

Glad Tidings

Of The Kingdom Of God



Featured **Articles**

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Old and New Towns (p.5)

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A monthly magazine written and 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 mankind; 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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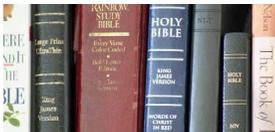
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Is Seeing Believing?

“I THOUGHT we were going to the seaside,” cried Tommy. “We are at the seaside Tommy,” insisted his mother. “But there is no sea! I can’t see it!” wailed Tommy and stamped his foot.

“Well we’re near the pier; if you go along it you’ll see the sea; I can show you a photo of when the sea flooded the road, and my Grandad used to paddle here.”

“No! No! I don’t believe you. It is not HERE.”

Faith, Not Proof

Very few things can be proved ‘without any doubt’. This applies to scientific theories, medical research, relationships and promises. We look at the evidence and decide for ourselves what or who to trust.

The Bible teaches that faith is about things that we cannot see or prove:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

These include the creation of the world, the Flood, God’s ability to raise the dead or destroy a city (Hebrews 11: 3, 17–19, 30).

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

But God does not ask for blind faith. Time and again He said that He would

do something dramatic so that people would know that He was the one true God (Exodus 7:5, 1 Kings 20:13–14, Isaiah 45:1–7, Ezekiel 12:15).

What evidence is there that we can actually believe the Bible?

Evidence From the Bible

Firstly, there is astonishing consistency in the Bible. It is made up of 66 books written over a period of 1,600 years by more than 40 different people. Yet it has the same message from beginning to end, with lots of detail showing its reliability. A single novels written by one person can be riddled with inconsistencies, but the Bible is not.

Despite lots of people doubting the existence of people and places mentioned in its history records, archaeologists have discovered many ancient writings which confirm Bible details.

Secondly, it is very unusual in its honesty. Our news reporters may claim to be



The Pier at Southport

independent but their reports often vary depending on their beliefs and those of their employers. This is nothing new. Ancient historians ignored events which they did not like, or which showed their country in a bad light.

We do not expect the Egyptians to give accounts of the awful plagues in the time of Moses, or the fact that so many of their Hebrew slaves escaped (Exodus 7–14). The Assyrians would not record the destruction of their king Sennacherib's army in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:35–37). Instead, they were very keen to record the skills, possessions and victories of their kings and leaders.

In marked contrast, the Bible tells of the sordid behaviour of one of its most famous and important kings. David committed adultery and murder and told lies, and these details are not in any way hidden (2 Samuel 11). Also, the Jewish prophets repeatedly tell their nation that they are wicked and disobedient, and that their God will punish them severely.

Finally, the Bible can tell the future with remarkable accuracy. There are graphic details of crucifixion before it was practised (Psalm 22). The fate of nations is given in detail, for example the downfall of Egypt (Isaiah 19:3–7, Ezekiel 30:10–12) and Babylon (Isaiah 13:19–22).

There are many prophecies about the Jews, including the fact that they would be scattered throughout the world and hated (Leviticus 26:27–39, Ezekiel 22:15–16).

There was also the amazing prophecy that they would return to Jerusalem. Nowadays we are used to hearing about Jews in Israel, but even in the 1890s this seemed impossible, and many people said that the prophecy could never come true. But it did. In 1948 the state of Israel was declared, and in 1967 the Israelis recaptured Jerusalem.

Even those who would like to reject the dates of Bible prophecies cannot deny that this prophecy (Luke 21:24) was in print in 1611 in the King James Bible. There are still copies of that edition, which was published about 400 years before there was any sign of the Jews going back to Israel.

Consider the Evidence

Tommy refused to believe the evidence offered by his mother. This was despite the fact that she had several pieces of information to support her truthful claim. Apart from a grumpy child and a frustrated mother there were no great consequences.

The Bible has a message about life and death. It explains why we are here, why we die and how we can be saved from extinction. It tells us about God and what He asks us to do. It is either the biggest lie ever or the most important book ever. Ignoring it could have devastating consequences. So let's not 'stamp our feet' if the evidence is not exactly of the sort that we want. Let us look carefully at the evidence that exists. The decision is ours.

Anna Hart

Old and New Towns

SOUTHPORT is a small town in England about 15 miles north of Liverpool. It was founded as a village in 1792, near a stream called the Nile, and now has a population of more than 90,000 people. It is world-famous for its Birkdale golf course. In 1838 the exiled prince Louis Bonaparte stayed there before returning to France and becoming Emperor. It has a popular main shopping street.

Apart from these facts, Southport is little known outside of the United Kingdom, and no one world famous was born there. Its shopping street and the whole town have changed dramatically over the past 200 years.

An Ancient Civilization

Thousands of miles away and thousands of years ago, in what is now Southern Iraq, there was a town called Ur. Critics of the Bible had questioned its existence, but in the 1920s the archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley found the remains of Ur.

It had been highly civilized with a system of religion and a huge temple. It had houses, many of which were luxurious with lobby, courtyard, kitchen, toilet, bedrooms and reception rooms.

The women had beautifully intricate clothes and jewellery. The people were skilled in mathematics, astronomy and reading and writing.



Ur has also changed dramatically. The once-magnificent city is now dust, with some relics in museums.

However, in approximately 2000 BC a very famous person lived in Ur. Abraham lived there with his wife Sarah and he is the father of all Jews and Arabs; a fact of which they are all very proud. Much of the trouble in the Middle East is between the offspring of Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael.

The Friend of God

God told Abraham to leave Ur and to go to a land that He would 'show him' (Genesis 12:1). This land was Canaan, now known as Israel, which at that time was less civilized than Ur. Abraham's life was radically changed as he never settled in Canaan and lived in a tent rather than in a house.

Abraham had amazing faith in God and is referred to as 'faithful' or 'believing' (Galatians 3:9), 'friend of God' (James 2:23). This was because of his willingness to leave Ur but also his obedience when God asked him to sacrifice his very special son Isaac. Abraham believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:17–19), but God did not make him go through with the sacrifice. Consequently, He regarded Abraham as 'righteous' or 'right with God' (Romans 4:3).

Isaac was a precious son because he was born when his parents were too old to have children naturally. He was a miracle child (Hebrews 11:8–12). Also God had promised Abraham that His special promises would come true through Isaac.

Promises from God Himself

God made life-changing promises to Abraham:

- ◆ He and his offspring would inherit the promised land (Israel) for ever (Genesis 13:14–17).
- ◆ His offspring would become a great nation and people who blessed this

nation would be blessed while those who cursed them would be cursed (Genesis 12:2–3).

- ◆ All nations would be blessed through a very special descendant of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22:15–18).

The True Gospel Message for Us

In the New Testament, the inspired apostles refer back to these promises to Abraham, showing that they are absolutely fundamental to the Gospel message (Romans 4:13–16; Galatians 3:6–9, 16; Hebrews 6:12–18). The Gospel message was, and still is, about 'the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ'. This is what the apostles preached (Acts 8:12). It was also 'preached to Abraham' through the promises God made (Galatians 3:8).

The Kingdom of God will be on earth, centred on Israel. Abraham never inherited the land he was promised and even had to buy a small plot in which to bury Sarah (Genesis chapter 23; Acts 7:2–5). But he will be in the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:28; Hebrews 11:39–40). The Jews are God's special people who have survived despite the odds and still have an important part to play in God's plan for the earth (Romans 11:25–28).

But above all, the special descendant promised to Abraham was Jesus, who is called the 'son' (descendant) of Abraham in Matthew 1:1. His name means 'God saves' and as God's only Son he is unique. Without the sacrifice of Jesus, no one

Ruins of Ur, Iraq



Southport, UK



would be in the Kingdom. We are naturally disobedient and selfish, and so enemies of God. But because of the perfect life and cruel death of Jesus we can be forgiven.

We need to have Abraham's faith and try to live like him. And this faith has to be in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10-12). If we do this we can also be counted as righteous and, like Jesus now and Abraham after his resurrection, be made immortal. This offer is open to both Jews and non-Jews – all nations, as promised to Abraham.

Unchanging Promises

Ur has changed – it is now just a ruin. Southport has changed too, over its 200 years. But God does not change. He will keep His promises to Abraham. It is up to us now to decide whether or not we want to be included.

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:29).

Chris Clarke

1 Chronicles

1 CHRONICLES records God's dealings with Judah in the days of David.

Jerusalem Journals

The Hebrew name for the two books of Chronicles means 'the acts of the days'. They are journals or records of events in God's ancient kingdom, centred in Jerusalem, when David and subsequent kings sat on "the throne of the LORD".

1 Chronicles begins with several chapters of genealogies – reminding God's people of their ancestry and heritage, and particularly of their function as witnesses to God among the nations. Later chapters cover the same ground as the books of Samuel and Kings, but this book emphasises spiritual themes.

Much in these divinely inspired books looks forward to the restoration of God's Kingdom under Jesus Christ.

Preparations for the Temple

David himself was not allowed to build a temple for God:

But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood' (28:3).

David did, however, prepare the materials needed to build the temple, and prayed that God would "give my son Solomon a

loyal heart to keep your commandments ... and to build the temple for which I have made provision" (29:19).

Chapter 29 includes a wonderful prayer of David which starts with these words:

Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory ... Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all (29:10, 11).

There are echoes of this in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13).

So David died, "in a good old age, full of days and riches and honour; and Solomon his son reigned in his place" (29:28).

Norman Owen

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Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

- ◆ 1 Chronicles 16:29–33 – see Psalm 96:9–13; 110:3.
- ◆ 1 Chronicles 17:11–14 – see Isaiah 9:6–7; Luke 1:32,33.
- ◆ 1 Chronicles 28:5; 29:23 – see 2 Chronicles 13:8; Acts 1:6.



Our Amazing Bible

IN MUCH of the western world, it is easy to get a Bible. In fact we have a lot of choice because there are dozens of different translations. It is even possible to read a Bible free on the internet or to download one to a mobile phone.

However, there are an estimated 250 million people without access to any part of the Bible in a language that they understand well. More than one billion people are without the full Bible in their first language. There are over 2,000 languages without a translation.

Printed English Bibles have been available since the 1500s but translations into other languages came much later. For example the Bible was translated into Farsi and Russian in the 19th century and into Afrikaans in the 20th century.

The Bible is still a best-seller, although not read as much as in previous generations. Nonetheless, many people still treasure their Bible. After all, it claims to be God's Word. How did our Bible get to us?

The Bible consists of 66 books written by more than 40 authors over a period of 1,600 years. People were able to write (for example by etching on stone) from 3000 BC or earlier. The words of the Bible were originally written on stone tablets, material made from the papyrus plant, or animal skins. There were 39 books written before the time of Jesus (the Old Testament),



mostly in Hebrew. The 27 books of the New Testament were written after Jesus had ascended to heaven following his crucifixion and resurrection, and in Greek.

The Manuscripts

None of the original manuscripts still exist. All of our translations come from manuscripts at the end of a chain of careful copying by scribes. After the Jews had returned to Israel from their exile in Babylon in 538 BC they assembled their sacred writings.

In the third century BC more Jews spoke Greek than Hebrew and so a Greek translation was produced, taking decades to complete. This is called the Septuagint and was in use in the time of Jesus.

Translators often refer to this translation as well as to Hebrew texts, because it came from very old manuscripts.

The Jewish scribes treasured their (Old Testament) scriptures and carried out meticulous checks to prevent errors. This was most certainly true for the Masoretes (sixth to tenth centuries AD). They listed special features, for example the number of times a rare word or short phrase appeared, the total number of verses, words, and letters in a section of the text and which word, and which letter marked the centre of the text. Experts have been amazed by the accuracy of the manuscripts.

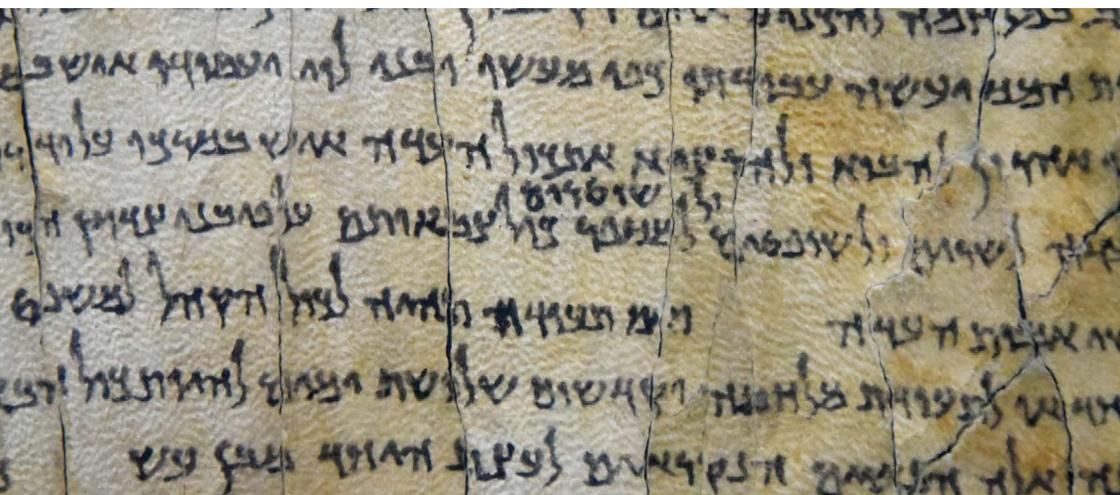
In the 1940s a very important thing happened. A shepherd boy found the first of a number of caves near the Dead Sea, containing very old jars and scrolls. These became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and they had extracts from every book in the Old Testament except Esther. They were important because they were about 2,000 years old. When compared with

the later manuscripts that were being used for translation, there were no significant differences. This was remarkable and shows the accuracy of the painstaking process carried out by the Jewish scribes.

The oldest fragment of the New Testament is part of John's Gospel, and dates from the second century AD. There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of part or all of the New Testament. For other ancient documents (like Caesar's Gallic War) there are far fewer documents and much longer time gaps from the original time of writing. So, amazing though it may seem, we can have confidence that the manuscripts used by translators are accurate copies of the originals.

An English Bible

In 382 AD a Latin version of the whole Bible was commissioned by the Pope. This is known as the Latin Vulgate. But Latin could only be read by the highly educated, and even some of the clergy could not



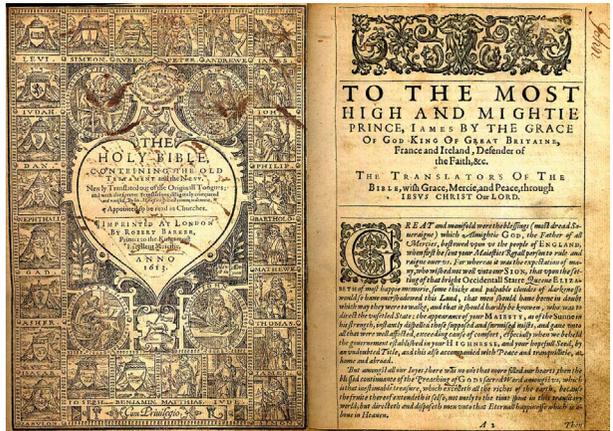
read Latin. So the Bible was not accessible to many people.

In about 1400 AD John Wycliffe translated the Latin Bible into English, but the Church was opposed to people translating or reading the Bible without its permission. These versions were hand-written. In 1455–6, the invention (in Germany) of printing meant that the Latin Vulgate version could be printed. By the end of the 15th century there were printed Bibles in several western European languages.

William Tyndale translated the New Testament into English from the Greek and Latin, but was executed for his work before he could finish the Old Testament. James Coverdale continued his work translating the Old Testament, largely from Latin, and the first complete English printed Bible was available in 1535.

In 1539 copies of the 'Great Bible' were available in all parishes in England. But there followed a period of contention between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestants. Many people were killed for reading the Bible, and so some Protestants fled to Geneva and produced the 'Geneva Bible'. The Catholics tried to remove the influence of Wycliffe and produced their own translation from the Latin, called the 'Douay Bible'.

There was an important landmark in 1611 when the King James version was produced, which is still in use today. The



The Preface to the King James Version

translators used the original Hebrew and Greek, also consulting Tyndale's work and translations in other languages.

A team of about 50 scholars worked on this, and their respect for the actual words of the text are shown in the Preface to this Bible. Since then there have been many different English translations. For these later translations the scholars often also consulted extra texts which have been found more recently.

Translation

Translating an ancient language is not easy. Some words are no longer used and others have changed their meaning over time.

Also, it is not simply a matter of translating word by word. A good translation conveys the same message as the original. This requires an understanding of the context of the words.

English translations vary in the degree to which they aim to be 'word for word'

versions or ‘meaning for meaning’ versions. The former can be more difficult to read as the language does not flow so easily. The latter are relatively easy to read but can be less accurate as there is always an element of interpretation as part of the translation, which introduces the translators’ own beliefs.

The preface usually indicates the philosophy of the translators and the degree to which the translation is ‘literal’. So translations can vary and it is wise to compare versions if possible. Some versions are paraphrases which cannot be used on their own for serious Bible study.

When reading the Bible, we should be trying to understand God’s message, as it was originally given. This is why it is useful to know where human ideas may have been introduced to the text.

There are also many commentaries and dictionaries which attempt to explain Bible passages or concepts. They can be very useful, but we must remember that they are

written by human beings and are subject to errors of interpretation.

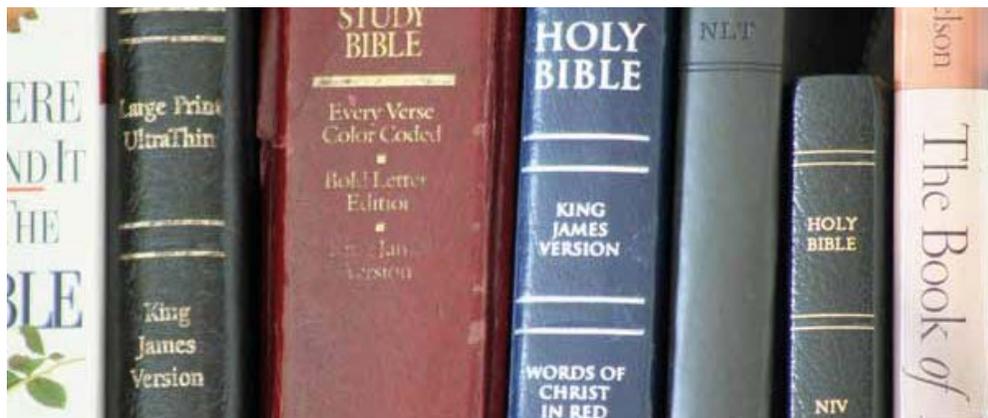
It is always essential to check the actual Bible words and context in a reliable translation.

It is also important to read the whole Bible. For example, the New Testament, including many of the words of Jesus, continually refers back to the Old Testament.

We Should Read It!

The Bible is an amazing book, with a unique and potentially life-changing message. If we can read this magazine then we can read a Bible for ourselves. People have tried to destroy it, others have given their lives so that we can have it in our own language. More than that, it tells of a perfect man who gave his life so that we could have hope of eternal life. Let’s resolve to start reading it carefully today.

Anna Hart



New Life in Shunem

LIKE Samuel before him, Elisha seems to have moved around the land of Israel in a circuit, ensuring that God’s message was available to as many as possible. On these journeys he passed through Shunem on several occasions. Shunem was a town in the north of Israel, in the area of Issachar.

A Home from Home

There was a woman living there who was obviously hospitable, persuading Elisha and his servant Gehazi to stop, to rest and to eat a meal with her. She is described as ‘notable’ or ‘wealthy’, and probably provided Elisha with a more comfortable place to stay than some of the other homes he would visit.

After one of the visits, the woman suggested to her husband that they should build a room especially for Elisha to stay in. They would build it on the flat roof of their house and furnish it with a bed, table, chair and lamp, providing everything which the prophet might need for his stay. Presumably they would still provide his meals whilst he was with them. It seems to have been readily agreed, and the next time Elisha came, he was able to find quiet sanctuary in the newly constructed room.

Such generosity must be rewarded, so Elisha told his servant Gehazi to speak to the woman:

He said to him, “Say now to her, ‘Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’” She answered, “I dwell among my own people” (2 Kings 4:13).

Clearly this was a lady who had no ambition to stand out from the place where she lived, no desire for honour. Gehazi realised that there was one thing missing in her life. She had no children, and her husband was old, presumably older than the woman herself. Had she begun to accept that this was a childless marriage?

A Son is Born

So he said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. Then he said, “About this time next year you shall embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!” (v15–16).

This faithful woman was overcome with joy and could scarcely believe the good news.

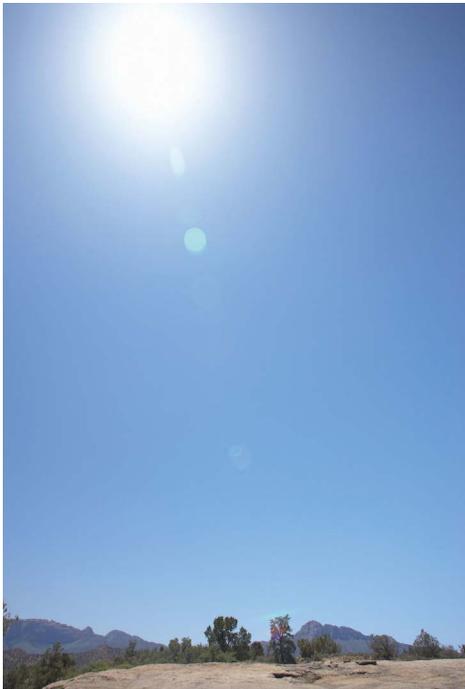
It was just as Elisha had said. The following year, during the springtime she gave birth to a son.

The miracle not only answered a long-felt need for this faithful couple, it also demonstrated again that Elisha was a true prophet of God. It was a test God Himself had established with Moses:

And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him (Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

Disaster!

There is a gap in the account, until the boy had grown. It was the time of harvest, and he went out to help his father amongst the reapers. It would be hot, and he seems to have been overcome with some form of sun or heatstroke. He said to his father, *“Oh, my head, my head!”* (2 Kings 4:19).



The father sent one of his servants to take the boy back to his mother, and she sat with him on her lap until midday, when he died. It must have been a terrible moment for the mother. Childless for so long, now her only son was taken from her. It was a moment when she was able to demonstrate her resourcefulness.

Laying the dead child on the bed in Elisha’s room, she gently closed the door and asked her husband for a servant and a donkey so that she could ride to meet Elisha. She refused to explain why she needed to go. We are not told how she knew where to find Elisha, but find him she did, at Mount Carmel. This would be a long ride, over twenty miles.

Elisha had seen her coming, and sent Gehazi to meet her, but she brushed aside his questions until she came face to face with the man of God, catching hold of his feet. Gehazi tried to stop her doing this, but Elisha intervened. He could see the bitter distress in her face but God had hidden the cause from him.

A few words were enough: *“Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me?’”* (v28).

Elisha realised what had happened, and they set off back to Shunem, Gehazi going ahead with Elisha’s staff. Gehazi had been told that when he came to Shunem, he was to lay the staff on the face of the child.

The woman was determined to accompany Elisha, and together they followed the servant.

When he came to Shunem, Gehazi did as he had been instructed, laying his staff on the face of the dead boy. But there was no response, no sound or sign of life. The boy must have been dead for some time by now: the woman's journeys to Carmel and back would have taken several hours. Did they travel through the night, or wait for the following day to dawn?

Despondent, the servant turned back to meet his master, to tell him, "*The child has not awakened*" (v31).

The Power of Life

When Elisha came to the house and saw the child on his bed, he went in and closed the door. With just two of them present, Elisha began with prayer. Then he did as Elijah had done in Zarephath: he lay on the boy, with his hands on the boy's hands, eyes on his eyes, mouth on his mouth. It might have looked like mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but it was not. This boy was dead, and a miracle was needed.

The boy's body began to get warm, Elisha moved and walked around the house before repeating the process. Suddenly the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha called Gehazi, presumably waiting just outside the room, telling him to summon the woman. When she came, Elisha's instruction was very brief:

Pick up your son (v36).

The woman fell once more at Elisha's feet, this time bowing to the ground in gratitude. She picked up her son once more and left

Elisha and Gehazi in the room she had had built for them.

What is especially interesting is that the boy apparently had nothing to say. Apart from sneezing, nothing is recorded. He has nothing to say about what it was like to be dead. All we can infer from this is that he saw nothing, heard nothing, experienced nothing. He was totally unconscious.

A little after this, Elisha was called on to perform another miracle. During a famine a group of the Sons of the Prophets were making stew from any vegetation they could find. When they had boiled a large potful, they discovered that there was something poisonous in the stew, and appealed to Elisha to help:

Man of God, there is death in the pot! (v40).



Elisha instructed them to bring him some flour, which he threw into the pot. Now the stew was safe, and they were all able to eat and have some left over. Once again Elisha was shown to be a man of miracles, a true prophet of God.

Mark Sheppard

The Kingdom of God on Earth

THERE are different types of kingdom: the animal, plant and mineral kingdom; and the territory which a king or queen rules.

There are relatively few monarchs today, but here in Britain we have a queen and maybe you have a king, queen or other ruler in your country.

To deal with our subject we have to ask certain questions:

- ◆ Do you have such loyalty for them that you would willingly die for them?
- ◆ Can the ruler live for ever and offer you the opportunity of everlasting life?
- ◆ Can they change the attitude of all nations so they will willingly serve them?
- ◆ Can they offer good health to everyone without the need for medicine?
- ◆ Can they change nature itself, and make this world a paradise?

To most of these questions you probably answered 'No'.

The Coming King

However, there is a king in waiting, who is immortal, living in heaven, and preparing to return. Such will be his power that the whole earth will be transformed into a place of beauty and plenty. Even nature itself, said to be 'red in tooth and claw', will be changed to peaceful co-existence.

What a picture! You may feel that the idea is ridiculous, but these ideas are Bible-based.

Two thousand years ago, an angel appeared to the virgin Mary and told her that she would have a child to be named Jesus, which means 'God saves'. He added:

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32-33).

Note all the future tenses. He would be a saviour, the Son of God, and then king. He would open a way for men and women to approach God, and if they accepted the way of salvation, he would eventually be their king, but no ordinary king. One prophet said, "There will be one king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9).

All his subjects will have a place in that kingdom. His throne will be in Jerusalem, which he called 'the city of the great king' (Mathew 5:34-35).

At Jesus' birth, a choir of angels confirmed the fact to the astonished shepherds:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men! (Luke 2:14).

The world will never have seen the like, and all to the glory of God.

Ken Clark

Miracles of the Kingdom

WE have the privilege of being able to read in the Bible about the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He came into the world with the express purpose of dying as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. He was also born to be a king (Luke 1:30–33).

The ministry of the Lord Jesus was really quite short: only three and a half years. Yet during this time he accomplished so much.

He preached the Gospel, performed many miracles and chose and taught his disciples so that they could continue this work after he had ascended to the Father in heaven.

The leaders of the day had failed the people, they were described as ‘evil shepherds’, but here was the Good Shepherd who had been sent by God to care for the flock.

He strengthened the diseased, healed the sick, bound up the wounded, brought back those who were driven away and sought those who were lost. In so doing he fulfilled prophecy (Luke 4:17–21 with reference to Isaiah 61:1–2).

Why Perform Miracles?

Jesus performed miracles for several reasons. They were signs to the people at that time and to those following, showing that he was the Son of God (John 20:30–31). Only someone with the power of God could do such things.

He also performed them because he was full of compassion for the sick, the hungry, and the bereaved (e.g. Matthew 14:14). While we cannot heal, we should try to follow his example by loving our ‘neighbours’ and helping them as much as we can (Matthew 22:37–40).

But Jesus’ miracles were also like his parables. They were both living ‘visual aids’ and a foretaste to show us in some small part what the Kingdom of God will be like. He told the unbelieving Pharisees that they could look to him and see the Kingdom in what he preached and what he did (Luke 17:20–21).

The miracles of Jesus can be divided into two types: the healing miracles and the nature miracles.

They were all phenomenal demonstrations of God’s power, and the people and disciples were often ‘amazed’ by them. The table overleaf shows a small selection of these miracles and some teachings for us today.

God’s Kingdom on earth is something we should prepare for. The words in the Bible are ‘life’ to us (John 6:68) and we should treasure them and learn from them. After all, it is our choice now whether we are in the Kingdom of God.

Sue Morgan

Miracle	Comment
Miracles of Healing	
Healing Peter's mother-in-law	She 'immediately arose and served them' with no need for convalescence.
Healing a leper	The man was 'full of leprosy' but completely healed or 'cleansed'.
Raising the dead (three times)	Death is the final sickness. Jairus' daughter was not long dead; the widow's son was on the way to be buried and Lazarus had been dead for four days.
Miracles of Nature	
Turning water into wine	The miraculous wine was better than the original wine.
Great catches of fish (twice)	The first time the large number of fish broke the net; the second time the 153 fish did not break the net.
Stilling the storm	The disciples were amazed when Jesus slept through the storm.
Feeding the multitudes	The first time, 5 loaves and 2 fishes, with 12 baskets left over; the second time, 7 loaves and a few fishes, with 7 large baskets left over.
Cursing the fig tree	The fig tree had leaves but no fruit; it was not the season for figs.

Reference	Extra Meaning
Mark 1:29–31 & Luke 4:38–39	This was evidence of who Jesus was; it fulfilled prophecy about Messiah; and pointed forward to physical and spiritual healing in the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 29:18; Isaiah chapter 35).
Matthew 8:1–4 & Mark 1:40–43 & Luke 5:12–14	Leprosy is symbolic of sin. We are all full of sin and can only be healed by Jesus; first by baptism associating with his death and ultimately in the Kingdom of God.
Mark 5:22–43 & Luke 8:41–56; Luke 7:11–16; John 11:1–45	However long we have been dead Jesus can raise us – to eternal life in God’s Kingdom.
John 2:1–11	The first ‘sign’ of Jesus. The ‘old covenant’ between God and mankind (under the Law of Moses) was fulfilled by Jesus and replaced by something better, the ‘new covenant’ (Hebrews 8:6–7) in the blood of Jesus (Luke 22:20).
Luke 5:4–11; John 21:1–11	Jesus showed the disciples that their work was to ‘catch’ men rather than fish, by preaching. The second time was evidence that Jesus was risen from the dead and was a reminder of their role as preachers.
Matthew 8:23–27 & Mark 4:36–41 & Luke 8:22–25	Nations in turmoil are like the troubled sea (Isaiah 17:12–13). In God’s Kingdom, Jesus will establish peace, and nations will be at rest (Revelation 15:2). We should also have faith that God can help us through the storms of life if we are faithful to Him.
Matthew 14:14–21 & Mark 6:32–44, Luke 9:10–17 & John 6:5–14; Matthew 15:29–38 & Mark 8: 1–8	We need food to live (as requested in the Lord’s Prayer). But we also need spiritual food. In God’s Kingdom there will be plenty of both physical and spiritual food.
Matthew 21:18–20 & Mark 11:12–14	The fig tree is a symbol of the Jewish nation. It did not bear fruit to God and so was destroyed in 70 AD. But Jesus said it would revive (Luke 21:29–31) and the Jews are now back in Israel. This is a sign that the return of Jesus is near.

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