

Clifton News

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News

On Saturday 9th April, we had the joy of seeing young Noah Rodger baptised. The occasion was well attended with around 50 present and a number watching on Zoom. John Aston preached the gospel. Prayer valued for his spiritual progress.

The following week we commenced four days of an Easter Holiday Club and were pleased to see around of 28 children attend most of the days. A few parents were present for the prize giving evening. Numbers were less than pre-pandemic days but it was a good start after the events of the past two years. The theme for the holiday club this year was “Daring Detectives” where the children were asked to evaluate the evidence for the truth presented in different Bible stories.

God willing, we shall be having another outreach at two local festivals, the South Norwood Community Festival on Sunday 3rd July and the Grange Picnic in the Park on Sunday 11th September. Last year’s outreach saw new children added to the children’s meetings and we pray for further blessing this year also.

The assembly will be going on an outing for the first time in many years with a coach booked for Littlehampton on Saturday 16th July. The children are all very excited.

Our sister Pamela Ledger of Bexleyheath was called home to be with the Lord and the funeral was held on Wednesday 8th June. She was a great support to her husband Tom whose visits to us for ministry where much appreciated.

Other matters for prayer: Sylvia Girard as she awaits a visa to be granted to join her husband William here. There are delays because of the war in Ukraine. Vipul and Olga are expecting a baby in October. Rejoy and Feba are expecting a baby in December. Peter Trump and Catherine Alcide who are unable to attend due to age and infirmities.

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Meetings

Lord's Day

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

July

3 South Norwood Community Festival outreach

10 Richard Catchpole

17 Andrew Hall

24 Nitish Patel

31 Thomas Taylor

August

7 Nitish Patel

14 Jonathan Varghese

21 John Aston

28 Thomas Taylor

September

4	Clifton young people
11	Grange Picnic in the Park outreach
18	Alastair Rodger
25	Alastair Rodger

MONDAY PRAYER AND MINISTRY

July

4	Alastair Rodger
11	Alastair Rodger
18	Colin Roberts
25	Colin Roberts

August

1	Richard Catchpole
8	Richard Catchpole
15	Nitish Patel
22	Nitish Patel
29	Bank Holiday

September

5	Alastair Rodger
12	Paul Miller
19	Paul Miller
26	Paul Miller

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

What Does God Want from Me?

President John F. Kennedy famously asked at his inauguration in 1963 “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country”. He wanted the American people to think about what they could contribute to their country rather than looking for what they can get from it. For instance, how could they help people rather than find ways to take advantage of them? He wanted them to get their relationship with their country right.

In a similar way, our question is all about our relationship with God. We could ask “How can I get all I want from God?” but that would put the starting point of our relationship with God in the wrong place. God is our creator and the owner of us and all the world “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” – Psalm 24:1.

Since God has made us and possesses us, we're not able to demand things of Him, He not our genie or our servant. We need to first ask what He wants from us.

There are lots of things that we could think of, could it be our money, our good works, our praise? Now all those things are, as we shall see, partially true. But there is something else that comes before all those things – our faith and obedience.

What I mean by this, is that God wants us to believe Him and for that belief to be shown through how we obey Him. As the writer to the Hebrews could put it “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.” – Hebrews 11:6.

The faith that we have in God is then demonstrated through how we behave, this is the point that is made in James 2:14-26. Our faith, which is an invisible thing, is made visible by how we behave. If we continually behave in a way that doesn't line up with how God wants us to live, while saying we're a believer in the Lord Jesus, we probably aren't.

And of course, if we want to obey God, we need to believe in His Son

(John 6:29).

Let's look at a couple of examples of this from the bible. Firstly, we can look at Adam and Eve, God gave them one rule to obey in the Garden of Eden – not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By choosing to eat of it, they showed that they weren't willing to believe God. They thought either that He was holding something back from them or that His warning of death wasn't real. Had they chosen to continue to believe and obey God, they would not have been sent out of Eden.

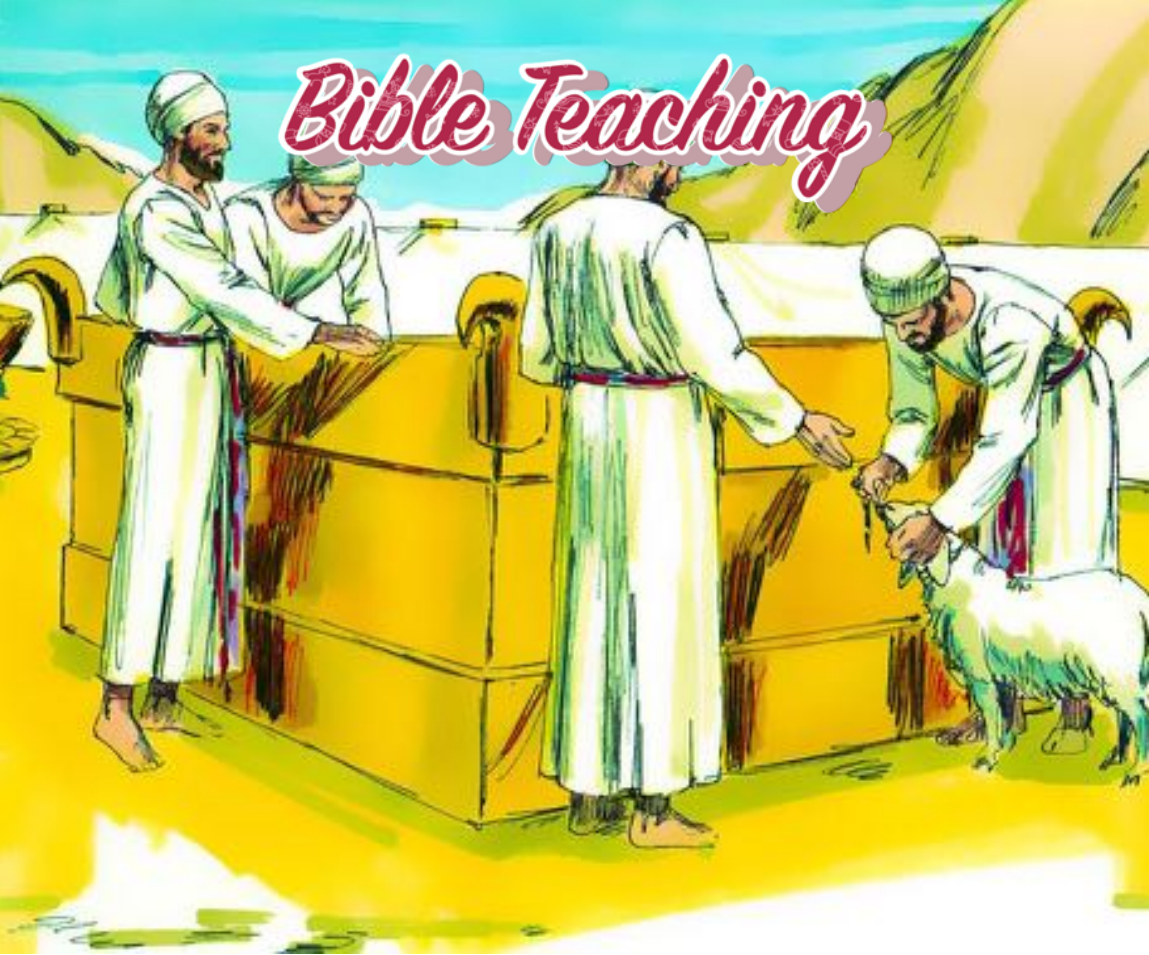
In 1 Samuel 15, King Saul is told to go and destroy the Amalekites and not keep anything back. Instead, Saul spares the King of Amalek and the best of their animals, which he said he was going to offer as a sacrifice to God. Saul might have thought that he was using his initiative to do something good, after all imagine how impressive that sacrifice would have been – surely God would have been pleased with that? No, God had given Saul clear instructions and as Samuel tells him, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” – 1 Samuel 15:22. If Saul had really wanted to please God, he would have obeyed what God had said, it demonstrated that he wasn't willing to believe God.

Many times, we might think we have found something we think is a good idea to do but goes against a direct instruction from God. For instance, we could decide to spend our time with our friends who aren't Christians instead of meeting with our church, just think of the chances we could have to tell them about the Lord Jesus! However, that would be directly going against what God wants us to do (Hebrews 10:25). So, we use God's word to guide our decisions.

As mentioned previously, God does want us to give of our resources (2 Corinthians 9:7), to do good works (Ephesians 2:10) and to worship and praise Him (John 4:23). However, all these are asked from people who are first believing in the Lord Jesus. Our giving, our good works and our praise are all expressions of our faith, showing that we believe in Christ, rather than something we do to start or keep a relationship with God. Believing in the Lord Jesus is the starting point and obeying Him is how we live. That's what God wants from us.

Alastair Rodger

Bible Teaching



THE SIN OFFERING

(Part 3)

From edited Bible notes by the late Tom Ledger

THE WHOLE CONGREGATION (vv. 13-21)

The priest went into the tabernacle sanctuary. The congregation was gathered unto the sanctuary (Numbers 2 etc ...). Not just individual units or families or tribes but associated together. Even as they moved through the wilderness , God was in the midst.

Each assembly is gathered unto His name (Matthew 18; Revelation 2-3) and can sin.

Ephesians - "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Revelation 2:4). They left first love, not first in time but in degree.

Pergamos - "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." (Revelation 2:15). Pergamos lost the sense of the authority of His Word

Laodicea - "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:" (Revelation 3:17). Laodicea means "the will of the people". They put own their will in place of His will.

The Corinthian assembly lost sense of His holiness. "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." (1 Corinthians 5:2)

(v. 15) "The elders ... lay hands ..." Place of grave responsibility
Confession of individual sin not to be done in assembly gathering, in prayer meeting etc ... WE are there as a church.

THE RULER (vv. 22-26)

(v. 22) "a ruler" (a Hebrew word meaning, clouds, vapours, chief or prince). One who governs, guides, provides refreshment and comfort.

As priests we go into the sanctuary but as rulers we go out to the saints.

"... speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." (1 Corinthians 14:3)

A word of warning follows

(v. 22) "When" not "if" as with the others. Can it be that teachers, evangelists being very busy people might get so occupied as to be negligent!

(v. 23) "kid of the goats, a male"

There are differing degrees of apprehension and differing degrees of means. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to

that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2Corinthians 8:12)



In Genesis 27:16 (Jacob Esau) the goat speaks of deception.

In Genesis 37:31-36 (Joseph and his brethren) the goat speaks of deception.

In Matthew 25:32, those who are the goats on the left hand are cast into outer darkness.

In Hebrews 11:37, those who were destitute wandering about in goat skins.

The goat speaks of man in his corruption away from God.

The goat is a type of Christ, "... God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (sin offering), condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:3-4)

(v. 25) "blood ...his finger ... horns of the altar" tells of the witness of confession, appreciation and restoration.

"bottom of the altar" the blood is the foundation.

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:” (2Corinthians 2:14-15)

It typifies the evangelist, the teacher, the elder making known Christ. there minister out from the altar but that’s interrupted by sin! The foundation must be appreciated afresh!

THE COMMON PEOPLE (vv. 27-35)

Sin is sin but not always the same in its defiling effect.

(v. 28) “Kid of the goats, a female”. This was of less value and easier to obtain. As to the type of Christ, the female shows His submission, His obedience unto death.

(v. 31) “for a sweet savour unto the Lord”. This is not said of a ruler or priest or the congregation. It gives added assurance to those who may feel that they are not as near to God as a priest or ruler!

(v. 32) “a lamb”. Typifies Christ in His meekness and lowliness. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” (Hebrews 7:26)

* Concluded *



Egyptian zoo paints a donkey to look like a zebra

In July 2018, a zoo in Egypt, the Cairo International Garden municipal park, denied painting two donkeys to look like zebras when a visitor, student Mahmoud Sarhan, posted pictures of them on Facebook.

It was quite obvious from the smudge marks on the 'zebra' that it was a donkey whose painted exterior was coming off. The animal was clearly not a zebra for they had forgotten to paint the nose of the animal completely black as it is on a real zebra. Donkeys are also smaller than zebras and their ears are floppy not rounded like a Zebra. It's not the first time a zoo has done this to fool visitors.

When it comes to being fooled in spiritual matters, many are good at fooling themselves but not God who alone can see the human heart for what it is. "... for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (1Samuel 16:7).

Some think that they are Christians simply by appearing to be one. They think that because they were born in a Christian country or Christian family, that they say the right words and do the right things that Christians do this makes them a Christian on the way to heaven. But we read in the Bible, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22-23)

This is why the Lord Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus, "... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

A donkey can only be a zebra if it was born a zebra and a person cannot be a Christian unless they are born again. We cannot become a child of God and be in heaven unless we are born into that family.

This takes place when you realise that Christ died for your sins and rose again the third day a living Saviour who alone can save you without any works or effort on your part. It is by faith in Christ alone this miracle happens in your life.

Reader, Are you a real Christian? Have you been born again?



Design in Creation



SYMBIOSIS

What is symbiosis? The word comes from two Greek words that mean “living together”. There are several kinds of symbiosis but mutualism describes creatures that live together for the mutual benefit of each other and when neither can survive without the other it is known as obligate mutualism.

How two creatures came into this relationship is very difficult for evolutionists to explain especially when one is a vicious predator that has to suspend its automatic killing mechanism to make an exception for the fish entering its mouth to clean.

PILOT FISH AND SHARKS

Pilot fish (*Naucrates ductor*) congregate around sharks, rays and sea turtles scavenging left over food from their host. The pilot fish swim



along side many different sharks but prefer the oceanic whitetip shark. They also benefit from the protection their predators give them by swimming close to the shark because other fish will not come near a shark! The shark is aware of the pilot fish's presence and allows it because the pilot fish also eats ectoparasites which attach themselves to the shark's skin.

THE BLUESTREAK CLEANER WRASSE

Cleaning inside the dangerous jaws of a predator falls to another more bolder kind of fish known as the bluestreak cleaner wrasse (*Labroides dimidiatus*). These 4 to 5.5 inch fish are found around coral reefs where they set up a cleaning station for dozens of different species of fish including some large predators.



Cleaner wrasse with a client moray eel

The wrasse has distinct blue colour and black stripe which is recognised by the client fish. The wrasse perform a coordinated dance to attract clients who when they arrive adopt a specific pose indicating they are ready to be cleaned.

The wrasse goes in and out of the mouth, the gills and the outside of the body just like when we visit a car wash. The cleaner gets a meal and the client is relieved of harmful parasites, scar tissue and bits of stuck food. Research done in the Great Barrier Reef showed that one single wrasse can in four hours service more than 2300 clients and eat around 1200 parasites (Grutter, A. S., 1996).

They are quite intelligent and if 'big daddy' clients come by such as sharks or groupers they leave the smaller fish to deal with them first. Clients know that they should queue up to be cleaned and wait their



A rockmover wrasse gets cleaned by a Hawaiian cleaner wrasse while an orangespine unicornfish waits its turn.

turn. Scientific studies have shown that the wrasse exhibits remarkable intelligence and recognises regular clients which it will give priority to. Other research has shown that though they prefer to feed on the mucus in the fish's mouth and gills they rather choose to feed on the parasites which helps their clients to stay healthy. This behaviour seeking to benefit its client for long term gain cannot be explained without a Creator designing everything to work together so perfectly for each others mutual benefit. The cleaner wrasses are crucial for the overall health of the reefs where they live.



Evolutionary change by blind chance mutations and natural selection cannot explain how client fish seek out cleaner fish in the first place and how the cleaner knows it should not run away from the teeth of a predator.

If evolution were true and a small fish inherited a mutation in its genetic code that somehow changed its behaviour to swim into the mouth of a predator then that will be the end for that fish and its evolution! If the predator somehow had a mutation that switched off its eating mechanism to allow small fish into its mouth then it will stop eating and die. Even if the small fish was accidentally allowed into its mouth the cleaning mechanism must be programmed into the fish to begin with along with the information programmed into all the client fish that come for a clean.

Here is yet another proof of the wisdom of God in Creation of whom Job said, "Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." (Job 9:10)

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep." (Psalms 107:23-24)



Cleaner wrasses working on the gill area of dragon wrasse



An orangespine unicornfish being cleaned by a Hawaiian cleaner wrasse

Wailing Wall, Jerusalem

