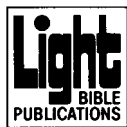




Light

...on a new world

*Published for the
Bexley Christadelphian Ecclesia (Dawn Fellowship) by*



*Light Bible Publications,
PO Box 362
DARTFORD,
DA1 9GT, England*

Editor: Colin Dryland

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 the Lord Jesus Christ and the setting up of the kingdom of God under his rulership when he returns to the earth.

Visit www.lightmagazine.org for back issues, special issues and further information.

VOLUME TWENTY THREE NUMBER ONE

CONTENTS

Editorial	Page 1
The Development of the 1st Century Church (5)	Page 3
Important Bible Words – Sin and Death	Page 13
Bible Characters – Esther	Page 21
What did Jesus mean?	Page 29
From our mailbag	Page 34

Cover: English Primroses

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

COPYRIGHT

*Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright 1982 by
Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*



Editorial

WE live in a world of uncertainty, a world that is subject to rapid change. Recent events in the Middle East have demonstrated how quickly countries can be de-stabilised and governments overthrown. These changes have led to further major problems creating a political vacuum and a failure to bring about the much needed reforms that will be of benefit to the citizens of those countries.

The present crisis in Syria could lead to a state of civil war, resulting in untold misery, many deaths and destruction of property. The Arab League and the United Nations have so far been unsuccessful in bringing the opposing parties together round the table, to resolve the situation by peaceful means. Thinking people are wondering about the implications of this in a region that has been unstable for such a long time.

One thing is certain, the world is not changing for the better. Wherever we look, whether it be the Middle East, the financial crisis in Europe, the plight of millions of people in Africa and other parts of the world, human governments are unable to find a real and lasting solution to these problems. You may well ask *'where is all this leading to'*?

Bible students know the answer to the question and are not surprised by the present state of the world. The Bible speaks of a coming time of change in the world that will affect all countries and all people without exception. This change will be brought about by the overthrow of all forms of human government. This will not leave a political vacuum as we see in parts of the Middle East at present. Instead there will be a new world-wide government headed up by a man chosen by God.

LIGHT ON A NEW WORLD

Around 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Paul's preaching took him to many places, one of which was Athens, a city much in the news at present as a result of the Greek economic crisis. Paul's message to the Athenians is found in Acts chapter 17 and centred on their worship of idols. Paul preached to them the one true God who made everything and *'is Lord of heaven and earth'* (verse 24).

Paul then made a stirring appeal to these Athenians to reject the worship of idols which are *'shaped by art and man's devising'* (verse 29) and to worship the one true God. Why? *'because he (God) has appointed a day on which he will judge the the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all, by raising him from the dead'* (verse 31).

This is not an isolated verse of Scripture. It is confirmed by many other passages in both the Old and New Testaments some of which give us firm indicators that we are now living at the time when we can expect this to happen. God's plan is to bring about the greatest upheaval the world has ever known. He will send his Son Jesus to a world in crisis and changes will be implemented which no amount of human endeavour could ever achieve. This will result in the establishment of the world-wide kingdom of God on earth.

Will you be ready for that world-shaking event?

Light magazine changes

Starting with this issue, Light magazine will in future be published once a quarter, the planned publication dates being 1st March, 1st June, 1st September and 1st December, God willing. The size of the magazine will also be increased from 28 to 36 pages and we hope to include more coloured content, including pictures, maps and charts. We trust this will enhance the content of the magazine for the benefit of our readers.



The Development of the 1st Century Church

5. The preaching of Philip

JESUS said to his apostles before he ascended to heaven: ‘...*you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*’ (Acts 1.8). Previous articles in this series have described the witness in Jerusalem. The events on the day of Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit marked the beginning of the preaching work of the apostles in **Jerusalem**. The witness that they were to give in **Judea and Samaria** was to be very different but it was still to be the hand of God that was directing the work. Instead of the visible revelation of God’s power this second phase of witnessing was the work of God by other means. The way in which these instructions of Jesus were carried out is shown by the record in the book of Acts.

The Church scattered

Persecution by the religious authorities in Jerusalem followed the death of the martyr Stephen. This in turn led to the believers being scattered from their homes in Jerusalem to the surrounding regions in order to find sanctuary: ‘*At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria...*’ (Acts 8.1).

This was a great trial of their new found faith. There was every

inducement for them to renounce their belief in the gospel and to enjoy a quiet life. But such was the strength of their faith that they not only clung to it but they were motivated to spread the word wherever they went: *‘Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word’* (Acts 8.4).



The witness *‘in Jerusalem’* had been the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but the witness *‘in Judea and Samaria’* was a result of the persecution and scattering of the believers. Foremost in this preaching was Philip who had previously worked alongside Stephen in Jerusalem

looking after the welfare of widows amongst the believers.

Now force of circumstances and a complete conviction of the truth of the message he carried meant that he actively spread the word to the people of Samaria (Acts 8.5).

The gospel preached by Philip

The gospel message preached by Philip consisted of two parts: *‘the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ’* (Acts 8.12). This definition is repeated several times in the book of Acts and accords with some words of Jesus to his disciples found in the gospel records (see opposite page for further details). It must also be noted that these things had to be accepted and believed before baptism could take place. For them salvation was on the basis that Jesus laid down: *‘He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he*

who does not believe will be condemned' (Mark 16.16). Baptism as recorded here followed belief in the gospel and stands in contrast to the various formulas used in churches today.

The Gospel defined

Four times in the book of the Acts of the Apostles the gospel is shown to be in two parts: *Part 1* about the kingdom of God; *Part 2* about the name of Jesus Christ.

- ❖ '...preached the things concerning the *kingdom of God* and the name of *Jesus Christ* (Acts 8.12).
- ❖ '...faith towards our Lord *Jesus Christ*...preaching the *kingdom of God*' (Acts 20.21, 25).
- ❖ 'he explained and solemnly testified of the *kingdom of God*, persuading them concerning *Jesus* from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets' (Acts 28.23).
- ❖ 'Preaching the *kingdom of God* and teaching the things which concern the Lord *Jesus Christ*' (Acts 28.31).

This definition is also apparent in some words of Jesus spoken to his disciples as recorded in parallel accounts by Matthew, Mark and Luke:

- ❖ '...left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for *my name's sake*' (Matthew 19.29).
- ❖ '...left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands *for my sake and the gospel's*' (Mark 10.29).
- ❖ '...left house or parents or brothers or wife or children for the *kingdom of God's sake*' (Luke 18.29).

Thus *the gospel* preached by the early church had these two elements: the things concerning the '*kingdom of God*' and the things concerning the '*name of Jesus Christ*'. The '*kingdom of God*' has reference to

the reward on the earth for the faithful and the ***‘name of Jesus Christ’*** has reference to the means of attaining to it. All Biblical evidence shows that both of these elements were understood and believed before baptism took place: *‘when they believed Philip as he preached **the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized**’* (Acts 8.12).

For further detail on these two vital elements of the gospel send for a copy of the booklet ‘A Declaration of the Truth revealed in the Bible’ to the correspondence secretary at the address on the inside front cover or email us at: mail@lightmagazine.org

The Holy Spirit passed on by the apostles

Philip in his preaching was gifted with the power of the Holy Spirit. He performed miracles which demonstrated that his authority was from God. The miracles which were performed confirmed the truth of the gospel that was preached. This is the pattern mentioned in the last verse of the gospel record of Mark: *‘And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs’* (Mark 16.20).

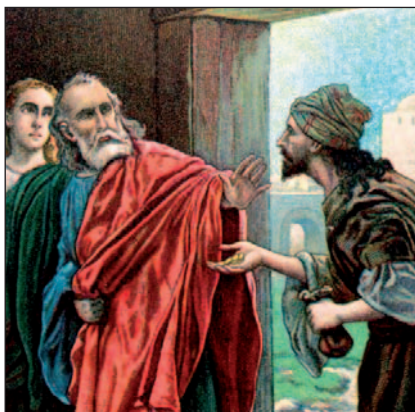
The same principle of miracles to confirm the word applied to the preaching of Jesus himself. He spoke of this when contending with unbelievers: *‘though you do not believe me, believe the works’* (John 10.38).

Now the record here is specific. The ability to pass on the powers of the Holy Spirit to other people was confined to the apostles. Philip, though he himself was full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6.3) did not have the power to pass it on to others. The passing on of the Holy Spirit was performed by Peter and John who came down from Jerusalem to perform the task: *‘Who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit...Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit’* (Acts 8.15,17). This ability of the

apostles to pass on the Holy Spirit is also noted in Acts 19.6, 2 Timothy 1.6 and Romans 1.11.

This is important to note because it meant that with the passing away of the apostles the ability to pass on the Holy Spirit also passed away. Thus Holy Spirit possession ceased to be a feature of the early church around the close of the first century. This is in fact the subject of a specific prophecy by the apostle Paul (1Corinthians 13.8, 9) as well as being confirmed by the writings of the ‘early Christian fathers’.

The power to work miracles proved particularly attractive to a man named Simon, who before his conversion practised sorcery. We read



that he ‘*was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done*’ (Acts 8.13).

So fascinated was Simon that he not only wanted the power himself but he wanted the power to pass it on to others. We are told that ‘*he offered them money, saying, “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit”*’ (Acts 8.19).

Personal prayer vital

This request lead to a stern rebuke from Peter for it showed an attitude of mind wholly unfitting for a believer in the gospel: ‘*You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you*’ (Acts 8.21, 22). From these words we can take two points. Firstly, the correct attitude of mind is vitally important in accepting the gospel message and a wrong attitude – ‘*the thought of your heart*’ – is something that

is hidden from our fellow men. Secondly, a situation like this can only be remedied by repentance assisted by personal prayer.

But such reform was something that Simon was apparently unwilling to do and Simon asked Peter to pray on his behalf: *'Pray to the Lord for me'* he said, not willing to face the task alone.

The Ethiopian eunuch

Following these events we read that Philip was directed to go to the road which went south from Jerusalem: *'So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship'* (Acts 8.27). This Ethiopian was a dignitary of high standing.

The country from which he came, now called Sudan, was known to the Romans as the kingdom of Meroe and we are told by the historian Pliny that at this time it was ruled over by a series of queens named Candace as a dynastic title (like Pharaoh or Caesar). Now this man was evidently a Jewish proselyte (a Gentile who had embraced Judaism). He had gone to Jerusalem for worship – and yet he would have been excluded from the temple. Why was this? As a eunuch he came under the prohibition of the law which said: *'He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the congregation of the LORD'* (Deuteronomy 23.1).

In such a condition he was attracted to the words of the prophet Isaiah who spoke about one who was *'wounded'* and *'despised'* and who had no *'generation'* because he was *'cut off'*. He was reading the words of Isaiah chapter 53. It is at this point that Philip appears on the scene. We read that *'Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"'* (Acts 8.30) The eunuch then asked Philip: ... *'of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?'* This was the opportunity for

Philip to explain the prophetic nature of Isaiah's words. The words were a prophecy concerning the work of Jesus.

The gospel message in Isaiah

Philip did not hesitate but '*opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him*' (Acts 8.35). This verse has echoes of the teaching of Jesus to his disciples when he met them on the road to Emmaus and '*beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*' (Luke 24.27). Jesus had at that time explained from the Old Testament Scriptures the reasons for his suffering and death. In this case Philip had evidently done a similar thing. He began with the passage which the man was reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Chapter 53 predicts in great detail the reasons for the suffering and death of the coming saviour:

'He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we did not esteem him. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...and by his stripes we are healed...and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all ... He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth ... For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken...he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth...When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days...By his knowledge my righteous Servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities...and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors' (Isaiah 53.3-12).

From these words Philip explains the principles of the sacrifice of Jesus. It is evident that he went on to explain the way in which a

person must not only believe but must also identify himself with the sacrificial death of Jesus by being baptized. This is clearly set out in one of Paul's letters:

‘...do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ...For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection’ (Romans 6.3, 5).

We know that this must have formed part of Philip's instruction to the eunuch because the next thing that we read is the eunuch's request to be baptized.

The Eunuch's belief and baptism

‘Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”’ (Acts 8.36, 37).

The reference to Jesus as the Son of God shows that Philip's instruction must also have included reference to the promise made to King David. For it is there that Jesus as the coming Messiah is shown to be the Son of God:

‘...I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son’
(2 Samuel 7.12-14)

The cautionary words of Philip to the eunuch: *‘If you believe with all your heart, you may* (be baptized)’, contrast with the faulty attitude of Simon who we considered earlier. It was said to him: *‘your heart is not right in the sight of God’*. Wholehearted belief in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ was and

continues to be the requirement for a person seeking the salvation offered through baptism.



Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch

The record also makes clear the manner in which baptism was given to the eunuch. It is not a sprinkling with water that is described here. Rather, in keeping with the requirement for baptism to represent a death and burial with Jesus, this was an immersion or a ‘burial’ in water. Note the words: *‘...he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water...’* (Acts 8.38, 39).

Philip was then taken away as he had come, by the power of the Spirit of God and he was to see the man no more. The eunuch went on his way home rejoicing in his new found faith.

Summary

The spreading of the gospel was on the basis laid down by Jesus when he said:

‘...Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved...And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and

confirming the word through the accompanying signs’ (Mark 16.15,16, 20).

Thus we see whenever we are given the detail:

- ❖ Baptism always followed belief in the gospel and a confession of faith. The gospel consisted of two parts – firstly the things concerning the kingdom of God and secondly the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ God’s spirit power was at work in overseeing the spread of the gospel.
- ❖ God’s spirit power was not a necessary requirement for all who believed.
- ❖ Baptism was a total immersion in water to symbolise the death and burial of the believer with Christ.
- ❖ A period of teaching preceded baptism to confirm that belief was based on a correct understanding of the gospel.

Conclusion

The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch marked the beginning of the next phase in the spread of the gospel message. As was mentioned in the introduction to this article, Jesus had said: ‘...*you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*’ (Acts 1.8).

The day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the witness in Jerusalem. After the persecution, Philip had been instrumental in witnessing in Judea and Samaria. It was Philip too who, by preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch, began the process of spreading the word ‘*to the ends of the earth*’. This was a work taken further by the Apostle Paul whose conversion and subsequent preaching is recorded in later chapters of the book of Acts.

Ian Giles
Norfolk, UK

Important Bible Words

Sin and Death

THERE are two themes running through the Bible. We could describe them as threads interwoven into its pages – a golden thread and a black thread.

The golden thread

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to the earth to solve the world's problems and set up the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God will last for ever and it will be a worldwide kingdom on the earth. The hope for the future that God holds out to humanity far transcends anything that man could possibly bring about by himself. Even if we die before Jesus comes we can still be in the kingdom of God, because the hope for the future that God holds out to mankind includes a way of escape from death. This is the true Christian hope for a future life. This is the Bible teaching about life after death – this is the golden thread.

The black thread

From the earliest times of human existence on earth there has been a barrier between us and our Creator. The Bible calls that barrier '*sin*' and the mission of Jesus at his first coming was to make possible the removal of sin and ultimately to re-unite God and mankind. In this article we shall examine what is meant by 'sin' and how it originated. The subject of sin also appears throughout the Bible, from the early chapters of Genesis to the concluding chapters of Revelation – this is the black thread.

If you asked a number of people: '*What do you understand by sin?*' most would probably say that it is things like adultery, stealing or

murder. In other words, sin is generally thought of as being the more obvious serious crimes of which human beings can be guilty. However in Bible terms sin is much more comprehensive than this. The word the writers of the Bible used was one that signified deviation from a path, or missing a target. This demonstrates the idea behind the use of the word 'sin'. It means to deviate from a path, to miss a mark that is aimed at, or to fail to achieve something. This definition makes sin much more widespread than most people realise. In his 1st letter the Apostle John wrote '*All unrighteousness is sin*' (1 John 5.17) and '*Sin is lawlessness*' (1 John 3.4).

Mankind's failure to live up to God's standards is sin in the Scriptural sense, even when it appears that a person is leading a morally good life. Similarly sin is '*lawlessness*', a state of mind in which a person does not accept the laws of God as the rule of his or her life, and does not obey them. Notice that this is true even if a person does not know the will of God. Men and women are guilty of sin in this sense even if they have never heard of God's laws.

However, God has also given specific laws and the Bible is full of references to the things we should or should not do. This sin caused by breaking a specific command of God is usually termed 'transgression'. As the word implies, this involves crossing over a line or rule that has been laid down by God. It is then possible to be sinners for two reasons – firstly because of general failure to attain to the characteristics of God, and secondly because of transgression of God's laws by those who know them but refuse to obey them.

Sin is universal

With such a definition of sin it is far from surprising to find that all mankind are guilty of it. The Apostle Paul confirmed this when he wrote that '*...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*' (Romans 3.23).

Sin could be described as the ‘constitution’ of the world. In human systems of government each nation has its constitution by which it is governed, and every person born into that country is bound by that constitution whether they like it or not. Similarly everyone born on earth comes into a world where a tendency to sin is ingrained into the very nature of man’s being and into every aspect of society. So sin is personified by the apostle as a king reigning in all the affairs of mankind (See Romans 5.21 and 6.12).

The effect of sin

We live in a world where sin ‘reigns’ and we may not appreciate the effect that sin has. It is so much a part of human everyday experience that its results are regarded as the normal run of affairs. In fact the reign of sin has incalculable effects and consequences. One result is separation from God. The clear teaching of the Bible is that the presence of sin raises a barrier between man and his Creator: *‘But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear’* (Isaiah 59.2).

The result of sin is a world cursed by suffering and death. Again, death is such a normal experience that it is difficult to think of it as the result of sin. But the Bible describes sin as our employer and death as our wages: *‘For the wages of sin is death’* (Romans 6.23). The letter of James personifies this process as the development of a child from birth to adulthood: *‘when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death’* (James 1.15). God’s plan of salvation from death, involves the removal of sin and the reconciliation of the world to Himself – the Bible’s golden thread.

The origin of sin

At the beginning of the Bible we read how sin became part of the very make-up of the human race and achieved its dominance in the world. We must regard the events in the Garden of Eden as having actually taken place. This is the only view that a follower of Jesus can take.

Jesus referred to Adam and Eve as historical people, and the circumstances of the introduction of sin into the world as literal happenings.

God's creation was seen to be very good. However from the Divine point of view this arrangement had one drawback. The Bible speaks of God's '*pleasure*' in His creation (Revelation 4.11 KJV). Real '*pleasure*' could only come when His creation responded to Him in love. So the Psalmist wrote: '*The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his mercy*' (Psalm 147.11).

This '*pleasure*' could not be satisfied by Adam and Eve's slavish obedience as if they were robots. God is pleased when people who are faced with a choice, deliberately do what is right in order to show their trust in Him. With this objective God devised a test of their allegiance. He pointed out to Adam and Eve a special tree bearing fruit and told them that they were not to eat of it or even touch it: '*but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat the fruit of it you shall surely die*' (Genesis 2.17 – see also Genesis 3.3).

How many times Adam and Eve walked near the tree, we do not know. As yet nothing had occurred to tempt them to disobey God. But one day, when Eve was alone, she was approached by a serpent. The creature had some reasoning ability together with the power of speech and it began to sow seeds of doubt in the woman's mind:

'Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat from every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die'" (Genesis 3.1-3).

The serpent ridiculed this idea and went on to tell the very first lie: *'...You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'* (Genesis 3.4,5). Eve thought about the serpent's words. Did this speaking serpent say the truth? Was God hiding something that would be of benefit to them? Was the threat of death simply to prevent them sharing God's knowledge and wisdom? The seeds of doubt began to grow in Eve's mind; and with the fruit hanging on the branches Eve's trust in God collapsed. Stretching out her hand she picked the fruit and ate it. She found Adam and shared the fruit with him. In this way sin entered the world but what were the consequences?

Think about what Adam and Eve had done. Their disobedience had not been a little accidental mistake; it was a deliberate challenge to God. He had said that if they disobeyed Him they would die. They said in effect, by their action: *'We don't believe you'*. God had revealed Himself to them as their Creator and Instructor. They in their pride sought for instant mental equality with Him. They had set up their own will in defiant opposition to God's will. They had challenged God's supremacy. To a God who is supreme this was not a challenge that could be overlooked, nor could the threatened penalty of death fail to be carried out.

The consequences of sin

The three participants, Adam, Eve and the serpent, were addressed in turn, and the overall message was that whilst the immediate prospect was dark and sad, yet there was a ray of hope that pointed to the removal at last of the barrier that had just been created between God and mankind. Adam's punishment was to be a life of toil and hard work in trying to produce food from an earth now cursed for his sake: crops being grown only with difficulty and sorrow. At the end he would die and return again to the dust from which he was first created. God said to Adam: *'In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return'* (Genesis 3.19).

This curse was not confined to Adam only but included all his posterity. They would inherit his sinful nature and so share the penalty of sin. The New Testament comment on this by the Apostle Paul is very clear: *'Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned'* (Romans 5.12).

We must underline two important points concerning sin and its consequences. Firstly, the Bible always attributes the origin and continuation of sin to mankind alone. No external agent can be blamed for man's predicament. We cannot blame a devil or some other external force for evil. James makes it very clear that temptation comes from within us: *'But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed'* [James 1.14].

Secondly, death, the punishment for sin, means the complete cessation of life. The idea that at death an 'immortal soul' continues a conscious existence is not found in the Bible. Otherwise death would hardly be a punishment. David wrote: *'For in death there is no remembrance of you; in the grave who will give you thanks?'* (Psalm 6.5) The teaching of the Bible is consistent as David's son Solomon wrote: *'For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten'* (Ecclesiastes 9.5).

The theme of sorrow and pain which so often leads to death was continued in the punishment of Eve. Her anguish was to come in the pains of childbirth and she was to occupy a subordinate position in the relationship between man and woman. God said: *'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you'* (Genesis 3.16).

A curse...

From the description of the punishments on Adam and Eve it would appear that mankind was without hope as a result of disobeying God's command. God is just and merciful and in His sentence on the serpent God gave a hint of His plan for the world. Here the first ray of hope appeared – the start of **the golden thread**. As the one who had encouraged Adam and Eve to sin, the serpent was to be cursed. However, at the same time God promised ultimate deliverance from the curse that the serpent had helped to bring into the world. God said to the serpent: *'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel'* (Genesis 3.15).

...And a promise

Here is a key verse of Scripture – it contains the solution to the problem of sin and death. Both the woman and the serpent were to have 'seed' or descendants and there was to be 'enmity' (hostility) between them. This is an example of symbolic language by which the Bible describes a great struggle between two opposing forces – the 'seed' of the serpent representing the power of sin and the 'seed' of the woman representing those who obey God in their lives and try to overcome the power of sin.

Eventually one particular 'seed' or descendant of the woman would inflict a head wound on the serpent's descendants, the inference being that such a wound would be fatal. But in the course of this conflict the serpent would give the woman's descendant a wound to the heel from which the woman's descendant would recover.

This amazing promise in Eden is telling us that the power of sin represented by the serpent would eventually be destroyed by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. This great victory of Jesus is summed up in the letter to the Hebrews: *'Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death...and release those who through fear of death were all their*

lifetime subject to bondage' (Hebrews 2.14, 15). Jesus achieved this victory through his sinless life and resurrection from the dead and as Paul tells us *'death no longer has dominion over him'* (Romans 6.9).

Conclusion

In this article we have seen that 'sin' is firstly an inbuilt human tendency which turns us away from God. Secondly 'sin' describes the acts of those who know the will of God and yet break His commandments. The effect of sin is alienation from God and disease, suffering and death are the consequences of sin.

The subject of 'sin and death' is the black thread that runs through the Bible. From the Old Testament we learn that sin and death came about because of the disobedience of our first parents. This is the cause of sin and death as confirmed by the New Testament writers.

But God also promised the coming of a descendant of Eve who would overcome the power of sin. Jesus is this promised Saviour of mankind. By his life of perfect obedience, his willing sacrifice and his resurrection, he has made it possible for God to forgive our sins and give us everlasting life. This forgiveness is offered to those who firstly believe the Gospel (the good news about the coming kingdom of God) and who then associate themselves with God's plan of salvation in the way He has prescribed through baptism. This offer of redemption is the only solution to the seemingly endless cycle of sin and death.

The subject of redemption and the Kingdom of God is the golden thread that runs through the Bible. Paul tells us that ultimately we have just two choices – on the one hand *'the wages of sin is death'* – but on the other hand *'the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Romans 6.23)

Which choice are you going to make?

Clifford Wharton
Surrey, UK

Bible Characters

Esther

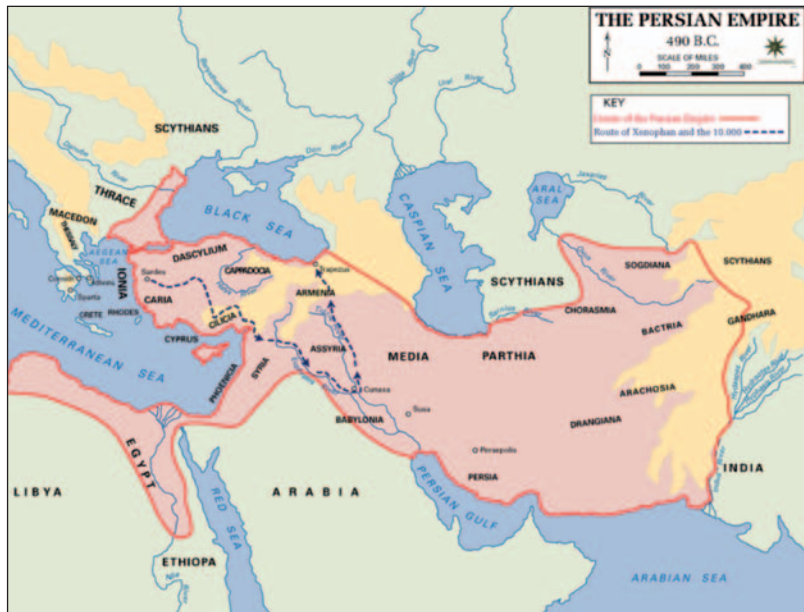
REGULAR readers of LIGHT magazine may be familiar with the Biblical account of Esther, the young Jewish girl who was cared for by her cousin Mordecai. She rose to prominence as the Queen chosen by Ahasuerus king of Persia about 480 BC.

What do we really know about Esther? We know from the record that she had known sadness in the loss of her parents, although we do not know the circumstances. She was orphaned at a young age. We know she was lovely to look at and we know that she became the wife of a powerful Persian monarch. Although the Biblical account does not mention the name of God, it is not difficult to see that she was a woman of great faith, but what finally became of her is not recorded.

For the purposes of this short study we intend to look at some of the characters and the detail behind the Biblical account, rather than simply go over a story that you may already be familiar with. If, as a reader you are looking at the story of Esther for the first time, then hopefully you will find this article instructive. In any case, may we recommend to you that if you have a Bible, you first read the Book of Esther.

Background

The background of the book is the Jewish captivity under the Medes and Persians. This empire followed on from the Babylonian empire, which it acquired by conquest, greatly expanding its area of influence. The first chapter of this book reminds us of this: *'Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces)'* (1.1).



Map of the Persian Empire

The generally accepted time period of the Persian Empire was from 527 to 336 BC and the events recorded in the Book of Esther probably covered the period 486 – 465 BC, some 21 years of the reign of Ahasuerus.

The Jews were in captivity and there can be little doubt that their business acumen and their intelligence did not go unnoticed. We know that previously, in the case of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel, the skills in administration were appreciated by the Babylonian court and that Daniel succeeded in the most difficult of circumstances, being raised to high office until the beginning of the Persian administration.

The events of Esther probably took place some 40 years after Daniel had passed off the scene. The place was Susa (Hebrew *Shushan*) the ancient capital of Elam where the palace of king Ahasuerus was located. This corresponds with modern Shush in Iran.

The over-riding mercy of God for His people is to be seen – even when He is causing them to suffer for their sins, as we learn from the Biblical accounts of both Daniel and Esther. As the wise man Solomon put it: *‘When a man’s ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him’* (Proverbs 16, 7). This is a lesson for all God-fearing people to bear in mind.

The account in the book of Esther is amazing for the inter-woven events that we are presented with and we will pick up these as we continue.

Ahasuerus

There has long been debate as to the true identity of this Persian king. Historians like Herodotus and Ctesias who both lived in the 5th Century BC, suggest that Queen Vashti was the wife of Xerxes known in history books as Amestris. Most commentators come down in favour of Xerxes 1st, who reigned from 486 to 465 BC and took Esther as his queen instead of Vashti, who lost her right to be queen.

Vashti

Today, one cannot but feel some sympathy with Vashti, although we do not know much about her character. Again, contemporary history tells the story that she murdered the mother of one of her husband’s concubines – it is not clear which! However the record goes on to say:

‘On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of king Ahasuerus, to bring queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold’ (1.10, 11).

It is almost impossible to compare those times with our own. The exploitation of women as practiced in Biblical times, seems very alien

to the Western world today where women's rights, so called, are jealously guarded. But Vashti was the reason why Esther came into the picture – at least, that is true of mere circumstance. There was, in fact, more of the purpose of God in the matter.

Mordecai

Mordecai was a Benjamite, a Jew who was taken captive during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He found employment as a wise man in the palace of the Persian kings in Shushan (Susa) the capital city. Mordecai is probably the Hebrew version of the Babylonian name Mardukaya. He rose to a position of high honour as a satrap or provincial ruler, as a result of exposing both Haman the Agagite and the plot to kill Ahasuerus. From some inscriptions of the period, it is thought he may have worked in finance. The circumstances of his promotion are covered in this account and are integral to it.

Haman

He was of course the enemy of the Jews. Why? Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, almost certainly because he knew of his origins. According to the historian Josephus, he was descended from the Amalekites. In the Book of Numbers, we read how Balaam prophesied concerning Israel: *'...his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted'* (Numbers 24.7).

In these words Agag is associated with the Amalekites, a warlike tribe that had been enemies of God's people since their beginnings as a nation. God was very angry with Saul the first king of Israel, because although he slaughtered the Amalekites, he kept Agag their king alive. (I Samuel 15.7, 8) Haman would have no love of the Jews, and we can be sure that Haman already knew about Mordecai, although it seems that he did not suspect that Esther was a Jewess.

We have in place the times, the background and the characters involved, but let us now consider Esther.

Esther

Jews in exile often took on a name that was changed to fit in with the country in which they have found themselves. On occasions, it was to safe-guard their identity and this may be the case with Esther.

The name Esther may be associated with the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, or it is more likely to be linked to the Persian word for ‘star’. Her Hebrew name is Hadassah, which means ‘Myrtle’ referring to the tree of this name. What’s in a name? The wise man Solomon is very clear about this:



Myrtle tree

‘A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favour rather than silver and gold’ (Proverbs 22.1).

Compare this reference with the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes:

‘A good **name** (Hebrew: ***shem***) is better than precious **ointment** (Hebrew: ***shemen***), and the day of death than the day of one’s birth’ (Ecclesiastes 7.1).

There is a play on words here in the original Hebrew text – ***shem*** and ***shemen*** translated ‘**name**’ and ‘**ointment**’ respectively. In order to see this we need to be able to read the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. This is typical of the many hidden gems found in Scripture, if only we dig a little deeper!

Esther was taken into the court of this great Persian monarch and thoroughly prepared for her duties:

‘Each young woman’s turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months’ preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women’s quarters to the king’s palace. In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name’ (Esther 2. 12-14).

Esther was accepted by the king and became his consort. It appears from the record that Xerxes loved Esther above his other women and he made her his Queen. She is thereafter referred to as Queen Esther. The account is well known how she confounded the expectations of Haman, assisted by Mordecai.

The plot to kill the Jews

It is here that Haman enters the account and affects the life of Esther so dramatically. In his hatred for the Jews, he obtains a decree from the Persian monarch, a decree which would have meant the annihilation of the Jews on a similar scale to that carried out by the Nazis in Europe during the Second World War. Mordecai made it clear to Esther that she had a responsibility to intervene on her people’s behalf and that her lofty position as Queen would not excuse her from doing her duty:

‘Then Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4.13, 14)

We mentioned at the beginning that there is no direct reference to God

in the Book of Esther. However, these words of Mordecai seem to imply that God would deliver His people even if Esther remained silent in the presence of the king.

Esther's trust in God

If you have read the Book of Esther, you will be familiar with her response. She agreed to go and approach the king on the matter and she sent this message to Mordecai:

‘Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!’(Esther 4.16).

‘If I perish, I perish!’ There have been many examples in the Scriptures of men and women who similarly put their heads ‘on the block’, as the saying goes. Jacob, for example, was finally persuaded to let Benjamin go to Egypt: *‘If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved’* and Paul said *‘I am not afraid to die.’* This demonstrates Esther’s commitment to her people but more importantly her trust in the God of Israel. Although it is not recorded we can imagine that she prayed fervently before taking her request to the king. Esther was successful and her appeal was heard by Ahasuerus and answered. Haman received his just deserts and was hanged and Mordecai was elevated to high office.



A spiritual lesson

Esther then, comes over from this interesting account as a woman of great beauty and faith. Is she or should she be an example to God

fearing women today? We will leave the reader to decide. To help you decide, you may like to read what Solomon wrote about such a woman as Esther. He asked the question: *‘who can find a virtuous wife?’* (Proverbs 31.10) His reply has provided one of the most beautiful passages of Scripture and needs to be read in full from Proverbs chapter 31 verses 10 to 31. It is recommended reading! Having set out the virtues of such a woman, he concludes:

‘Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised’ (Proverbs 31.30).

The Bride of Christ

The story of Esther has many spiritual lessons for Christ’s followers. They will see beyond the physical beauty of Esther that attracted her to that great Persian monarch and will recognise that as they wait for the return of the bridegroom, they too must exhibit such virtues in their lives, as faithful Esther did in hers. They must prepare as the ‘Bride of Christ’, for the perfection of God’s Kingdom on earth.

In the very last book of the Bible given to the Apostle John especially for the servants of Jesus, a wonderful picture is presented:

“‘Let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God”” (Revelation 19, 7-9).

David Evans
Kent, UK

What Did Jesus Mean?



‘it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle...’

ALL three of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) record this saying of Jesus. But what did it mean to his hearers and what does it mean to us? The Matthew account gives the background to the proverb used by Jesus in chapter 19 verses 16 to 26. A rich young man, a ruler of the people, had come to Jesus asking what good thing he should do to have eternal life. Jesus’ answer directed the young man towards God, the only source of goodness, and he continued: *‘But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments’* (verse 17). Jesus was referring to the portion of the Law of Moses known as ‘The Ten Commandments’ (see Exodus chapter 20)

The young man asked which one he should keep. In reply, Jesus picked out a number of the commandments, including the general principle, *‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’* (verse 19). The commandments forbade murder, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness – he had done none of these things. *‘All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?’* (verse 20). We note here that the young man was very persistent.

Whether he expected Jesus to commend him and say that nothing further was necessary and assure him of a place in the kingdom, is not

stated, but it would appear that this was the direction the young man assumed, or hoped, that the conversation was going.

The answer of Jesus caused dismay in the man's mind:

'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me' (verse 21).

Jesus was asking him to become one of his close disciples and join them on their preaching ministry to Israel – what an invitation! But the sacrifice Jesus stated was necessary for the young man to become '*perfect*', struck him at a weak point. Clearly he was too attached to his worldly possessions to give them up for Jesus. We are told that '*he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions*' (verse 22).

It should be noted here in passing, that to have '*treasure in heaven*' is to be accounted righteous before God, like faithful Abraham. The reward of eternal life will be '*reserved in heaven*' (1 Peter 1.4), but not enjoyed in heaven! The reserved reward will be enjoyed at Jesus' second coming at the '*revelation of Jesus Christ*' (1 Peter 1.7) when he will reward his faithful servants at the resurrection. The righteous will then enter eternal life in God's kingdom on the earth (Matthew 25.34).

When Jesus spoke about the kingdom of heaven as he did on many occasions, he was not referring to a kingdom **in heaven**, but a kingdom based on heavenly principles to be set up on the earth. Jesus referred to this in the Sermon on the Mount. He said to his followers: '*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is **the kingdom of heaven**...Blessed are the meek for they shall **inherit the earth***' (Matthew 5.3,5). Afterwards Jesus prayed '*Your kingdom come. Your will be done **on earth as it is in heaven***' (Matthew 6.10).

After the young man had gone, Jesus said to his disciples '*Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of*

heaven' (verse 23). Jesus was saying that it was a tough choice for the man. Priorities have to be set and if wealth and possessions are stopping you in your search for life, then you may be called on to give them up or **use them in God's service**. To illustrate the difficulty, Jesus went on to say that *'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'* (verse 24).

An attractive explanation that has been common teaching in the last two centuries is that there was a small side gate in Jerusalem called *'the eye of a needle'* as in this illustration of the Damascus gate.



The idea being that, after dark, when the main city gates were shut, travellers or merchants would have to use this smaller gate, necessitating a camel's baggage to be completely unloaded with the camel crawling on its knees into the city. If this is the correct interpretation, the teaching of the parable is apparent. Humility and ridding oneself of unnecessary and distracting possessions is a pre-requisite to entry into the kingdom of God. Though the teaching is sound, there is apparently no ancient confirmation that such a gate ever existed!

In fact, Jesus used similar exaggerations in his saying to give added emphasis to his teaching, and the *'eye of a needle'* proverb seems to be an example of what is called hyperbole. Another example is where Jesus refers to the inability to see our own faults as like having a plank of wood sticking out of your own eye whilst trying to extract a speck of dust from someone else's eye (see Matthew chapter 7.3). This is another deliberate exaggeration made by Jesus in his teaching to emphasise the point.

Jewish Talmudic literature uses similar expressions, where for example an elephant passing through the eye of a needle refers to what is regarded as an impossibility and a camel is portrayed as dancing in a very small corn measure.

The disciples were incredulous – if the privileged, educated, wealthy young man who had been blessed and who appeared to have led a God-fearing life, couldn't be saved, then who could? *'Who then can be saved?'* they asked (verse 25). Jesus then looked at them (perhaps his eyes had been watching the retreating young man) and said: *'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'* (verse 26).

Jesus was asking them to understand two very different points of view. Standing by the side of men, as men see it, it did appear impossible; but stand by God's side, see it from His viewpoint and all things, even the salvation of rich and poor, are possible.

Interestingly, a Jewish Midrash (an ancient Jewish commentary) records: *'The Holy One said, open for me a door as big as a needle's eye and I will open for you a door through which may enter tents and (camels?)'* (Midrash Rabbah The Song of Songs 5.3). Whilst these words are not inspired Scripture, the idea is clear. We cannot be saved by our own works. We are required to have faith, even a small measure will achieve great things as we read in the letter to the Hebrews:

'But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he who

comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him' (Hebrews 11.6).

We are totally reliant on the grace of God centred in the gift of Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. The promised reward of eternal life in God's Kingdom is quite out of proportion to the small measure of faith and works we can ever exhibit. Such is the Father's love for His children.

If we, like the young man, have wealth and possessions in whatever measure, then these 'blessings' can and should be used in our Master's service. If it means giving them to others, then so be it. If we have just a small measure of faith and determine that we will search out the truth in our lives, and act upon it in belief and baptism, then God, through Christ, will achieve for us what appears impossible to men - even eternal life for us in His coming Kingdom.

Justin Giles
Kent, England

Bible Reading Tables

Send for your FREE copy of the daily Bible reading tables to:

**The Correspondence Secretary
Light Bible Publications
PO Box 362
Dartford
DA1 9GT
England**

or Email to: mail@lightmagazine.org



From our Mail Bag

A reader has asked for an explanation of Jesus' words addressed to Peter: *'...I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church...'* (Matthew 16.18).

There is a widely held view that the intention of Jesus was to appoint Peter to act on his behalf as the head of the church and this incorrect view is summed up in a Catholic correspondence course booklet (number 8) entitled 'Peter and the Eleven' which reads:

'Christ is the head of the Church. But it is clear from the New Testament that he appointed St. Peter to be his vicar to act for him as head of the Church on earth. At his first meeting with St. Peter, or Simon as he was then called, Jesus gave him a new name to indicate the special position he was to have. He said: "So you are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas (which means Peter)". Actually Cephas is Aramaic for rock.

Now St. Peter is told that he is to be the Rock in the place of Christ. Because of him "the power of death" will not overcome the Church, that is, it will not die.'

The verse examined

We must first look at the context in which Jesus made his statement to Peter as he was asking him a question: *"...who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are **the Christ**, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16.15, 16). Peter expressed his personal conviction and correctly identified who Jesus was, because some people were of the opinion that Jesus was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

It should be noted that in the original New Testament Greek, two different words are used: ‘...*You are Peter* (Gr. **petros** meaning detached stone), *and on this rock* (Gr. **petra** meaning living rock or solid rock) *I will build my church...*’. It is clear that a difference between Peter and the foundation is meant or the word ‘**petros**’ would simply have been repeated. ‘**Petros**’ therefore shows Peter’s instability while ‘**petra**’ indicates the immovable rock-like character of Christ, based on the confession of Peter – ‘*You are the Christ*’.

The fact that Peter did not receive infallible authority from Jesus is evident from the comment of the Apostle Paul when writing to the Galatians: ‘*But when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed*’ (Galatians 2.11).

There is no historical evidence that Peter passed on any authority to anyone else and perhaps more to the point there is no evidence that Jesus instructed him to do so. It was the Apostle Paul who went to Rome and also wrote to the ecclesia in this city. Peter did make it clear in his letters that he did not regard himself as having any superiority, referring to himself as ‘*a fellow elder*’ (1 Peter 5.1) and exhorts those who are elders not to be ‘*lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock*’ (1 Peter 5.3).

Further evidence can be advanced that the other disciples were also unaware that Peter was given a position of authority. On one occasion, just before Jesus was arrested, we read that they were arguing about this very subject: ‘...*there was also rivalry among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest*’. The response of Jesus was: ‘...*he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who leads as he who serves*’ (Luke 22.24, 26).

On another occasion, the mother of James and John sought the two highest positions for her sons at the return of Jesus to establish God’s kingdom on earth. Jesus replied: ‘...*to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by my*

Father' (Matthew 20.21-23). Would she or they have considered such a request if Peter had already been appointed as the head of the church?

The Scriptures unambiguously state that Christ is the rock-like foundation of the Church and not Peter. The Apostle Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth:

‘According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 3.10, 11 – see also Matthew 21.42; Acts 4.11; 1 Peter 2.6-8).

In summary then, Jesus in acknowledging Peter’s (*petros*) correct answer that Jesus was the Christ the son of the living God, pronounced that upon this solid rock (*petra*) of Peter’s faith in ‘*the Christ*’ (Greek anointed - a reference to his future role as king over the Kingdom of God), the church would be established. So the Gospel message concerning the kingdom of God was preached and through the preservation of the Biblical record we can also learn of God’s plan of salvation centred in Jesus and become associated with it.

Correspondence Secretary

Light on a new world is published to provide a better understanding of the true Christian hope and the correspondence secretary will be pleased to arrange for the magazine to be mailed to an address on request. Other Bible related publications are available on request and we will be pleased to answer your questions.

Please write to, the correspondence secretary at the address shown on the inside front cover. Alternatively you can Email us at: mail@lightmagazine.org.

For further information about the magazine, Bible related topics and publications visit the following web sites:

www.gospelofkingdom.co.uk

www.the1way.net

www.neshamah.info

www.dawnbooksupply.co.uk

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Light Bible Publications retain subscriber addresses on a private and secure database. They are not distributed or made available to any organisation and are removed following a request by a subscriber to cancel the magazine subscription.

The Lowfield Printing Company, 9 Kennet Road,
Thames Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 4QT

FREE BIBLE COURSE



The Bible Correspondence Course is in two parts. The first part gives a basic outline of what the Bible contains and its message. The second part is a more detailed study of the important Bible teaching concerning God's plan of salvation and the Christian way of life. The course is free of charge and the first lesson can be obtained by writing to:

The Correspondence Secretary
Light Bible Publications
P.O. Box 362
Bexley
Kent
DA1 9GT
England

Alternatively you can Email us at: mail@lightmagazine.org