

Clifton News

292 April - June 2021

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Jesus said
"I am the resurrection, and the life."
John 11.25

News

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1:18)

As we approach Easter we give God thanks for our living Saviour. We thank God for the improving situation in regard to the pandemic and the successful vaccination program. We thank God for the wisdom He has given to mankind in the field of medicine though sadly few acknowledge this or give God the glory.

We are now back at the hall for all our meetings and hope in due time when all restrictions are lifted in June to re-commence our children's meetings and all other gospel work. We have not had much contact with most of the children since the first lockdown and value prayer that they will return and this pandemic had made them think of the uncertainty and brevity of life and remember their Creator in the days of their youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Some of the believers at Clifton had caught covid but we thank God for their recovery with none needing hospitalisation. Most have now been vaccinated.

Peter and Anya known to the assembly here sadly lost their first baby Lidia who died a few days after birth. Prayers valued for them in their bereavement.

Prayers valued for those in fellowship who have not been able to attend for a long time. Peter Trump has been housebound since the past year and awaiting his hip operation long overdue. Also our brother Jerry has recovered from his stroke that he suffered last year and hopefully will be able to leave the care home soon.

Apart from the Breaking of bread all our meetings are broadcast on Zoom. If any of you would like to listen to listen to God's Word, please enter the following on the Zoom website to join Clifton Hall.

Meeting ID: 756 5533 4423

Passcode: 186868

Editor: Nitish Patel.

Clifton Hall, 45 Whitehorse Lane, South Norwood, London SE25 6RD.

Website: www.cliftongospelhall.com. Email: cliftongospelhall@googlemail.com

Meetings

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread 11.00 am
(During outreach at local community events it is at 10 am)

Young people's Bible class 12.00 pm
Family Service 4.00 pm

Monday

Prayer and Bible Teaching 7.45 pm

Wednesday

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

Temporarily
closed due to
covid-19

Friday

Friday Club 7.30 pm
(Term time only for those over 10)

Temporarily
closed due to
covid-19

SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

April

4 Nitish Patel
11 Richard Catchpole
18 Alf Taylor
25 Jonathan Docksey

May

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

June

- 6 Nitish Patel
- 13 Thomas Taylor
- 20 Jonathan Docksey
- 27 John Aston

MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING

April

- 5 No meeting (Easter Monday)
- 12 Nitish Patel Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.1-16)
- 19 Nitish Patel Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.17-48)
- 26 Alastair Rodger Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6.1-15)

May

- 3 No meeting (Bank Holiday)
- 10 Roy Aitkin
- 17 Roy Aitkin
- 24 Richard Catchpole Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6.16-34)
- 31 No meeting (Bank Holiday)

June

- 1 David Penfold
- 7 David Penfold
- 14 Richard Catchpole Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7.1-28)
- 21 Colin Roberts
- 28 Colin Roberts

Question Box

Will God punish someone who didn't get a chance to hear the gospel?

I remember discussing this question years ago with one of my school friends, he questioned whether God would punish someone who wasn't able to hear the gospel. For instance, someone living today in an isolated tribe in the Amazon rainforest could live and then die without hearing anything about the Lord Jesus. Or before the internet or radio or the printing press was invented, the only way people would hear the gospel would be if someone told it to them, leaving whole nations of people who lived and died without the message of the gospel reaching them.

We know that salvation is only found through faith in the Lord Jesus (John 14:6, Acts 4:12), there's no other way that anyone can be saved, not through good works, or good intentions or anything else. Therefore, unless a person hears about the Lord Jesus, His death and His resurrection, and then believes in Him, they can't be saved.

This then means that the person not believing in Christ is lost, as there is no third position – “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” John 3:36.

My old schoolfriend thought this was unfair, and maybe you do too. We could perhaps equate it to being punished for breaking a rule we had no way of being aware of, for instance if the speed limit road were to change from 30mph to 20mph but there were no signs showing this. Anyone caught speeding would have a good chance of appealing the punishment, as they could show there was no way of them knowing the correct speed limit. Should it not be the same with the person who never heard about Jesus?

Let's see what the Bible says.

Firstly, what is it that the person not believing in Christ is punished for? In Revelation 20:11-15, we read of the great white throne judgment, the final judgment of mankind. Anyone on that day who's “name was not found in the book of life” (v15) was thrown into the lake of fire. But prior to that we twice read that everyone was “judged according to what they had done” (v12,13). So, the judgement will involve a review of every person's life and actions. This suggests that the punishment that each person will experience will be according to their sins, more sins leading to a greater punishment.

By being judged for their sins, every person has an equal standing before

God, God has given each of us a conscience to know right from wrong. Regardless of whether a person hears about Christ or not, we are all answerable to God for our behaviour. God has revealed Himself to everyone through His Creation, so everyone is “without excuse” (Romans 1:21), everyone can know there is a God and that because of that we have a standard of morality.

Secondly, we also look to what Jesus said in Luke 10:13-16, He warns the cities that He had been teaching in about their unbelief, saying that it would be more “bearable in the judgement for Tyre and Sidon than for you.” Tyre and Sidon were foreign cities which God had pronounced judgment upon in the Old Testament and where Jesus had not taught. Unlike Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, where Jesus had preached, performed miracles, and demonstrated that He was God. His warning was that the people who had hear His words with their ears and seen His miracles with their eyes and yet not believed would suffer more in the day of judgement than the people of the places He hadn’t visited. This indicates the punishment received will depend on how much of the gospel was heard and understood.

Similarly, in Luke 12:35-48, Jesus speaks in a parable of servants whose master is away and how ready they are for his return. He warns that there will be more severe punishment for those servants who knew what their master expected of them than for those who weren’t aware. Again, indicating that the punishment received on the day of judgement will account for how much of the gospel was heard and understood.

Now my schoolfriend wasn’t a Christian and he used this question as an argument to try and put me off from sharing the gospel further. The reality for anybody reading this who is not a Christian, is that we can discuss Amazon tribes and their fate having never heard the gospel, but you have heard the gospel and you can very easily find out more about the Lord Jesus. You can find out more in this magazine or by attending a church service or a thousand other means. Rather than worrying about everyone else, the most important thing for you is how will you respond to the gospel, will you believe in Christ? Will you call upon Him to save you from your sins?

There is also a challenge for the Christian here in this question. How will we respond to the commission given by the Lord Jesus before His ascension? “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28:19-20 – Jesus calls us to go and take His message across the world, and that is what Christians have done over the centuries. Today there are very few parts of the world where the gospel has not reached as missionaries have gone out spreading the message, sometimes at the cost of their own lives. We can support those people as well as sharing the gospel with those we meet each day.

Alastair Rodger

Bible Teaching



ISAIAH 6 (PART 1)

Bible notes by the late Tom Ledger

NOTABLE CHAPTERS

Outstanding, impressive, stirring chapters. Well known and easy to remember i.e. Psalm 22, Psalm 23, Psalm 24. The cross, the crook and the crown. Matthew 5-7, 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 5, Isaiah 53!

ISAIAH 6 THE GREAT VISION

(v. 1) THE PARTICULAR PERIOD OF THE VISION

“In the year that king Uzziah died”

(v. 1) THE PERSON OF THE VISION

“I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne”

(v. 1) THE PLACE OF THE VISION

“and his train filled the temple.”

(vv. 1-4) THE PARTICULARS OF THE VISION
"high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims ..."

(v. 5) THE POWER OF THE VISION
"woe is me"

(vv. 6-7) THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SERAPHIM
"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal"

(v. 8) THE PLEA OF THE THRONE
"Whom shall I send"

(v. 9) THE PERMISSION OF THE THRONE
"And he said, Go"

(vv. 9-13) THE PECULIARITY OF THE MESSAGE

"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy ..."

(Tom noticed a note on the platform to speak up for the hard of hearing)

Hard of hearing is one thing. Dull of hearing is another!

THE PARTICULAR PERIOD OF THE VISION (v.1)

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." (Isaiah 6:1)

(A) The time of the vision: 735 BC. Over 700 years before the Lord Jesus.

"These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."
(John 12:41)

Uzziah meaning "power of Jehovah", i.e. to approve, bless, save also known as Azariah meaning "Jehovah hath helped"

He reigned for 52 years. His was the only throne Isaiah had known since childhood. See 2 Chronicles 26.

(B) The people of the period

Increase of wealth, increase in military strength produced a sense of national security.

Foreign trade fostered idolatry.

Society was corrupt. Law courts were corrupt. Law was on the side of the rich. The poor lived in miserable villages in poverty. Their land was lost to the rich by fraud, deceit and violence.

Religion was hypocritical, false, shallow and empty.

It is difficult to keep a real sense of sin in a society of fallen standards!

The young Isaiah had witnessed the sad depressing degeneration of his nation and its king.

The literal leprosy of the king was but a sad picture of the moral and spiritual state of the nation.

The national glory of Israel died out too with the king's death. The Babylonian invasion came about 100 years later.

THE PERSON OF THE VISION (v. 1)

Pompey the Roman general entered the Temple in BC 63 and went through the court of the Gentiles and the court of the women. The priest stood before the veil of the sanctuary. People fell on their faces and begged him not to go in. But in contempt, the general walked into the Holy Place where Uzziah was struck and he went into the Holy of Holies. He looked around and came back out and said, "Its empty!" there is nothing there but darkness.

Isaiah saw God!

"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1 Timothy 6:16)

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:12)

Not even Isaiah. He saw a vision.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)

“Jesus saith unto her (Martha), Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” (John 11:40)

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,” (Acts 7:55)

Oh, how we need men of vision. The pure in heart, those who believe, men full of the Holy Spirit.

Oh for a deeper sense of God’s glory
Oh for a deeper knowledge of God’s glory
Oh for a deeper understanding, appreciation.

No long silences at the Lord’s Supper.

.... to be continued

Good News



The Transfusion

Over the years there has been told a number of versions of this story of sacrificial love. We relate the one popular on many Christian websites currently which says it took place during the days of the Vietnam war (1955-1975).

There was an orphanage near an American Marine Base in Viet Nam. One day the Viet Cong fired mortar shells into the orphanage, killing dozens of children and wounding many more. A boy named Kai had a seriously wounded friend who needed a blood transfusion. Kai's friend had a rare blood type and only Kai's blood matched it. Little Kai had never heard of a blood transfusion but when the American doctors explained it would save his friend's life, little Kai volunteered.

As the blood began to flow from Kai to his friend, Kai began to whimper. When the doctors asked if it hurt, he said no. A little later he whimpered again. Again he told the doctors it did not hurt. The doctors asked, "What's wrong, Kai?" With tears coursing down his light brown, dusty cheeks, Kai asked, "When am I to die, sir, when am I to die?"

The poor lad thought that when he gave his blood he would have to give it all and die to save his friend.

We see a beautiful illustration of the love that the Lord Jesus had for us all.

The sentence of death was upon us all for the Bible says "all have sinned" (Romans 3.23) and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6.23). There is also following the second death if we die in our sin without God's salvation, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8).

We need to be saved! The only cure is blood for the Bible says, "... without shedding of blood is no remission (forgiveness)." (Hebrews 9.22). Many Jews trusted in the animal sacrifices they offered at the Temple but the Scriptures point out, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10.4)

There is only one whose blood was acceptable to God and that was the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ shed on the cross ... "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" (Hebrews 10.12).

This blood alone can save you and cleanse you from sin. But this can only take place when you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10.9).

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15.13)

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:." (Colossians 1.14)

Design in Creation



DINOSAURS IN THE BIBLE

“Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.” (Job 40:15)

Many different animals are mentioned in Job 38-41 culminating in the description of the two greatest in Creation, Behemoth the greatest creature on earth (Job 40:15-24) and Leviathan, the greatest and most fierce some creature of the sea (Job 41:1-34).

Though dinosaur bones had been discovered by man over the centuries they were not properly identified until 1822 when British palaeontologist Gideon Mantell (1790-1852) and his wife Mary found teeth in a quarry belonging to an Iguanodon. These extinct lizards were named dinosauria or terrible lizards by Richard Owen (1804-1892) and so the great interest in dinosaurs began.



Behemoth was a dinosaur!

The Hebrew word for Behemoth is the plural of the ordinary Hebrew word for beast or animal. This means it is the greatest, most colossal beast that God made. The Bible teaches that God created all land animals and man on day six of Creation (Genesis 1:24-25). Man and dinosaurs therefore co-existed together until the flood when all except those on the Ark perished. The dinosaurs taken onboard would have been smaller juvenile ones which easily could fit inside as they all hatch from eggs. Evolutionists claim that dinosaurs died out at the end of the Cretaceous period 65 million years ago due to an asteroid impact on the earth. This is in direct conflict to what the Bible says. However as is often the case, recent discoveries point increasingly to the truth of the Bible than the conjectures of men whose only reason for believing in an impossible theory is that it removes God out of their sinful lives.



The way dinosaur fossils are formed point to a worldwide flood. Their remains are seen all over the earth, sometimes in the massive fossil beds where they are buried together in vast numbers in sedimentary rock. Sedimentary rock is formed by rushing water carrying dead animals, plants, sediments and drying into rock with the fossils formed inside. For dinosaurs to become fossils they must be buried quickly otherwise they will be eaten or decay. They did not die and were slowly covered with sediment over millions of years as evolutionists teach. What we see points to a worldwide flood.

In 2005, a team of scientists lead by palaeontologist Mary Schweitzer published a paper describing how they found intact blood vessels and red blood cells in the femur of a Tyrannosaurus Rex supposedly over 68 millions years old. A further paper revealed that they had also found proteins in the T Rex femur. Soft tissue, blood cells and proteins similar to that in the dinosaur cannot survive



millions of years as laboratory tests clearly show. Rather they point to the biblical timescale of a flood around 4300 years ago. Dinosaurs would have multiplied after the flood and were seen by Job who lived a short time after. But over time, due to the one great Ice Age that followed the flood and human activity they became extinct like many other creatures we do not see today.



Behemoth's anatomy

“Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.” (Job 40.16-19)

Some Bible translations or commentaries refer to it as a hippopotamus or an elephant but the description given makes this unlikely. The cedar tree of Lebanon often mentioned in the Bible can grow up to 40 m (130ft) high and the trunk can be up to 2.5 m (8 ft 2 in) in diameter.

From this description of Behemoth's tail, it is clear that Behemoth was not a hippo or an elephant for neither of them have a huge tail like a cedar tree.

The biggest dinosaur whose size and weight can be calculated reliably was the Dreadnoughtus which was 26 m(85ft) long and weighed about 65 tons. It would have needed bones like strong pieces of brass and like bars of iron to support its massive body and enable it to walk.

Behemoth's habitation

“Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.” (Job 40.20-24)

God says that Behemoth was a herbivore which ate grass. Silicified plant tissues including various grasses have been found in the fossilised droppings (coprolites) of sauropods confirming this. Today's largest living land animal is the African elephant which can weigh 7 tons and can drink 50 (200 litres) gallons of water a day. A sauropod would indeed need a vast amount of food estimated over 400 kg per day (800 lbs) and much more water than a river like the Jordan could supply. It would have needed to be designed with valves in its neck like a giraffe to prevent blood rushing up and down to the brain causing it to faint or haemorrhage whenever it tried to stoop down to drink. Dinosaurs in all their great variety and abilities were truly are a remarkable proof of design by an all wise Creator God.

Life sized replica of a Brachiosaurus in
Gosangol Dinosaur Park, Korea



City of Haifa from the slope of Mount Carmel, Israel

