

Clifton News

279 October - December 2017

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News

The outreach at the Thornton Heath festival went well. Clifton Hall was given a stall a bit nearer the main stage and it was a better place for giving out literature. The weather was good with rain only towards the end of the day. Many thousands of visitors attended. Special packs were made to give out to parents and children and one thousand John 3:16 gospel card tracts were printed of which around half were distributed. The Mayor of Croydon, Cllr. Toni Letts opened the festival and during the day was introduced to the stall and took literature.

The Wednesday and Friday clubs continue to see good numbers of children. Behaviour is generally good and the youngsters continue to listen to the gospel and ask questions. Pray for the children of the believers, for Rhea, Noah, Sara and Zillah.

We would like to thank all our readers who pray for the work of the assembly here which completed 120 years of witness in this hall this year.

Christmas Meetings

Carol Service

ON SUNDAY 24TH DECEMBER AT 4 PM FOLLOWED
BY TEA AND MINCE PIES

Watchnight Gospel Meeting

ON SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER AT 11 PM

Meetings

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread	11.00 am
Family Service	4.00 pm

Monday

Prayer and Bible Teaching	7.45 pm
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Wednesday

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

Friday

Friday Club	7.30 pm
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SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

October

1	Andrew Hall
8	Glyn Davies
15	Alastair Rodger
22	Richard Catchpole
29	Nitish Patel

November

5	Alf Taylor
12	Alastair Rodger
19	John Aston
26	Norman Gibbons

December

- 3 Andrew Hall
- 10 Ferranti Wong
- 17 Nitish Patel
- 24 Richard Catchpole (Carol Service)
- 31 Nitish Patel

MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING

October

- 2 Robert Bennett
- 9 John Aston
- 16 George Rassovsky
- 23 Nitish Patel
- 30 Nitish Patel

November

- 6 David Willis
- 13 Timothy Millar
- 20 Timothy Millar
- 27 Timothy Millar

December

- 4 Colin Roberts
- 11 Colin Roberts
- 18 Colin Roberts
- 25 No Meeting

SATURDAY NIGHT MINISTRY

- 7 October Daniel Rudge (Bracknell)
- 4 November Alastair Henry (Uxbridge)
- 2 December John Lee (Bognor Regis)

Question Box



Answers to questions asked by the young people in Friday club.

“After you die, how would you suffer in hell if you are a spirit?”

It is our earnest prayer and desire that hell will not be the destiny of anyone reading this or any in our youth club. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of Hell as a very real place of torment (Mark 9:44; Luke 16:24). The only escape from it is trusting Him as Saviour and Lord. He died on Calvary to save us from our sin and the eternal judgment we deserve.

However, the sad fact is that there will be many in hell and in torment. The question relates to the spiritual part of man and whether it can feel pain. We know our bodies feel pain, but what does the Bible say about the soul and spirit?

The Bible teaches that angels and fallen angels i.e. the Devil and his demons can feel torment and pain even though they are spirits without a physical body.

“And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:29)

The time they were referring to is when they will be cast into the Lake of fire,

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Revelation 20:10)

Therefore we see that God created spirits with no physical body but created them so that they can feel pain and torment.

What about human beings? The Lord Jesus spoke of the rich man who died and his body was buried but his soul went to hell.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” (Luke 16:22-23)

The word ‘hell’ here refers to Hades where all the unbelieving souls go today. If anyone dies without Christ today, their body is buried or cremated. Their soul goes immediately downward to Hades to be in torment and await the final judgment. They will be resurrected in their bodies to appear before the Judge of all the earth, the Lord Jesus Christ who will sit on the Great White Throne.

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11)

They will give account of the sinful deeds they committed in their bodies while they lived on earth and for their rejection of Him as their Saviour (Revelation 20:13). They will be cast into the Lake of Fire for their names are not found written in the book of life (Revelation 20:15). They will join the Devil and his demons for whom this place of punishment was created (Matthew 25:41). It was not made for man for God loves man and gave His Son to die for all so that none need perish. “The Lord ... is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

Nitish Patel

Bible Teaching

THE FACE OF THE LORD JESUS

by John Wallace (Hartlepool)

“I foresaw the Lord always before my face.” (Acts 2:25)

These words are a quotation from Psalm 16:8 where we read, “I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved.” Putting these verses in Acts 2:25 and Psalm 16 together we see that the Lord Jesus always had the conscious assurance that God was with Him. He could say to the Jews, “He that sent me is with me, I am not alone.” (John 8:29). When all forsook Him and fled, He knew that God was there. Having had this confidence Himself, He says to us today, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). He lived in the moment by moment enjoyment of the presence of God, He did always that which pleased the Father. He knew that with the help of God no power on earth or in heaven could rob Him of the enjoyment of that “I shall not be moved”. An appreciation of these things will lead us into a deeper understanding of the awesomeness of his cry on the cross, “Why didst thou forsake me.?” Why Thou, Why me.

“His face shone like the sun” (transfiguration) (Matthew 17:2)

On the mountainside the brightness of His glory shone through the veil of His humanity. Peter describing the scene says that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty. The glory and brightness of the sun would suggest a number of things.

Unique glory

The glory of the sun is unique. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, “there is one glory of the sun.” There is no heavenly body that can compare with the glory of the sun.

Whenever and however we think of the Lord Jesus we must keep in mind the we are thinking of a glory which is absolutely unique, there is nothing with which it can be compared.

His face shone like the sun. The glory of the sun is in its brightness, the brightness and the glory are inseparable. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that the Lord Jesus is, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” surely an assertion of his absolute deity.

Undiminished glory

The sun has been shining since the beginning of creation and yet its brightness hasn't diminished by the tiniest degree. The Lord Jesus has existed from all eternity and yet His glory is undiminished. In the beginning He laid the foundation of creation, at the end He will fold it all up. He was there at the beginning, He will be there at the end and He will be the same at the end as He was at the beginning.

Inherent glory

The moon derives its glory from the sun, if there was no sun it would be in total darkness but the glory of the sun is in itself. Such is the glory of the Lord Jesus. He didn't receive it from anyone or anywhere and it wasn't bestowed upon him, it is His eternally, essentially.

Manifold glory

We see the glory of the sun in its brilliance but hidden in the brilliance are all the beautiful colours of the rainbow.

Peter was eyewitness with those on the mount of His majesty (2 Peter 1:16); John beheld His glory (John 1:14). What John saw was not the brilliance, the splendour; he saw the love, the grace, the kindness, the compassion, the gentleness (we could go on) of the Lord Jesus. John saw, not the outshining of His glory but the glory of His character, His personality.

“His face was set towards Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51)

The time has come that the Lord Jesus should be received up to glory; before that time could come He must first go to the cross. We must be clear that the Lord Jesus, perfect as He was, could never at any time have gone back to heaven apart from going to the cross (Hebrews 10:7). Where was that to be? Jerusalem. Isaiah was the prophet who wrote most about the Lord Jesus and in Isaiah 50:7 he writes, “I have set my face like a flint”. Purpose, determination, intent, resolve were all written on the face of the Saviour as He looked forward to the cross.

“He fell on his face” (Gethsemane) (Matthew 26:39)

Matthew uses some thought provoking expressions in writing about Gethsemane.

He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Sometimes in a difficult situation a person will use the expression, “it’s getting me down”. They are feeling the weight and the pressure of it . The Lord Jesus had had the cross on His mind right from the very beginning but now it is very near and He is beginning to really feel the weight and the pressure, He began to be very heavy.

“My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.” The word ‘unto’ would signify not just to the time of but to the point of. A person who is feeling very ill will say that they feel as if they are going to die.

‘Even unto death’, how can we begin to understand the intensity of the sorrow that was gripping the Saviour’s heart?

‘He went a little further’. He had left behind the main number of the disciples, He leaves behind Peter, James and John and He Himself went a little further. Ultimately He was to go further still, all the way to Calvary.

‘He fell on his face’. One is reminded of an old Scottish saying “Its better felt than tell’t”. There are some situations, good or bad that go beyond mere words. We peer through the darkness and see a lonely figure, prostrate on the ground with His face towards the earth in agony of soul and body and mind and we ask with hushed voice who is this solitary sufferer? It is none other than the Son of God, the Lord of glory. How can we but gaze upon His suffering with awe and wonder in our hearts at such a mystery.

“His visage was marred more than any man” (Isaiah 52:14)

We now want to think of a number of expressions used by various writers in relation to the cross.

Matthew tells us they spit in His face (Matthew 26:67), Mark tells us they began to cover His face and to buffet Him (Mark 14:65), Luke tells us they struck Him in the face (Luke 22:64), The Psalmist pens the words, “Shame hath covered my face” (Psalm 69:7) and Isaiah speaking prophetically says, “His visage was marred more than any

man." (Isaiah 52:14); "I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6). All these expressions add up to shame, humiliation, indignity and degradation.

There are two words that are very similar but very different and we must not confuse them, they are humility and humiliation The Lord Jesus humbled Himself but cruel men humiliated Him. The hymn writer has penned the words,

*Thou, O Son of God! wert bearing
Cruel mockings, hatred, scorn;
Thou, the King of glory, wearing,
For our sake, the crown of thorn:
Dying, Thou didst us deliver
From the chains of sin for ever;
Thousand, thousand praises be,
Precious Saviour, unto Thee!*

*All the shame men heaped upon Thee,
Thou didst patiently endure;
Not the pains of death too bitter,
Our redemption to procure:
Wondrous Thy humiliation
To accomplish our salvation:
Thousand, thousand praises be,
Precious Saviour unto Thee!*

(Ernst Christoph Homburg, 1605-1681)

To be continued ...

Good News

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOPE DIAMOND



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Centre of attraction at the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. is the world's most famous and most expensive blue diamond valued at \$350 million. Over 100 million visitors come to gaze at it. It has travelled the world for over 400 years falling into the hands of merchants, kings and the rich. Tales of its curse are legendary with stories of those who possessed it dying horrible deaths. Much of its mystery was exaggerated to boost the interest in the diamond.

It was purchased in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier in 1666. It was a spectacular 116 carat deep blue diamond, its blue colour coming from the traces of boron in the crystal structure. It was cut into a smaller one named the French blue and sold to the king of France, Louis XIV. It was stolen in 1791 and recut into a 45.52-carat diamond and acquiring its "Hope" name. After going through numerous owners, it was finally purchased by Harry Winston a New York gem

merchant in 1949 who never believed in the tales of its curse and toured it for a number of years before giving it as a gift to the museum.

The manner in which he sent the diamond to the museum was unusual. He posted it through ordinary post, insured for \$1 million at a cost of \$145.29, of which \$2.44 was for postage and the balance insurance. The parcel is still kept by the museum.



During this season, we remember another gift that was sent, the Lord Jesus Christ. This gift is an “unspeakable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15) and a gift of whom the Bible says, “He is precious” (1 Peter 2:7) and His blood shed to redeem sinners on the cross is “precious blood” more precious than silver or gold (1 Peter 1:18-19).

How was this gift delivered to mankind? This gift was delivered wrapped in poverty and humility, “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:7)

Men saw the Saviour and were stumbled at Him for He came in the garb of a poor carpenter from Nazareth yet He is the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Here indeed is a mystery that is indeed worth considering, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1 Timothy 3:16).

Reader, do you know this precious Saviour? Have you believed on Him to the saving of your soul?

(Nitish Patel)

Design in Creation



Stars and Galaxies

By Nitish Patel

Very soon the Christmas season will be upon us and we will be reminded again of the words of the wise men, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2).

THEIR CREATION

The stars were created by God on the fourth day of the Creation week, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." (Genesis 1:16)

In the observable universe, astronomers have estimated recently that

there are around 300 billion trillion stars i.e. 3 followed by 23 zeroes. Even though it is beyond the mind of man to count these many stars, the number of them is known to God and He has named every one, "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." (Psalm 147:4)

Scientists who deny a Creator believe that the universe began with a big bang 14 billion years ago and that the stars formed from the resulting gas clouds collapsing under their own gravity. The problem with this is that according to the big bang theory, the universe was very hot and hot gas expands and unless cooled down will overcome weaker pull of gravity. Some propose that exploding stars known as supernovae provided the shockwave needed to squeeze a nearby cloud to form a star but it begs the question that if a star needs a star to be born how did the first star form without other stars? Also 14 billion years is not enough for 300 billion trillion stars to form like this if they could. Abraham Loeb, of Harvard's Center for Astrophysics, says, "The truth is that we don't understand star formation at a fundamental level." (New Scientist, February 1998).

We know that God created all the stars on the fourth day all complete and functioning. The nuclear fusion which powers our sun and the stars have only really been understood since the advent of the science of nuclear physics which began with Henri Becquerel (1852-1908) who discovered radiation. The sun has an enormous power output of 3.86×10^{26} watts at any moment.

"Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!" (Job 22:12). It takes light travelling at 186,000 miles per second over four years to reach us from the nearest stars Alpha and Proxima century. The vastness of the universe is mind boggling. The distances are so vast that they can only be described in light years or astronomical units (the distance between the earth to the centre of the sun). Light travels 6 trillion miles in one year. Thats 6,000,000,000,000 miles and the au is 93 million miles.

THEIR PURPOSE

From the very first reference to the Sun, moon and stars we see their purpose.

“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.” (Genesis 1:14-15)

TO MARK THE SEASONS

Without the constant motion relative to the earth of the Sun, moon and stars man would not be able to know the time at all. The motion of the constellations of stars across the sky with the planets indicate what time of the year it is. Sowing and reaping are dependent on accurate time keeping so that mankind can have food to eat.

Constellations are mentioned in the Bible, “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?” (Job 38:31)

FOR NAVIGATION

Stars were created for guidance and we see how the Bible mentions their use in navigating the seas. The mariners on board the ship Paul was on gave up hope when they could not see the sky. “And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.” (Acts 27:20)

Merchant shipping from ancient times depended on navigation based on the relative positions of the sun, moon and stars in the sky.

They were for signs and we see this in the special star God created

and used to guide the wise men to where Jesus was.

TO GLORIFY GOD

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1-2). David as a young shepherd boy wondered at the Creation above him. We too need to have an interest in what God has created for through it, He shows His glory and power.

DIFFERENT IN GLORY

“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.” (1 Corinthians 15:41)

The surface temperature of a star determines its colour. Stars range in colour from red around 3000 Kelvin to blue around 50,000 Kelvin. The stars also vary in size. Our sun is intermediate with a surface temperature of around 6000 Kelvin.

The stars vary in size and type with some known as super giants and are millions of times bigger than our sun. There are white and black dwarf stars the size of planets, there are neutron stars, and black holes which everyone has heard about. We do not have space to look at these but we can say like the Psalmist, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:3-4).

Though so insignificant compared to the universe God has created, man is God's great object of love and for whom He gave His Son to die.

The Pleiades mentioned in Job are an open cluster of stars in the constellation of Taurus.



Our own galaxy, the Milky Way.



Bethlehem, Israel

