt with by fair trial proper witnesses, and manslaughter



carefully distinguished from killing with intent. Slander, hatred, and oppression of the poor were all unlawful. Rather, they must support each other and show tolerance, even when foreigners chose to live in their land. Social justice and reverence for God were the twin arms of the national code that he laid before them.



these parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers (Deuteronomy 30:4–5).

To reinforce yet again the importance of God's law, Moses made them agree to hold a national assembly when they reached the Promised Land, and to recite out loud the main points that would bring them God's blessing, or His cursing should they be disobeyed. To drive the message home they were to write them down on plastered rock for a reminder to subsequent generations.

Prophetic Oracle

Moses' speech rose to a climax as he saw with the eye of inspiration the long centuries ahead. He foretold that after an initial burst of enthusiasm for God they would turn their backs on Him, and suffer the judgments of His wrath. He could see famines and invasions, interspersed with repentance, and then a final dispersion from the land. These chapters (27 to 29) are a remarkable prophecy of what actually happened to Israel, culminating in the Roman destruction of the nation in AD 70. But his vision went beyond, predicting a merciful God who would have compassion on His wayward people, by restoring them to His land and His favour:

If any of you are driven out to the far-

We have seen the beginning of this restoration in the last 100 years as the last act of the Divine drama begins which will, at last, see Moses raised from the dead and entering into the Promised Land as part of his inheritance for such faithful service.

Last Act

As a final act, the aged leader wrote a copy of the Law in his own hand and delivered it to the priests as an archive to be preserved. His last words to the people, at the advanced age of 120 years, comprised a song about God and their future, which they must memorise and teach their descendants, followed by a one-by-one prophetic blessing of each of the 12 tribes.

Then, after many sad farewells, he climbed alone into Mount Nebo, where he was permitted briefly, perhaps on a day of startling atmospheric clarity, to see for the first and last time, the whole land that God had long ago promised to Abraham. He would have glimpsed the extent of it – from faraway Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea. Then he sank into the long sleep of death, from which he will awake on the day of glory.

David M Pearce

Why So Many Wars?

Over the last 4,000 years barely 300 have been without military conflict! Since the dawning of time men have sought to kill other men in mindless games of power, greed and economic expansion – freedom for some, at the cost of loss of life for others:

- North American Indians slaughtered as the white man spread across the continent,
- South American natives routed in the Conquistadors' relentless search for gold,
- African tribes exploited in the name of progress, and
- Millions of Europeans killed as the Nazis sought control of Europe.

Why can't men and women live at peace with one another?

New World Organisation

Today nations are being organised into a new world order which is controlled solely by economic interests which are dictated by international banks, global corporations and the ruling elite (the most wealthy and influential people whose ideals are forced on the masses). Such people are only concerned with maintaining their power, by whatever manipulation is necessary, including war.

Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India and in 1898 he made this chilling statement which has proved to be remarkably prophetic: *To me, I confess that countries are pieces on a*



chessboard upon which is being played out a great game for the domination of the world.

Increasing Knowledge

What is the result of our increased knowledge about many things? Too often it merely means getting power over those that don't have such knowledge. The world we are living in should be characterised by growing cooperation and mutual help between nations, better education, more mechanical aids, an increasing reduction in disease and faster communications. Yet these are the terms we readily recognise:

- Exploitation,
- Wealth and Debt,
- Weapons of untold destructive power, and
- Commercialism.

Greed

What exactly drives all this acquisition and application of knowledge? Nothing other than money, and the desire for more money. The first canals in Britain were not built because they could be built, but so that goods could be transported to grow businesses. The first navies were formed so that commerce could be protected away from home waters. Armies were formed to protect national interests, investments and the need for new resources. And it still goes on. Nations are already staking their claims to

control the fuel reserves in the Arctic which are becoming available thanks to the receding icecap.

The Middle East

Why do you think so many countries are interested in the Middle East? It's not the people or the need to gain more land. It is because the majority of the planet's remaining accessible cheap oil reserves are located there. All the industrialised nations have an enormous thirst for oil to maintain their economies; therefore they need to protect their oil supplies.

This is being done by a combination of diplomacy and threat; the threat being the large scale presence of armed forces in the region and the diplomacy takes the form of sanctions or co-operation agreements. However, due to the nations' conflicting interests and the hate between Arabs and Jews, the region is best described as a tinder box waiting to explode into a large scale regional war.

The tension exists because whilst developed nations want the oil, people living in those countries have their own priorities and their own political aims. With the opportunity to obtain arms from sympathetic nations or dealers, conflicts often break out. At present many of them, as in Libya, amount to all out civil war, but often the conflicts between rival nations have an even greater effect.

The re-establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 and the resultant opposition of Arab neighbours has been a major cause of instability in the Middle East and this is something that is likely



to draw nations in on a wider scale – as is now happening in Libya. This is just what the Bible foretells will also happen in Israel.

All Nations Involved

After the 1914-1918 Great War world leaders set up the League of Nations (the precursor to the United

Nations). One of its key objectives was, and still is, to prevent future war through disarmament, open diplomacy, restrictions and penalties, thus aiming to make war unattractive to all nations. Despite these laudable objectives, conflicts and wars continue. In fact, new warfare delivery agents have emerged – weapons of mass destruction: biological, chemical, and nuclear.

In the riverside gardens at the United Nations complex in New York is a sculpture by artist Evgeniy Vuchetich which depicts a man beating a sword into a plough, an action which is based on this Bible quotation:

He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isaiah 2:4).

The War to End Wars

God has indeed predicted that this will become a reality, but only after a momentous war in the Middle East that will at last be a war to end all wars. This is what another inspired

prophet says of that momentous happening:

It shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it (Zechariah 12:3).

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle (Zechariah 14:1–3).

In other words, at a time when Jerusalem is a massive irresolvable problem to the world and a real barrier to peaceful progress in the region, war will suddenly break out with all the interested parties heavily involved. This is a grim prediction, precise in its language. The Middle East and Jerusalem is never far from the focus of attention of the world's media and the peace process is high on the national agenda, particularly that of the USA, the European Community and Russia.

Partitioning Israel

Another important prediction in the book of Joel explains that God will intervene to ensure a satisfactory outcome for His people:



On account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they (Israel's enemies) have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land (Joel 3:2).

Because of this, God will bring the nations who attack Israel to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and enter into judgment with them there.

The scattering of the Jewish people happened from BC 733 to AD 70. The partitioning began with the UN resolution of 1947, and the current peace process relies on dividing Israel further, into a two state nation, and further dividing Jerusalem. Let the nations of the world beware!

Signs of the Times

We should not ignore these prophecy-fulfilling signs of the times. We are living in a period when this final world war could happen. At a crucial point in this coming war, the Lord Jesus will return. When he succeeds and takes control of the world, Jesus will prove to be a strong and just leader whose beneficial influence will span the globe. People will be confronted with the choice to comply, or to be banished forever from the Kingdom of God which will be established on earth.

We live in exciting times. The Bible has far more to say and is certainly worthy of attention. So rather than let it gather dust on your bookshelf, take it down and read it for yourself to see what needs to be done so you can be ready for the Coming of the King.

David Bilton

Always just right

Most of us live reasonably comfortably on Planet Earth, especially since, of all the other planets in the solar system, only Earth is able to sustain life.

It just happens to orbit the Sun in the middle of a band called The Region of Tolerance, where the temperature is just right for us. Take our two neighbouring planets, Venus and Mars. There could be no possible life on Venus: it is far too hot, with a surface temperature of 400 degrees C and it is surrounded by a thick cloud of 90% CO₂ gas, and has an atmospheric pressure of 100 times that on Earth.

Life on Mars would be equally impossible: it would be far too cold. The daytime temperature rarely reaches 25 degrees C and at night it plunges to minus 80 degrees. Mars has very little atmosphere, the pressure being about a fiftieth that of Earth. But the most serious problem is the total lack of water, for on Mars it never rains.

Just right!

Planet Earth just happens to be right for human life with an atmosphere consisting mainly of 78% nitrogen and 20% oxygen; an excellent mixture for breathing and, because we have an atmosphere, the sun's rays fill it to give us daylight. Earth's atmosphere also protects us from falling rocks, which rain down from outer space. We can often see them brightly burning at night time: we call them shooting stars.

Our atmospheric pressure of 14.7 psi, is also just right for us, as is our

average temperature, and because the axis of our planet is tilted about 23 degrees from vertical, it is changed around every 12 months to give us seasons. Without these conditions some plants and animals would not exist.

How Come?

Why is it that we happen to exist on a planet where everything is so suitable for life? Some scientists say that all these favourable conditions came about by sheer chance, including life itself. But true science deals with facts not speculations. Our existence on this planet just cannot be because of a long string of coincidences. Behind it all there must be Intelligence. And the concept of our existence being due to intelligent design is much more likely than a succession of chance accidents.

Nature itself screams out 'design', wherever one looks, and even more so through a microscope. Design suggests Creation, and Creation means God. With God in the equation, the problems dissolve, and we are led to His Word, the Bible. We are on this planet because God wishes us to know something about Him and His purpose. Without God this wonderful planet has no meaning whatsoever.

Thanks to the Bible we learn that Planet Earth is yet to enjoy a glorious future, of which you can become part. Whatever else you do, please make sure you investigate this Good News, and please do it soon.

Malcolm Edwards

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