

the **Christian** worker MAGAZINE



August 2021 • Vol 53 No 8



One new Christian!

**Articles by John Kneller,
Alex Gear and Jon Galloway**

Appeals and updates

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EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION

The Christian Worker Magazine is published monthly as a news magazine for Churches of Christ in the United Kingdom. The first issue was published in January 1969.

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/christianworkeruk

Former Editors: Albert E. Winstanley (1969-1973; 1980-1987); Robert C. Eckman (1973-1980); Graham A. Fisher (1987-2014)

All articles and news items should be sent to **Trevor Williams** by the 21st of each month. Late items may be accepted until the 25th. Publication is the first day of each month.

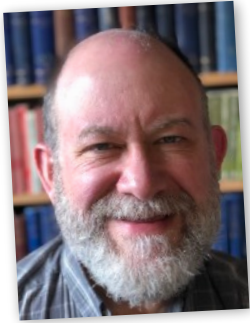
To receive *The Christian Worker Magazine* as a free pdf, send your e-address to jdgalloway@mac.com. Professionally printed copies are available at cost. Please contact Trevor for details – twilliams195@hotmail.co.uk.



Front cover:
blooming rose in East
Kilbride; above:
lavender growing in
East Kilbride



MY PERSPECTIVE



We are a
blessed
people

Blessings

It is so easy to get caught up in the mindset of those around us and complain about almost everything that happens. Perhaps during the present Covid crisis this can be an even greater temptation. Despite how gloomy life can look at times, we have much for which to be thankful.

We should be thankful for our lives and all that we enjoy each day. Everything that we enjoy in life ultimately has its source in God. James wrote: *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows”* (James 1:17 NIV). That includes all that we need for life: our food, clothing, and shelter. Jesus reminded us that if God takes care of birds and plants that he will also take care of people, because we are more valuable to him (Matthew 6:25-34). God provides the blessings of life for us each day.

Also we have our families to also be thankful for. Solomon reminds us of the preciousness of our children. *“Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them”* (Psalms 127:3-5).

Perhaps our families can be trying at times, but as we grow older we realise what a great blessing they are to us. It is wonderful to be surrounded by loving children and grandchildren.

Often we are reminded that every spiritual blessing we have is from Jesus. Paul wrote: *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who*

has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). He went on to mention many of these in what has been called a great poem of praise.

Because of Jesus we have a relationship with God as adopted sons. What a privilege to be part of God’s family! We have God’s grace, freely given to us through Jesus and “lavished” on us (don’t you just love that word?). We have the forgiveness of sins because of Jesus’ death. Because of Jesus we have hope. God has also given us his Holy Spirit *“who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance”* (Ephesians 1:13).

Because of all that we have in Jesus, how can we sit around and complain about our life? Yes, we have had to live with restrictions for almost seventeen months, but have these taken away any of our blessings? We have had to worship in different ways, but has this detracted from God’s love for us? If anything, the restrictions brought on us by this pandemic should help us to be more thankful for what we have!

When we are tempted to complain we need to count our many blessings.

*When upon life’s billow you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

*So, amid the conflicts, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all,
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.*

Jon



CONGRATULATIONS!

Another new Christian in Liverpool

After many months of study, prayer and thought, **Tom Stock** surrendered his life to Christ on Sunday, 11th July. Please celebrate with us and keep Tom in your prayers as he begins his new life in Christ.

Mike Glover



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Virtual Jesus- Keeping Him Real

A 'non-camp' digital experience.

For ages 8-18

This will be a virtual gathering point for youth

Coming this summer- for details, contact Jason 07795560990



CATCH THE VISION

As I write this in July we seem to be seeing light at the end of the Covid tunnel. We revised our worship to protect our members and conform to government guidelines. One family did test positive but have safely recovered for which we are truly thankful. We are all looking forward to resuming normal worship including unrestricted praise. With masks and visors gone and a new sense of normality the future looks promising.

A passage that has encouraged me through the lockdown and restrictions is the account of the angel Gabriel's visit to Zechariah promising the gift of a son. Due to age Zechariah is doubtful and asks, 'How can I know that this is so?' Gabriel replies, 'I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you.' The promise was from God and that made it certain.

His claim to stand in the presence of God is mind blowing and beyond my imagination. To live within the Divine presence. To be God's messenger. To

know the inner workings of heaven and be a part of it and see the great glory of God surely sets him apart. For us to draw the veil aside and take a brief look into heaven would be more than we can imagine yet Gabriel has the great privilege of standing there in God's presence daily. What effect would that have on us? On our faith? On our commitment?

I think of Stephen after his great testimony before the Jewish rulers when he looked up into the heavens and 'saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God'. That vision empowered him to face a violent death and pray for forgiveness for his killers.

At the transfiguration and glorification of Jesus, Peter said 'it is good for us to be here'. This was a new and powerful vision of Jesus for Peter. Jesus is declared by God to be his son, my beloved; and they are commanded to listen to him. When Moses received the Ten Commandments and came down the mountain to the people his face shone so brightly that he had to cover his face.

Paul writing to the Philippians (chapter 4) encourages them to stand fast in their faith even when there were problems in the congregation. He urges them to work together as his fellow-workers in the gospel because their names are written in the Book of Life.

As workers in the gospel our names are also written in the Book of Life. One day we will stand in God's presence and witness all the glory that Gabriel saw. We will see the glory of God and the Lord Jesus standing in welcome and know him as the son we listened to in this life. And like Zechariah we will know that God always keeps His promises. Can we catch the vision to encourage us in our Christian life?

John Kneller

John Kneller worships with the Christians in Newtongrange, although he is originally from Wigan. He served many years as the treasurer for 'The Scripture Standard'. He enjoys his retirement and spending time with his grandchildren.





BRITISH BIBLE SCHOOL NOTES

Autumn Study Week 2021

Following the best part of a year and a half of cancelled or virtualised events, we are delighted to confirm that, Lord willing, our planned Autumn Study Week is to be going ahead this coming November.

This year we are delighted to offer you three full days of intensive classroom-based teaching on the book of Acts at our annual Study Week in the north of England. We have four teachers planned for the event which begins on the evening of Monday, 1st November and concludes on the morning of Friday, 5th November. We would love to have you join us.

Those of you who are familiar with Bassenfell Manor in the northern Lake District will know that it is not only an ideal setting for an event of this nature, but also well suited for such under the recent conditions, being particularly spacious for



what is generally a relatively small group. You can expect:

- Three full days of study and reflection away from the cares of everyday life
- Delightful accommodation, good food and decent company
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And all this for only £150 inclusive of accommodation, food, bedding and study materials. Please look on our web site for more details, or get in touch with us at study@britishbibleschool.com.

Thank you for your continued support of our work, both financially and through prayer. May God bless each of us in his service.

Patrick Boyns
britishbibleschool.com



FAMILY NEWS

DIRECTORY CHANGE

We are making some changes here in Skelmersdale. From 1st August the congregation in Skelmersdale is relocating to Ormskirk (which is about 5 miles away from Skelmersdale).

ORMSKIRK

Meeting at Aughton Village Hall,
Winefred Lane, Aughton, ORMSKIRK
L39 5DH

Send post to: 152 Ormskirk Road,
UpHolland, Skelmersdale WN8 0AF

Website: www.the-scriptures.co.uk

Sunday worship: 9:30 am
Bible study: 11:00 am
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:30 pm

Contacts:

Mike & Funmi Glover. Tel. (07879)
444267; Email: mike97@talktalk.net

Stephen & Sheila Daniell. Tel. (07929)
263023; Email:
stephen.daniell@hotmail.co.uk

Tony & Mandy Tyson. Tel. (07473)
970143, (01696) 371885;
Email :tonytyson66@yahoo.co.uk

Tony Tyson

UPDATE FROM EAST KILBRIDE

The congregation in East Kilbride continues to enjoy peace and harmony. Restrictions due to the global pandemic continue to impact some of what we can do but the congregation is pulling together as we can.

The merger between the two congregations in East Kilbride has gone smoothly. Jon and Alex share most of the lessons on Sunday between them. It has been wonderful to have more men

available to help in worship on Sundays. The spirit at our worship periods has been uplifting and very positive as we encourage each other through God's word as well as just being able to be together.

Restrictions are not yet totally lifted in Scotland, so we continue to abide by the rules that are in place. Scotland has been in Level 0 since mid-July which has meant two changes in what we can do in worship: we are able to sing and we have been able to reduce the distance between seats in worship to one metre.

As we still have a face covering requirement indoors in Scotland these must continue to be worn in worship. This also means that singing has to be done with face coverings. But singing with face coverings is better than not singing at all! Also the congregation has chosen to continue to 'sing' a song in British Sign Language each Sunday. After singing in sign for just over a year, we have developed a vocabulary and a skill that we pray can be used in the future. So all were in favour of continuing to develop what we have learned.

Scotland will have further restrictions lifted in mid-August. We are planning to resume our Bible classes on Sundays and Wednesday from 22nd August. Also we are having guest speakers periodically which help us to reconnect with others in Scotland.

We have been through a challenging sixteen months but it is nice to see the end in sight, even though we are not there yet. Although the virus has not gone away, through the vaccine and the usual precautions we are learning to live with it.

Jon Galloway



SILENCE IN LUBBOCK

I have flown to Lubbock, Texas, numerous times, primarily to recruit AIM (Adventures in Missions) teams for the work in East Kilbride. I fly out of Lubbock on the early morning flight. As it is always over-booked, the airline staff offer you \$250 if you will give up your seat and take a later flight. But there were no takers that morning, probably because work is significantly more important than \$250.

Just before take-off we heard this announcement: "If are you willing to give up your seat you will receive \$400 and a seat on the next flight to Houston." A woman raised her hand and some of the waiting passengers cheered. The woman waved her ticket in the air, did a little dance and headed off.

It's a small jet, literally like flying inside a tube. The usual boarding commotion was over. The door was closed and the flight attendant picked up the flashing phone. Two minutes later the cockpit door opened, the main access door was reopened and a man stepped into the plane. After talking with the flight crew he took the phone in his hand and informed us, "The pilot's calculations showed the plane was at maximum flying weight and due to a strong crosswind, five passengers needed to leave the plane!" Nobody responded positively to him. He then said, "we are going nowhere until five passengers disembark. If you are prepared to get off would you raise your hand?"

I raised my hand, unbuckled, stood up, and opened the overhead compartment for my bag. I looked back, only one other passenger was standing (pressures of life playing their hand again). Another announcement followed: "Would you please stow your belongings in the overhead compartment and take your

seat." Confusion abounded. We were informed, "The pilot made a mistake with his original calculations and his recalculation showed we could fly." At that the man left, the door was closed, and there was complete silence. I looked over at the guy across the aisle. I asked him, "Are you thinking what I am thinking?" He answered, "Yes. Was the pilot right the first time or the second time?"

No one challenged this new information. Nobody questioned the reworking of the pilot's calculations, everybody just sat there. Every passenger at that moment unwittingly placed their lives in the hands of a man we had never met and knew nothing about other than his maths was questionable.

We taxied from the gate with the long grass swaying in the wind. Total silence prevailed. Suddenly the aeroplane throttled back, and we were off down the runway. Once in the air the relief was audible with loud cheers and hand claps.

It is disconcerting that millions of people place their lives in the hands of men they know nothing about. People allow themselves to be swayed by credentials, stardom, and modern pressures. People rarely challenge new beliefs or practices because the society they live in is accepting of them. For the most part society embraces these ideas and practices – is our silence taken as being in agreement with them or, at worst, that we have no backbone?

Jesus is the world's only hope, and the world needs to HEAR his message.

Are you willing to be vocal for him or remain silent, understanding now what silence is perceived as?

Alex Gear

Alex Gear serves as an evangelist in East Kilbride. Originally from Castlemilk in Glasgow, he has been serving congregations in East Kilbride for over twenty years. He is married to Gillian and they have three children and three grandchildren.





APPEALS & UPDATES

INDIA PRAYER APPEAL

For some time now, I have been trying to encourage and support the Lord's people in Pedana, India. This support has mainly provided teaching materials and exchanged email messages with the elders and evangelists.

As we are all now painfully aware, the Covid crisis has caused great suffering and loss to many in India, and the Lord's people have not been exempt from the hardships. The majority of the men in Pedana lost their jobs and began to struggle to feed and clothe their families. In an attempt to relieve those worst affected, the elders and preachers decided that they and their families would fast for two days each week and use the money they saved to help feed their brethren. Eventually, despite their sacrifice, families were still going without enough food.

When I learned of their plight, I was anxious to do something to help. The congregation at Clarkston immediately sent funds to purchase enough basic foodstuff and medicines to last them for four weeks; this was a great relief to



every family within the church. They also helped feed some of their needy neighbours who were not Christian but Hindu or Muslim; they

tried to help as best they could. These were tough times for the congregation, but worse was yet to come. Eight of the brothers and sisters contracted COVID with three fatalities. As he insisted on taking relief to the homes of suffering brethren, one of the evangelists contracted COVID, was unable to receive hospital care and sadly died, leaving a wife and three young children. This was a low point for the Christians, but they remain faithful to Jesus and accept that caring for his people sometimes comes with a high personal cost.

When I mentioned to the elders at Pedana that I would like to share their experiences with their brethren in the UK, they were anxious that I did not make a strong appeal for financial support. They know, only too well, that many Christians in India require help at this time, and they do not want to undermine any work being done to help in other places. So the purpose of this report is to solicit prayers on behalf of the Christian families, the elders and evangelist, especially for those who have or are suffering from this terrible sickness. Then there are the bereaved, the widows and orphans now dependant upon the church for their daily bread. May we pray that our



APPEALS & UPDATES

Father's grace continues to strengthen them and uphold the hope we all have in Jesus.

Jack Paton

VEDADO, CUBA

Great news on the appeal in last month's *Christian Worker!* Through the kindness of brothers and sisters in the UK, France and America we have managed to raise the funds required for the building and to carry out some renovations to make it even more useful for the congregation.

We would like to thank all those who donated and also those who considered the appeal. May God continue to bless you in all your work.

Derek Brown (Castlemilk, Glasgow)

PAKISTAN BIBLE APPEAL

Naeem Sabir is in need of Bibles in Urdu to use in reaching people in his area of Pakistan. These Bibles cost around £6.00 each.

He writes: "Because of Covid-19 deaths lots of people are changing their way and turning to the Lord Jesus Christ. They are asking for Bibles and we are trying our best to spread the gospel so they can have a Bible they can read for themselves."

If you can help, please send funds to *The Christian Worker*, % Trevor Williams (address on page 2). For further information contact Trevor: (0115 837 6895).

Trevor Williams

BELGIUM FLOODS

Many in the UK have heard of the floods in Belgium and Germany. Below is a report sent by Richard Wolfe and Jean-Marie Frerot in Verviers.

Due to a low pressure system it rained persistently for days to the point of causing

apocalyptic events (I am using the words of the news reports here).



There are two dams located thirty miles from Verviers. Both received so much water that they couldn't resist the pressure. The water gushed out and came thundering down the valley. In a matter of hours, our city and those around were partially destroyed. Houses crumpled, bridges collapsed, cars were washed away and many people were killed. We were horrified by what we saw. People couldn't get out of their houses or their cars and drowned, entire families. The rescue boats flipped and firemen were washed down the river. Many people had to climb onto their roofs to escape the water, but helicopters were unable to get to them due to the low clouds and high winds.



Many of our church families are now sleeping in public basketball halls or in rooms lent to them by good souls. They are unable to return home either because of a lack of running water or electricity or gas to cook. They have to use clothes that are lent to them and eat what people are willing to share with them. They have lost everything. One of our brothers in particular was really affected by it. His name is Jean-Pierre

APPEALS & UPDATES

Bangu. His family is one of the most active in the congregation. He had muddy water up to his ceilings. He was supposed to preach this Sunday but his Bible and his notes were washed away.



As if this was not enough, we now have to deal with looters who are entering all shattered doors to steal whatever they can. The Christians who had to evacuate and were unable to return to their homes are worried that they will have nothing left when they go back. They hope that the military will show up soon to give a hand in clearing the debris and re-establishing utilities. But it is likely to take a few days.

Tonight, the storm has calmed down a little. It is still raining but less intensely and the water has gone down. Suzanne and I were able to go to the church building. It is hard because the police block many roads and many of the roads are unsafe. Fortunately, the water level stopped right at the steps of the entrance of our building. But there was blood on the doors. The church has no power and no water, since it is right next to the area that was flooded. God protected our meeting place.

Update: 19th July 2021

Currently, outside relief workers are discouraged from coming into Verviers, due to the large number of trucks, cranes and other heavy equipment on site. To date, 36 deaths are reported here, plus 150 in Germany and over 100 missing.

Many houses have been destroyed. Yesterday we went to the Verviers suburb of Pepinster where Carion, our brother in Christ, lives. He is paraplegic. His house and several others have completely disappeared. Only the cellars remain.

The spirituality of the congregation remains good and strong after this year of Covid. Yesterday, 42 attended worship. We had to meet upstairs in the classroom of Freed-Hardeman University which is part of our building. Since there is still no electricity in the area, the auditorium was too dark.



The trains are not running, and this morning I heard that the line from Verviers to Liege won't be in service until late August.

In several locations it is a true spectacle of desolation. But I am confident that this trial will work to the advantage of the congregation. We assist, we console, we preach and we grow.

Thank you for your prayers. And know that our congregation remains strong spiritually despite these catastrophic events. Please continue to pray for us.

Jean-Marie Frerot

If any would like to help the Christians in Verviers, please contact Jean-Marie or his son Daniel. Jean-Marie Frerot: jmfrerot@icloud.com; Daniel Frerot: daniel.frerot@gmail.com.

Richard Wolfe



JOY IN WORSHIP

God's people had been in exile for seventy years. Upon their arrival back in Judah after Cyrus allowed them to return home, they settled once again in the towns. But they needed to get back to a right relationship with God which included worshipping him as he had directed. For them this meant resuming national worship in Jerusalem.

In order to worship God an altar was needed even more than a building where their worship was centred. So the first thing the priests did was to build the altar of God so they could offer burnt offerings.

"Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices." (Ezra 3:2-3 NIV)

Notice that they were careful to follow what had been written in the Law of

Moses, the Jewish scriptures. They continued by celebrating the Festival of Tabernacles and restarting other sacrifices that were commanded by God (Ezra 3:4-6). There was no temple but this did not stop their worship of God.

It was the following year that they began rebuilding the house of God in Jerusalem. When the foundation was laid the people celebrated.

"With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: 'He is good; his love towards Israel endures for ever.' And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No-one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away." (Ezra 3:11-13)

This is a scene depicting mixed emotions. Many were shouting for joy because God's house was once again being built. But others were weeping because of what they had lost. These people would have been old and they had seen the first temple, the one built by Solomon. They were mourning what they had lost and, it would seem, mourning because of their sin which caused the first temple to have been destroyed.

The times we live in perhaps reflect some of these emotions. Worship has continued through the pandemic but in ways that were different for most of us. But just as worship for the Jews did not require a building, our worship doesn't either and was often accomplished



JOY IN WORSHIP

'remotely'. We can be thankful to God for the technology that allowed this. We joined together to worship God with other Christians, we talked to each other, we sang together, we broke bread together, we studied God's word together.

Was it real worship? Of course it was! Just as other meetings for our work were conducted online and were real meetings, worship together online was real worship. Worship isn't going through a ritual in a building with other Christians but is found in the heart of the worshipper.

When speaking with the woman at the well in Samaria Jesus dispelled the view that worship is centred on a place. He told the woman: *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24)

Perhaps the words of Paul are also applicable when we begin to judge others based on what we are doing. *"Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand."* (Romans 14:4)

As in-person worship resumes we experience the same emotions the Jews experienced: joy and weeping. Weeping for what we have had to go through – and perhaps the loss of loved ones to the virus – but joy that we can once again be together in-person worshipping our Father.

May our worship of God be ever more joyful because of what we have had to live through the past year and a half as we lift our voices



in praise of our Creator and Saviour. May we express the same sentiment that the Jews did when they resumed worship: *"The Lord is good; his love towards his people endures for ever."*

Jon Galloway

A TRIP OF A LIFETIME
TO THE BIBLE LANDS OF
ISRAEL & JORDAN

2022

January 22nd – February 3rd



If you are interested in
joining us please contact
Ian Starrs for further
details

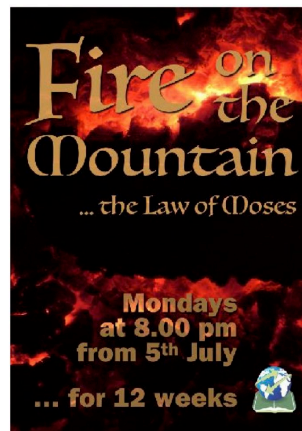
email: jes22ian@msn.com

NOTICES

Online Bible Classes with the British Bible School

For twelve weeks commencing
5th July 2021

Mondays at 8.00 pm

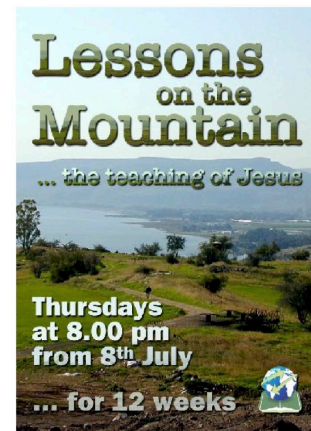


At the foot of a mountain in a remote desert, a nation of liberated slaves received a law and entered into a covenant with their God, the only God.

Thousands of years later, the influence of that law is still felt ...

Presenter: David Chapman

Thursdays at 8.00 pm



One of the most profound and life-changing texts, this section of the Gospel of Matthew has so much to say of the daily walk of the disciple of Jesus.

Considered by many to be something of a manifesto of the kingdom of God ...

Presenter: Patrick Boyns

www.britishbibleschool.com

Trusting the Teacher

... taking him at his word

Autumn Weekend Family Retreat

Friday, 17th to Sunday, 19th September 2021
at Letton Hall in Norfolk

www.britishbibleschool.com

ACTS

British Bible School Autumn Study Week

Bassenfäll Manor, Bassenthwaite, Lake District
Monday, 1st to Friday, 5th November 2021

- Three full days of study and reflection away from the cares of life
- Delightful accommodation, good food and decent company
- All inclusive cost: £150 per student

This module begins to examine this key New Testament book within the context of God's purpose for mankind. The mission implications for the student are immense as the good news of Jesus continues to be taken across cultural boundaries throughout the world.

For the details visit our website: britishbibleschool.com



DIARY

August

2nd-20th September – British Bible School: Evening Online Class – “Fire on the Mountain – the Law of Moses” (taught by David Chapman), each Monday at 8.00 pm. Please see British Bible School website for details (<http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/online-events>).

5th-23rd September – British Bible School: Evening Online Class – “Lessons on the Mountain – the teachings of Jesus” (taught by Patrick Boyns), each Thursday at 8.00 pm. Please see British Bible School website for details (<http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/online-events>).

28th – Liverpool: Gospel Meeting – “Finding God” (Matthew 11:28-30), speaker: Diego Rojas, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 970 213 6444. Contact: Charles Yankiah (07891 262910 or cyankiah@hotmail.com).

September

4th – Great Barr (Birmingham): Fellowship Day, 10.00 am-3.30 pm. Theme: Abundant Life In Christ (John.10:1-10). Lesson 1: Abundant Life in Christ through His Love & Sacrifice (John 10: 7-18, 25-30) – Stephen Woodcock (Shephed). Lesson 2: Abundant Life in Christ through His Humility & Service (John 13:1-17) – Adam Barr (Cumbernauld). Zoom ID: 879 9050 1513; Password: 484833. The Zoom link opens as from 9:45 am. Contact: Sola Adeosun (sola.adeosun@gmail.com).

11th – Great Barr (Birmingham): An Evening of Prayer and Psalms, 7.00 pm. Contact: Sola Adeosun (sola.adeosun@gmail.com).

17th-19th – British Bible School Family Retreat at Letton Hall: Trusting the Teacher...taking him at his word. Please visit our website at: <http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/upcoming-events/letton-hall-family-retreat-2021> and complete the Registration Form online. A deposit of £10 per person is required on booking, with full payment due by 3rd September 2021.

25th – Liverpool: Gospel Meeting – “Finding God” (Matthew 11:28-30), speaker: Wayne Pascall, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 970 213 6444. Contact: Charles Yankiah (07891 262910 or cyankiah@hotmail.com).

October

29th-30th – Peterborough: Ladies’ Day on Zoom. Contact: Marsha Erysthee (merysthee1@aol.com).

30th – Liverpool: Gospel Meeting – “Finding God” (Matthew 11:28-30), speaker: Steve Lusk, 7.00 pm. Zoom Meeting ID: 970 213 6444. Contact: Charles Yankiah (07891 262910 or cyankiah@hotmail.com).

November

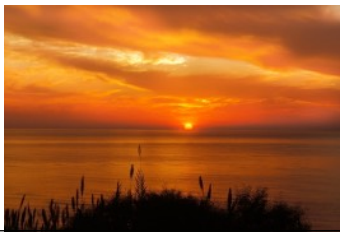
1st-5th – British Bible School Autumn Study Week at Bassenfell Manor: Acts. Teachers: Patrick Boyns, Jon Galloway, Mark Hill, and Jack Paton. Cost: £150 all inclusive. For further information and registration form: <http://britishbibleschool.com/news-and-events/upcoming-events/autumn-study-week-2021>.

December

11th – Great Barr (Birmingham): An Evening of Prayer and Psalms, 7.00 pm. Contact: Sola Adeosun (sola.adeosun@gmail.com).

January

22nd -3rd February – Trip of a Lifetime to the Bible Lands. Contact: Ian Starrs (jes22ian@msn.com).



THE FINAL WORD



The Great Storyteller

With all the great texts about God that we see in Scripture some may think that the parables are the easiest to understand. Yet it is worth noting that God incarnate is the one who told the stories that have attracted us to Jesus throughout our lives. Some of those seemingly simple stories are repeated thousands of times across the world week after week. Some may think these gifts of God to his followers may seem better for the children or the uninitiated, and the meaty doctrines are better for those who are walking well in the faith. To a degree I challenge this; if Jesus was the storyteller so should be the preacher.

Over many years I have listened to 'Bible gymnastic preachers' who seem to want to impress all with their encyclopaedic knowledge of the Bible as they skilfully jump from one passage to another and then offer a number of references to back up their teaching. I am pleased that such brethren have taken time and effort to research the sacred word but what they share with the congregation is very little.

Some preachers seem to be in a dream wandering from one place to another, sometimes losing themselves and often their hearers. Others may want to drive home a particular point which perhaps would be better discussed in a Bible

study situation rather than from the pulpit. Something I have learned over many years of trying to preach is that no one remembers much of what is said in a sermon.

If a thought can be remembered or the listeners can take home a single word to think about then perhaps it might be said that the time was well spent.

One type of sermon remembered is when the story is told – that is why Jesus used parables, stories for the hearers. When this happens there may well be something that grabs the attention of the hearers that makes the story real. Secondly there may be something that God is saying to the hearers that very day. Thirdly, hopefully there might be a response to the story told. The story may effect a two way conversation: God speaks to me and I speak to God.

When the Bible story is told the teller needs to enter into the text searching every word to make it come to life. The teller needs to feel the heat of the day for the sower, or the pain of the wounded man on the road to Jericho, or the thrill of the precious pearl. There is a need to be right there in the middle of the story. It has to be owned before it can be shared.

Much of our Bible is written as narrative, Genesis, Exodus and other historic events on through the whole history of the Hebrew peoples. When we arrive in the New Testament the first five books are again the stories of God working with his people. There is much doctrine to wonder about in the later epistles yet even there we find the picture language which invites us to listen. We must never forget to tell the story.

Speak to us, O God that we might listen. Help us to speak that others may hear you. Amen

Trevor

