

Dear Friends

It is always good to count our blessings. The opening section of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians is a good place to turn to. As many of you will be aware, we have begun a new morning series on this Letter – and here now is a brief summary of some of the wonderful array of blessings that Paul spells out, in Eph.1.3-14, for all those who are “in Christ” – i.e. all those who are Christian believers: those who put their trust *in him*, and in him alone.

We looked at this section a few Sunday mornings ago – the A-B-C of the Gospel:

A. Christians are **ADOPTED** as God's children – v.5: “*adoption through Jesus Christ*”. We need to be aware that adoption carried tremendous privileges in the Roman world. Once adopted, a person was fully and legitimately and permanently a member of the new family and all past debts were wiped out. On a spiritual level, that is true of all Christian believers, adopted into God's family.

B. Christians are **BLESSED** in Christ – v.3: he “*has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing*”. What an amazing truth! We need to keep in mind the tension in the Christian life between the “now” (all that we can enjoy as Christians now) and the “not yet” (those things we have to wait for until heaven). But, in principle, “every spiritual blessing” is ours now, to begin to enjoy.

C. Christians are **CHOSEN** by God – vv.4-5: “*even as he chose us in him ... in love he predestined us for adoption*”. This is not to inflate our arrogance or to make us feel special in the wrong way – nor is it meant to discourage those who are seeking to be sure about the Christian life. But the truth is, as the Lord Jesus himself says: “*You did not choose me, but I chose you*” (Jn.15.16).

D. Christians are **DELIVERED** in Christ – v.7: “*in him we have redemption through his blood*”. Some translations use the word “deliverance” instead of “redemption”. Christians have been ransomed. A price has been paid to deliver those who are totally incapable of freeing themselves. And the price paid to set us free was the death of Christ (“through his blood”).

E. Christians are **ENLIGHTENED** by Christ – v.9: “*making known to us the mystery of his will*”. We can never discover truths about God, unless he chooses to reveal them to us. The word “mystery”, used here, always in the

New Testament speaks of the truth that has been revealed. The Gospel is an “open secret” of God’s purposes of salvation. The Bible is revealed truth, but as we read our Bibles, we still need God to enlighten our minds.

F. Christians are FORGIVEN in Christ – v.7: “*the forgiveness of our trespasses*”. At the heart of the Gospel is “forgiveness of sins”. Because of Christ’s death we can have forgiveness – and we can know that his blood continues to cleanse us.

G. Christians are GATHERED in Christ – v.10: God’s plan is “*to unite all things in him*”. One day, God will gather all his people in heaven.

H. Christians are HALLMARKED in Christ – v.13: “*sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*”. Here is an assurance of belonging and of security and of belonging. All Christian believers are sealed with God’s Holy Spirit as a guarantee of all that is to come.

I hope these tremendous truths from Ephesians 1.3-14 thrill us and excite us. The question for each one of us is: Are you “in Christ”?

With Christian greetings,
Yours,
Robert Bashford

FROM THE REGISTERS

FROM THE CHURCH REGISTERS

We extend our prayers and sympathy to the relatives and friends of those committed to God’s care:

FUNERALS:	11 th January	Robert Elliott, aged 80 years
		Robert Walter, aged 64 years
	13 th January	Deborah Allen, aged 50 years
	15 th January	Bryan Musselwhite, aged 64 years

DECEMBER/JANUARY SERMON CDs

All CDs of the sermons preached on Sunday mornings and evenings in December 2009 and January 2010 are available on request from Elizabeth and Nigel Hadley (Tel: 831067) as usual. If you have requested a CD please collect from the back of Church the following Sunday. CDs £1 each.

SERMONS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2010

Sunday 7 th February	8.00am	“Come to me” (Mt.11.25-30)
	10.30am	“God’s new society” (Eph.2.11-21)
	6.30pm	“The Son of God” (Jn.10.31-42)
Sunday 14 th February	8.00am	“Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath” (Mt.12.1-14)
	10.30am	“The mystery revealed” (Eph.3.1-13)
	6.30pm	“The whirlpool of judgement” (Amos 1-2)
Sunday 21 st February	8.00am	“God’s chosen servant” (Mt.12.15-21)
	10.30am	“The Royal Prayer Force” (FAMILY SERVICE)
	6.30pm	“Leading questions” (Amos 3)
Sunday 28 th February	8.00am	“Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” (Mt.12.22-32)
	10.30am	“Filled with his fullness” (Eph.3.14-21)
	6.30pm	“Prepare to meet your God” (Amos 4)
Sunday 7 th March	8.00am	“A tree is known by its fruit” (Mt.12.33-37)
	10.30am	“Unity and maturity” (Eph.4.1-16)
	6.30pm	“Seek me and live” (Amos 5)
Sunday 14 th March	8.00am	“The sign of Jonah” (Mt.12.38-42)
	10.30am	“Family values” (MOTHERING SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE)
	6.30pm	“The fruit of complacency” (Amos 6)
Sunday 21 st March	8.00am	“Belonging to Jesus’ family” (Mt.12.43-50)

	10.30am	“Passion for life”
	6.30pm	“God’s patience runs out” (Amos 7)
Sunday 28 th March	8.00am	“The parable of the sower” (Mt.13.1-9, 18-23)
	10.30am	“The triumphal entry”
	6.30pm	“The autumn of opportunity” (Amos 8)

GIFTS FOR MISSIONARY FRIENDS

Thank you to those who gave towards the Christmas gifts to our missionary friends. This amounted to £950, which was divided equally between Lucy, Mike and Debby, Pete and Sarah. They have expressed their deep appreciation.

An exciting aspect of the Christian life is being able to share in the work of other Christians in different parts of the world, and to know of answers to our prayers.

If you are new to St James (or even if you’re not), and would like to know more about one or other of the Christian workers we support and receive regular news up-dates from them, please do have a word with me.

Barbara Bashford

LENT COURSE

Nearly every year at St James’ we put on a three-part course, normally of a devotional nature. It is an opportunity to study something of the Bible’s teaching in an unhurried way. Each evening takes the form of a Bible-talk, often followed by an opportunity to ask questions.

This year’s Lent Course has as its title “What are they doing in the Bible?” We shall look at three Old Testament characters, who play very different roles in the story-line of the Bible – but with each one we may find ourselves wondering why they are included in the Bible, either because they seem so unorthodox, or flawed, or irrelevant.

The three parts of the course are as follows:

Wednesday 10th March: *Balaam – a dodgy prophet,*

Wednesday 17th March: *Samson – a flawed leader,*

Wednesday 24th March: *Esther – a queen of Persia.*

Each meeting takes place at 8.00 pm in the Church Centre. I do hope that we shall make some discoveries together about parts of the Bible with which we may be less familiar.

Robert Bashford

EASTER WEEKEND

Easter will be upon us before too long. Let's aim to make the most of Easter at St James', as it is the most significant weekend of the whole year. After all, what can be more important in the life of the church-family than to take in afresh the amazing truths that Jesus died for us on the Cross and rose again from the dead? He is our living Saviour and Lord.

Here are the gatherings planned for the Easter weekend:

MAUNDY THURSDAY (Thursday 1st April)

8.00pm Lord's Supper and Bible address.

GOOD FRIDAY (Friday 2nd April)

10.30am Good Friday Family Service

2.00pm Devotional Service

EASTER DAY (Sunday 4th April)

8.00am Lord's Supper

10.30am Easter Day Family Service,
followed by shortened Lord's Supper

6.30pm Easter Evening Service

- Do aim to come to as much as possible of all that is on offer over that weekend. We enter into the joy of Easter Day via the agony of Maundy Thursday and the Cross of Good Friday.
- Prepare for Easter by coming to the Lent Course (*see the article in this magazine*).
- Consider inviting someone along, whom you are bringing to a "Passion for Life" event (*see the article in this magazine*).

Robert Bashford

PASSION FOR LIFE

"Passion for Life" is a nationwide Gospel initiative, designed to encourage churches to put on special events in March 2010 to help people to understand

more clearly what the Christian Good News is all about and what it means for them.

At St James' we are putting on three "Passion for Life" events. Two of them are in March, and one of them is in April. They are:

Saturday 20th March: **Men's Breakfast** – 9.00am – Church Centre

Speaker: Chris Knowles

Sunday 21st March: **Guest Service** – 10.30am – St James'

Speaker: Chris Knowles

Saturday 24th April: **Ladies' Breakfast** – 9.00am – Church Centre

Speaker: Becky Saywell

(see the separate item about this in the magazine)

Tickets will be required for the two breakfasts, and they will be available soon.

How can we get behind "Passion for Life" at St James'?

- Please pray – for the speakers, for the planning, for the response.
- Please pray at home, in your Home Group and at other church-gatherings, and come to Focus on Prayer on Wednesday 10th February.
- Please ask yourself the question: "Who can I invite to one of these Passion for Life events?"

Robert Bashford

LADIES - We are holding a **on LADIES BREAKFAST** on **Sat. 24th April**.

More details will follow. Please mark the date in your diary and maybe think about inviting a friend.

If you would like more information contact **Barbara Bashford**. **Tel. No. 832380**.

Abridged Minutes of the meeting of the 2009/10 PCC of St James' Church, Westgate and Garlinge held on Tuesday 12th January 2010 at the Church Centre.

Information in printed version of magazine only – Web Ed

LORD'S SUPPER SERVICES

At our Lord's Supper services since the beginning of September 2009, we have been receiving the bread and wine in the pews and using individual cups for the wine, instead of coming to the rail to receive the bread and wine. This has been a practical response to the concerns about swine flu and to the advice from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York not to use the common cup.

The PCC has given careful consideration to how we should proceed at St James' with Lord's Supper services in the time ahead. It appreciates that there may well be those who like the tradition of coming to the rail to receive the bread and wine. But the unanimous decision has been that we should continue as at the moment.

The benefits of the remaining in the pews and using individual cups include the following:

- It gives a stronger sense of taking the bread and wine together as a church-family, gathered around the Lord's table. This reflects New Testament principles and also reflects what the Reformers of the 16th century had in mind (even though they did not use individual cups).
- People do not have to come to the rail to receive, which can be a problem for the frail and elderly.
- People who would not be able to come forward do not have to feel embarrassed by having the bread and wine brought to them.

Robert Bashford

FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES CYCLE RIDE

Following the above, our Treasurer, Marion Clarke, has received a letter enclosing a cheque for £106.88. The main body of the letter says "Mrs Gibbs has kindly sent me the £213.75 that she, together with Sarah Jaquiss, Jacob Spanner and the Floyd family raised on 12th September. It is particularly gratifying to know that a whole family wanted to take part in this event together. I am tremendously indebted to all those who took part for their energy and devotion to the Friends, as well as to Mrs Gibbs for doing the job of Local Organiser. Would you please pass on my thanks to them all?"

DANDELYON PATCHERS

The Dandelyon Patchers is a small self taught quilting group which meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 2pm until 4pm – if you would like to join this small friendly, self teaching group please contact Margaret Robinson on (01843) 831971.

STJAMES MISSIONARY PAGE

Arab World Ministries Media Celebrates 50 Years

Where were you in 1959? In that year, the first section of the M1 motorway opened, the UK began to use postal codes and Barbie dolls first went on sale.

In the backstreets of Marrakech in 1959, Moroccan cooks were bashing spices in their mortars. Cars, donkeys and pedlars wound their way through the narrow streets. When the electricity faltered, a few rays of the sun filtered through the shutters to light up dim kitchens.

In one of those houses in Marrakech's old city, a group of missionaries and a Moroccan man were recording a radio programme in their living room. This small beginning was the birth of Arab World Ministries (AWM) Media.

Well Prepared

Don Harris had always been keen on electronics. While in the British army, he was drafted to a radio squadron, which helped to prepare him for his future radio ministry. When Don and his wife Mary first arrived in Morocco as missionaries in the 1950s, this type of work seemed impossible. But, when Don was asked to begin a radio work in North Africa, he was thrilled and jumped to the task.

As the Harrises set up a simple recording studio in their home in Marrakech, Farid (not his real name) a Moroccan believer came to visit for a few days. Perhaps this was 'the voice' of the burgeoning radio work? Don asked Farid if he could help to prepare materials for broadcast and he agreed.

Part way through Farid's first test reading, there was a knock on the door. The postman was there with a letter, which contained £75 for "the beginning of radio work". The small team was filled with worship and wonder.

Elsewhere in North Africa

During the pre-independence years in North Africa, in the late 1950s, traditional missionary activity such as Bible correspondence course work was permitted among the national Arabs and Berbers. While the strong Muslim character of these French colonies imposed some restrictions, resident missionaries freely pursued personal witness and literature distribution.

The correspondence course ministry grew by exposure at national book fairs and rallies and by word of mouth. By the early 1960s hundreds were studying the Bible. In January 1963, 2000 courses were sent out in Tunisia alone. At one agricultural college, 15 students were studying Bible courses. One said he was a Christian, causing an uproar. The supervisor told him to stop his studies, to which the student replied, 'I am a Christian and therefore have the right to study the Bible'. The supervisor threw up his hands and told them to study if they liked.

Too Successful?

But the wind was about to change. In March 1963, the Tunisian government issued a verbal warning saying that all activities connected with the Christian Centre must cease. The missionaries were told that they were 'in danger of creating a Christian minority'. Within days the police closed the Centre and padlocked the doors. The missionaries were able to retrieve equipment and materials, but they had to make other plans for their ministries.

Radio work became plagued with problems. So, by the end of 1963, mission leaders decided to consolidate both correspondence course and radio work in one centre outside of North Africa. As some of the correspondence workers were in Marseille, they chose to locate the work in that city in 1964.

Church Partnership

While churches in the Middle East have existed since the time of Christ, the church in North Africa has been re-born in the last few decades. Christian radio played an important role in the establishment of this emerging church. National Arab leaders speak of the evangelistic and discipleship role that the radio played in their lives. While media pioneers focused on evangelism, today AWM Media is increasingly involved in discipleship and leadership training of national believers across the Arab world.

The involvement of Arab believers in media ministry has been happening for some time now. Much of the correspondence ministry with those reached by radio, television, video or the Internet has been handled inside the Arab world. In the future we expect to transfer more and more of our media ministry activity to the Arab world as we equip the national church to carry out the work.

Unleashing the Internet

The Internet has exploded in the last decade and AWM Media has been making use of this technology. The main emphasis today in AWM Media is on the Arabic evangelistic website *Maarifa*, which means ‘knowledge’. It contains a youth section, video, FAQs and regular devotions.

AWM Media began as a home-grown radio programme and is now is touching the entire Arab world. This expansion has resulted in changes in technology and in the audience. Pray for the on-going work of this strategic work as it seeks to engage, equip, evangelize and establish believers and seekers from the Arab Muslim world.

Christine McLaren
AWM

ANY QUESTIONS?

We take a break this time from the series of “Any Questions?” on the Bible, to tackle a question which is clearly on many people’s minds as a result of the devastating earthquake in Haiti:

“Why are there so many disasters? What should be our approach and reaction to the many disasters that take place in the world?”

Do we ask the question as detached observers or as people personally involved? In the immediate wake of a disaster our right reaction is to help – and at St James’ we have had the opportunity to give towards the needs in Haiti via Tear Fund. But having said that, it is natural that we should want to think about what the Bible has to say about suffering and disaster.

Jesus once referred to two disasters that set people talking – Pilate’s sacrilegious murder of Galileans, and the collapse of the tower at Siloam (Luke 13.1-5). Had those Galileans – or the victims at Siloam – in some way

deserved their fate? Jesus made an important point – it wasn't that these people were innocent and blameless, but they were no worse than anyone else. If repentance is called for, then it should be expressed by all – for Jesus says, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (v.3 and v.5). What conclusions do we draw from this?

We are all living with a flawed design. An obvious question that a disaster raises is: *What sort of order are we landed with within this universe of ours?* The Christian answer is that this world is marked by the rebellion that characterises the human race universally. All suffering and pain in the world stem from the Fall of Genesis chapter 3. The things that go wrong are not necessarily linked to the fault of a single individual – but they come as solemn reminders that we are living with a cracked design. Even the creation itself is somehow aching for the day when suffering and decay will be at an end (Romans 8.22) – but the end is not yet.

We are all living in a temporary home. Here were these Galilean victims – dead. But they would have died at some point, from one cause or another. It is, perhaps, our Lord's use of the word “perish” – carrying with it the idea of more than physical death but of *ruination* – that makes the point.

The real disaster is to exit from this life without ever having made peace with God. These disasters were saying, “It will be your turn one day – have you thought about it?”

We are all living on borrowed time. Disasters remind us that our tenure here is one of leasehold, not freehold. And when will the lease run out? It could be sooner than we think. A disaster is a forcible reminder.

We are all living as debtors to love. Suffering and disaster can only begin to show some meaning when they are seen against the background of the Cross, where God himself suffered for the world.

From an article by Richard Bewes (adapted)

GIVING FOR LIFE

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Luke 12:34

Life Giving – Through giving his life for us, Jesus provided the ultimate demonstration of God's generosity. Giving is at the centre of God's character

– God gives us life, and his giving is renewed daily. **Question** – In what ways have *you* expressed *your* thanks for all that God has given to *you*?

Giving throughout Life - When considering matters concerned with giving and generosity many Christians find that they are on a lifelong journey. They see that their thinking about money and what they should give has changed over time. **Question** – Where are *you* on *your* journey of generous giving?

Giving Life – When we give we give life. Regular committed giving by church members enables the church to carry out God’s mission in the world. Church and charitable giving gives new life, new vision, new hope. **Question** – Do *you* give regularly? Do *you* give generously?

Giving in all of Life – Christians are challenged to be generous in every aspect of their lives. It’s not only about giving money, but offering hospitality, giving time and using our skills – in our churches, but also in our homes, our workplaces and communities. Giving is the outworking of faith. **Question** – In which area do *you* find it easiest to give? Which do *you* need to work at?

What can I do?

1. **Give Thanks:** Give thanks for everything with which God has blessed you. Do this regularly, as the more often we give thanks, the more we realise how much we’ve been given.
2. **Give Regularly:** Commit or re-commit to giving money regularly to the church and to other charities. Review your giving in other areas, such as time or hospitality.
3. **Give Generously:** General Synod has challenged church members as an initial target to give 5% (or £1 in £20) of their after-tax income to and through the Church, and a similar amount to other work that helps to build God’s kingdom.
4. **Give Yourself:** Be involved with the organisations you support. Spend time praying for the work of your church and that of other causes you support. Keep up to date with what they are doing so that your prayers and your giving are properly informed.

The Archbishop’s Council 2009

A young curate was visiting an elderly man on his 99th birthday to interview him about his long life. The interview over, the curate said: “I hope to see you again on your 100th birthday.” The old gentleman carefully looked him

over and said: “I can’t see any reason why you shouldn’t, young man, you look healthy enough to me.”

**Prayer Points
From Gideons International**

- Thanks for all the open doors in schools, hospitals and the hospice to bring the Gospel.
- Pray that these doors would remain open.
- Pray for open doors in the emergency services, who have so far remained closed to the Gideons in the area.
- Please prayerfully consider talking to any people you know who may be interested in becoming Friends of the Gideons, to support the work, both in prayer and financially.

RICK WARREN

You will enjoy the new insights that Rick Warren has, with his wife now having cancer and him having ‘wealth’ from the book sales. This is an absolute incredible short interview with Rick Warren, ‘Purpose Driven Life’ author and pastor of Saddleback Church in California. In the interview by Paul Bradshaw with Rick Warren, Rick said:

People ask me, What is the purpose of life? And I respond: In a nutshell, life is preparation for eternity. We were not made to last forever, and God wants us to be with Him in heaven. One day my heart is going to stop, and that will be the end of my body – but not the end of me.

I may live 60 to 100 years on earth, but I am going to spend trillions of years in eternity. This is the warm-up act – the dress rehearsal. God wants us to practice on earth what we will do forever in eternity. We were made by God and for God, and until you figure that out, life isn’t going to make sense.

Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you’re just coming out of one, or you’re getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is that God is more interested in making your life holy than He is making your life happy. We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that’s not the goal of life. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness.

This past year has been the greatest year of my life but also the toughest, with my wife, Kay, getting cancer. I used to think that life was hills and valleys – you go through a dark time, then you go to the mountain top, back and forth. I don't believe that anymore. Rather than life being hills and valleys, I believe that it's kind of like two rails on a railroad track, and at all times you have something good and something bad in your life. No matter how good things are in your life, there is always something bad that needs to be worked on. And no matter how bad things are in your life, there is always something good you can thank God for.

You can focus on your purposes, or you can focus on your problems. If you focus on your problems, you're going into self-centredness, which is my problem, my issues, my pain. But one of the easiest ways to get rid of pain is to get your focus off yourself and onto God and others.

We discovered quickly that in spite of the prayers of hundreds of thousands of people, God was not going to heal Kay or make it easy for her. It has been very difficult for her, and yet God has strengthened her character, given her a ministry of helping other people, given her testimony, drawn her closer to him and to people.

You have to learn to deal with both the good and the bad of life. Actually, sometimes learning to deal with the good is harder. For instance, this past year, all of a sudden, when the book sold 15 million copies, it made me instantly very wealthy. It also brought a lot of notoriety that I had never had to deal with before. I don't think God gives you money or notoriety for your own ego or for you to live a life of ease.

So I began to ask God what He wanted me to do with this money, notoriety and influence. He gave me two different passages that helped me decide what to do, 2 Corinthians 9 and Psalm 72. First, in spite of all the money coming in, we would not change our lifestyle one bit. We made no major purchases. Second, about midway through last year, I stopped taking a salary from the Church. Third, we set up foundations to fund an initiative we call The Peace Plan to plant churches, equip leaders, assist the poor, care for the sick and educate the next generation. Fourth, I added up all that the church had paid me in 24 years since I started the church, and I gave it all back. It was liberating to be able to serve God for free.

We need to ask ourselves: Am I going to live for possessions? Popularity? Am I going to be driven by pressures? Guilt? Bitterness? Materialism? Or am I going to be driven by God's purposes (for my life)?

When I get up in the morning, I sit back on the side of my bed and say, God, if I don't get anything else done today, I want to know you more and love you better. God didn't put me on earth just to fulfil a to-do list. He's more interested in what I am than what I do. That's why we're called human beings, not human doings.

Happy moments - PRAISE GOD

Difficult moments – SEEK GOD

Quiet moments – WORSHIP GOD

Painful moments – TRUST GOD

Every moment – THANK GOD

If you do not pass it on, nothing will happen. But it will just be nice to pass it on to a friend – just like I have done.

JESUS – THE GREAT 'I AM'

JESUS – THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA - Revelation 1:8 and 22:12-16

Bad habits

We humans – yes, both men and women – have many irritating habits and serious short-comings. Starting a job and not finishing it is one of the most frustrating things about us! Ceilings half painted, walls partly stripped, gardens half dug – but not completed – is the story of our lives!

Short-comings

Another human limitation is identified in the television programme, '**Who do you think you are?**' Well-known people set out to investigate their family history over several generations. In the present series, some of the researchers got a nasty shock in discovering 'skeletons' in the family cupboard – financial fraud, suspicion of bigamy, death in a Nazi concentration camp and a generation who were born into slavery, among them.

As the family tree grows it becomes evident that the researcher is just one individual in a very long story. They weren't there at the beginning, and certainly won't be there at the end of it.

So there we have it: not only do we not complete the job in hand, but our lives are just a pin-prick in a much bigger picture!

Jesus only

In this series we have been examining the amazing claims of Jesus Christ – that he gives Living Water to the thirsty, satisfies the hungry with the Bread of Life, is the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the True Vine – and now the **Alpha and the Omega!**

The greatest claim of all

The book of ‘Revelation’ was written by the apostle John at the end of the first Century AD. This was a time when Christians were facing fierce persecution – and death – for their faith. ‘Revelation’ was designed to give them hope and encouragement through prophetic message, stretching from John’s day until the return of Christ, and the end of the world.

John begins ‘Revelation’ by describing Jesus Christ as *‘the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth’*, while assuring his readers of Jesus’ love for them, reminding them that Jesus had set them free from their sins, and that he will return to earth again, 1:5-7.

The Alpha and the Omega

Immediately following these amazing claims, the Lord God speaks to announce that he is **‘the Alpha and the Omega’** – *‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty’*, (1:8). ‘Alpha’ and ‘Omega’ are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which means that the Lord God was claiming to be present at the beginning of human history, and that he will be the one who brings human history to a close. The Lord God was no ‘pin prick’ in the wide expanse of human history, but present and active in every part of it from beginning to end!

But who?

Much later in ‘Revelation’, the title, **‘Alpha and Omega’** occurs again. On this occasion it is **Jesus Christ** who lays claim to the supreme name. He claims to be the **‘First and the Last’** – the **‘Beginning and te End’**, 22:12-13. *Equal* claims are made by both God Almighty and Jesus Christ!

Taken together, this means that either **God Almighty** and **Jesus Christ** are **equal** and are, therefore, both qualified to make the same claim, or, if **Jesus** was the speaker on both occasions, it means that he is **God Almighty** as well as **Saviour** and **Lord** of all!

A time to trust

Whichever is true, our response is clear. When we entrust our lives to Jesus Christ he promises to take us into his care and keeping through all life's experience, in this world and the next. He'll never leave the job half done! He'll never start what he doesn't intend to finish! After all, he is 'the **Alpha** and the **Omega**', the beginning and the end!

Michael Toogood

A Hymn for the new year

Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.

His adorable will let us gladly fulfil,
And our talents improve,
By the patience of hope, and the labour of love

Our life is a dream; our time as a stream
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay.

The arrow is flown, the moment is gone;
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and eternity is here.

O that each in the day of his coming may say,
"I have fought my way through,
I have finished the work thou didst give me to do!"

O that each from the Lord may receive the glad worded,
"Well and faithfully done!
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne."

From "A collection of hymns for the use of people called Methodists"
Made by the Rev. John Wesley
Published by Wesleyan Conference Office, 2 Castle Street, City Road in 1877.

Submitted by Ian and Christine

HOAX/URBAN MYTH IN CHURCH MAGAZINE

In the previous edition of the Church magazine (December 2009-January 2010) there appeared an article under the heading “Important Warning” about paper stuck to the rear window of cars.

I am grateful to Ian Dallison for pointing out that this is a hoax/urban myth which has been circulating, by email, since 2004.

Ian advises that if you go into www.google.co.uk and click on “Advanced Search” and then put in the opening words of any dubious email (in this case “Beware of Paper on the Back of your Vehicle”) in the Exact Phrase box then Google will come up with lots of sites that explain that it is a hoax/urban myth.

NB Any feedback from readers is always welcome. We could use this as a feature of the magazine.

Ed.

JESUS IS THE WAY – ‘...I am the Way...’ John 14:6NKJV

Judaism sees salvation as a judgement day decision based on morality. Hindus anticipate multiple reincarnations in the soul’s journey through the cosmos. Buddhism guides your life according to the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eight-fold Path. Muslims earn their way to Allah through the Five Pillars of Faith. Many philosophers deem life after death as hidden and unknown, ‘a great leap in the dark’. Some people clump Christ with Moses, Mohammad, Confucius, and other spiritual leaders. ‘Jesus said... “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”’ John14:6(NKJV). Many object, ‘All roads lead to heaven.’ But how can they? Buddhists look toward Nirvana, achieved after no less than 547 reincarnations. Christians believe in one life, one death, and an eternity of enjoying God. Humanists don’t acknowledge a creator of life. Jesus claims to be the source of life. Spiritualists read your palms. Christians consult the Bible. Hindus perceive a plural and impersonal God. Christ-followers believe ‘...there is only one God’ (1 Cor.8:4 NLT). Every non-Christian religion says, ‘You can save you.’ Jesus says: ‘My death on the cross saves you.’ All roads don’t lead to London, all ships don’t sail to Australia, and all flights don’t land in Rome. Every path does not lead to God. Jesus blazed a stand-alone trail void of self-salvation. He cleared a one-of-a-kind passageway uncluttered by human effort. He offers us a unique invitation in which He works and we

trust, He dies and we live, He invites and we believe. ‘... “The work God wants you to do is this: Believe the One he sent”’ (John 6:29 NCV).

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WE NEED TO BE THANKFUL

When I open my eyes at dawn
To see the sun and blue skies
I begin to yawn
Before I close my eyes in the evening
I see the twinkle of the stars
It reminds me of you
Then I start to dream.

Thank you GOD
For creating the heaven and earth
Thank you for gifting us
With a special birth.

When I see the creatures
Of this lovely world
The ones that are little
The ones that are large
If they walk or if they sliver
I bet you they can't stand and deliver.

Thank you God
For creating the heaven and earth
Thank you for gifting us
With a special birth.

When I look at aeroplanes in the sky
In my eye line appears a kite, which goes by
On a peaceful day the sea looks calm
Your life can go in a flash
It sounds like people beating drum
Like a matador and a bull in a ring
If you are not careful
The thing can sting you.
Thank you GOD
For making this all possible

You are our LORD and KING
Once and for all

When we see a flash in the sky
We wonder where it came from
We see the flash with our own eye
The clap from the sky is frightening
It's small but it is loud
We were given the heaven and earth
For a reason, by which I'm proud
The LORD had to suffer for us
The thing is he didn't make a fuss

By Robert Bradley

DEADLINE DATE: Please may all articles for the April and May magazine be with the Editor by Friday 19th March 2010. Thank you.

JESUS SAID: 'Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' (**Luke 2:49**)

NB: Although it was written that Jesus was asking questions of, and giving answers to, the teachers in the temple courts (Luke 2:46&47) these are the first words of reported speech, as recorded by Luke in his Gospel, of Jesus aged 12.

SATURDAY SHOP

The Saturday Shop in December raised £386.74, giving a total for the year of £2,590.47 for which thanks are given to God and to all who helped in so many different ways. There are no figures for January due to the Shop being cancelled because of the inclement weather!

FEBRUARY 2010

Tuesday 2 nd)	
Wednesday 3 rd)	Home Bible Study Groups (<i>whatever date and time have been arranged for your Group</i>)
Thursday 4 th)	
Thursday 4 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
	2.00 pm	Dandelyon Patchers, Church Centre
Sunday 7th	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service with the Lord's Supper
	3.00 pm	Marriage Preparation
	6.30 pm	Evening Service
Wednesday 10 th	8.00 pm	Focus on Prayer, Church Centre
Thursday 11 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
Saturday 13 th	10.00 am	Saturday Shop, Old School Hall
Sunday 14th	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service
	6.30 pm	Evening Service
Monday 15 th	2.30 pm	Friendship Club: "Wellbeing" (Sandy Prynne), Church Centre
Tuesday 16 th	12.00 noon	Garlinge Lunch, Old School Hall
Wednesday 17 th	8.00 pm	Ash Wednesday Lord's Supper and Bible address, Church Centre
Thursday 18 th	2.00 pm	Dandelyon Patchers, Church Centre
Sunday 21st	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service
	6.30 pm	Evening Service with the Lord's Supper
Monday 22 nd	10.00 am	Living Stones Bible Study Group, 3 The Grove
Tuesday 23 rd	8.00 pm	Garlinge Outreach Team, Church Centre
Thursday 25 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
Sunday 28th	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service
	6.30 pm	Evening Service

MARCH 2010

Tuesday 2 nd)	
Wednesday 3 rd)	Home Bible Study Groups (<i>whatever date and time have been arranged for your Group</i>)
Thursday 4 th)	
Thursday 4 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
	2.00 pm	Dandelyon Patchers, Church Centre
Sunday 7th	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service with the Lord's Supper
	6.30 pm	Evening Service
Tuesday 9 th	7.30 pm	PCC, Church Centre
Wednesday 10 th	8.00 pm	Lent Course: "What are they doing in the Bible?" pt.1. Balaam, Church Centre
Thursday 11 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
Saturday 13 th	10.00 am	Saturday Shop, Old School Hall
Sunday 14th	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service
	6.30 pm	Evening Service
Monday 15 th	2.30 pm	Friendship Club: "Thanet Coast Project" (Tony Child), Church Centre
Tuesday 16 th	12.00 noon	Garlinge Lunch, Old School Hall
Wednesday 17 th	8.00 pm	Lent Course: "What are they doing in the Bible?" pt.2. Samson, Church Centre
Thursday 18 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
	2.00 pm	Dandelyon Patchers, Church Centre
Sunday 21st	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Family Service
	6.30 pm	Evening Service with the Lord's Supper
Wednesday 24 th	8.00 pm	Lent Course: "What are they doing in the Bible?" pt.3. Esther, Church Centre
Thursday 25 th	10.30 am	Parents and Toddlers, Old School Hall
Sunday 28th	8.00 am	The Lord's Supper
	10.30 am	Morning Service
	6.30 pm	Evening Service
Monday 29 th	10.00 am	Living Stones Bible Study Group, 49 Orchard Rd