DEW

ARABIA

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

EDITION TWO



A magazine with refreshing droplets of Gods word to Christians in the UAE.

DEW ARABIA



A PRAYER

THE GIVER

Creator, Upholder and Proprietor of all things, we cannot escape from Thy presence and control, nor do we desire to do so. Our privilege is to be under the agency of Thy omnipotence, righteousness, wisdom, patience, mercy and grace; for Thou art Love with more than parental affection.

We admire Thy goodness, stand in awe of Thy power, abase ourselves before Thy purity. It is the discovery of Thy goodness alone that can banish our fear; allure us into Thy presence, help us to bewail and confess our sins. We review our past guilt and are conscious of present unworthiness.

We bless Thee that Thy steadfast love and attributes are essential to our happiness and hope; Thou hast witnessed to us Thy grace and mercy, in the bounties of nature, in the fullness of Thy providence, in the revelations of Scripture, in the gift of Thy Son, in the proclamation of the gospel. Make us willing to be saved in Thy own way, perceiving nothing in ourselves but all in Jesus.

Help us not only to receive Him but to walk in Him, depend upon Him, commune with Him, follow Him as dear children, imperfect, but still pressing forward, not complaining of labour, but valuing rest, not murmuring under trials, but thankful for our state.

The Valley of Vision

by Arthur Bennett

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Photo by Neom - Saudi Arabia

BELOVED READER,

We praise God for the wonderful response to the first edition of Dew Arabia across the UAE, Oman and beyond. Thank you for reading with such enthusiasm, your encouragements, and for your many thoughtful inquiries about a second edition.

In this edition, the sovereignty of God is our central theme. It is a big word and an even bigger truth to grasp. Though many aspects of God's sovereignty remain unknown to us, we can still take joy in this core attribute of His character.

Many question the existence of God when they encounter pain, sickness, job loss, loneliness, abuse, or other forms of brokenness. But what questions are biblical to ask when we see evil? How do we respond to our brokenness in faith? And how has God responded?

We are excited to share a variety of writings on God's sovereignty and encourage you to bring your questions to Scripture in faith, knowing that God is all good and in control of all things. A mystery to rest in and rejoice over.

In His service,
The Dew Arabia Editorial Team

Photo by Derick McKinney

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Theology

SOVEREIGN AND FREE

Understanding Compatibilism

"The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble." Proverbs 16:4

How has God ordained the very fabric of reality? What does it truly mean for God to be God? Is He a distant observer, passively watching history unfold-or the sovereign Lord *"who upholds all things by the word of His power"* (Hebrews 1:3) **?**

Scripture leaves no doubt: the living God is intimately involved in every detail of creation. Every atom, every heartbeat, every decision exists within His sovereign decree. To be God is not merely to possess power, but to exercise it perfectly, purposefully, and lovingly.

This truth—God's absolute rule over all things—defines His very nature. It deepens our awe, strengthens faith, and provides comfort in suffering. One of the clearest ways the Bible reveals this sovereignty is through Compatibilism: the teaching that God's complete sovereignty coexists with genuine human responsibility. God ordains all that comes to pass, including voluntary human decisions, yet without violating human agency or becoming the author of sin.

We act freely when we act according to our desires and nature. Yet because our nature has been marred by sin (Genesis 3; Roman 5:12-14), we willingly choose what is contrary to God—revealing our need for His redeeming grace. Compatibilism affirms that even in our rebellion, God remains sovereign; and even in His sovereignty, our choices remain meaningful.

Scriptural Foundation

Few passages capture this better than Genesis 50:20. When Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they committed real evil. Yet years later, Joseph could say: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive."
In one sentence, Joseph acknowledges both moral evil and divine purpose. His brothers' intentions were wicked, but God's plan was redemptive. Evil and good operated simultaneously, yet God's design prevailed.

A similar truth unfolds in the story of Pharaoh. God commands Moses to demand Israel's release, but Pharaoh hardens his heart. Scripture records both divine and human agency:

> "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh" (Exodus 9:12).
> "Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not listen" (Exodus 8:15).

Both statements are true. Pharaoh freely chose rebellion, and God sovereignly ordained that rebellion for His own purposes. Paul later explains, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you" (Romans 9:17).

God's hardening is not arbitrary; it is a righteous judgment, allowing Pharaoh to act according to his own corrupt desires. God does not inject evil—He simply removes restraint, revealing what already lies in the human heart (Romans 1:24).

These examples are not contradictions but revelations. As Proverbs 21:1 declares, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will." God's sovereignty and human choice are not competing forces but complementary realities woven into His providential rule.

Compatibilism in Redemptive History

Throughout Scripture, God's sovereignty operates through human agency—never against it. In Job, Satan afflicts the righteous man only by divine permission. "Behold, all that he has is in your hand," God says, setting boundaries even for the adversary (Job 1:12). The calamities that follow—fire, wind, disease—come ultimately under God's sovereign oversight. Job responds not with blame but with worship:

> "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The narrator affirms, "In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong" (Job 1:21–22). Even in suffering, Job recognizes a wise and purposeful hand behind every trial.

This same divine orchestration appears across history. God raised up Nebuchadnezzar to judge Judah, yet held him accountable for his pride. The humbled king would later confess:

> "He does according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; none can stay His hand" (Daniel 4:35).

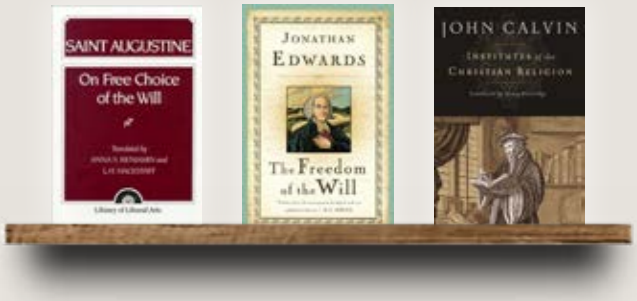
Centuries later, God called Cyrus, a pagan ruler, His "anointed" (Isaiah 45:1), appointing him to restore Israel from exile—"though you do not know Me," God said. Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance and Cyrus's benevolence were both real, yet both served divine purposes.

From Job's afflictions to the decrees of kings, the pattern is constant: God's sovereignty governs human freedom without nullifying it.

Sovereignty in Seeming Chaos

One of the most striking illustrations of providence appears in 1 Kings 22, when the wicked King Ahab disguises himself to escape a prophecy of death. Amid the battle, Scripture records:

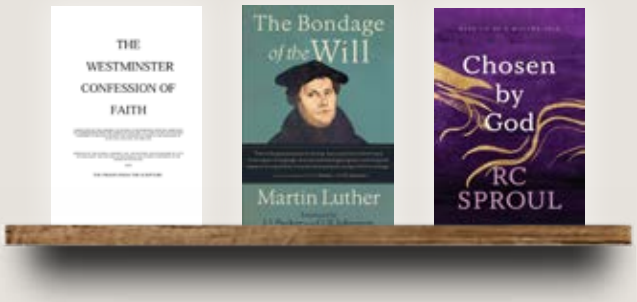
Recommended Books



On the Free Choice of the Will
Augustine of Hippo

The Freedom of the Will
Jonathan Edwards

Institutes of the Christian Religion
John Calvin



Confession of Faith
Westminister

The Bondage of the Will
Martin Luther

Chosen by God
R.C. Sproul



Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility
D.A. Carson

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God
J.I. Packer

Providence
J. Piper

> "A certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armour and the breastplate."

An arrow loosed "at random" fulfils God's word precisely. What seems like chance is in truth divine precision.

> "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:33).

There is no coincidence in God's world. His will is not merely general but detailed—down to the path of an arrow. Ahab's disguise failed, but God's decree stood firm.

The Cross: The Pinnacle of Compatibilism

Nowhere do God's sovereignty and human responsibility meet more profoundly than at the cross of Christ. Jesus Himself foretold His suffering:

> "The Son of Man must suffer many things ... and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31).

His death was no tragic accident. Isaiah had prophesied, "It was the will of the Lord to crush Him" (Isaiah 53:10). Yet the agents of His death—Judas, the priests, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers—acted freely and wickedly. Their guilt was real. The apostle Peter declared both truths side by side:

> "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23).

Later, the church prayed: "They were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus ... to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:27–28).

At Calvary, the mystery becomes magnificent. God ordained the death of His Son, yet those who carried it out did so willingly and are held accountable. Here is Compatibilism in its highest form: divine sovereignty and human guilt converging to accomplish a unique redemption.

The cross is not only the centre of salvation—it is the supreme display of providence. What humanity meant for evil, God meant for eternal good.

What Compatibilism Does *Not* Mean

Whenever we affirm God's sovereignty, we must be careful about what we deny. Compatibilism is not determinism (which erases moral freedom) or fatalism (which renders choice meaningless). Scripture teaches neither.

It does <u>not</u> mean:

- That God causes sin directly
- That human freedom is an illusion
- That moral responsibility is meaningless
- That prayer, evangelism, and decision-making are pointless

Rather, it means God ordains all things—including human choices—through secondary causes, without violating the reality of those choices. ▷

Five clarifications summarize the biblical position:

God Is Not the Author of Sin
His holiness is untarnished; He never tempts anyone to evil (James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Habakkuk 1:13).

Human Choices Are Real and Morally Significant
We think, will, and act—and will answer for those actions (Romans 2:6; Proverbs 16:9).

God Ordains Through Secondary Causes
His sovereignty includes, rather than excludes, human agency (Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23).

Sovereignty Is Not Fatalism
God's control gives meaning to our labour, not futility (1 Corinth. 15:58).

Mystery, Not Contradiction
God's ways surpass comprehension but not reason (Romans 11:33).

We are not puppets but image-bearers—real actors in a divinely written story. Our decisions have consequences, and yet our Father reigns over all, turning even evil toward His good purposes.

Why Is This So Hard?

Why is this doctrine so hard to accept? First, because we crave autonomy. We want to be the captains of our souls. Compatibilism humbles us by showing that true freedom exists not in independence from God but in harmony with His will.

> "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

Second, we stumble over mystery. We prefer neat formulas, but divine providence defies simple logic. Moses reminded Israel, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God" (Deuteronomy 29:29). Paul could only exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33).

Some truths are too vast to dissect; they must inspire worshiped, not merely explained.

Finally, we struggle because of suffering. It can feel unbearable to affirm God's control when pain seems senseless. Yet the Bible never apologizes for divine sovereignty—it presents it as our deepest comfort. Joseph's words to his brothers remain the banner of providence:

"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." (Genesis 50:20)

If God could turn betrayal, imprisonment, and a cross into instruments of redemption, we can trust that no sorrow lies outside His redemptive design.

Compatibilism is not a cold abstraction—it is a window into the heart of God. It assures us that nothing in creation, from the schemes of kings to the choices of common people, from suffering to salvation itself, falls outside His wise and loving rule.

In this truth we find both humility and hope: humility, because all things depend on Him; and hope, because His purposes cannot fail. The God who works all things "according to the counsel of His will" is the same God who promises to make all things new.

When our world feels uncertain, when our own choices falter, we rest in the God who is both sovereign and good—Whose power never cancels human meaning but redeems it for His glory. ■

This article is an edited version of the original by **Michael Franco Smit** - Elder in Abu Dhabi, Teacher & Author.
Published on **The Gospel Network** - tgnghana.org



Reflective Questions

1. When you face a situation you can't control, what are some of your responses? Tick all that apply. Which ones do you think are Biblical responses?

   - ☐ I panic and worry!
   - ☐ I get upset with God or the people involved.
   - ☐ I look for comforts like food / cigarettes / ...
   - ☐ I will work hard to control it my way.
   - ☐ I will try to avoid this from happening again.
   - ☐ I distract myself, hide or ignore it to feel better.
   - ☐ I ask family and friends for advice.
   - ☐ I pray expecting God to solve it quickly.
   - ☐ I pray for wisdom / guidance / trust / joy in Him.
   - ☐ I bring my fear and pain to God, knowing He hears me, He is in control and trust He is good.
   - ☐ I share my burdens with Christian friends.

2. How does the truth that your prayers, efforts and labour is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58) encourage you in a specific task or relationship you are struggling with right now?

3. Is there a current hardship where you need to believe, like Joseph (Genesis 50:20), that what others (or life) meant for evil, God can mean for good?

Colophon

Dew Arabia is an independent publication dedicated to the Christian community in the UAE. Its mission is to deepen Christians' engagement with Scripture through thoughtfully selected content and to provide a platform for local Christian authors to share their writings.

Dew Arabia is named to represent the life-giving droplets of God's word to Christians just as dew brings life to the desert's dry expanse.

Distribution
For private and church circulation only.

Publication Frequency
A limited number of editions are released each year. Every edition is created to be a collector's item—something to be kept, re-read, or shared for encouragement.

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Every future date mentioned in this publication presumes Deo volente - God willing.

Friends Recommend



Word Up!

Word Up is a scripture-based memory card game designed to learn Bible verses in a fun, interactive way. With simple rules and engaging designs, it's perfect for churches, kids and families.

From a classic memory match (if the scripture reference and verse match: keep the pair!) to a fast-paced verse recall and team challenges, there's a version for every age and setting!

Let's learn scripture! Email **info@arrowandanchor.org**



A bruised reed He will not break— Isaiah 42:3

by Reena Thomas

Social Media Highlights

Obeying God wrongly?

"IT IS POSSIBLE ...

... to obey God, not for God's sake but for your sake." - *Tim Keller*

Who is truly bigger: your problems and sin, or God? As you look at this spiral galaxy, zoom out and remember the infinite God—limitless in power, presence, knowledge, and supremely good!

Do you shove God away during your hardest times? Do you try to solve the problem of God's sovereignty at the moment of crisis?

If God cannot govern your moments of crisis, He cannot govern the rest of your life. - *John Piper*

Podcast

LIVING WATERS

Explore pressing questions through sound theology and apologetics—served with plenty of humour.

the greatest LOVE STORY

A LOVE THAT TRANSFORMS

There is a reason that all the best stories end with a bride and groom living happily ever after: it is the one true story, the joyous news that God, in His infinite love, sent Jesus, to restore the brokenness between us and God. At the end, Jesus Christ will fulfil His vows to His church, "All that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you."

God's love: *Scripture tells us that "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This divine love is the foundation of all hope and the model for every marriage.*

Our need: *Unfortunately, we all fall short of God's glory as sin separates us from Him, leaving us in need of redemption (Romans 3:23).*

Christ's sacrifice: *Jesus, God in flesh, took upon Himself the penalty of our sins. Through His sacrifice, He offers forgiveness, new and everlasting life with God.*

Our response: *By grace alone, through faith in Christ, we are saved. This free gift is received through repentance, turning from sin, and trusting in Jesus as Lord and Saviour (Ephesians 2:8–9).*

"We love because He first loved us." –1 John 4:19

Share with us!

Reach out to us at contact@dewarabia.com

Volunteer with us!

Become part of our volunteer team and support through **Hindi** and **Tagalog proofreading**!

Share your creativity!

Have you embroidered your favourite Bible verse?

Has your child made a beautiful craft at Sunday school?

Do you enjoy calligraphy, taking pictures or getting creative in other ways?

Share your creations with us so we can encourage one another!

Send your well wishes!

Looking to congratulate someone, share your prayers and wishes or express a heartfelt 'Thank You'? Send it in to be featured in *Dew Arabia*!

Scripture Reading

Job 38: 1-18

ENGLISH

The Lord answers Job

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.

4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?

12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, 13 that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? 14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. 15 From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.

16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? 18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?

Declare, if you know all this." (ESV)

ARABIC

١فاجاب الرب ايوب من العاصفة وقال

٢من هذا الذي يظلم القضاء بكلام بلا معرفة.
٣اشدد الآن حقويك كرجل. فاني اسألك فتعلمني.

٤اين كنت حين اسست الارض. أخبر ان كان عندك فهم. ٥من وضع قياسها. لانك تعلم. او من مدّ عليها مطمارا. ٦على اي شيء قرّت قواعدها او من وضع حجر زاويتها٧عندما ترنمت كواكب الصبح معا وهتف جميع بني الله. ٨ومن حجز البحر بمصاريع حين اندفق فخرج من الرحم.

٩اذ جعلت السحاب لباسه الضباب قماطه. ١٠وجزمت عليه حدّي واقمت له مغاليق ومصاريع. ١١وقلت الى هنا تاتي ولا تتعدى وهنا تتخم كبرياء لججك

١٢هل في ايامك امرت الصبح. هل عرّفت الفجر موضعه. ١٣ليمسك باكناف الارض فينفض الاشرار منها. ١٤تتحول كطين الخاتم وتقف كانها لابسة. ١٥ويمنع عن الاشرار نورهم وتنكسر الذراع المرتفعة.١٦هل انتهيت الى ينابيع البحر او في مقصورة الغمر تمشّيت. ١٧هل انكشفت لك ابواب الموت او عاينت ابواب ظل الموت. ١٨هل ادركت عرض الارض.

اخبر ان عرفته كله. (سميث فان دايك)

HINDI

1 **फिर यहोवा ने तूफान में से अय्यूब को उत्तर दिया। परमेश्वर ने कहा:**

2 "यह कौन व्यक्ति है जो मूर्खतापूर्ण बातें कर रहा है?" 3 अय्यूब, तुम पुरुष की भाँति सुदृढ़ बनो। जो प्रश्न मैं पूछूँ उसका उत्तर देने को तैयार हो जाओ।

4 अय्यूब, बताओ तुम कहाँ थे, जब मैंने पृथ्वी की रचना की थी?
यदि तू इतना समझदार है तो मुझे उत्तर दे। 5 अय्यूब, इस संसार का विस्तार किसने निश्चित किया था? किसने संसार को नापने के फीते से नापा? 6 इस पृथ्वी की नींव किस पर रखी गई है?
किसने पृथ्वी की नींव के रूप में सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण पत्थर को रखा है? 7 जब ऐसा किया था तब भोर के तारों ने मिलकर गया
और स्वर्गदूत ने प्रसन्न होकर जयजयकार किया।

8 "अय्यूब, जब सागर धरती के गर्भ से फूट पड़ा था, तो किसने उसे रोकने के लिये द्वार को बन्द किया था। 9 उस समय मैंने बादलों से समुद्र को ढक दिया और अन्धकार में सागर को लपेट दिया था (जैसे बालक को चादर में लपेटा जाता है।) 10 सागर की सीमाऐं मैंने निश्चित की थी और उसे ताले लगे द्वारों के पीछे रख दिया था। 11 मैंने सागर से कहा, 'तू यहाँ तक आ सकता है किन्तु और अधिक आगे नहीं। तेरी अभिमानी लहरें यहाँ तक रुक जायेंगी।'

12 "अय्यूब, क्या तूने कभी अपनी जीवन में भोर को आज्ञा दी है उग आने और दिन को आरम्भ करने की? 13 अय्यूब, क्या तूने कभी प्रात: के प्रकाश को धरती पर छा जाने को कहा है और क्या कभी उससे दुष्टों के छिपने के स्थान को छोड़ने के लिये विवश करने को कहा है

14 प्रात: का प्रकाश पहाड़ों व घाटियों को देखने लायक बना देता है।जब दिन का प्रकाश धरती पर आता है तो उन वस्तुओं के रूप वस्त्र की सलवटों की तरह उभर कर आते हैं। वे स्थान रूप को नम मिट्टी की तरह जो दबोई गई मुहर की ग्रहण करते हैं। 15 दुष्ट लोगों को दिन का प्रकाश अच्छा नहीं लगता क्योंकि जब वह चमचमाता है, तब वह उनको बुरे काम करने से रोकता है।

16 "अय्यूब, बता क्या तू कभी सागर के गहरे तल में गया है? जहाँ से सागर शुरु होता है क्या तू कभी सागर के तल पर चला है? 17 अय्यूब, क्या तूने कभी उस फाटकों को देखा है, जो मृत्यु लोक को ले जाते हैं? क्या तूने कभी उस फाटकों को देखा जो उस मृत्यु के अन्धेरे स्थान को ले जाते हैं?18 अय्यूब, तू जानता है कि यह धरती कितनी बड़ी है?
यदि तू ये सब कुछ जानता है, तो तू मुझको बता दे। (ERV)

TAGALOG

Ang Sagot ng Diyos kay Job

1 Pagkatapos nito, sumagot ang Diyos kay Job sa pamamagitan ng malakas na bagyo,

2 "Sino kang mag-aalinlangan sa aking kaalaman? Lalo lamang lumilitaw ang iyong kamangmangan. 3 Tumayo ka riyan at magpakalalaki, tanong ko'y sagutin, ikaw ay magsabi.

4 Nasaan ka nang likhain ko ang mundo? Kung talagang may alam ka, lahat ay sabihin mo. 5 Sino ang nagpasya tungkol sa lawak nito? Sino ang sumukat, alam mo ba ito?

6 Sino ang may hawak ng mga haligi ng mundo? Sino ang naglagay ng mga panulukang-bato? 7 Noong umagang iyon, ang mga bituin'y nag-awitan, at mga nilalang sa langit, sa tuwa'y nagsigawan.

8 "Sino ang humarang sa agos ng dagat, nang mula sa kalaliman ito'y sumambulat? 9 Tinakpan ko ang dagat ng ulap na makapal, at binalutan ito ng kadiliman. 10 Ang dagat ay nilagyan ko ng hangganan, upang ito'y manatili sa likod ng mga harang. 11 Sinabi kong sila'y hanggang doon na lang, at huwag lalampas ang alon na naglalakihan.

12 Job, nakalikha ka ba kahit isang bukang-liwayway? 13 Ang daigdig ba ay naigawa mo ng tanglaw, upang ang masasama'y mabulabog sa taguan?

14 Malinaw na gaya ng tatak sa putik, nang makulayan ay tumingkad gaya ng damit. 15 Masasamang tao'y nasisilaw sa liwanag ng araw, sa paggawa ng karahasan sila'y napipigilan.

16 "Nakapunta ka na ba sa mga bukal ng karagatan? Ang sahig ng dagat ay iyo bang nalakaran? 17 May nakapagturo na ba sa iyo sa mga pintuan na pasukan tungo sa madilim na daigdig ng mga patay? 18 Alam mo ba kung gaano kalaki itong mundo?

Sumagot ka kung alam mo. (MBBTAG)



Scriptural Reflections

WILL JUDAS ISCARIOT GO TO HEAVEN?

Judas Iscariot remains one of the most infamous figures in all of Scripture—his name, once meaning "praise," forever tainted by treachery. Though the name Judas was common in Jesus' day, even shared by one of His half-brothers, no parent today would name their child Judas.

After spending the night in prayer, Jesus chose twelve men to be His apostles—including *"Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor"* (Luke 6:12–16). Out of the countless followers, Jesus deliberately chose a man who would later betray Him to be killed.

Not much is known about Judas before this moment, but the all-knowing Son of God was not unaware of whom He was choosing. Later, during the Last Supper, Jesus plainly revealed His betrayer, saying, *"One of you will betray Me,"* and identified Judas by giving him the dipped morsel of bread (John 13:21–26). Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, yet He chose him to be one of his disciples—raising the profound question of whether Judas acted freely or was set up by God?

God Is Sovereign And Man Is Responsible

In His sovereignty, God had ordained that Jesus would be crucified, and for that to happen, someone would have to betray Him. Therefore, if all this had been predetermined by God, should Judas be held responsible for doing what God had ordained? The answer is an emphatic yes—that is exactly what Jesus says in Matthew 26:24:

> *"The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."*

In this verse, Jesus does not give Judas a pass for the wicked part he played in His death.

On the Last Day, before the Great Judgment Throne, Judas will not be excused on the grounds that he was only carrying out the will of God any more than the soldiers who crucified Him would be pardoned for contributing to the salvation of man. In his sermon to the Jews in Acts 2:23, Peter said of Jesus that He was

> *"delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, [and] crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."*

According to this verse, the men who killed Jesus were ▶

not neutral people carrying out God's orders. Peter describes them as lawless men. Their actions were consistent with who they were at heart—lawless. In the same way, Judas Iscariot was not a neutral agent or a robot with no control over his actions. Even though not much is written about him in the Bible, the little we know helps us understand that he was not a neutral agent. His choices and actions were deeply influenced by his heart's posture toward God.

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire." (James 1:13-14)

A few days before the crucifixion of Christ, an incident is recorded in John 12 where Mary, the sister of Lazarus—who was raised from the dead by Jesus— *"took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair."* One of Jesus' disciples was not impressed with the apparent wastefulness of that action.

In verses 4–5 of chapter 12, John records:

> *"But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (he who was about to betray Him), said, 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"*

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John provides a very important commentary on Judas's supposed care for the poor. He writes in verse 6:

> *"He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it."*

Judas walked in close proximity to the Messiah, yet his heart was very far from Him. His love for money was stronger than his love for the Saviour. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made it clear to His disciples that a person cannot serve both God and money. Picking up the same theme, Paul warned his readers to watch their lives closely because *"the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils"* (1 Timothy 6:10). Judas was not a robot on whom outside forces acted. He did not betray Jesus because it was his fate or destiny; he was fully responsible for his actions. He failed to heed the counsel of the wise man to guard his heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23).

What Does It Mean To Say Man Is Responsible?

The fact that man is responsible for his actions means on the Last Day no one can blame God for their evil actions—not Judas, not the chief priests and the Jews, not the lawless soldiers who killed Him, and definitely not any of us. The Bible is crystal clear that God is sovereign—He has the power, authority, and ownership to do whatever He chooses in creation. But it also teaches that man is responsible for his actions. God's sovereignty does not negate the responsibility of free moral agents.

That is why Judas Iscariot will not be able to use God's sovereignty as a crutch for his evil betrayal of Jesus. This is the truth James emphasizes when he says,

> *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."* (James 1:13–15)

James is clear in these verses that God cannot be held responsible for man's evil actions. He is holy and cannot be accused of orchestrating evil. Every evil act of man has its root in an evil desire in man's heart, which eventually leads to sin and death. However, man's evil actions do not take God by surprise. The free will of man does not work outside of God's control. That is why Joseph in Genesis 50:20 could say to his brothers, "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.*"

The truth of man's responsibility is crucial for judgment on the Last Day. We are told in Acts 17:31 that God has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness. It would be an injustice of the highest order if God were to condemn anyone for actions over which they had no control. But we know that will never be the case because God is the standard of justice and fairness. As Abraham retorted, *"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"* (Genesis 18:25). That is why Judas will be fully held responsible for betraying Jesus.

What Should Be Our Attitude Knowing That We Are Responsible For Our Actions?

The fact that you are responsible for your actions means you should seriously take to heart the words of the wise man in Proverbs 4:23: *"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."* Jesus made it even clearer when He said,

> *"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."* (Luke 6:45)

This means the heart is the real battlefield. What happens there determines the entire course of your life. Judas Iscariot did not stumble into sin. He did not betray Jesus by accident. It was his deep love for money above his affection for God that eventually led him to commit the unpardonable sin. James 1:14–15 provides the natural progression of sin:

> "*But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."*

Any victory over sin must first be won in the heart. Judas lost the battle in his heart long before he betrayed his Master. In Matthew 26:14–15 we read that it was Judas who initiated contact with the chief priests and asked,

> *"What will you give me if I deliver Him over to you?"*

Luke in his account (22:3–4) writes,

> *"Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them."*

John uses the same language as Luke:

> *"Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'What you are going to do, do quickly."* (John 13:27)

How was Satan able to enter Judas Iscariot, a man who lived in such close proximity to Jesus? It was because he failed to guard his heart. Even though he sat under the teaching of Jesus, his heart was left unattended. In Matthew 12:43–45, Jesus describes the process by which unclean spirits take residence in a person:

> *"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first."*

An unattended heart is an open door for the devil.

Guarding one's heart is a serious matter of life and death and must therefore engage all our attention and effort. Judas Iscariot left a place in his heart into which Satan was able to enter. In 1 Peter 5:8–9, the Apostle warned his readers to

> *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith."*

Throughout His three and a half years with them, Jesus reminded and warned His disciples to be watchful. Judas would not have become such an easy prey to the devil if he had heeded the words of his Master.

How Does Self-Watch Look Like?

There are three means of grace that come to mind as I think about self-watch as followers of Christ.

Abide in God's Word

The first means for self-watch is to let the word of Christ abide in you. In John 8:31, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him,

> *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples."*

Elsewhere in 2 John 8–9, we read,

> *"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."*

It is not enough to profess faith in Christ; you must abide in His teaching to be a true disciple.

Judas Iscariot sat under many teachings of Christ, but it is apparent the word of Christ did not abide in him.

The word of Christ abides in us when we internalize, trust, and obey its teachings, allowing it to transform our values, character, and actions. That is how we attend to our hearts and make no room for the devil. Judas Iscariot sat under many teachings of Christ, but it is apparent the word of Christ did not abide in him.
In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned His hearers,

> *"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."* (Luke 16:13)

In the end, it became clear through his actions which of the two masters Judas truly loved, as he betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

Perhaps you too are in a church where the word of God is preached faithfully, or you regularly read the Bible in your personal quiet times. But the most important question is whether the word you hear or read is abiding in you? You are abiding in God's Word if you take to heart its teachings and pray for His help to be a doer of what it says. Jesus likens those who put into practice what they hear to a wise man and calls foolish those who hear but do not practice what it says (Matthew 7:24–27).

Prayer

The second means of self-watch is prayer. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus had taken His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, and it was there that He impressed upon them the importance of prayer as a means of self-watch. Once in the garden, He asked them to remain at a designated place while He went a little farther to pray alone. When He came back after an hour or so, Peter and the rest of the disciples were fast asleep, and so in Matthew 26:40–41, He asked them,

> *"So, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation."*

It is important to note the reason Jesus gives for the call to watch and pray—it is so that they would not fall into temptation. What is striking about all this is that it appears Judas Iscariot was not present during this prayer time, because a few verses later, in 26:47, he was leading a great

crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders to arrest Jesus. While Jesus and the other disciples were out praying, Judas was pursuing what he loved above all else—money. A praying Christian is a watchman who keeps guard not only over his or her own soul but also over those of others.

In his book The Hidden Life of Prayer, David MacIntyre writes:

> *"The exalted Saviour ever lives to make intercession; and to His redeemed people He says, 'Tarry ye here, and watch with Me'* (Matt 26:38)*. There is a great work to be done in the hearts of men, there is a fierce battle to be waged with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. Demons are to be cast out, the power of hell to be restrained, the works of the devil to be destroyed. And in these things, it is by prayer above all other means that we shall be able to cooperate with the Captain of the Lord's host."*

A prayerless Christian is a careless soldier who has left the garrison of his heart unattended, and it is only a matter of time before the enemy swoops in and lays siege to his or her life.

A prayerless Christian is a careless soldier who has left the garrison of his heart unattended, and it is only a matter of time before the enemy swoops in and lays siege to his or her life. Judas Iscariot left his heart unattended, and it is not surprising Satan was able to enter and assume command of his life. How are you doing in your spiritual discipline of prayer? Do not be a Judas Iscariot who left his heart unattended.

Accountability

The final means of self-watch is accountability. I have always wondered what would have happened if Judas Iscariot had shared his struggle with the love of money with Peter or any of the other disciples. I believe he would have received help. Perhaps he was complacent and told himself it was not such a big deal, or he justified his stealing from the money bag as a small weakness. I do not know what his excuse or calculation was, but it eventually led him to commit the unpardonable offense.

Sin is deceitful, and that is why it is important to have other brothers and sisters in your life who love you enough to admonish and rebuke you when they see you on a destructive path. The writer of Hebrews says it best:

> *"Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin"* (Hebrews 3:12–13)

"The Christian life is personal, but it is definitely not private." In His supreme wisdom, God has designed the Christian life to be lived in community. There is no other way to thrive and flourish as a follower of Christ apart from living in a church community and being accountable to other believers who are on the same road to the Celestial City.

In His supreme wisdom, God has designed the Christian life to be lived in community. There is no other way to thrive and flourish as a follower of Christ apart from living in a church community and being accountable to other believers.

Just as in the jungle an isolated gazelle is often the lion's lunch, so the lone-ranger Christian is easy prey for the devil. The Bible knows nothing of a lone-ranger Christian! The road to heaven is so arduous and fraught with tribulation that it cannot be travelled alone. What if Judas Iscariot had shared his struggles with the love of money with another disciple?

And So, Will Judas Iscariot Go to Heaven?

The Bible does not explicitly say Judas Iscariot will go to hell; however, there is enough biblical data to warrant the conclusion that he was unconverted and will therefore not make it to heaven (Matthew 26:24; John 17:12).

However, as interesting as knowledge of Judas's fate on the Last Day would be, it is not the most important question. God has fixed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness, and that judgment has been committed to Jesus Christ. Being the perfect Judge He is, He will execute judgment with complete justice and righteousness. We leave the fate of Judas to that perfect Judge.

But for us, the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:6, as he spoke about the Israelites in the wilderness, are of paramount importance:

> *"Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did."*

The things written about Judas Iscariot and his failure to guard his heart are the most important lessons we should take from his life.

We must let the word of Christ dwell in us richly as we keep watch over our souls through prayer and take full advantage of the community God has graciously given to us. It is true that God is sovereign over all things, but it is equally true that each of us is responsible for our own actions and will one day give account of every decision and action we take. May the life of Judas Iscariot serve as a warning for all of us.■

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by Kwesi Sena - *MATS, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, elder in Dubai.*

Reflective Questions

1. What three means of grace does the author mention to be watchful and protect your heart? Which one do you need to grow in?

   - ☐ Go to church
   - ☐ Prayer
   - ☐ Do good things
   - ☐ Accountability
   - ☐ Abiding in God's word: read it, study it, trust it, obey it and let it change you.

2. The author points out that the Bible teaches we are **responsible for our own actions** and that God will judge us one day. What temptation are you facing? What will you **pray for this week so you stand firm and resist it?**

3. You read that if you stay alone a Christian, it is dangerous to your soul. Do you treat a church community as necessary for your faith, or optional? **Do you have a Christian friend** you share your struggles with and let them help you?

   - ☐ No, I prefer to keep my personal life private and make my own choices. I do things my way.
   - ☐ Not yet. I would like a Christian friend who can help me live for God better. Let me ask someone from Church to read a Christian book with me!
   - ☐ Yes, by God's grace! I want to be more honest with my friend about what is in my heart.

4. How does it look like to abide in Gods Word? What happens when you don't? What will you do differently this week to abide more in the Bible?

Conversation Starter

At dinner with your family or when you're with Christian friends, ask: Who is a Christian friend you share your struggles with and ask for help? If you don't have one yet, who could you team up with? What book would you like to start reading together?

Recommended Books



Where was God when that happened?
Christopher Ash
Teaching on Sovereignty: God's goodness, power and the way He works.

The Enemy Within
Kris Lundgaard
Why do I keep on sinning? This book offers insight and hope for overcoming ongoing sin.

Side by Side
Edward Welch
Practical guidance how to improve your interaction and friendship with fellow Christians.

Enjoy your Prayer Life
Michael Reeves
Short, practical and encouraging advice on how to enjoy praying.

Suffering and the Sovereignty of God
J. Taylor & J. Piper
Encouraging book that applies Scripture to a realistic fallen world we all live in.

Rediscover Church
C. Hansen & J. Leeman
Is it really that important to gather each week?

The TRUTH about LIES

Series

LIE 2 I can't change

J. Mack Stiles



Photo by Joyuma - Berlin

DEW ARABIA

Scriptural Reflections

Tax collectors were despised in Jesus' day. Sell-outs to the occupying Roman forces, they took money from their own people and gave it to the enemy. They were notorious for charging too much and keeping the difference.

Money was certainly was everything for the chief tax collector in Jericho, meaning more to him than social acceptance or anything else. Perhaps Zacchaeus would sometimes lie in bed at night wondering about his chosen path, but then turn over with a sigh, knowing there was no going back. Society would never accept him, so he may as well enjoy his wealth. Money had a tight grip on Zacchaeus's heart.

There's a lot of truth in the lie "I can't change." When a person has made something their ultimate thing—be that money, sex, or success—all the willpower in the world won't topple that god. Some have obvious addictions which enslave. Others just can't shake that secret vice.

One morning there seemed to be a buzz outside:

> " Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him ... When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."
> (Luke 19:1–6)

ABOUT

The Truth about Lies

Series

Each series covers a chapter of the book 'The Truth about Lies' by J. Mack Stiles which focuses on an individual encountering Jesus from the New Testament. During each interaction Jesus exposes a lie that many of us have been brought up to believe as self-evident truth. Every exposé contains a common thread: The truth is more relevant to you than feels comfortable.

The encounters all come from one of four Bible books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. These accounts are biographies recording Jesus' time on earth—the same story captured from four unique perspectives. And what they show runs to the heart of what it means to be human. For you. For me. Jesus meets our greatest need.

Tax collectors were cheats and collaborators, yet the Son of God seeks out this lowlife to hang out with. It doesn't go down well with the crowd:

> " All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."
>
> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."
>
> Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. " (Luke 19:7-10)

Zacchaeus knew that without Jesus, "I can't change" is right. Oh, sure we can make minor adjustments for a time, but genuine changes only happen through Jesus. We are lost in our sin without him. Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Jesus explained further at another meal:

> " It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick ... I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. " (Matthew 9:12-13)

Jesus knows we can't sort our lives or shake off our sins. That's why he came. On my own, I can't change, but Jesus doesn't leave me on my own. ▷

The Truth: Jesus Can Turn My Life Around

My college friend Paul took great delight in packing up as many of his friends as would fit in his ancient VW bug and driving up and down the main street of Chattanooga, Tennessee, fists raised out the windows, shouting out in unison: "Repent!" to shocked pedestrians.

My friend Paul saw repentance as silly puritanism, a religious show of weeping and wailing following a fiery sermon. That's not what repentance is. Repentance is not merely cleaning up our act, getting our life together, or acting nice. There's nothing wrong with that, but it's not what repentance means.

Initially, the word repent was a military marching command that meant "about-face." To stop marching one way and start marching another. That's what it means in a spiritual sense, too. We turn from going our route and go God's way. Repentance and belief are two sides of the same coin. We repent of disbelief and turn to belief.

Josh was a tall, good-looking university student in Dubai. On a weekend retreat with a group of Christians, I gave a clumsy talk about the vast gulf between human sin and the purity of God. Despite my awkward presentation that night, the truth of the talk pierced Josh's heart like a splinter. He tossed and turned in his bed as his past haunted him.

Later he would tell me it was as if God was cataloguing his life of sin before his eyes. For the first time, he saw where he blamed others for hurtful things he had done. He saw where he'd justified himself for the pain he had caused others because of his selfishness and where he'd ignored his cruel actions toward others though those things had caused harm.

Finally, he said it was like a weight was crushing him in his bed. He had come to the place of "owning his sin." He saw that it was his sin, not anybody else's, and he could do nothing about it. Finally, the burden was so overwhelming that he rolled out of bed to his knees and asked for forgiveness from Christ.

Josh felt the burden lift; he knew of Christ's love and forgiveness for him. Over the years, I've watched Josh grow into the loving, kind person he is today, but that was not his trajectory until that evening. Josh repented that night.

The sharp edge of repentance requires us to face up to our sin. Until we do this, its hold over us is as strong as ever. We won't be able to change. The fact is, left to ourselves, we like our sin.

But it's a gift to see sin for its lie. That's because sin will eventually destroy you and those you love. So, repentance starts by seeing that you are a complete mess of sin and crying out from the heart to God for forgiveness. We own our sin and ask for mercy.

But we don't just wallow in self-pity. We go God's way. We stake our life on Jesus being who he says he is and doing what he promises to do.

Trusting our lives to him, knowing that one day we will see our faith become our reality. Faith, most of all, is vital to God. The Bible says that it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6). Our first parents disbelieved God in the garden, now we reject that path and turn in faith and belief back to him.

We don't "claw our way back into favour," not "get religious," not "be prissy and righteous." But we trust in Jesus. Every relationship requires trust. This is the relationship of all relationships. Faith is central.

The amazing thing is he begins to change us from the inside out. When we see Jesus for who he is, we start wanting and, with his help, experiencing change. God's Spirit works in us to transform us.

As Jesus' Spirit works in us, God replaces money in the top spot of our lives. Our hearts no longer worship sex but our Saviour. We reject success as our ultimate goal; instead knowing him becomes more important. Our hope is no longer in our looks, abilities, or relationships but in Jesus. We no longer call the shots in our life, but trust God to lead us.

Zacchaeus had a dramatic about-turn as he owned his sin of greed and immediately began giving his money away after turning to Jesus. The process will be slower for others, but it will be there.

A Decision Needs to be Made

My friends are always surprised when I say all genuine Christians are converts. You are not born a Christian. At some point, all Christians make the conscious decision to put their trust in Jesus and follow him as the Lord of their lives. I would explain to them that this move was not from one religion to another but from life to death, from darkness to light. Ultimately, this is God's work in us.

To become a Christian is a big decision and is potentially very costly. Those around you may be unhappy that you've rejected lies they still hold dear. But you'll gain so much more in Jesus than you will ever lose from the world.

Here is a summary of what needs to be believed to become a follower of Jesus:

- Our Creator God is holy, just, and loving. We are his people, made in his image. Yet, though we were once in perfect fellowship with God, we are now cut off from him. That separation of God and his people started with a rebellion by our ancestors.
- At root, the rebellion was our choice not to believe God and our attempt to make ourselves God instead. That treasonous rebellion failed, and the judgment was eternal death. The sin of rebellion passes from generation to generation like a curse: all people inherit sin and judgment. Our sinful nature makes it impossible for anyone to earn their way back to God.
- But even though we cannot buy or earn our way out of the curse, God in his love provided a way of escape back to a loving, forgiven relationship with him. The entire Bible prophesies, records, and explains the coming of a Saviour to do that.
- Jesus, fully God and fully man, lived a perfect life and became the perfect sacrifice to ransom us from the curse of sin and death. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins through his death on the cross. He rose from the grave, conquering death, and proving what he said was true. Through his death, he offers us forgiveness from sin and the right for any who turn to him to become children of God. His children will live forever with him.
- Jesus will never turn anyone away who hears this message of good news and responds. Jesus calls us to turn from an unbelieving lifestyle and the accompanying sin that entangles us and instead to put our complete trust and faith in him alone to rescue us. So, to become a follower of Jesus, we offer our lives to him in faith and commit to following him as Lord throughout our lives.

If you understand these essential points, you know enough to know Jesus. If you believe this, then you are a believer. You might find it helpful to pray a prayer like the following one-it's a personal response to the God who calls you to a personal relationship:

> My God and my Father,
>
> I recognize that you are God, and not me. I repent and am sorry for living without you-living as though I was the ruler of my life and not you.
>
> Please forgive me for not trusting you. Please forgive me for all my sins. I turn away from my sin and toward you. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to be my Saviour. Thank you for his perfect life and his sacrificial death to pay for my sins. Thank you that he rose again to give me new life. I trust in Jesus for my forgiveness, for my life, and for eternity.
>
> Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to walk with Jesus in obedience to him through this life.
>
> In Jesus' name,
>
> Amen.

The Bible is clear:

> " If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Mirroring Zacchaeus's experience, we too can know that "Today salvation has come to this house." ■

Extract from 'The Truth About Lies' by
J. Mack Stiles *- former pastor in Iraq, author and international speaker*
10 Publishing*, 2023 - a division of 10ofThose.com*

COLUMN

CHRIST THE LIVING WORD

"By the living, life-giving Word, by the Spirit of God, the Almighty created us and created everything," I told my wife.

The book of Genesis, chapter 1, verse 26, reads: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" "The Almighty God wanted mankind to be in His image, in His likeness!" my wife exclaimed in astonishment. She looked at me and then gazed at the sky with a puzzled expression, as if she saw it for the first time. "Yes! The Creator of the heavens and the earth! Yes, He is God," I replied. "This is His will and purpose!"

The words flowed, pulsating with life from the Lord God, the source of life, the Spirit who breathed life into Adam's nostrils after He had formed him from the dust of the ground, and he became a living creature. "That's amazing!" my wife exclaimed. "If anyone, in this vast universe, wants to know where he or she comes from, he or she only needs to read the word of God?!" "Yes," I replied, "if the Creator is known, then one will know where he or she comes from and what they are doing here on this tiny planet. Because the Creator speaks through His eternal, unchanging, forever reliable Word, in its divine origin and truth, and reveals Himself to men and women He created."

In my first blog, I shared that the first time we ever read the Holy Bible, we started on page one, verse one: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) And look at this now! In the Gospel of John, the first four verses read:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the Life was the light of men."*

"God says, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'" A strange silence fell upon us; we didn't utter a word, and time had stopped for a moment as we contemplated this verse in amazement.

God and His Word are inseparable! For He *is* the Word, and the Word is God *Himself*! Life is in this God; He is the source of life! How great is this light! The light that shone forth from life. It made us realize that the greatness and power of the Word ignites all of life. We felt we had been like the dead, and had just awakened from the pitch-black darkness of death, seeing the light that shines to infinity!

Truly, O God! How great You are, O God! All things were made through You, and without You there was not anything made that exists. There is no other God! You are the living God, forever and ever!

from Morocco

FOUAD T.

Poem



Be Still, O Soul

While He plans, the expanse He lays,
From the beginning to the final days;
He seeks not your help nor asks your view,
His wisdom reigns—forever true.

In power so vast, beyond your mind,
The cosmic plan was long designed.
Placing us where we are to stay,
Be still, O soul, trust His sovereign way.

The sea before us may rage,
The dust, monstrous in shape,
Yet He, our Lord, is Sovereign still,
Salvation stands by His perfect will.
Be still, O soul, and know that He is God

The Lord is enthroned, His work is complete,
Salvation's design no foe can defeat.
No war remains, the victory's done,
Faith alone—O weary and desperate soul.
Be still, O soul, let His grace now make you whole

The grand plan, in Christ, fulfilled!
At the cross—Salvation and Judgement beams
Revealing the great mystery
At this shore, the path of life and death revealed.
What He plans, He accomplishes.
A trusting soul, by grace is stilled

—

Temi Cotek - Church member in Rash Al Khaimah

Reflective Questions

1. Study Exodus 14:1-14. What purpose does God Himself give for leading the people into a vulnerable position (verse 1-4)? How does this challenge your perception of God's wisdom when He leads you *into* a difficult or "trapped" situation, rather than *away* from it?
2. What is the difference between a "passive" stillness (giving up) and the "active" stillness of faith (standing firm in trust while God works)? What does active stillness look like in prayer, praising God, and when discussing your struggle with others?
3. Meditate on verses like Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 55:8-9, or Jeremiah 17:7-8. Remind yourself, "His wisdom reigns—forever true; His thoughts are higher than your own, and His hidden things require no counsel."



Unconformed to Business

Stuart is something of a rarity in Dubai – and within our church community. With his distinguished grey hair, he stands out in a much younger crowd. Naturally, we were curious to hear about his journey in the UAE—how long he has been here, whether he was already a believer when he moved, and how his faith has grown within the region's distinctive business culture.

Words & Photography by Josien Bucarizza

Interview

Stuart leans back in his office chair on our Zoom call, smiling—as he so often does—and begins to reminisce about a Dubai that feels like another world altogether:

"My wife and I officially moved here in 1989. Dubai was very different in those days!"

In answering if he was already a believer when he moved here, Stuart goes back to his childhood. "Faith was always a part of my life. I was raised in an evangelical church, attending every Sunday.
After university, when I moved to London, I attended All Souls Church, Langham Place. That was John Stott's church," he explains. "The teaching there was unbelievable. So when I came to Dubai, I was really looking for that same depth of biblical preaching."

Was it easy to find a church in Dubai back then?

"There were not too many churches. We joined one in Oud Metha. After a few years I started attending the gatherings of a church with only about 50 people," he estimates, "in a modest small villa. I was deeply impressed by the teaching. Their focus was singular and unwavering: the gospel. It was, and remains, the only agenda."

Stuart continues with sharing how this small villa church eventually received its own building. "After much prayer, the government, in a wonderful gesture of kindness, granted us land. 'We have good news,' the Elders said, 'we have land. The bad news is, it's in Jebel Ali!" Stuart laughs at the memory. "Now, you have to remember that back then, Dubai ended at Safa Park, so Jebel Ali felt like the end of the moon!"

The UAE is known for its value of tolerance. From your experience, how has this become reality and shaped the ability to practice your faith?

"After we received the land, the church building still had to be built," Stuart notes. "I remember one of our church members, who owned a tile factory, donated the floor tiles. It was a significant sacrifice. To this day, every time I step into the church, my eyes are drawn to those tiles. They are a silent testament to that man's generosity—a tangible reminder that this church stands on the foundation of many such sacrifices. We are, truly, walking in the footsteps of others."

It is clear that Stuart enjoys talking about the UAE and the context in which the church has taken root here. "The concept of freedom of worship here is relatively recent, perhaps only the last 25 years. So, when you walk on those tiles, you should remember the sacrifices people made.

Our church building may be relatively new, but it stands in the legacy of the missionaries of the 1960s and '70s, who braved the desert, building hospitals, serving local people with midwifery. Imagine what life was like then, so completely different, such a harsh environment. The hardship they faced. And even earlier, in the 18th and 19th centuries, people endured so much to build what we are benefiting from today. That is intentionality."

Do you still see this intentionality in our church today?

"It is displayed before us weekly!" Stuart states without hesitation. "Consider our pastors, elders and each person who faithfully serves the fellowship each week." As an illustration of this, Stuart shares a memory that has never left him. "A colleague of mine, who started attending with me, once pointed out the pastor's car: a small, aging blue Honda (or Toyota). He said: 'I can't believe that man. He could have been wealthy, yet here he is, driving a small second-hand, rather old car!' That car was a visual image of intentionality. Look at any of our pastors, who have transplanted their entire families for years of service, and you see that commitment lived out. My respect for them is immense."

How has being surrounded by such purpose transformed you?

"I have a reference point in having such people around me," Stuart explains. "I remember at ▹

What books do you enjoy reading?

"My primary reading is the Bible, paired with D.A. Carson commentaries. I have just begun a one-year plan with John Stott's notes, and it has been incredible—a daily immersion in the Word. Books like C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity have also been very formative. Outside of faith, I am drawn to modern history and international studies, particularly of South Asia and the Middle East.

That said," Stuart confesses with a disarming honesty, "I must admit I struggle with dense, lengthy theological books. I find myself wading through and then skimming ahead, searching for the conclusion— 'Just tell me the outcome!' Perhaps it is my business background. I am a poor example of a theological reader, I am afraid. I have a shelf full of Christian books waiting for me, a quiet promise for when I retire."

the inauguration of the Church building the message was clear 'the church is not a social club. It is a light on a hill. It's a place where we can be directed, discipled corrected and uplifted – and where we can encourage others. But it is not a social club he warned" even though the temptation to reduce it to that is always there.

"My everyday prayer is: 'Don't let the business world conform me. Instead, let me be conformed to Your image, God.'"

Thinking for a moment, Stuart continues. "How has it changed me? Through the consistent gospel teaching and these real-life examples I have around me!

My everyday prayer is: 'Don't let the business world conform me. Instead, let me be conformed to Your image, God. Give me opportunities to speak into people's lives.' Because love isn't just a feeling; it's an action."

Stuart shares how this leads to a weekly self-audit: "What impact did I have? What sin must I confess? Church is really the pillar of my life! A stabilising force, keeping my life rooted in God and giving me strength. We are all so vulnerable!"

In what ways are you vulnerable?

Without a moment's pause, Stuart answers. "I'm flawed. In many ways," he shares openly. "In my work, for example, there have been decisions made without first consulting God. I followed my own will, and it was a mistake. Yet, God's faithfulness has been constant. I don't pray for business success, I pray that I may be a good witness for Him and that He would give me wisdom."

Is it a conscious choice to avoid praying for business success?

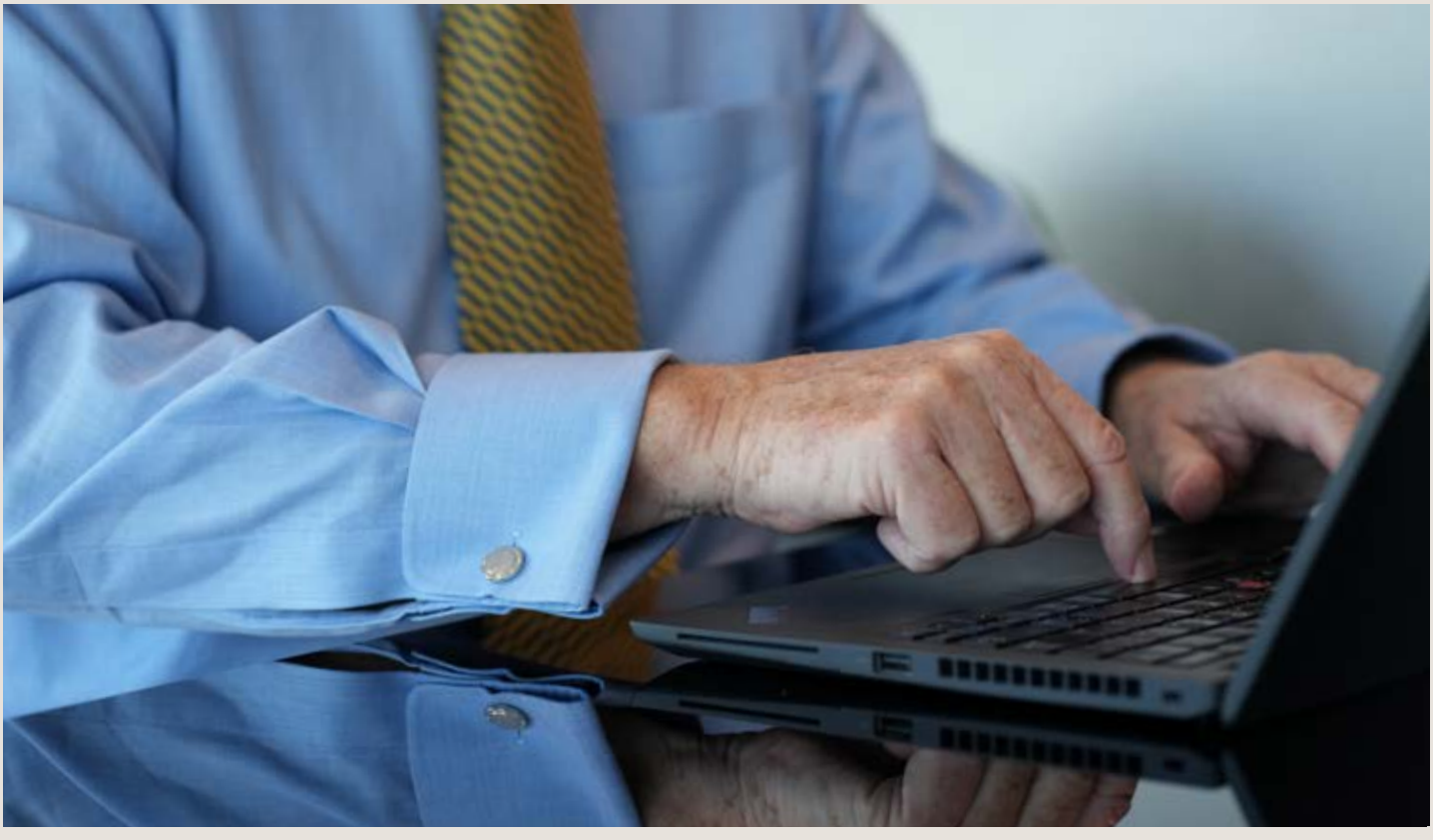
"Absolutely," Stuart affirms. "How could I possibly pray: 'Lord, make me rich'? No! My concern is for the people under my care. In difficult seasons, a kind of question-and-answer with God echoes in my mind:

'Have I nourished you, spiritually and physically?' Yes, Lord!

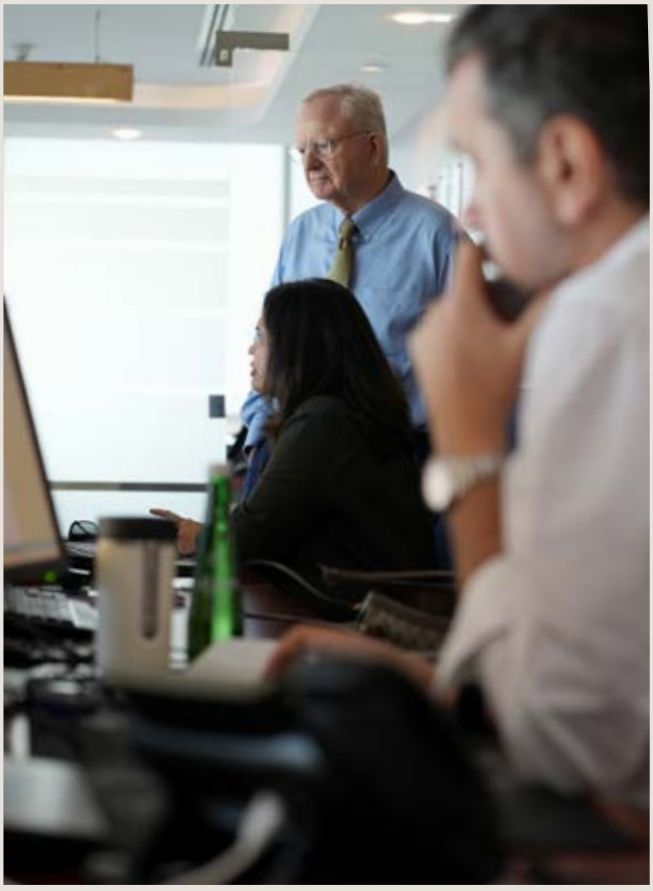
'Have I kept you safe?' Yes, Lord!

'Have I placed you in a position where you can speak to other people?' Yes, Lord!

Then it is as if God says: 'Okay, trust Me. Just trust Me.'
With every business crisis, that







is the reminder. 'Trust me!' So, I trust Him. My striving is not to be conformed by business, but to be conformed by Him."

How do you resist being conformed by business instead of by Christ?

"What is different about a Christian?" is the rhetorically question Stuart asks in return. "God's command is: Love God above all. The second is to love others as ourselves. That means shifting focus from oneself to God and how you can build others up. Being a follower of Christ must be evident in your life and speech, unambiguous and unashamed!" Stuart is not describing a private standard of his own, but the clear, Biblical pattern for every believer.
"If you are a Christian, it should be evident that you are a follower of Christ – through your life and your speech. It needs to be very clear. You cannot be ashamed of Christ. And, oddly enough, here in the Middle East it's often easier to discuss spiritual matters than in places like Europe.

It all comes back to trust. Trusting God. God is sovereign and in control; yes, also in the bad times—a truth I'm reflecting on while reading Job at the moment."

What encouragement would you offer to Christians across the UAE and the wider region?

"My wife has a friend who messages us daily with a Bible verse, a practical reflection, and a note of praise to God through the ordinary—the break of dawn, a garden flower, her cat's adventures. She finds a way, every day, in joy or sadness, to praise God. And I share this as an example to two young girls who are the lights of our lives. I want them to see a woman who walks with God, praising Him daily, even amidst agony, worry, and sickness. I pray every day that they grow in the knowledge of God. He desires to be known. And as you know Him, you will praise Him and you will bear fruit."

Stuart's encouragement to Christians across the UAE and beyond is to pursue a deeper knowledge of God, trusting that this will lead to Scripture-shaped praise. As we grow, our praise of God will be reflected in how we think, speak, and live with the people around us.

"One of the joys I have is to walk around the block and talk to whoever I meet; gardeners, homeowners, anyone sitting on the side of the road. Be the person who consistently expresses the love of God." Stuart is very clear, "The main thing is the main thing: the gospel! Our lives must reflect that." ■



C.SP URG EON

CHARLES SPURGEON'S
MORNING AND EVENING

DEW ARABIA

Photo by Annie Spratt

Readings by C.H. Spurgeon

‘Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you.’

Numbers 11:23

God had clearly promised Moses that He would feed the huge crowd in the wilderness with meat for an entire month. But Moses slipped into doubt. He focused on the visible means and couldn’t see how the promise could possibly be kept. He looked to created things instead of the Creator. ***But does the Creator need his creation to fulfil a promise for Him? No.*** *The One who makes the promise always fulfils it Himself, by His own unlimited power.* ***When He gives a promise, it’s done, done by Himself.*** *His promises don’t depend on the cooperation of people with their tiny strength.*

We can easily see the mistake Moses made. And yet, we do the same thing all the time! God has promised to supply our needs, but we look to other people (or things) to do what God has promised to do. Then, because we see that people are weak and limited, we start to doubt. Why do we even look in that direction? ***Would you look to the North Pole to pick sun-ripened fruit? That’s how foolish it is to look to the weak for strength and to creation to do the Creator’s work.***

Here’s the correct way to see it: ***the foundation of faith is not whether we can see enough resources to make the promise happen, but on the total sufficiency of the invisible God,*** *who will absolutely do what He has said.*

*And if, after clearly understanding that the responsibility lies with the Lord and not with people or things, we still choose to give in to doubt, then hear God’s question: “****Is the Lord’s arm too short?”*** *May His mercy also bring this truth to our hearts: “Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you.”*

Modern translation of Charles Spurgeon's Morning and Evening daily readings; evening 8th June

سَتَرَى الآنَ إِنْ كَانَ مَا قُلْتُهُ سَيَتِمُّ أَمْ لَا. العدد ١١:٢٣

لقد وَعدَ اللهُ موسى بوضوح أنه سيُطعم الجموعَ الغفيرة لحمًا في البرية لمدة شهر كامل. لكن موسى انزلق في الشك. ركّز موسى على الوسائل المنظورة ولم يستطع أن يرى كيف يمكن للوعد أن يتحقّق. نَظر موسى إلى الأمور المخلوقة بدلًا من الخالق. ولكن هل يحتاج الخالقَ إلى خليقته ليُتمِّم وعدًا قاله؟ كلا. إن مَن يَعِد هو دائمًا مَن يفي بنفسه بالوعد، بواسطة قُدرته غير المحدودة. عندما يُقدِّم اللهُ وعدًا، فإن الأمر قد تمَّ، بواسطته هو. إنَّ وعوده لا تعتمد على مساهمة الناس بقوتهم الضئيلة.

يَسهل علينا أن نرى الخطأ الذي وقعَ فيه موسى. ومع ذلك، نحن نَفعل الأمر نفسه طوال الوقت! لقد وَعدَ اللهُ أن يُسدِّد احتياجاتنا، لكننا نَلتفت إلى أشخاص آخرين (أو إلى أشياء أخرى) ليُحققوا بنفسهم ما وَعدَ اللهُ أن يَفعله. وبعدها، ولأننا نَرى أن الناس ضعفاء ومحدودين، نبدأ في الشك. لماذا ننظر في هذا الاتجاه أصلًا؟ هل يبحث الشخص في القطب الشمالي عن ثمار تَنضج بواسطة أشعة الشمس؟ هذه هي نفس حماقة أن يبحث الإنسان عن القوة لدى الضعفاء، ولدى الخليقة عما يستطيع الخالق أن يَفعله.

هكذا ينبغي أن نَرى الأمرَ: لا يَرتكز الإيمان على أننا نَرى موارد كافيةً لتحقيق الوعد، بل على الكفاية التامة للإله غير المنظور، الذي سيفعل يقينًا ما وَعدَ به.

وبعد أن نفهم بوضوح أن المسؤولية هي مسؤولية الرب لا الناس أو الأشياء، إذا اخترنا رُغم ذلك أن نستسلم للشك، فلنَسمع سؤال الله: "هَلْ تَقْصُرُ يَدُ الرَّبِّ؟" ليت رحمته تَغرس هذه الحقيقة أيضًا في قلوبنا: "الآنَ تَرَى أَيُوافِيكَ كَلاَمِي أَمْ لاَ."

Church & Life Practices

DON'T PRAY LIKE A ROBOT

"I do not intend to spend any time at all proving to you the general truth that God is sovereign in His world. There is no need; for I know that, if you are a Christian, you believe this already. How do I know that? Because I know that, if you are a Christian, you pray; and the recognition of God's sovereignty is the basis of your prayers. In prayer, you ask for things and give thanks for things. Why? Because you recognize that God is the author and source of all the good that you have had already, and all the good that you hope for in the future. This is the fundamental philosophy of Christian prayer. The prayer of a Christian is not an attempt to force God's hand, but a humble acknowledgment of helplessness and dependence. When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world; it is not in our power, therefore, to supply our needs by our own independent efforts; every good thing that we desire for ourselves and for others must be sought from God, and will come, if it comes at all, as a gift from His hands. If this is true even of our daily bread (and the Lord's Prayer teaches us that it is), much more is it true of spiritual benefits. This is all luminously clear to us when we are actually praying, whatever we may be betrayed into saying in argument afterward. In effect, therefore, what we do every time we pray is to confess our own impotence and God's sovereignty. The very fact that a Christian prays is thus proof positive that he believes in the lordship of his God." (J. I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, InterVarsity Press, 1991, p. 11-12)

This is a great quote. I want to take it one step further as we think about living as Christians in the Middle East. Prayer doesn't just prove *that* we believe in God's sovereignty; it also proves *what* we believe about God's sovereignty.

Fatalism

We are surrounded by fatalism in the Middle East: an 'Insha Allah' attitude that whatever will be, will be. How do we know if we're falling into this kind of fatalism? By looking at our prayers!

Fatalism is the view that God has determined everything, so it doesn't matter what you do. We are robots. Everything in life is pre-programmed, predetermined. Prayer is nothing more than cogs and wheels in a religious machine. Call it mechanical piety. We go through the motions, but whatever will be, will be. A fatalistic view of God's sovereignty reveals itself in prayer that is rote, ritualistic, and marked with resigned indifference. Take Eli as a biblical example. What was his response to the devastating news about God's judgment?

"It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him." (1 Samuel 3:18)

It's a prayer based on God's sovereignty, but it betrays the resigned indifference of fatalism. Eli should have been greatly distressed and prayed in full conviction that disaster could be averted through prayer. Think of all the times Moses did this for Israel in the wilderness.

Human Responsibility

A biblical view of God's sovereignty does not eliminate human responsibility or God's use of secondary means to accomplish divine purposes. Instead, it upholds them. Contrast Eli's prayer with Hannah's prayer. Hannah prayed to God out of deep distress and full conviction that God sovereignly works through prayer (1 Samuel 1:9-

2:10). Hannah was moved by God's sovereignty to fervently pray. Hannah's prayer reveals the biblical view of God's sovereignty. Eli's prayer does not.

But didn't Jesus pray like Eli in the Garden of Gethsemane? "Not my will, but yours be done." Isn't that resigned indifference? No. Read the context. Jesus was deeply distressed in the face of crucifixion and prayed

> "... if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:37-39).

Humble submission to the Father's will? Yes. Resigned indifference? No.

Jesus' prayer in the Garden reveals a biblical view

If you find yourself falling into fatalism, pull back the curtain of heaven and be reminded of how important prayer is. Human prayer is present in God's heavenly court. This should motivate us to pray.

of God's sovereignty. He wasn't just going through the motions; he was moved to fervent prayer.

What about Paul? Doesn't he teach fatalism in Romans 9-11? Doesn't his view of God's eternal decree reduce prayer to resigned indifference? No. Listen to how Paul speaks and prays in this section of his letter:

> "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers . . . my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved" (Romans 9:2-3, 10:1).

There is no hint of fatalism in Paul's prayers.

Robotic Prayers

What about our prayers? Do we show hints of fatalism?

You know you're falling into fatalism if your prayers are becoming robotic, rote, and ritualistic. Going through the motions of mechanical piety. Resigned indifference. Confessionally, we may deny fatalism, but functionally, a resigned indifference in prayer betrays a distorted view of God's sovereignty. We too easily forget our responsibility to pray and that God uses prayer as a means to accomplish his divine purposes.

I don't think Christians consciously make the decision to be fatalistic in prayer. It's the trap we all fall into when we're tired, distracted, bored, or complacent. Or maybe it's discouragement because of unanswered prayer: it seems like whatever will be, will be, so why pray?

Brother, sister, examine your prayer life! What does it say about your view of God's sovereignty? Do you pray like Eli, or like Hannah, Jesus, and Paul?

God's heavenly court

How do we get out of the trap of fatalism? One way is by seeing the importance of prayer in God's sovereign purposes. Perhaps the best picture of this is the visions John saw in the book of Revelation. What is present and active in Christ's reign and judgement on earth? The prayers of the saints (Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4). If you find yourself falling into fatalism, pull back the curtain of heaven and be reminded of how important prayer is. Human prayer is present in God's heavenly court. This should motivate us to pray.

God's sovereignty doesn't make us less human. It makes us more human. It moves us to pray to the one who moves things through prayer. Don't pray like a robot. Learn from the prayers of God's people written in Scripture, recorded in church history, and prayed in your church.

Show who God really is through your prayers. Your prayers don't just prove that you believe in God's sovereignty, but what you believe about God's sovereignty. Display God's true majesty through your prayers.

Tim Jackson - *associate pastor in Ras Al Khaimah*

Recommended Reads

- A Call to Prayer, J. C. Ryle - an encouragement to pray with passion, not lose heart, and live in closer intimacy with God.
- Praying with Paul, D. A. Carson - a call for believers to reject superficiality and pursue a God-guided approach to prayer.
- In the Lord I Take Refuge, Dane C. Ortlund - 150 daily devotions through the Psalms.
- Why We Pray, William Philip - an encouragement to pray based on the nature of God and the gospel..

Photo by Pawel Czerwinski

SOLA SCRIPTURA
SOLA GRATIA
SOLA FIDE
SOLA CHRISTUS
SOLI DEO GLORIA

Theology

HERE I STAND

Why The Protestant Reformation Still Matters

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16–17)

If our problems were economic, political, military, educational, or medical, then perhaps God might have sent us an economist, a general, a philosopher or a doctor. But because our problem is moral and spiritual—because our deepest problem is sin and the justice of God—He sent us a Saviour. That is what Martin Luther discovered.

Let us return in our minds to Wittenberg, Germany—just over five hundred years ago. In a small tower room, a young monk named Martin Luther, trained in law and terrified of death, sat wrestling with the Word of God. Years earlier, caught

in a violent thunderstorm, he had cried out, "Saint Anne, save me! I will become a monk!" And he did. But monastic life brought him no peace. Luther's soul was tormented by guilt. He confessed his sins daily—sometimes for hours on end—yet walked away with no assurance that he was right with God. He always felt he needed to do more. The question that haunted him was the same ancient question Job once asked:

"How can a man be right before God?" (Job 9:2)

Post Tenebras Lux – After Darkness, Light

Left to ourselves, we imagine God as a taskmaster and ourselves as His employees: if you do good, you'll be rewarded; if you fail, you'll be punished. That is how every religion in the world works—do this and live.

But in that tower, while studying Paul's letter to the Romans, Luther saw something he had never seen before:

"The righteous will live by faith."
(Habakkuk 2:4 Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38)

Suddenly, the light broke in! Salvation was not a wage to be earned, but a gift to be received! Humanity can do nothing to satisfy the wrath of God, for as Scripture says, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). And what can a dead man do but stink? The gospel revealed to Luther that Jesus had done for us what we could never do for ourselves. The righteousness God requires is the righteousness He freely gives to all who believe.

Luther came to see that the "righteousness of God" in Romans 1:17 was not the standard by which God judges us, but the righteousness He graciously provides in Christ—a righteousness outside ourselves.

When Jesus cried out from the cross, "It is finished!"—He meant it. The full debt of sin was paid, once for all. At the cross, two great exchanges took place—a Double Imputation:

[credited or belonging to]

1. Our sin was imputed to Christ.
2. His righteousness was imputed to us.

This truth struck Luther's heart like lightning. And it was this gospel—the free grace of God through faith in Christ alone—that brought the might of Rome against him.

The Hammer and the Word

In Luther's day, the Church of Rome taught that grace came through the seven sacraments, dispensed only by priests as a kind of slow intravenous drip—infused bit by bit until, perhaps one day, a soul might become righteous enough. But this system robbed Christ of His glory and enslaved consciences to fear.

So, in 1517, Luther took a hammer and nailed ninety-five theses [that means, statements] to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg—arguments meant to spark debate. Yet those theses struck the match that lit the Reformation.

At the heart of his protest was one burning question: Who or what has final authority—the Church or the Word of God? From that stand flowed the great rallying cries of the Reformation—the Five Solas:

[*Sola* is Latin for 'only' and 'alone']

1. Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone is our final authority, not councils, not popes, not traditions.
2. Sola Gratia – Grace alone saves us, not merit, not effort, not works.
3. Sola Fide – Faith alone is the instrument by which we receive grace, not penance, not indulgence, not performance.
4. Solus Christus – Christ alone is our Mediator, Redeemer, and righteousness—no priest or saint can add to His finished work.
5. Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the glory—for salvation is of the Lord, from beginning to end.

Each of these truths shines as a facet of one great diamond—the supremacy of God's grace in the gospel.

Here I Stand

These truths shook the world. When Luther was called to recant [that means, to take back his statements] before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521, he famously replied:

"Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—for my conscience is captive to the Word of God—I cannot and will not recant. Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

That stand was not arrogance—it was conviction. Luther stood not on his own authority, but on the Word of God.

The Reformation was not a human rebellion but a divine restoration. It was not merely an intellectual awakening, but a spiritual resurrection of the Church. God raised up Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, and countless others to bring His people back under His Word.

... today, we remember not the courage of a man, but the faithfulness of God ... God raised up men who would proclaim once again: "The righteous will live by faith."

Men like William Tyndale risked their lives so that even the ploughboy could read the Word of God. The same sovereign hand that turned Pharaoh's heart and split the Red Sea now opened the Scriptures to the nations once more.

And as the Word was opened, something miraculous happened: people could finally read the Bible for themselves. The ploughman in the field, the mother at home, the student in the classroom could now hear God's voice in their own language. The Word of God was unchained.

[In Luther's time, the Bible was only available in Latin, a language most people could not read. So they had to depend on priests to tell them what it said.]

And that is why the Reformation spread—not by sword or politics, but by Scripture in the hands of ordinary believers.

Why It Still Matters

Why does all this matter today? Because the battle for truth is never over. The Reformation was not the invention of something new—it was the recovery of something ancient: the gospel itself. And that work of recovery must continue.

Rather than turning to the Bible's teaching, the Roman Catholic Church has, since Luther's day, added more doctrines like Marian dogmas, papal infallibility [that means, that they cannot be wrong], and an ever-expanding sacramental system that still denies justification by faith alone.

But even beyond Rome, our modern age is just as dark. Many churches have traded the authority of Scripture for the authority of feelings, and the glory of God for the glory of self. That is why the cry of the Reformation still must be heard: *Sola Scriptura! Sola Fide! Solus Christus!* We do not need a new Reformation—we need a continuing one. Semper Reformanda — "*The Reformed Church, always reforming according to the Word of God.*" We need hearts, homes, and churches once again brought under the Word of God and the gospel of grace.

Luther never set out to start a movement. He simply opened his Bible and discovered that the righteousness of God is not bad news—it is the best news of all. It is the gift of Christ's perfect obedience, freely given to sinners who believe.

Soli Deo Gloria

And so today, we remember not the courage of a man, but the faithfulness of God— that when the gospel was buried beneath centuries of superstition [that is, false belief], God raised up men who would proclaim once again:

"The righteous will live by faith."

(Habakkuk 2:4 Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38)

Let us, then, be people of the Book once more—reading it in our homes, teaching it to our children, and submitting every thought and practice to its truth. And as we remember the Reformation, let our remembrance end not in admiration, but in adoration. The Reformation was never about the glory of man but the glory of God. Not a monk with a hammer, but a Saviour with a cross. Not a protester before an emperor, but a Redeemer before a throne.
Not a doctrine to admire, but a gospel to proclaim.

So may we stand where Luther stood—on the Word of God, for the glory of Christ, by the power of the Spirit—until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

—

by Michael Franco Smit - *Elder in Abu Dhabi, Teacher & Author.*

Recommended Reads

- Why the Reformation still matters, Michael Reeves - eleven key questions that remain critically important for the church today.
- The Unquenchable Flame, Michael Reeves - concise introduction to the Reformation for people who are new to the topic.
- Meet the puritans, Beeke, Pederson, Jones - a reference book, accessible for devotional use and enjoyable for everyday reading.

TESTIMONY

God Rescued From Weary to Rest



I grew up believing that a successful life means owning a lot of things. That kind of life did not make me feel successful though. Although my hands were full of "stuff" my heart was empty. I never felt real love.

My childhood was hard. I was raised with violence. Abused by my own mother. No protection from my father, he was a silent and absent witness.

I lived my life as a dysfunctional adult in a military environment. During my darkest years, I was lost in immorality and a fake fulfillment of pride from achievements at work. I both witnessed and took part in violence, and the regret that followed was more bitter than I could have imagined. I was not humble toward my loved ones and never really served them with real love (which only comes from Jesus).

One day, I was alone and plagued by recurring thoughts of ending my life. Then my eyes fell upon one of my wife's Bible-study notes. It was on Matthew 11:28–30:

tired, hopeless, angry

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

= God's guidance, His way, His leadership

Jesus isn't offering a "yoke" versus "no yoke." No. He is offering His yoke as a replacement for the yoke you are already wearing whether it's the yoke of religious law, sin, or life's burdens.

I broke down in tears, confessing and repenting to my Heavenly Father. That afternoon He rescued me from my sinful path through the grace of His Son and the power of His Spirit.

Since that day, His kind providences have guided me, every step. My family has taken me by my hand, walking with me through difficult days – gently and patiently.

At my church, God has given me a big family, friends and mentors. I feel called and willing to serve Him, humbly and sacrificially. With a deep desire I commit to God's will and my church. I pray for my pastors, elders, brothers and sisters to continue in God's purpose of rescuing lost souls like mine.

by

Carlos

Catechism

What is a catechism?

In a Christian context, it means to teach Biblical truth and often this is done in an orderly way with questions, answers and biblical support.

Why?

A catechism helps believers, and children, understand the Bible more clearly through interpretation, selection, organization and completeness:

Interpretation: It provides a big-picture understanding of how individual Bible verses fit together within the larger message of Scripture.

Selection: It highlights the most essential parts of Scripture for knowing God and living faithfully, helping believers prioritise what to focus on.

Organization: It arranges biblical truths in a logical, progressive way, preventing confusion that can come from learning disconnected verses.

Completeness: It ensures a more comprehensive grasp of the "whole counsel of God," offering a structured body of truth that can be faithfully passed down.

As we are required to continue in the faith, stable and steadfast (Col. 1:23) we are urged to "attain to the unity of the ... knowledge of the Son of God ... so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4: 13-14) as there will be many deceivers (1 John 2:26).

Let's continue!

In the first edition we had a look at the first nine questions, to study and memorize it with our family, children and friends! Let's continue with the 'New City Catechism' from the Gospel Coalition (available online - www.newcitycatechism.com, in app and book version, in different languages incl. Urdu).

As with memorizing the Bible itself, God's truth will equip you as a Christian for daily life.

NEW CITY CATECHISM

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ENGLISH

Question 10
What does God require in the fourth and fifth commandments?

Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in public and private worship of God, rest from routine employment, serve the Lord and others, and so anticipate the eternal Sabbath. Fifth, that we love and honour our father and our mother, submitting to their godly discipline and direction. LEVITICUS 19:3

Question 11
What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments?

Sixth, that we do not hurt, or hate, or be hostile to our neighbour, but be patient and peaceful, pursuing even our enemies with love. Seventh, that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else, nor

TAGALOG

Tanong 10
Ano ang ipinag-uutos sa atin sa ika-apat at ika-limang utos?

Ito ang ika-apat, ang makapaglaan tayo ng oras sa Pampubliko at Pansariling Pagsamba sa Diyos sa Araw ng Pamamahinga, huminto at magpahinga sa ating nakagawiang mga gawain o trabaho, paglingkuran ang Panginoon at ating kapwa habang hinihintay naman natin ang walang hanggang Araw ng Pamamahinga. At ang ikalima naman ay ito, na dapat nating mahalin at igalang ang ating ama at ina, magpasakop sa kanilang maka-Diyos na disiplina at direksyon. LEVITICO 19:3

Tanong 11
Ano ang ipinag-uutos sa atin sa ika-anim, ika-pito, at ika-walong utos?

Sa ika-anim ay ito, na hindi natin saktan, o kamuhian, o maging matigas ang ating puso sa ating kapwa, bagkus maging mapagpasensiya at mapayapa, na pati sa ating mga kaaway ay marapat na gawin rin natin ang mga bagay na ito. Sa ika-pito, na dapat tayong umiwas sa seksuwal na imoralidad sa halip ay mamuhay nang matapat at may kabanalan, sa buhay may asawa man o wala, at iniiwasan ang mga hindi tamang gawa, pananamit, pananalita, pag-iisip o anumang bagay na magdudulot ng pagkakasala. At ang ika-walo ay ito, na hindi natin kunin ang bagay na pagmamay-ari ng

ARABIC

س١٠
ما الذي يطلبه الله في الوصيّة الرابعة والخامسة؟

ج١: الرابعة، أن نَقضي وقتًا في يوم الراحة في عبادة جماعيّة وشخصيّة للرب، مُستريحين من روتين أعمالنا، خادمين الرب والآخرين، وبهذا نكون مُتَرقِّبين للسبت (يوم الراحة) الأبديّ. الخامسة، أن نُحِبَ ونُكرِم أبائنا وأمهاتنا، خاضعين لتأديبهم وارشادهم في الرب. اللاويين ١٩:٣

س ١١
ما الذي يطلُبه الله في الوصيّة السادسة والسابعة والثامنة؟

ج٢: السادسة، ألّا نؤذي أو نجرح أو نُعادي جيراننا، بل نكون صبورين ومُسالمين، ساعين حتّى نحو أعدائنا بالمحبة. السابعة، أن نمتنع عن الفُجور الجِنسي ونعيش بالطُهرِ والأمانةِ، سواء في الزواج أو في حياة العزوبيّة، مُجتنبين كل الأفعال، والنظرات، والكلمات، والأفكار، والرغبات الغير

withhold any good from someone we might benefit. ROMANS 13:9

Question 12
What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?

Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive, but speak the truth in love. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone or resenting what God has given them or us. JAMES 2:8

Question 13
Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

Since the fall, no mere human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly, but consistently breaks it in thought, word, and deed. ROMANS 3:10–12

Question 14
Did God create us unable to keep his law?

No, but because of the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, all of creation is fallen; we are all born in sin and guilt, corrupt in our nature and unable to keep God's law. ROMANS 5:12

Question 15
Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose?

That we may know the holy nature and will of God, and the sinful nature and disobedience of our hearts; and thus our need of a Saviour. The law also teaches and exhorts us to live a life worthy of our Saviour. ROMANS 3:20

Question 16
What is sin?

Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law—resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation. 1 JOHN 3:4

Question 17
What is idolatry?

Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security. ROMANS 1:21 AND 25

Question 18
Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?

No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come. EPHESIANS 5:5–6

Question 19
Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favour?

Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer. ISAIAH 53:10–11

iba nang walang pahintulot nila, ni magkait ng mga bagay sa ating kapwa na tayo lang ang magbebenepisyo. ROMA 13:9

Tanong 12
Ano naman ang ipinag-uutos sa atin sa ika-siyam at ika-sampung utos?

Sa ika-siyam ay ito, na hindi tayo magsinungaling o mandaya man, bagkus ay magsabi ng pawang katotohanan sa diwa ng pag-ibig. At ang huli at ika-sampu naman ay ito, na matuto tayong makuntento kung ano ang ibinigay sa atin ng Panginoon, at hindi pag-imbutan ang pag- aari ng ating kapwa na ipinagkaloob rin sa kanila ng Diyos. SANTIAGO 2:8

Tanong 13
IKaya ba ng sinuman na sundin ang Kautusan ng Diyos nang perpekto?

Simula noong nahulog ang tao sa kasalanan, wala nang sinuman sa buong sangkatauhan ang kaya pang tuparin ang Kautusan ng Diyos nang perpekto, bagkus ay patuloy itong sinusuway ng tao sa kanilang isip, salita, at gawa. ROMA 3:10–12

Tanong 14
Nilikha ba tayo ng Diyos na hindi kayang sundin ang Kanyang Kautusan?

Hindi, ngunit dahil sa pagsuway ng ating mga unang magulang, sina Adan at Eba, lahat na rin ng nilikha ay nahulog sa kasalanan; kung kaya lahat tayo ay ipinanganak sa kasalanan at sira na ang ating likás, kaya hindi na natin kaya pang sundin ang Kautusan ng Diyos. ROMA 5:12

Tanong 15
Kung gayon na wala nang kaya pang sumunod sa Kautusan, ano pa ang layunin nito sa atin?

Para malaman natin ang perpektong kabanalan at kalooban ng Diyos, at ang pagiging makasalanan at patuloy na pagsuway ng ating mga puso; sa gayon ay mapagtanto natin na tunay nga tayong nangangailangan ng isang Tagapagligtas. Itinuturo rin sa atin ng Kautusan at hinihimok tayo nito kung paano tayo dapat mamuhay ng karapat-dapat sa ating Tagapagligtas. ROMA 3:20

Tanong 16
Ano ang kasalanan?

Ang kasalanan ay hindi pagtanggap at pagbalewala sa Diyos dito sa daigdig na Kanyang nilikha, patuloy na pagre-rebelde sa Kanya sa pamamagitan ng pamumuhay nang hindi ayon sa Kanyang kalooban, at hindi paggawa nang kung ano ang ipinag-uutos Niya sa Kanyang Kautusan—na paniguradong magdudulot sa atin ng kamatayan at pagkakagulo sa lahat ng mga nilikha. 1 JUAN 3:4

Tanong 17
Ano ang pagsamba sa diyus-diyosan?

Ang pagsamba sa diyus-diyosan ay ang pagtitiwala sa mga nilikhang bagay sa halip na sa Lumalang para sa ating pag-asa, kasiyahan, kahalagahan, at katiwasayan. ROMA 1:21 AT 25

Tanong 18
Hinahayaan lang ba ng Diyos ang pagsuway natin at pagsamba sa diyus-diyosan ay hindi naparurusahan?

Hindi, sapagkat ang bawat kasalanan ay labag sa kapangyarihan, kabanalan, at kabutihan ng Diyos, labag rin ito sa Kanyang makatuwirang Kautusan. At ang Diyos ay may makatarungang galit sa ating mga kasalanan, at Kanya itong parurusahan sa dakilang araw ng Kanyang paghuhukom, dito pa man sa buhay na ito at sa darating pang mga panahon. EFESO 5:5–6

طاهـرة، وكل ما قد يقودنـا إليهم. الثامنة، ألّا نأخذ من دون اسـتئذان ما يَخُصّ غيرنا، وألّا نُمسِـكُ خيرًا عـن الآخرين قـد ننفَعَهم به. رومية ١٣:٩

س١٢
مـا الذي يطلُبه الله في الوصيّة التاسـعة والعاشرة؟

ج٢: التاسـعة، ألّا نكـذِب أو نُخادِع، بل أن نقول الصِـدق في مَحبـة. العاشرة، أن نكون راضين، غير حاسـدين لأحدٍ أو مُغتاظين بسـبب ما أعطاه الله لهـم أو لنا. يعقوب ٢:٨

١٣
هل يسـتطيع أي شـخص أن يَحفَظ ناموس الله بالتمام؟

ج٣: منذ السـقوط، لم يسـتطع أي إنسان أن يَحفَـظ ناموس الله بالتمام، بل وباسـتمرار يَكسِره بالفِكـرِ والقَولِ والفِعل. رومية ٣:١٠–١٢

س١٤
هـل خلقنـا الله غير قادرين على حِفظ ناموسـه؟

ج٤: لا، ولكـن بسـبب عصيان أبوينا الأولين، آدم وحواء، سـقطت كل الخليقـة؛ كُلنا وُلِدنا في الخطيـة والذنب، فاسـدين بالطبيعة، وغير قادرين على حفـظ ناموس الله. رومية ٥:١٢

س١٥
بمـا أنـه لا أحد يسـتطيع أن يحفظ الناموس، فما هو هدفه؟

ج٥: لكي نعـرف طبيعة وإرادة الله المُقدسـة، والطبيعـة الخاطئة لقلوبنـا وعصيانها؛ وبذلك نُـدرك احتياجَنا لمُخلِّص. والناموس أيضًـا يُعلِّمنا ويُحفِّزُنـا لكي نحيـا حياة تليـق بمُخلصنا. رومية ٣:٢٠

س١٦
مـا هي الخطية؟

ج٦: إن الخطيـة هي رفـض أو تجاهل الله في العـالم الـذي خلقه، هي التمـرُّد على الله بالحياة بمعـزل عنـه، وهي ألّا نكون أو نفعل مـا يطالبنا به في الناموس—الأمـر الـذي يؤدي إلى موتِنا وهلاك كل الخليقـة. يوحنا الأولى ٣:٤

س١٧
مـا هي الوثنية؟

ج٧: إن الوثنيـة هي أن نثق في أشـياء مخلوقة بـدلًا مـن الخالق لأجل رجائِنا وسـعادتنا، قيمتنا وأماننـا. رومية ١:٢١ و٢٥

س١٨
هـل سيسـمح الله لعصيانِنـا ووثنيتنا أن تمُرَّ دون عقاب؟

ج٨: لا، فكل خطية هي ضد سـيادة الله وقداسـته وصلاحـه، وضد ناموسـه العادل، والله غاضب بعـدل على خطايانـا وسـيُعاقبها بقضائه العادل في هـذه الحياة وفي الحياة الآتية. أفسـس ٥:٥–٦

Are you a Spirit?

In Response to the "We Are Gods" Theology Part II

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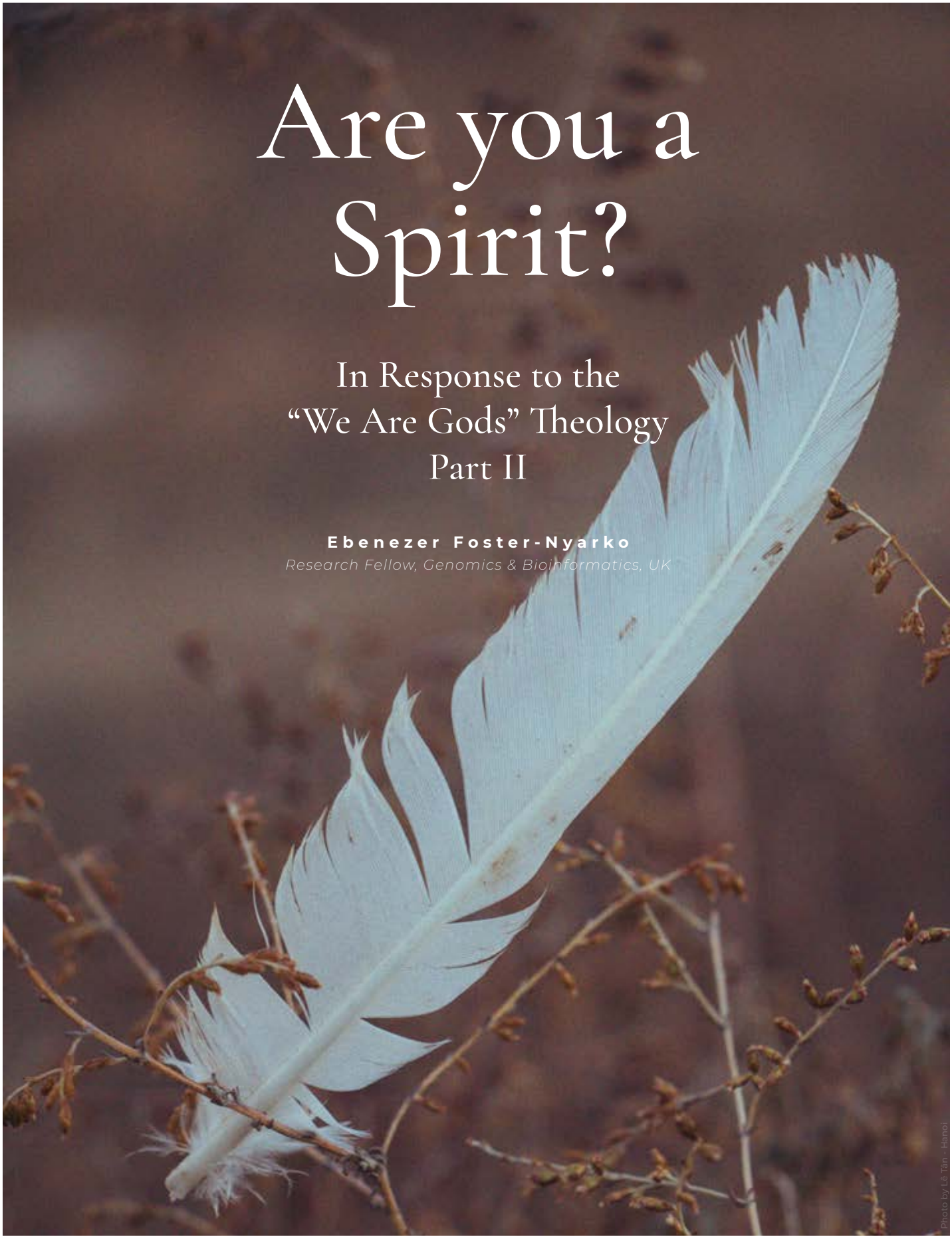


Photo by Le Tan - Hanoi

World View & Culture

In part I of this article, we examined the first significant claim of "New Creation" teachers who hold that believers are gods. Namely, the wrong interpretation of the creation account. We saw that there is no basis whatsoever from Genesis 1 and 2 that God created man as a god.

False teachers have always made too much of the creation account. Kenneth Copeland, who is one of the pioneers of the deification of man, said,

> *"God's reason for creating Adam was His desire to reproduce Himself. I mean a reproduction of Himself. And in the garden of Eden He did just that. He was not a little like God, he was not almost like God, he was not subordinate to God even. ... And Adam was as much like God as you can get, just the same as Jesus when He came to earth. He said "if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." He wasn't a lot like God—he's God manifested in the flesh. ... Adam in the Garden of Eden was God manifested in the flesh."* [1]

Biblical chapter and verse for this bold assertion? He had none to hand, except to appeal to the creation story, which we have seen upon careful examination does not support any form of deification of man at all. Kenneth will go on to attribute this false teaching of his to "divine revelation" which he claims to have received from God Himself. In a 1989 message he preached, "Substitution and Identification", Copeland said,

Recall that in the very first temptation in the garden of Eden, Satan dangled the fruit of deification before Eve. He said, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God..."

> *"The Spirit of God spoke to me, and he said, "Son, realise this." "A twice-born man whipped Satan in his own domain." And I threw my Bible down and I sat up like that. I said, "What?" He said, "A born-again man defeated Satan. The first born of many brethren defeated him." He said, "you are the very image and the very copy of that One." ... And He said, "You are in His likeness..."*
>
> *And I said, "Well now, you don't mean, you couldn't dare mean that I could have done the same thing?" He said "Oh yeah. If you'd known and had the knowledge of the Word of God that He did, you could've done the same thing. 'Cause you're a reborn man too."* [2]

So, you see that this teaching did not originate from a careful Scriptural exegesis; it is quite plainly the doctrine of men and of demons.

Recall that in the very first temptation in the garden of Eden, Satan dangled the fruit of deification before Eve. He said, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5). But even in the garden, the knowledge of good and evil did not make man God—it simply plunged Adam's posterity into a state of depravity and helplessness in sin (Genesis 3:22). Could Adam or any of his posterity be sinless like our Lord Jesus Christ? Has anyone ever been? Could we have done what Jesus did, to die in our place and resurrect on the third day? What rank heresy!

Christian, realise that this teaching is nothing but a demotion of God and a deification of man. Authentic, historical and orthodox Christianity believes in one God, not many gods. He stands transcendent and resplendent, unequalled to any creature. As we affirmed in the previous post, His desire in creation and regeneration is to make us like Him, not to replace Him or to be the same as Him. Similar and same are similar, but not the same.

The Exaggeration of the Trichotomy of Man

This false theology makes a great deal of the fact that as humans, we are (essentially) spirit, with a soul, which dwells in a body, what is referred to as the trichotomy of man. I want to argue from the Scriptural data that this position is exaggerated and that we don't have conclusive evidence from the Scriptures that man is tripartite. What is quite plain throughout the Scriptural narrative is the fact that, in addition to the body, there is an immaterial aspect of man, which the Bible sometimes calls "the spirit", and at other times "the soul".

Let's examine what those who teach that "we are spirits" say about these so-called divisions and hold them up to the Scriptural lens.

First, they claim that the spirit is the higher component of human nature, the body and soul being subservient to it if trained properly. Based on this, they say it is our spirits which relate to God (as it is sinless), as our souls and body are prone to sin. Second, they assert that this "spirit" comes into being, or is born at regeneration, such that believers cease to be human from the moment they are born again. Thirdly, they assert that those who live in the consciousness that they are spirit do not experience the limitations that the "ordinary" human being experiences; namely sickness, poverty, failure etc (wealth and health theology).

The spirit or soul is NOT higher than the body

To the first claim, we do not agree that the spirit is superior or sinless (please see the previous article), or that it is the spirit alone that communicates or relates to God. On the contrary, we see both the body and the soul/spirit being involved in worship, prayer and all aspects of our relationship with God.

Mary, in Luke 1:46-47 magnifies the Lord with her soul and in the same breath, her spirit rejoices in God her Saviour. The "soul" and "spirit" seem to be used synonymously to describe the same activity of worshipping the Lord.

Similarly, David, in the Psalms simplifies all this when he enjoins his soul to bless the Lord and all that is within him to do the same (Psalm 103:1).

In Romans 12:1, we are commanded to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

We are not born as "spirits" at Regeneration

To the second claim, we note first of all that these "New Creation" teachers contradict themselves. On one hand, they insist that man was created as a spirit, and in the same breath they assert that the born-again believer is a spirit and therefore ceases to be anything like the ordinary human being. If all humans were created as "essentially spirits", then where lies the differences between believers and unbelievers? Both believers and unbelievers should then lay claim to deity.

The teaching that we are born again as "spirits" stems from a misinterpretation of John 3:6 where Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" and Romans 8:10, where we read, "But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness."

The context of John 3:6 looks like this:

> *"Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

A careful examination of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus will show that Jesus is making a comparison between natural and spiritual birth. His point is that the new birth comes about by the activity of the Holy Spirit. He further uses the analogy of the wind to drive home this point—namely that this is a sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit (we are not aware it until it happens. The moment we become aware of it, it has already happened). Some translations use "born from above" for "born again" in John 3:3—again a reference to the fact that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and not of man. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" therefore simply contrasts the spiritual birth with the natural one (John 3:3 could be paraphrased, "the birth that is brought about by the Holy Spirit is a spiritual one")—it is not to be taken to mean that the new believer is literally a spirit. Such an interpretation does not fit into the context.

Again, in Romans 8:10, the context shows that Paul means, before we came to Christ, we were not living in fellowship to God. We were dead in the sense

that our whole persons were rebellious in our sins and trespasses (Ephesians 2:1). However, when we became born again, this changed. Whereas we were formerly dead to God and alive to sin, we now became alive to God and righteousness, and dead to sin. Thus, our whole persons become "new creations" to God in the sense that we are now in a new and right relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:17).

What Is the Real Difference?

So, let us ask those who insist that we are "essentially spirit", with a soul in a body, what is the real distinction between spirit and soul? Is there anything that the spirit is said to do in Scripture that the soul cannot do?

The most convincing argument for me is the fact that every activity Scripture ascribes to the soul, the spirit is said to be able to do the same, and vice versa. Support for this is seen in the following.

Paul's spirit was provoked in Acts 17:16 (challenging the notion that emotions are exclusive to the soul only). Jesus balances the equation when he said in John 12:27, "My soul is troubled" and few verses later John records that He was "troubled in spirit." (John 13:21). Clearly, John uses the terms soul and spirit interchangeably.

Similarly, the faculty of understanding or reasoning and intelligence is not restricted to the realm of the "soul" alone. Scripture records the spirit's ability to err (Isaiah 29:24) and of the spirit having the ability to understand (1 Corinthians 2:11).

We also see that the Bible refers to the soul or spirit departing from the body at death. For example, Jesus in Luke 12:20 rebukes the rich fool, and says his soul will be taken from him that night. However, when Jesus was about to die, we see Him committing His spirit to God and then giving up the ghost/spirit (KJV) (Luke 23:46).

When it comes to the afterlife, Peter refers to the dead as spirits (1 Peter 3:19); however, John refers to the souls of those who had been slain under the altar in heaven, and of those beheaded for the sake of the gospel coming to life and reigning with the Lord in His millennial kingdom (Revelations 20:4).

On all this, Grudem insightfully writes,

> *"Those who advocate trichotomy face a difficulty defining clearly just what the difference between the soul and the spirit (from their perspective). If Scripture gave clear support to the idea that our spirit is the part of us that directly relates to God in worship and prayer, while our soul includes our intellect (thinking), our emotions (feeling), and our will (deciding), then trichotomists would have a strong case. However, Scripture appears not to allow such a distinction to be made."* [3]

The question remains, why do we need to isolate and hype the "spirit" from the whole man? Again, the answer lies in the fact that teachers of "we are gods" theology need you to believe that you are the same in nature and essence (they call it having the same spiritual DNA—whatever that means) as our Lord Jesus Christ or God, so that it will be easy to believe you cannot be sick or broke.

But we have seen from this article's discussion that,

1. There is no hard and fast distinction between what the spirit can do that the soul cannot do. The two terms are often used synonymously in Scripture.
2. If we were created as spirits and therefore gods, then everyone (both believers and unbelievers) is a spirit and god. True Biblical Christianity does not support this.

In the next article (part III) we will delve into the biblical doctrine of regeneration and examine some specific Scriptural verses that are used to teach that we are gods. ■

NOTES

1. Kenneth Copeland, "Following the Faith of Abraham I"; Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries (1989); Tape #01-3001, Side 1.

2. Kenneth Copeland, "Substitution and Identification"; Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries (1989); Tape #00-0202, Side 2

3. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. Inter-varsity Press (36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4ST, England). 21: 443..

Published on
The Gospel Network - *tgnghana.org*
Part 1 appeared in the first edition, part 3 will follow in the third.

TESTIMONY

God Continued From Darkness to Light



All over the world, people are chasing something worth living for. I chased purpose in education, friendships and success. But I discovered that none of these things comes even close to the true meaning of life.

My name is Duot. I'm from South Sudan. I grew up in a home where Christianity was mostly cultural: we went through the motions of Sunday school, reading Bible stories and prayed, as something you just do besides your other daily things. My heart did not understand the meaning of the Bible stories.

After South Sudan and Sudan split in 2011, my family and I moved to Uganda. There I was under the teachings of the prosperity gospel. It sounded logical and for years I believed that knowing God was a transaction: do things for God so He will do things for you. I thought I could secure a spot in heaven and earthly comfort at the same time, manipulate God with "spiritual activity".

"I understood that free Grace would cost me my own will, my own ways, my 'freedom', my entire heart. The cost of following Jesus is a cost too high, I concluded."

My studies brought me to Ras Al Khaimah. It was here, in the United Arab Emirates, where my understanding of God was redefined. Through campus Bible studies, student outreach, church and conferences, I heard the true gospel. I vividly remember thinking that 'salvation through Grace alone' sounded too good to be true.

While my interest was awakened, I rebelled to this Gospel and chose an attitude of indifference. I understood that free Grace would cost me my own will, my own ways, my 'freedom', my entire heart. The cost of following Jesus is a cost too high, I concluded. In a contrasting duality, I did however envy the way my friends treasured Jesus.

As I continued trusting in my owns ways, pursuing self, my education and whatnot, I expected a progressive path of building up myself. After two years of running, the path turned out to not be as successful. I found myself exhausted. The things I thought would give me meaning didn't just disappoint me; they exposed how empty I was.

God however, had not given up on me. He was the one opening my eyes for the emptiness of anything other than Himself. He used friends who continued faithfully sharing His Word. And around that time, a friend encouraged me to pray and read the Bible, asking God to soften my heart. And God did. Over time passages like Ephesians 2:1–9 started to make sense. I saw that I wasn't just "struggling" or "not religious enough", I was dead in myself. Dead in my sins.
God, so rich in mercy, made me alive in Christ. By grace alone, need to say.. I definitely did not earn anything. I saw myself clearly: a sinner, an enemy of God, standing condemned before a holy God. But even clearer than my sin was the truth that overwhelmed me: God loved me while I was this sinner. Christ took my place. He substituted Himself for me. I gained His righteousness!

My story is not a story of me finding God. It is God not giving up on me. He pursued me when I turned my back to Him.
God still continues with me, shaping me into His likeness. Not only in private, but also within the community of believers He has placed me in.

That same grace is open to you. Salvation is not about what you do for God; it's about what God has done for you: Jesus.

God open my heart to desire Christ. He will do the same for you if you trust yourself to Him.

by

Duot

SONG

To behold God means to look at God with intense attention, purpose, awe, reflection and emotion! It is to marvel at His glory in His written Word. 2 Cor 3:18

Behold Our God

This song meditates on Isaiah 40, proclaiming God's greatness and sovereignty over creation, nations and His tender care in shepherding, gathering and carrying His people. Your problems and sin may be big, but God and His promises are bigger. How many promises can you find in Isaiah 40? Write down how they are fulfilled in Jesus! 2 Cor. 1:20 Let us listen to God's wise and tender voice! Come, let us adore Him!

Who has held the oceans in His hands?
Who has numbered every grain of sand?
Kings and nations tremble at His voice
All creation rises to rejoice

Behold our God, seated on His throne
Come, let us adore Him
Behold our King, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore Him

Who has given counsel to the Lord?
Who can question any of His words?
Who can teach the One who knows all things?
Who can fathom all His wondrous deeds?

Behold our God, seated on His throne
Come, let us adore Him
Behold our King, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore Him
Who has felt the nails upon His hands?

Bearing all the guilt of sinful man
God eternal, humbled to the grave
Jesus, Saviour, risen now to reign

Behold our God, seated on His throne
Come, let us adore Him
Behold our King, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore Him

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Church Leadership & Outreach

FAMILIES ON THE FIELD

Brandy Spandler-Davison
Member of the Great Commission Council

A family on the mission field will encounter both opportunities and challenges unique to their ministry assignment. In addition to being equipped and qualified, it is necessary to have a strong foundation of dependence on the Lord and a growing trust in His kind providence. With this foundation in mind, a family can better navigate expectations, attitudes, and responses to issues such as community, cross-cultural living, healthcare, education, and security.

Have you ever had a moment of questioning your life choices? One day, you're strolling along, and suddenly, doubts hit you. Our family had just gotten back into the country where we serve, and I was on my way to the grocery store when anxious thoughts nearly knocked me off my scooter. What in the world are we doing here? My heart began to squeeze tightly, and fear descended. Our family does not belong here. We don't fit into this culture. These people are living for very different things. I watched wealthy people pour out of the malls, knowing that drugs and prostitutes were right around the corner. Suddenly, I thought, "Why did we come to this place? How can we possibly make any impact? And what are we doing raising our three boys here?"

The Bible shows that God values family and uses families to minister to those around them. Prospective missionaries undergo much training to prepare for their work.[1] This training should also include how to care for our families while living overseas. Every parent must navigate decisions about education, medical care, safety, and more. Families need to be equipped to stay on the field long-term and thrive.

Where Is Home?

Every person is created with a desire for home. A place that is safe. A place that is secure. A place that is stable. For missionaries, and especially for the children of missionaries, the simple question of, "Where are you from?" can feel complex. When asked this, my children look to me for help.

Is home the Asian country they were born in? Is it one of Mum or Dad's home countries or the place we most often visit? Or are they from the current country we call home but is not their passport country?

Our kids wrestle with whether this person should know more about them or if they should give a basic answer. The question can often cause a deeper struggle when we go back to the US. They leave behind the known and stable community of Asia to be reintroduced to friend groups across America. Each time, they ask, "Why do we have to leave? Why can't we stay?" It's a need for stability, comfort, and belonging.

These desires are not wrong, so as parents, we want to understand how our children feel. It is hard to see the confusion of "Where am I from? Where do I belong? Who are my friends?" Yet the beauty of these conversations is that we say: Home is with God. Heaven is what our hearts are truly longing for. Jesus is the friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24). Our prayer is that God will show Himself as faithful, and they will know intimacy with Him.

What About Our Extended Family?

Going overseas and leaving behind extended family can be heart-wrenching. The desire to take the gospel to the nations is strong, but the pain of leaving behind a family we love deeply and want our children to know is real.

Some family members will send us off with support, but not without tears. Others, especially those who are not followers of Christ, will oppose what we are going to do. We need to be aware of the sacrifices our extended families make and make opportunities for those relationships to grow from afar. [2]

I never felt the sacrifice of being far until we had children, and our siblings had children. Our nieces and nephews grew up, and we didn't really know them. Our extended family doesn't really know our children either. Sure, we call once a week. They send gifts for special days. Grandparents try to do special things when we are around.

The distance can be challenging, but it's not impossible, especially with the blessing of the internet. Along with the losses that come from having extended family far away also comes the privilege of seeing God's family take more of its rightful place. Our children benefit from having grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles who share none of their DNA but who love them deeply because of their love for Christ.

Some may be serving in a place where there is not yet a local church. Work to build a healthy biblical church where you are. Let these brothers and sisters become your family's extended family. The body of Christ was meant to be our most faithful family. Remember Jesus's words in Luke 18: "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." [3] The church is our eternal family.

Is It Safe?

While in the US, I have been asked, "Are you taking your children back with you?" meaning, "Is it safe? Will your children be okay?" Some of this fear comes from being aware of dangers. We must be mindful of the dangers that our family may face.

A missionary family serving in Northern Iraq will have different safety concerns than those serving in Mexico City. Those in Russia will be thinking through situations that would never arise in Bangkok. There are different dangers wherever we serve. Friends of ours serve where bombs sometimes fall near their homes. Others live where gathering as believers invites police invasions. We live with our three sons around the corner from an alley full of brothels. None of these are safe places.

We must ask ourselves what we want our kids to value most. Do we want them to value safety above all else or understand that true security comes from knowing the Lord? We must remember that we are not called to live safely. We are called to live boldly for Jesus' name among the nations. Our children learn that persecution for His name is the norm for Christians.

However, this is not a call to foolishness. It is a call to consider the potential threats, together with church leadership, and to make decisions based on faith. We can go or stay for the glory of God if done in faith. God's presence is always with His children, His glory is worth the sacrifice.

Will There Be Enough?

Every parent wants to know that their children will have enough. Enough food. Enough clothes. Enough rest. This is true of medical care and education.

While serving in West Africa, my teammate developed an allergy to millet, the region's staple crop. She had to consider that although she loved West Africa, it might not be wise to move there again. Choosing to go somewhere else is not wrong if healthcare might be insufficient for your needs.

Education opportunities in countries where poverty is rife may be diminished. There are good schools in some places, but they come with high price tags. A family must ask, "Can we afford such costs? Can our family cope with the sacrifices that might need to be made to homeschool?"

With every lack comes an opportunity for trust in the Lord's provision. While our kids may not have every opportunity that children in the West have, the opportunities that children have on the field are amazing—learning other cultures, being adaptable, learning about God's work. No matter the lack or sacrifice, He will show Himself sufficient for everything we need.

What Is Our Hope?

In all these concerns we must realize that our hope is not in finding the perfect circumstances for our family. Our hope is in a person—the person of Jesus Christ. We must constantly go to Him with our hearts lifted and wills bowed down to His lordship. As we pray to Christ, throwing ourselves upon Him in the difficulties and confusion, we can remember His promise: "Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you." [4]

So how did my scooter ride end on that day when I was overwhelmed by our decision to raise our family in a place fraught with dangers, feeling like we don't belong? It ended with a gentle nudge that reminded me that God's people are in this city. If God's people are here, then I want to be here. I want to be poured out for His people so that they might worship the only One worthy. I want God to use our family—daddy, mummy, and three little boys—to show the world that Christ is deserving of all that we might sacrifice for His Name.

What is our hope at home or far away, in safety or insecurity, in belonging or in isolation, in life or in death? Our hope is that we are not our own but belong to God. That is enough. He is enough. . For us and our children.

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[1] See GCC article on Missionary Training, "Are They Ready?"

[2] See "What Missionary Grandparents Give Up–and Gain" by Mack Stiles https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/missionary-grandparents-give/

[3] Luke 18:29-30

[4] Hebrews 13:5

Recommended Resources

- Kocman, Alex and Dunford, Scott, hosts. "Cheryl Winget on MK Education and Parenting on the Field." The Missions Podcast, ABWE, 15 January, 2023. https://youtu.be/zdu8ESYE8Bg?si=uWDNAKKzvNHFbiQW
- GCC article "Unique Challenges of Women on the Field"
- GCC article "Mental Health and the Missionary."
- Hoover, Christine, host. "The Joy of Raising Missionary Kids." Ministry Wives Podcast, North American Mission Board, 29 January, 2024. https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/by-faith-with-christine-hoover/id1341513188?i=1000643362790
- Stiles, Mack. "What Missionary Grandparents Give Up–and Gain." The Gospel Coalition, 4 April, 2024, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/missionary-grandparents-give/



C.SP URG EON

CHARLES SPURGEON'S
MORNING AND EVENING

DEW ARABIA

Photo by John Kollogiannis

Readings by C.H. Spurgeon

'You have not walked on the bottom of the deep seas.'

Job 38:16

Some things in nature will always remain a mystery, even to the smartest and most determined researchers. Human knowledge has limits; only God knows everything. If this is true for the physical, temporary world we can see, it must be even more true for spiritual and eternal matters.

So why have I been tiring myself out trying to figure out destiny and free will, predestination, and human responsibility? ***I am no more capable of understanding these deep and complex truths than I am of discovering the secrets of the deep ocean.***

Why am I so eager to know the exact reasons behind God's ways, the motives of His actions, or the purpose of His difficult lessons? I will never be able to hold the sun or grasp the universe in my hand—and yet, even these are insignificant compared to the greatness of God. Those would still be nothing compared to the greatness the Lord my God. Instead of trying to master the infinite, ***I should spend my energy on love.*** *What I can't grasp with my mind, I can receive with my heart—and that's enough.*

I can't explore the deepest part of the ocean, but I can enjoy the healthy wind blowing above its surface and sail on its blue waves with a good wind. Even if I could explore the sea's greatest depths, what good would it do? It wouldn't save a sinking ship or bring a drowned sailor back to his grieving family. In the same way, solving God's deepest mysteries wouldn't help me at all. ***The smallest amount of love for God and the simplest act of obedience to Him are far more valuable than the most profound knowledge.***

Lord, I leave the infinite to You. Please keep me from a hunger for the "tree of knowledge" that could distract me from truly living in You, the "tree of life."

Modern translation of Charles Spurgeon's Morning and Evening daily readings; evening 5th September

बता क्या तू कभी सागर के गहरे तल में गया है? अय्यूब 38:16

प्रकृति की कुछ बातें हमेशा रहस्य ही रहेंगी, चाहे सबसे बुद्धिमान और सबसे दृढ़-निश्चयी शोधकर्ता ही क्यों न हों। मानव ज्ञान की सीमाएँ है; सब कुछ केवल परमेश्वर ही जानते है। यदि यह बात उस भौतिक और अस्थायी संसार के बारे में सत्य है जिसे हम देख सकते है, तो आध्यात्मिक और अनन्त विषयों के लिए यह और भी अधिक सत्य है।

तो फिर मैं भाग्य और स्वतंत्र इच्छा, पूर्वनियति और मानवीय उत्तरदायित्व को समझने की कोशिश में स्वयं को क्यों थका रहा हूँ? मैं इन गहरी और जटिल सच्चाइयों को उतना ही कम समझ सकता हूँ, जितना कि गहरे समुद्र के रहस्यों को खोज सकता हूँ।

मैं परमेश्वर के तरीकों के पीछे के सटीक कारण, उनके कार्यों की प्रेरणाएँ, या उनकी कठिन शिक्षाओं का उद्देश्य जानने के लिए इतना आतुर क्यों हूँ? मैं कभी भी सूर्य को अपनी मुट्ठी में नहीं पकड़ सकूँगा, न ही ब्रह्मांड को अपनी हथेली में थाम सकूँगा—और फिर भी ये सब परमेश्वर की महानता के सामने तुच्छ है। मेरे प्रभु परमेश्वर की महानता की तुलना में ये कुछ भी नहीं। अनंत को साधने की कोशिश करने के बजाय मुझे अपनी शक्ति प्रेम में लगानी चाहिए। जिसे मेरी बुद्धि नहीं पकड़ पाती, उसे मेरा हृदय ग्रहण कर सकता है—और वही पर्याप्त है।

मैं समुद्र के सबसे गहरे हिस्से की खोज तो नहीं कर सकता, पर उसकी सतह पर बहती स्वास्थ्यप्रद हवा का आनंद ले सकता हूँ और अनुकूल पवन के साथ उसकी नीली लहरों पर नौकायन कर सकता हूँ। और मान लो कि मैं समुद्र की अत्यंत गहराइयों तक उतर भी जाऊँ, तो उससे क्या लाभ? वह न तो डूबते जहाज़ को बचा सकेगी और न ही डूबे हुए नाविक को उसके शोकाकुल परिवार के पास लौटा पाएगी। इसी प्रकार, परमेश्वर के सबसे गहरे रहस्यों को सुलझा लेने से मुझे कोई वास्तविक सहायता नहीं मिलेगी। परमेश्वर के प्रति थोड़े-से प्रेम और उनकी प्रति आज्ञाकारिता का सबसे सरल कार्य भी सबसे गहन ज्ञान से कहीं अधिक मूल्यवान है।

हे प्रभु, अनंत को मैं तेरे ही सुपुर्द करता हूँ। मुझे "ज्ञान के वृक्ष" की ऐसी भूख से बचा, जो मुझे तुझ में सच्चा जीवन जीने—अर्थात "जीवन के वृक्ष"—से भटका दे।



The Blessing of Hospitality

" In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.." Matthew 5: 16

Meal deliveries offer immense value to a church community as it fosters relationships and provides practical support during times of need. It is so much more than just a meal, it is a way to serve and love others, just as Jesus calls us to do.

Something as simple as receiving a meal specially prepared for you and your family during a time of need not only takes a great burden off you, it also reminds you that you have a family in Christ to support, encourage and carry you. Let this testimony encourage to share a meal with someone in need:

"We are so thankful for the incredible love and support the hospitality team has shown our family through Mealtrain.com as we welcomed our little baby. Each meal was more than just food — it was a reminder of God's goodness and the beautiful community He's surrounded us with. Your kindness, prayers, and generosity have truly been a gift during this special season." A family who has received meals

Consider this easy tried-and-tested quiche recipe to prepare for a someone in need! - Judie van der Merwe

Would you also like to share one of your favourite recipes? Email us at contact@dewarabia.com



Photo by Akhil

Recipe

JUDIE'S CHICKEN QUICHE

PREPARATION: 20 MIN BAKING: 45 MIN

by Judie van der Merwe
Church Hospitality Team Leader, Dubai

INGREDIENTS

Puff Pastry - 230 g approximately; **Chicken** - 1 cup, shredded; **Spinach** - 200 g, frozen; **Onion** - 1 piece, diced; **Feta Cheese** - 125 g; **Eggs** - 4, medium size; **Cream** - 1 cup

INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation
Start with pre-heating the oven to 180˚C. Spray a (disposable) dish with non-stick spray and line it with the puff pastry.

Sauté
On medium heat, Sauté onions for 5 minutes until cooked. Add the frozen spinach and cook for another 10 minutes until the spinach is defrosted. Add some salt and pepper to taste and let it cool down.

Whisk
While the spinach is cooling, whish together the eggs, cream along with salt and pepper.

Layer
Spoon the cooled spinach over the pastry evenly and add the shredded chicken on top. Place blocks or crumbs of feta evenly over the dish.

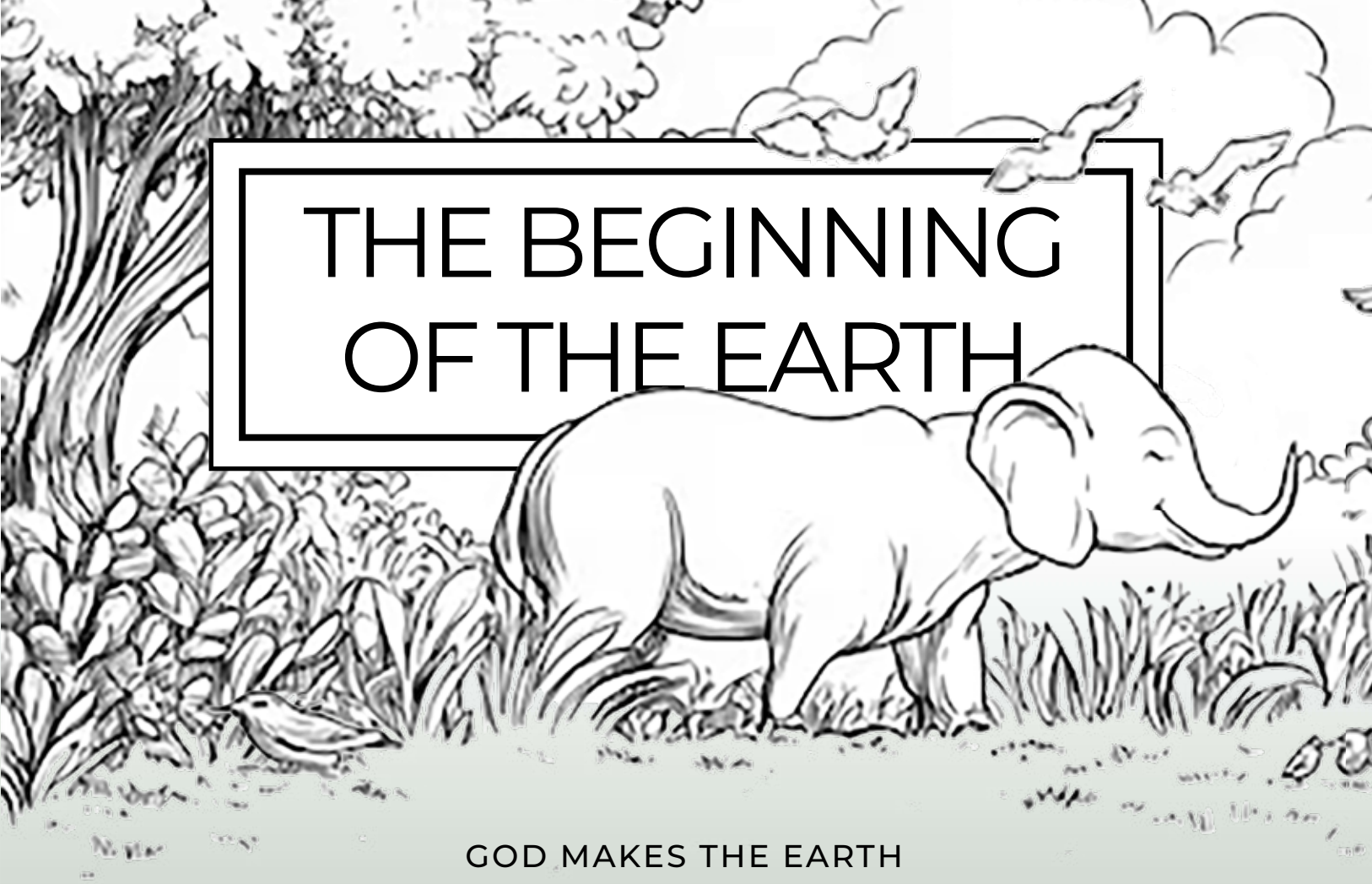
Bake
Cover the dish with a thin layer of the egg and cream mixture and bake for 45 minutes in the pre-heated oven until the quiche is set. Test this by inserting a toothpick in the middle. The quiche is ready to be served when it come out clean.

TIPS!

Variation - The chicken can be substituted for other meats, tofu or left out to make it vegetarian.

Hospitality - A few thoughtful touches to make your meal delivery especially helpful and caring:

- Gather information such as the address, delivery dates, allergies, (dis)likes, etc. Mealtrain.com is a free and useful platform for this.
- For everyone's convenience, use disposable dishes—no washing or returning required.
- Include a handwritten note with a scripture, prayer, or words of encouragement to the meal, it will be a treasured part of your gift.
- A home-cooked meal is often the most nutritious and appreciated choice. Alternatively, you can order a meal through a delivery service.



THE BEGINNING OF THE EARTH

GOD MAKES THE EARTH

[1] In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without shape and it was empty. Deep water covered the earth and everywhere was dark. The Spirit of God moved above the water. [3] God said, 'There will be light!' And there was light.

[4] God saw that the light was good.

He caused the light and the dark to be separate. [5] God called the light 'day'. He called the dark 'night'. Evening passed and then it was morning. That was the first day. [6] Then God said, 'A wide space will appear between the waters. So the waters will be in two separate places.' [7] So God made this wide space. He made the water under the space separate from the water that was above it. What God said happened. [8] God called the wide space 'sky'. Evening passed and then it was morning. That was the second day. [9] God said, 'The water that is under the sky will come together in one place. Then dry ground will appear.' And what God said happened. [10] God called the dry ground 'land'. He called the water that had come together 'sea'.

God looked at what He had made. He saw that it was good.

[11] Then God said, 'The land will cause plants to grow. There will be plants with their seeds and trees with their fruits. Each kind of plant and tree will have its own seeds and fruits.' And what God said happened. [12] All kinds of plants and trees began to grow in the ground. The plants made seeds. The trees made fruits with seeds in them. Each plant made its own kind of seeds.

God looked at what He had made. He saw that it was good.

[13] Evening passed and then it was morning. That was the third day. [14] God said, 'There will be lights all across the sky. They will make the day different from the night. They will show the seasons, days and years. [15] The lights in the sky will give light to the earth.' And what God said happened. [16] God made two great lights. The brighter light ruled over the day. The less bright light ruled over the night. God also made the stars. [17] God put all these lights in the sky to shine their light on the earth. [18] They were to rule over the day and night. They were to make the time of light separate from the time of dark.

God looked at what He had made. He saw that it was good.

[19] Evening passed and then it was morning. That was the fourth day. [20] God said, 'The waters will become full with many living things. Birds will appear and fly above the earth, all across the sky.' [21] God made big animals to live in the sea. He made every different kind of living thing that filled the sea. He made every different kind of bird to fly in the sky.



Colour me!

God looked at what He had made. He saw that it was good.

22 God blessed the animals and the birds. He said to them, 'Give birth to many young ones, so that you grow in number. Fill all the water in the seas. The birds also should become very many, all across the earth.' 23 Evening passed and then it was morning. That was the fifth day.
24 God said, 'Different kinds of animals will now appear on the land. There will be farm animals and wild animals. There will also be other small animals that move along the ground. There will be many kinds of animals and each kind will be different.' And what God said happened. 25 God made the different kinds of wild animals and the different kinds of farm animals. He made all the different kinds of animals that move along the ground.

God looked at what He had made. He saw that it was good.

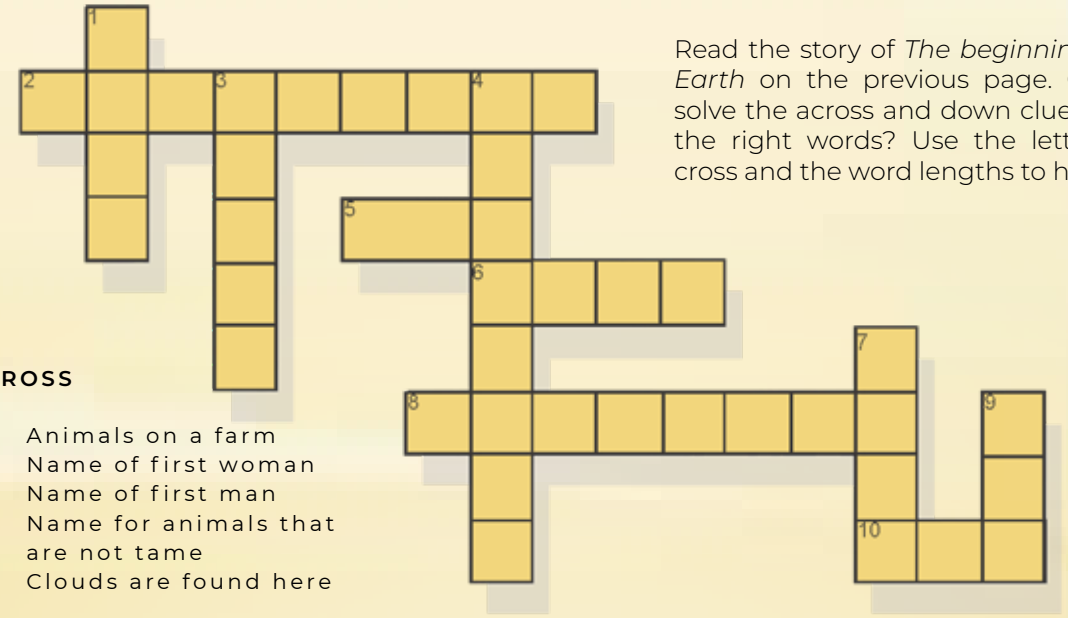
26 Then God said, 'We will make humans so that they are very much like us. They will rule over the fish in the sea and over the birds in the sky. They will rule over the farm animals. They will rule over the whole earth and all the animals that move along the ground.' 27 God made humans. He made them to be like Himself. He made some of them males and some of them females. 28 God blessed them. He said to them, 'Give birth to children. Grow in number. Fill the earth and rule over it. Rule over the fish in the sea. Rule over the birds in the sky. Rule over every different kind of living animal that moves along the ground.'
29 Then God said, 'Listen! I now give to you every plant on the earth as your food. I give you every plant that has seeds in it. I give you every tree that has fruit with a seed in it. I give them to you for your food. 30 I give to the animals green plants for their food. It will be food for all the animals on the earth, all the birds in the sky and all the animals that move along the ground. Everything that has life may eat every kind of green plant.' And what God said happened.

31 God looked at everything that He had made. He saw that it was very good.

Evening passed. And then it was morning. That was the sixth day. GENESIS 2 1 In that way God finished making the heavens and the earth, and everything that was in them. 2 The seventh day came. Then God stopped the work that He had been doing. He had finished His work and He rested on the seventh day.

3 God blessed the seventh day. He made it a special day, because He had finished making everything. He did not work on that day.' (Genesis 1-2:3, EASY)

Crossword



Read the story of *The beginning of the Earth* on the previous page. Can you solve the across and down clues to find the right words? Use the letters that cross and the word lengths to help you.

ACROSS

2 Animals on a farm
5 Name of first woman
6 Name of first man
8 Name for animals that are not tame
10 Clouds are found here

DOWN

1 These swim under water.
3 Name of our planet
4 What we call something that is made
7 Another name for oceans
9 Birds do this

Word Search

Can you find the words in the below list? And can you link each of these words with their matching pair?

C	Y	A	D	A	M	F	I	S	H	S	B
P	L	A	N	D	H	V	B	V	I	J	A
L	S	H	C	S	U	N	E	Y	X	B	V
A	E	I	Y	W	O	M	A	M	S	I	S
N	A	A	M	O	O	N	R	S	J	R	T
T	A	D	K	K	A	Y	T	D	P	D	A
S	C	R	E	S	T	L	H	K	O	S	R
Q	E	V	E	A	E	F	T	M	A	U	M

→ ↓

ADAM
BIRDS
EARTH
EVE
FISH
LAND
MOON
PLANTS
REST
SEA
STAR
SUN

Make a pair

- *globe*
- *sunday*
- *food*
- *lights*
- *homo sapiens*
- *cresent*
- *H_2O*
- *fins*
- *avians*
- *terra*
- *sol*
- *companion*

Email your Word Scramble and Questions answers to contact@dewarabia.com for a chance to win a book!

Word Scramble

Unscramble each clue word. Then use the letters to make the phrase that answers this question:

What did God say about what He created?

1	2		3	4	5		6	7	8	9

How many times did God say this? _____

Can you write down the verse numbers? _____

_____

ADY	9					
EARTWS	3	4				
UNS	5					
HGITN		1	6			
ONMO		7	8			
IGHTL					2	

Questions

1. The story of *The beginning of the Earth* on the previous page tells us that God made everything in six days. How did He create everything? _____
2. What did God make on Day 1? What is the last thing God made on Day 6? _____
3. What is special about humans? What job did God give them to do? _____
4. After six days God finished creating the earth. What did God do on Day 7? _____
5. What is your favourite animal God made that you want to thank Him for? _____

Find the Differences

Are you able to find the 17 differences between the two pictures?





"All things have been handed over to Me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

- Jesus

Matthew 11:27-28