

Clifton News

No 267 October - December 2014

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NEWS

Bible Exhibition

We were pleased to have Jonathan Black come to Clifton with his Bible Exhibition from the 22nd September to the 3rd of October. Over 250 different people came in including children. A number had the gospel explained to them including a Moslem man who asked many questions for an hour and a half. Some new contacts have been made and we pray that they will come to the regular meetings of Clifton Hall and be saved.

It was also encouraging to see some of the children who used to come to our Sunday school years ago come in to see the exhibition.



*Christmas Carol Service
Sunday 2 1st December at 4 pm*

(Followed by tea and mince pies)

*Watch Night Service
Wednesday 3 1st December at 1 1 pm*

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MEETINGS

THE WEEK AT CLIFTON

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread 11.00 am

Family Service 4:00 pm

Monday

Prayer & Ministry 7:45 pm

Wednesday

Seekers Club 6:30 pm (Term time only for under 10s)

Friday

Friday Club (Term time only for 10+) 7:30 pm

SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

October

- 5 Nitish Patel
- 12 Andrew Hall
- 19 Nitish Patel
- 26 Alastair Rodger

November

- 2 Richard Catchpole
- 9 Alastair Rodger
- 16 John Aston
- 23 Nitish Patel
- 30 Norman Gibbons

December

- 7 Andrew Hall
- 14 Nitish Patel
- 21 Richard Catchpole (Carol Service)
- 28 Nitish Patel

MONDAY PRAYER & MINISTRY

October

- 6 Bible Reading, Romans 9
- 13 Timothy Millar, Nehemiah 5 & 6
- 20 **No meeting**
- 27 Richard Catchpole, Nehemiah 7

November

- 3 Bible Reading, Romans 10
- 10 Jonathan Black, Nehemiah 8
- 17 Jonathan Black, Nehemiah 9
- 24 Nitish Patel Nehemiah 10

December

- 1 Bible Reading, Romans 11
- 8 Colin Roberts, Nehemiah 11
- 15 Colin Roberts, Nehemiah 12
- 22 Colin Roberts, Nehemiah 13
- 29 Norman Gibbons

QUESTION BOX



Here are answers to some questions asked by the young people at our Friday Club.

If a person believes in Jesus but then joins another religion is he still saved?

Our questioner wonders what happens if someone appears to have believed in the Lord Jesus for salvation, but then at some point later converts to Islam or Hinduism. Are they still saved? Are their sins still forgiven? Will they be in heaven when they die?

Or will their salvation they once had be lost? Instead of being on the narrow way to life, will they be back on the broad road to destruction? To answer this question, let's think about what happens when a person believes in the Lord Jesus.

We could look at many parts of scripture, but let's concentrate on the second chapter of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Writing to believers, in verses 1 to 3 he tells them what their lives used to be like. "We were dead in trespasses and sins ... we once lived in the passions of our flesh ... were by nature children of wrath." These things don't just apply to the Ephesians, but they apply to all of us as well, "like the rest of mankind" Paul tells us.

What had to happen for these dead, disobedient sinners to be saved? God had to act, being rich in mercy and because of His great love, He made us alive together with Christ, verses 4 and 5 tell us.

The following verses tell us more of what God has done and will do for those He's saved:

v6 – Raised us up with Christ

v6 – Seated us with Him in the heavenly places

v7 – Will be shown the immeasurable riches of His grace

v10 – Created us in Christ for good works

There is far more that we could go into, but we can see that the blessings of salvation are brought about by God. He has done these things. It's not dependent upon what the believer does, but what God has done. They have eternal life because God has given it to them;

they are secure because God has saved them.

So what happens if a person no longer believes in the Lord Jesus?

Well, that person was never saved in the first place. John writes in Chapter 5:1 of his first letter (1 John) that “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.” It follows that if someone doesn’t believe that Jesus is the Christ (i.e. doesn’t follow the Lord Jesus), he hasn’t been born of God. That person hasn’t lost their salvation as you can’t lose something you never had.

How can we then know if we are saved? John tell us in Chapter 5:13 of his letter that “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life” (emphasis mine). He wrote his letter so that believers could be sure that they have eternal life. What does John do to make sure believers know they have eternal life? He provides a series of tests for them to examine their lives. I’ll provide one example, but you can find the rest for yourselves!

In Chapter 3:6, John says “No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him.” So a person who is saved, who has eternal life, doesn’t live a life marked by sin. A person who is consistently sinning hasn’t known Christ and doesn’t have eternal life. What is your life like? Are you consistently disobeying God or are you looking to obey Him? When you do sin, does it grieve you? Do you confess it to God (1 John1:9) or do you go back for more of the same?

When God saves someone, their lives are completely changed. They are no longer under condemnation for their sins, but are forgiven and declared righteous, they are no longer going to hell, but are seated in the heavenly places. But not only is their destiny changed, their lives are changed in a way that everyone should be able to see. The reality of their salvation should be evident in their lives. No longer wanting to sin, they now seek to live a life that pleases God.

So it’s impossible for someone truly saved by God to lose their salvation, but someone’s turning away from the Lord Jesus to follow another religion would indicate that they were never saved in the first place.

Alastair Rodger

BIBLE TEACHING

Elisha Prophet of Water (Part 6)

By the late Charles Wigg (Tasmania)



MOUNT CARMEL

From Bethel Elisha went to Mount Carmel. Thus he reminded himself of how his master had stood alone against eight hundred and fifty pagan priests, and a vacillating people who halted between two opinions, who tried to mix truth with error, who tried to serve Jehovah and the Baals. Now he was called to follow the example of that dear man of God. He saw where the altar of Israel, which Elijah had rebuilt had stood. He remembered how that in answer to the prayer of his master, the fire of God fell, consumed the burnt offering, the stones, the dust, and licked up the water in the trench. He remembered the mighty cry of a terrified but restored people. A cry in which he too had possibly joined, "Jehovah, He is God, Jehovah, He is God!" What challenging, searching memories these were to him, at the beginning of his ministry. Memories of the fickleness of the ignorant people of God, amongst whom he was to labour. Memories of the courage of his mighty master, whose example he was to follow. Memories of the intrinsic holiness of Jehovah, whom he was now to serve, and of His mighty power which he was to experience! Thus humbled and

challenged, Elisha returned to the capital, Samaria. Wicked city that it was, the place where was the wicked Jezebel's seat of power, (though her palace was at Jezreel). The one before whom his master had failed, become afraid, and from whom he had run away.

Elisha was the one who was to see that wicked woman lose her power. It was through his anointing that Jehu was to arise to destroy the dynasty of Ahab, the tyranny of the Baals, and have Jezebel thrown down from the heights of her palace, for the dogs to eat her body, after she had been trodden to pulp beneath his horses' feet. It seems that Elisha made his home there, 2Kings, 6:32, though we once find him at Dothan, 2Kings, 6:13. We may criticise him for dwelling in that wicked place, for Elijah never dwelt there, and went there only to proclaim the word of God.

Here we see the contrast between the ministry of Elijah and that of Elisha. Elijah maintained a strict, rigid separation from what was evil. He refused to associate with that which was evil, even by dwelling in the place where evil was practiced. Elisha on the other hand, though dwelling in places where evil was practiced, yet remained apart from it. He was available at all times to any, great or small, that really sought help from God through His word that was in the prophet's mouth. In the ministry of Elijah we see the expression, the practice of TRUTH. In Elisha's ministry we see the expression of GRACE. He was a patient man, gentle and understanding. He was able to bear with the shortcomings of ignorant and carnal men. We see the perfect balance, the combination of both in the person of the Lord Jesus. John, 1:17. He did not endorse, or encourage what was wrong and evil, though he associated with those who formed unholy associations, and ventured on wrong endeavours as we shall see in later chapters. But we joyfully admit that both were mightily used of God.

DISASTER AVOIDED

In chapter 3 of 2Kings, we are introduced to a situation of compromise, to unholy associations. We have the son of Ahab,

(Jehoram), who did evil in the sight of Jehovah, but not like his father or mother. He obviously judged some of the wicked excesses of his father, and abolished one form of idolatry. Nevertheless he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, and did not depart from them. It may be as well at this juncture to examine that cardinal sin, and see what it means for us.

Jeroboam came to power when Israel was divided through the folly of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. 1 Kings, chapters 12 & 13. Once he had divided the people, and had the support of nine and one half tribes, he cunningly devised a way to perpetuate his dynasty. He knew full well, that if the children of Israel continued to go to Jerusalem, to the Temple to worship there, (as God had commanded), sooner or later they would turn again after the son of David. So he devised a means to prevent this. He made two golden calves, and put one in Bethel and the other in Dan. The one in Bethel, was as near as he could get to Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen to set His name there. The one in Dan was as far away as he could get from God's centre.

The idea behind the golden calf, was to degrade the God of Israel, from being the mighty Lord of all, and make Him a to be a servant. This was a very convenient form of god, one that can be manipulated by man. Yet the calf was the animal of sacrifice as well as the animal of service. Showing in the type that though they were willing to trust in the redeeming power of the blood, yet they wished God to be their servant, and (being made of gold), He would be the source of their prosperity, and they could thus worship the gold, as they worshipped the god. Such an idea is common today, but is just as hateful to God as the golden calves were.

All this was to prevent them from returning to God's chosen way. He also exalted the High Places, where sacrifice was offered, and immorality was practiced, all in the name of religion. He also made priests of the lowest classes, whereas God had said that none were to serve Him as priests, but the sons of Aaron. We see this around us everywhere today, where men have introduced a special class

of men to act as priests, and thereby rob the people of God of their priceless privilege. The priest or minister is paid a salary, and he does everything, while the people, (the laity), look on. Thus we see a parallel today in the sects and denominations that men have set up. These result in the perpetuating of the greatness and rule of man. Thus like Israel the people of God today are made to sin, and prevented from returning to God's original thoughts, and from gathering to the name of the Lord Jesus alone. These are the sins that Jehoram clung to, such sins, though hateful to God, would lead to his continuing his hold over the people, and perpetuating his dynasty.

However Mesha the king of Moab, who had paid heavy taxes each year to support the grandeur of Ahab's kingdom, rebelled against Jehoram, and refused to pay the taxes. This king could not bear to have his finances reduced, neither can those that are like him today bear to be deprived of their life of luxury Their 'hip pocket nerve' is very sensitive indeed. Thus he decided to try to regain his lost revenues, and to do so entered into an unholy alliance with two other kings, Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, and the King of Edom. The King of Judah was a good king, and walked in the ways of his godly father. However he made the terrible mistake of marrying the daughter of Ahab. He allowed his natural love to becloud his judgment, and began to love those that hated Jehovah.

When invited to assist the son of Jezebel in recovering his lost revenues, he responded whole-heartedly, gladly committing the lives of his own soldiers to such a doubtful endeavour. He stands as a warning to us in this respect. There are some today that will encourage believers to join hands with, nominal 'Christians', and others that are heretical in nature, and that teach and practice things that are contrary to the word of God. Emphasizing that we Christians must present a 'united front' to the world. We must join with homosexuals, Roman Catholics, and all comers in public marches, like "Marchers for Jesus" etc. Let us beware!

.... to be continued

GOOD NEWS

How Shall We Escape?

by Robert E. Surgenor

ALCATRAZ! One mile from the shores of the San Francisco Bay it stands. Twelve acres of solid rock, it rose with an ominous appearance to those who were being taken there for confinement. Known as “The Rock,” it became America’s version of Devil’s Island.



Named by a Spaniard, “Isla de los Alcatraces,” meaning, “Isle of the Pelicans,” it lived up to its description, for only pelicans were able to come and go freely during much of the island’s history. Purchased by the Federal Government for \$5,000 in 1854, and fortified for \$1,697,500, it first held Civil War prisoners of war, then political prisoners. In 1934, it became the most fearsome federal prison of all, the home of notorious citizens such as Alfonso “Scarface” Capone and George “Machine Gun” Kelly.

The ultimate in maximum security penitentiaries, Alcatraz had a way of reducing the most hardened and confident criminals. Even the so called “Great Al Capone” became a weak little old man, cringing in his cell for fear of being knifed to death. At Alcatraz, a no-talking rule was strictly enforced on its 300 inmates, and guards were ordered to open fire at the least indication of trouble.

During its 29-year history, at least 35 of the 1,576 inmates confined to Alcatraz tried to escape. Seven were shot or killed, 22 were recaptured, and the rest presumably drowned in the bay’s vicious ocean-bound currents. Contrary to fictional stories, no one ever succeeded in escaping!

In 1963, Alcatraz closed. As the last prisoner was being transferred he remarked, “It’s mighty good to get up and leave.” Thus the curtain

closed on a 29-year history of human misery, grief, hopelessness and confinement.

SATAN'S PRISON

When we turn to the spiritual realm, it might surprise you to know, that we find prisons, too! For years, I was in a prison and I wasn't even aware of it. The Lord mentions the situation in Luke 11:21-23. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Let me explain this statement to you. The "strong man" is Satan, and he has led mankind captive, robbing him of heaven. Armed, he is well supplied, knowing how to snare souls, as he did Eve, thus introducing spiritual and physical death into the human family. His "palace" is the world, the attractive sphere of his mighty operations. His "goods" are the souls of men and he keeps them "in peace." How can he do it? Very simply, he does it by holding before men the pleasures, fame, wealth, honors and pursuits of this world, so that their minds have no time to think upon eternal things. Satan exercises dominion over their intellectual capacities and affections. Man, is "DEAD" spiritually as far as God is concerned (Ephesians 2:1). He has a false peace. With no anxiety about his soul, no fear of the future, and no dread of hell, he is in for a dreadful awakening! Yes, Satan is doing well at keeping his prisoners at peace. Is your's a false peace?

HOW TO ESCAPE!

Can something be done about it? Absolutely! God has provided an escape from Satan's prison! Christ as the stronger One has come. Just as we consist of flesh and blood, God's eternal Son became a Man "that through death He might destroy (annul) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." "He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2: 14,15,9). His precious blood was shed at Calvary to purchase redemption and to cleanse

the sinner of ALL his sins. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). It is all of grace, and not prayers, penance, or works on your part! Any professed minister who would tell you otherwise is being used of Satan to deceive you! Never mind what men may say. If God says it, that is all that matters! You can come into the good of His promise, being redeemed from Satan's grasp, sin's defilement and hell's torment; and you can be totally and eternally forgiven, once for all! How? By faith! Faith in what? Faith in Christ! In other words, you must trust His sacrifice at Calvary as all you need to fit you for heaven. You must believe on Him, rely on Him, placing confidence and dependence on Him alone.

God says, "For by grace are ye saved through FAITH" (Ephesians 2:8). Be earnest - don't neglect God's way of escape!

GOD'S PRISON

Let me tell you now about the most terrible prison of all. It's God's prison. Peter speaks of those who were disobedient to God in Noah's day as presently being "spirits in prison." He speaks of sinning angels being cast down into hell, delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment and of the unjust being reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished (1 Peter 3:19; 2 Peter 2:9,4). If you die as an unjust person (unforgiven, unredeemed), you will enter the prison-house of hell. Your spirit will be incarcerated until the day of resurrection, to be judged for your sins at the great white throne; then finally, you will be cast, body, soul and spirit into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8). The sentence will be, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46).

"How shall we escape,
if we neglect so great salvation?"
(Hebrews 2:3)

THE ANSWER IS - YOU WON'T!

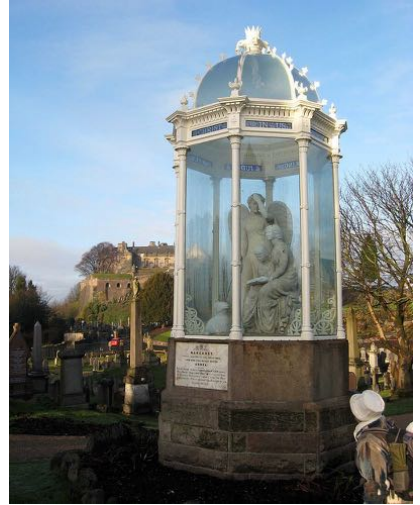
CHURCH HISTORY

The Two Margarets

By Mark Beardall

Margaret Wilson and Margaret McLauchlan were Scottish Covenanters who died for their faith. They were known as the Wigtown Martyrs or the Two Margarets.

Margaret Wilson was born in 1667 and was only eighteen years old at the time of her death. Her father Gilbert Wilson had a farm called Glenvernock, near Penningham, in Wigtownshire, Scotland. He and his wife conformed to Prelacy and the Prayer Book and attended the ministry of the local Episcopalian curate but all three of his children were Covenanters who refused to attend such services.



Wigtown Martyrs
Monument, Stirling

A number of covenants were made in Scottish history that sought to protect the Presbyterian form of church government and way of worship but the most famous was the National Covenant of 1638. James VI of Scotland had imposed Bishops on the Scottish Church having a desire to make the Scottish Church conform to the English Church. His successor Charles I with the encouragement of Archbishop William Laud set up a hierarchy of Bishops in Scotland. And later in a book of canons he declared himself to be the head of the Church. In 1637 Charles I forced the Book of Common Prayer on the Scottish people and anyone who opposed it would be charged with treason.

Ministers who refused to conform were thrown out of their church buildings and forbidden to preach. Some continued to preach in private homes and barns and in the open air. There were great

meetings known as “conventicles” often in open fields or in the hills where non-conformist ministers used to preach. Preaching at a non-conformist conventicle was punishable by death.



King Charles II (1630-1685)

The National Covenant of 1638 was first signed at Greyfriars Kirk in Grassmarket, Edinburgh and was later signed all throughout Edinburgh and Scotland. Those who signed this covenant were concerned that the King was trying to bring the country back to Romanism. They were prepared to die to defend the faith against popery and prelacy and to maintain the true worship of God. It was a long document but it sought to defend the faith to the glory of God.

Covenanters experienced a brief period of rest under Oliver Cromwell but the persecution resumed after the restoration of the monarchy. Charles II had earlier signed the National Covenant to gain support for himself to become King in Scotland while Cromwell was

in England. The Covenanters backed Charles II against Cromwell. But after his restoration, he repayed them by persecution. He made all private religious gathering illegal. Anyone found preaching at a conventicle would be immediately shot by soldiers. This was the beginning of the Killing Times during which 18,000 Covenanters died.

Margaret Wilson 18, her brother James 16 and her sister Agnes 13 lived in the hills. Their parents were not allowed to feed them or shelter them. Anyone found sheltering a Covenanter would be put to death.

In February 1685 Margaret Wilson and her sister Agnes left the hills to visit Margaret McLauchlan at Wigtown. Margaret McLauchlan was the elderly widow of James Mulligan. When her husband died shed had to look after the farm alone and live of its produce. She was a pious woman who refused to attend services according to the Prayer Book, instead she met at home with other believers. She was a woman of hospitality who often sheltered those who were homeless through

persecution. When Margaret and Agnes visited Margaret Mclauchlan, a man called Patrick Stuart invited them all to dinner with purpose to betray them. At the meal he asked them to drink to the Kings health. They all refused as this was almost like accepting him as head of the Church. He went to the authorities and all three were arrested. Margaret Wilson and Agnes were thrown in the “thieves hole” while Margaret McLauchlan was put into prison in Wigtown. The girls were put in the same prison in Wigtown two days later.

On 13th April 1685 they were charge with being at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge and the skirmish of Ayr Moss and attending conventicle. They were also required to make an oath of Abjuration to renounce the Covenant. All three refused to make the oath of abjuration and were found guilty of treason. They were sentenced to be drowned in the Solway Firth.

Gilbert Wilson went to the Privy Council of Scotland to make an appeal for his daughters. He was able to secure the life of Agnes his younger daughter for £100 due to her tender age but he could not help Margaret. Though they granted the two Margarets a reprieve, it was ignored.

On 11th May 1685 Margaret Wilson and Margaret Wilson were tied to stakes on the Solway Firth at low tide. Margaret Wilson was tied up nearer to the shore so that she would see Margaret McLauchlan die before herself. Margaret McLauchlan died without saying a word, which greatly angered her tormentors.



While the waves gradually covered Margaret McLauchlan, a soldier said to Margaret Wilson, “What do you think of her now?” Margaret replied, “Think? I see Christ wrestling there. Think ye that we are sufferers? No, it is Christ in us, for he sends none a warfare at their

own charges.”

After her fellow martyr died and the waters came up higher on her own body, Margaret Wilson sang part of the 25th Psalm and quoted part of Romans chapter eight, “Who shall separate us from, the love of God...?”

When the waters began to choke her, she was pulled out of the river and commanded to take the Abjuration Oath and to pray for the King. She refused to take the oath but prayed for the King’s forgiveness and salvation. Her tormentors were not satisfied so they thrust her back into the water and pushed her under until she drowned.

The two Margarets were not the only ones who suffered for the faith. Many more were put to death for the faith. The Covenanters were eventually given their freedom to worship after the landing of William of Orange in 1688.





(Above) Hot volcanic water springing out of the ground near Laodicea. By the time hot water reached the city it was lukewarm. The church there had become just like its water supply (Revelation 3:16). The city of Izmir (Smyrna) (Below)





Ruins of the city of Hierapolis mentioned in Colossians 4:13