

Clifton News

295 January - March 2022

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News

2022

Happy New Year !

We would like to wish all our readers a very happy New Year filled with the joy of the LORD which is our strength (Nehemiah 8.10).

We give God thanks for His blessing and encouragement as we begun to restart the children's work in September. After a slow start, numbers began to pick up and around 15 children attend the Seekers club on Wednesdays. The Friday club numbers are still low but improving.

This years Carol service went very well with about 40 present including children and parents. A number of the Seekers children sang at the Carol Service and some of the young men. John Aston gave a good illustrated gospel message and we pray for blessing upon the Word sown.

Our brother William Girard is engaged to Sylvia Lazarus from India and we wish them the Lord's blessing as they plan to get married in Mumbai soon.

We have heard of the home call of Hugh MacKay on 26th October who along with his wife Vi who was in fellowship in Clifton Hall were commended to serve the Lord in Nigeria in 1951. The editor remembers his visits to talk to us in the Sunday school with stories of Africa.

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Meetings

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread 11.00 am
(During outreach at local community events it is earlier so please check our website before coming)

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

January

2	Richard Catchpole
9	Alf Taylor
16	Alastair Rodger
23	Alastair Rodger
30	Ferranti Wong

February

6	Andrew Hall
13	Nitish Patel
20	John Aston
27	Richard Catchpole

March

6	Nitish Patel
13	Thomas Taylor
20	John Aston
27	Nitish Patel

MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING

Please note all the Monday meetings in January and February will be held online on Zoom only.

January

3	Bank Holiday
10	Eric Parmenter - Ephesians 1. 1-14
17	Eric Parmenter - Ephesians 1.15-23
24	Richard Collings – Ephesians 2. 1-10
31	Richard Collings – Ephesians 2. 11- 22

February

7	Philip Kaye – Ephesians 3. 1-13
14	Philip Kaye – Ephesians 3. 14-21
21	Colin Lacey – Ephesians 4. 1-16
28	Colin Lacey – Ephesians 4. 17-32

March

7	Nitish Patel – Ephesians 5. 1-21
14	Nitish Patel – Ephesians 5. 22-33
21	Robert Bennett – Ephesians 6. 1-9
28	Robert Bennett – Ephesians 6. 10-24

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

Question Box

How can we know Christianity is true?

There are many religions across the world, for example Islam, Hinduism or Mormonism. How then can we know that Christianity is true? If we were to ask a Muslim or a Hindu or a Mormon, they would all say that their faith was true.

Jesus Himself stated that He was the only way to the Father, so He claimed that faith in Him was the only way to God.

Now, instead of getting into a discussion on this and risk upsetting people, we could take an easy way out and say that maybe all the different religions are true. Some people picture this as faiths being different paths going up the same mountain. However, that's not possible since parts of different religions contradict each other. For instance, Hinduism says there are many Gods, while Christianity, Islam and Judaism all say there is one God. Christianity says that Jesus is God, whereas Islam and Judaism would deny this. It's not possible for all of them to be true.

So, if it's not possible for all religions to be true, how do we establish which one is?

Clearly, there's not enough space in this magazine to answer this question fully, so I want to just focus on one question we can ask when looking at a faith or religion – where did it come from?

Followers of many religions would point to a man or woman who heard from god or gods and then delivered that message to other people, this person would be called a prophet.

What about Christians? We can point to Jesus as the founder of our faith. And while He did tell people the message of God, He was more than just a human messenger – He was God Himself. He made this clear in many ways, through the miracles He performed, claiming the power to forgive sins, receiving worship as God and applying Old Testament verses about God to Himself.

Jesus' enemies realised what He was saying about Himself, they accused Him of blasphemy and claimed that His miracles were performed by the power of Satan. However, when asking whether what Jesus said was true the big challenge His enemies faced, and the crucial element I want us to think about is His resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is key. On multiple occasions Jesus said that He was going to be killed and three days later rise again (Matt 16:21, Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22, John 2:19-22). If that didn't happen, we couldn't trust anything else Jesus said – if He claimed He would rise from the dead but didn't, why should we believe He is the only way to the Father? If it did happen, Jesus rising from the dead confirms what He said about Himself, what He taught and what He achieved by dying on the cross. Peter and Paul use forms of this argument in preaching recorded in the book of Acts (Acts 13:32-34, 16:30-32).

Jesus' resurrection was also foretold in the Old Testament (Psalm 16:10, 22:22-31, Isaiah 53:10-11), so His rising from the dead also confirms what God had said about His coming Saviour. As an aside, the consistency of the scriptures (the different books agree with each other and closely reference one another) is another reason for us to believe Christianity to be true.

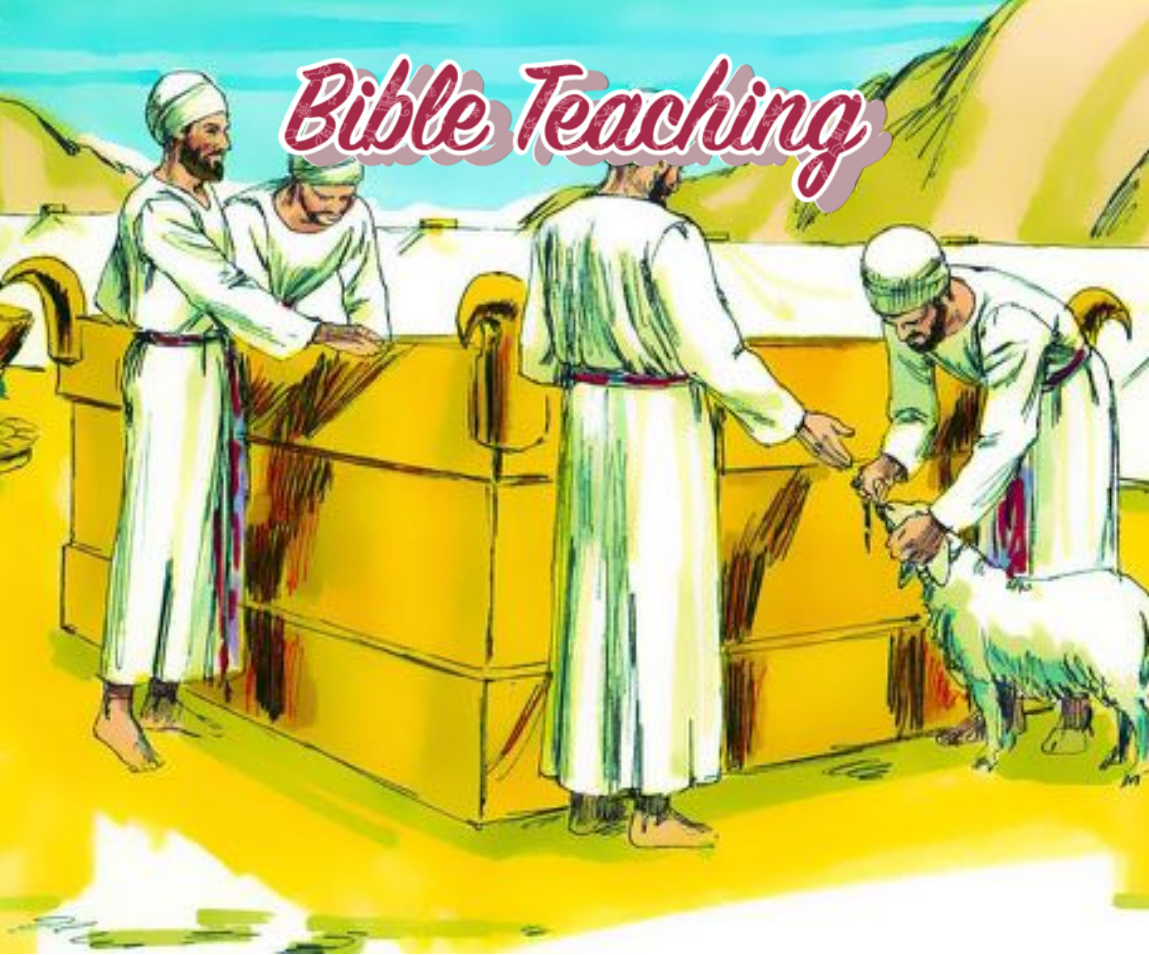
Of course, if the resurrection is an important reason for us to know that Christianity is true, you might ask "how can I know that the resurrection happened?" There are many answers we can point to, here are just a few:

- We have eyewitness accounts from those who knew Jesus and who saw Him both before and after His resurrection.
- His disciples changed from running away in fear before Jesus' crucifixion to boldly preaching about Him in public and even suffering and dying for Him after His resurrection. Why would they do that if they knew Jesus had not risen?
- The stone was rolled away, the tomb was empty, the body was never found. If the religious authorities wanted to stamp out Christianity, and they did, showing that Jesus was still dead would have done this. Yet they couldn't.

When considering whether Christianity is true, there is much more we can say, but a simple answer we can keep in our minds is this: Our faith starts from a man sent from God, who is God, who said He would die and rise again and did just as He said. We can rely on what Jesus said and put our faith in Him knowing that just as He promised to rise again, so has He promised to raise all those who believe in Him (John 6:40).

Alastair Rodger

Bible Teaching



THE SIN OFFERING

(Part 1)

From edited Bible notes by the late Tom Ledger

THE CONTEXT OF THE SIN OFFERING

Exodus speaks of a bringing out by redemption, that He might be in midst of His own.

Leviticus speaks of bringing them in before Him, to worship, communion with Him.

An assembly is not a mission, a club but for God, to appreciate Him, to learn to know Him.

Grace is displayed, but on the basis of righteousness.

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”
(Romans 5:21)

i.e. no compromise with sin

What we have before us are shadows not the image (Heb. 10.1)
An outline, an indication, no amount of repetition of a shadow will make it into the substance.

TWO CLASSES OF OFFERINGS

Burnt, Meat (meal, grain), peace offerings

The Hebrew word used for ‘burn’ is to burn as incense, to turn into vapour i.e. to ascend

Offerer comes as a worshipper. There is an identification of offerer with acceptability of victim.

Sin, Trespass offerings

The Hebrew word used for ‘burn’ is saraph, meaning to consume, burning down.

Offerer comes as a sinner. There is an identification of victim with offerer’s sin, guilt.

Fresh statement from the LORD unto Moses

“And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him ...” (Leviticus 1:1)

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,” (Leviticus 4:1)

“When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Leviticus 4:14)

Leviticus contemplates a people already in covenant relationship with God but provision made for being maintained in the joy and communion of it.

Sin is sin in God's sight whether we are aware of it or not. Sin is judged according to the standard of His holiness and not our thoughts of it.

"The thought of foolishness is sin" The independent act of will is sin.

OUTLINE

- (vv. 1-2) Introduction
- (vv. 3-12) When the priest sins
- (vv. 13-21) When the congregation sins
- (vv. 22-26) When the ruler sins
- (vv. 27-35) When the common people sin

We will look at the fullest expression of the sin offering regarding the priest in detail, the rest in general.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them." (Leviticus 4:1-2)

vv. 1-2 "speak..." New Departure. Transition of subject matter. An introduction of different class of offering. Cf. Trespass offering (Leviticus 5:14).

"unto the children of Israel" in law of the offering, it is "unto Aaron and his sons."

"If ..." not when. No light thoughts of sin. Sin is not inevitable.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" (1 John 2:1)

"sin" - Sin's penalty gone forever - no fear of that. Sin's presence still within us. Sin's power still felt. Joy of salvation interrupted. Communion links broken because of sin!

"Ignorance ..." Not less serious than sin of knowledge. It's because of our own darkened heart's selfishness, insensitivity, blindness.

Paul did not pronounced himself free, "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord."
(1Corinthians 4:4)

Peter in Acts 3:17, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

Paul to the Gentiles Acts 17.30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

"any of the commandments" "shall do against any of them". No word of God is rot be ignored, undervalued. No word of God unimportant Pergamos had lost the sense of its authority (Revelation 2:12-17).

THE ANOINTED PRIEST SINS (vv. 3-12)

(Christ means literally the "anointed", the Messiah)

"And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them (set apart), that they may minister unto me in the priest's office." (Exodus 30:30)

- (a) He held the highest and most important position. Nearest relationship.
- (b) He represented the nation before God ups his shoulders and breast.
- (c) When he sinned people had no representative. Out of communion.

Note. (The more the light, the greater the privileges, the more the responsibility. We shall be called to account accordingly.)

When Adam fell he took all under him with him, including Creation, so with the priest. He takes all whom he represents.

.... to be continued

Good News



THE JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE

On Christmas Day saw the launch of the James Webb telescope which after 20 years of construction, \$10 billion in costs and many delays finally took off from French Guiana on top of an huge Ariane 5 Rocket on its ten year mission to look deeper and further into the universe than any telescope has ever done before.

Though the purpose is to try and prove the unscientific theory of the origin of the universe from nothing by a “Big Bang”, it will only prove as all observational science has always done that there is a Creator God who made all things in six days.

Every believer should have a love for God’s Creation for it reveals His glory and power (Psalm 19.1, Romans 1.20). King David as a young boy did not have a telescope but enjoyed astronomy as he looked at the night sky in Bethlehem. Gazing at the stars and moon at night. He wrote, “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?" (Psalms 8:3-4)

The greatness of the universe which the James Webb telescope will discover will only point to the greatness of the one who created it all, our Lord Jesus Christ for "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3)

Yet such a great universe is so small compared to the one who made it, "Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" (Psalms 113:5-6)

Yet God's Son who created all things humbled Himself even further and became man. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ..." (John 1:14)

He humbled Himself even further, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:" (Philippians 2:8-9)

Dear reader, if you are not saved, you need to realise you are accountable to your Creator for your sins. You need to get right with God through the only way provided, the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. Begin this new year with new life from God! Trust Christ now.



Design in Creation

THE SPIDER

By Nitish Patel

“Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web.” (Job 8:14)

The spider has to be the one of most loathed insects God made on day six of the Creation week. The sudden sight of one makes many scream with fright and reach to terminate it with extreme prejudice! It’s web a marvel of construction just swept aside with little thought of the wonders of its engineering! Putting aside our natural revulsion at spiders, they are an astounding proof of a Creator God.

Job speaks of the flimsiness of a spider’s web. A spider’s silk line is typically 0.001 - 0.004 mm thick. The hypocrite will find that trusting their self righteousness will be no different to depending upon the strength of a web. However, for its size, the spider’s silk is one of the



strongest materials known to science. It is stronger than steel and stronger than Kevlar the strongest manmade fibre used to make bullet proof vests. Dragline silk which is the main support for the web is 100 times stronger than steel. If a cable could be made of this silk the thickness of a garden hose it could support the weight to two Boeing 737 Jumbo jets weighing 60,000 to 85,000 kg each!

SPINNERETS

A spinneret is the silk weaving organ of a spider. Most spiders have three pairs of six spinnerets though some have eight or just four. There is a spigot on the end through which the silk emerges. The spider uses its legs and bristles to pull out more silk.

Inside the spider there are silk glands that produce liquid proteins and other organic molecules which flow through tiny tubes. On the way to the spinnerets the water is removed by the cells lining the tubes and then given mild acidic bath. This makes the liquid into a fibre and then the final process adds a thin fatty coating to the silk as it exits the spinneret through the air. Up to eight silk glands may be present, each producing a different types of silk with different

properties and uses. There is silk to attach the web, a strong drag line, the web spiral silk, the glue like silk to catch insects, swathing silk, tangling catching silk and silk to protect the egg sac. Spiders don't stick to their own web because they make sure only part of their body touches the silk at any time. They also clean their legs through their jaws regularly.

THE BOLAS SPIDER

Unlike most spiders which use a web to randomly catch a hapless prey, the bolas spider does not use a web but makes a line with a glue ball on the end which they spin round and round and then throw at moths to catch them. Adult female bolas spiders produce a chemical cocktail that makes them smell just like a female moth's sex pheromone and the innocent male moths are lured to their deaths.



THE DIVING BELL SPIDER

The diving bell spider spends most of its time underwater and has a scuba tank to provide it air to breathe. It only occasionally comes to the surface to replenish its oxygen supply. It creates this tank using its web silk to form a diving bell. It uses the hairs on its legs to trap air and put it into the bell.



Once underwater, the silk is water proof allows gas exchange with the surrounding water. Oxygen comes in and carbon dioxide goes out. Because nitrogen escapes out the spider has to go to the surface now and then to replenish the bell. The spiders can monitor the oxygen concentration of their bell.



THE DECOY SPIDER

A species of spider was discovered by two US Biologists in September 2012 in the Peruvian Amazon jungle, and months later another entomologist discovered similar behaviour in a spider in the Island of Negros in the Philippines. They are of the genus *Cyclcosa*.

Though thousands of miles apart both which have a unique skill.

They are able to make decoys, fake giant spiders to scare away predators. These decoy spiders are made out of dead insects, leaves and parts of the spider's own dead skin or cuticles. They make them four times larger than their own body and they also purposefully sit by the side or inside the structure and animate these giant spiders and move them so that they appear to come to life! There is no other creature able to make a decoy of itself and do this. This is unique in Creation. The spiders are acting out intelligent well thought out actions in creating something with eight legs looking like itself and knowing that it must be made to move to look authentic. The spider cannot really think much for itself for its brains are tiny but all these things are written into its DNA certainly not by chance accidents but by a Creator God.

THE 'ZOMBIE' SPIDER

Though it sounds like a horror film, the newly discovered Zombie spider in the Ecuadorian jungle is created when a parasitic *Zatypota* wasp lays an egg in the abdomen of a social spider (*Anelosimus eximius*) which normally create a bucket like web for thousands of its family members. Scientists are still learning how the larva which hatches and attaches itself to feed on the spider and somehow is able to control the spider's brain so that it abandons its family nest and starts building a cocoon for the wasp's larva instead. Once the larva has fed off the spider till it dies within the cocoon it made, the larva spins its own cocoon emerging as a beautiful regal wasp.

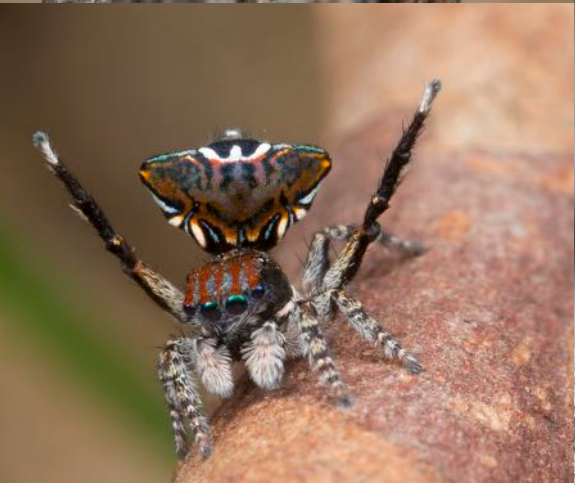
THE PEACOCK SPIDER

Though most spiders are frightening to behold, not so the beautiful small and cute peacock spider (*Maratus volans*). Like the peacock bird, the male displays its colours to attract females and they perform their courtship dance. These are barely the size of a grain of rice and have superb eyesight and can see the full spectrum of light up to UV. They can jump 10 cm, 40 times their body size. They come in a range of rainbow colours. They do not build webs but just eat almost any insect or other spiders.

All these spiders raises troubling questions for those who believe every living thing came about by mere chance mutations. All these are clear evidence of intelligent complex information in their DNA, design, engineering, beauty and purpose that only a designer and engineer could produce.

Psalm 148 shows how everything in Creation brings praise to the LORD even creeping things ...

"Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl ..." (Psalms 148:7-10)





The Dead Sea