

Glad Tidings

Of The Kingdom Of God



Featured **Articles**

Saving Lives (p. 3)

God's Solution to Human Problems (p. 5)

The Bible and Education (p. 10)

A monthly magazine written and published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world.

Its objectives are – to encourage the study of the Bible as God’s inspired message to mankind; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God’s world-wide Kingdom.

Table Of Contents

Saving Lives



3

God’s Solution to Human Problems



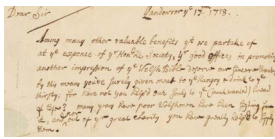
5

Leviticus



9

The Bible and Education



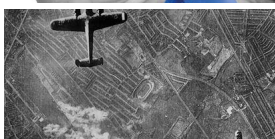
10

What God has Done for Us



12

One Night in the Blitz



15

Jezebel



17

Glad Tidings Distributors for orders and payments

United Kingdom

Fiona Oram, 24 Windermere Avenue,
Ashby de la Zouch, Leics. LE65 1FA, UK
Tel: +44 (0)7521 079 190 (24 hrs)
fiona@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Australia

Ruth Morgan, 51 Jesmond Road,
Croydon, VIC 3136, Australia
gladtidingsaustralia@gmail.com

Canada

Vivian Thorp, 5377 Birdcage Walk,
Burlington, ON L7L 3K5, Canada
vivianthorp@bell.net

New Zealand

Neil Todd, 14 Morpeth Place, Blockhouse
Bay, Auckland 7, New Zealand
thetodds@xtra.co.nz

U.S.A.

Pat Hemingray, 1244 Pennsylvania
Avenue, Oakmont, PA 15139, USA

Other Countries

Andrew Johnson, 22 Hazel Drive,
Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5RJ,
United Kingdom
andrew@gladtidings.me.uk

Editor

Andrew Hale, 52 Mardale Crescent,
Lymm WA13 9PJ, United Kingdom
editor@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Publisher

The Glad Tidings Publishing Association
A registered charity – Number 248352

Saving Lives

THE structure on our front cover is an unusual one, but a type of building found in many coastal locations around the UK. Some other countries have similar ones. It is a lifeboat station, operated by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which describes itself as 'the charity that saves lives at sea'.

The lifeboat is launched on receiving a distress signal, because another boat is in trouble or people are in danger of drowning for some other reason. Typically, the boat will be maintained by a full-time mechanic, but the crews are volunteers. They are called by phone or radio, and instantly stop their work or leisure activities to rush to the lifeboat.

Often in dangerous, stormy conditions, they put out to sea. They show great skill and courage, risking their own lives to save others.



Bible Saviours

The Bible too has stories about people saving others. One good, if unexpected example, is Joseph (not Jesus' step-father),

and we read his story in Genesis chapters 37 to 50. One of twelve sons of Jacob, he was hated by his brothers. This hatred was inflamed because he had dreams which told him that one day they would all bow down to him. Eventually, the brothers sold Joseph into slavery and he was taken to Egypt.

In Egypt, he suffered injustice and imprisonment, but eventually entered into the king's service. He became second in command in Egypt, and managed its food resources during a terrible famine. His brothers visited Egypt to buy food, and were terrified when they found out about the now powerful Joseph – what would he do

to them? Would he take revenge?

However, Joseph was gentle and gracious with them. He could see that God was at work, and he had this to say to them:

I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve a posterity

for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance (Genesis 45:4–5, 7).

God was using Joseph to save his family, which would become the nation of Israel. He would also use His prophets to warn those who would listen, and tell them to obey God. The prophet Ezekiel was given this message:

He who takes warning will save his life (Ezekiel 33:5).

God as Saviour

The Lord God is described many times as the saviour of Israel, as in these examples:

For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour (Isaiah 43:3).

I am the LORD your God... there is no saviour besides Me (Hosea 13:4).

His work of salvation goes much further than this. He wants to save everyone and calls to everyone:

Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:22).

A subject which appears regularly in *Glad Tidings* is the need for men and women to be saved from death; by faith and baptism we can hope to be in God's kingdom.

Jesus the Saviour

God's work of salvation is carried out through Jesus. Even his name means 'God Saves'. There was another Joseph who was the step-father of Jesus. When he was told

that Mary would have a son, the angel said to him:

She will bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus came to save lives, and he was very explicit about this:

For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them (Luke 9:56).

The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

Jesus spent his life serving God, teaching people about God's purpose and calling them to follow him. When he died, he was a perfect sacrifice: he did not deserve to die as he never disobeyed God, but he willingly offered his life so that men and women could be saved. Paul summarised it like this:

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Romans 5:8–9).

Saving or Losing Life?

How we respond to this is crucial. What God wants is for us to believe His promises and to be baptised. We need to commit our lives entirely to God, following Jesus:

Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it (Mark 8:34–5).

God's Solution to Human Problems

THE great theme of the Bible is 'the Kingdom of God'. But what does this mean?

The very first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us about God's purpose in creation, and mankind's place in it:

God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27).

In other words, men and women living on the earth were to reflect the very characteristics of God.

These qualities are summed up in a dramatic revelation to Moses, two thousand years later, when God showed Moses His glory and said:

The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty (Exodus 34:6-7).

The Need for Change

The more we reflect on them, the more we can see these characteristics are needed in our world. In our personal relationships we need to adjust to each other's needs and to behave in ways that bring no sadness and



regrets. In social interactions, such qualities would transform the way communities function. International relations would be transformed if they were upheld. They even have an application to the way we treat our natural environment.

If leaders at every level upheld these values, think of the massive difference it would make. People are too often motivated by greed and the desire for power. The result is conflict and selfish behaviours designed to assert personal, institutional, racial or national supremacy. The Bible sums up this human tendency as 'sin'.

Just take a look at the news and you can see how close to the truth this is – in politics, business, family life, sport, culture – in fact in any sphere of human activity. But, by contrast, where good things are happening

– and they do happen – we can usually see elements of the qualities of God’s glory finding expression.

The Kingdom of God is about a world in which this ‘glory of God’ ultimately fills the earth. The Bible assures us it will happen.

Clearly, there has to be change. The starting point for this is the desire for change, the recognition that something needs to be done if the world is to survive as a place where beauty prevails over ugliness, where ‘the glory of God’ prevails.

Jesus’ First Coming

The gospel message is that change can and will happen. ‘Gospel’ means ‘good news’ – or ‘Glad Tidings’. At the centre of this good news is the Lord Jesus Christ. In his own life he embodied the change that can happen. He gives hope to those who commit their lives to him.

that so often drive us, and showed ‘the glory of God’ in his character and actions, reaching out to meet the needs of people from all backgrounds.

The supreme action of his life was, paradoxically, his death. It came about because of all that is wrong with human nature, bringing about a totally unjust trial, followed by the suffering that ended in his crucifixion. Immediately before this happened, Jesus said:

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you (John 15:13–14).

In other words, he allowed himself to be arrested and abused and to be nailed to a cross to show the enormity of sin, and to demonstrate to the world that sin leads to death.

But at the same time, his was an act of love. For no one can show greater love than to lay down their life for others. The love that brought him to death was also the love that had conquered sin. He never gave way to its impulses, or to the temptations that confronted him.

For this reason, God, Who is altogether holy and just, raised him to life again after three days of lying dead in a cold, sealed and guarded tomb. The apostle Peter put it like this:

Him (Jesus), being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put



Because of his unique relationship with God, Jesus conquered the selfish impulses

to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it (Acts 2:23–24).

There was no doubt about his death and there was no doubt about the reality of his resurrection. For 40 days he appeared in various situations to a whole variety of people.

He then met with his disciples and gave them instructions to go into all the world and preach the good news that his resurrection had confirmed. God's purpose in creation was sure. Whereas the first man (Adam) had failed to obey God and show His glory, Jesus had succeeded. He had conquered sin, once and for all. From now on, all who learnt the lessons of his life and death and declared their belief in all that it stood for, could live a new life 'in him'.

The Second Coming

But there was more to it than simply living life now. When Jesus ascended into heaven as his disciples watched, two angels appeared to them and gave this message.

Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

Thus assured that he would return to the earth, the Second Coming of Jesus became the central hope of believers.

A few years later the apostle Paul summed it up in this way:

Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:20–26).

Christ 'the firstfruits' – the first man to be raised to life for evermore. Then 'at his coming' those who belong to Christ. So if we 'belong to Christ' we shall be called to face him at the Judgement, along with all who have come to know him. If we have died, we shall be raised, as he was raised, for the same purpose – to be called to account for how we lived our lives and specifically for our response to the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:10, see also John 5:25–29). Those who are 'in Christ' will be changed into immortal beings like him, destined to be with Christ to accomplish the task that lies ahead.

'For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.' As the rest of the passage makes clear, this involves ruling the earth and cleansing it of all that opposes the purpose of God. We are back to the overriding theme of the Bible – the Kingdom of God – the state of affairs on the earth when God's laws will prevail, when men and women will live in harmony

with each other under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ and those who, like him, have become immortal.

What will life be like at this time for the mortal population of the earth? There will be peace (Isaiah 2:4). All people everywhere will have enough food (Psalm 72:16; Amos 9:13, 14). Health problems will be resolved and men and women will live healthy lives in harmony with nature (Isaiah 35). Work will be satisfying and productive (Isaiah 65:21–23). Children will grow up in a safe and healthy environment and old people will be respected and content (Isaiah 65:20; Zechariah 8:4, 5). The earth's resources will no longer be squandered or grabbed to enrich the few, and the rich will no longer have an advantage over the poor (Psalm 72:4, 12–14).

Signs That the Kingdom Is Near

During his lifetime Jesus knew from the Old Testament precisely what would happen to him – his unjust, tortured death. But he also knew he would rise again, ascend to be with his heavenly Father and return again in power and glory to fulfil his ultimate destiny – to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth.

The disciples wanted to know when this would happen. He would not give them a precise time, but made clear that they could expect the situation in the world to be as the prophets in the Old Testament had described:

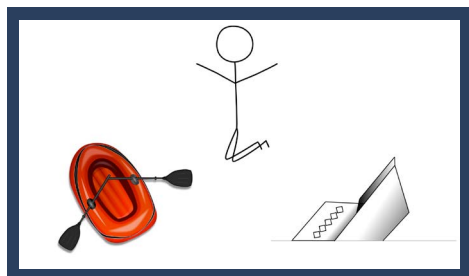
There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time (Daniel 12:1).

The world would be full of problems and people would be fearful about the future. But Jesus also gave them assurance:

*There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **Then they will see the Son of Man** coming in a cloud with power and great glory... So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near (Luke 21:25–27, 31).*

The Kingdom of God is the solution to all of our problems, and those of the whole world. If we make it the focal point of our lives, we can look forward to it with confidence and excitement.

Michael Owen



Please visit the Glad Tidings web page for video content, previous editions and articles from the magazine.

<https://www.gladtidingsmagazine.org>

Leviticus

THE Book of Leviticus is set at the time of the Exodus, when the children of Israel were journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land. It records God's laws given to Israel at Sinai, including details of the sacrifices and the personal and collective life of holiness required of Israel.

Priesthood

Aaron (of the priestly tribe of Levi) was Israel's first High Priest. His sons and descendants continued the priesthood over the next eight centuries.

Though the Levitical priesthood failed, through disobedience, God would later provide a better priesthood: Jesus Christ (of the tribe of Judah) is the only priest today, a mediator between God and men.

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

Christ and the Offerings

Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled all that was intended in the various offerings. His total dedication and sinlessness made him the perfect offering for those who look in faith to God for forgiveness of sins.

We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins

Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

Leviticus 10:3 – see Isaiah 52:11 and 1 Peter 1:15–16.

Leviticus 17:11 – see Hebrews 9:22.

Leviticus 23:39–40 – see Hosea 12:9 and Zechariah 14:16.



forever, sat down at the right hand of God... Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, his flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:10, 12, 19–22).

Norman Owen

By kind permission of 'The Christadelphian'

The Bible and Education

THE Apostle Paul wrote to his friend and brother in Christ, the young man Timothy, and reminded him that:

From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15).

Learning to read from the Old Testament was something well known to all Hebrew children of his day. Moses had instructed Israel:

Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren (Deuteronomy 4:9).

Jewish children would attend the synagogue and learn to read from an early age. So it was that at the age of 12 years, Jesus was able to astound the teachers of his day in Jerusalem; not because he could read, but because he could understand and explain what he had read.

The History of Welsh Literacy

In Wales, in the early 18th Century, it appears that the 'Hebrew Model' was also in use. The only books in common circulation were Bibles, and these were used to teach the population to read. This coincided with a religious revival

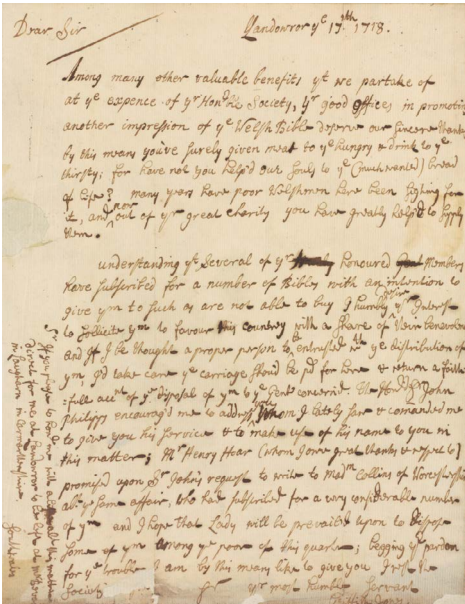
in Wales. Preachers were insistent that everyone should learn to read the Bible for themselves, and not rely on what a select few were telling them about what it said.

So it was that literacy began to spread throughout the country, and it was the 'circulating schools' of Carmarthenshire which fanned the flame of education.

Behind these schools was a famous preacher named Griffith Jones (1684–1771). He was tireless in writing to the local gentry for funds, and to the Society for the Promotion of Scripture Knowledge for more Bibles. These were delivered by ship from London, where they were printed, to Laugharne in Carmarthenshire.

In 1734, Griffith Jones set about organising a way to teach both children and adults basic reading skills in as short a time as possible. He would set up a 'school', teaching them in around three months, before moving the school to the next town. With the Bible as their text these 'circulating schools' reached almost every part of Wales. The language taught was usually Welsh, although English was used in some areas of Pembrokeshire.

It is estimated that almost half the population had attended these schools by the time of his death in 1771. By the second half of the 18th Century, Wales was one of the few countries where the majority of the population could read. This caught the



Griffith Jones' 1718 request for more Bibles

attention of Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, who in 1764 commissioned a report on Griffith Jones' circulating schools.

Mary Jones

It was in one of these circulating schools in the north of Wales that a girl by the name of Mary Jones was educated. She learned not only to read, but like the Psalmist, to love the Bible.

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day (Psalm 119:97).

In the year 1800, at the age of only 16, Mary walked 25 miles to buy her own Bible from a man called Thomas Charles (1755–1814). He had also been brought up in Carmarthenshire and as a young

man would have known of Griffith Jones. It had taken Mary many years to save up for her Bible, and it was her commitment, dedication and love for the word of God which so impressed Thomas Charles.

As a member of the Spa Fields and Religious Tract Society he campaigned for more Bibles for Wales. One member said “Well if for Wales, why not the whole world?” And so the British and Foreign Bible Society came into existence in 1804.

Education Today

Over the last 50 years the Welsh language has been revived. Welsh schools are found all across the country. They teach children from all backgrounds to speak and read in Welsh from as early as the age of 3 or 4.

Although today sadly they don't use the Bible to learn to read, it is interesting to note that many schools in Wales still celebrate their rich history and the Bible's role in the origins of education in Wales.

However in other parts of the world such as Cambodia, the English language is being taught through the medium of the Bible.

There is no doubt that the word of God provides a firm foundation upon which to live a good life. Surely this is what Jesus was teaching about when he gave the well-known parable of the buildings upon the rock and upon the sand (Matthew 7:24–27). How sure are your foundations?

Jamie Palmer

What God has Done for Us

ALMOST every week we hear about someone who has run up huge bills on their credit cards or borrowed from loan sharks. As a result, they find themselves in great difficulties. Sadly, some of them take extreme measures, even suicide, to find a way out. No one is willing to cancel their debts.

robbery or murder. Human opinions about what is a ‘real’ sin may alter, but God’s doesn’t. We are all sinners – we all disobey God to some extent – and therefore deserve the same sentence as the first people, Adam and Eve. God gave them a rule and stated the punishment for breaking that rule. Because they did what they wanted instead, God confirmed what would happen:

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return (Genesis 3:19).

The result is that we have their same physical nature and so we too will die. But we don’t die just because we are mortal. Like our first parents, we sin and therefore deserve to die.

Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).

But there is something we can do about it, although it is more accurate to say that God has done something about it, by offering us a way out.



Our Debt to God

The Bible describes our sin, our wrongdoing in God’s eyes, as a debt that God is willing to wipe out. This is despite the fact that it’s our own fault that we’ve got into that mess in the first place.

It’s no use saying we aren’t sinners, when what we mean is that we don’t commit

God's Mercy

Jesus told the following story:

A certain king wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, "Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all." Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt (Matthew 18:23–27).

It must be fiction, because who in their right mind would wipe out such a huge debt? It was achieved by the servant throwing himself on the mercy of a lord who was more compassionate than probably any person you know.

The remarkable thing about God is that, despite His hatred of sin, He feels pity for those who share that hatred. He is merciful towards them. The Psalmist says of Him:

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:8–10).

This is a wonderful statement of what God is like, which is

often repeated in the Bible. It first appears in the Old Testament, which many people think describes a fierce unforgiving God, different from the God of love in the New Testament. But there is no contradiction. Here it is again, this time in the New Testament:

The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

God's Way Out

God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3–4).

God wants us to be saved from the effect of our sins, but he is a God of justice, as well as a Saviour. He condemns sin, but in His great mercy He is prepared to forgive the repentant sinner.



Do you... not know that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4).

God wants to help us, but we must get to know and understand the truth. Not your truth, not our truth – God’s truth. He shows us the only way to live, as only He can.

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

That “name” is Jesus, which means “God saves”.

The Role of God’s Son

There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:5–6).

God has given His only Son to be the intercessor between God and mankind. We can therefore only come to God through him. Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience. In overcoming sin, and in finally succumbing to death, Jesus showed God’s condemnation of sin. He revealed God’s just ways to men in his teaching and in his behaviour. Perhaps his greatest act of obedience was to voluntarily surrender his life, when in fact he had the power to put a stop to it.

God (sent) His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3).

Jesus was a human being and represented all those who hate their tendency to sin against God, described by the Apostle Paul as follows:

To will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:18–25).

Jesus offered himself as a voluntary sacrifice. His was a perfect sacrifice and therefore was acceptable to God for our sins. For the sake of His Son, God shows mercy to the rest of us by forgiving our sins – if we turn to Him.

*“Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God...”
By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:9–10).*

So at the very time that human beings did their worst for God by killing His Son, God was doing His best for the human race.

In Him (God) we have redemption through his (Jesus’) blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us (Ephesians 1:7–8).

But that’s not all that God does for us. Jesus didn’t just die; he left the grave after three days to become immortal. We too can become immortal and enjoy life on earth in the Kingdom of God, working with Jesus. That’s God’s offer to all of us.

It is our sin that separates us from God, because He hates it. He has decided to offer us His mercy through the work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rod Hale

One Night in the Blitz

LES wasn't a very brave man, but he was kindly; he loved to laugh and joke. And it certainly wasn't a time he enjoyed. There could be another air raid at any moment, especially in the night, and fear stalked him.

All week the bombers seemed to be focussing on Nottingham, for no good reason as far as anyone could tell. Much of the Lace Market area had gone up in flames with showers of shrapnel and cascading masonry. It was cold outside in the night, much better to stay indoors – at least there'd be a chance of getting to a shelter. The kitchen table was already strengthened, just in case.

But there was a job to be done. Dorothy had to be escorted back to the Nurses' Home. It was dark early, so the curfew had not begun, and she had to be back to start her night duty. She had been to see Les and his wife, Ada. They had recently met when Dorothy began her nursing training.

Les thought, "She's so cool, calm and collected. It's because of her new-found faith and hope. And because she was the oldest of a family of nine. Since the untimely death of her father she's had to help her Mum with all the rest, getting meals, doing



the washing etc. Wish I could get this faith thing. Ada's got it too." Out loud he said, "Come on then, I shan't be back till after curfew if we don't get going!"

Attack!

Coats on, they set out walking at a brisk pace, hoping to catch the bus, with its hooded head lamps, which went past the end of the street. They were just crossing the main road when out of the night came the roar of aero engines. There had been no warning!

They dashed for cover in a street-side shelter. Les stood there shaking. He was holding tightly to Dorothy's hand – not to help her but to steady his own body which was trembling from head to toe.



evening. Eventually all was quiet. The occupants of the shelter dusted themselves down and, amazingly, the bus slowly trundled from under the nearby railway viaduct where it had sheltered during the raid.

Calm After the Storm

Dorothy said, “I’ll be OK now. You go home to Ada and reassure her everything is all right.”

They arrived in the shelter at the same time as the air raid warning officer. Les was about to shout, “What happened to the warning siren, then?” when the first bomb burst with a deafening crash.

For some time, it seemed as though bombs were dropping all around; it began to feel personal. They faced the back of the shelter with their hands firmly over their ears. Across the street was an end of a row of terrace houses; it looked intact. There was a respite and they dared to look out. Then there was that sudden roar again, a whistling through the air, a thud and then the explosion. The little group turned away with eyes tight shut. As the clatter of flying bricks and shattered glass faded away they looked back. There was a low rumble and the end wall of the terraces began to crumble. Fortunately, the row was clear — it had been bombed out the previous

A quick goodbye and Les was gone. Dorothy hurried as fast as the bus would take her, back to the hospital, straight on duty — there would be casualties. As she sat looking out of the window there was just a moment or two for a prayer of thanks for safe deliverance. The Lord had been with her, once again, through a difficult time

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty...

He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday (Psalm 91:1-6).

David Nightingale

Jezebel

In this series, we will consider the work of two Old Testament prophets. They worked in difficult times, had many challenges, but were able to do amazing things. And we can learn a great deal from them.

WHEN Prince Harry married Meghan Markle, it was because they chose one another and because they are in love. It was not in the hope of cementing any relationship between Great Britain and the United States of America.

Until quite recently political alliances between different countries were often established by arranged marriages between members of their royal families. At one time Queen Victoria was related to many of the crowned heads of Europe, her many children having conveniently married in the hope of establishing warmer political relations.

It was much the same in Bible times, and weaker kingdoms would seek to prevent war and conflict with a larger neighbouring kingdom by a strategically arranged marriage.

So it was that Ahab, the son of Omri, king of Israel, married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. From about 875 to 853 BC, Ahab reigned over the northern Kingdom of Israel, which had been formed when it split from southern Judah after the reign of Solomon.



A Really Bad Partnership

Israel had a very chequered history, and none of its kings has a good record in the Bible, but Ahab seems to have been one of the worst. It is said of him that:

Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him (1 Kings 16:30).

Reading the account of Ahab's life, it appears that much of the wrong he did was because he allowed his wife to dominate his life and his decision making. It ought to have been obvious that it would be a difficult relationship.

The Lord God was still, if only nominally in some people's minds, the God of Israel. Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, which means "With him is Baal". He was priest of Ashtoreth and had murdered his brother to seize the throne.

Baal was the most prominent fertility god of the period, widely worshipped, and often

this idolatry caused the people of Israel to fail in their worship of the true God. Jezebel seems to have been well taught by her father, and to have schemed and plotted her way through life. She dominated Ahab and held a most unhealthy influence in the kingdom. Although she was only the king's consort, having no legitimate role in the kingdom, she nevertheless managed to dominate affairs during the reign of Ahab, and beyond.

Ahab's reign began about 100 years after the division of the kingdom; six evil kings had reigned over the northern kingdom. He must have thought that the political alliance of such a marriage would be valuable, Sidon being on the north east of Israel.

Introducing the Prophets

However, the Lord God could not allow Israel to slip deeper in the worship of idols without attempting to restore them and bring them back to Him. For the period we are to look at, covering the reigns of four or five kings, and spreading over about 50 years, He made repeated attempts to bring the people back to Him, in the hope that true worship might be re-established.

During this time, two prophets dominate the scene: firstly Elijah (his name means 'Yahweh is God') and then Elisha (his name means 'God is salvation'). Both sought to bring the nation back to true worship, to influence kings and rulers; both had trials and difficulties, triumphs and times of bitter disappointment. Through



most of the time of Elijah, Jezebel is seen at work, attempting to guide Ahab into ways of supporting Baal worship, rather than godly ways.

False Worship

There had been several attempts to set up alternative forms of worship. The first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam, did not want his subjects going to Jerusalem to worship, as it was now in a foreign country.

Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" (1 Kings 12:28).

Ahab's contribution later was to actively worship Baal:

Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria (16:32).

It was as if he was deliberately trying to provoke the Lord God by acts which were hostile to true worship. Once again it would mean that ordinary people would be less likely to go to Jerusalem to worship the true God in the way He required.

It did not stop there. It is recorded that Ahab made an Asherah. This was a wooden pole, placed at Canaanite places of worship, possibly a tree with the branches removed. They were often erected by the side of altars to Baal, and were seen as fertility symbols. Women wove hangings for Asherah. No wonder it is written that:

Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him (v33).

There is a further comment made on Ahab's reign. He allowed a man called Hiel to rebuild Jericho, something which had been specifically forbidden by God. In the time of Joshua, when Jericho had been destroyed at the start of the Israelite conquest of the land, this prophecy was given to the people:

Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates (Joshua 6:26).

The record suggests that Hiel lost his firstborn son, Abiram, when he laid the foundations of the rebuilt city of Jericho; and when he was able to install the gates it was at the cost of his youngest son, Segub, exactly as prophesied by Joshua. We need to learn the lesson that God's commands are not to be ignored.

Trying to Set It Right

This series of articles has started with Jezebel because she dominates the scene during the work of Elijah. Both Elijah and Elisha are prophets in the sense that they told the people what God wanted them to do.

A distinction is sometimes made between prophets who 'foretell' (tell the future) and those who 'forth tell' (telling people about what God wants). Neither Elijah nor Elisha made any long term prophecies, only comparatively short term ones, and neither wrote down their own message, but they are both well worth considering because of the way they reminded the people of Israel of God's message.

Their story is a fascinating account of the Lord God seeking to bring His people back to Him, with miracles, wonders and signs to accompany all that they said.

Mark Sheppard

Free Offer

If you would like to receive the Glad Tidings magazine FREE for 6 months – send your name and address to one of the addresses below. Or go to our website at: www.gladtidingsmagazine.org/free-magazines

Name

Address

Postcode

Country



Addresses for the Free Offer :

In the UK write to: FREEPOST GLADTIDINGS
(fiona@gladtidingsmagazine.org)

In Africa and Europe write to: Anne Bayley, 68 Hay Lane, Shirley, Solihull B90 4TA, UK

In other countries, to: Andrew Johnson, 22 Hazel Drive, Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5RJ, UK
(andrew@gladtidings.me.uk)

Contact Details:

To find out about your nearest Christadelphian Meeting, or to request free Bible literature or a correspondence course, please write to the address nearest you.

United Kingdom

FREEPOST GLADTIDINGS
fiona@gladtidingsmagazine.org

Africa & Europe

Christadelphian Bible Mission,
404 Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham
B28 8SZ, UK
requests@cbm.org.uk

The Americas

CBMA, 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA
93065, USA
cbma.treasurer@gmail.com

Caribbean

CBMC, Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280, 101
Avenue, Surrey, BC, Canada V3R 0J7
philsnobelen@shaw.ca

India

T Galbraith, GPO Box 159, Hyderabad,
5000001, India
tim@galbraithmail.com

South and East Asia

ACBM, PO Box 152 Cobbitty NSW,
Australia 2570
coelmada@gmail.com

Photo Credits:

Front cover: Mumbles Lifeboat Station,
Wales, UK
Jo Evans

Pages 15, 16, 18: Wikimedia Commons

www.facebook.com/GladTidingsMagazine/

www.youtube.com/channel/UCxb_gW5cp8LUTMQVQfTpRw

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the New-King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson Inc. Used by permission: All rights reserved.

G18