

Clifton News

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God is
Love

God is
Light

Clifford Hall
November 2017



News

"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm 136:1)

We are very grateful to all who pray for us here at Clifton Hall and here are some items for prayer for the coming months.

In April the assembly will be busy hosting another Easter Holiday Club for the children from 10th to 14th April.

There has been no response yet to our application from the organisers of the South Norwood Festival. We hope that they will give us a place for our gazebo and stall for the festival to be held on Sunday 2nd July. It will be a great opportunity to make known the young peoples work and distribute gospel tracts.

We praise God that the Wednesday Seekers and the Friday Club continue to see good attendance and particulalry on Friday there is an interest in the message with some good questions asked which are answered in this magazine by Alastair. A few of the children profess to have trusted the Lord and we pray for further blessing.

The family service has seen an increase in attendance this year. The gospel is faithfully preached every week and we keep waiting on the Lord for blessing on His Word.

Alastair and Rebecca Rodger are expecting their second baby in May and prayer is valued for a safe delivery.

Meetings

THE WEEK AT CLIFTON

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread	11 am
Family Service	4 pm

Monday

Prayer and Bible Teaching	7.45 pm
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Wednesday

Seekers Club	6.30 pm
(Term time only for under 10s)	

Friday

Friday Club	7.30 pm
(Term time only for 10+)	

SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

April

2	Ferranti Wong
9	Norman Gibbons
16	Nitish Patel
23	Alastair Rodger
30	Norman Gibbons

May

7	Andrew Hall
14	Ferranti Wong
21	Richard Catchpole
28	John Aston

June

4 Glyn Davies
11 Thomas Taylor
18 Richard Catchpole
25 Alastair Roadger

MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING

April

3 Alastair Rodger
10 No meeting (Holiday Club)
17 Easter Monday
24 David Willis

May

1 No meeting (Bank holiday)
8 David Penfold
15 Martin Hayward
22 David Penfold
29 No meeting (Bank holiday)

June

5 Roy Aitkin
12 Colin Roberts
19 Colin Roberts
26 Richard Catchpole

Easter Holiday Club



Every day
Monday 10th to Thursday 13th April
10 am to 12 noon
Ages 4 years and over
Prize giving on Thursday at 7 pm

Question Box



Questions asked by the young people at our Friday Club answered by Alastair Rodger

Are Jesus and God the same person?

Questions about God are often asked and it's important that we answer them as God has made Himself known for a reason. He hasn't hidden Himself away and we don't get to come up with our own ideas about Him. Having a wrong view of God and Jesus can have serious consequences (2 John v. 9).

Way back in the January 2015 issue of Clifton News, we answered a question about doctrine of the Trinity and provided the following definition: "Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three co-equal and co-eternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Based on our definition, we see immediately that there is a misconception in our question. God is not one person; He is one Being shared by three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

So let's rephrase the question: Is Jesus God?

To which the answer is yes. That Jesus is God is a truth that can be found throughout the New Testament and even in the Old Testament. It's a key part of the Christian faith, someone who doesn't believe that Jesus is God isn't a Christian.

Firstly, we can turn to the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. In chapter 9 verse 6, he writes "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This is a prophecy about the Lord Jesus, written before He was born, He's described as the "Mighty God".

When we come to the New Testament, we find that each of the four

Gospels present Jesus to us as God. We'll look at brief examples from of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus declares that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. What a claim to make! God is the only one who could have all that authority, not someone who is just a man.

In Mark 2:10 Jesus declares and demonstrates that He has authority on earth to forgive sins by healing a paralysed man. Forgiving sins is something only God could do (v. 7). Lastly in Luke 3:4, the words of Isaiah 40:3 are quoted about John the Baptist. John had come to "prepare the way of the Lord". In Isaiah, these words are clearly referring to God, Luke applies them to Jesus, showing that He is God. There are several occasions in the New Testament where Old Testament scriptures about God are applied to Jesus.

The forth gospel emphasises that Jesus is God, at the very start of the gospel John introduces us to the Word (Jesus). He describes how the Word is eternal, is in the presence of God, the Word is distinct from the Father and He is God. Again in chapter 5:15-23, Jesus speaks of His unity with His Father: the Father works, He works, the Father gives life, He gives life, the Father should be honoured, the Son should be honoured. Jesus the Son is equal with God the Father, therefore He is God.

Finally we can go to Paul's letters for a couple of examples. In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul speaks of Christ as being in the form of God and being equal with God and that every knee should bow to Him and confess Him as Lord (Language used of God in Isaiah 40:23). Also in his letter to Titus, Paul writes of Jesus as being the great God and Saviour (2:13).

For a bonus example, we also see Peter using the same language construction in chapter 1, verse 1 of his second letter, calling Jesus Christ God and Saviour. Space doesn't allow us to look at other examples, but when you begin to appreciate this truth, it can be seen clearly in all of the books of the New Testament. The Lord Jesus is God!

Bible Teaching

Elisha Prophet of Water (Part 16 of 17)

By the late Charles E. Wgg (Tasmania)

SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE



In chapter eight, (2 Kings) we next have the account of seven years of famine. It is to be noted that the duration of the famine was twice the length of the famine proclaimed by Elijah. It is not said either, that this famine was the direct result of Elisha's prayers. Elisha understood the mind and will of God in this situation. The famine was not as severe as the one called for by Elijah, because it seems that there were some harvests during those seven years.

The prophet warned the woman of Shunem, to go to another place for that period, so she went to the land of the Philistines and stayed there. It seems that her husband must have died, either before she went away, or while she was sojourning in the Philistines land. When she returned with her son, no mention is made of her husband. Because

she acted in obedience to the direct command of God, He saw to it that she suffered no loss.

Her case was so different to that of Elimelech & Naomi, in the book of Ruth. They ran away from a difficult situation, but got into worse troubles. They were out of the will of God, and suffered because of it. The seven years of famine passed by, and the woman returned with her son, and approached the King to have her house and land restored. It is interesting to notice the timing, which was obviously God's timing, which is always perfect. God is never in a hurry, but He is never too late.

When the woman cried to the king for her house and land, Gehazi was relating to the King the miracle of the raising to life of the woman's son. This reveals another thing, and that is that Gehazi must have been cleansed from his leprosy. Otherwise he would never be in the presence of the King. This shows us the wonder of the mercy of God. However though cleansed from the outward display of the leprosy and its defilement and corruption, yet the leprosy was still in his heart, and in the hearts of his sons and daughters also.

Moses had to learn this lesson also, because when he put his hand in over his heart and brought it out again, it was as leprous as snow. But when he put his hand in again, and brought it out, it was restored as his other hand. This was to teach him, (and us), that the leprosy of sin lies latent in our own hearts also. Solomon prayed that each one would know the plague of their own heart. (2 Chron. 6:29. J.N.D.)

As they stood there, the widow and her son were a living testimony, both to the miraculous power of God, and the persistence of a faith that refused to give up. So it was, that not only the woman's house and land were restored to her, but also the value of the fruits that had been harvested from the land, during those seven years. This was surely the intervention of God on their behalf, and was a direct result of their obedience to His word.

ELISHA AT DAMASCUS

We may wonder what Elisha was doing at Damascus? Perhaps there are several answers to this query. You will recall that Elijah was told by God to do three things, and he did only one of those things, that is he anointed Elisha as prophet in his stead, the other two duties he left to Elisha to do. It was to fulfil one of these duties that the prophet came to Damascus. That is to anoint Hazael king over Syria.

But there was another reason perhaps why he came to Damascus. You will recall the healing of Naaman in chapter five. When Naaman returned he was no longer an idol worshipper, Jehovah was now his God. It seems that this change was not pleasing to Ben Hadad king of Syria, and he probably felt that he could no longer trust that general to lead his army against Israel, and dismissed him from his post. I say this because Hazael was now the general of Ben-hahad's army. Perhaps news had reached Elisha of Naaman's suffering and it is quite possible that he had gone to Damascus to comfort and to establish him in his faith. He could have been staying at Naaman's house, when he had a visit from Hazael.

It was at this time that Ben-hadad fell sick, though it seems that his illness was not terminal. Hazael had been sent by Ben-hadad with a huge gift, to request the prophet to inquire of Jehovah as to whether he would recover from his illness. Thus God's time had come. It was probably more than twenty years before that God had given the command to Elijah, and it was possible that Hazael was only a child then. This reveals to us again, that God knows the end from the beginning, and that He always acts according to His own plan, in His own time.

It is quite interesting that this time Elisha did not refuse the gift, though it was huge. It was forty camel's burden of all the good things of Damascus. Perhaps it was his intention to bring relief to others that were suffering, back in Israel. Unlike Gehazi in the earlier chapter, he was not motivated by selfishness and greed.

The prophet clearly told the messenger, that his king's sickness was not life threatening, that in the normal course of events, he would certainly recover. However he had been shown by Jehovah that Hazael would murder his master and seize the throne of Syria for himself. He wept as he realized the terrible things that Hazael would do to the children of Israel. This was in spite of the fact that they richly deserved the judgment that the invader would mete out to them. Yet he loved those people, and though they were in a backslidden state, yet they were his people. So it was that Jehovah literally placed the sword in the hands of the Syrian coup plotter, with which he would slaughter the unfaithful children of Israel, and in so doing would execute God's judgment upon them.

Though Hazael was horrified by Elisha's description of the things that he would do, yet in the years that followed, he and his soldiers fulfilled accurately all that had been prophesied. The very next day, after delivering that part of the message that he knew his king would wish to hear; Hazael murdered his master. He did not do this with the sword, but in the king's weakened condition, he smothered him. In so doing, he fulfilled what God had intended, but what Ahab had failed to do.

... To be concluded



Ivory carving found at Arslan Tash, Syria depicting Hazael king of Aram Damascus

Good News

Chinese man cycles 500km in wrong direction



The Chinese news agency, the People's Online Daily told the story of a Chinese man who was too poor to buy a train ticket so decided to cycle all the way home in time for the Chinese New Year.

He set off in December from Rizhao in Shandong province to get home 1700 km north in Qiqihar Heilongjiang province, a journey of about one week by bicycle.

After 30 days of cycling, the young migrant worker had been living in internet cafes and was low on funds. He was stopped by traffic police in the central Chinese province of Anhui because he was seen riding on the highway which cannot be used by cyclists.

When he told the police where he was wanting to go, they told him that he had been travelling in the wrong direction! In fact he had travelled 500 km (312 miles) in the wrong direction! The unnamed man could not read maps and was depending on others for directions.

After discovering his mistake, both police and people working at the toll station he was stopped took pity on him and collected money to send him the 2000 km home by train.

This sad story which had a happy ending can easily be a picture of millions of whom the Bible says are heading in the wrong direction but are unaware.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). There is only one way to heaven. All other ways are detours to doom and the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15)

Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

However, guided wrongly by others like the Chinese man was, millions are on the wrong way following the many religions that Satan offers which teach salvation by human effort and works even though God has clearly declared that salvation is by grace alone and "not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9).

Others follow their own heart which is deceitful and believe that all will go to heaven whatever life they have done but the Bible says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived ..." (1 Corinthians 6:9).

Jesus warned, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matthew 7:13)

Reader, which way are you travelling? Are you saved through faith in Christ alone who died for you and rose again a living Saviour or are you like the Chinese man travelling in the wrong direction down the broad way that leads to destruction?

Design in Creation

OUR AMAZING EARTH

By Nitish Patel

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)

The universe is so finely tuned for life that the smallest degree of difference would mean that life would be impossible on earth. Consider some of the many facts about the amazing earth we live on.

THE EARTH'S ORBIT

Isaiah wrote in 700 BC that the earth is round, “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.” (Isaiah 40:22). Job declared that the earth hangs in empty space, “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” (Job 26:7)

The earth is just the right distance from the sun. The earth is on average 92.96 million miles from the sun and travels 584 millions miles in its orbit around the sun every year. If we could travel the distance to the sun by car driving at 70 mph non stop, it would take over 152 years.

If the earth was nearer then most of its water would boil and if too further away then most of its water would freeze. This is known as the “Goldilocks Zone”.

The sun is also the right colour for photosynthesis in plants to occur. If it was bluer or redder then the photosynthetic response would be weaker. The sun is also the right mass. If it were larger, its brightness would change too quickly and the radiation would be much higher. The tidal forces from such a sun would disrupt the planet's rotational period. If it were smaller then the earth would be too cold and the

ultra violet radiation needed for photosynthesis could not occur.

“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.” (Genesis 1:5)

The sidereal year is exactly 365-days, 6-hours, 49-minutes and 9.54-seconds and this is consistent to over a thousandth of a second every year without change. The 24 hour rotation of the earth means life can exist. If it rotated much more slowly then one side would be in darkness for too long and freeze and the other side would roast in the sun. This would also upset the balance and water and ice with disastrous consequences.

THE EARTH'S SIZE

God asked Job, “Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.” (Job 38:18)

Though Job did not know the size of the earth, God knew and He created it the perfect size and mass for life to exist in abundance upon it. It has been calculated that the earth's mass is around 5.972 sextillion metric tons and it gains around 40,000 metric tons each year from meteorites which bombard it from space.

Any smaller then the gravity would not be enough to retain the atmosphere which would be blown off into space by the solar wind (charged particles which are emitted by the sun at high speed).

“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.” (Psalm 102:25)

The crust of the earth is just right thickness around most of its surface shielding life on the surface from the hot volcanic magma below. At the volcanic heart of the earth is a dynamo creating the magnetic field which shields life from the harmful rays of the sun and the Galaxy. It diverts the electrons and protons into the north and south poles creating the wonderful shimmering curtains of light in the sky known

as the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights .

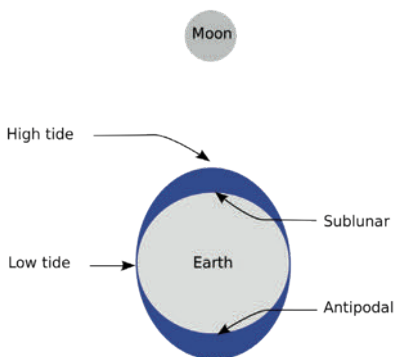
THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” (Genesis 1:6)

The atmosphere is the perfect mix for life. The oxygen nitrogen and carbon dioxide ration is the right amount. Some 12-19 miles above, the earth's stratosphere has an o-zone layer or shield composed of trioxygen which protects us from most of the dangerous ultra violet radiation which is harmful to life. Although man wants to travel to other planets such as Mars and even live there, whoever manages to go there will not live long without protection from the intense solar radiation.



THE EARTH'S SATELLITE



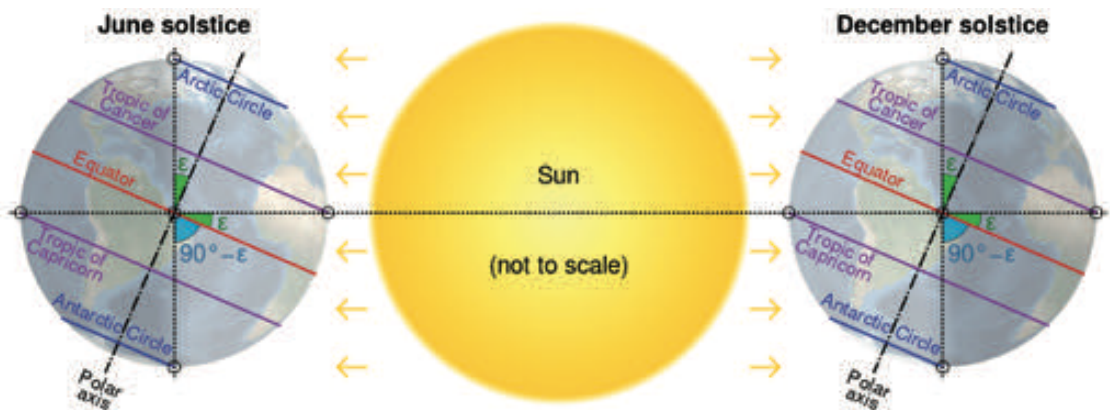
The moon is the earth's satellite and orbits at an average distance of 238,900 miles away. It was created to give light in the night and the timing of days, months and years (Genesis 1:14-16). Its gravity causes the earth to remain in its tilt and causes tides in the seas and oceans which are vital to life. The tides cleanse the ocean shorelines and prevent

water stagnating.

THE EARTH'S SEASONS

“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” (Genesis 8:22)

The earth's axis of rotation is tilted $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees relative to the perpendicular of the earth's plane of orbit. This tilt causes the four seasons. Too much of a tilt would mean the seasons would be extreme cold and extreme heat. Too less would mean that there would be no seasons. As a result there would be a permanent unbearable band of heat at the equator and the poles frozen to a much larger extent. There would be stationary weather patterns and only part of the earth would be inhabitable for humans and many animals.

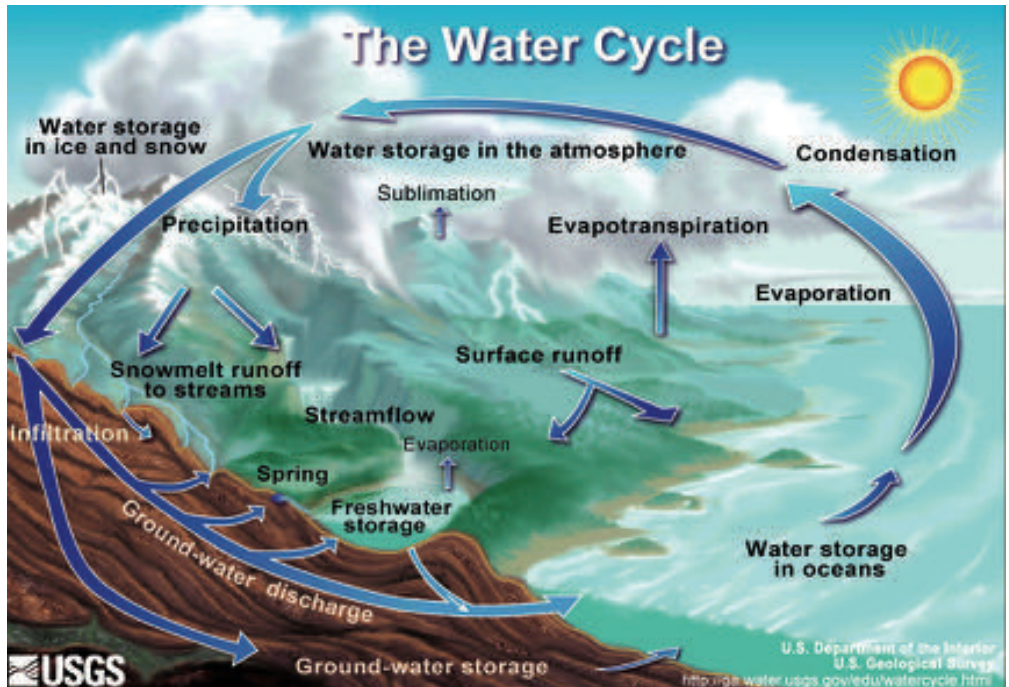


THE EARTH'S WEATHER SYSTEM

“Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.” (Psalm 65:9)

Pharaoh learnt the hard way that the LORD controlled the weather (Exodus 19:29).

3000 years ago, King Solomon described the complex circular global wind patterns that determine earth's weather later confirmed by science.



“The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.” (Ecclesiastes 1:6-7)

Atheists believe that the earth is just one insignificant plant in a universe of billions of similar planets but the Bible teaches that the earth is very special to God for He made man in His image and placed him here. His Son was born as Man here and died here. It is here that He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and will return to earth to reign eternally with His people.

We can say like the Seraphim, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” (Isaiah 6:3)

The earth viewed from the moon by the astronauts of Apollo 8 24th December 1968





The Garden of Gethsemane