

# BEYOND TODAY

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## Lessons from a Master Potter

*Mankind was made from the “dust of the ground,” and has a physical affinity with clay. Processes used by a master potter can provide insights into how God also moulds our spiritual development.*

In the second chapter of Genesis we read that “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). The implication here is that the LORD mixed water with the dust to make a clay. When Adam and Eve subsequently disobeyed and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God warned them, “Dust you are and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

There are a number of parallels between moulding clay and the way God works with human beings. Although the physical shaping of man is complete there is still a spiritual modelling of hearts and minds that God is perfecting.

In autumn 2015, the television series, “The Great Pottery Throw Down” was broadcast on BBC2. Similar in format to the very successful “Great British Bake-off,” ten home potters battled each other and the clay to produce crockery, garden features, tiles and even wash basins. Many different techniques were employed and competences tested.

As the programme revealed, clay is not the easiest medium to work with, requiring a considerable amount of effort and expertise on the part of the potter. Perhaps this is why Scripture equates these skills to the way God moulds His people.

### Working with clay

Before clay can be fashioned it has to be kneaded to even out the moisture content and to make the clay pliable. When God calls a person, He begins to work on his or her heart to change it from what He refers to as a “heart of stone” to “a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19).

An additional process called wedging may be required



A skilled potter at work.  
(avarand/Shutterstock)

to remove any trapped air. Bubbles of air within the clay expand during firing and can cause cracks. Similarly Christians have to become free of wrong character traits, such as pride, that can lead to sin.

When throwing pots on a wheel, a lot of water is needed to maintain the plasticity of the clay. Even when working with coils or slabs, or pulling clay for cup handles, additional water is needed to smooth the edges and joins. This is akin to our need to receive and be constantly replenished with God's Spirit, to keep our hearts pliable and humble (Ezekiel 36:26).

Once formed, the clay object must be dried, then fettled, where rough edges can be smoothed and surplus material removed. God is constantly working with us to remove our

misconceptions and bad habits.

What we have to remember is that God decides what kind of product He wants us to become (Isaiah 64:8). It is not for the pot to turn round and argue that it should be made into something else (Jeremiah 18:6, Romans 9:21).

### Firing and beyond

Before firing, a ceramic object can be decorated. This could be with impressions from a stylus or similar engraving implement in still-damp clay, or by the use of various slips and glazes. These can be applied in numerous ways on dry clay, including dipping and painting.

Firing fixes the glaze and can change its appearance. The high temperatures of the kiln also chemically change the composition of the clay and permanently harden it. For Christ's followers, the permanent change from mortal,

**No matter how battered we become in this physical life, in the resurrection our spiritual bodies will be perfect.**

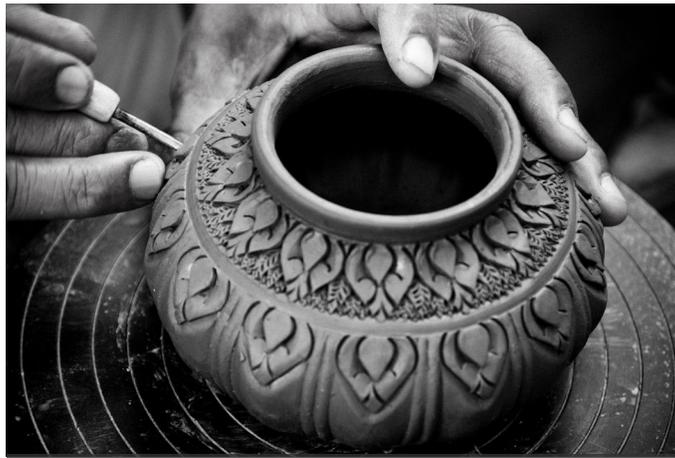
physical beings to eternal, spirit-born children of God will occur at His return (1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

Some pots don't make it through the firing process. Some crack; others fall apart, or worse still explode, usually due to air bubbles, which equate to sin. Christ tell us, "He who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

James wrote, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation [trials]; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).

In 1 Corinthians 3:9-15 God likens us to a building and shows how building materials are affected by fire. This building has Christ as its foundation, so the base is secure. However, as we strive to follow and obey God, we need to allow the Master Potter to shape and refine us. Some of our works will be like gold or silver, some like wood, hay and straw (verses 12-13). Just as with the best ceramics, firing will bring out the strength and beauty. "If anyone's work which he has built . . . endures [or survives the kiln], he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned [or comes out of the kiln broken], he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (verses 14-15).

This scripture is not discussing salvation, which is a gift rather than a reward. Instead it is considering the effort each person has made to conform to Christ, how much we allow the Master Potter to work in our lives to produce the character of His Son in us. Christ spoke of this reward as separate from the *gift* of eternal life (Luke 19:11-24; Revelation 22:12).



Engraving a decorative pattern onto a pot.

(Ioan Florin Cnejevici/Shutterstock)

Several of the apostles remind us that trials – even fiery trials – bring about changes in a Christian's character, causing growth and increasing faith (1 Peter 4:12-13). James mentions this in his epistle: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2-3).

These trials are allowed by God so that we can be



Examples of traditional pottery.

(Chaowalit Seeneha/Shutterstock)

"conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

Sometimes, however, God allows trials for correction, perhaps when we do not recognise the need to change (Hebrews 12:5-9).

### The Master Potter

Watching the struggles of the various potters during the television series, an appreciation develops of how difficult it can be to produce a quality ceramic piece, whether utilitarian or purely decorative. One can relate to the joy when a piece comes out of the kiln looking exquisite, or grieve with those whose apparently perfect pot left the kiln cracked or broken.

Our Heavenly Father won't allow His precious children to be tried beyond what they can bear. He is a true Master Potter and, as long as we are willing to allow Him to work with us, He promises to bring us safely through all the necessary processes (Philippians 1:6). And no matter how battered we become in this physical life, in the resurrection our spiritual bodies will be perfect.

God is looking forward to the time spoken of in the last chapters of the book of Revelation when His children will be resurrected into His Family, and to the time beyond that when He can come down to a new earth and live among them.

David Payne

*Beyond Today*

# Implications of the “cross of Christ”

*Several times the apostle Paul utilised the expression “cross of Christ”. Was he referring only to the physical cross on which Christ died? Or using a metaphor for something much more wide-ranging?*

**T**he Bible teaches that the sacrificial atonement of Christ to redeem us from our sins is essential to understanding the salvation process.

Crucifixion was the last thing that Christ’s disciples wanted to see happen to their divine Leader. It was a painful and humiliating death, yet Jesus, who had emptied Himself of His divinity, humbled Himself and became “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8 New American Standard Bible).

Jesus explained to Nicodemus: “Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up [crucified], that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:14-16).

Christ knew beforehand both the timing and the manner of his death. He would have seen bodies of executed criminals hung on crosses or stakes of various designs. This was a common and gruesome form of capital punishment in ancient Rome’s vast empire.

## **The power of the gospel**

Paul was sent “to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect, for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:17-18).

This scripture asserts that the cross has a definite message. In addition Paul clearly associated the spiritual power of

**Only the shed blood of God’s Son can satisfy the just demands of the law. Only the sacrifice of Christ can satisfy God’s terms and conditions.**

God with the cross of Christ. Can a wooden stake, or a copy thereof, really possess power? Or did Paul intend a different meaning?

The symbolism of Christ’s cross is an integral part of the gospel message. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes . . .” (Romans 1:16).

Paul explained elsewhere: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in Me [through the power of the Holy Spirit]; and the life which

I now live in the flesh I live by faith in [or ‘of’] the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). The Holy Spirit is the agency of God’s power. “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

## **An instrument of peace**

In his letter to the saints in Rome, Paul wrote: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). But how?

Peace with God can never be understood as appeasement. It comes at a very steep price – the shed blood of the sinless Jesus Christ. “And by Him [Christ] to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross” (Colossians 1:20).

Sin had erected an impenetrable wall between God and His human creation. Universal law decreed that only blood could pay the penalty, “And according to the law, almost all things are purified with blood and without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sins]” declares the writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 9:22).

The ancients had their sins temporarily “covered” by the blood of animals. But this was not enough. Hebrew continues, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). Only the shed blood of God’s Son can satisfy the just demands of the law. Only the sacrifice of Christ can satisfy God’s terms and conditions: “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He [Christ] entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12).

God will not compromise with His spiritual law. Jesus kept His Father’s commandments, setting us an example for all time (John 15:10). We have to repent and obey implicitly (John 15:14; 1 John 5:2-3). But humanly we simply cannot effectively keep God’s law until we have first been fully forgiven for our sins – our past transgressions of God’s holy spiritual law – and received His Holy Spirit following repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands (see Romans 7:12; 1 John 3:4; James 2:9).

At that point we are at peace with God, and if we do slip up and sin Christ stands as our Advocate who will intercede on our behalf when we repent (1 John 1:8-2:2).

## **Our guilty consciences cleansed from sin**

Old Testament ordinances, gifts and sacrifices could not make people who performed the service perfect “in regard

to the conscience” (Hebrews 9:9). But Christ’s atonement can! “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (New International Version, verse 14).

When forgiven and washed clean from our sins, first by Christ’s blood, and second symbolically in the baptismal waters, we can “draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience [by His blood] and having our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

The apostle John expressed deep appreciation “to Him who loved us and washed from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5). During Paul’s conversion, Ananias asked him: “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptised, and wash your sins away, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). The salvation process encompasses both the blood and the water (1 John 5:8).

### **The real meaning of the “cross of Christ”**

Paul stated: “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .” (Galatians 6:14). Yet the original, physical cross on which Christ was crucified no longer exists.

The explanation is that in Scripture the phrase “cross of

Christ” is intended as a metaphor. It is a sort of shorthand, not just for the manner, or even the events of our Saviour’s death but also for the meaning and implications of it. It encompasses the entire atonement for our sins. This is so important to understand.

Jesus allowed His life’s blood to be poured out to bear “the sin of many” and He “made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). Since all have sinned we all come into this category (Romans 3:23). He took our punishment for our sins on Himself – the beatings, the humiliation and finally an excruciating death. All this was done to the member of the God realm who had created the human family and was never guilty of any sin.

This is what is intended by the expression “the cross of Christ.” It does not imply a physical icon, such as a crucifix, used either in worship or as a talisman. Such a symbol would breach the second commandment and could limit the true understanding of the apostle’s metaphor.

In explaining salvation, our free booklet *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Salvation* brings together repentance, forgiveness, water baptism, the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and most important of all the role of the blood of Christ shed on the cross (the atonement). Request or download your copy today.

# Preventing worry from becoming an idol

*Idols can be anything that occupies our minds, thoughts and time, pushing God out of first place.*

**T**he first of the Ten Commandments states, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). Idolatry involves worshipping an image of some humanly devised god or goddess, or a symbol supposedly used to “aid” worship of the true God.

However, when a lawyer asked Christ what the great commandment was, Jesus responded, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). This means that for a Christian anything that consumes an excessive amount of our time and energy and takes our hearts and minds away from God becomes, by this definition, an idol.

With that definition, there is an almost endless list of possible gods – money, athletics, hobbies, travelling, gaming, drugs. Even worry! Are you surprised?

### **Worrying God out of our lives**

If we spend much of our time fretting, feeling anxious or worrying, those emotional states can interfere with our relationship with our Heavenly Father and break the two commandments quoted above. The worry has then become an idol.

### **What is worry?**

To worry is to allow one’s mind to dwell on difficulty or troubles. Maybe we are afraid of the consequences of our past actions. Maybe we are afraid of a future event. Maybe we are afraid of becoming ill, or not recovering. In fact so many of us are so practised at worrying we become addicted to it and will look for things to worry about. The net result is that we experience unease and are not at peace. That is not what God intends for us as Christians!

Experts have estimated that of all the things we worry about, 40 percent will never happen, 30 percent are past and all the worry in the world cannot change them, 12 percent are needless worries about our health, and 10 percent are petty, miscellaneous worries, leaving 8 percent for things that legitimately deserve our concern and thoughts (Source: *The Essence of Success* by Earl Nightingale). Thus 92 percent of the things you worry about, if you tend to be a worrier, will never happen. It is a waste of our time and energy to focus on any of the 92 percent.

In Matthew 6:25, Jesus addresses the subject of worry. He said, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put

on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” He is saying don’t worry and fret about the physical. God takes care of birds and flowers; aren’t you of more value? “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?” (verse 27). Worry is a waste of time! Instead Christ gives us our focus: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [food, drink, and clothing] shall be added to you (verse 33).

So, how do we ensure that worry doesn’t become an unintended idol?

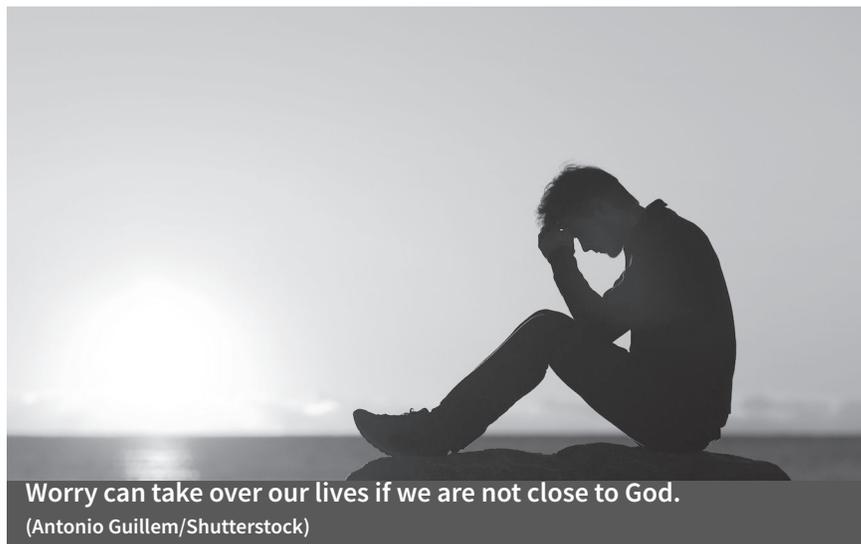
### Antidotes to worry

To defeat worry we need to ensure our relationship with God is on a sound footing.

Firstly, instead of worrying we should pray. We must be fervent in prayer. It is our lifeline to God. We can deposit our worries with Him, “casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). The Apostle Paul tells us to “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

Remember to leave your cares with Him and not take them back again at the end of the prayer, which is all too easy to do and can block the peace that should result from giving our problems to God to solve. God wants us to learn to lean on and trust Him. Also remember that while the Almighty stands ready to help, there may be actions we can take to alleviate adverse circumstances. Is there anything productive that we can do? Ask God for wisdom to recognise suitable solutions.

Next we can study the Bible looking for scriptures that counter worry; for example Matthew 6:25-34, and 2 Timothy 1:7 which reminds us “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound



Worry can take over our lives if we are not close to God.

(Antonio Guillem/Shutterstock)

mind.” We can learn about the faith of Abraham, Daniel and others as described in Hebrews 11.

Having focused on these points, we can then endeavour to replace worry with godly meditation. For example, we can consider the help God gave to his servants in the past. Actively seeking and implementing His will in our lives rather than our own desires brings peace of mind and hope even in troubled times (Romans 15:4; Psalm 119:165).

### Replacing worry with faith

Anxiety is an enemy of faith. Other enemies Christ identifies are fear, doubt and human reasoning. Often these four are intertwined.

In numerous passages of the Bible, God instructs us not to worry, fear or be anxious. Yet it is often our first instinctive response. How can our faith in God be increased? To understand more and to improve your relationship with our Heavenly Father – to learn to trust Him more and worry less – please request or download our booklet *Tools for Spiritual Growth*.

Ademola Adesupo

## Factors of faith

*The concept of faith is much misunderstood. This is what the word conveys.*

**M**any people think of “faith” as either a feeling or a collection of ideas that represent one’s convictions. Although both of these concepts involve elements of faith, the full definition is much broader.

The New Testament Greek word translated “faith” is *pistis*, the same word also rendered “belief.” It basically means “firm persuasion” and “conviction based upon hearing.”

Notice the definition from a respected Bible dictionary: “The main elements in ‘faith’ in its relation to the invisible God, as distinct from ‘faith’ in man, are especially brought out in the use of this noun and the corresponding verb, *pisteuo* [“believe”]; they are:

(1) a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgment of God’s revelation or truth, eg, 2 Thess. 2:11-12;

(2) a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12;

(3) a conduct inspired by such surrender, 2 Cor. 5:7.

Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context” (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, “Faith”).

Faith is trusting belief, conviction and conduct based on a right relationship with God. It is not static, but grows in strength and depth as we nourish that relationship with our Creator throughout our lives.

To study this important topic further please request or download our booklet *You Can Have Living Faith*.

All our booklets can be downloaded from [www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets](http://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets).

# Middle East turmoil

## *Has the countdown to Armageddon begun?*

*With the entire Middle East embroiled in war or potential conflicts, is an end-of-world scenario underway?*



The Jezreel valley as seen from the ancient city of Megiddo. This is where the world's armies will gather before the final battle at Jerusalem.

(Robert Hoetink/Shutterstock)

**A**rmageddon conveys terrible forebodings to millions of people around the world, focusing minds on a future conflict of awesome proportions and dire consequences. Bible theologians refer to this as the final battle between man and God. Ever accelerating destabilisation in the Middle East indicates that we may be approaching man's last stand against the Almighty.

The word Armageddon derives from the mountain overlooking the town of Megiddo, about 80 miles north of Jerusalem. Har is Hebrew for mountain, and Magedom is the town itself. In Old Testament times there had been some decisive battles fought in the plains near Megiddo. Two kings of Judah died there, Ahaziah and Josiah (2 Kings 9:27 and 2 Kings 23:29). *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* refers to it as "a prophetic battlefield where the kings [rulers in today's language] of the whole world gather together unto the war of the great day of God" (John D Davis, p. 226).

### **Influenced by demons**

This end-time battle between good and evil is described further in Revelation 16:16, "And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon." Who will gather them together to fight a conflict with no chance of success? Verse 14 identifies them as leaders of nations influenced by demonic powers. "For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Demons know that they have no chance of defeating God. Nonetheless, they will not be deflected from their purpose. In a similar manner, Satan rose up against God in a futile attempt to seize His throne (Isaiah 14:12-14). Described as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), the Devil is renowned for influencing events in human affairs to mankind's detriment. Beginning in the Garden of Eden, his attempts to influence the world adversely continue in ever increasing intensity as we approach the time of Armageddon.

### **Overall prophetic focus**

The overall focus of end-time prophecies is the Middle East, with particular emphasis on the area known as the Holy Land. It's a time when "the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31).

A few verses later the Almighty reveals, "I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel 3:2). The exact location of this valley is unknown – it could possibly be the valley created when the Mount of Olives splits in two at Christ's return (Zechariah 14:4). However, the name signifies in Hebrew "Yahweh has judged." That judgment will take place close to Jerusalem as indicated by Zechariah 14:2, "I will gather the nations to battle against Jerusalem." Although the demons influence the armies to attack, God chooses the battleground.

The entirety of chapter 14 of Zechariah describes God's ultimate intervention in human affairs – the last great battle before the dawn of the millennium and the reign of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). In Zechariah 14:5 we see that "the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You." The Bible defines this time as the time of the first resurrection, the resurrection of the saints. (Compare 1 Corinthians 15:52 with Revelation 11:18).

The Middle East remains pivotal to end-time prophecies. One cannot be certain how near we are to the time of that great gathering of forces at Armageddon ahead of the final battle between man and God at Jerusalem. Pre-conditions that Jesus Christ prophesied in Matthew 24 have either all been fulfilled or are being fulfilled in our time. The threat of human annihilation, the ever decreasing moral decline in society, the ever increasing natural upheavals and the true gospel being preached around the world lead us to believe that the time of God's judgment on an evil world is near.

To study this subject further, please download or request our booklets *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.

Gerhard Marx

*Beyond Today*



**Q** Does God take His Spirit away when we sin and give it back to us if we repent later?  
*Reader from London*

**A** To find the answer to this interesting question, we need to look at some examples in the Bible concerning the Holy Spirit.

As we come to a realisation that we have sinned, we recognise that our own sins have been responsible for Christ's death. If this grieves us so much we truly desire to change and follow our Heavenly Father's requirements, as revealed by Jesus Christ, this is repentance. If we are subsequently baptised, God then gives His Spirit through the laying on of hands by His ministry (1 Timothy 4:14).

Once provided with that Spirit, we are able to produce the fruits of the Spirit rather than the fruits of the flesh. There is a transformation of our minds (Romans 12:2). Compare Galatians 5:22-23 with Galatians 5:19-21.

In other words, we don't practise a life of sin, although we still sin on account of weaknesses in our human nature. It's important to realise that God's Spirit does not possess anyone, but it guides us into the paths of righteousness and sustains us in our battle against sin. At no time in our Christian lives does God take our free choice away from us. Man is and remains a free moral agent with the choice to accept or reject God's approach to and directions for life. See Deuteronomy 30:19.

Under inspiration, the apostle John tells us, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7-9). Here we see that it's a question of always being in a repentant attitude, since our sins require us to ask for forgiveness, even though we strive to practise a godly way of life.

Once God gives His Spirit, He is not going to take it away just because we stumble from time to time. We have the example

of King David who pleaded with God not to take His Spirit from him after he had sinned terribly (Psalm 51:1-11).

If we stubbornly refuse to repent after falling short or don't see the need to repent and seek forgiveness, then and only then will we lose God's Holy Spirit (Hebrews 6:4-6).

In other words, God gives His Spirit only once, and He will never take it away from a person who is willing to seek God's approach to life as exemplified in His Word.

**Q** Why do we have to repent before we are baptised?  
*Reader from Paisley*

**A** The key reason for repentance before baptism is that one needs to come to the realisation that he or she is sinful by nature. Sin is breaking the laws of God, both in letter and spirit (1 John 3:4).

The apostle Paul explained that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The apostle John wrote that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). In the next verse John tells us why it's essential to confess our sins: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In other words, there is only one way for sinful human beings – us – to be acceptable to God, and this is through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Anything less than true repentance would minimise the suffering Christ went through to make forgiveness possible.

Genuine repentance also means that we acknowledge that we ourselves were responsible for the need for Jesus, as the divine Son of God, to die. In other words we, in effect, like His fellow countrymen some 2000 years ago, put Christ onto the stake or cross. Paul wrote that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for *us*" (Romans 5:8). "Us" includes everyone, since all have sinned – broken the commandments of God – as quoted above.

Repentance would also include deep gratitude that Christ suffered such agony and humiliation so that we could be forgiven. (For more on this subject, please see the article on the cross of Christ on page 3.)

All sinners who repent are justified before God, as long as we don't practise a life of sin. See 1 John 3:4-6.

Baptism, therefore, is an outward confession of our repentance and willingness to obey God, with His help, for the rest of our lives.

## Let the Bible Answer...

### *What does the Bible teach about meditation?*

Topics on which to meditate (consider deeply/weigh up) can be found in Joshua 1:8; Psalm 77:12; Psalm 119:15-16, 97; Psalm 143:5-6, Philippians 4:8-9 and 1 Timothy 4:12-16.



## Letters From Our Readers

### Change of name

I like your name change. Please keep up the standards.

*Reader from Preston*

*Beyond Today* is a wonderful name.

*Reader from London*

Thank you for sending me the last [issue] of *The Good News*, and I look forward to receiving *Beyond Today*. Times are frightening but exciting knowing God is in control.

*Reader from Bedford*

*Editor's comment: The reasons for the name change can be found on page 2 of the January-February 2016 issue of the main magazine.*

### Enlightening Bible Course

Thank you for these studies that enable me to grow in my walk with the Lord. I found this study really helpful and easy to understand.

I look forward to the next study.

*Student from Northern Ireland*

All the articles and magazines that you have been sending me, including the *Bible Study Course*, are very helpful to me in studying the Bible. It forces me to read the Bible.

*Student from Leicester*

I am really enjoying this *Bible Study*

*Course*. I am looking forward to receiving Lesson Three.

*Student from Southend-on-Sea*

Thank you for this fantastic opportunity to learn the word.

*Student from Reading*

*Editor's comment: Our twelve-lesson Bible Study Course can be downloaded from our website ([www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-study-course](http://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-study-course)) or requested from our British Isles office. The address can be found on the front page of this Supplement, or readers can request it on the accompanying mailing carrier. Please remember to include your complete postal address. Questions and comments are welcome.*

### Clear and essential material

Thank you for making biblical prophecy clear for all of us.

*Reader from Macclesfield*

I appreciate your comments on biblical prophecy and where we are in the news today and in regards to Israel and the Church.

*Reader from London*

Thank you for the latest magazine full of essential material to help us along the way of the true God.

*Reader from Leeds*

Thank you again for your magazines. I enjoy all the articles as they explain

things clearly and you are not afraid to speak the truth.

*Reader from Chard, Somerset*

Profoundly thought-provoking and inspirational. Easy to read and understand.

*Reader from Slough*

I like the way your writers back up their statements with the Word of God. Very scriptural.

*Reader from County Down*

I look forward to your magazine as it explains the prophecies and how they are revealed in present day events. Much food for thought.

*Reader from London*

Thank you for all you do to enlighten all of us. It would appear that people are in denial. Our leaders (all intelligent, educated people) are being deceived and refuse to see where they are leading the nation.

At least we can all pray.

*Reader from Slough*

### Holy Days

Your magazine makes it much easier to understand what is going on today. Would you let me know the dates of God's festivals mentioned in the Bible

*Reader from Langport, Somerset*

*Editor's comment: A Holy Day calendar has been sent as requested.*

## How our literature is funded

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