

# the **Christian Worker** MAGAZINE



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## A view of the Bible land

**Evangelism and outreach in Eastwood**

**Changing for the better**

**A Bible reading plan**





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Bethlehem Square at Christmas.



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# MY PERSPECTIVE



## Perfect vision for 2020

### Another New Year

For those of us over a certain age, it doesn't seem all that long ago that we were welcoming in the year 2000 – and here we are twenty years later at the beginning of 2020.

I don't know if the congregation where you are sets a theme for the year – you can read about the theme Eastwood will be using later in this issue. To me, the obvious theme for the year 2020 would be 'Perfect Vision' – after all if our eyes are 20/20 we have what is defined as perfect vision.

But what should be our perfect vision spiritually? I've heard lessons on having perfect vision based on Acts 20:20 – *"You know that I did not hold back from proclaiming to you anything that would be helpful, and from teaching you publicly and from house to house..."* (NET). The emphasis was a need to be teaching both publicly and from house to house. And that would be a good emphasis.

To me, perfect spiritual vision would need to be centred on Jesus. I will be suggesting a theme from Acts 1:1 for the congregation at East Kilbride this year: *"I wrote the former account, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach"*.

To have spiritual 20/20 vision we need to be doing and teaching. Jesus is our perfect example of this. To summarise Jesus' life in one sentence, this is what Luke said about the biography that he wrote of Jesus' life. Jesus taught about God's kingdom and how people need to live if they are to be a part of it. But Jesus did not only teach how people needed to live, he also showed them what it was

about. It is about helping others. It is about taking time for other people. It is doing what needs to be done.

We need to be teaching and doing, basing both on Jesus. But this implies something else: we need to be reading and studying God's word. Without the knowledge of what Jesus taught and did, we won't be able to teach others and do what he did.

It isn't without meaning that the word used to describe Jesus' followers most often is 'disciple'. What is a disciple? The Greek word means a student, a pupil. It is important that we be lifelong students of Jesus, that we be reading and studying about him and how he wants us to live.

As we enter 2020, let's all strive to have 20/20 spiritual vision – that we follow in the steps of Jesus by doing and teaching. There are several articles in this issue that address both aspects of our Christian life.

We had a request after last month's article on the 'Trip of a Lifetime' to Israel that we publish some more detailed articles describing what we have learned from the trips that have been made to the Bible lands. One of the comments made frequently on our trip in November was that it made the Bible '3D' as we saw the places where the events occurred. As not everyone will be able to make such a trip, we hope we can convey at least some of what we learned in these articles.

We wish everyone a happy New Year!

Jon



# A view of the Bible lands



## Bethlehem

The first trip Arlene and I made to the Bible lands was in January 2018. We were with a group from Freed-Hardeman University, made up of students and some associated with the school, as well as Ian and Barbara Starrs.

One of the surprises for me when we arrived was that there were Christmas decorations everywhere – I hadn't realised that in Israel the date used for Christmas was the one based on the Julian calendar and used by the Orthodox Church, which is 7<sup>th</sup> January. We had arrived just in time for Christmas!

This brought another surprise – how the manger scene is depicted. Everywhere we went we saw manger scenes and it was always a grotto, a cave, that was depicted as the place Jesus was born (the photo above is of a painting in the chapel at Shepherd's Field, just outside of Bethlehem – I don't know where the dog came from!).

In the Western world, we usually assume that conditions in first century Bethlehem would be like what we know, and we keep animals in barns. If Jesus was born where the animals were kept, we picture a wooden stable. Yet in both trips I've made to Israel, I

have yet to see a wooden barn anywhere. The problem is simple: there is very little wood growing in the Judean wilderness. They kept animals in the caves which you see almost everywhere in the hills. Which led us to another discovery – the sheep fields.

If your image of the fields where sheep were kept around Bethlehem is of lush, green fields of grass, then we have been too influenced by Western countries. The Judean wilderness at first glance looks as if it is devoid of vegetation (see below). Upon closer inspection you see that there is some green and flocks of sheep and goats do survive



The fields near Bethlehem





Inside the Church of the Nativity

there. I understand that in the spring, just after the rains, it is a bit greener than it was the two times we were there (January and November), but not like the fields we see in the UK.

Although we don't know precisely which field near Bethlehem the shepherds were using the night Jesus was born, it would have been near the ones you see at 'Shepherds Field'. The shepherds would not have had a long walk up the hill to the village of Bethlehem when they went to visit the newborn Jesus laying in a manger, a feeding trough normally used by animals.

Why did Jesus end up being born where the animals were kept? Most of our translations tells us that it was because there was no room in the inn. We learned from our guide that it was probably not an 'inn' that Joseph was turned away from. The Greek word, we were told, better means 'a guest room', which is what we find in the 2011 New International Version: *"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them"* (Luke 2:6-7 NIV). We learned that most people had a room in their house that they kept ready for guests. The room was full when Joseph and Mary arrived, due to the number of people who had arrived for the census, so they ended up beneath the house in the cave where the animals were kept. It was common in the houses in this area to be built over a cave and the animals were kept in the cave.

As to the place where Jesus was born, we are on firmer footing as to this being the correct location. We have the Roman Emperor Hadrian to thank for marking its location. Christians were visiting the site of Jesus' birth from very early times. There would be those who knew where it was and it would seem that this information had been handed down. In AD 135 Hadrian had the site above the grotto converted into a pagan temple for the worship of Adonis, the mortal lover of Aphrodite, to discourage Christian pilgrims from visiting it. Jerome wrote in 420 that the grotto had been consecrated to the worship of Adonis, complete with a sacred grove of trees being planted. Hadrian's purpose, he wrote, was to wipe out the memory of Jesus from the world. Rather than wiping out the memory of where Jesus was born, Hadrian marked the place by building the pagan shrine over it (he did that in several locations in Israel).

The Roman Emperor Constantine commissioned a basilica to be built over the grotto after his mother Helena visited this area in 325-326. The original building was built between 330-333. After it was destroyed in a fire, a new basilica was built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian in the mid-500's, which is the building you visit today.

What struck me upon entering the basilica was how gaudy it was! A shrine has been constructed over the grotto decorated with gold and silver. Underneath the shrine is the cave where Jesus would have been born.



Entrance to the grotto



As caves go, it is not a large chamber, although it is part of larger, more extensive cave network. We discovered on leaving the basilica that Jerome lived and worked in this same cave system at the end of his life – there is a Roman Catholic chapel dedicated to him next to the Church of the Nativity (you can visit the caves where he lived and worked – which we did).

The day we visited the Church of the Nativity on our first trip was 8<sup>th</sup> January, the day after Orthodox Christmas Day. Although it was just after ‘Christmas Day’ it wasn't as crowded as it was when we visited in November 2019, when the queue to just get into the basilica would have taken several hours of waiting (as it was an hour from closing time, we knew we wouldn't get in).

Although there weren't any queues to get into the basilica, when we entered the grotto itself there were quite a few people in it – as you can see from the photo below, it was wall-to-wall people. The grotto itself is more of a chapel, with wall coverings and paintings on the walls and ceiling. In the best tradition, they have



Roman Catholic chapel over Jerome's grotto

marked the precise spot where Jesus was born – or so they say (I think there is quite a bit of editorial license going on!). What the people in the photo below are photographing is the altar with a star in the floor to mark the spot. Somehow I doubt that Mary would have given birth in the entrance to the cave – somewhere towards the back makes more sense to me!



The altar over the star 'marking' where Jesus was born

Although the gold and silver and the shrines that have been built can be a deterrent to trying to see the sites associated with Bible events, we had to learn to see past the gaudiness and appreciate what this was marking for us. Yes, this most likely is the place that Mary gave birth to Jesus. Yes, it has been turned into a shrine. But it was amazing to be able to stand there in the cave, look around, and think "this is where it happened – this is where the Messiah came into the world."

Although the glitz can be off-putting, we can be thankful that these sites were preserved so that we as Christians, so many years later, can still visit these sites and see where the events happened.

Jon Galloway



Inside the grotto of Jesus' birth

# AT REST



## ROBERT HUGHES (Kirkcaldy)

**30<sup>th</sup> April 1938 - 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

We report the death of our brother Robert Watt Hughes, who passed away at the age of eighty-one on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, following complications mainly from Parkinson's Disease. The funeral took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2019 and was conducted by brother Ian Davidson of Motherwell, and extracts from that address are printed below.

In the July 1956 *Scripture Standard*, under the heading: "News from the Churches", we read: "With Joy and gratitude we report another addition to our number. Robert Hughes, one of our Bible Class scholars, made the good confession and was baptised on Lord's Day, June 10<sup>th</sup>. We pray the Lord will richly bless our young brother and that he may become a good servant of His Saviour." The prayer was answered.

Robert grew to become a true stalwart in the faith and a hugely influential member of the Lord's body in Kirkcaldy. Among the many commitments he fulfilled in his long Christian life were as preacher, teacher, choir master and writer. With the full support of his late wife, Fay, he undertook all his duties with unflinching dedication, precision and industry. He cared not only about the destination of his own soul, but that of others. It is difficult to assess the number of gospel addresses he delivered over the years, but they

obviously ran into the hundreds. He shared the joy with the holy angels when a soul was saved from the power of Satan and brought safely into God's family. He laboured long and hard for the Lord in many ways and is a wonderful example to us all.

He wrote two notable works: *Alexander Campbell's Five Days in Fife* and *Churches of Christ in the County of Fife, Scotland*. The latter was written in commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church in Kirkcaldy (1998). He also wrote articles for the *Fife Free Press* under the titles: "View from the Pulpit" and "Heart of the Matter", amongst others. He did all this church work while pursuing a busy career in engineering, which took him to the United States and a number of countries in Europe. He was highly qualified and, indeed, received rewards in his early career as a Naval Architect. His various directorships were clear proof of his professionalism, skill and talent in his line of work.

We especially extend to Robert's two sons, Neil (wife Gillian) and Allan (wife Karen), and the four grandchildren, our very sincere condolences at the loss of a wonderful father and grandfather. We thank the staff of Gowrie Care Home, Kirkcaldy for all the support, kindness and unstinting care shown to Robert in the past few years.

He has now gone to be with the Lord, which, as Paul once wrote, "is far better". He will never be forgotten by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Tony Clark



## JAMES and JENNIFER NEIL (Skelmersdale)

1945-2019 and 1948-2019

It is with mixed feelings that we have lost two of our devoted members of the church at Skelmersdale. Both James and Jennifer were called home late this year.

James had been ill for sometime and had been fighting Parkinson's Disease for many years. During this time his devoted wife cared for him and looked after his every need.

Then Jennifer was suddenly diagnosed with aggressive cancer in August and died in October. She was a wife, mother and grandmother and a devoted Christian in the Skelmersdale congregation.

James passed from this life in November a month after Jennifer passed away. James suffered with Parkinson's Disease for about ten years.

James was well known for his work among the youth of the church and also his work with the charity "Save the Children Fund", where he was acknowledged and met by HRH Princess Anne.

He also worked with the local brass band and taught many young people how to play many musical instruments.

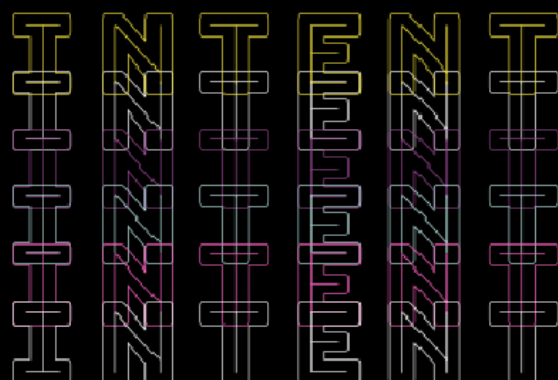
He worked for many years in the building trade and often helped to repair church buildings. His love of working with the youth within the churches was his great talent. He was a former member of the congregations in the Wigan area including Plattbridge, Earlstown, Albert Street and Longshoot. He served for many years among these congregations until he eventually came to Skelmersdale in his later years. At Skelmersdale he served as an elder with Roy Renshaw and later Brian Stevens.

Our thoughts and prayers are with their son Darren and his wife Anita and his grandchildren.

We shall all miss James and Jennifer, but know that they have gone to be rewarded by the Master and Lord of us all.

Tony Tyson

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# BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

## Changing for the better

I confess I'm not a huge fan of New Year's resolutions. It's not that I can see no room for improvement – quite the opposite – but I've really never been terribly good at keeping them. I suppose I'm of the disposition to think that if something is worth changing, then it's worth changing now – whenever now might happen to be.

The problem with changing things is that unless there is a change in our surroundings, any meaningful change we might want to make is often little more than short-lived. This is why we might say that unless something changes, nothing changes. And therein may lie the hidden value of New Year's resolutions: a change in the year might, for some, be a sufficient change in surroundings to enable one of more significance.

Whilst thinking of change, I'm thinking of ways in which we might make changes to our lives to enable the Spirit of God to work more effectively to change us from within. One thing we should all be able to do is to make the word of God more a part of our lives each day. As disciples of Jesus we should be learning of him daily, reading the Scriptures and taking time with God. We should be wanting to do these things.

Over the years the British Bible School has adapted to try to help better meet the needs of British disciples in terms of exploring, learning and understanding the message of Scripture. In recent years we have done this primarily through our Extension Class Programme, offering study events over weekends and in residential settings around the country and across the Channel.

This past year we have held Study Weekends at Great Barr (Birmingham), Northampton, Aberdeen, Morley and

East Kilbride (Glasgow). We have taught at residential events at Bassenthwaite in the Lake District, European Christian Workshop at Lancaster and at ABSS in Germany, as well as being involved in a number of other events at various levels.

Alongside our extension programme we have continued to offer a few Modules through our Distance Learning Programme in which a number are engaged. Our Family Retreats continue to grow in popularity with our winter retreat yet again fully booked and our newer autumn retreat attracting larger numbers. These have enabled us to promote the work of the School and get to better understand the needs of fellow followers here in the U.K.

And then there is our soon-to-be-launched video-based teaching project, *The Book Programme*, which is in an almost constant state of preparation! Look out for further news of this before too long.

Funding has been a significant concern over the past year or so. For some time we have been in the process of revising our organisational and financial structure. We are close to having this sorted, but unforeseen delays have placed considerable strain in a number of areas which we hope will soon be relieved with additional funding. If you are interested in knowing more of this, please do get in touch.

We are very much looking forward to new opportunities for us to serve together as we begin another new year. If you think we might be able to serve you in some way, or if you think you might be able to be of help to us, then let's get together and make 2020 a year of greater service to the King of all kings.

Patrick Boyns



# A REFLECTION ON 2019

## Review of 2019 at Eastwood and forward to 2020

### **Gospel outreach meetings – Theme: Jesus The Saviour**

We have been holding this type of outreach meeting now for quite some years now. We begin on Saturday evening at 6:00 pm with a warm welcome and refreshments. This enables meeting and greeting in an informal atmosphere and is concluded at 7:00 pm when the main meeting begins.

The meeting itself is a time of singing, prayers and Bible readings of related passages to the topic, not necessarily wholly related to the lesson but based around the topic to give the Bible background to why we picked the subject. The speaker will usually speak for around 45 minutes, although an hour is by no means unacceptable as we are spreading the Gospel and worshipping God. The meeting will be concluded with a final hymn and prayer. There is a further time for discussion over refreshments before people depart. The meetings usually finish with most people having left at around 9:30 pm.

During 2019 our speakers spoke on the theme of “Jesus the Saviour”. Patrick Boyns spoke on "Jesus in my life" in February; Allan Ashurst spoke in May on “Jesus at the cross”; Jon Galloway was the speaker in August on “Jesus in the church”; and Ken Mullan concluded the year by speaking on “Jesus the Return”.

We have a good number of repeat visitors from other church groups in the area along with some who come for the first time. There is always a welcome for those that choose to ‘pop in’ for a chat, a cup of tea and then leave prior to the meeting, as this may be their first visit to a ‘church’ environment. The evenings are planned to be relaxed, welcoming

and accessible to anyone who responds and chooses to visit.

Prior to each Saturday evening we distribute 1000 A5 full colour double sided leaflets around the neighbourhood on the previous Sunday following our Sunday morning worship. We have found for a small congregation that this number of leaflets is very manageable and four teams of two or three can usually distribute their allocation in about one hour. We also post A4 full colour posters in shops, hairdressers, nail parlours and cafes for a week to two weeks prior to the meeting. In all of this it has to be said that personal invitation is always going to be the best way to introduce new people to our congregation.

### **Barbecue and Activity Day**

This took place on Saturday, 27 April. Besides having an outdoor barbecue, there was a bouncy castle and bungee run in the day time followed by evening activities. As we have land surrounding our building, we have the facility for outdoor activities.

The weekend was planned and equipment supplied or hired – only to find that the weather decided otherwise and some of the planned activities had to be cancelled as the hire companies could not supply for health and safety reasons. It was very windy and rained. However, a good number of people supported the event, the Barbecue became an indoor cook-fest, with giant jenga and giant connect-4 to keep everyone entertained.

The activities for the evening were brought forward a little and the group was divided into teams for “the games”. We had activities such as name the mystery



## A REFLECTON ON 2019

item, order the events of the Bible (one team of mature Christians had a little issue around the order of creation, which was quite amusing). Other games included: identifying the picture, blind fold connect-4 and an exercise in Korean writing (a little bit like the Generation Game, where someone shows the teams something and then the team has to duplicate it as accurately as possible after it has been taken away).

This was a great day for Christians to get together with friends and have a good time. There was some good team building outcomes and even though the weather was not the best the whole day was thoroughly enjoyed by all who came. A big thank you to all our visitors from the various congregations that came together for a good time of fellowship and activity.

### Teach-in weekend

This was held 22 -23 June. We invited Ian Starrs to come and lead us in some talks and discussions about how to spread the gospel, or effective evangelism by the individual Christian as part of the local congregation. We gave Ian a brief history of the congregation and a rough outline of our expectations along with a guide timetable for the weekend. The main event was on Saturday and started around 10:00.

We were encouraged to look at ourselves and appreciate how effective we could be, what is needed and how we can accomplish the remit that we have been left by Jesus to spread the good news. Although we may all know what needs to be done and most may have a good idea about how to do it, but I have to say when someone fresh addresses the congregation and digs around in this subject you can learn a great deal about what you are not doing and you have to face the fact that no matter what you think you know you may definitely not be as effective as you would like to think you are. Ian took us on a journey of self-awareness and application. Using examples, he showed us how simple it was in some cases to crack the hardest nuts.

The weekend concluded on Sunday with Ian giving a talk on “The meaningful conversation”. This was extremely useful as Ian showed us how to make sure that an ordinary conversation that may give a nod to conversing about Jesus could be turned quite easily into a conversation that had direction, determination and hopefully a conclusion. To see in practice and get to understand just how easy it is to take a passing conversation from one level to a totally different level without being overwhelming, Bible thumping or uncomfortable was an absolute eye opener. Just by thinking ahead of time of the alternative language that can be used in such encounters one can be prepared.

We would highly recommend Ian to any congregation looking to review their position and find a way forward for more effective outreach as a congregation and as individuals.

We have had a few other challenges through the year, but we have enjoyed a great time of fellowship together, may God bless us all as we meet the new opportunities of 2020

### Plans for 2020

We are planning four gospel outreach meetings on the theme for the year of “Jesus my Brother and my Friend”. The lessons will be: “Jesus when you are ill” (8<sup>th</sup> February); “Jesus when you feel broken” (9<sup>th</sup> May); “Jesus when you feel forsaken” (8<sup>th</sup> August); and “Jesus when you feel isolated” (7<sup>th</sup> November).

We are also planning another Barbecue and Activity Day on 20<sup>th</sup> June, and there more activities we are still planning.

Don't forget the old adage “If you fail to plan you plan to fail”. The Bible shows to us that God planned everything meticulously and nothing was left to ‘chance’. *For 2020 let us all plan to bring the good news to as many as possible!*

Adrian Limb



# FAMILY NEWS & APPEAL

## NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

It came to our attention that some congregations and online directories of churches are still listing as an email address for the Newcastle church of Christ, [church@newcastlecoc.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:church@newcastlecoc.fsnet.co.uk)

This email address, along with all Freserve addresses, Wanadoo addresses and Orange addresses ceased to exist on 31 May 2017 when it was closed down by the then host EE.

Our present email address for the Newcastle congregation is [newcastlecoc@gmail.com](mailto:newcastlecoc@gmail.com).

Please can you look through your records, address books or any online directory you may support to make sure that the old email address is gone and that our Gmail address is given in its place. That way we won't miss any correspondence that is being sent to us.

Graeme Stickings

## A NOTE FROM TREVOR

Many thanks to the four people who wrote to me after reading last months 'Final Word'. Your kindness was really appreciated.

Trevor Williams

## NEW GROUP OF CHRISTIANS

The Lord willing, a new group of Christians will begin meeting in Hammersmith on Sunday, 5th January 2020. We will begin with three Christians.

We will send information about where we will be meeting and meeting times soon. Malcom Armstrong will serve as

the contact and evangelist for this new congregation. He can be contacted on (07835) 517740.

Malcolm Armstrong

## NAEEM SABIR (PAKISTAN)

Third World countries like Pakistan don't usually have free public primary/secondary education, so parents have to stump up school fees. Naeem has three children, and in addition he and his wife have been raising three more children whose parents were brutally murdered by Islamic extremists. In short, Naeem needs some extra support for his family.

British Christians have been very generous, but anything in addition that some might be able to contribute would be very gratefully received.

If you can contribute, please send cheques to: 'Barbara Fisher (Pakistan Account)'. Mrs Barbara Fisher, 5 Portway, North Marston, Buckingham, MK18 3PL.

Barbara Fisher (Buckingham Park)







# Book Review

## Professor Grant Horner's Bible-Reading System

<http://grant-horner-bible-reading-plan-pdf.weebly.com>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/prof-horners-reading-system.html>

Rather than being a 'Book Review' this is a review of a plan for Bible reading. I came across this 'plan' a number of years ago but only tried it for myself during 2019. I can recommend this is a good way to spend time reading God's word.

This Bible reading plan is based on reading ten chapters each day from ten different sections of the Bible. Being a linear thinker, this did not initially appeal to me, but after reading this way for the past year, I have found connections between scriptures that I might not have seen.

The ten reading lists are:

- List 1 – the Gospels (Matthew-John)
- List 2 – The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy)
- List 3 – Letters, part 1 (Romans-Colossians and Hebrews)
- List 4 – Letters, part 2 (1 Thessalonians-Philemon, James-Revelation)
- List 5 – Wisdom (Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
- List 6 – Psalms
- List 7 – Proverbs
- List 8 – History of Israel (Joshua-Esther)
- List 9 – Prophets (Isaiah-Malachi)
- List 10 – Acts

As you can see, some lists are long while others are short, in particular Proverbs and Acts – you will be reading them each month. As Grant Horner explains: "If you are wondering why you should read Acts (or Proverbs) all the way through *every single month*, then – you've just shown that you NEED to read them that often!" I think that says enough.

I made some adaptations to this plan to better suit me. Rather than reading daily, I tend to read five days a week and use weekends to catch up if I have fallen behind that week. After using his reading lists for several months I also adapted the lists a bit, as it seemed to me I was over-reading some parts and under-reading others. My adaptation is this:

- List 1 – the Gospels (Matthew-John)
- List 2 – The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy)
- List 3 – Paul's letters 1 (Romans-2 Thessalonians)
- List 4 – Letters 2 (1 Timothy-Revelation)
- List 5 – The Ketuvim (Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1/2 Chronicles)
- List 6 – Psalms
- List 7 – Proverbs
- List 8 – Former prophets (Joshua-2 Kings)
- List 9 – Latter prophets (Isaiah-Ezekiel, Hosea-Malachi)
- List 10 – Acts

Using this system, during 2019 I read the entire Bible through once, the entire New Testament an additional two times, plus other books several times (Acts a total of nine times and Proverbs a total eight times).

I recommend this type of Bible reading. One warning: it takes an investment of between 30 minutes and an hour each day, depending on the length of the chapters. But if we spend this much time watching television, surely we can spend some time investing in knowing God's word.

Jon Galloway



# DIARY

## January

17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> – **BBS Family Retreat**: “In the Steps of the Master”; venue: Bassenfell Manor Christian Retreat Centre near Keswick. Contact: [britishbibleschool.com](http://britishbibleschool.com)

## February

8<sup>th</sup> – **Eastwood (Nottinghamshire)**: Quarterly Outreach meeting – “Jesus – when you are ill”. Light refreshments at 6.00 pm and lesson at 7.00 pm. Contact: Adrian Limb ([cofceastwood@aol.com](mailto:cofceastwood@aol.com)).

21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> – **Northampton**: Youth Weekend. Contact: Mark Hill ([marks@uwclub.net](mailto:marks@uwclub.net)).

28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> – **Hyvots Bank & Kirkcaldy**: East Coast Joint Meetings – “2020 Vision”, 7.30 pm. Speaker: Mark Hill. Friday at Hyvots Bank, Saturday in Kirkcaldy (Hayfield Community Centre). Contact: Alan Moyes ([alan.j.moyes@gmail.com](mailto:alan.j.moyes@gmail.com)) or Nick Wilson ([hniwilson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:hniwilson@blueyonder.co.uk)).

## March

14<sup>th</sup> – **Great Barr**: Bible Seminar. Venue: Main hall, Collingwood Community Centre, Collingwood Drive, Birmingham. B43 7NF. Contact: Sola Adeosun ([sola.adeosun@gmail.com](mailto:sola.adeosun@gmail.com)).

## April

11<sup>th</sup> – **Kirkcaldy**: Annual Social Day, 1.30 pm. Speaker: Adam Barr. Contact: Alan Moyes ([alan.J.Moyes@gmail.com](mailto:alan.J.Moyes@gmail.com)).

## May

9<sup>th</sup> – **Eastwood (Nottinghamshire)**: Quarterly Outreach meeting – “Jesus – when you feel broken”. Light refreshments at 6.00 pm and lesson at 7.00 pm. Contact: Adrian Limb ([cofceastwood@aol.com](mailto:cofceastwood@aol.com)).

16<sup>th</sup> – **Liverpool & Skelmersdale**: Ladies’ Day. Contact: Maria Appiah-Anane ([mgvaa5@googlemail.com](mailto:mgvaa5@googlemail.com)).

## July

3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> – **Camp Heatherbell**: “Focus” at Auchengillan Outdoor Centre, Stockiemuir Road, Blanefield, Glasgow G63 9BA. Contact: Adam Barr ([brujnr@icloud.com](mailto:brujnr@icloud.com)) or Graham McDonald ([Graham@gmcd.net](mailto:Graham@gmcd.net)).

## August

8<sup>th</sup> – **Eastwood (Nottinghamshire)**: Quarterly Outreach meeting – “Jesus – when you feel forsaken”. Light refreshments at 6.00 pm and lesson at 7.00 pm. Contact: Adrian Limb ([cofceastwood@aol.com](mailto:cofceastwood@aol.com)).

16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> – **Camp Charnwood**: John’s Lee Wood campsite, Markfield Lane, Leicester, LE67 9PS. Contact: Guy Sandison (07791 101397) or Simon Hardy (07728 038636).

27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> – **European Christian Workshop**: Lancaster University. Theme – ‘AWAKE’. Contact: Stephen Woodcock (01509 768789 or [registration@europeanchristianworkshop.com](mailto:registration@europeanchristianworkshop.com)).

## September

5<sup>th</sup> – **Great Barr**: Fellowship Day. Venue: Main Hall, Collingwood Community Centre, Collingwood Drive, Birmingham. B43 7NF. Contact: Sola Adeosun ([sola.adeosun@gmail.com](mailto:sola.adeosun@gmail.com)).

26<sup>th</sup> – **Peterhead**: Annual Social Day, 1.00 pm. Speakers: Tony Coffey and Graham McDonald. To help with catering, please send number attending by beginning of September. Contact: William Strachan ([wstrachan007@gmail.com](mailto:wstrachan007@gmail.com)).



## DIARY

### November

7<sup>th</sup> – **Eastwood (Nottinghamshire)**: Quarterly Outreach meeting – “Jesus – when you feel forsaken”. Light refreshments at 6.00 pm and lesson at 7.00 pm. Contact: Adrian Limb ([cofceastwood@aol.com](mailto:cofceastwood@aol.com)).

### *European Events Calendar*

#### February 2020

17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> – **Gemünden, Germany**: Advanced Bible Study Series. Arrive Monday evening for ABSS I, which begins on Tuesday morning. ABSS I – Tuesday-Friday; ABSS II – Friday-Sunday. Contact: Paul Brazle ([brazle.paul@gmail.com](mailto:brazle.paul@gmail.com)).

27<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> March – **European Ladies’ Retreat** in Burg Lichtenberg, Thallichtenberg, Germany. Theme: “A Royal Priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). Organised by Christian women in the UK. Contact: [elrorganizers@gmail.com](mailto:elrorganizers@gmail.com). Website: <http://elr.yolasite.com>.

Brenton James, a Christian brother who lives in France, has a close friend whose daughter would like to spend some time in Britain improving her English. **Delphine Bellanger** is a 17 year old who speaks some English – she would like to stay with a family who have children that she could look after in return for board and lodging. Her family will be providing all other support.

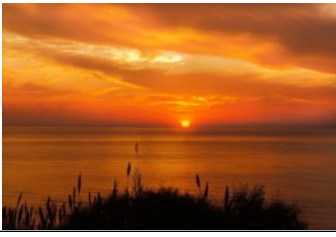
Contact Brenton on [brenfrance@outlook.com](mailto:brenfrance@outlook.com) for more information.

### Advanced Bible Study Series in Gemünden, Germany

ABSS I – 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February

ABSS II – 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> February

Contact: Paul Brazle ([brazle.paul@gmail.com](mailto:brazle.paul@gmail.com))



# THE FINAL WORD



## The light of Jesus has come

*'Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.'* (Isaiah 60:1-2)

Every week it seems that there is some sort of glum news, nationally, locally, church or family and it seems that we are walking through mud and in darkness. Life is anything but easy. Christmas may have been OK for a few days but then someone, somewhere went and spoiled it. Another air disaster, another marriage break up, another whatever it may be, but it was not fun.

*Darkness is over the peoples.* Isaiah wrote these words about 800 years before Jesus was born. He was looking ahead and believed with all his heart that there would be light among the people of God and that light was reflective. It was the light of the glory of the LORD. It was that light that was created in Genesis 1:3. It did not come from Sun or Moon but was the beginning of the creation. Light is beautiful. In the darkness of winter we like to see the bright lights on trees or in shops, in our houses and in the streets. We need light; we need something to warm our

hearts and souls, though we just can't manage to do it by ourselves.

The light from God is reflective

light; it bounces from God to us, then on to those around us. The light of the glory of Almighty God appears over us and therefore has to be seen by others. Years ago I remember singing 'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine,' or 'Be a lighthouse for Jesus, be a lighthouse shining bright.' Among the little ones we sang 'I'll be a sunbeam for Jesus, to shine for him each day, in every way try to please him at home at school at play.' This is perhaps not great theology but the simple sharing of the good news about Jesus. The nightmares of life come covered in darkness. *'Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning'* (Psalm 30:5).

2019 may have been an amazing year for you or an horrendous time or just plain boring. I wish I could tell even myself what will happen in 2020 but I am unable. So for myself and for you I pray that the light of Jesus will shine into you and out of you. I wish that the darkness of life could be removed but all I know is that there is only one true, honest source of real light and that is through Jesus our LORD.

*Light of the world you stepped down into darkness,*

*Opened my eyes let me see beauty that made this heart adore you,*

*Hope of a life spent with you.*

*Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down,*

*Here I am to say that you're my God...*

(written by Tim Hughes)

Lord open our eyes and let us see your light.

Trevor

