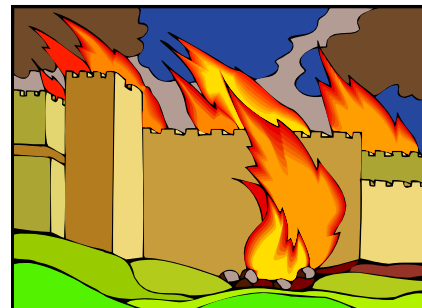

◆ THE EDIFIER ◆

Volume 18

CHURCH of GOD 7th DAY - AUSTRALIA

JUNE 2012

Up-lifting the Muslim's Faith in Christ



There once was a king who was loved very much by his people. One day his magnificent palace was destroyed by his enemies. They were jealous of his splendid palace and his popularity with the masses.

His closest friends grieved his loss with him. They and the people rallied behind him and helped him rebuild. There was great rejoicing when they had finished.

His friends were so touched by the events that soon after they each wrote their own similar accounts of these momentous events.

However, one day the King's enemies turned against his closest friends.

They were faced with the unenviable choice of denouncing their king or being killed. The latter was their end.

Several hundred years later, a man arose who put a rather different slant on these events. He claimed that the king was in fact not a king, but only a rich man, that his palace was never destroyed, and that it was never rebuilt.

Whose account would you tend to believe – the closest friends' who witnessed the events, wrote contemporaneous accounts of the events, and were prepared to die for their king, or the man who came several hundred years later blatantly contradicting the essence of what the closest friends had written?

Of course we would tend

to believe the close friends of the king.

The closest friends of Jesus wrote contemporaneously that He was the Son of God, that he died on the cross to save us, and that he ensured our salvation by His victorious resurrection. Many of them also died because of their convictions.

The writings of Islam 600 years later pronounced that Jesus was not the Son of God (but only a prophet), that He did not die on the cross at all (let alone to save us), and that he was never resurrected to life on earth.

Now which version would you tend to believe?

By David Kidd

*A magazine dedicated to
uplifting and transforming
peoples lives through the
uncompromised word of God.*

Surprise

By John Klassek

One of the remarkable things about the Bible, especially prophecy, is its SURPRISING nature. Things come to eventuate exactly as scripture foretells, and we find ourselves (or those at the time it occurs) as absolutely surprised and not really expecting it!

For example, there was a great deal of Messianic expectation when Jesus was born. Even though the ancients understood the prophecies given such as Isaiah 7:14 saying that “a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Immanuel”, “God with us”.

When Jesus did come to this earth and was born as a baby boy in Bethlehem, it really came as a surprise.

When you read the gospel accounts, you soon pick up on that sense of surprise from Mary’s visitation by the angel Gabriel, from Joseph’s experience, from the shepherds’ in the field to the arrival of the wise men.

When Jesus came, it was a surprise.

It also happened in the discourse when Jesus repeatedly told his disciples that he would be handed over to the Gentiles, he would suffer, be killed and that he would

be raised three days and three nights later.

I don’t think that the disciples, as the scriptures attest to, really understood or fully comprehended what Jesus was foretelling.

Thus when you read the gospel accounts when early on that Sunday morning, long after Jesus had been resurrected, the people immediately involved were nothing less than surprised! The angel at the tomb spoke to the women who were surprised. The disciples were surprised. They only understood what actually happened some time after those events occurred.

I think Jesus understands that “sense of surprise” we experience. When Jesus was telling his disciples about the upcoming resurrections, as cited in John 5:28-29, he said, “Don’t be amazed; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice – and come out, those who have lived righteously to a resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to a resurrection of judgment.”



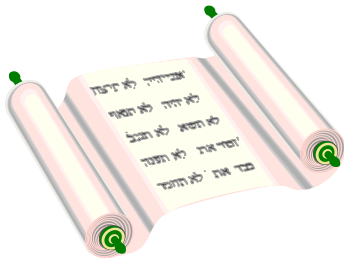
And here Jesus prefaced his words by saying, “Don’t marvel” or “Don’t be amazed!” So, one day in the future, when we find ourselves participating in either of those resurrections, we’ll probably find it “surprising” – more surprising and amazing than we can ever imagine today.

The last book of the Bible is part letter, part prophecy and part apocalypse. The Book of Revelation is prefaced by telling us of “things that must soon take place”, and so over the years theologians and scholars alike have disagreed and debated whether these mysterious things and events in Revelation happened completely in the past or whether they exist yet in the future. But, the bottom line is, that even though we know that Jesus Christ is coming as “King of kings, and Lord of lords”, in might and in power and in glory, his coming is probably going to happen in a way that we really don’t fully comprehend or imagine today. We’ll probably be more surprised than anything else.

So when the day comes and the words of God become fulfilled, may we all be more than pleasantly surprised!



"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."
Matthew 1 : 23



Five Major Themes in Paul's Writing

Of the many themes and topics the apostle Paul addresses throughout his 13 epistles, the five perhaps most prominent that come to mind are:

1. The Lordship of Christ
2. Resurrection
3. Justification
4. Grace
5. Faith

1. The Lordship of Christ is the underlying premise for the entirety of Paul's ministry, and is evident throughout his letters, perhaps no better summarised than when Paul said, "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." (1 Corinthians 16:22) In fact, the term "Lord" is cited almost some 300 times throughout Paul's writings.

Paul anchored every part of his teaching on the Lord Jesus Christ, emphasised, for example in his averting of personal focus when he said, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves

your bondservants for Jesus' sake." (2 Corinthians 4:5)

A study of the frequency and placing of the term "Lord" throughout Paul's epistles leaves no question what occupied Paul's thinking. If we go back to the Gospel accounts, we hear the resurrected Jesus confirming his Lordship when he said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18)

2. Paul's training as a Pharisee gave him the added advantage of believing in the Resurrection, identically as Jesus taught and demonstrated. Paul's insight into the resurrection is remarkable, and possibly attributed to no other source than the revelations apparently given to him. (2 Corinthians 12:7) Jesus said that, "all who are in their graves would hear his voice and come out, those who lived righteously to a resurrection of life and those who have done evil to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29)

Paul further develops Jesus' resurrection teaching, hinging his entire preaching ministry on the Resurrection of Jesus, saying in effect that if Jesus' wasn't resurrected, we're all believing a myth. (1 Corinthians 12:15-23) In verse 20 Paul asserts what the gospel accounts tell, that: "But now Christ is risen from the dead..." Paul does not, however, retell what Mark, Matthew, John and Luke record on this, nor does he quote Jesus' verbatim. This conspicuous absence nonetheless doesn't detract from Paul's intensity – Paul is hesitant, even evasive, in detailing the

"revelations" he apparently experienced that apparently gave him insight into the resurrection.

3. Justification recurs throughout Paul's writings, with "justified" and "justification" occurring some 24 times in his epistles. No better is this illustrated than when Paul said, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1) Paul showed that of and by ourselves we are as good as dead; only through Jesus' sacrifice are we "justified" in the eyes of God. The penalty of sin has been paid by Jesus in our stead. John 3:16 states that no one who believes "shall perish", because of what God did to demonstrate His love. Paul asserts that no one is justified by their works or law keeping. (Romans 3:20) John further supports justification by belief when, in writing of Jesus, said, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (John 1:20) This is echoed in Paul's statement, when he wrote, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

4. Although Jesus never used the word "grace", John did when he wrote of Jesus, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of

Continued on next page

grace and truth.” (John 1:14) Paul is renowned for his “grace and peace” greetings from the Lord Jesus Christ that appear in practically all his salutations and some of his benedictions. In fact, the word “grace” appears some 90 times throughout Paul’s epistles.

Perhaps best known is Paul’s assertion that, “For by grace you have been saved through faith...” (Ephesians 2:8) Here, grace, salvation/justification and faith are interwoven. Another related passage in this sense is Paul’s assurance of, “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:24) The reader will note that many of Paul’s themes are interwoven and inter-related, and one cannot be isolated from the other.

FAITH

5. Faith here comes to mind. Faith is believing God, and showing the evidence of that belief through action. If Paul is the author of Hebrews (as many scholars believe), then nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the words: “Without faith it is impossible to please Him...” (Hebrews 11:6) Hebrews 11 is known as the faith chapter, and like classic Paul (as in Romans), leans heavily on the Old Testament scriptures to make his point. Jesus often illustrated the need for faith (Luke 18:8), and spoke favourably to those who demonstrated it.

To the woman who was healed, Jesus said, “Your faith has made you well.” (Matthew 9:23)

The word “faith” occurs some 169 times in Paul’s writings, thrice in one verse: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’” (Romans 1:17)

There is no discordance between Jesus and Paul. Some scholars have suggested that the Pauline influence and contribution to the New Testament canon undermines not only the other apostles, but also Jesus. Yet, in the above few examples, we see that Paul submitted entirely to the Lordship of Christ; his Christ theology must not be confused with the complexity and method of Paul’s writing and person.

By John Klassek



What would you expect if God came to live among us?



That He could heal the sick, raise the dead, control the winds and waves, read minds, fulfil ancient prophecies about Himself and do all kinds of miracles?

That He would show amazing love toward us, and that the day He blessed and set apart as holy from the beginning, (Saturday Sabbath Gen. 2:1-3) would hold special significance to Him?

Don’t you think it’s interesting that all of the above has only ever been fulfilled in the life of one person – Can you guess who?

This is why the Bible says of Jesus:

“He is the image of the invisible God ... For by Him all things were created that are on heaven and that are on earth ... And He is before all things ... For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell and by him to reconcile all things to Himself ... having made peace by the blood of His cross”

(Colossians 1:15-20)

By David Kidd



WE ARE MIRACLES!

It's not hard to find Christians who say they have never seen a miracle – and you might notice they sound just a little unhappy.

How come? What do our fellow Christians call a miracle anyway?

Ask them, and they might start naming miracles they have read about in their Bibles: Jesus healing great numbers of sick people, Jesus raising the dead back to life, Jesus walking on water, Jesus turning water into wine. They might also mention Peter and other apostles performing many miracles among crowds of people, only to conclude, "But that was way back then, I would like to see a miracle now – just one will do."

Fair enough. Let's look for a miracle now – and when we find one, will we believe that it is a miracle?

Could anyone see a miracle and not believe? Don't worry, you may not be the first one.

miracle of all time, the resurrected Jesus. When Thomas finally saw Him, Jesus said something that reaches right down through the ages into our time:

"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

The number of 'those who have not seen and yet have believed' includes every Christian since the spectacular beginning of the Church on the Day of Pentecost almost two thousand years ago. And Jesus said they – including all of us now – are blessed.

The word 'blessed' may also be translated as 'happy'. Believers are happy people.

Then we read where Jesus appeared to His disciples again, this time standing on the shore by the Sea of Tiberias early in the morning, yet somehow His disciples did not realise it was Him.

He called out to them, *"Friends, haven't you any fish?"* "No," they answered. He said, *"Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."* When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. (John 21:5-6)



When the disciples did as Jesus told them, they found He had performed another miracle. Here might be a lesson for all of us: when we obey Jesus, we become aware of the miracles He does.

Then one of the disciples recognised Jesus, and when Peter finally dragged the net ashore, they witnessed another miracle: *"It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn."* (John 21:11)

When John wrote what we call the fourth Gospel, he used a Greek word which has been translated variously in our English Bibles.

We just read in John 21:6 *"to haul the net in"*, and in verse 11 *"and dragged the net ashore"*. Both words, "haul" and "dragged" are translated from the same Greek word.

In John 6:44 we read where Jesus said, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."* "Draws him", same Greek word.

In John 12:32 Jesus said, *"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."* "Will draw", same Greek word again. Verse 33 *"He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die."*

When we line the use of this word up in a sequence, God seems to show us how He creates Christians and builds His Church through a number of miracles:

Continued on the next page

1. The Father draws him, or her.
2. Jesus' death on the cross will make it possible for all men to be eventually drawn to Him.
3. When the disciples did what Jesus had told them to do, the fish were so many they were unable to haul the net in. Likewise, when we as Jesus' disciples do as we are told, He will give a miraculously plentiful increase. Recorded in Matthew 4:19 and in Mark 1:17, we read these words to His disciples to be, *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*
4. Even though the net, when dragged ashore, contained such a great number of large fish, it was not torn – another miracle. If you want to liken the net that never tears to the Church that Jesus built, here is what He had to say about Himself: *"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."* (Matthew 16:18)

The Church is made up of people who are living miracles, which the New Testament calls saints or holy ones.

When we meet a fellow human being who is being drawn by God, we are seeing yet another miracle in the making.

By Ernie Klassek

Scripture quotations were taken from the New International Version.

The Greek verb ελκω in the Gospel of John

John 6:44 ελκυση, to be drawn by the Father
 John 12:32 ελκυσω, Jesus: will draw to myself
 John 21:6 ελκυσαι, to drag the net
 John 21:11 ελκυθεν, to be hauled in by the net



You're Always There for Me

When the world comes crashing in
 And chaos rules my mind,
 I turn my heart to you, Lord,
 And pure, sweet peace I find.

You lift me out of trouble
 You comfort me in pain;
 You nourish, heal and cleanse me,
 Like cool, refreshing rain.

In times of joy and bliss,
 When things are going right,
 You lift me even higher,
 And fill me with delight.

You listen to my prayers;
 You hear my every plea;
 I'm safe because I know
 You're always there for me.

By Joanna Fuchs

This Christian poem tells of Jesus' never-failing support for us and communicates the sense of peace and safety that comes with knowing Jesus Christ.



The Youth Section

Creation

Children's Quiz



- 1) Before the creation of the world as we know it, the earth:
a. *was flat* b. *was bright* c. *was empty* d. *was inhabited*
- 2) How many days did it take for God to complete creating the world?
a. *5* b. *6* c. *7* d. *8*
- 3) On the first day, God saw that the light was:
a. *bright* b. *too dim* c. *hot* d. *good*
- 4) In order to give light to the world, on the fourth day God created how many great lights?
a. *one* b. *two* c. *three* d. *four*
- 5) On which day were oxen created?
a. *6* b. *3* c. *5* d. *2*
- 6) God called the dry ground _____; and the gathering together of the waters he called _____.
a. *sand/ocean* b. *dust/lakes* c. *land/sea* d. *earth/tides*
- 7) Man was created on what day?
a. *2* b. *4* c. *6* d. *7*



The answers are in Genesis 1 : 1 - 29



The Centre of the Bible

Q: What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalms 117

Q: What is the longest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalms 119

Q: Which chapter is in the centre of the Bible?

A: Psalms 118

Fact: There are 594 chapters before Psalms 118

Fact: There are 594 chapters after Psalms 118
Add these numbers up and you get 1188.

Q: What is the centre verse in the Bible?

A: Psalms 118:8

Q: Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?

The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives and that they want to be in the centre of His will, just send them to the centre of His Word!

Psalms 118:8

"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."

Now isn't that odd how this worked out (or was God in the centre of it)?

When things get tough, always remember... Faith doesn't get you around trouble, it gets you through it !!

Author Unknown



The Origin and Change of the Sabbath

Do you know how the change in the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday came about?

Do you know when this change occurred?

This booklet demonstrates that the Sabbath heritage originated at Creation, that the seventh-day Sabbath can be identified throughout various periods of human history, and that the Sabbath has never lost its identity or purpose as a day of rest and worship.

Please send for the free booklet today!

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