

Clifton News

293 July - September 2021

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News

It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

As we come out of the final lockdown, we are now almost back to normality with all the meetings back at the hall including both the Seekers and Friday Club. Seekers has seen around 9 children attending with some new faces.

We were also pleased to welcome into fellowship Rejoy Thomas and his wife Feba, originally from India, who have come here to work in Croydon University Hospital. They have a daughter aged 2 years named Abilene.

Birthday wishes from us all to little Alessa who turned one in July.

We had applied to have a stall at the South Norwood Festival due to take place on the 18th of July but initially they informed us that due to covid restrictions they had to reduce the number of stalls and we cannot have a place. However, we prayed and despite the Devil's attempts to stop the gospel going out at this festival, when we enquired again there were two cancellations and they gave us a place! We give God thanks for our first outdoor gospel outreach since 2019.

We value prayer for Ellen's mother, Grace Desai, who has been diagnosed with colon cancer. We thank God that the cancer has not spread and she awaits an operation to remove it. Pray for Jerry who has been made homeless and Peter Trump who is awaiting a hip operation and has been offered a new ground floor flat in Waddon.

Our Monday night ministry meeting and Family Service is broadcast on Zoom. If any of you would like 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

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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)

Friday

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

SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

July

4	Mike Surry
11	Mike Surry
18	Nitish Patel
25	John Aston

August

1	Andrew Hall
8	Ferranti Wong
15	Alastair Rodger
22	John Aston
29	Richard Catchpole

September

5	Alastair Rodger
12	Richard Catchpole
19	Nitish Patel
26	Thomas Taylor

MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING

July

5	Daniel Rudge
12	Timothy Miller
19	Timothy Miller
26	John Aston

August

2	Nitish Patel
9	Nitish Patel
16	Robert Bennett
23	Robert Bennett
30	No meeting (Bank Holiday)

September

6	Daniel Rudge
13	David Penfold
20	David Penfold
27	John Aston

Question Box

Why did God allow COVID-19?

Since by the time you read this, we should have an end date for most of the Government's COVID-19 restrictions, it's a good time to reflect on the last year and a half, and answer our question.

Why did God allow COVID-19 to occur and spread across the world? Notice that I'm not asking if God didn't know what would happen or if He wasn't able to stop it, for from the bible we see very clearly that nothing happens outside of God's will and purpose. In Isaiah 46:9-10, God could say of Himself - "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'".

I referred to this scripture when speaking at our online Family Service at the end of March 2020. You'll remember at that point we had not long gone into the first lockdown; we didn't know what was going to happen and I highlighted four potential purposes that God be using COVID-19 to accomplish:

1. To remove distractions like sport and entertainment from us that draw us away from Him
2. To use it as a trial that tests and proves our faith so that we come out of the other side stronger
3. To show us that we need Him, that we're not self-sufficient and able to live without Him
4. To make us think of eternity, whether that is for the Christian who gets a bit too comfortable with life and forgets that there is a rest to look forward to with God or for the non-Christian who is reminded that we are all going to die one day, and we need to be ready for that.

Looking back at this list, there are elements of each of these things that have happened in my life and I'm sure in your life as well. At that point, in late March 2020, we were all expecting the lockdown to be over soon and normality to resume quick – however that has not been the case.

Since that point, it would fair to say that we have all learned a lot about ourselves and mankind in general. As I noted in my third point, COVID shows us that we need God and we have seen how powerless mankind has been demonstrated to be in the face of a virus. We looked to our elected leaders, and they stumbled from one position to another.

As the Psalmist could say – “Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation” (Psalm 146:3). We can say based on last years' experience, that salvation and hope is not to be found in politicians but in God.

The last year has also shown us how much we value our physical health and the health of others. We've changed our lives dramatically to attempt to ward off the threat of COVID-19.

The challenge that this raises for all of us, and I ask myself this too, is how much we value our eternal souls and the souls of those around us? We've gone to great lengths to protect one another's lives on this earth, what about when our lives end as they eventually will? Do we make sure we're caring for ourselves and each other in this regard? Have we trusted Christ? Are we reading God's word? Part of a local church? Are we sharing the gospel with others?

Alastair Rodger

Bible Teaching



ISAIAH 6 (PART 2)

Bible notes by the late Tom Ledger

PART 2

THE PLACE 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)

"Temple". Statement not qualified, not explained.

JACOB (GENESIS 28)

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew [it] not." (Genesis 28:16)

Nothing there but the wind and cold just as before but now he has been made aware of the unseen and real, the spiritual.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice

in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Philippians 3:3)

We only worship according to the measure we rejoice in Christ and reject the flesh!

Oh, its not the place, its the Person, the outlook, the character, the desire, the response, the life. It can be in a field, a bedroom, hospital bed, on the sea, in the car !

THE PARTICULARS OF THE VISION (vv. 1-4)

(v. 1) “High and lifted up”. The place of absolute sovereignty. Almighty in majesty, sublime.

“The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,” (Psalms 113:4-5)

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also [that is] of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isaiah 57:15)

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

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:” (Luke 1:32)

Name confirmed not conferred.

He was lifted up!

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:” (John 3:14)

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” (John 8:28)

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32)

“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:9)

He was received up into glory.

“Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.” (Isaiah 52:13)

Exalted - literally raised up, extolled i.e. to heaven, very high - King of kings and Lord of lords.

(v. 1) “and the train filled the temple”. Literally the hem or fringe of His robe.

“Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:” (Psalms 104:2)

The extremity of His garment was enough to fill the Temple!

He is God who fills, He will not just take a place. He must fill the assembly, our lives, our homes etc.

“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.” (Isaiah 6:2)

Isaiah knew instinctively who they were! Peter knew Moses and Elijah on the holy mount!

(v. 2) “SERAPHIMS”

Fiery or burning ones. Literally to burn with devouring fire, to burn consumingly.

In contrast to burn as fragrance, incense, to burn delightingly: sweet savour, acceptance.

They seem to have to do with the searching, burning holiness of God.

“FACE” wings of reverence,

“FEET” wings of humility

“FLY” wings of obedience

Veiled from the eye of God but heard in heaven.

THEY ARE THERE IN SIX DIFFERENT ATTITUDES

(1) READILY: Never relaxed, resting, inattentive.

(2) BURNINGLY: Telling out the inscrutable holiness of God.

Incomprehensible, inexplicable, undiscoverable, unsearchable.

- (3) KNOWINGLY: They act according to the need of the moment without any command from the throne.
- (4) PROPHETICALLY: Telling what shall be. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)
- (5) ANTIPHONICALLY (anti - in return, phone - voice): alternatively declaring, no discordant note in heaven.
- (6) LIMITEDLY: They do not, cannot respond to the call from the throne (v. 8).

Inanimate pillars moved yet not the heart of man.

.... To be continued

Good News



1000 miles in the wrong place

The news recently ran the story of a young woman, Gemma Cargin, 25, who ended up 1000 miles in the wrong place. She is originally from Banbridge, County Down, but works as a teacher in Manchester. She is a frequent flyer who flies home often to see her family. She arrived Sunday morning, 31st May, at Manchester Airport and proceeded to what she was sure was the right gate. There was nothing on the TV screen to show where the flight was going. None of the attendants checking and scanning her boarding card even noticed something was not right.

With a 40 minute flight ahead of her she had a nap and when she woke up asked the flight attendant, "When are we landing?" only to be told there was still another hour and fifteen minutes. She asked, "Is this flight not going to Belfast?" They told her she was on the way to Gibraltar! She was naturally worried how she was going to get back and worried for her parents who would be wondering why she did not arrive on the expected flight. Her mother was told she was not on

that flight yet Gemma has texted her mother from the plane to say she was on her way! There was a lot of confusion. Her parents were told instead she was on the way to the Spanish city of Alicante!

Finally, when she landed she was able to tell them where she ended up. After taking a few selfies of the Rock of Gibraltar from the steps of the aircraft she was able to fly back. EasyJet was investigating how this could have occurred.

This story reminds of a more solemn awaking. We read of the rich man who died and "... in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." (Luke 16:23).

He awakened to find that he was not in heaven but in a completely unexpected place, hell!

But for him, however, there was no way back for a great gulf had been fixed. He was in torments but there would be no mercy for him.

He was going in the wrong direction all his life and did not show any concern about eternity. He rejected the Bible which would have made him wise unto salvation. It was too late and there was no hope.

How about you dear reader? Where will you spend eternity? Will you wake up in the wrong place after death? Hell is a solemn certainty if you die in your sin. How much better to be saved through the precious blood of Christ shed on the cross for you and be fit and ready for heaven.

The Apostle Paul knew where he was going, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:6)

Mistakes in boarding cards can be remedied but there is no hope once you draw your last breath and you are not saved. There is no way back! Trust the Lord Jesus as your Saviour now.

Design in Creation

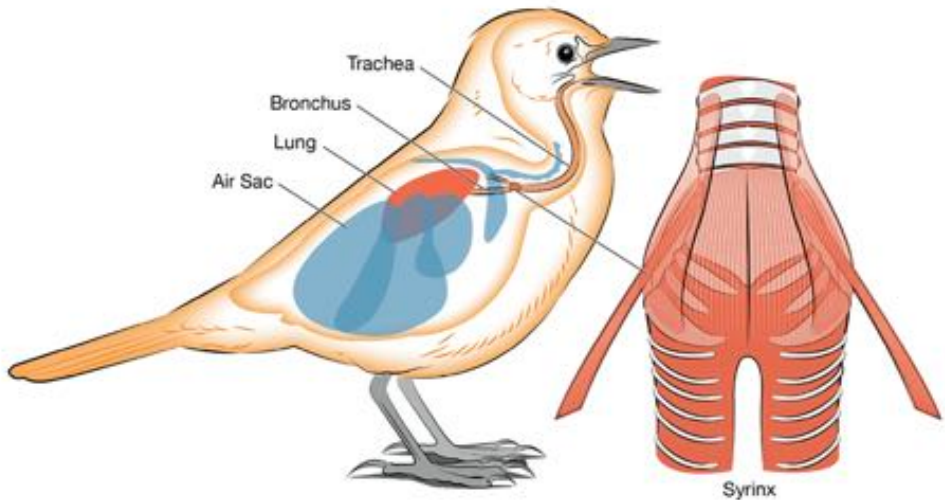


The Singing of Birds

By Nitish Patel

“He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.” (Psalm 104:10-12)

One of the most astonishing proofs of divine design in Creation is the singing of birds. There are nearly 10,000 species of birds and half of them can sing, often to attract a mate or make known their territory. Bird song is not some random noise birds have learnt to make after millions of years of evolution but remarkable perfectly played music. Here are some amazing facts about birds that sing and glorify their Creator and provide much enjoyment for mankind.



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HOW DO BIRDS SING?

Humans have one voice box called a larynx to speak and to sing but birds have two voice boxes called a syrinxes lower down nearer their lungs. This enables them to sing two different notes at the same time. The Cardinal can sing from one lung and syrinx and seamlessly switch to the other lung and syrinx. The Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) can sweep through more notes than what is on a piano in one tenth of a second! The Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) can sing rising and falling notes simultaneously in its final trill. Their songs like human music has rhythm, melody, phrases and starts on a key note.

Birds lungs function differently to human lungs and do not use a

diaphragm to breathe but air sacks are compressed by muscles within the static lungs which move the air in and out. Their breathing is the most efficient in the animal kingdom because of their need to fly which requires large amounts of oxygen. This also enables them to sing with such rapidity up to 45 notes per second.

Birds can sing pitch perfectly in duets each bird knowing exactly the next note to make in response to its companion birds. Plain tailed Wrens (*Thryothorus euophrys*) can sing in groups with females and males alternating with each other in cycles creating a melodious symphony!

WHERE DO THEIR SONGS COME FROM?

Birds are 'hardwired' with many songs written into their DNA. This is impossible to explain by evolutionists but they usually state it just happened without showing by empirical science how new information can arise for notes and pitch put together so beautifully into the bird's genome by mere chance and mutations. Music requires a musician. Jesus is described as the Creator and the Chief Musician in the Psalms (Psalm 8:1; Psalm 19:1). He is the one who taught the birds to sing!

Birds also learn to sing from their parents and from others of their own species. This is known as the critical period after they hatch from their eggs and begin to learn how to fly and sing.





Birds like the Mockingbird and the Lyrebird of Australia (*Menura novaehollandiae*) are excellent mimics of all the birds around them. The later can imitate the calls of at least twenty different other species including the Kookaburra bird which sounds like it is laughing. We recommend you watch one in action on YouTube.

These birds can mimic anything including human voices, frogs, cats, telephones, car alarms and many other noises. Some birds kept in captivity have no other birds to learn from and therefore mimic their human owners. One such is the Indian Myna bird (above) which is very good at mimicking humans. They are popular pets for this reason.

DIFFERENT DIALECTS

Just as humans develop local dialects so also with birds and their songs. In one area if the birds of the same species are separated by

geographical features such as mountains or lakes each group starts producing area specific dialects.

THE DAWN CHORUS

Every morning there is the dawn chorus when the song birds all start to sing just before the sun starts to rise. Scientists still do not know why they all do this.

The Bible speaks of the arrival of Spring and the time of the singing of the birds ... "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." (Song of Solomon 2:11-12). This is a picture of what will happen when the winter of the Tribulation will be over for this world and the sunshine of the reign of Christ's kingdom will arise ... "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." (Malachi 4:2).

Every time we hear the dawn chorus we are reminded that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming and all Creation will praise His name ... "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. ...Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl" (Psalm 148:1, 10). There will be the singing of birds like has never been heard since Creation!

Some birds like Nightingales can sing an incredible 100-300 different songs from their repertoire!



View of Jaffa (Biblical Joppa) from Tel Aviv beach

