

Light

VOLUME 26.3



...on a new world

"The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls..."

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Note:

*All Bible quotations taken from the New
King James Version (NKJV) except where
another version is indicated after the text.*

The Christadelphians believe the Bible (Old and New Testaments) to be the wholly inspired and infallible Word of God. Its principal theme is the salvation of mankind through the saving work of Jesus Christ and the setting up of the kingdom of God under his rulership when he returns to the earth.

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Cover Picture:

In one of his parables, often described as 'the pearl of great price', Jesus compared the search for real hope in the future with a merchant searching for one pearl of outstanding quality – see page 38.

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from the editor

Regular readers of this magazine will know that it offers a selection of articles designed to focus on Bible teaching across a range of topics. The Christadelphians, who publish 'Light on a new world', believe that the Bible is Divinely inspired. It needs to be read carefully in its entirety if the reader is to understand the purpose of Almighty God with mankind. Its message is consistent throughout the 66 different books, recorded by some 40 writers, spanning a period of about 1,500 years.

This edition of 'Light' magazine contains articles that provide some interesting insight into the oldest books of the Bible. It is commonly assumed that the Old Testament is significantly out of step with the discoveries of modern science and irrelevant. It is asserted that the early books such as Genesis are not based on fact. But recent archaeological discoveries powerfully support the

earliest Bible narratives. There is no question that the Bible has stood 'the test of time.'

It should be noted that the Old Testament, written between 1300 and 400 BC, is referred to many times in the New Testament which was completed in a relatively short period during the first century AD.

Diligent Bible readers will find that from the very beginning of human history, God had a plan and purpose with His creation. It included first of all one nation the Jews who were chosen by God to serve Him. Then it was extended to the Gentiles – that includes everyone else. How the gospel message spread from the land of Palestine (now Israel) in the first century AD, immediately after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, is abundantly clear from the work of Apostle Paul. It was his life's work to visit many places throughout the Roman Empire including parts of Italy, Greece and Asia Minor (now Turkey) to spread the gospel message.

Paul was a very well educated man and a prolific writer. The New Testament contains a number of letters written to individuals and first

century churches (called *ecclesias*) who had embraced the teaching of Christ.

One of the most telling things that Paul wrote is that *“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness”* (Romans 4.3). This demonstrates that the teaching of both the Old and New Testament is essentially the same but aimed at different groups of people. The two strands have been brought together by the Divinely inspired writers, as confirmed by the first words of the New Testament: *“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”* (Matthew 1.1).

God’s plan is to bring all mankind to acknowledge Him, to destroy sin and death and provide faithful believers with the reward of eternal life on earth. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, his model prayer had a line loaded with meaning: *“...your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven....”* (Matthew 6.10). We can be assured from this prayer that God’s kingdom will come and His will is to be done on earth.

The writer to the New Testament Jewish believers in the letter entitled “Hebrews”, had much to say about men and women in Old Testament times, about its relevance, firstly to his first century readers, and now to

the readers of this magazine. Demonstrating the importance of the Old Testament, the writer catalogued a long list of faithful people, about whom a lot is written in the Old Testament. They chose to use their lives to try and serve God but died in hope of a future reward. I’ve paraphrased the passage (see below) but you need to read the whole of Hebrews chapter 11 to understand its importance to us in the twenty-first century:

These people all died in faith not having received the reward but having obtained a good report by their faith and actions. They did not receive the promise because God has provided something better for us, so that they should not be made perfect without us.

The heroes of faith recorded in this chapter await the resurrection spoken of many times throughout the Bible (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18). It will take place when Jesus returns to the earth for all those who, as Paul put it, “sleep” in hope of the resurrection, and to bring about the world-changing events expressed in Jesus’ last message:

“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ...” Revelation 11.15

John Meadows
Kent UK



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

Part 17: The Church Established

This series has concentrated on the book of Acts, which gives an account of the work of the apostles who spread the gospel message after the death and resurrection of Jesus. This resulted in the development of a community of Christians in the first century AD who believed in Jesus as the Messiah and saviour of the world.

From chapter nine onwards, that account concentrated on the work of the Apostle Paul, who preached the gospel to the Gentiles (non-Jews) in Syria, Asia Minor (now Turkey) and other parts of the Roman Empire including its capital city Rome.

To judge from those letters that have survived in the New Testament, Paul was the most prolific letter writer of all the apostles and we have looked at some of his letters in previous articles. Now we will look at three other inspired writers; the Apostles Peter and Jude in this part, and John in the next, to see what they tell us about the Christian communities established in the first century AD.

Who were Peter and Jude?

Peter was one of a group of fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, the first to be called by Jesus to follow him as his disciple. A bold, impetuous man, he became the spokesman for the twelve apostles in declaring their firm faith in Jesus during his ministry: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"*, he declared (Matthew 16:16).

This simple statement of his faith was the foundation on which Christianity was established. He had difficulty understanding the path of suffering that Jesus predicted for himself before his crucifixion, and he denied his master during the trauma of his arrest, a matter of bitter regret for the rest of his life. But after his resurrection, Jesus told Peter to care for his fellow believers, and later he became the spokesman for the small community of Christians in Jerusalem although others shared that role as their numbers grew.

It is thought that Jude, the writer of the short letter that bears his name, was the natural brother of Jesus, as was his brother James (see Jude verse 1) who became leader of the church in Jerusalem. Neither of them made any special claims arising from their family relationship with Jesus, although it was well known to others in the Church (see 1 Corinthians 9.5 and Galatians 1.19). Peter, with James and his brother John (the two sons of Zebedee) witnessed the transfiguration on the summit of a high mountain (see Matthew 17.1-13). They alone of all the disciples saw a vision of a glorified Jesus conversing with Moses and Elijah, and heard the voice of God speaking about His Son in words later quoted by Peter in his second letter:

“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to him from the Excellent Glory: ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’. And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain” . (2 Peter 1.16-18)

Peter, James and John were “eye-witnesses of his majesty” and this was evidence of the truth about his second coming for which all true disciples of Jesus should be looking. Peter would have written his first letter in the early 60s of the first century AD. The subject matter, and similarities between them, suggest that his second letter and Jude’s letter were both written after AD 66, the period of Nero’s persecution of Christians in Rome. Probably about this time Peter was executed for his faith together with his fellow apostle Paul. This period also saw the Jewish revolt against the Roman occupation of Palestine, which culminated in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, an epoch making event for the Jews which led to their dispersion throughout the Roman world.

General Principles

These letters of Peter and Jude illustrate a process that we have already noted in this series of articles based on the book of Acts. Just as a river gets more polluted the further it gets from its source, so the beliefs and teachings of the early Christians came to be lost in the morass of man-made traditions and doctrines that came to undermine the purity of the original message taught by Jesus and his apostles. Not long before Paul was put to death by the Emperor Nero, he wrote to his friend and *“son in the faith”* Timothy, urging him to *“Preach the word! ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but ... they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables”* (2 Timothy 4.2-4).

This process was already happening in Paul’s lifetime and also during the decades before and after AD 70 covered in these letters. They contain positive teaching about the attitudes and way of life of true Christians. They also warn against

insidious influences in their communities that would corrupt them even as Paul had warned.

First Letter of Peter

Addressed to *“the Dispersion”* i.e. Jewish and Gentile Christians throughout Asia Minor (1.1), we note that Peter wrote this letter from a place which he called ‘Babylon’ (5.13). It is possible that this place had the figurative meaning that the book of Revelation was to give to the city of Rome, and tradition places him in that city towards the end of his life. Interestingly, the Roman Empire had two places bearing this name; a small town on the Euphrates where the ancient city of Babylon originally stood and a military post in Egypt.

In his last recorded conversation with Peter after his resurrection, Jesus charged Peter with a pastoral role towards his fellow Christians as a way of demonstrating his love for his Master: *“Feed my lambs ... Feed my sheep”* (John 21. 15-17).

From his original calling to be a ‘fisher of men’, Peter was now to be a shepherd to Christ’s flock



It was in fulfilment of that charge that Peter wrote to the believers to help them cope with persecution which he described as *"the fiery trial which is to try you ... (they were to) partake of Christ's sufferings ... (they were to be) reproached for the name of Christ ... (individually suffering) as a Christian ..."* (4.12-16).

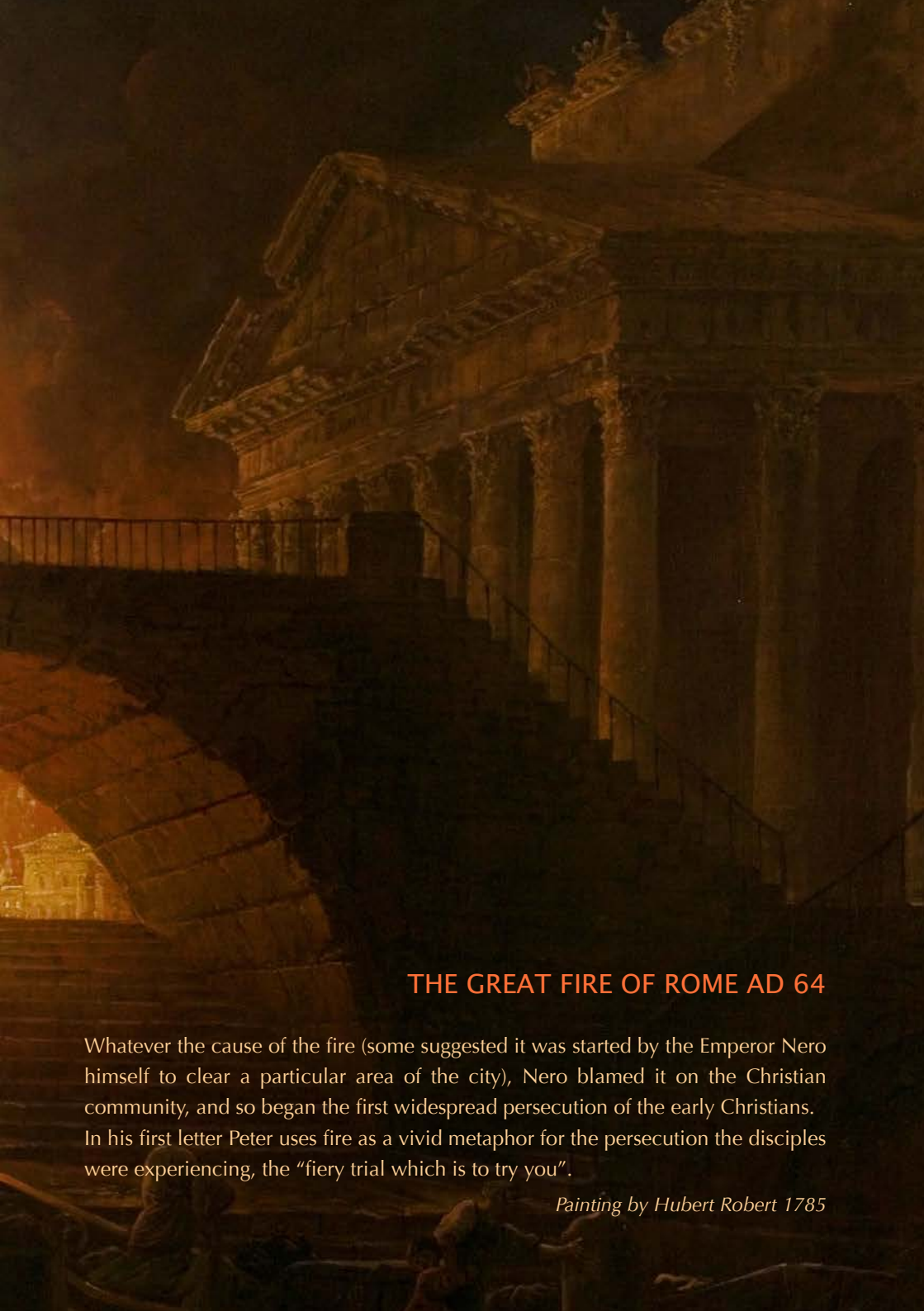
In describing their sufferings he used a phrase to denote the Imperial Roman authorities rampaging through their community:

"...because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the (Roman) world".

(5. 8, 9)

The word 'devil' in this verse is not the fallen angel of popular theology which is nowhere to be found in the teaching of the Bible. It is translated from the Greek word '*diabolos*' which simply means '*false accuser*'. The apostle uses it to refer to the Roman authorities who at the time of the Emperor Nero were responsible for the persecution of the Christians and eventually the death of Peter himself.





THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME AD 64

Whatever the cause of the fire (some suggested it was started by the Emperor Nero himself to clear a particular area of the city), Nero blamed it on the Christian community, and so began the first widespread persecution of the early Christians. In his first letter Peter uses fire as a vivid metaphor for the persecution the disciples were experiencing, the “fiery trial which is to try you”.

Painting by Hubert Robert 1785

The main body of this letter (1.13-5.11) consists of exhortations that illustrate the personal challenges facing first century believers. *“Be holy, for I am holy”* wrote Peter (1.16), quoting from the Old Testament (e.g. Leviticus 19.2). This was in contrast to the pagan world that many believers had once enjoyed, walking as Peter puts it: *“...in licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries”*(4.3). Their separation from such a world could be a reason for their persecution. But Peter encouraged them in these words: *“...even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed”* (3.14) and again *“... it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil”* (3.17).

Submission was a key part of their service; to government (2.13-17); to masters if they were slaves (as many were), beaten even when doing good, in the spirit of their new master Jesus Christ *“who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree ...”* (2.18-25); wives and husbands to each other within their own families (3.1-7).

Theirs was a pilgrimage, separated as they were from their world as *“a holy nation, his own special people...”* So he beseeches them *“as sojourners and pilgrims”*, not to be rooted in

the world they lived in but to *“abstain from fleshly lusts ...having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles”* (2.9,11,12). In this they needed to be courageous, *“always... ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”* (3.15).

Earlier, Peter compares their faith to something very precious, *“much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire...”* (1.7), like the fire of persecution that they were about to experience.

The end result of this way of life *“is the true grace of God in which you stand”* (5.12). Grace is the free gift of salvation, which if we achieve it will be largely undeserved, given to us despite our failings but only if we have tried our utmost to be worthy of it.

Second Letter of Peter

As we have already noted, Peter probably wrote his second letter during the short period before his martyrdom, when the Roman world was being turned upside down by the evil Emperor Nero. This coincided with the Jewish revolt that was eventually put down by the Roman army under Titus and with

RIGHT: The sack of Jerusalem in AD 70 as shown on the Arch of Titus in Rome.

the intense persecution of Christians. Peter's commission from Jesus to feed his sheep (John 21.15-17) however, led him to focus on false teachers and evildoers who had infiltrated the early church.

Of these, many were adherents of Gnosticism, a belief that the body is totally evil, from which we need to be liberated by a special knowledge (Gnosis). It was mainly a second century development; but this false knowledge, which undermined the work of Christ as a Saviour, was beginning its pernicious growth, so damaging to the truth of the gospel and the Christian way of life, that belief in Jesus should bring.

So Peter urges a combination of faith and practice, to *"be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure ..."* (1.10), knowing the authority on which his teaching was firmly based. His message concerning the second coming of Christ *"did not follow cunningly devised fables"* (1.16). Peter himself had seen Christ's majesty, power and glory to come, in the Transfiguration ((1.16-18); he also referred to the

"more sure" word of prophecy *"as a light that shines in a dark place ..."* (1.19-21). Peter was writing not only with the purpose of urging Christian growth, but also to combat false teaching and to stimulate watchfulness for the certain return of the Lord. *"...there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them"* (2.1) and the very ethos of the church was at risk. But the judgment of these *"false teachers"* was assured. It will be reminiscent of the destruction of Noah's world and of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the event, the Lord's return did not happen then. The terrible events of AD 70 provided immediate fulfilment.

However, the long delay to the final fulfilment in the second coming which *"scoffers"* were and are quick to point to (3.3,4) does not mean we can't expect it soon: *"... with the Lord one day is as a thousand years..."* and the delay is not *"slackness"*, but part of God's *"long-suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (3.8,9).



To Peter's fellow believers, then and now, comes the searching personal question that follows: *"...what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...?"* expecting and praying for the dissolving of the present world order and looking forward to *"new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells"* (3.11-13).

The Letter of Jude

Similarities in the language used by Jude in his description of the false teachers of his day and that used by Peter in his second letter suggest a close relationship between them. Many of the same expressions and examples are used (e.g. verse 18 compared with 2 Peter 3.3), suggesting an agreement between them to write about a common problem that had become an urgent one. Jude's intention had been to write about their *"common salvation"*, the hope of the gospel (verse 3). But now there was an urgent need to *"contend earnestly for the faith..."* within the community of believers (verse 3), and the intended audience for the letter was to be as wide as possible; all *"those who are called..."* (verse 1) are not limited by geographical area.

Jude's subject was now the infiltration of *"ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into*

licentiousness..." (verse 4), perverting the hope of salvation into a licence to sin, in that their sins could no longer be laid against them – in part the effect of the Gnostics we referred to earlier. A series of historical examples of apostasy were now given (including Israel in the wilderness and Sodom and Gomorrah which could be applied to the false teachers that Jude was now contending against (verses 5-16).

True believers had to build themselves up (verses 20-22), relating to their corrupted community with compassion, saving where possible without becoming contaminated themselves – as Jude so aptly puts it *"pulling them out of the fire ..."* (verse 23). The final exhortation to all who would follow Jude's example as they wait for the return of their Lord from heaven is in the doxology or hymn of praise to God that concludes the letter:

"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to God our Saviour, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen"

Howard Cooke
Surrey, UK

THE BIBLE STANDS THE TEST OF TIME

Cyrus king of Persia

This four-winged guardian figure is the symbol of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia (reign 559-530 BC). The original bas-relief was found at Cyrus' palace at Pasargadae in modern Iran.

This modern reproduction is on a monument to Cyrus in the Sydney Olympic Park, Australia

A study of the ancient Persian king, **Cyrus the Great**, provides us not only with further evidence of the historical accuracy of the Bible records, but also a fascinating background to parts of the prophecy of Daniel and to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Cyrus, founder of the Medo-Persian Empire is introduced to us in Isaiah chapter 45 in a dramatic prophecy that names him 150 years before he came to pre-eminence as king of Persia. His destiny was mapped out before his birth, and this prophecy was given through the Spirit to demonstrate the foreknowledge of the Almighty. Cyrus was destined to overthrow the Babylonian empire and allow the Jews to return to Israel from their 70 years' captivity.

"Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held - to subdue nations before him and loose the armour of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. "

Isaiah 45.1,2

The conquest of Babylon

When the soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon in 539 BC, Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, records that the gates were found open and

General Gobryas took the city without fighting. There is no doubt that Cyrus was an important king who carried out the Divine will for the good of His people, the Jews. The fall of Babylon marked the end of the seventy year period of oppression for the Jews as foretold by Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 25.11 and Daniel 9.2).

Herodotus also records that in the campaign against Babylon the river Euphrates was diverted and the army of Cyrus advanced along the river bed to take the city by surprise.

The Cyrus Cylinder

The historical reality of Cyrus, and his unique and enlightened approach to governing an empire made up of many nations, is demonstrated by an amazing clay cylinder found in Babylon around 1880 by the archaeologist Hormuzd Rasaam, Henry Layard's assistant.

Layard, working for the British Museum, had found nothing of significance after digging in three mounds in 1850. However, Rasaam returned and started fresh excavations in 1879-1882.

Apart from the cylinder (or part



of it) he discovered the ruins of a huge ziggurat which were identified in 1900 as the temple of Marduk the chief god of Babylon.

Although the British Museum had the main cylinder fragment, a smaller unidentified part of it had for years been at Yale University in America, having been purchased from an antiquities dealer. The two parts were not recognised as being one cylinder until 1970, and were eventually re-united in 1971. Only after this was the surviving Akkadian cuneiform script capable of being more accurately translated and read as a whole. The cylinder recounts the capture of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, Bel-shazzar's father, listing his inadequacies and alleged crimes as ruler. Cyrus claims to have become the new ruler with the approval of Marduk, the god of Babylon, describing how he brought

relief to the city, and how he restored a number of god images which had been displaced. Significantly the cylinder describes a policy of restoring temples and reuniting displaced peoples, held in Babylonia, to their homelands.

The cylinder may be seen as an example of Cyrus seeking the loyalty of his new subjects, by re-assuring them of his respect for their traditions. It has been called "the first human rights charter in history". It was used by the late Shah of Persia (now Iran) prior to the Islamic revolution in 1979 for political ends. Ironically, the Shah celebrated 2,500 years of the Persian monarchy just a few years before his own downfall. The importance of what Cyrus did is very much recognised today, and in Olympic Park, Sydney, Australia, a monument to Cyrus commemorates his work (see overleaf).



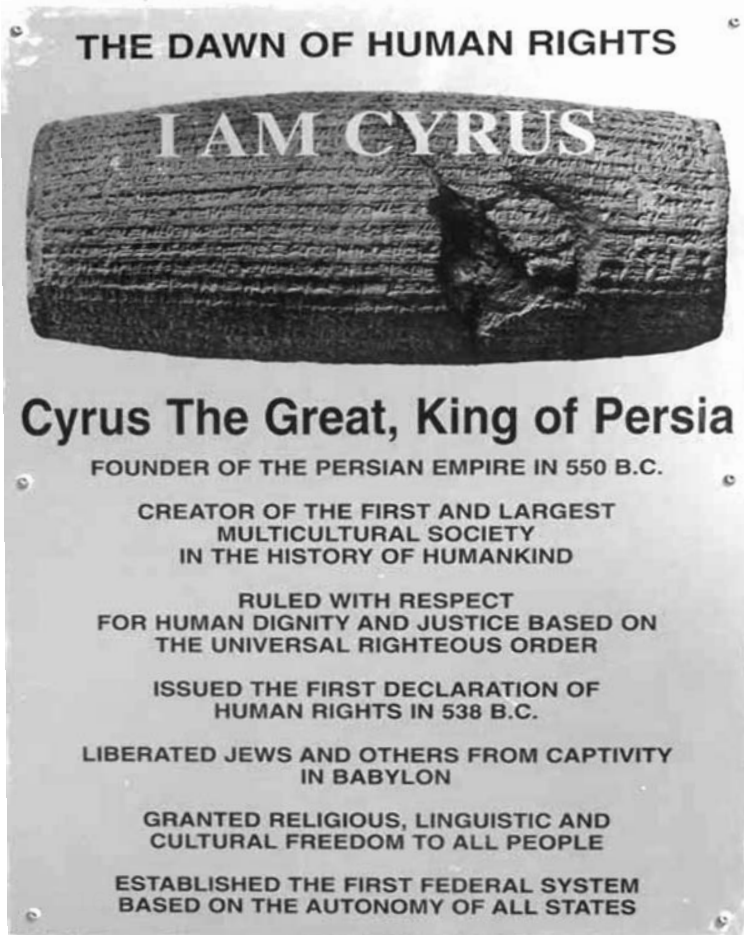
Confirmation of Ezra and Nehemiah

This is an amazing confirmation of the background to the Biblical record concerning Cyrus. The book of Ezra records the original decree of Cyrus in respect of his policy towards the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem:

"In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: 'Let

the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid... Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God....be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God'" (Ezra 6.3-5).

The content of the Cyrus cylinder agrees exactly with the policy towards the Jews recorded in the Old Testament. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell us how many thousands of Jews returned to rebuild the temple and the wall of Jerusalem. They reinstated their national way of life centred around the Law of Moses and the temple services.



The tribute to Cyrus on a modern monument in the Olympic Park, Sydney, Australia

The death of Cyrus

There are several different conflicting accounts of Cyrus' death, one of which is that Cyrus met his fate in a fierce battle with the Massagetae tribe from modern-day Kazakhstan. Some accounts state the Persian troops recovered his body after he had been crucified. Unlike Christ, however, the death of Cyrus was permanent and his memorial stands to this day. He was buried at his capital

Parsagadae (in today's southern Iran) and as the Persian religion forbade burial in the ground, his tomb stands impressively about 10.5 metres (35 feet) above the garden that once surrounded it. In 2006 it was pronounced a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Though the city itself is now in ruins, the site of Cyrus' tomb has never been lost and has remained largely intact, having been restored in recent years. According to the Greek historian Plutarch (AD 46 – AD 120), his epitaph said this:



'The clemency of Cyrus the Great towards the Hebrews' – illustration on parchment by Jean Fouquet c.1470

"O man, whoever you are and wherever you come from, for I know you will come, I am Cyrus who won the Persians their empire. Do not therefore begrudge me this bit of earth that covers my bones".

Jesus Christ - the 'Cyrus' of the future?

It can therefore be clearly demonstrated from the Bible, that the Cyrus of history was used in God's purpose to facilitate the restoration of His people, the Jews, to their ancient homeland. He was also a wise and beneficent ruler of many nations.

This is echoed in the future work of Jesus Christ as king over the kingdom of God. Cyrus, in all his frailty as an earthly ruler, was a pattern for Jesus Christ, the future king of the world. Cyrus was described in the words of the prophet Isaiah as God's "*anointed*". Jesus Christ is also described as God's anointed – his name means "*saviour anointed*". He will return to the earth as an all-wise, just and

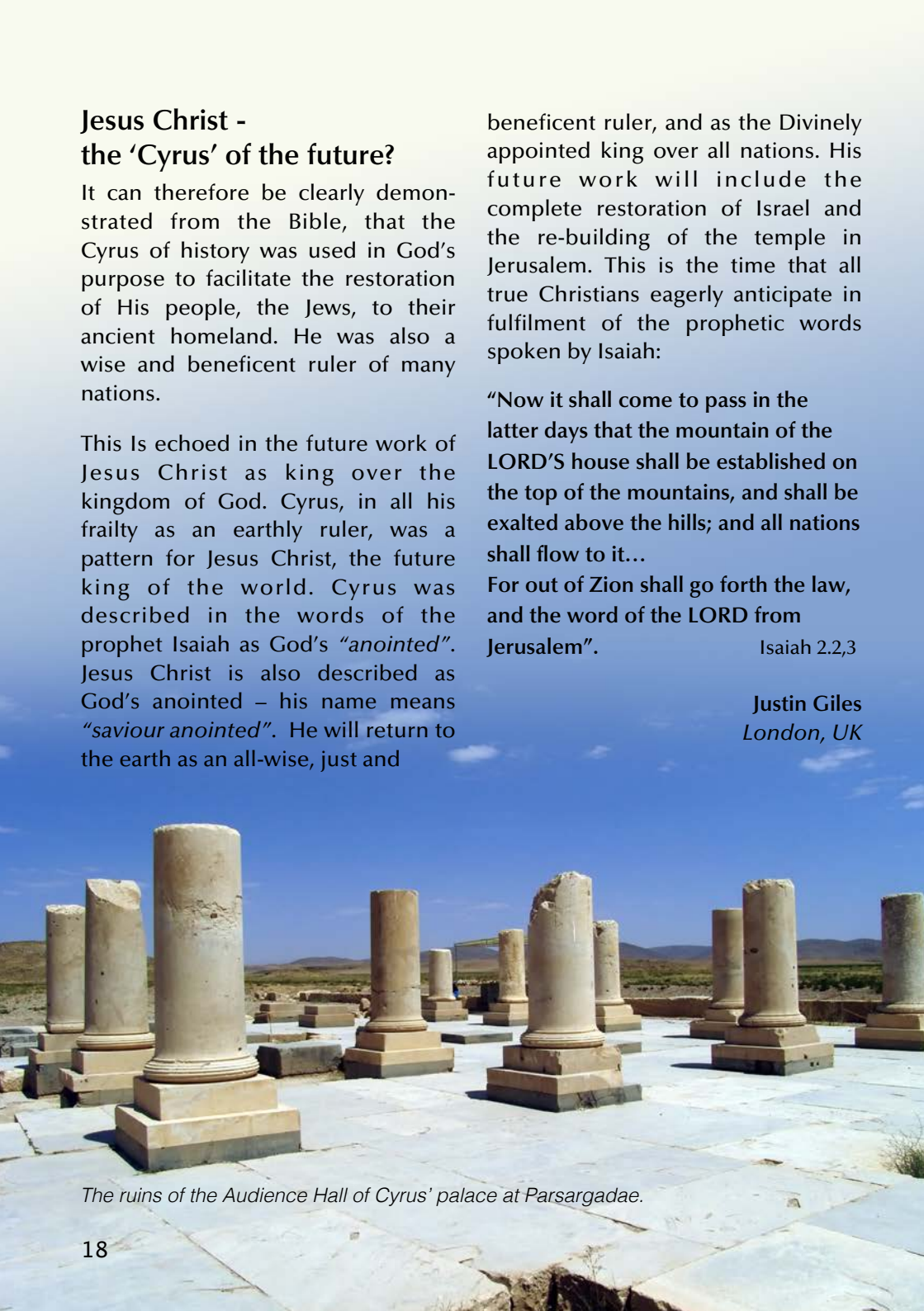
beneficent ruler, and as the Divinely appointed king over all nations. His future work will include the complete restoration of Israel and the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem. This is the time that all true Christians eagerly anticipate in fulfilment of the prophetic words spoken by Isaiah:

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it...

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the LORD from
Jerusalem".

Isaiah 2,2,3

Justin Giles
London, UK



The ruins of the Audience Hall of Cyrus' palace at Parsargadae.



from our mailbag

The persecution of the Jews

A reader has asked whether the Bible depicted the Holocaust and the terrible loss of Jewish lives. With the general increase in religious confrontation where will it all lead?

The Holocaust had a devastating effect on the Jewish people, resulting in the murder of some six million Jews in the death camps of Nazi Europe. Over the centuries anti-Semitism has resulted in the persecution of Jewish communities in many parts of the world and is still prevalent and increasing today. But in spite of all the anti-Semitic aggression, the Jews have survived and can be recognised in many countries where they have retained their separate identity.

why is this?...

The celebrated American author, Mark Twain, also asked this question in an essay he wrote, published in 1899:

'...The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed; and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his

energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

("Concerning The Jews," Harper's Magazine, 1899)

God's chosen people

The answer to the reader's question has its starting point with God's selection of the Jews as His chosen people. This is confirmed by the following words of Moses recorded in the Old Testament more than 3,000 years ago:

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth"

Deuteronomy 7.6

In the New Testament we read about a conversation that Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. He said to her: "...salvation is of the Jews" (John 4.22) and therefore their 'immortality' as Mark Twain put it is assured. In spite of their dispersion throughout the world and their subsequent persecution they were destined to survive. This assurance

TOP RIGHT: an iconic image of Jewish persecution – the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943



was given by God through the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

"'For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished'".

Jeremiah 30.11

Moses, that great leader of the Jews, also spelt out the curses that would come upon them for disobeying God's law. They would be few in number, scattered among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other, their life would hang in the balance, fearing day and night and they would have no assurance of life

(see Deuteronomy chapter 28 verses 58 to 67).

In these verses the answer to the reader's question about the Holocaust is recorded in terrifying detail. The fulfilment of the curses in Deuteronomy 28 can be seen in the history of the Jews over the last 2,500 years. Their disobedience culminated in the rejection of Jesus Christ their Messiah. They cried out *"His blood be on us and on our children"* as Jesus was led away to be crucified (Matthew 27.25).

Only 40 years later these words would become reality with the terrible sufferings of the Jews at the hands of the Romans. Death and destruction was followed by dispersion of the remainder to all parts of the Roman Empire. Their subsequent history bears out the prophetic words of Deuteronomy chapter 28.

God's witnesses

But why are the nation of Israel and its people the Jews constantly in the news today? Again the Bible provides us with the answer:

"You are my witnesses," says the LORD, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he'"
Isaiah 43.10

So God's dealings with the Jewish people also provide a witness to the accuracy of Bible prophecy and the reason why they are so often in the news. The return of the Jews to their ancient homeland was foretold in the Bible and was an event long awaited by Bible students:

"...I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land"
Ezekiel 37.21

This chapter describes a vision seen by the prophet Ezekiel. He saw a valley full of dry bones which represented the Jewish people in dispersion. Their remarkable regathering to 'their own land' was represented by the dry bones coming together, the flesh coming on them and their standing up again – **a national resurrection.**



This remarkable prophetic vision in Ezekiel chapter 37 is well worth reading in full.

What of the future?

When we look around our world today we see a very sorry state of affairs on many levels - famine and drought, economic, environmental and natural disasters; mankind's inhumanity to man especially evidenced by the barbaric acts carried out by some claiming to carry them out in the name of religion. Thinking people who wonder where this will lead, would be right in concluding that the future looks very bleak. However, these circumstances are foretold in the Bible as being typical of the time which will herald the return of Jesus to rectify all these problems and establish God's kingdom on earth.

In Luke chapter 21 we read that Jesus warned his disciples about the coming destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. They were wondering when this would happen and they asked him: *"Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"* (Luke 21.7).

Jesus responded by speaking of the time when Jerusalem would be besieged by the Romans and the inhabitants taken captive (see

previous page). However Jesus didn't stop there but went on to speak of the time when he would return with power to bring about the huge changes necessary for God's kingdom to be established:

"...there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory". Luke 21.25-27

The Bible student should not therefore be troubled by the state of the world in which we live, but concentrate rather on understanding the whole of God's plan of salvation. The Divine purpose is to establish His kingdom on earth and the important question is - how can we as individuals have a part in it?

Correspondence Secretary

NOTE: For a more detailed look at the subject of the Jewish people, please send for the booklet 'SURVIVORS' (see back cover).



How many monkeys make a Shakespeare?

You've heard the story, I'm sure. If you have a lot of monkeys typing away on lots of typewriters, eventually, given enough time (and bananas), they will type out the complete works of William Shakespeare.

The point of the story? That given enough time, anything can happen – that even the most complicated thing we can imagine, like perhaps the living cell, could happen entirely by accident.

On the face of it, this sounds reasonable enough, and it has passed into popular culture in all sorts of ways. The story has been around a long time (who uses typewriters these days?) but the odd thing is, it's only quite recently that a number of people have checked out the maths and worked out the actual probability involved. The results are very interesting.

The maths involved are in essence quite simple but produce some very large numbers indeed. If you have a keyboard with just 26 keys for the 26 letters of the alphabet, the chances against hitting **one** particular letter by accident are 26 to 1; there are 26 possible options, only one of which is

correct. The chances against hitting **two** specific letters are 26×26 (26^2) to 1; **three** letters is $26 \times 26 \times 26$ (26^3); and so on.

So what are the chances of getting some Shakespeare? How about just one sonnet, a short poem, rather than the Complete Works?

Israeli scientist, Gerry Shroeder (physicist, author and lecturer) writes:

'All the sonnets are the same length. They're by definition fourteen lines long. I picked the one I knew the opening line for: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" I counted the number of letters; there are 488 letters in that sonnet. What's the likelihood of hammering away and getting 488 letters in the exact sequence as in "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day"? What you end up with is 26 multiplied by itself 488 times... or, in other words, 10 to the 690th (10^{690}).'

One followed by 690 zeros. That is what 10^{690} means.

One billion is 10^9 , one followed by 9 zeros – 1,000,000,000. Do you have the faintest idea how big a number one followed by 690 zeros is? Is there perhaps another big number we can compare it with?

Gerry Shroeder again:

'Now the number of particles in the universe – not grains of sand, I am talking about protons, electrons, and neutrons – is 10 to the 80th ...1 with 80 zeros after it. 10 to the 690th is 1 with 690 zeros after it. There are not (not even close!) enough particles in the universe to write down the trials...' (quoted by Prof. Antony Flew, author of 'There is a God' 2007).

So much for the 'monkey theorem'!

RIGHT: Could the living cell have been assembled by a long series of accidents? The odds against it are astronomical.

What seems on the face of it to be a piece of unremarkable common sense, is in reality complete nonsense. A story which was designed to prove one thing in fact proves the absolute opposite. Some mathematicians regard anything above 1 chance in 10^{100} as in effect zero probability; it's never going to happen, ever.

Of course a short fourteen line poem doesn't even begin to compare in complexity and organisation with, for example, the living cell, and for the record, the text of 'Hamlet', just one of Shakespeare's plays, has not **488** but well over **132,000** letters.

Why haven't you heard about this before? Some trace the monkey story back as far as 1860, to a famous encounter between Thomas Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, when Huxley championed the newly-minted theory of Charles Darwin. Why is this same old story still being trotted out today when it has been entirely discredited?

Why? Because the materialist culture of our times demands that life happened by accident – without design, without intelligence, without purpose – without God.

The maths say it didn't.

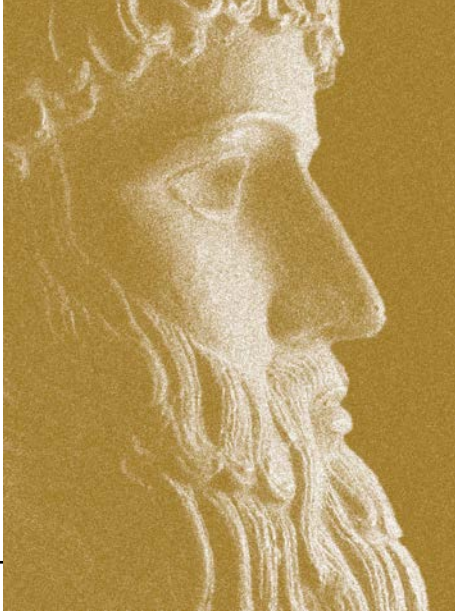
The Bible says it didn't.

Can you believe it?

Roy Toms
Norfolk, UK

comment





RIGHT: the remains of Ur, dominated by the partially restored ziggurat to the moon god Nanna.

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Abraham

Around 2,000 BC, Ur of the Chaldeans was a prosperous city situated near the head of the Persian Gulf in present day Iraq. Archaeology has revealed a wealthy and sophisticated urban culture and a city dominated by a massive ziggurat dedicated to the moon god Nanna, the patron deity of the city. This was the hometown of Terah and his three sons Abram, Nahor and Haran, a family introduced to us in Genesis chapter 11.

(Note: Abram's name was later changed to Abraham – see Genesis 17.5. Abraham is the form used throughout this article except where Abram appears in a direct quotation from Genesis).

We know nothing of Abraham's early life, only that it was dramatically changed by a message from God. God called him to leave this idolatrous city, and to travel to an unspecified distant land which God would show him (Genesis 12.1).

God's promises to Abraham

Abraham did not question the Divine command - he simply obeyed, with full trust and implicit confidence in God's guidance. God led him, first to Haran, and then to the land of Canaan (now known as Israel), and made the first in a series of promises in recognition of his faith and obedience:

“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse



him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan."

Genesis 12.2-5

At the time, Abraham and Sarah were childless. It was to be some 20 years between the promise of a descendant and the miraculous birth of their son Isaac in their old age (Genesis 21.2,3). The patience of Abraham is one of his most notable characteristics. Over a period of

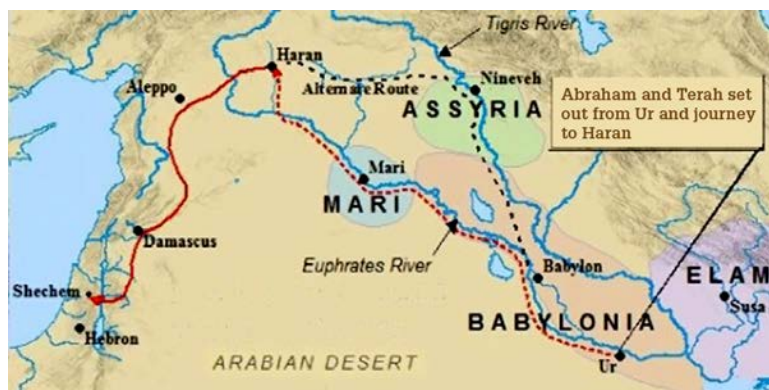
many years, God developed and enlarged the promise. Having told him that he would become "a great nation", God then promised him a land for his descendants to dwell in:

"Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him".

Genesis 12.7

This land called Canaan was to become the possession of Abraham and his descendants for ever. Moreover they would develop into a great nation as numerous as *'the dust of the earth'*. When Abraham and his nephew Lot found it necessary to separate because of the great size of their flocks and herds, God repeated and amplified the promise:

Abraham's one thousand mile journey around the Fertile Crescent from Ur to Haran and then on to Canaan. Difficult and fraught with danger, this epic journey was inspired by Abraham's absolute faith in God's promises.



'Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you'"

Genesis 13.14-17

The friend of God

Such was the relationship between God and Abraham that he was called "the friend of God":

"But you, Israel, are my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham *my friend*"

Isaiah 41.8

"...the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it

was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called *the friend of God*."

James 2.23

What an accolade, to be called '*the friend of God*'! The passage from James' letter is a direct quotation from Genesis, where God reassured Abraham that he would have a son in fulfilment of the promise, despite the fact that he was getting on in years and childless:

"Then he brought him outside and said, 'Look now towards heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them'. And he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'. And he believed in the LORD, and he accounted it to him for righteousness"

Genesis 15.5,6

The birth of Isaac

Eventually Isaac was born, when both Abraham and Sarah were too old in the natural order of things to

have children. This miraculous event would undoubtedly have brought great joy to them both, especially as it was now some 20 years after the initial promise of a son. God expressed confidence in Abraham in these words:

"For I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has spoken to him".

Genesis 18.19

Many years later, God tested Abraham; he instructed him to sacrifice his son Isaac. What God himself was to do, in sacrificing his only son for the sins of mankind, he now asked Abraham to do. Abraham's trust in God did not waver; he was fully prepared to obey God, even though he knew that the promises could only be fulfilled through this son. He was in no doubt that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (see the comment in Hebrews 11.19). Abraham got as far as raising the knife to kill his son before an angel of God stopped him (Genesis 22.10-12) and provided a ram for the sacrifice.

As a result of Abraham's implicit obedience, God repeated the promise. He told him that one of his

descendants would have complete power over his enemies:

"And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, 'By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice'"

Genesis 22.15-18 KJV

The word "seed" in this passage is a translation of a Hebrew word which can be singular or plural depending on the context. It can also refer to the seed of plants as well as human descendants. Most modern English versions translate it as "descendants" which overlooks the possibility that it could refer to one particular "seed" or descendant.

We do not have to speculate as to the identity of Abraham's "seed" or descendant. He is the one who will "*possess the gate of his enemies*" and through whom "*all nations of the earth*" will eventually be blessed. The Apostle Paul identifies the "seed" in his letter to the Galatians:

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham...Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your seed,’ who is Christ”.

Galatians 3.8,9,16

The gospel in the Old Testament

These are key verses to an understanding of God’s promises to Abraham. They tell us that he received the gospel message. This was the good news, as the word ‘gospel’ means, of the coming

kingdom of God. It may come as a surprise to you to realise that the gospel message is found in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. Paul is clearly telling us that the particular ‘seed’ or descendant of Abraham who will implement these far-reaching promises is none other than Jesus Christ.

We have already noted that the land promised to Abraham was a clearly defined territory and the New Testament tells us that the promises were not fulfilled in Abraham’s lifetime. For example in the book of Acts we read Stephen’s defence of his faith before the Jewish Council. He reminded them of the hope of Abraham:



“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia...Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there...he moved him to this land (Palestine) in which you now dwell. And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, he promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him”.

Acts 7.2,4,5

When will Abraham inherit that land God promised him? There can only be one explanation – Abraham will be raised from the dead. He believed in the power of God to raise the dead, as is shown by his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. God intervened and the sacrifice did not take place. In a sense Isaac came back from the dead and this ‘sacrifice’ pointed forward to the work of Jesus Christ the promised “seed” of Abraham. Some 2,000 years later, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice and God raised him from the dead.

The Jews are the descendants of Abraham through his son Isaac.

LEFT: A bedouin tent in the Syrian desert. After leaving Haran, Abraham and his family lived in tents for the rest of their lives, and never possessed any of the land God had promised them.

When Abraham’s descendants, the nation of Israel, entered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and eventually became a strong nation, this partly fulfilled the promise made to Abraham. God chose the Jews to be His special people, but when they rebelled against Him they were driven out of the land of promise – but not for ever. They have now returned to that land, but they will not be fully restored until Jesus Christ, the one they rejected and put to death, returns to the earth and the promise will be realised (Acts 17.31).

The relevance of these promises to us

Although Abraham lived some 4,000 years ago the promises that God made to him are still very relevant to us. In fact these promises form the basis of the true Christian hope of life after death. The Bible hope is a Jewish one, but its blessings and benefits are not limited to the Jews. In Jesus’ day the religious leaders claimed Abraham as their father but Jesus reproved them with the words: *“If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham”* (John 8.39). Abraham’s “works” were obedience based on faith and trust in God. These are the real spiritual criteria for claiming descent from Abraham, as the Apostle Paul explained to the Galatians:

"For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".

Galatians 3.27-29

This tells us that any man or woman, regardless of their natural descent, can be counted as a descendant of Abraham. Those who Paul describes as being *"in Christ Jesus"* through belief of the gospel and baptism become *"Abraham's seed and heirs"* with him of the Divine promises.

These promises are a fundamental part of God's plan for the world. God has a plan centred in Abraham's descendants, the Jews, through one particular descendant, Jesus Christ. Jesus himself said *"salvation is of the Jews"* (John 4.22). We can only share this plan of salvation by believing the gospel which was first preached to Abraham and obeying God's command to be baptised.

Abraham is one of the greatest characters of the Bible. His outstanding characteristics were faith, trust, and obedience. He completely changed his life in response to God. He is rightly called *"the father"* of all true believers,

both because of his great character and because the promises made to him by God are the basis of the gospel message. The Apostle Paul testifies to Abraham's faith in these words: *"...we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness ... that he might be the father of all those who believe..."* (Romans 4.9,11).

Abraham's obedience led him to leave a comfortable life in the pagan city where he once lived: *"for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Hebrews 11.10). He became one of those *"strangers and pilgrims"* on the earth who had complete faith in the promise of God for the future (Hebrews 11.13).

If we are to be counted as *"Abraham's seed"* we too need to have complete faith in God as he did, to be prepared to change our lives, to make a fresh start and to follow his outstanding example of faith, obedience and service to God.

Clifford Wharton
Croydon, UK

**money in the
bank**

or

**treasure in
heaven?**

Many countries in the world are run as capitalist economies, where financial gain is uppermost on people's minds. A small minority inherit wealth but for the majority the desire to improve their financial position can only come by working for a better life. Capitalism can be defined as:

"...an economic system in which trade, industry, and the means of production are largely or entirely privately owned. Private firms and proprietorships usually operate in order to generate profit, but may operate as private non-profit organisations. Central characteristics of capitalism include private property, capital accumulation, wage labour and, in some situations, fully competitive markets. In a capitalist economy, the parties to a transaction typically determine the prices at which they exchange assets, goods, and services" (source : Wikipedia).



It has been suggested that 'Christianity' and 'Capitalism' are completely opposed to one other. They are seen to be representative of sharing with others on the one hand, and the desire to accumulate wealth on the other, with little common ground between them. But what does the Bible say?

The teaching of Jesus directs us to consider a different way of life from that pursued by the majority of men and women – a way of life which, if followed, will lead to something far better in the long run. Jesus said to his disciples: *"Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Luke 12.33, 34 NIV).

These words were addressed to people from different walks of life both rich and poor. Jesus had been telling the disciples not to worry about the things of this life but to seek the kingdom of God first. He encouraged the sharing of wealth with those who were poor, because this would in the long run be a means of acquiring wealth of a more lasting kind - *"a treasure in heaven"* as he called it.

The Bible, contrary to expectation, does not condemn financial gain and

the accumulation of wealth but points us in a different direction. If we wish to secure an eternal future beyond our present short existence and to find the "treasure in heaven" that Jesus spoke about, something more is required.

Important principles

True Christians believe that God will provide for their needs, which in reality are very basic and with which they must be satisfied. In return, they should work diligently to support themselves wherever possible. The work ethic is a very clear principle in the Bible, and it is an acknowledgment of the fact that after Adam and Eve had disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, they were told that they would have to work in order to survive (see Genesis 3.19).

However, accumulating wealth, along with power and influence for their own sake, is a human weakness and should be avoided by the followers of Jesus. The Bible also helps us to take the right approach if wealth comes our way; it should be used responsibly. Christians know that true wealth is not measured by the extent of our material possessions.



Do not struggle to get rich

Whatever the merits of Capitalism as the basis of a country's economy, the Bible is blunt in its assessment of those who spend their time and energy making money for themselves. For such people, their wealth is the only thing they have to live for. The Bible tells us about Solomon, king of Israel, who was given great wisdom by God. He also had great riches yet had this to say about those who struggle to get rich:

"A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished". Proverbs 28.20 NIV

"Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they

are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle". Proverbs 23.4,5 NIV

What shall we do with our wealth?

The Bible teaches that the present time should be used to prepare for a new life in God's kingdom. So far as He is concerned, our lives are an opportunity to get ready for a future which does not depend on the accumulation of wealth. Some of the finest examples of men and women who pleased God are those with the fewest material possessions.

There are also some outstanding examples in the Bible of those who managed to balance the possession of material wealth (which they had

not sought for other than by acting wisely) with an understanding of true values. Although Abraham was rich, he was more interested in the future inheritance that God had promised to give him (see article on page 26).

Another example was Job. God took away his wealth but Job never questioned God's right to do this. In a simple statement of trust he said: *"...‘Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD’"* (Job 1.21).

Moses, who was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, was destined to leave the wealth of Egypt behind for a nomadic life as the leader of God's people, the Israelites. The New Testament comment on this is that he chose *"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 11.25, 26).

The teaching of both the Old and New Testaments is consistent. We read about a number of people who were wealthy. Some of these were good examples of using their wealth in the right way, but others were not. It was a question of priorities, or getting their motives right.

On one occasion Jesus was approached by a devout Jew, described in the Gospel of Luke as *"a certain ruler"*, who asked Jesus: *"...what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* (Luke 18.18). Jesus reminded him of the need to keep the commandments of God, to which the man responded: *"All these I have*

*The wealth of Egypt:
winged scarab of
Tutankhamun in gold and
semi-precious stones.*



kept from my youth". But what was lacking? "You still lack one thing" said Jesus. "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Luke 18.21, 22). Mark's record adds that the rich man "was sad at this word, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions" (Mark 10.22).

Jesus was not laying down a universal rule that everyone who is wealthy has to give everything away, but he had pin-pointed a weakness in the character of this particular man. He had not grasped the fact that there was still much more he could do, including changing his attitude to his wealth which was clearly very important to him, preventing him from becoming a disciple of Jesus.

The life of a true Christian

The first century Christian communities were made up of men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds. There were rich and poor, slaves and free. Some were traders or professional people, others were just ordinary folk earning their living on a day to day basis just like many people do today.

There were also the cultural and ethnic differences that we experience now. People were loosely categorised as either Jews or

Gentiles. These differences brought into focus the distinction between rich and poor and within the Christian community there was a bond of fellowship which included the re-distribution of wealth (Acts 2.44,45). In God's eyes there is ultimately no distinction between rich and poor *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3.23).

The apostles addressed the problem of unequal distribution of wealth a number of times. They acknowledged that the solution was not just a reallocation of material possessions with the rich simply giving away everything they had, but rather by having due regard for those who genuinely did not have enough. This was something that needed to be done discreetly and thoughtfully. The Apostle Paul's sound advice to Timothy was:

"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy, and to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6.17-19).

True wealth – God's priceless gift

For the Christian, true wealth consists in the wonderful knowledge of God's plan for His creation and the hope of a share in His coming kingdom through belief of the Gospel and baptism into the saving name of Jesus. This is not a concession on God's part, it is evidence of His love as expressed in the well-known words of John: *"...he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3.16). It is His wish that everyone should obtain salvation, because he is *"not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3. 9).

Material wealth loses its attraction completely for those whose ambition is to look forward to God's coming kingdom. Abraham and Job did not live in a capitalist society, but they had discovered the right approach to wealth and found real and lasting treasure in heaven. It's a treasure that is beyond compare and Jesus will bring it from heaven when he returns to set up the kingdom of God on earth. The true Christian hope is based on resurrection and everlasting life to be enjoyed on the earth – not in heaven as so many mistakenly believe.

In one of his many parables Jesus likened this to valuable treasure. He compared it to a merchant who found a particular pearl of tremendous value and in his desire to obtain it, he disposed of all his wealth so that he could purchase that one pearl (Matthew 13.45, 46). That's how important the true Christian hope is – it's the only thing worth having in this life.

And so we are presented with the ultimate choice: enjoy the things of this life now with no hope for the future, or be like the merchant of the parable and seek that priceless treasure. God's free gift of salvation from death comes with the prospect of eternal life to be enjoyed in the kingdom of God on earth. The Apostle Paul expressed it in these words:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6.23).

Colin Dryland
London, UK



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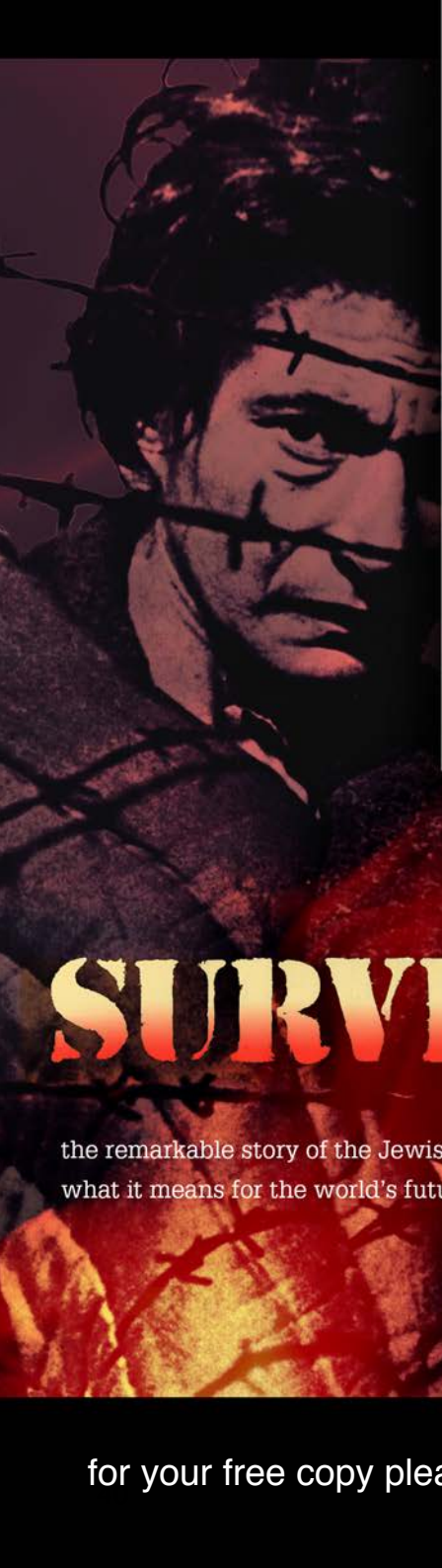
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"If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.
May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you..."

PSALM 137

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