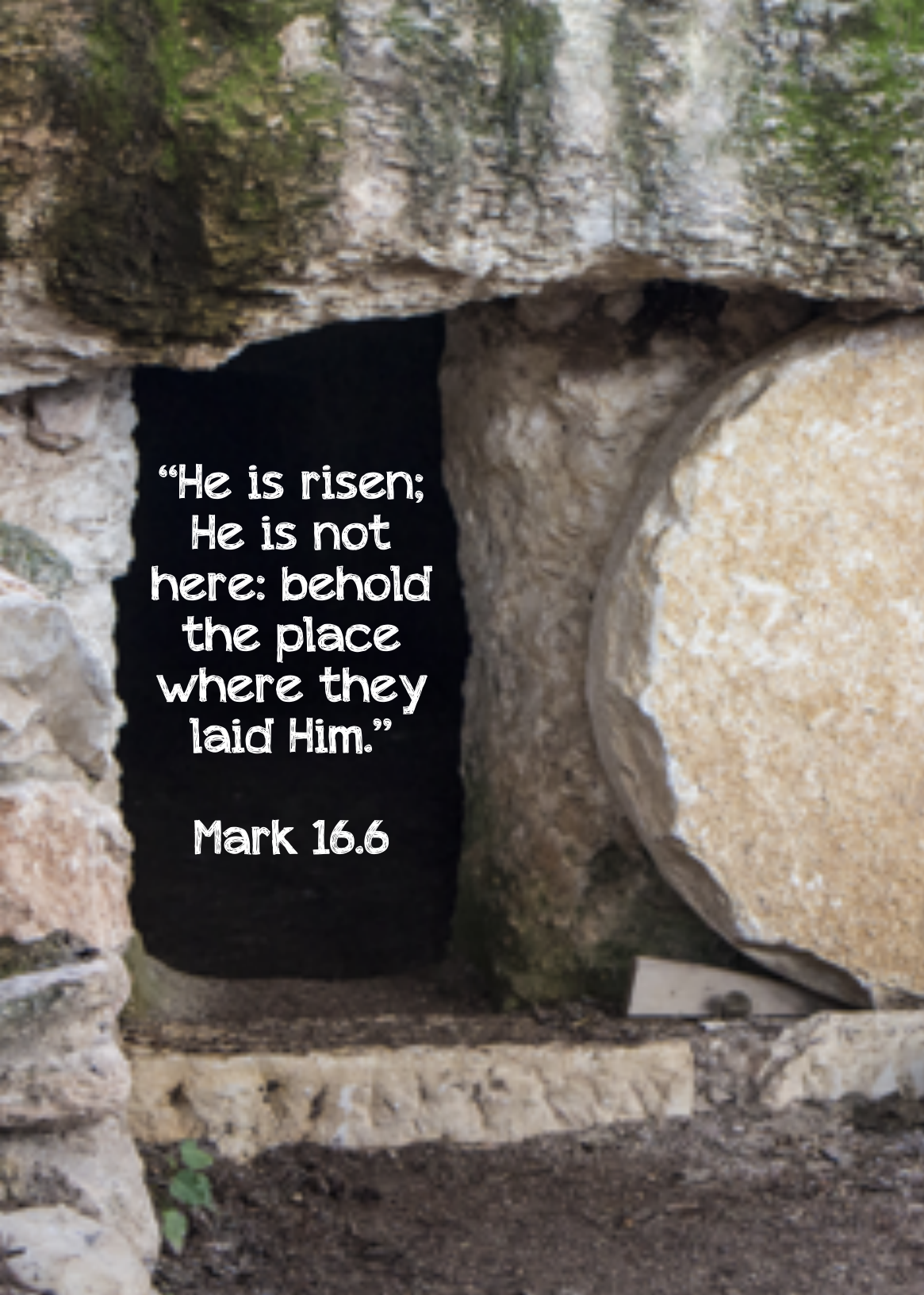


# Clifton News

285 April - June 2019

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**“He is risen;  
He is not  
here: behold  
the place  
where they  
laid Him.”**

**Mark 16.6**

# News

Please pray for our **Easter Holiday Club** which will be from the 15th to 18th of April with the prize giving on Thursday 18th at 7 pm.

The Lord has answered prayer and we have been offered places again for our stalls at the **South Norwood Festival** on Sunday 30th June and at the **Grange Picnic in the Park** on Sunday 14th of July.

Pray for **Shera** who comes to study the Bible weekly. Also prayer is valued for **Roberto** and **Pedro** both from Brazil and have come to the Lord and attend Sunday mornings.

Last month, we had a visit from an **Indian evangelist T—** who labours for the Lord in a Central Asian Moslem country. His work has to be very secret due to the persecution Christians face. Many have been saved and have to meet discreetly where they can. We thank God that the gates of hell have not been able to stop the church of Christ there. We are also looking forward to the visit soon of **Shaji Matthews and his wife Beena** who labour for the Lord in the Himalayas and have seen a thriving assembly established.

The **Seekers and Friday Clubs** continue to encourage and we pray that the Holiday Club will add new younger children. The **Family Service** has seen encouraging numbers recently for which we thank God.

Our brother **Dan Girrad** will be getting married to **Jochebed Coelho** on Tuesday 30th July and prayer valued for the happy occasion.

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# Meetings

## Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread	11.00 am
Young people's Bible class	12.00 pm
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

## April

7	Mike Surry
14	Shaji Matthews (India)
21	Richard Catchpole
28	Vincent Khushal

## May

5	Nitish Patel
12	Ferranti Wong
19	George Rassovsky
26	John Aston

## **June**

2	Andrew Hall
9	Alastair Rodger
16	Nitish Patel
23	Richard Catchpole
30	No meeting (South Norwood Festival outreach)

## **MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING**

## **April**

1	Timothy Miller
8	Timothy Miller
15	No meeting (Easter Holiday Club)
22	No meeting (Easter Monday)
29	Speaker to be announced

## **May**

6	Bank holiday
13	Nitish Patel
20	Nitish Patel
27	Bank holiday

## **June**

3	Roy Aitkin
10	Roy Aitkin
17	Robert Bennett
24	Robert Bennett

# Question Box



Presently we are answering questions and objections often raised by Bible critics.

*How can the Bible be inspired if it contains a story like the one in the book of Judges where a man offered his wife to the men of the village to do whatever they liked with her? They abused her all night until she was dead. It was a sickening and nauseating thing.*

The person who asked this question (summarised) failed to discern between what the Bible records as history tragic though it is and what the Bible teaches as instruction and morals for us. It gives the inspired facts of what took place. They are an accurate and perfect record of what happened not a justification of what happened.

The story is found in Judges 19 and the subsequent war that resulted because of this evil deed in Judges 20-21. It is about a Levite whose concubine played the harlot and went to her father's house. The Levite went and fetched her back. On the way he lodged with an old man in the city of Gibeah. The sons of Belial (a phrase for worthless and evil men) wanted the Levite to be handed over to them so they could rape him (Judges 19:22). Finally it was the concubine who was handed over to them.

There is nothing in Judges to say God condoned this behaviour. This passage is about God's exposure of man's depravity. We read, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). This is repeated seven times in the book.

One must not take passages out of context of the message of the book which is clearly demonstrating what happens when men leave God out of their lives and the wickedness that results.

In the context of Near Eastern hospitality of that day, guests were to be protected at all costs. In Genesis 19, we read of the same happening to Lot. The men of Sodom wanted the angels who had come to his house and abuse them. Lot offered his daughters to the men of Sodom but they refused (Genesis 19:8). Lot was delivered when the angels blinded all those wicked men.

God nowhere commands the handing over a family member to be abused. It was the custom people practised and Lot chose to live in this wicked city and his whole family suffered the consequences in the same way we see when those who chose to join terrorist groups like ISIS and moved with their family to Raqqa in Syria today and suffered the consequences. The Bible records the events as a warning of how depraved the human heart can be (Jeremiah 17:9) and the need of everyone for salvation that is only found in Christ.

Nitish Patel



# Bible Teaching

## THE SHAME OF THE CROSS

(Part 2)

By John Wallace, Hartlepool



### The shame of apparent defeat

Right from the beginning the Devil had tried to get rid of Him; the Jewish leaders had been antagonistic towards Him but they had failed in their desire. When He came to Nazareth they would have taken Him and thrown Him over the brow of the hill but “He passed through the midst of them and went on his way” (Luke 4.28). In John 8, they took up stones to stone Him but He escaped from them.

On His last coming to Jerusalem the crowds thronged about him praising God and saying, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord”. The Jewish hierarchy are in despair they are losing ground rapidly, the world is gone after him. Within a week that same crowd are crying for His death and are not satisfied until they see Him hanging on a cross.

The Jewish leaders are feeling well pleased with themselves; Satan is



rejoicing; that is the end of Jesus of Nazareth – they were mistaken. Satan’s apparent victory proved to be the moment of his final defeat. The Lord Jesus had said “This is your hour and the powers of darkness” (Luke 22.53) but really and truly it was His hour. What appeared to be a humiliating defeat was seen to be a glorious triumph. The hymn writer has said,

*“By weakness and defeat He won the mead and crown, trod all foes  
beneath His feet by being trodden down”.*

### **The shame of apparent desertion by God**

There were two things which were precious to the Lord Jesus.

1. His trust in and dependence upon God.
2. His delight in God and Gods delight in him.

His tormentors held both of these things up to ridicule; “He trusted in God that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him seeing He delights in Him” (Psalm 22.8) Matthew uses the words, “Let him deliver him, if he will have him”. (Matthew 27.43)

Sometimes hurtful words are spoken unthinkingly and the person who said them regrets having said them Sometimes they are said deliberately with the intention of hurting the person they are spoken to. This is the sense here; they not spoken unthinkingly but with the intent to cause the Saviour hurt and distress

In the lovely hymn, “Gazing on Thee Lord in glory”, the writer asks a question, “Did thy God e’en then forsake Thee, hide His face from

Thy deep need?”. That is an intensely thought provoking question. To the multitude around the cross it appeared as if his God had truly deserted him and left him alone.

What did the Lord Jesus think about it? In Psalm 22, David writes those words actually spoken by the Lord Jesus on the cross, “why hast thou forsaken me?” But then in v. 3 we see the response of the Lord Jesus to that, He says, “but thou art holy”. What was he thinking?

There on the cross He himself became the sin bearer is He appreciating that such is the perfect holiness of God that He could not look upon sin. There is no complaint against God, God is to be praised not to be complained against, He says, “Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel”.

If God is holy then everything that He does must be in keeping with His character. What He does must be right. Even in His deep distress He still has every confidence in God and what God is doing. His confidence and delight in God are unshaken.

### **The secret**

How was the Lord Jesus able to cope with all this. There are two things in regard to the response of the Lord Jesus in relation to his suffering.

1. He opened not his mouth (Isaiah 53.7)

He was silent before his accusers. How could he do that?. He committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously (1 Peter 2.23). There was so much injustice, so much unrighteousness; He

committed His cause into the hands of the righteous Judge.

## 2. He despised the shame

All the shame men heaped upon Him he counted as nothing. How could He do that?. For the joy that was set before Him.

There was an immediate joy before the heart of the Saviour; the joy of knowing He was finishing the work He had been given to do.

There was also the joy of anticipation. One day He would present to Himself in glory the church for which He was laying down his life. (Ephesians 5.27). That joy of expectation remains in the heart of the Saviour still today and in our hearts too.

Speaking of the shame and the grief the Saviour bore the hymn writer has said; "Lord Jesus Thou, and none beside, its bitterness could know; No other tell Thy joy's full tide which from that cup shall flow".

**\*\* Concluded \*\***

# Good News

## Guru not dead just meditating in a freezer!



In 2014, an Indian court had to decide whether a guru was dead or still alive. Shri Ashutosh Maharaj who was in his seventies founded the Hindu order “the Divine Light Awakening Mission” in 1983 to promote “global peace through self awakening’. A built the 100 acre retreat on the outskirts of Jalandhar Punjab and there are missions in his name around the world, including the U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Germany and even a British base in British headquarters in Hayes, Middlesex. He accumulated a huge fortune of £100 million.

Doctors say that he died of a suspected heart attack on January 29th but his followers refused to release his body for cremation. They say he's not dead - just meditating (in a deep freezer since January). He is described as 'an exceptional awakened being with a divine persona' whose 'ever-enthusiastic charisma has re-kindled a spirit of a positive aura and has directed many towards a constructive path across the globe’.

They say their leader has been grateful for the many phone calls, e-mails and even personal visits he has received!

According to one of his aides, who asked not to be named, "Maharaj has been in deep meditation. He has spent many years meditating in sub-zero temperatures in the Himalayas, there is nothing unusual in it. He will return to life as soon as he feels and we will ensure his body is preserved until then", he said. In 2017, his followers won a dispute in court against Dalip Kumar Jha who claimed to be his son and wanted the body released for cremation but the Punjab and Harayana court ruled that his disciples could preserve him in the freezer. The son claimed that they were only doing it to control his vast fortune.

One thing is certain about that guru, he's dead! Whatever his followers say. He has no power over death for he, like all of us are sinners and under the sentence of death. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23). There is only One, Jesus the Son of God, upon whom death had no claim for He was born without sin, the only One in human history. He is the Saviour we all need. He died for our sins and there was no doubt about it. "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19:34). This was the proof of death needed for Pilate to release Jesus body for burial. We read, "And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph." (Mark 15:44-45). This was important for it shows that Christ had paid the price our sins deserve and His death was real, not a faint on the cross with a fake resurrection when He revived as some of God's enemies claim even today.

Jesus rose again from the dead as He said He would, "And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." (Luke 18:33). He is the living Saviour and we urge you to trust Him now.

# *Design in Creation*

## FIBONACCI NUMBERS

By Nitish Patel

Leonardo Fibonacci (1170-1250) was the greatest mathematician in Europe during the Dark Ages. His father was a merchant and Leonardo accompanied him to North Africa where he studied calculation with an Arab master. In 1202, he wrote a book called Liber abaci or the Book of the Abacus and spread the use of Hindu-Arabic numerals in Europe. Roman numerals were in use at that time but now thanks to Fibonacci they have been universally replaced with the Hindu-Arabic numerals we use today (i.e. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, & 0). He also introduced an interesting sequence of numbers originally discovered by Indian mathematicians about 1300 years ago. They are known as the Fibonacci series or Golden Numbers. The sequence is simple. You start with 0 and 1. Then you add the previous two numbers and go on ...



0,1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233 etc

( $0+1=1$ ,  $1+1=2$ ,  $2+1=3$ ,  $3+2=5$ ,  $5+3=8$ ,  $8+5=13$ ,  $13+8=21$  ...)

Whats so special about these numbers you might ask? The amazing fact about these numbers is that they are seen everywhere in Creation. This mathematical law governs everything from the number of flower

petals, arrangement of seeds, leaves on a plant stem, the shapes of animals, the shape and the number of parts of the human body, the DNA molecule, patterns and colours in bird feathers, and the shape of galaxies in the universe and many other things.

We look at some examples in Creation beginning with the plant kingdom.

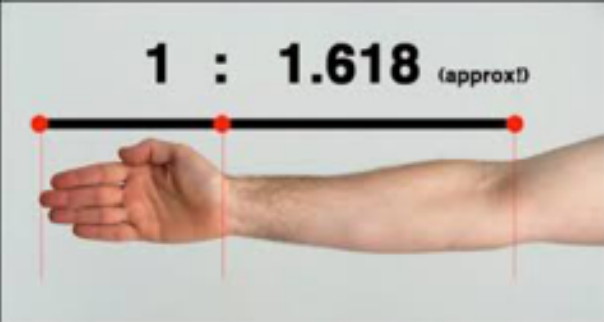
If you cut a banana cross section you will see it is in 3 sections, a Fibonacci number. If you cut an Apple in half it has five sections, again a Fibonacci number. If you look at the petals of flowers, they add to up Fibonacci numbers. This also goes for the arrangement of seeds and leaves on the stem. The leaves are arranged in a Fibonacci sequence on many plants so that the leaf above does block the sunlight falling onto the leaf below. Other plants follow the Lucas number series which are similar to the Fibonacci sequence but start with 2, 1 and carry on 3, 4, 7, 11, 18 etc ... In the human body, we see that we have one nose, two eyes, three segments to each limb and five fingers and toes on each limb. The body is arranged according to the Fibonacci series.

### THE DIVINE RATIO

If we take the ratio of two successive Fibonacci numbers and divide each by the number before for example  $5/3=1.666$ ,  $13/8=1.625$ ,  $21/13=1.615$  and go on,







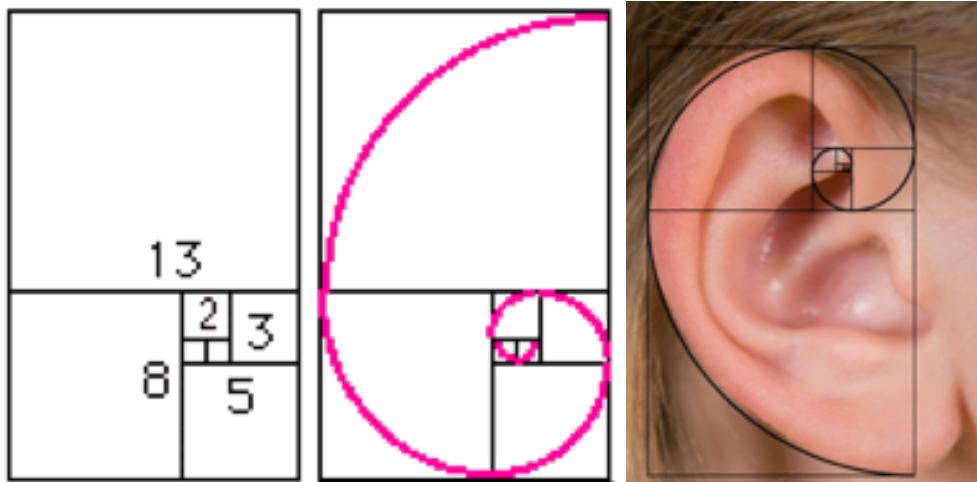
ultimately we reach a ratio of 1.618. This is called a number of names, the Golden Section, the Golden Mean, the Golden Number, Phi or the Divine Ratio.

This was known to the Greeks long before and they used this proportion in their architecture such as the design of the famous Parthenon in Athens because it is the most pleasing proportion to the human eye. Many artists throughout history have employed this ratio of 1 to 1.618 in their works such as Leonardo da Vinci, Van Gogh, Vermeer, Sargent, Monet, Whistler, Renoir. You can buy a set of Golden Mean calipers and see this ratio throughout Creation. Everything is designed by God in this perfection proportion. The human arm, fingers, face, body, the design of the peacock feather and the DNA molecule whose sections are in this ratio.

### THE FIBONNACI SPIRAL

If we make a rectangles out of the Fibonnaci numbers and then draw an arc from one corner of each square to another we get an approximate spiral whose shape is seen throughout Creation. It is seen in the shape of the human ear.

The spiral arrangement of seeds in a sunflower flower follows the Fibonnaci sequence as this is the best way to pack as many of them together. The nautilus shell pictured is another example.





The laws that govern this universe cannot arise out of nothing and chance as athiests and evolutionists believe. These numbers, ratios and shapes in Creation are a powerful testimony to the fact that laws of nature and moral laws must have a Law Giver.

God is a God of order and perfection. His Creation is governed by the laws of physics and mathematics. The Fibonacci series is just one of the many displays of God's wisdom in Creation. This is the God of the Bible of whom Job wrote, "Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." (Job 9:10)



Nautilus shell



Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem  
(Believed to be the road Jesus walked to His crucifixion)

