

BEYOND TODAY

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A King who needs no successor

Sorrow gripped families, nations and indeed the entire world when the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was announced. However, God has promised the earth a King whose reign will never end.

It's not that the citizens of Britain and the Commonwealth expected Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to live forever. Many thought she might equal her late mother's age of 101. It was the suddenness of her death that took most by surprise, leaving them stunned, uncertain and feeling more grief than anticipated.

On Tuesday 6 September she bade farewell to the

outgoing prime minister Boris Johnson and greeted the next incumbent Liz Truss. To a casual observer, though very frail, she seemed in good spirits. Others expressed concern. Two days later she was dead. For Her Majesty the speed of her passing was probably a great blessing; for those left behind not so much, as family and nations alike started to come to terms with her loss.

An ancient lineage

"In largely secular, godless Britain there is a strong element of the sacred in this relationship between the people and the Crown. The monarch in Britain is consecrated to a higher king. At the coronation – which will take place next year – Charles will be anointed. The oath that he takes is not to the people but to God." Thus remarked British journalist, author, and public commentator Melanie Philips in an article on the Jewish News Syndicate website dated September 16.

It is the same oath his late mother took almost 70 years ago, and she never forgot who her Overseer was. For the sacred significance of this anointing please see pages 2 and 3 of our January/February 2022 Supplement (ucg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Supplement-Jan-Feb-2022.pdf).

In the same article Melanie Philips wrote: "Few also



Earthly kings and queens look to a secure line of succession out of necessity. King Charles III expects his elder son Prince William will succeed him.

Shutterstock

appreciate that the British monarchy is patterned on ancient Israel. It's why the monarch is anointed; it's why words uttered by 'Zadok the Priest,' taken from the first Book of Kings, have been sung at every English coronation since 973 CE. Some British monarchs in the past have even purportedly traced their line back to King David" (jns.org/opinion/the-momentous-task-facing-king-charles-iii/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email).

Our booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* provides more background to this subject.

Legacy

Of the late Queen it is said that during the seven decades of her reign she was "steadfast, enduring, dutiful: our constant in an age of change" (Obituary article by Cahal Milmo in the *i newspaper*, 9 Sept. 2022).

Embracing enduring principles based on the Judeo/Christian values that have withstood the test of time helped the Queen carry out her duties steadfastly – with much admiration by her people. In the United Kingdom the present Head of State, King Charles III, is monarch for a period of time. During his coronation a shout will go out with the words, "God save the king!"

The anointing of Queen Elizabeth II is biblical-ly connected with the coronation of Solomon, king of

Israel. This is what was said during the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth immediately after she was anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury: "Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king; and all the people rejoiced and said: God save the king, Long live the king, May the king live forever."

It remains to be seen how these words will compare with the order of words at King Charles' coronation. All the indications are that the former Prince of Wales, now king, will follow in the footsteps of his late mother.

An eternal destiny

An even greater destiny awaits every human being. However this will occur in God's timeframe, not ours. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal a glorious potential for all mankind. Those called and responding now are promised rulership under Christ when His kingdom will cover the earth (Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 20:4-6).

These who have committed themselves to follow Christ and dedicated their lives to Him in this age of men will become spirit-born children of God, fully fledged members of His divine Family. Eventually eternal life will be made available to all others willing to accept God's ways. May God speed His kingdom.

Gerhard Marx and Barbara Fenney

A King forever

Christ promises everlasting rulership to His faithful followers.

The wonderful world of tomorrow will be inaugurated at the return of Jesus Christ who will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16). Every kingdom, power and government will be brought under His divine rule (Revelation 11:15). He will establish the Kingdom of God on earth. This was the heart of His message – the gospel, or good news, that He preached (Mark 1:14-15).

Those sons and daughters of God who have been faithful to Him will share in Christ's rule. Notice Christ's promise: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21). Those who overcome will be given responsibility as kings and priests of God in that Kingdom (Revelation 1:5-6).

This amazing future was earlier foretold in the Old Testament. For example, the prophet Daniel was given a vision of Christ receiving His Kingdom from God the Father: "I was watching in the night visions, and behold,

One like the Son of Man [Jesus Christ], coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days [God the Father], and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

"Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:13-14, 27).

The "saints of the Most High" are those who are being sanctified or set apart as holy now. All of God's true followers are promised to be kings and rulers with Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:4-6).

To study further please request or download our booklets *Why Were You Born?* and *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

Whilst we wait . . .

Regarding our Christian walk, we aren't called simply to watch the world go by, but for a greater purpose. So, what should we be doing other than merely whiling away the hours?

I have done a lot of waiting this past year. Being taken into hospital with breathing difficulties eventually led to aortic-valve replacement surgery. During the interlude between diagnosis and surgery I could do very little except wait.

Finally, the operation took place. I'm told I took three days to come round afterwards. I remember almost nothing of this, but I guess that was a blessing given the type of surgery involved. However this delayed my return home. More waiting. Eventually I was discharged and have generally healed well and can now do more than I could in the months before the operation.

Such waiting time should, where possible, be put to good use. There are other occasions where we just have to try to be patient and achieve what we can. In addition to knowing what it is we are waiting for, we can seek out biblical suggestions for what we might do whilst we wait.

Anticipation and implementation

Paul, writing to the Church in Rome, addressed waiting. In Romans 8:18-25, "waits," "waiting," and "wait" are all used, and in the NKJV each is accompanied by "eagerly" with the intent of waiting with enthusiasm, anticipation, determination, perseverance. Specifically we are waiting:

- For glory to be revealed in us
- For the revealing of the sons of God
- For the redemption of our body

Jesus asked a rhetorical question: "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). In addition, in the Parable of the Ten Minas, He

We should know the difference between the truth of God and persuasive words, philosophy, empty deceit and demonic influences.

castigated a servant who was given a gift but who chose not to make appropriate use of it (Luke 19:20-23).

Through these statements Jesus is telling us, firstly, to have faith, and secondly, to keep doing what His way of life requires us to. In other words, we aren't simply to



watch, wait and do nothing, because that is a way to lose heart (Luke 18:1).

Paul pretty well sums up the public marketplace for ideas and opinions in today's world as being ". . . without Christ . . . having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). We were all once like this, with lives not based on Scripture but on human perspectives and viewpoints.

He contrasts those he says are "without Christ" with the elect of God – those he declares are "in Christ." Colossians 3:12-17 discusses the relationships within the elect of God, including such concepts as "kindness, humility, and meekness" (verse 12) and letting "the peace of God rule in your hearts" and "the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (verses 15-16).

Perhaps this passage might be summarised as being an extended example of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others, as we would have them do unto us" (found in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:12). The previous verses expand that to emphasise that the elect of God are to live up to their status "in Christ."

Interaction with those "without Christ"

A little later in the same letter Paul directed the elect of God to walk in wisdom and make the best use of their time in relation to those who are outside (Colossians 4:5-6). A couple of elements are highlighted for us all to consider when talking with those not yet called by God:

Always speak with grace seasoned with salt (verse 6).

In other words, don't talk down to people as if they were stupid for not understanding; don't harangue others. Be humbly grateful that God has called you and opened your eyes to His truths.

Try to answer appropriately – which begs some questions: Do we know what is appropriate and how to respond suitably? Could we explain what the Bible teaches? Does our conduct negate what we are trying to say?

The English Standard Version Study Bible offers the thought that “Paul’s comments assume that the Colossian believers are vitally involved in the local community and have ample opportunities to interact with outsiders in a way that would commend the gospel to them” (page 2518).

Thus, one conclusion from Colossians 4:5-6 is that the elect of God will be – and indeed ought to be – interacting with outsiders. That said, Paul in Colossians also gives some advice, even warnings, to the elect.

Although its original context was to counter gnosticism, Colossians 2:4, 8-10 and 16-19 provide advice for the people of God. We should stay strong and know the difference between the truth of God and persuasive words, philosophy, empty deceit and demonic influences.

We are to follow this advice as the elect of God and be making the best use of our time.

Biblical focus

The Gospel is to be preached, but Paul explains there

is a mystery at its core: Colossians 1:26-27, 2:2-3, 4:3, describe that mystery as “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

What is the difference between the elect of God and those who are outside? Paul, writing from the perspective of his world and its mindset, highlights a key point which is relevant to today’s world that is those “without Christ” contrasted with those “in Christ.”

The world – the one we experience today – is predominantly “without Christ.” People are estranged from Him, with no hope. This describes our world perfectly. Maybe it is by deliberate personal choice, or maybe it is by simply going along with the zeitgeist – the spirit of the times.

And yet the offer still remains: People can be made near to God the Father by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:12-13 and 17-22). That is the core element of the Gospel which the elect of God are to preach.

So, what we might do in this life as we wait includes establishing our relationship with God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, enhancing our relationships within the elect of God and encouraging, even educating and “witnessing to” those who are, as yet, without Christ. Above all, our lives should more and more reflect the behaviour patterns of our Lord and Saviour.

One thing we should not do while we wait eagerly for our revealing as the children of God, is simply watch the world go by – we are called to play our part for a much greater purpose than that.

David Fenney

Beneficial words

Words we speak can build up or tear down, thus we should be careful what we say.

It has been said that there are two ways of life – one of outgoing concern for others and one of selfishness and wanting to get one’s own way without consideration of those who get hurt in the process. It is possible to apply these two approaches to what proceeds from our mouths.

Words can show sympathy or empathy or provide encouragement. Praise for a job well done can thereby inspire the recipient to do better still. “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24). The right word at the right time can benefit an individual facing a crisis such as bereavement or job loss. “A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” (Proverbs 15:23).

On the other hand, what we utter can rob others of their peace of mind and sense of self-worth. Results can be devastating. The book of Proverbs also records that “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those

who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21).

The tongue is a powerful force for good or evil. “There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health” (Proverbs 12:18). We should never be quarrelsome but instead peaceable. Some issues can have many viewpoints. We should not be so arrogant that we assume our perspective is the only acceptable one (Proverbs 1:5).

The apostle James warned of the deceitfulness of our tongues (James 3:5-10). We should guard our mouths and speak only that which is uplifting and truthful and brings honour to our Heavenly Father. True Christian love “does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5, New International Version).

Followers of Christ should strive to be givers of kind and helpful words which will benefit others.

Philip Perry

Bible tips to enhance our “meekness quotient”

Jesus said the meek would inherit the earth. In our present turbulent world, being “meek” may present a challenge.

Inheriting the earth is a big reward for being meek (Matthew 5:5). This misunderstood trait is certainly one God wants His children to develop. For this reason we would do well to consider what the word signifies.

Compared to English, the Greek language has more precise words. Words often used for describing the valuable quality of trained animals like elephants and horses are found in the New Testament to depict a virtue God wants His people to develop.

When the apostle Paul lists “meekness” as the eighth attribute among the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5:23 (King James Version), he uses the Greek noun *praotes* or *prautes* – and “meekness” is the closest translation for the Greek word used here. (Similarly, the closest English translation for the related Greek adjective *praos* or *praus* is “meek.”)

Meek not weak

We are to be meek (yielded, teachable, responsive) first of all in our relationship with God, and secondly, meek (humble, gentle, respectful) in our relationships with people. To become this kind of person, God must tame and train us!

The word is close in meaning to magnanimous,

Gentleness refers mostly to actions, whereas meekness refers to attitude.

defined as “generous in forgiving; avoiding resentment or revenge; unselfish.” Meekness is an important part of true love. “Love is patient, love is kind . . . It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5, New International Version). Frequently translated “gentleness,” meekness does not equate to weakness.

Be aware, however, that gentleness refers mostly to actions, whereas meekness refers to attitude – one’s whole state of mind as well as actions. Meekness produces gentleness.

This explains why meekness is one of the beatitudes – beautiful attitudes for which God promises blessings (Matthew 5:5).

Christ was approachable

We can consider the example Jesus Christ set whilst He was on earth. Although He could call upon divine power, He was approachable, sympathetic, kind and loving. He advised: “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly [humble] in heart” (Matthew 11:29). He used His power for healing rather than hurting. His instruction here is: “Learn from Me.”

God is all-powerful, but never misuses that power. He is the perfect Father who never overreacts, is gentle with His children and always does what is best for us. He doesn’t destroy us when we slip up but is quick to forgive us when we repent.

Can we be approached by someone about an issue, imagined or real, without them fearing we will snap back and become angry? How would Jesus Christ react? We should always follow His example.

Be gentle with everyone

Another tip is to give people some “wobble room.” Maybe they have had a bad day, are tired or in pain. The apostle Paul wrote, “Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Colossians 3:12-13).

An individual who is secure in his or her relationship with God aims to stay calm, think first and then respond in the way that will best help the other person. That is true strength and true meekness. Since we all like to be treated gently, why not treat everyone else gently? “And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise” (Luke 6:31). That’s the Golden Rule!

Grow in meekness and gentleness

Finally, we know that the greatest power on earth is

the power of the Holy Spirit. It is God's Spirit that enables individuals to be far more meek and gentle than they could ever be without it.

Paul explained how that Spirit would transform our lives: "But the fruit [product, effect] of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness [meekness], self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). What an amazing solution! Our Heavenly Father does not leave us on our own to work up these virtues. By putting our faith in God, repenting of our sins and being baptised, we can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands of the elders (Acts 2:38; 1 Timothy 4:14). That gift in turn produces wonderful fruit!

To keep your attitudes and actions meek and gentle, you will need to swim upstream against today's current of rudeness and roughness. Paul foretold that "in the last

days . . . men will be lovers of themselves . . . unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal" (2 Timothy 3:1-3).

God is calling people out of such darkness to set the right example for others (Matthew 5:14). That is a tall order but God is ever ready to help us. Pray earnestly for His help. In addition, make a habit of reading His Word so it can transform your thinking and way of life. If you do not already have copies, please request or download our booklets *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion* and *The Power of the Holy Spirit*.

An important part of being a shining light is having godly meekness and gentleness. Someday the whole world will be a peaceful and happy place. That someday is when Christ returns and the meek inherit the earth!

Adapted from an article by Don Hooser

This is God speaking

Some claim God's voice is audible to them. Others see lights or visions which they assume to be of divine origin. Here's how God really speaks to His people.

The book of Hebrews informs us that "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). The last recorded revelation from Christ was to the elderly apostle John in around AD 90 (Revelation 1:1).

It is possible for God to give direct instructions to someone. However, we must be very careful not to assume that just any thought, idea or perceived voice comes from God. The apostle Paul warns of deceptions by both fallen angels and apostate ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air," which suggests he broadcasts his attitudes and evil thoughts into our minds (Ephesians 2:2). Even visions and miracles are not a proof of God – Christ Himself warned that signs and wonders could be performed by those seeking to deceive (Matthew 24:24, Revelation 13:11-15).

For the Christian today, God's Holy Spirit works on the mind with our own human spirit (Romans 8:16). It is much more likely that God's intervention will be by a scripture popping into our heads (John 14:26), or by a feeling that we need to take or not take a particular action in accordance with recorded scriptural principles, rather

than some sort of vision (Philippians 2:12-13). For example, to contact someone in need.

So how can we tell if something we hear or think is of God? There is a principle in the Old Testament we can follow. In Deuteronomy 13:1-4, God Almighty gives directions as to how to discern whether a supposed prophet is from Him or not. Any instruction from God will conform to His laws and purposes, and if it breaks His law or is frivolous or pointless (Isaiah 55:8-9), then it is not of God. This principle is reinforced in Isaiah 8:20, which reads, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

In the New Testament we read, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). Thus any thought, impulse, or voice (literal or metaphorical) that suggests breaking God's law is not from Him.

All this should encourage us to seek to know and understand the Ten Commandments, as codified in the Old Testament, and as our Saviour Jesus Christ magnified them in the New.

For more information, please download or request our booklet *The Ten Commandments*.



Q In your literature you state that Jesus drank wine. Are there any scriptures you can cite to prove this point?

FAQ

A The book of Luke states that the religious leaders of the time called Jesus a “winebibber.” “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber!’” (Luke 7:33-34).

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words explains the Greek word for winebibber, *oinopotes*, means “a wine drinker.” In the Old Testament this word is used to describe those who abuse alcohol (Proverbs 23:20). Since Jesus drank a little wine from time to time, specifically at the Passover (Matthew 26:29), this opened Him up to the charge of abusing it. Christ always drank in moderation; He never abused alcohol.

The Bible teaches that misusing alcohol is a sin (Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21), but reflecting on its use in moderation, Judges 9:13 speaks of wine that “cheers both God and men.” Psalm 104:15 also presents moderate alcohol use in a positive light as “wine that makes glad the heart of man.”

Christ’s first public miracle was turning water into a quality wine (John 2:1-11), something He would not have done if drinking any alcoholic beverage were a sin.

Jesus instructed Christians to take a small amount of wine as part of the Passover service (1 Corinthians 11:25-26). In the context of this instruction, Paul corrected some of the Corinthian congregation for getting drunk at the Passover (1 Corinthians 11:21). Clearly, they were using fermented wine in the observance of the Passover or it would not have been possible for them to become drunk.

Grapes were harvested in autumn and the Passover occurs in spring. Fresh grape juice would not keep for six months from the harvest until Passover without modern methods of preservation. Grapes could be dried as raisins or their juice fermented into wine. Often the juice would ferment of its own accord due to naturally occurring yeasts in the air. Wine was sometimes used as an antiseptic to cleanse wounds (Luke 10:33-34). Fresh grape juice would not have these properties, nor could it be kept for this purpose.

Those with a proclivity towards alcoholism or who cannot drink in moderation should not drink. Christians of legal age who choose to drink should always do so in moderation.

Q Statements in Leviticus 17:14 and Acts 15:29 suggest Christians should avoid blood transfusions and eating blood products such as black pudding.
Reader from Cheshire

A Eating blood and blood products is explicitly forbidden in the scriptures you quote. The command was a prohibition against customs that pagans were using in idolatrous worship. They commonly drank the blood of animals, believing they would receive strength by doing so. Clearly, this has nothing to do with the modern practice of blood transfusions.

Beyond clarifying the misrepresentation of the Bible, the United Church of God has no official position on the question of blood transfusions. We believe it is up to the individual to make decisions about healthcare and treatment programmes, and it is not a doctrinal matter. At the same time, we encourage people to take reasonable responsibility for their health and well-being, which is a godly principle.

On a related point, we believe in and look to God as our healer, anointing and praying for the sick in faith (James 5:14-15).

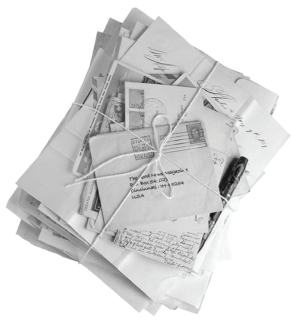
Let the Bible Answer...

What does the Bible tell us about peace?

Followers of Christ should live peaceful lives and not stir up strife or contentions: Galatians 5:19-26; Romans 12:18; 1 Corinthians 11:16; Hebrews 12:14.

They are to be peacemakers, which may require much wisdom and counsel: Matthew 5:9; Romans 14:14-19; Ephesians 4:1-3; James 3:13-18.

Peace is a fruit of God's Spirit: John 14:27; Romans 8:6. The Father and Christ live in peace: Romans 1:7.



Letters From Our Readers

Comfort for the bereaved

I appreciate all the help you have provided for me. At a time which is truly dark for me right now, you have helped guide me towards the light.

Reader in London

Please can you send me three copies of *What Happens after Death*? I am in bereavement with two other mums. All of our sons died last year.

Reader in Portsmouth

Editor's comment: We are so sorry to hear of your loss and that of the other two mums. We pray that the knowledge of what really happens after death and the hope of a future resurrection of all who have died will bring you some comfort.

Russia

Could you please send me the literature relating to Russia's relevance to end-time events. It would appear to be very appropriate at the moment. Thank you for your continual good news and helping us all to look forward to the wonderful future promised. It doesn't feel far away now.

Reader in Plymouth

Editor's comment: Our booklet Russia and Bible Prophecy is on its way to you.

Best seller

Thank you for the booklet *Tools for Spiritual Growth* you sent me. I can understand why the Bible is still the number one best-selling book, and the number one book to read all one's life. There will never be anything

else to surpass it.

Reader in Hull

Subscriber renewals

Thank you so much for continuing my subscription. I always look forward to your magazine dropping through my letterbox.

Reader in Doncaster

Thank you so much. We enjoy all your input.

Reader in Marlow

Please could I continue receiving *Beyond Today* magazine? I enjoy reading it and save it in a binder, so I can reread as I wish. I've learned passages from the Bible and understand them better. Thank you,

Reader from Leeds

Many thanks for your *Beyond Today* magazine, which is passed around to the residents. Your resources are so very important to me.

Reader in Plymouth

Thank you so much for your magazine and the booklets that I download. They explain so much to me and are a constant tool in maintaining and growing my faith.

Reader from Grimsby

Thank you for your magazine. It inspires and excels in spiritual revelation and prophecy in these dark days.

Reader in Northern Ireland

I would very much like to continue receiving *Beyond Today*. It is a most enjoyable read.

Reader in Cambridge

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