

SKYWORLD

Internet Bible Materials

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THE MISSING BOOK

by Martin Girard

And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.".... (2 KINGS 22:8)



At first sight this is an amazing statement. Surely “the book of the law” *belonged* “in the house of the Lord”? Nobody ought to report that they had *found* it there! The implication, clearly, is that somehow the book of the law had been lost.

THE HISTORY OF IT...

Manasseh’s wicked reign of 55 years had ended. Josiah, at the age of eight, had become king. When he was 16, Josiah “began to seek after the God of David his father”, and four years later began to purge the land of idolatry (2 Chron.34:3). Six years after this, when he was 26, Josiah appointed certain men (including Shaphan, the scribe) to repair the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, using funds collected for that purpose. It was while this work was in progress that “the book of the law” was discovered by Hilkiah. Presumably, in earlier years when idolatry was prevalent, the book of the law was considered unnecessary and was placed somewhere out of the way. Other copies of the law must have been in circulation at the time, for Josiah was familiar with the tenor of it. This particular book, however, when discovered and read, had such a great impact upon Hilkiah, Shaphan, and, ultimately, Josiah the king who “rent his clothes” (v.11) when he heard its contents.



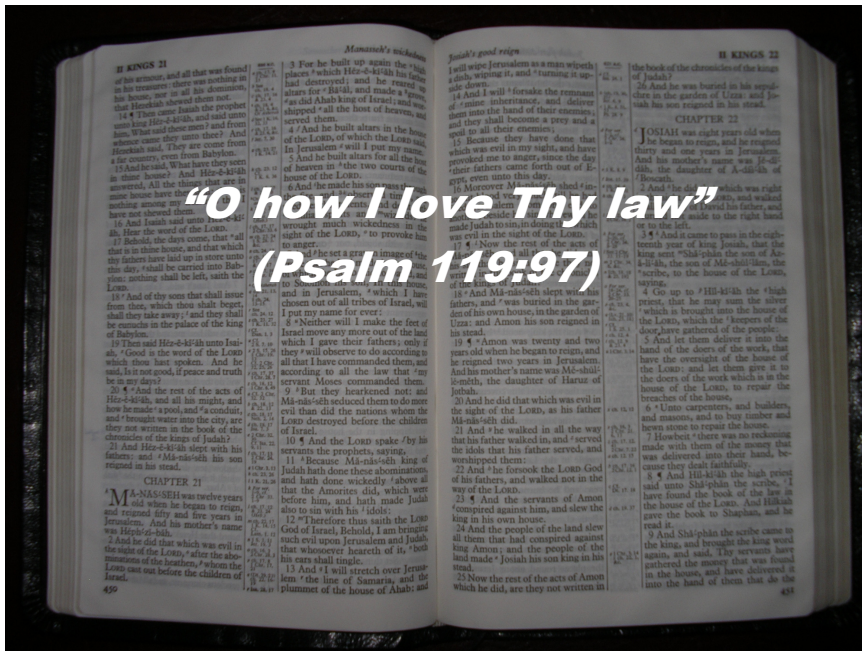
How could the temple possibly function without the law of God? In earlier years there had been indifference - especially in Manasseh’s reign - to the things of God. Josiah had initiated a return to God’s ways, but the temple was functioning at this time with God’s Word stored away in a cupboard!

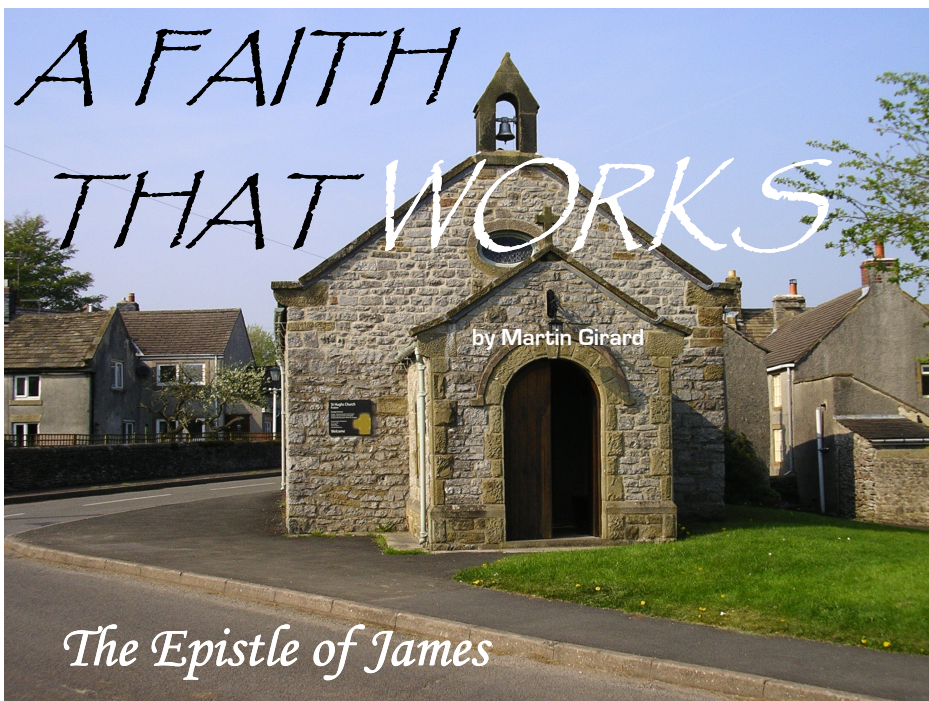
"I HAVE FOUND THE BOOK OF THE LAW IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD"

A NEED TO REDISCOVER

Today we need to rediscover the Word of God. Many churches in our day have "lost" the Bible. It may still be in the pew, or a copy may be available at the door, but it plays no real part in the life of the church.

Without sidestepping the issue, we need to face this challenge ourselves. Although we may be of evangelical persuasion, do we *really* give the Word of God its rightful place? Too much preaching today is devoid of the Bible. When the Bible is preached in its authority, people will not laugh but be shaken - as Josiah was. There may be a time to laugh (Eccl.3:4), but never at the expense of God's truth. Surely it is high time for God's people to rediscover His Word and renew their faith in its convicting power. Nothing else can bring life to dead souls.





There can be no doubt that the Reformation is one of the landmarks of Church history. It was then that the doctrine of justification by faith alone was rediscovered, and the gospel of God's redeeming grace was proclaimed with clarity that had been unknown for centuries. When Martin Luther read the Epistle of James its message appeared to be all wrong. To think that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," (Jas.2:24, KJV) seemed preposterous. It contradicted the precious Reformation doctrine, and Martin Luther concluded that James was therefore "a right strawy epistle".

Although correct in so many other ways, the great reformer here was wrong. No "straw" is to be found in the Word of God. Rather, this epistle contains "precious fruit" (5:7) and rightly deserves its place in the canon of Scripture, for it shows how God seeks precious fruit in our lives.

JUSTIFIED BY WORKS

To begin with, let us examine Luther's contention. Does James contradict the other apostles, as Luther maintained, by declaring that a man is justified by works and not by faith only? The answer is found in the second half of chapter 2 where James asks a question: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he

hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" (2:14). What he means is, can faith *of that kind* save him? How can it be *real* faith if it is only expressed in words? James goes on to demonstrate that faith is intensely practical and manifests itself in certain very compelling ways.

An illustration is given at this point. Suppose a fellow believer has inadequate clothing and insufficient food to eat. On behalf of the local church, a member of the fellowship speaks kindly to the individual and sends him home simply with good advice. "The weather is cold, so do keep yourself warm," he says, "and do make sure that you eat some good, nourishing meals." Speaking in this way is absurd! "What doth it profit?" James asks (2:16). The voice may sound kind, but the words do *nothing* to help one who is in need of food and warmth. Such "faith" is really not faith at all. As there are no works to prove its existence, it is "dead", (2:17).

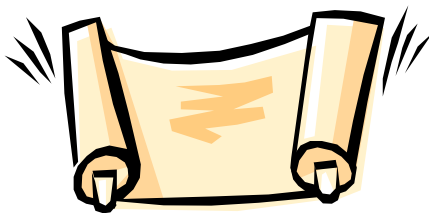


Real faith is not merely mental belief. Why, even demons believe in the existence of God, (2:19)! Most certainly God can see our faith in Him, but people around us need to see our faith expressed in our behaviour - hence the statement, "I will show thee my faith by my works," (2:18).

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

In order to make his point clear, James directs his readers to the Old Testament Scriptures and carefully selects two examples to show how a person is justified (declared righteous) by works. First, Abraham is considered as being justified by works when he offered his son, Isaac, upon the altar, (2:21). This act, James tells us, "fulfilled" the Scriptures which declared that "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," (2:23).

If we consult the Old Testament Scripture at this point, we at once discover that this quotation does not come from Genesis 22 (the chapter that describes the offering up of Isaac) but from Genesis 15:6. Even before Isaac was born, God promised Abraham many descendants. Hearing the promise, Abraham simply believed God and was declared righteous by God as a result of his faith. Paul refers to this very same incident in Romans 4:1-3 and confirms that it was not by works but by *faith* that Abraham was made righteous.



Returning to James 2:23, if we read the verse carefully we find that "the Scripture" (i.e.Gen.15:6) was *fulfilled* when Abraham placed Isaac on the altar.

Remember, he was *already* righteous. His act of offering up Isaac simply *proved* that he was truly righteous, and, as a result, "he was called the Friend of God," (2:23). "Can't you see that his faith was working *with* his works, and his faith was perfected *by* his works?" James asks his readers (see 2:22). He was *seen* to be righteous by what he did. Isaac and the young men who had accompanied him were thus given clear evidence of Abraham's faith - and we who read of these things centuries later witness the faith of Abraham here as well.

A very different example is considered next - and what a contrast! Not an honourable man but a very dishonourable woman - a Gentile, and a prostitute! We are told that Rahab the harlot was justified by works when she had received the spies and sent them out another way, (2:25). At first glance it may seem that Rahab obtained her righteousness by her works, but a study of the Old Testament incident clearly shows that this was not the case.



In Joshua 2:9-11 we read Rahab's own confession of her faith in God. "I know that the Lord hath given you the land," she declared to the spies. "All the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt."

Astounded by what God had done, she confessed, "the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." These words prove beyond question that Rahab already believed that the God of Israel was the true and living God. She had come to believe in Him because of what *He* had done. She was not made righteous by what *she* had done in receiving the spies, but her act of receiving them and sending them out by another way were the "works" that demonstrated the faith that already existed in her heart.

A WORKING FAITH

Both Abraham and Rahab provide us with evidence of *a faith that works*. Before *God* each was justified by faith; before *men* they were declared righteous by the works that proved their faith. It was their works that made their faith visible.

The Word of God (called "the perfect law of liberty") is like a mirror that we must stoop down and look into, (1:25). Humbly, we must draw near to God (4:8) and examine ourselves in the light of His Word. Do we possess the kind of faith displayed by Abraham and Rahab? Christianity is intensely practical, and we are to demonstrate our faith by our works. Although faith is *more* than words, our words are also important. A person's "religion" is "worthless" if he is unable to

control his tongue, (1:26, NIV). So necessary is it to be careful with our words that James devotes almost a whole chapter (3:1-12) to the control of the tongue. He also stresses the importance of caring for the poor and needy. Orphans and widows in those days experienced particular difficulties. Welfare benefits that exist in many countries of the world today were not available then. Therefore believers should "visit" those passing through such "affliction" - and the word "visit" (which literally means "to exercise oversight") implies helping them in practical ways, (1:27).



This practical expression of Christianity can often be detected in the epistle. The sick person who calls for the elders of the church to pray over him should also be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord, (5:14). The Greek word **aleipho** which is used here (and is also found in Mark 6:13) is not the same as the word generally used for sacred anointing. Its use in James 5:14 suggests that the elders of the church should demonstrate **a practical care**. They are to be concerned not only for his spiritual needs (praying for him) but also for his physical needs (applying comfort through the use of oil). Once again, faith must express itself in practical ways.



THE PRAYER OF FAITH

With faith being such a major theme in this epistle, it is hardly surprising to find a number of references to prayer. The Christian life can be perplexing. Troubles and trials can often come our way, and our faith can be tested greatly. James gives us sound advice under such circumstances. We must come to God in prayer, acknowledging our lack of wisdom and seeking "the wisdom that is from above" for our particular need, (1:5 & 3:17). We must not doubt Him as we pray, (1:6-7). Sometimes we do not receive from God because we do not ask (4:2), and at other times our prayer requests are denied because they are selfish, (4:3). Once again James uses the Scriptures to provide us with an example that will help us understand his instruction. Elijah was a man "just like us" (5:17, NIV). His earnest prayer requests were for God's glory and were granted, (5:17-18), and his example should be an inspiration for us to be fervent in our prayers, (5:16).



WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

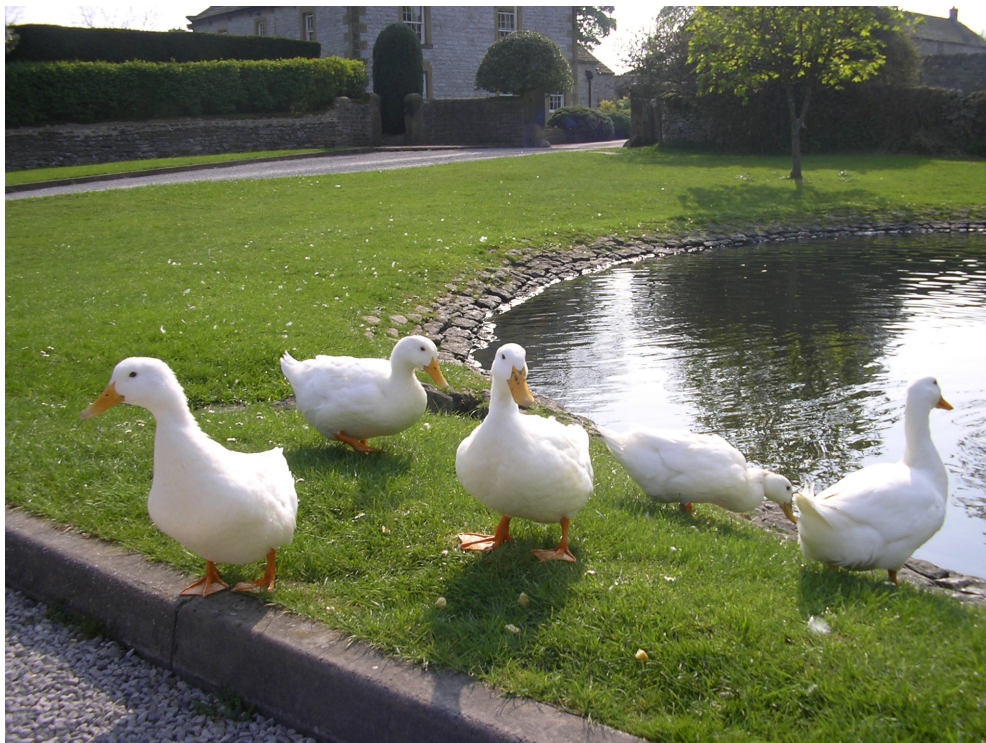
Our life span is brief - indeed, our life is compared to "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," (4:14, KJV). In God's sight a rich man is like "the flower of the grass", and he will soon pass away, (1:10). James issues stern warnings against those who misuse their riches and exploit the people who

work for them, (5:1-5). Both rich and poor are equal before God. Therefore we should not show favouritism to the rich visitor who comes to our Christian meeting, (2:1-9). Our Lord never showed partiality - and neither should we.

In this article we have only been able to give a "taster" of the Epistle of James. There is much more to discover. Why not read the letter through yourself and let the Lord challenge your own attitudes? This is certainly no epistle of straw! Rather, it is a very practical and down-to-earth epistle showing the "precious fruit" that God seeks in our lives. Others need to see our faith in action, and fruitful lives will bring glory to our Father in Heaven, (Jn.15:8). The Lord is coming again. As we patiently wait for Him to return, we must live for Him and seek to bring God's saving grace to those who are perishing, (5:8,19-20).

**Be ye doers of the word,
and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.**

James 1:22



PRECIOUS GEMS FROM PETER



by Martin Girard

The world's largest gem diamond early in the twentieth century was known as the Cullinan. It was found in the Premier Mine in the Republic of South Africa in 1905. The diamond weighed 1306 carats - over 250 grammes! Recognizing its great value, the government of Transvaal purchased the stone and presented it to King Edward VII of England. It was certainly a most valuable treasure.

Anyone familiar with the writings of Peter in the New Testament will at once remember that the word *precious* is used a number of times in his epistles. The English word "precious" is actually used to translate four different Greek words. In 1 Peter 2:7 Christ is "precious" to those who believe in Him - or, "the preciousness", according to J.N.Darby's New Translation of the Holy Scriptures. The word speaks of a *value* placed upon something, and it is rendered "honour" in three other places, (1 Pet.1:7; 3:7; 2 Pet.1:17).

A similar word, *timios*, meaning *costly* or *valuable* is found three times in Peter's writings. A study of the three verses where it occurs can be a great blessing to the soul, for we discover in them things of inestimable value.

PRECIOUS FAITH



The first of these verses where *timios* is found (1) is 1 Peter 1:7. Peter writes of "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire," (KJV). Gold, when tested by fire, is proved genuine. Pyrite (otherwise known as iron pyrites) *looks* like gold and is sometimes called "fool's gold". Experts, however, are not deceived by this pale brassy yellow mineral. Pyrite is usually mined for its sulphur, and the true nature of this mineral is seen when it is "tried with fire". In this verse Peter is concerned with something "much more precious" than gold - and that is the believer's faith. Gold can be placed in a furnace for an extended

period of time and may withstand very high temperatures, but it will not increase in size or in value. However, when a believer passes through the furnace of affliction, his faith is multiplied and strengthened, and its true value is seen.



After the Cullinan diamond was discovered, it was handed to an expert craftsman in Amsterdam. For weeks he studied the diamond's design and produced diagrams of its structure. Eventually, using the special tools of his trade, he cut a notch in it and with a hard blow broke it into two pieces. A wasteful act of destruction? Not at all. This lapidary knew what he was doing, and his single blow multiplied the value of the treasure. From those two halves, nine large diamonds and 96 smaller stones were produced. The rough, uncut stone contained those precious jewels that none but the expert could see.

In a similar way we are *living stones* (see 1 Pet.2:5) in the hands of God. He wants to fashion us by His skill into objects of beauty that will glorify His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The blow that strikes us may be painful, and the fires of testing may be hard to endure, but God's purpose is that the believer's faith "might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet.1:7, KJV).

The trial of our faith is "much more precious" than gold tried in the intense heat. When we find ourselves in the furnace of affliction, we must patiently trust our God who works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph.1:11) and always does that which is for our ultimate good.



PRECIOUS BLOOD

The second time Peter uses *timios* is in 1 Peter 1:19 where he refers to "the precious blood of Christ." Once again we find gold brought into the comparison. Our redemption, Peter tells us, is not with "silver and gold" which are "corruptible".

In the Old Testament atonement money was paid by the Israelites (Ex.30:11-16), but long before Peter's day Judaism had degenerated into mere tradition. The redemption Peter writes about is altogether on a different plane, for it is "with the precious blood of Christ". He was "a lamb without blemish and without spot," (1 Pet.1:19). John the Baptist had pointed to the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sin of the world, (Jn.1:29). In Him no "blemish" or "spot" could be found. His life was perfect. That sinless life was to be laid down, bringing to an end the animal sacrifices which had been required under the Law. Through His blood which was shed, eternal redemption has been obtained, (Heb.9:12). In heaven He is worshipped as the One who has redeemed people from every nation upon earth by His blood, (Rev.5:9).

How precious is that blood to those who believe! Considering the price of our redemption, our one desire now should be to please Him by living holy lives, (1 Pet.1:16) that bring glory to our Father.

PRECIOUS PROMISES



The third time Peter uses the word *timios* is in his second epistle. Writing to those who have "obtained like precious faith" (2 Pet.1:1), Peter unfolds the bountiful provisions that God has supplied for His people. (2) He then reveals that "exceeding great and precious promises" have been given to us by our faithful God, (2 Pet.1:4). These promises relate to what God is going to do for us in the future. We have become "partakers of the divine nature" by which we are able to escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust". God has not only given to us a new life but has also given all the resources necessary to maintain it. When we know the One who has "called us to glory and virtue," (v.3), we can appreciate the promises He has made. He can never break His promises!

These promises are not just "great" but "exceeding great," (2 Pet.1:4). Although Peter does not enumerate them here, they are all connected with the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and with what God will do for us then. Being connected with such an event, they are certainly "precious" to us! John tells us that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is," (1 Jn.3:2). These promises, like the precious blood of Christ, have *eternal* value. We ought to search them out and rejoice in this "treasure" that God has given to us, (Gen.43:23).

ALL BECAUSE...

One other related word which is found twice in 1 Peter 2 is **entimos**, meaning *valued*. On both occasions this word (which is translated "precious") refers to Christ, the "living stone" (v.4) and the "chief corner stone" (v.6). Although rejected by ungodly men, the Lord Jesus Christ was chosen of God and is "precious" to Him.



We, who by grace believe in the Lord Jesus, find Him precious too. All our blessings come from Him. Our "precious" faith and the "precious promises" that have been given to us are both on account of His "precious blood" that was shed at Calvary. No wonder we shall praise Him eternally!

END NOTES:

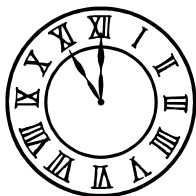
(1) Some ancient manuscripts have *polutimotos* here, being a comparative. Hence, "much more precious".

(2) "Precious" here (2 Pet.1:1) is *isotimos*, and it refers to the readers' faith which was *of equal value* to Peter's, thus "like precious faith".

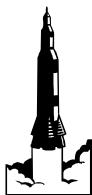
A Millennium Milestone

by Martin Girard

Do you remember the dawning of the year 2000? Many who were alive at that time will not forget where they were as midnight approached on the 31st December, 1999. Across the world excitement had been mounting as the twenty-first century drew ever-closer. For quite a few years our attention had been drawn to that much-heralded date - January 1, 2000. Celebrations had been arranged to mark the occasion, and the development of many plans and projects was witnessed. With the unveiling of monuments and the completion of tapestries in Britain, for example, and with the Millennium Dome itself becoming such a landmark on London's skyline, the intention was that in years to come *nobody* would forget the arrival of the year 2000.



The beginning of a new year is always an occasion for looking back and looking forward. Every year on January 1st we can consider the year that has gone and look ahead to the year that lies before us. But as the twentieth century faded into history, our thoughts went back further than just one year. The twentieth century had witnessed many changes. At the end of the Second World War it would have seemed absurd to talk about man walking on the moon. The first powered flight by Orville and Wilbur Wright had only taken place in December, 1903. But what amazing progress there has been since that time! Of all the centuries, the twentieth has perhaps seen greater changes than any other in history.



As we reflect upon the 1900s and also consider the more distant past, we become aware of the progress that mankind has made. There have been remarkable advances in science and technology in recent times and great successes in the fields of medicine and surgery. We must admit, however, that there seems to be a price to pay for progress. Conflicts in Iran, Iraq, Rwanda, Albania, and Serbia cannot quickly be forgotten. What about Afghanistan? The weapons of mass destruction that man has invented cast their dark shadow over the future. Socially, the western world has witnessed the break-up of family life and the erosion of moral standards. Prisons

are becoming overcrowded, and violent crime in many countries is on the increase. We realize that in many respects things are *not* getting better. We hear much about global warming, and the depletion of natural resources, and environmentalists are frequently expressing their concerns. Unusual weather patterns are being recorded, and there have been a number of very destructive hurricanes and frightening earthquakes and tsunamis. While many people long for a safer, happier world, the future hardly seems promising.

TWO THOUSAND YEARS

The millennium celebrations marked one very significant event. It was two thousand years ago, as we count time, that Jesus Christ was born. Although the exact date of His birth cannot be stated with certainty, there can be no doubt that His birth was a milestone! The fact that our calendars are dated from His coming proves this beyond any contradiction. Yet we must understand that He did not begin His existence 2000 years ago - because He is eternal. He "was in the beginning with God," and, as the Word, He "was God," (Jn.1:1-2). The Bible tells of how He took upon Himself human form: He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us," (Jn.1:14).



Jesus Christ has made a tremendous impact upon history. This should not surprise us when we consider the unique life of God's Son. Nobody spoke like He did. Often His enemies tried to trap Him in His speech, but all their cleverness could not match His divine wisdom. "They marvelled at Him," (Mk.12:17). Mighty miracles marked His life, confirming that He was "approved of God," (Acts 2:22). He could heal all kinds of sickness, calm storms, feed hungry multitudes, and even bring the dead back to life. His kindness and compassion attracted those rejected by society. Has anyone ever displayed such love?

But why did He come? Was it to be an example, to teach us how to live? The New Testament answer is plain: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," (1 Tim.1:15). He came to this planet to *save* us, not by His life but through His death upon a cross. By the sacrifice of His sinless life, He has made forgiveness possible for sinful man. On the third day after His death He rose again and was seen by many witnesses to be alive. More than five hundred at one time saw the risen Lord, (1 Cor.15:6). Forty days later He ascended to heaven before the eyes of His followers promising, as He left them, that He would return some day.



ANOTHER MILLENNIUM

The Bible has something to say about the Millennium too - but not the millennium that most other people have been talking about. It describes "the thousand years" when Satan will be bound and thus prevented from pursuing his evil schemes, and when peace on earth will be enjoyed under the reign of Christ,



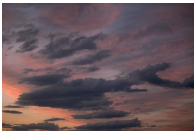
(Rev.20:1-6). Earth's "golden age" is yet to dawn, when there will be peace and harmony both in the animal kingdom and among men of different nationalities. Prophecies such as Isaiah 11:6-7 still await fulfilment when Christ reigns as rightful king upon this earth and when war will be no more. So much money is spent today on training

men and women for war and equipping nations to defend themselves satisfactorily. A day is coming when they will not "learn war any more," for the "Prince of Peace" will be in complete control, (Isa.2:4 & 9:6).

BUT FIRST...



Before that time, however, things are going to get worse. The Bible pictures Christ returning in judgment to a world experiencing *worse* turmoil than it has ever known at any other time. Much of the book of Revelation is devoted to those last days of terrible tribulation, culminating in the moment when the Lord Jesus appears in flaming fire to take vengeance on those who do not know God and have not obeyed the message of the Gospel, (2 Th.1:7-8). The prospects for the ungodly are bleak indeed. The Lord's coming in judgment is something to be feared.



A different prospect awaits the believer. We have not been "appointed ...to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Th.5:9). Our sure and certain hope is that the Lord

Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout - first raising the bodies of those who have died believing in Him, and then catching up those who are alive at His coming. We shall meet the Lord in the air and shall go to be with Him for ever. Truly, there is comfort in these words, (1 Th.4:13-18).

NEARING THE END



Man has the power to destroy himself, and many people wonder how much longer this world can go on. Ungodliness abounds everywhere, and only God's patience has prevented Him from acting in judgment already, (2 Pet.3:9). *Believers* sometimes wonder how much worse things will get before God righteously intervenes in the affairs of men.

A FUTURE PLAN

The one thing we can be certain about is that God has His own programme. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, and there are many indications from the Bible that His coming is near. Is He your Saviour, or will He be faced as your Judge? The gospel appeal is urgent: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near," (Isa.55:6). We must forsake our sinful ways and our sinful thoughts and, in repentance, ask God to be merciful and to pardon our sins, (Isa.55:7). He can - because His Son died in our place when He came to earth.



For those who love Him and consider what is happening in the world today, the Saviour's own words offer great consolation. He said: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," (Lk.21:28). As we recall the close of the twentieth century and the commencement of a new millennium, we can look *back* and rejoice that He came. But we can also look *ahead* and remember that He is **coming again** - soon.

"I will come again"

(John 14:3)



Guidance from Above

by Martin Girard

According to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.
[Numbers 9:20]

One of the most helpful lessons that we can learn from the Israelites as they journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land concerns the way in which they were guided by the Lord. Although they did not know the way, God did - and He was with them. The cloud that rested above the tabernacle signified His presence by day and by night. The people's responsibility was simply to look up and watch that symbol of God's presence. If the cloud stayed, the camp must remain where it was; if the cloud began to move on, it was time for them to pack up and follow its leading. The time interval was never specified. They might have to remain in the same place for two days, a month, or a year (v.22). It would be useless to move *before* the cloud did, for they would not know which direction to take! However, to stay put when the cloud moved on would be foolish because it would mean that they were refusing the presence of the Lord.

Often we imagine that we know the way, but we don't. Like the Israelites who had to check the cloud daily, we must look *up* to the Lord for guidance. If we are not constantly depending upon Him, we may miss His leading. Just as the Lord chose the way they were to take, we must allow Him to choose the way for us.

LETTING HIM CHOOSE

Our own will must be abandoned to His. For the Israelites, the guidance might not always have been convenient. Some locations may have seemed pleasant, but then the Lord began to move them on. At other times they could become impatient when the cloud stayed put and they wanted to move. Worst of all, perhaps, was when the cloud began to move in the night. Who would want to start packing up then!

Our hearts are no different. The Lord's calls may not always seem "convenient" to us. We can display the same impatience or reluctance that they did. Obedience is the key element, learning to stay or to move as He directs - for He always knows best. The life of faith is never trouble-free, but help is never far away. It requires constant waiting upon the Lord for direction. All our human plans must be "God willing". Remember, the Israelites couldn't even plan for tomorrow! Are we uncertain what to do? Jesus said, "I am the Way," (Jn.14:6). We must go *with* Him - and when we do, we will discover that He takes care of all the incidentals.

***“According to the commandment
of the Lord they journeyed”***

(Numbers 9:20)



THE ULTIMATE ROYAL EVENT



by Martin Girard

Driving in South Yorkshire one day in June 1987, I was surprised suddenly to come across a series of special road signs displaying the message, *Royal Visitors - This Way*. Not having followed the local news in Sheffield, I was curious to discover who was visiting the area - and it didn't take long to find out that Prince Charles was participating in the celebrations of a well-established country hospital. Crowds filled the hospital grounds, each person hoping to catch a glimpse of the future king. At length the Prince appeared with his entourage, and for a few brief moments we watched as he walked the short distance to the gleaming red Wessex helicopter of the Queen's Flight, before he was whisked away to an unknown destination.



Never before had I been so close to the Prince of Wales, so I felt pleased that I was in the right place at the right time. Doubtless many others, like myself, had not followed the news and had missed the event altogether.

SOMETHING GREATER

A greater “Royal Event” is soon to take place, and yet many people in the world today remain totally unaware. Another Prince is coming. He is “the Prince of Peace” and is also the “King of kings”. (1) The Bible tells us that “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven...” (2) Jesus Christ, once rejected in Jerusalem, cast out, and nailed to a cross, will come to this earth again.

At His return He will not travel alone - as Royal visitors often do today - but will take all those who love Him to be with Him in Heaven for ever. Jesus said, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

(3) Will **you** be among the number at that “Royal Event”?

WATCH AND BE READY!

The Bible also teaches that Jesus Christ will reign upon this earth as King and introduce an era of peace never known before. (4) Knowing how easily we can forget these coming great events, Jesus gave us this clear warning:- “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” (5) He *is* coming! We do not know when, but we must be ready!



What does it mean to be ready? It means that we believe the Lord Jesus shed His blood to cleanse us, and we have asked Him to forgive us through His death on the cross. When forgiven, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (6) and can face the future with confidence, knowing that when Jesus comes we shall go to be with Him for ever.

THE COMING KING

World events indicate that the King of kings will soon be returning. Jesus told a story of some who were ready and some who were not, in Matthew’s Gospel, Chapter 25. When He returns, those who are ready will go “in with Him” to Heaven, but for those not ready the door will be firmly shut. (7) God’s door of invitation is still open, and the Lord Jesus is willing to save you - but you must come **now**.



*“Come and welcome, whosoever will,”
‘Tis the Saviour’s gracious call;
He is able, willing, waiting now to save,
Simply trust Him, that is all.*

END NOTES:- (1)Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 19:16. (2)1 Thessalonians 4:16. (3)John 14:3. (4)Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:1-9. (5)Matthew 24:42. (6)Romans 5:1. (7)Matthew 25:10.