

PRESBYTERIAN NETWORK

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ENGLAND & WALES



» EDUCATING CHILDREN AT HOME

»
**BIBLE DIFFICULTIES
EXPLAINED: PART 1**

»
**A GODLY KING:
ALFRED THE GREAT**

»
**HOW I LOVE
YOUR LAW**

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“ EDITOR'S NOTE

The United Kingdom is passing through a time of great difficulty.

There is political turmoil. Who will be prime minister? Will the UK leave the EU etc.? Some harvests have been poor. One farmer said that for 220 kg of seed sown, he harvested only 170 kg (echoes of Hag. 1:6)

Let us pray for our country. Pray for a revival of the Christian religion, for the advance of the gospel (2 Thess. 3:1). How we need the light of Scripture. The Bible contains the wisdom by which a nation is raised up. Pray for those in government (1 Tim. 2:1-5). Pray for God's merciful providences. Pray that the name of God, and the name of the Lord Jesus, will be honoured in this country once more. ◦

📁 SUBSCRIPTIONS AND GIFTS

We wish to thank readers for cheques paying subscriptions and making gifts towards the publishing costs of the *Presbyterian Network*. Some may find it helpful to know that subscriptions and donations can be paid via **PayPal** (and those living abroad can make a payment in their own currency.) To do this, you simply go on [PayPal.com](https://www.paypal.com) and donate/pay money to the following account: **treasurer@epcew.org.uk** ◦

📍 SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

📍 BARRY



The congregation in Barry is thankful to God for being taken forward under the faithful ministry of his servant who labours tirelessly amongst us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding his gracious provision, the Lord continues to test our faith and commitment to him (individually and corporately) in different ways.

1. Arrangements for relocation to the centre of Barry are progressing, with a planning application recently submitted to the Council. Members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (in the USA) have given donations towards the building work, and others are organizing sending teams to help with the renovation of the rear hall without cost to the church. The congregation has chosen a new name: 'Christ Church Presbyterian'.

2. Rev. Andrew Goodman and his family will be returning to the United States for six months in late spring next year (2020). Arrangements for ministry during his absence are in the early stages; we look to the Lord to provide.
3. The health of some members is an ongoing concern. Such trials of faith draw us all closer to God in dependence upon him.
4. In July, a Holiday Bible Club is scheduled and will again be staffed by a team from the United States. We pray that the week of morning meetings will be well attended by children from the locality.

In all these matters may the Lord be glorified as we look to him by faith to meet our need and add to our congregation those who live in the neighbourhood.

✍️ Russell Young

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

BERLIN

Our highlight over the last month must be 15 May. A mission team from Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, came for two days to help us with outreach. We were able to host our first evangelistic evening. It does not sound like much, but it was a milestone for the congregation in Berlin. It was better attended than we expected. We now want to repeat this event on a regular basis.

As the church is growing, we feel the need for elders and deacons. It would help the church to move forward. We are trusting in the Lord and know that his providence is better than our timing. He will give the right men at the right time.

I also want to share a personal encouragement with you. Since the work in Berlin started, we have had good contacts with the Reformed congregation in Heidelberg. Last year they were able to plant a church in Hannover, just a few hours away from us. The minister there is a good friend of mine. It is great to see the church of Christ grow and it is great to have a fellow Gospel worker close by.

 Johannes Müller

BLACKBURN

The church asks for prayer for the ministry of the Word of God. Rev. Norman Green continues his weekly ministry. The church has started open air preaching again, doing this every other Saturday.

Some members have suffered bereavement and need comfort from the Lord. The

church is encouraged that recently two new families have come to it.

In August, Norman, with Judith and Benjamin, will go to Kenya for two weeks, where Norman will preach at a Reformed Conference and in various churches.

 The Editor

BURY ST EDMUNDS

In our morning services, Matthew is preaching through 1 Corinthians, and in the evenings Benjamin has begun a series in Nehemiah. Midweek, Benjamin has been leading us through the book of Acts, before prayer. It is our prayer that the Lord would use his Word to strengthen each of our members in their love and obedience to our God, whether they have walked with him all their lives or are newer to the faith.

We have just had a sad goodbye to an American military family who were a real encouragement to the church, but, in the Lord's kind providence, we have also rejoiced to bring two young families into membership in the past few months (one English and one American). The regular outreach of the church continues, and we have begun planning a low-key week of outreach for the first week of August with lunchtime talks.

Murdo Alex Macritchie and Ian Pape continue to be hard pressed with cancer, but both give testimony to the Lord's sustaining grace through great suffering. The Lord is gracious, merciful and kind, and we rejoice that he sustains his people.

 Benjamin Wontrop

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

CARDIFF - BETHEL



Colin Wilson, new deacon at Bethel

The last few months have seen an increase in visitors to the church, some more regularly than others. Matt Faux, a student at Union Theological College, and his wife Rachel presented their second son, Joshua,

for baptism and we were delighted that Colin Wilson was ordained and installed as a deacon in the church, helping to ease the workload for the other deacons.

Our regular Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Saturday has grown in popularity and this year there were 99 children hunting for 1200 eggs, creating a great family atmosphere. This event is welcomed by the community and gave an opportunity for conversations to take place and also to publicize the Sunday Services and children's clubs, Explorers and Bethel Youth Group (BYG).

An Easter craft event for mums and their children was also organized with a gospel message given by Deborah Woolley. The Women's Committee has been busy and organized an afternoon tea and pamper session in June where the message of salvation will be proclaimed.

Some members struggle with long-term illnesses and one older member, too weak to attend services for the last few years, died recently.

 Patricia Stowell

CARDIFF - IMMANUEL

In April, the church marked its 20th anniversary. Older members remember the very poor circumstances - the 'wooden hut' - in which we first met. The Lord has been faithful to us. He has preserved for us the preaching of God's Word, which is so fundamental to Christian life.

Currently we are experiencing some hard trials. Mavis' daughter, Judith, after suffering with cancer, was taken to be with the Lord. We grieve, but we know that at death 'the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies' (Westminster Confession, 32.1). Several of our older men are quite seriously ill.

But there are encouragements in church life. Contact with our neighbourhood has increased recently: a group of disabled people asked to attend our coffee morning. The Hebrew Bible Week held in February was well attended and a success. Our church retreat in Sidmouth in May was a time of fellowship with brothers and sisters from several churches. Together we were able to relax and spend time in John's Gospel.

In August we must say goodbye to Iestyn and his family as he moves to a new field of ministry. We are glad to have Benjamin Mitchell with us for an internship this summer. We pray that the Lord will give gifts to his church.

 Peter Naylor

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

CHELMSFORD

We are very privileged in Chelmsford to welcome many people who come from other countries, some of which are closed to the gospel. Many of these are students studying at the local university, and recently we have seen Moslems and Hindus in our services, with a number attending the current Christianity Explored Course. A couple have professed faith and some are very serious about their search for the truth.

This has been an encouraging year for student work, and we have greatly enjoyed fellowship with those who have been attending church. Some will be leaving us as they finish their studies, one back to his home in China and others moving away for new work. We will miss them, but are praying that students from next term's intake will make their church home with us.

Some church members recently enjoyed an outing to London to take part in a Christian Heritage Tour. This guided tour began in the British Museum looking at artefacts relating to the Old Testament, and then moved on to a tour of sites which are particularly significant in an appreciation of the rich Christian heritage of London. Those who went found it extremely interesting and were encouraged and blessed by the experience.

This term in our mid-week meetings we are following the Living Christianity Course produced by the Christian Institute, which considers modern culture in our world today, and how Christians should relate to it. It is proving an interesting course.

 Ruth Ferguson

CHELTENHAM - NAUNTON LANE

As in previous years, Stephen and Audrey Johnston will be leading a team to the Presbyterian Church in Mangalia, Romania, from 24-31 July. Development of the children's work in Mangalia and nearby Limanu since last year's visit has been encouraging. Therefore, this aspect of evangelism will receive much attention this year with four days of Holiday Bible Clubs in both places.

We continue to look to God for the provision of a minister; we have been almost one year without a minister now. During this vacancy, the elders have taken up all the needful pastoral visits, as a few people have had, or are expecting, surgery.

We are going through 1 Corinthians in the mid-week meetings, and look forward to studying the book of Amos after that. The first Wednesday of the month is a dedicated prayer meeting.

Michael Cochran organised a concert which about 200 children from local evangelical churches attended. They received a clear presentation of the gospel through songs with words straight from the Scriptures.

Larry and Mandy Wilkes, from the USA, were at our last Prime Time meeting. We got to know them better through a Q&A time. They are here with Mission to the World and will work in the Whaddon Road Church.

 Tai-Tuck Yu

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

CHELTENHAM - WHADDON ROAD



The Wilkes family have finally arrived! They are settling in well, having just found more permanent accommodation. The hope is that Larry Wilkes will be able to share some of the pastoral work but also that we will have a greater capacity as a church to reach the lost of Cheltenham.

Our Easter children's choir concert was well attended and I was able to share something of the good news of Christ's death and resurrection to those present. During our Lord's Day services at Easter it was a privilege to focus in on Isaiah 52:13-53:12, contemplating the Suffering Servant.

We are encouraged by an increase in attendances and in membership which is a real blessing. We are geographically quite spread out (as far south as Bristol and as far north as Tewkesbury). Wisdom, love, patience and energy are needed as the church grows. There are also several members who have various struggles.

We continue through 2 Samuel in the morning and Revelation in the evening on the Lord's Day, and are studying the second book of the Psalms in our midweek meeting. The increase at our midweek

meeting is a particular encouragement, showing a healthy appetite for the Word of God and a recognition of our utter dependence on God.

 David Pfeiffer

DURHAM

'But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"' (Galatians 4:4-6)

Our church recently had the great encouragement of seeing the baptism of three adopted children. These children have been with their new parents for around two years but it was only recently that they were adopted. As a result of this new family situation the children were brought for baptism to receive God's covenant sign.

The baptisms painted a living picture of our adoption into the family of God. The minister preached from the above text, pointing us to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of a great family of fallen men and women.

Please pray for this family. The children come burdened with many issues from their early life and their parents must lean heavily on the Lord each day. But in earthly adoption let us all remember our spiritual adoption by our heavenly Father.

 Phil Baiden

 **SPOTLIGHT** on the Churches

 **GATESHEAD**


It has been a joy to see Sunderland Presbyterian Church start weekly services. The reports from this fresh work have been nothing but encouraging so far and the work has sparked some interest in the community.

Our project for All Saint's Church in Newcastle City Centre is going ahead. Recently, we had a fund-raising event which opened up some interesting opportunities for the funding of the new windows. A local company is interested in helping out substantially. Furthermore, it is promising to see how the building attracts a good number of people. Members of our church have had opportunities to witness about Christ to visitors of the not yet completed refurbishment.

One of our ministries is directed to the Asian community in Gateshead and Newcastle. Hanoq Yaqub, who is currently under care of the Presbytery, is teaching the Asian group weekly. Lately, one of the most faithful attenders at this Bible Study was taken to a detention centre to be sent back to Pakistan, which would have meant persecution for this young man. It was wonderful to see how the Lord provided and, after more than three weeks in the detention centre, he was released following a 10-minute hearing.

 Florian Weicken

 **HEXHAM**

The last several months have been full of blessing in Hexham. The church has seen nearly 10 new visitors and regular attenders, as well as seeing a young man profess faith in Christ. At the same time the church has enjoyed the blessing of fellowship with Gateshead, Sunderland, and Durham Presbyterian Churches through a church holiday in April and then a church walk in May. This fellowship has continued to be used by the Lord to strengthen the congregation. There will be new members joining the congregation in the coming months, Lord willing, and there will be a Christianity Explored course later this year. We continue to pray that the Lord would raise up officers from the congregation.

 Joshua Rieger

 **HULL**

We continue to worship twice on the Lord's Day and our attendance figures remain steady. We were sad to see Barry Shucksmith and his wife move from the area due to family circumstances. We will miss him but we are thankful for the help and encouragement that he gave us by preaching on a regular basis. In fact he preached the very first sermon in our church which was many years ago.

One of our members, Tracey, has made good progress at the Union School of Theology with a view of training to be scripture reader for SASRA. Her training in the college is

 **SPOTLIGHT** on the Churches

almost complete and she is hoping to begin a placement but we do not know where yet.

The monthly coffee mornings are an encouragement and for the past four months we have added a devotional time at the end. Something from the Bible is read or we talk about some current issue and try to bring God into this. We have people coming who do not attend the normal church services.

Quite a number of us cannot attend the services as often as they would like due to illness.

The fact that we have no pastor is still an ongoing concern, but we look to the Lord to provide the right man to lead the work.

 Chris Lawson

 **OXFORD**

Nine months have passed since the beginning of Oxford EPC and we have so much to give thanks to God for: the use of St Luke's Chapel for our morning services continues to be an amazing opportunity; attendance at both services has been encouraging; and there is a real sense of love in the church. It has also been fantastic to see a number of students come along, as well as some non-Christians from the community and the University. We long to see sinners saved so please pray for the Lord to add to the church through the conversion of the lost.

It has been a blessing to host many visitors, some of whom are in Oxford for a weekend,

others for slightly longer. We are praying for a gathering of locally-based families, couples and individuals, to further establish the core group.

Andy will be travelling to the USA at least twice in the coming months, to raise further support and interest in Oxford EPC, and we are working hard to navigate the 'visa minefield' to get Rev. Michael Cochran, together with Laura and Fox, to Oxford as soon as possible.

 Andrew Young

 **SALFORD**

Thankful for over a year as a church, we are learning to make more of every Lord's Day together. On Sunday mornings we have been hearing what it means to be Christ's church from Ephesians; it is encouraging to see whole families engaged together. We are supporting those young in the faith to develop healthy routines for discipleship. It has been good to hear discussions from men's breakfasts on 'Disciplines of a Godly Man' feeding into conversations on Sundays.

We are aware of the needs and challenges, as well as great opportunities. More than half of our regular congregation were not attending church just over a year ago. At the start of April, Chris preached a topical series on 'How does Christ's resurrection benefit us?' Having invited people from the neighbourhood, we were disappointed to have no extras at Easter. However, we continue to have non-Christians attending regularly and hearing the Word preached.

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

It is a joy to experience fellowship in the gospel. Our members have been contributing more, especially in welcome and refreshments. We were encouraged by a team visiting from Greenville, South Carolina, joining us in making Christ known in Salford.

 Rosemary Statter

SHEFFIELD

Since the completion of the Chapel extension, there have been fresh shoots of growth in the work of the church. New members have been added, with a number of covenant baptisms. Our Lord's Day class for adults on the Westminster Larger Catechism has re-commenced after a six month break. Something new though is a catechism class for younger children, and it has been well received by the children and parents.

A monthly Bible study for women on Friday nights has begun with teaching on the Book of Proverbs. The teaching is by the minister and then the women are left to discuss, pray together and have fellowship. We are thankful for its warm reception. Of great encouragement has been a new Christianity Explored Course, with people bringing friends who desire to explore the Christian faith through the Gospel of Mark.

Lincoln Church Planting Studies. This work began in early 2019. Each month the studies in Lincoln grow in group unity and an expectation for a church planting work. Rev. Ben Thomas has been support raising in the United States in preparation to

come as a family, to lead the work further. Hopefully, they will be here by July, Lord willing.

 Kevin Bidwell

SOLIHULL

Our children are really enjoying the Sunday School and it is helping them to focus more during the morning service as they recognize the passage and remember the key verse. We continue to see regular visitors but long for people to stay and become committed Christians.

The building we currently use for Sunday services closes in September. We have found a new building in a different part of Solihull, which we plan to use to launch our summer mission week and then regularly on Sundays from the beginning of September. A team from Sovereign Grace Presbyterian Church, North Carolina will be coming again to support us and reach out to the local community during the mission week.

We have welcomed six new members since January and one member has transferred her membership to Trinity IPC in Aberdeen where she is at University. Our oldest member (99 years old) passed away to be with the Lord in February. She was a faithful member and much loved.

This financial year our income has exceeded our expenditure (for the first time), our attendance at both services has grown by just over 20% and membership by 16%.

 Dr Rachel Morgan

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

SUNDERLAND

We have been overwhelmed by the Lord's goodness to us at the start of this work. We began public worship on Easter Sunday. It was an occasion of tremendous joy to celebrate Christ's resurrection with a new advance of His kingdom.

Thus far we have been encouraged by visitors worshipping with us at each service. Our numbers (and spirits) have been buoyed by extended family members, friends of friends, local Christians, and believers from further afield.

We are blessed to have a core group who have a heart for the city and an excitement to watch the Lord's hand at work in it. The love among those attending is evident; in a small body, we lean especially on one another and on each person's specific gifts. The Hiltons are expecting their third baby mid-June, and are on the cusp of moving from Gateshead to Sunderland.

 Anna Hilton



IMMANUEL CHURCH, TRANÅS, SWEDEN

Pastor David Bergmark is ending his service as pastor in Immanuelskyrkan in mid-June this year. He has served as pastor in Immanuelskyrkan since its start some 15 years ago. We members have benefited so much over the years from his careful and consistent teaching from the Word of God, and we are very grateful for this. The Bergmark family is moving to the USA for two years of studies at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida.

We are now in the process of searching for a new pastor and we ask for your prayers for this. We are grateful for the support of our assessor elders in the UK, Hugo Heij and Phil Baiden, at this time.

At Easter we arranged an 'Emmaus walk', based on the discovery of the risen Christ by the men walking to Emmaus. Members from different churches gathered at an outdoor place in town, and walked through the town, stopping at five or six places to read Scriptures, sing, pray, and get some thoughts for meditation and discussion as we walked to the next stop. Some 40-50 people participated. We are glad for this good time of fellowship.

 Sune Jäderberg

HEBREW BIBLE WEEK

25 FEB - 1 MARCH 2019



Ministers of God's Word need to be able to read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. These biblical languages are often taught in seminary but, once in the ministry, a man comes under time pressures and he can find it difficult to maintain the use of the Hebrew and Greek text.

The aim of the Hebrew Bible Week was to help counter that. It was held in Immanuel, Cardiff, in February, and was well attended by men, and two ladies, from across the country.

During the week, we concentrated on the text

of 2 Kings, but also studied one chapter of Isaiah. We looked at some basic features of Hebrew, and the most basic form of the verb. We memorized the opening two verses of Psalm 96.

It was great to spend time together. We had opportunities for fellowship

at meal times. Members of the church helped by providing lunch each day and we used a couple of local restaurants for evening meals.

We hope that a second 'Hebrew Bible Week' can be arranged for next year (2020) with a focus on the Prophecy of Isaiah. ◦

Psalm 96:1-2

שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ
 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ:
 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה בְּרִכּוֹ שְׂמוֹ
 בְּשָׂרוּ מִיּוֹם-לְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ:

EDUCATING CHILDREN AT HOME

One Mum's Experience

Even before we met, my husband and I had each decided to home educate our potential children! We now have six, aged between nine and two, all of whom join in 'home-school' to some extent. With only six years' experience, limited to primary level, I certainly do not have all the answers. But, having been asked to address some practical questions prospective home educators may have, I hope I can help.



ALISON RICHARDS

AM I REALLY UP TO IT?

I confess, this was not a question I seriously pondered before I began home educating. (With an academic background and several years' teaching experience at secondary level, I – proudly and erroneously – assumed that educating my own, primary-aged children would be easy.) But it is a question I have asked myself countless times since.

However, the question often arises out of fear: fear of failing my children; of appearing to fail; of others' opinions or criticisms; of too much work; of my children not being as clever/ accomplished/ obedient/ godly as others'. But, like all of the Christian life, home educating involves the constant exercise of faith.

So, if you are asking yourself this question, the answer is 'yes' and 'no': you are 'up to it' in that you don't need a teaching qualification (or degree) to teach your children; nor do you have to be creative, energetic or accomplished. It is possible (and fun) to learn alongside your children. You don't need to be an expert in every subject. If you feel a particular deficiency, you can enlist the help of a friend, church/ family member or tutor for that specific area.

On the other hand, none of us is sufficient. Without the Spirit growing his fruit in us, we have neither the wisdom, grace nor strength to bear the responsibility for our children's spiritual and academic training and the shaping of their characters. But – provided it has its roots in humility, not fear – a feeling of inadequacy is a prerequisite, not a preclusion, to home educating. Pray for faith in the Lord's enabling power. If he has called you to do it, he will equip you.

WHERE CAN I FIND GOOD MATERIAL?

As the number of Christian home educators in the UK increases, so does the availability of Christian resources. The majority are aimed at the US market. Several are only available there and must be shipped at considerable cost. But many are now distributed in the UK. (Conquest Books is a good place to start online). Others can be downloaded. However, whilst it would be ideal to have explicitly Christian resources for every subject, it may be necessary, with discernment, to use secular material. Applied Christianly, such resources may be more effective than a weaker Christian programme.

The selection of resources is potentially mesmerising. There is a range of approaches, depending on the amount of time you have available for planning, and your budget. You can hand-pick materials for each subject separately – you may end up using a different publisher for each subject and supplementing these texts with other resources so that you get exactly what you want. Alternatively, you can opt for a ready-made programme of study, encompassing multiple subjects. A popular choice is Ambleside Online: a free online curriculum based on the educational principles of Charlotte Mason. Sonlight sells age-appropriate curriculum packages. Or you can delegate some of these choices, either within a parent-led co-operative or to tutors (for example, some parents use online tutors such as NSW Learning for secondary students; Cambridge has a Classical Conversations Community; and Newcastle Christian School provides tuition in the core subjects two-and-a-half days a week and guided home study assignments).

HOW CAN I STRUCTURE THE WEEK/DAY?

One of the downsides of being trained as a teacher was that I was slow to realize that I do not need to replicate the school classroom experience at home. I am educating *my* children, in *my* home. I do not have to manage everything the same way as an institution does for a class of 30. I have the freedom to organize our schedule and determine the atmosphere of our home as best glorifies God and serves the needs of my family.

That said, I have a timetable; and a schoolroom. God is a God of order; children thrive on routine; structure is a coping mechanism for me, too. And I am in charge. I set the work; the children are responsible to me for its completion, to an acceptable standard. But I no longer try to deliver Ofsted-rated lessons at precisely 30-minute intervals!

The structure of the week will depend upon whether you are part of a co-op or similar group. If so, the week will be organized around the scheduled meeting times, with time at home spent completing assignments and studying subjects not covered in communal lessons. If not, you can write your own schedule. My husband and I begin planning each year by prioritizing the subjects we want to teach (we don't have to follow the National Curriculum); then I fit them into a timetable, ensuring that we cover Bible and the 'Three Rs' daily and additional subjects as appropriate. We set apart one afternoon a week for a field

trip or nature walk. Musical and sporting activities are determined by available classes and whether they fit with the shape of our week. Every family will have their own priorities.

Unlike a rigid school timetable, a home-school schedule has to have some flexibility. The shape of each day depends greatly on the composition of the family; it will evolve as children grow older and

siblings are added. Some 'give' in the system is needed to accommodate the interruptions of home life. In addition, there are seasons when it is impossible to stick to the pre-ordained timetable (e.g. moving home; family illness; responsibility for ailing relatives; pregnancy, miscarriage, and childbirth). At such times, I have sought help, or pared back our schedule for a limited period, occasionally jettisoning everything other than the absolute basics. However, it is amazing what the children have learned during these seasons given wholesome and challenging reading material.

The relative flexibility of home educating can be a benefit when setting the structure of the academic year as a whole. If it is possible to take some holidays outside of those scheduled by the education system, families can capitalize on quieter trips or cheaper vacations.

Many ask, 'How is it possible to teach several children, of different ages, and care for pre-schoolers/toddlers/nursing infants?' It is tricky. And some days, it seems to fall apart. It helps to schedule Maths during the baby's naptime. But it becomes even

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A feeling of inadequacy is a prerequisite, not a preclusion, to home educating. Pray for faith in the Lord's enabling power. If he has called you to do it, he will equip you.

more challenging when the toddler drops morning naps. I have tried playpens, slings, school-time toys, lots of Duplo and cuddles. Different strategies work for different people.

However, positively, much home educating material is designed with multi-age teaching in mind. At least at primary level, this can work for most subjects other than English and Maths. (Depending on the age gaps and range of the children in a family, teenage students may need to work more individually or require specialist tuition in certain subjects). All of the children study the same material, engaging in activities at different levels, where necessary.

Older children can study additional subjects (e.g. languages) when the younger ones have completed their lessons. Pairing children of similar ages for Literature and Writing allows them to tackle age-appropriate texts and writing tasks without duplicating work.

For Maths, Spelling, Grammar and Handwriting, children can use workbooks at their own level and complete a checklist of activities, most of them independently, whilst mum circulates and gives individual tuition. It is heartening that, depending to some extent upon ability and maturity, children generally become more independent once they hit age seven to nine, enabling mum to devote more attention to youngsters who require more help.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIALIZATION?

This is the question I am asked most frequently. Perhaps our anxiety about this arises out of an unquestioning acceptance of the education system – which, necessarily, herds together peer groups – as the norm. The family is the building block of society. Within the family structure, children learn to honour the God-given authority of their parents. If blessed with siblings, they also learn to live with, love unconditionally, and value those with widely differing personalities, gifts, interests and ages. Add to this the extended and church families, and they interact with various authority figures and with the youngest to oldest members of society.

Thus, home education has a significant social advantage over the school system in that a child's interactions, relationships and friendships are not artificially stratified. Instead of spending the majority of their waking hours with others of exactly their age, they learn naturally to be comfortable with those of all ages and abilities; to conduct themselves appropriately in relation to both adults and peers; to look up to, respect and emulate responsible older children; to look out for, accommodate and protect those younger and weaker. And their primary influence during the formative years is their parents.

This is not to deny the importance of special friends. In this regard, church children's clubs and YP groups and

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Home education has a significant social advantage over the school system in that a child's interactions, relationships and friendships are not artificially stratified.

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I don't have as many opportunities as I might amongst potential contacts at the school gate. Instead, my children are my main mission field right now.



Richards Home School

campus can be invaluable in nurturing solid friendships; conferences (such as Sheffield PC's Reformation Conference) allow young people and their families to meet others from across the denomination. Our children relish the 48 hours spent away with the North-Eastern churches each Easter. In addition, many areas have informal groups of Christian home educating families which arrange regular social gatherings, educational outings and sporting events. Co-ops also provide intellectual sparring partners.

And opportunities for team sports? Look for a local club which does not have commitments on the Lord's Day. Otherwise, consider individual sports, supplementing these with whatever sporting activities your local home-ed group can arrange.

But what about the evangelistic opportunities afforded by having one's children within the education system? Many Christians see children as a fifth column, granting access to non-Christian

parents and inroads into the local community. It is true that, as a home-educator, I don't have as many opportunities as I might amongst potential contacts at the school gate. Instead, my children are my main mission field right now. And they watch and learn as we show hospitality to and interact as a family with unsaved relatives, neighbours or acquaintances. I pray that they will desire to share the gospel as they embrace Christ themselves. Until then, my quiverful of arrows need their shafts strengthened and their barbs sharpened in order to be ready.

ARE THERE ANY PITFALLS I SHOULD AVOID?

Home educators have the enormous privilege of directing their children's moral education. However, many Christian teachers draw a *false dichotomy between academics and character development*. Granted, it is possible to focus on the former at the expense of the latter. But that doesn't mean we should dismiss

the quest for academic success as a worldly, self-centred preoccupation. Rather, rigorous academic study can be a means of developing character: it requires application, self-discipline, perseverance, submission to instruction. Additionally, God-honouring teaching materials and the careful application of them foster moral understanding and encourage children to glorify God. We should promote the pursuit of all-round excellence.

As in all well doing, it is easy to *become weary and discouraged*. *Overload* is a common complaint. I have often cried, 'I simply do not have the time and energy for everything I have to do!' However, this is sinful self-pity and flawed thinking. I do have time to do all that God has called me to do; I must prayerfully identify his priorities for me in my current season of life and stick diligently to them – possibly seeking help with or delegating tasks I don't have to do myself; and not distracting myself from my duty.

Some distractions result from *drawing unhelpful comparisons* with other home educators and with the school system. 'Mummy blogs' and social media can also feed anxiety, as highly selective self-presentation potentially distorts reality and leaves readers feeling disheartened at their inadequacy in comparison to the incredible energy and ability of super-mums. Such skewed perspectives can also lead to muddled priorities. Martha-like, I have neglected the 'one thing needful' in favour of getting things done. But my walk with

Christ should be my first priority. And the educating of my children must be done to his glory in constant reliance upon him.

Additionally, home educating can be *relatively isolating*. I have found it invaluable to meet periodically with a small group of like-minded mothers and am refreshed and refocused by their godly perspectives. It might be helpful for churches, whenever possible, to consider home educating mothers when scheduling women's activities. And dads must ensure that their wives don't feel as if they are doing everything alone.

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Home educating has humbled me and exposed my sin more than anything else I have done. It is hard work; and I am perennially tempted to give up. But I am fortified by the conviction that God has called me to this privileged task and he will supply all my needs.

In conclusion, home educating has humbled me and exposed my sin more than anything else I have done. It is hard work; and I am perennially tempted to give up. But I am fortified by the conviction that God has called me to this privileged task and he will supply all my needs. It is also an inexpressible blessing to be involved intimately in every part of my children's development; to have the joy of their company all day; to direct and share with them their educational experience, learning much with them along the way; and

to be free to explore every subject from a godly perspective. Home education will not save my children, nor protect them from all evil. Only Christ can do that. But my husband and I sow with tears and prayer, water with instruction, and look to the covenant LORD to give the increase. I hope that many of you will be encouraged as you do, or contemplate undertaking, the same sacred task. ◦

PART 1



Bible Difficulties Explained

THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE CANAANITE NATIONS

REV. DOUGLAS
McCALLUM

In the first half of the book of Joshua, we read how Israel conquered the land of Canaan. In obedience to God's command, his people drive out the inhabitants of the land and devote them to destruction.

It is a compelling account of the Lord's power and faithfulness. But it is also an account that troubles many thoughtful readers. It seems to imply that the God of the Bible condones ethnic cleansing.

People sometimes object to Christianity by saying something like this: 'How can you believe in a God who wipes out entire nations, who orders the killing of whole populations, including their women and children? Is that not genocide? How can you worship such a barbaric God?' How do you respond to such an objection? What should you say if someone accuses the God of the Bible of being a cruel, genocidal despot?

In what follows, I want to consider three important areas that, when taken together, provide what I believe to be a robust, biblical framework for dealing with this objection: 1. the character of God; 2. the unique nature of Israel's mission; 3. how the conquest of Canaan applies to Christians today.

1. THE CHARACTER OF GOD

God is the sovereign Creator of

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God did not destroy the Canaanites because of their race. He destroyed them because of their wickedness. What happens in Joshua is an act of divine justice, not ethnic cleansing.

the universe. This is his world. He made everything that exists, which means that, ultimately, the land of Canaan did not belong to the Canaanites. It belonged to the Lord. He therefore had every right to do with it as he pleased. If he chose to drive out the nations that lived there and place his own people in the land, that was entirely his prerogative. As Paul says in another context, 'O man, who are you to reply against God?' (Rom. 9:20)

At the same time, God is not arbitrary. He is the righteous Judge. The Bible explains that what happened to the Canaanites was an act of divine judgment for their sins, foretold to Abraham (Gen. 15:16). They were guilty of all sorts of abominable practices, including incest, bestiality, and child sacrifice (see Lev. 18 & 20; Deut. 9:5). In other words, God did not destroy the Canaanites because of their race. He destroyed them because of their wickedness. What happens in Joshua is an act of divine justice, not ethnic cleansing.

But God is also the gracious Saviour. There were provisions for the Canaanites to be saved. If they had repented and professed faith in the one true God, they would have been spared. The prime example of this is Rahab and her family, in Joshua 2. If the conquering of Canaan had been an act of ethnic cleansing, no one would have been saved.

So, in answer to the question whether God ordered ethnic cleansing, we can say no, definitely not. It was an act of divine justice. We must keep three truths in mind: God is the Creator, the Judge, and the Saviour.

More specifically, though, we must remember the unique nature of Israel's mission to conquer Canaan.

2. THE NATURE OF ISRAEL'S MISSION TO CONQUER CANAAN

Israel's conquest of Canaan was a unique, one-off, not-to-be-repeated event in redemptive history. As such, it is not possible to draw upon it in order to justify any act of genocide, nor does it provide a template for wars of ethnic cleansing. Let me explain.

The land of Canaan – the Promised Land – had a special place in God's redemptive plans. It formed part of God's original promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:7). As 'the promised land', Canaan was, on the one hand, a large-scale embodiment of the tabernacle-temple (Exod. 25:8; Num. 35:34) and, on the other hand, a small-scale picture and foreshadowing of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11:14-16; 12:22). The land of Canaan, like the tabernacle-temple and the new heavens and new earth, was a place where God dwelt in a

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We must keep three truths in mind: God is the Creator, the Judge, and the Saviour.

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God cannot be 'at home' with sin, whether in Eden, the tabernacle-temple, the heavenly Jerusalem, or, as in this particular case, Canaan.

special way. (Other connections may also be noted: for example, the Garden of Eden was a dwelling of God; the church is a temple of the Holy Spirit; and Christ himself is, of course, the ultimate dwelling of God.)

But as such, the land, like the tabernacle-temple and the new creation, was holy. It was holy because it was the place where God dwelt with his people. This is important because, as God's holy land, sin and defilement could not be tolerated. God cannot be 'at home' with sin, whether in Eden, the tabernacle-temple, the heavenly Jerusalem, or, as in this particular case, Canaan.

And this explains why Israel had to execute a 'holy war' against the Canaanites: their presence in the land defiled it. They polluted the land with their uncleanness. And as a result, the land needed to be purified as the place of God's holy presence.

It is therefore vital to recognize that the command to devote the Canaanites to destruction was a unique command for that specific period of redemptive history. It was designed to effect a once-for-all, not-to-be-repeated cleansing of the land. And there were quite different rules of warfare for cities outside the Promised Land (Deut. 20). Holy war was only to be carried out against the cities within Canaan in order to purify it and to protect the Israelites from falling into idolatry.



Battle of Jericho, conquest of Canaan

What we read in Joshua, then, was a unique event in redemptive history that had a specific, divinely sanctioned purpose. It provides no warrant whatsoever for the evil practice of ethnic cleansing.

How, though, are we, as 21st century, new covenant Christians, meant to apply Israel's conquest of Canaan to our situation today?

3. APPLICATION TO CHRISTIANS TODAY

There are, I believe, three main applications that we can make from the unique events of the first half of the book of Joshua to the church situation in which we find ourselves today.

1. We too are engaged in holy war. Just as Israel fought in a holy war on God's side, so too do we. But there are at least two important differences.

First, whereas Joshua's holy war was waged primarily against human opponents, New Testament holy war is waged against spiritual opponents, Satan and his demonic assistants (Eph. 6:12ff). The devil wants to destroy our holiness. And we must fight against him, using spiritual armour.

Second, whereas Israel fought to conquer Canaan with swords, our holy war encompasses the whole world and takes the form of evangelism rather than physical conflict. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is, in one sense, Jesus' call to arms – the arms of gospel preaching and prayer. Jesus Christ is going forth to conquer by his Word and Spirit (Rev. 19; Psalm 110).

2. Jesus Christ will one day come to wage a war of final destruction. The extermination of the Canaanites does not justify ethnic cleansing in the world today. Rather, it anticipates final judgment. What happened to the Canaanites was, so to speak, an intrusion into this present world of Jesus' final, eschatological cleansing of the entire world and his sending of unbelievers into hell.

When you meet someone who balks at God's treatment of the Canaanites, you can explain to them that a far worse judgment at the

end of the world awaits those who persist in rebellion against God.

3. Thank God for Jesus Christ! For only he can save us from that final judgment. Perhaps you wonder why Israel was not destroyed in the land (at least, not initially; they were eventually exiled). Why were they not devoted to destruction? After all, were they not sinful like the Canaanites? What made the difference so that they, though sinful, could yet remain in God's holy land?

The short answer is that the Israelites were provided with sacrifices that were devoted to destruction instead of them. God's holy war was waged against these animal substitutes, with the result that Israel was spared.

Now bring it forward to today: why aren't you destroyed, despite your sin? Because at the cross, Jesus was devoted to destruction instead of you. God's holy war against sin was waged against him so that you might be spared.

Does the Bible condone ethnic cleansing? No. But God is a sin cleanser. He wars against our sin, sin that leaves us all liable to judgment; for we are all sinners, and we deserve to be devoted to destruction. But such is God's love for sinners that he gave Jesus Christ, his holy Son, to be our sacrifice. And, believer, Christ, by his death, has cleansed you from your sin and fitted you for the land he has purchased by his blood, the heavenly Canaan. ○

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Joshua's holy war was waged primarily against human opponents. New Testament holy war is waged against spiritual opponents.

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Jesus was devoted to destruction instead of you. God's holy war against sin was waged against him so that you might be spared.

A GODLY KING

Alfred the Great

Alfred the Great (849-899) is the only British monarch honoured with the title 'The Great'.

In the eighth century, the English church was in serious decline and the land was tasting the judgment of God.

'In the year 793 terrible portents came over the land of Northumbria, and miserably afflicted the people, there were massive whirlwinds and lightnings, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. Immediately after these things there came a terrible famine, and then a little after that, six days before the ides of January, the harrowing of heathen men miserably devastated the church of God on Lindisfarne, by plunder and slaughter' (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*).



Danish Viking raids eventually led to a full-scale invasion of England. In the space of a few years, from 865 to 869, they conquered Northumbria, Mercia, and East Anglia, and then set their sights on Wessex (see map, page 26).

When Alfred became the king of Wessex in 871, young and very inexperienced, he faced the Viking threat. Remarkably, in the Battle of Ashdown that year, he prevailed. A white horse, cut into the hillside at the Iron Age fortress of Uffington, probably marks the place of that conflict.

But his victory was short-lived. Soon afterwards, Guthrum led his Danish army into Wessex. On 6 January 878 – on 'Twelfth Night', a time of feasting – he took Alfred off-guard. It seemed that the kingdom of Wessex was lost. Many of Alfred's nobles betrayed him and swore allegiance to Guthrum. Alfred was forced to go into hiding. 'Cut off from his throne, his court, and his armies, Alfred, betrayed and abandoned, wandered in the moors, wastelands, and fens of Wessex. Moving into the marshes and woods of Somerset' (Merkle, p. 92).

He took refuge in Athelney. These darkest of days he saw as the chastening hand of the Lord (Heb. 12:5-6).

He loved the Psalms, and he saw in David's experience – the young king who was a fugitive – a picture of his own life. In those months, he pondered how to regain his kingdom. He chose Whitsun as the time to face Guthrum once again. They joined in battle close to the Saxon village of Edington, and Alfred was victorious. This time he pressed home his victory and Guthrum was forced to sue for peace. Alfred granted him mercy, on condition that he embraced Christianity.

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He loved the Psalms, and he saw in David's experience – the young king who was a fugitive – a picture of his own life.

The Saxons baptized their infants and they were very strict about it, insisting that babies should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. So the spectacle of adults – Guthrum and his men – dressed in white, coming as adults for baptism was an unusual sight. Alfred chose the humble church of Aller near Athelney for this. He stood at the font and lifted Guthrum out of the waters. Now he was his spiritual son and he received the new name Æthelstan. Although this baptism may seem strange, nevertheless Æthelstan, formerly Guthrum, never went back on his baptismal vows. He remained loyal to Alfred.

Now Alfred began to rebuild his kingdom. He fortified a network of towns (*burh*) about 20 miles apart, and he reformed the army so that there was a strong guard in each town and a mobile force ever ready to move swiftly to confront the foe. Alfred is sometimes known as the father of the English navy, because he also worked out a new design for his ships.

Alfred's greater achievements came from his Christian faith. He had read of the golden age of the fifth and sixth centuries,



Map of England in Saxon times



when kings ruled in peace, and the Anglo-Saxon people possessed a lively faith and faithfully worshipped God. Latin was known and books were available. Alfred realized what England had lost, and he wanted to recover it. Even his own education was deficient.

He began to bring scholars to his court. None could be found in Wessex. Werferth, Plegmund, Æthelstan and Werewolf were brought from Mercia. Messengers to the continent brought back Grimbald from Flanders and John from Old Saxony. From St David's in Dyfed, West Wales, the monk Asser was called.

Alfred formulated a plan with two parts. First, he wanted all freeborn Wessex men to be able to read and write. Alfred set himself the task of learning Latin. He also insisted that his old battle-hardened warriors now take on a new battle - learning to read and write! Second, he laboured to make the best Christian books available in the language of the people. He chose key works. He and his scholars worked as a team to translate them. They would read out the Latin, section by section, discuss the meaning, and decide

on the most appropriate translation. Alfred personally translated Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, Boethius' *Consolations of Philosophy*, Augustine's *Soliloquies*, and the first 50 Psalms.

Have you heard of **the Alfred jewel?** Producing books at that time was costly. Alfred wanted to signal how valuable these books were, not for the material, but for what they contained. He gave orders that his craftsmen make **æstels** - place-markers - made of gold, polished rock crystal, and coloured glass. They carried the words: AELFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN - 'Alfred ordered me to be made'. We possess only one of these æstels today. Discovered in 1693 in the peat of the Somerset moors, it is kept in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. When Alfred sent out his books into his realm, these æstels were sent out with them.

The king also set out his own law book (*domboc*). He began with Exodus 20:2-17, the Ten Commandments, some laws from Exodus 21-23, and excerpts from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7); then he gave the laws of Wessex.



The Alfred jewel

Alfred decided that he would devote half of each day to God, to study and to prayer. In order to do this, he had to measure time. No clocks were available in those days, so he used candles, all of the same length, to measure time. However, the breeze would often blow out the flame. Therefore Alfred designed a lantern made with thinly shaved pieces of ox horn. By this means, he could faithfully keep his vow to the Lord.

Today, in the town of Wantage, Oxfordshire, stands his statue, with these words written beneath it:

Alfred the Great
The West Saxon King.
Born at Wantage A.D. 849

Alfred found learning dead,
and he restored it,
Education neglected,
and he revived it,
The Laws powerless,
and he gave them force,
The Church debased,
and he raised it,
The land ravaged by a fearful enemy,
from which he delivered it.

Alfred's name will live as long
as mankind shall respect the past.

Truly this godly king can teach us many virtues: bravery – he showed great courage in battle; tenacity and perseverance – he refused to give up when all seemed lost; leadership – he led from the front; the value of learning; and best of all, faith and devotion to God.

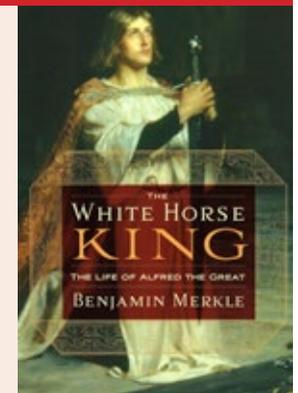
Places to visit:

the Uffington White Horse (SN7 7QJ); the Alfred Jewel In the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (OX1 2PH), and the King Alfred Statue in Wantage (OX12 8AW). There is



another statue in Winchester, Alfred's capital (SO23 9BE). Further afield there are the remains of Lindisfarne on Holy Island, off the Northumberland coast. o

RECOMMENDED



Editor's Note:

Benjamin Merkle, *The White Horse King. The Life of Alfred the Great* (Thomas Nelson, 2009). I would recommend this book to our children.

HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW



FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN READING THE LAW OF GOD



REV. DR PETER J. NAYLOR

Three times the Psalmist says 'I love your law', God's law (Psalm 119). Not everyone can say this, and in fact the law is a spiritual battle ground. Theologically, there is a narrow path between the pitfalls of legalism and antinomianism, and 'New Covenant Theology' (so-called) teaches that the law is abolished and many believe this.¹ Satan's first strike against Adam was to tempt him to disobey the Lord, and all mankind fell. How can fallen men love God's law?

But 'the righteous LORD loves righteousness; the upright will see his face' (Psalm 11:7). So the Scriptures urge us to 'pursue righteousness' (1 Tim. 6:11). 'Whoever does not practise righteousness is not of God' (1 John 3:10).

WHAT IS THE LAW?

The word *Torah* sometimes refers to the whole Pentateuch (Luke 24:44). Sometimes it refers to the body of laws contained in those books (Gal. 3:17).

Some observations

1. We cannot understand the law apart from the covenant. If our understanding of covenant is defective, we will not understand God's Law. Notice the preface to the Ten Commandments: 'I am the LORD your God...' God gave his people his law *because they were his people* (Exod. 20:2).
2. The Ten Commandments stand out from the rest of the laws. They were spoken by God and were written by the finger of God in the two tablets of stone (Exod. 34:28). The many other statutes and judgments supply the detail of the great principles of the Ten Commandments. And those ten are summarized in the two great commandments – to love the LORD your God with all you heart and with all your soul and with all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself.
3. Eight of the Ten Commandments are negative. This reminds us that we are sinful and God must forbid us from sinning. But the negative implies a positive. 'You shall not murder' implies the duty of preserving life.
4. God's commandments do not concern behaviour only but also motive. Christ makes this clear in his Sermon on the Mount. If we have never actually committed adultery but we have lusted after a woman, we have broken the commandment, 'You shall not commit adultery'.
5. Moses' laws fall into three categories.
 1. Moral law sets out what is right and wrong.
 2. Ceremonial laws regulated the worship of Israel, its priests and sacrifices. These were abrogated by the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:15-16 etc.).
 3. Civil laws are those which regulated Israel's life 'in the land', about judges, and punishments. When foreign nations occupied the land and carried the people away, these laws could be applied no more. But the moral law, given by God, is binding. God will not excuse any who transgress.

Five Questions to Ask

When we read God's law, it can help us if we keep five questions in our minds.

¹ Kevin McGrane, *New Covenant Theology Weighed and found wanting*, 2018.

1. WHAT DOES THIS TEACH ME ABOUT GOD?

The law is an expression of the holy character and will of God. It reveals his mind. It reveals his unapproachable holiness (Lev. 16:1-5). It shows his righteousness, goodness, mercy and love. He detests sin. When God promises that his people shall know him, he also promises that the law will be written on their heart (Jer. 31:31-34).

2. WHAT DOES THIS TEACH ME ABOUT MYSELF?

The law is a mirror. It shows us what is in our hearts. It exposes our disobedience and sinfulness, even the hidden secrets of the soul. We have done what is forbidden and omitted to do what is required. 'Honour your father and your mother,' but we find that we have not done that. 'You shall not covet,' but we find that our heart clinging to those things that we should leave alone.

John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* opens with the sight of a miserable, burdened man. Reading the Bible ruined his tranquillity, bringing his sins to light, showing him that he was a citizen of the City of Destruction.

The law shows us the seriousness of sin. Its punishments and its curses (Lev. 26; Deut. 27-28)

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When God promises that his people shall know him, he also promises that the law will be written on their heart.

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The law is a mirror. It shows us what is in our hearts. It exposes our disobedience and sinfulness, even the hidden secrets of the soul.

remind us that God is offended, and foreshadow the day of judgment and the eternal punishment of the wicked.

The law exposes our inability to do right. We cannot achieve our own righteousness by our efforts to keep the law. We read, 'Do this and live,' but it is not possible for fallen men to do it. The proud heart thinks it is possible, and vainly imagines 'I have done that', but when the law is presented to us, we discover the shocking truth that we have not kept it and cannot (Luke 18:1-26). This use of the law is a great blessing. By this means God awakens us. The Holy Spirit works in us through the law.

Compare how two kings reacted: David acknowledged his guilt and was forgiven; Jehoiakim cut up and burned Jeremiah's scroll, and was taken away into captivity (Ps. 32; Jer. 36). The law shows us ourselves as we really are. And in this way, we learn how mighty is our Redeemer.

3. HOW DOES THIS SHOW ME JESUS CHRIST?

The law shows us Christ's righteousness. He was born 'under the law' (Gal. 4:4-5) and he kept it. He did not break any of God's commandments. Fully human, he was perfectly holy. 'He committed no sin', 'knew no sin,' was 'yet without sin', 'holy,

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners' (1 Peter 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26). Jesus Christ received the law with delight of heart and unmodified love for God and for us. He zealously obeyed it. He fulfilled the law. This is the mind of Christ (Psalm 1).

The law shows us Christ's work. From childhood our Lord was found in the synagogue, hearing the law, and there he found the commission given to him by the Father in the counsels of eternity set forth in writing. When they read about the day of Atonement and the many sacrifices, he knew that he had come to lay down his life (Psalm 40). When the law spoke about priest, king and prophet, he discovered his own threefold anointing (e.g. Deut. 17-18).

The law gave our Saviour strength for his work. Facing the awful prospect of Calvary, he found in the law assurance of success and reward. The law promised life and blessing to the obedient one. Thus he received strength to endure, because of the joy set before him in the *law of God*.

Christ fulfilled the law of God. In perfect obedience and perfect love, he fulfilled the requirements of the moral law. The ceremonial laws of tabernacle, priesthood and sacrifices, are all fulfilled in Christ. The Letter to the Hebrews works out an extended comparison:

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The law shows us Christ's work.. When the law spoke about priest, king and prophet, he discovered his own threefold anointing.

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Where the Holy Spirit is present and working, he writes the law in the heart. Far from deleting it, he inscribes it and gives us power to obey.

- » Aaron had to offer first for his own sins, Christ was holy and without sin;
- » an earthly tent, a heavenly tabernacle not made with hands;
- » the blood of bulls and goats, Christ's own blood;
- » sacrifices that could never take away sins, Christ's offering once and for all, cleansing the conscience;
- » priests without an oath. Christ with an oath (Psalm 110);
- » many priests removed by death, Christ ever living to intercede for us.

Laws concerning how Israel should be governed pointed to the perfect righteous rule of Christ. The curses of the broken law were fully inflicted upon our Lord Jesus. The temporal judgments of Deuteronomy 28 expressed God's wrath, which was fully satisfied in the death of Christ (Gal. 3:13). He rendered satisfaction: 'It is finished.' Hence the blessings are his and ours and the promises of God of Yes and Amen in Christ Jesus.

4. HOW SHOULD I LIVE?

The law teaches the Christian how to live. *Torah* means direction or instruction. It is 'a lamp to my feet and a light to my path'. The New Testament confirms this. 'Blessed are those who do his commandments' (Rev. 22:14). John's first letter was a polemic. False teachers had

come deceiving men, leading them away from righteousness and brotherly love. But where the Holy Spirit is present and working, he writes the law in the heart. Far from deleting it, he inscribes it and gives us power to obey (2 Cor. 3; Rom. 8; Eph. 1-3).

5. WHAT DOES THE LAW PROMISE ME?

Not only do the commandments teach us what God desires to see in us, they also show us what we shall be, by the grace and power of God, conforming us to his will, and, at the last, transforming us. When we see him, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. In this sense, every commandment is a promise. One day a thief was converted, but he was worried because he had made his living by stealing. What now? And he entered a church building and there on the wall were the Ten Commandments. His eye rested on 'Thou shalt not steal'. He read it as a promise, rather than a command. He rejoiced: God has promised me that I will not steal any more.

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Use the law as window into the holy of holies, a mirror of the soul, a view of Christ, a lamp to your feet, and a promise of final deliverance from sin and everlasting joy in the presence of the Lord.

The commandments show us what we shall be when in God's mercy we enter the new heavens and the new earth 'in which righteousness dwells'. This is a great help in times of temptation. While we live in this sinful body and this sinful world, we wrestle against sin and cannot reach perfection.

But we shall be perfect when brought into the presence of the Lord.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Read the law asking these questions: What does this show me about God, about myself, about Christ, how to live, and what does it promise me? Use the law as window into the holy of holies, a mirror of the soul, a view of Christ, a lamp to your feet, and a promise of final deliverance from sin,

and everlasting joy in the presence of the Lord and all the holy angels and the innumerable host of the ransomed. With Christ, we can say, 'Oh how I love your law.' Because of him, we can say, 'The terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do; my Saviour's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view.' ◊



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Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Matthew Jolley
☎ 01284 706123
✉ matthewjolley@mac.com
🌐 bse-pc.org

▲ CAMBRIDGE

Queen Emma Primary School,
Gunhild Way (am)
Resurrection Lutheran Church,
Westfield Lane (pm)
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm, Thu. 7.45pm
Minister: Rev. Douglas McCallum
☎ 07855 130526
✉ dmccallum1981@gmail.com
🌐 cambridgepres.org.uk

▲ CARDIFF - BETHEL

Michaelston Rd, Culverhouse
Cross, Cardiff CF5 4SX
Sun. 11am & 6pm, Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Mark Johnston
☎ 029 2059 5000
✉ revmgjohnston@gmail.com
🌐 bethelpcr.org.uk

▲ CARDIFF - IMMANUEL

Heol Trelai, Caerau, Cardiff CF5 5LJ
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm, Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Peter Naylor
☎ 029 2040 5750 / 07773 093738
✉ peter.naylor@immanuelcaerau.org.uk
🌐 immanuelcaerau.org.uk

▲ CHELMSFORD

Hall Street Methodist Church
Chelmsford CM2 0HG
Sun. 11.30am & 6pm, Thu. 8pm
Minister: Rev. Darren Moore
☎ 01245 690559
✉ darrenmoore@chelmsfordpres.co.uk
🌐 chelmsfordpres.org.uk

▲ CHELTENHAM

23 Naunton Lane, Leckhampton
Cheltenham GL53 7BJ
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm
Wed. 7.45pm
Minister: Vacant
☎ 07778 530 452
✉ ajhnst9@aol.com
🌐 cheltenhampres.org.uk

▲ CHELTENHAM - NORTH

Whaddon Road E.P. Church
Rear of Claremont, Whaddon Rd,
Cheltenham GL52 5LZ
Sun. 11am & 6.30pm
Minister: Rev. David Pfeiffer
☎ 07846 858766
✉ drpfeiffer85@hotmail.com
🌐 whaddonevangelicalchurch.org

▲ DURHAM

The Chapel, Laburnum Avenue
Durham, DH1 4HA
Sun. 10.30am & 3.30pm, Thu. 7.45pm
Minister: Rev. Phil Baiden
☎ 07714 340 892
✉ philbaiden@yahoo.co.uk
🌐 depc.org.uk

▲ GATESHEAD

Lobley Hill Community Centre
47 Scafell Gardens, Gateshead
NE11 9LS, Sun. 10.30am & 6pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Bill Schweitzer
☎ 07939 071404
✉ contact@gatesheadpres.org.uk
🌐 gatesheadpres.org.uk

▲ HEXHAM

The Torch Centre, Corbridge Rd
(near hospital) Hexham NE46 1QS
Sun. 10am & 5pm, Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Joshua Rieger
☎ 07930 016785
✉ joshuamrieger@gmail.com
🌐 hexhampres.org.uk

▲ HULL

Rear of 336 Holderness Rd
Hull, HU9 3DQ
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm
Contact: Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell
☎ 0114 2431720 / 07954 546487
✉ kevinbidwell@me.com

▲ OXFORD

St Luke's Chapel, OX2 6HT (am)
The Friends Meeting House,
43 St. Giles', OX1 3LW (pm)
Sun. 10.30am & 6.30pm
Minister: Rev. Andy Young
☎ 07963 139683
✉ andy@oxfordpres.co.uk
🌐 oxfordpres.co.uk

▲ SALFORD, MANCHESTER

River View Primary School,
1 Wheaters St, Salford, M7 1QZ
Sun. 11am & 5pm.
Minister: Rev. Chris Statter
☎ 07914 048085
✉ salfordEPC@gmail.com
🌐 salfordEPC.org.uk

▲ SHEFFIELD

Hill Top Chapel, Attercliffe
Common, Sheffield S9 2AD
Sun. 10am (SS), 11am & 5pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell
☎ 0114 2431720 / 07954 546487
✉ kevinbidwell@me.com
🌐 sheffieldpres.org.uk

▲ SOLIHULL

37 Faulkner Road
Solihull, B92 8SB
Sun. 11am & 5pm, Thu. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Stephen Dancer
☎ 0121 707 1826
✉ info@solihullpres.org.uk
🌐 solihullpres.org.uk

▲ SUNDERLAND

Fulwell Community Library,
11 Station Road,
Sunderland, SR6 9AA
Minister: Rev. Nathan Hilton
☎ 07960 677510
✉ contact@sunderlandpres.org.uk
🌐 sunderlandpres.org.uk

▲ TRANÅS

Höggatan 8,
57333, Tranås
Sweden
Sun. 10am & 4.30pm
Minister: Trygve Lundblad
☎ +46 (0)70 238 70 75
✉ trygve.tranas@gmail.com

CLERK OF PRESBYTERY

Dr Falko Drijfhout,
63 Larchwood, Keele,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 5BB
☎ 01782 611280 / 07811 387438
✉ f.drijfhout12@gmail.com



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10-12 October 2019

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