

BEYOND TODAY

The British & European Supplement

July/August 2025

Every second counts

Time is a precious and limited commodity – don't waste it.

We all have 24 hours in a day, but does it sometimes feel like that is not enough? Maybe we wish we had more time, or perhaps we are looking forward to retirement, when we might have more free time. If the latter, then think again. After retirement, days can be filled with new tasks, making us busier than ever. It's not uncommon to hear, "I don't know how I found time to go to work."

From our perspective, time flies. The good news is, we are the pilot – we have the controls. Thus, we get to dictate, for better or worse, how we spend much of our time.

Biblical instructions

In Ephesians 5:15-16 the apostle Paul advised: "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

The Good News Bible (a paraphrased version useful for its flow, but too loosely translated for serious doctrinal study) reads, "So be careful how you live. Don't live like ignorant people, but like wise people. Make good use of every opportunity you have, because these are evil days."

On a practical level, how can we be wise and make the most of opportunities? Let's consider three major factors.

Overcommitment

Irrespective of what we are doing, we need to ask ourselves if we overcommitted. Wasted opportunities can occur due to overcommitment. We may miss opportunities and fail to take advantage of using our time profitably if we are just too busy. Consider Martha, the sister of Mary of Bethany, who was unable to listen to Jesus because she was too involved with food preparation. Her

well-intentioned actions denied her the opportunity to learn directly from Christ (Luke 10:38-42).

Sometimes we must ask ourselves whether there is too much going on in our lives. Do we have sufficient time for the fundamentals? If not, can we simplify our lives? There is a place in a very real Kingdom just ahead of us and all our actions should be geared toward that end. This world is evil and will eventually perish. We must make time for the basics now.

Distraction

Do we fail to redeem the time because we are distracted? In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus explained various reasons why some failed to follow Him. Describing the third of these groups, He elaborated thus: "Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful (Mark 4:18-19).

Are we focused too much on the cares or concerns of this world? It's easy to spend too much time on social media or the internet following what is often referred to as "click bait" (moving from one story to another). TV can

Watch!

For the latest commentaries on the Middle East conflict please go to <https://ucg.org.uk/news-and-events/>.

be used wisely but for many becomes a time-waster. Even a newspaper can hold similar distractions.

The writer of Psalm 119 asked God to “turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me [give me life] in Your way” (verse 37). In this case, “worthless” doesn’t necessarily mean evil, but implies useless or false.

Instead, be wise, stay focused.

Priorities

Another way to reduce wasted time is to prioritise our tasks. Write a list if it helps, and concentrate on those that are most important. We can waste opportunities to redeem the time simply because we treat everything as being of equal importance. We can do good but fail to do what is best.



Time is fleeting. We need to make best use of it!

Shutterstock

King Solomon wrote many proverbs as well as the book of Ecclesiastes. Chapter 3:1 of the latter states, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” The next seven verses list various aspects of life for which there is “a time.”

The important point to remember is that, while there is a time or a season for everything, there is not necessarily time for everything. There is a difference, and we need to be selective and choose to be spending our time carefully. Personal time is not infinite. We can neither pause nor rewind it, nor start over as if in a game.

Because time is such a precious commodity, we would be wise ask ourselves, “Is this the best use of my time right now? Is there something else that should be given higher priority at this time?”

For example, verse 4 of this chapter says there is a time for dancing, but if we are dancing all the time, is it at the expense of sleep or study? Is dancing bad – of course not, but it would be if it displaced more important

issues that need attention.

We might be thinking that we need to devote all our time to studying the Bible, God’s instructions to us. Do you really think you can be a Christian just by studying? Could any of us fly an aeroplane just by reading the manual? Do you really think you can be a Christian just by studying? As learning to fly takes practice, so does being a disciple of Christ. We need to spend time applying what we are learning.

At the top of our time priority list should be prayer, studying God’s word and meditation, i.e. reflecting on our studies (Psalm 119:15). Other priorities should include time for family (both blood relatives and our spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ) and friendships.

Room for improvement

I mentioned dancing before. There is nothing wrong with decorous dancing in context but it cannot be at the cost of more important matters. I like watching motorcycle racing. After a stressful week I can chill for a while. I could easily watch a lot more of it, but that wouldn’t be wise. Whilst we all need some time to refresh, it is a single use entity. Once used it is gone and can never be recovered.

Think of it in terms of money. We want a return on what we are spending, we want value. If we waste or throw money away, that’s it. Do we do the same with time? Do

At the top of our time priority list should be prayer, studying God’s word and meditation i.e. reflecting on our studies (Psalm 119:15).

we spend it wisely for the best return or do we let it slip through our fingers like sand? Gone forever.

Another aspect is to see everything that comes our way from God’s perspective. This is one of the reasons we must spend time with God in prayer and study so that we will begin to think as He does. Over time you get to know a person – what they enjoy, their concerns and how they view particular topics. It’s the same with God.

This, of course, can apply to a multitude of situations. We need to exercise the wisdom that God gives us. Turn away from issues that don’t matter, and focus on life as God has revealed.

Be content

The apostle Paul said he had learned to be content in all things (Philippians 4:11). In my life, despite the circumstances I have been in, I have always had a roof over

my head and I've always had access to food. I know that God will see to these things for me. On the other hand, time and how I use it is in my domain.

To possess the newest, latest and best gadgets, if it is within our means, is not a problem. To spend all our time and energy going after the newest, latest and best is folly.

Paul had learned to prioritise and focus, and to embrace each new opportunity as a gift from God. He was content to serve. An example of wisdom in action, a wise man who redeemed his time.

As Christ's disciples, our primary focus is on God's

Kingdom, and we should always have an eye towards that goal. Is our time allocation helping or hindering that aim? We can fritter time away, or use it profitably. At the end of our days will we look back upon a life well-lived, or will we regret all the time we wasted?

If we are wise and prioritise our actions in these evil days, then we will focus on the right tasks at the right moment, redeem our time and enhance our relationship with God.

Jason Godfrey

Renewal of the inner person

Daily contact with God can refresh our spiritual condition.

As we age our bodily strength seems to be consumed at an increasingly rapid rate. Sometimes when out walking, I have to call out to God for the strength to actually reach my destination.

The apostle Paul encourages us in 2 Corinthians 4:16: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." The Greek word translated "perishing" has the sense of "to change for the worse" or "to consume." On the other hand, "renewed" suggests the receipt of "new strength and vigour" in our spirit.

How we are renewed

To start this renewal, the apostle Paul recommends prayer. He wrote: "Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (2 Thessalonians 5:17-18). Ideally prayer should include a formal approach on our knees and maintaining a constant attitude of prayer, speaking to God whilst attending to our daily tasks. King David and the prophet Daniel both prayed three times a day (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10.) As we do this, God gets to know our minds and concerns.

Another key to the renewal of the inner person is through listening to what God tells us. We do this by studying the Bible. True followers of God will be eagerly immersing themselves in all the Almighty has to say.

Then, by meditating on what we have learned through our study of God's word, His thoughts gradually become our thoughts. When confronted by Satan the devil, Jesus responded, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

It is so important to actually live by every word of God, as Jesus instructed, and not just hear the word. The apostle Paul wrote to the disciples at Rome, "not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Romans 2:13).

Whilst there is little to prevent the perishing of our physical flesh, there is much we can do to renew the inner person. The apostle Paul declared: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

For more guidance and deeper understanding please request or download our booklet *Tools for Spiritual Growth*.

Philip Perry



Ageing brings physical challenges. Staying close to God mitigates against corresponding spiritual "deterioration."

Shutterstock

The genealogy of Christ

How can we reconcile the different accounts of Christ's lineage given in Matthew 1 and Luke 3?

God says there are no contradictions in His Holy Word (John 10:35). If we find something in the Bible that seems contradictory, we need to seek an explanation. Such is the case with this question of the two different genealogies of Christ.

Matthew, writing to the Jews, gave the legal descent of Jesus. This could only be through Joseph. Luke, on the other hand, provided the real physical descent of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38). The latter could only come through Mary since Jesus was conceived of a virgin and was begotten by God's Spirit, not by a human father (Matthew 1:18-25).

Legal lineage and literal descent

That Matthew was writing the genealogy from Joseph's perspective is seen in his use of the word "begat" in the King James Version and "begot" in the New King James Version. Matthew 1: 2 states: "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren" (KJV). "Begat" means to become the male parent of, to father, or to engender (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*) and is used throughout this entire list. If used of a woman, it signifies "born" or "brought forth". Since God the Father begot Christ by the power of His Spirit, it brings Mary into the picture by saying that she was the one "of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." So even though Mary is mentioned, being Christ's only human parent, the genealogy is Joseph's.

In Luke's genealogy, it might appear that this is also a genealogy from Joseph's side because it lists Joseph and says of him that he "was the son of Heli" (Luke 3:23). However, Matthew has already declared Joseph's literal father to be Jacob (Matthew 1:16), so how can his father now be called Heli? (Luke 3:23). The answer lies in the use of the words "the son" in Luke.

In both the KJV and the NKJV the words "the son" are in italics, as they are throughout Luke's list. Words in italics are not in the original Greek but have been added by translators to try to clarify the text. Often these additions do help, but sometimes they can distort the meaning and cause confusion. Such is the case with the words, "the son, in this chapter. The correct reading of Luke 3:23 should be "... Joseph, which was of Heli."

How was Joseph "of Heli"? The only way that Joseph could be associated with this list is as the son-in-law of

Heli – Heli being Mary's father. It was not the norm to include women in such a list, so Luke was allowing Joseph to stand in Mary's place. Legally, as the husband of Mary, Joseph became Heli's heir.

Messianic line

God says that Abraham, Judah, David, and others were the forefathers of Christ (Genesis 12:3; Acts 3:25-26; Hebrews 7:14; John 7:42). How can we prove from Scripture that Jesus was of this line? Matthew's genealogy cannot prove it, because Joseph was not actually Christ's father. But Luke, giving the actual lineage of Jesus through Mary, shows that He was of Abraham, Judah, and David (Luke 3: 34, 33 and 31).

When Jesus walked the earth as a human being, one who claimed to be the Messiah would have to prove that he had descended from Abraham and David. To prove this, the Gospel writers placed His genealogies at the beginning of Matthew (Joseph's genealogy) and in Luke 3 (Mary's genealogy) for all to see and verify.

It would have been easy for Jesus' adversaries to have refuted His claims by simply comparing his genealogies with the official records of the time. But Scripture doesn't record any instance of the Jewish leaders challenging Jesus on this point.

When Jesus walked the earth as a human being, one who claimed to be the Messiah would have to prove that he had descended from Abraham and David.

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* on Matthew, chapter 1, points out: "The opening verse connected [Jesus] back to two great covenants in Jewish history: the Davidic (2 Samuel 7:1-29) and the Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-20; 15:1-21). A question the Jews would have asked was, 'If Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfilment of these two great covenants, is He related to the rightful line?' This is why Matthew traced Jesus' lineage in detail."

As an aside, the gospel of Mark includes no genealogical record relating to Jesus Christ. However, the apostle John, apparently writing some six decades after Jesus'

death and resurrection, does not begin with His human genealogy or His human birth, but with His divine origin. At the beginning of his Gospel, John tells us precisely who Jesus is, where He came from and that He existed before

His human conception (John 1:1-3, 14).

Rather than disprove the Bible with a contradiction, Matthew and Luke's genealogies of Jesus Christ, correctly understood, help to validate it.

Human lifespan

Does God decide how long a person can live?

A question we are frequently asked regards man's lifespan is "Does God decide when a person dies or does He leave it to time and circumstance?"

Time and chance are indeed great contributors to a person's lifespan, even for those who take care of their bodies and can access a healthy diet. However, when living in a country at war, young people in particular frequently have their lifespan shortened when called up for military service. Then there are those who abuse their bodies with alcohol or drugs which contribute to a reduced life expectancy. Some unfortunately commit suicide. Others are victims of crime. Still others die of starvation, often on account of civil wars.

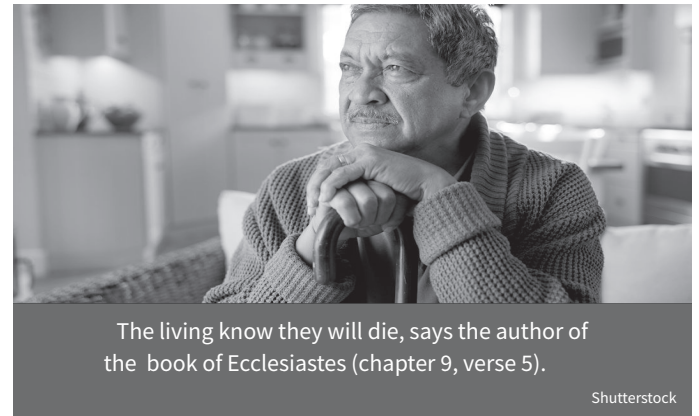
God isn't of course responsible when the above examples cause premature death, although He may intervene where blatant sin is involved, as in the case of the Flood, and for specific individuals (Genesis 6:5-7; 2 Chronicles 13:20; Acts 12:23). On the other hand, He has extended life and even restored life in exceptional cases (2 Kings 4:32-35; 20:1-6; John 11:39-44). As the prophet Ezekiel explains, God asserts, "Behold, all souls [living creatures] are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Our Creator has power over life and death.

Lifespan has a limit

God is responsible for setting in motion a general boundary of some 70 years of life for most human beings. During the time of the Exodus under Moses we read in

The Bible teaches us that, although we are born mortal, our ultimate destiny is to "put on" immortality.

Psalm 90:10, "The days of our lives are 70 years. And if by reason of strength they are 80 years . . ." In modern times average life expectancy in Britain has increased to over 82 years for women with many now reaching 90 or 100. However beyond that there seems to be an upper limit of



The living know they will die, says the author of the book of Ecclesiastes (chapter 9, verse 5).

Shutterstock

around 120 years, with very few achieving more. Moses lived to fulfil 120 years, although he had the blessing of good health until his death (Deuteronomy 34:5-7).

We are physical beings, prone to act in ways that shorten lives. Only God Almighty has life inherent in Himself, as is described so accurately in Isaiah 57:15: It is God "who inhabits eternity." But we are mortal, hoping to inherit immortality once we acknowledge and repent of our sins and ask for God to apply His Son's atoning sacrifice to repeal the death sentence hanging over us (Romans 6:23). The Bible teaches us that, although we are born mortal, our ultimate destiny is to "put on" immortality, as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. "Behold, I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

That is the ultimate destiny of all human beings. Once we accept Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and live a life of righteousness based on God's Word, we can have confidence that He who began that good work in us will complete it (Philippians 1:6). To study this important topic further please request or download our booklets *What Is Your Destiny?* and *What Happens After Death?*

Gerhard Marx

The heart of a mouse

Research on embryonic mouse cells reveals inbuilt organisation and direction as the vital organs form.

The Bible was long accepted as a true and reliable account of human origins. Then Darwin's theory of evolution took the world by storm, with predictable consequences, as belief in a personal God plummeted.

Recent research, however, carried out this year on a specially engineered mouse model, reveals how embryonic cells become cardiac cells at the right time, moving purposefully to the right place to form the heart. Does this indicate evolution or point to a higher mind controlling the development of physical organs?

An advanced imaging technique was used during this research collaboration between University College London (UCL) and the biomedical Francis Crick Institute to create a time-lapse video of cardiac cells as they form the heart of a mouse. Researchers say the study's findings could revolutionise how scientists understand and treat congenital defects in human hearts.

The time-lapse shows how cells move, divide, and form organs like the heart during embryo growth. In humans this occurs in the second week after conception.

According to the report, the team found that during gastrulation (the process by which cells begin to specialise and organise into the body's primary structures), cardiac cells emerge rapidly and behave in "highly organised ways." Instead of moving chaotically or randomly, the cells followed "distinct paths" – "almost as if they already know where they are going and what role they will play, whether contributing to the ventricles (the heart's pumping chambers) or the atria (where blood enters the heart from the body and lungs)."

Senior author Dr Kenzo Ivanovitch (UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health and British Heart Foundation Intermediate Research Fellow) said: "This is the first time we've been able to watch heart cells this closely, for this long, during mammalian development. We first had to reliably grow the embryos in a dish over long periods, from a few hours to a few days, and what we found was totally unexpected."

Dr Ivanovitch added: "Our findings demonstrate that cardiac fate determination and directional cell movement may be regulated much earlier in the embryo than current models suggest.

"This fundamentally changes our understanding of cardiac development by showing that what appears to



Like humans, all living beings are
"fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Shutterstock

be chaotic cell migration is actually governed by hidden patterns that ensure proper heart formation." The full report can be read at ucl.ac.uk/news/2025/may/scientists-film-heart-forming-3d-earlier-ever.

This research shows that embryonic cells become cardiac cells at the right time, then move purposefully into the right place to form the heart. Despite the denials of evolutionists, this level of specific arrangement requires information, and information always comes from a mind.

To study further the proofs of a Creator God please request or download our booklet *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*

Mark Mirigian

Let the Bible answer...

What does the Bible say about judgement?

All will stand before the judgement seat of Christ and give account: Romans 14:10.

With the Scriptures finally opened to their understanding, they will be judged by their response: 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15.

Those called by God in this age are being judged now by those same standards: 1 Peter 4:17-18.



Q Should we pray to or worship angels? Does everyone have a personal angel with whom they can interact?

FAQ

A Christians are to diligently follow the Ten Commandments, and the first is very clear: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). Sometimes individuals seem to want a personal angel to do their bidding. They may even look to angelic aid without ever calling upon God for help.

Whilst Jesus said of those who come to Him in child-like faith, “In heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven,” this does not necessarily mean one angel per person (Matthew 18: 4-6, 10). It could mean a plurality of angels to each person or to the believers collectively.

Some have an obsession or near worship of angels. Angels are real, but one must be cautious about attributing credit to them instead of to God. If you wish to express thanks for miracles and answered prayer that you believe God’s holy angels have done for you, give thanks to God. Angels act at His command. Never seek to thank or praise the angels directly.

Angel worship has been around for a long time. Gnosticism, a philosophical-religious movement that was beginning to infiltrate the Church in the first century, falsely taught that angels are necessary intermediaries between God and each of us. The apostle Paul referred to this in Colossians 2:18: “Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels . . .”

Jesus Christ is our sole Mediator with God (1 Timothy 2:5). Yet angels serve as messengers, and people seem drawn to that, thinking they can access God via an angel. A similar issue arises among those who pray to various dead saints. Praying to saints and angels is really an adoption of the pagan methodology of approaching the spirit

realm through perceived lesser deities.

True angels don’t take our focus away from God to point it at themselves. They are careful not to develop a relationship with us because we might then start to rely on them rather than on God. Anyone claiming to be communing with angels may find these are not God’s holy angels they are engaged with, but instead are evil spirits (demons) posing as righteous angels to gain influence in people’s lives.

The apostle John recorded an encounter with an angel who pointed him toward God alone and cautioned about bowing down to or giving more credit to angels (or anyone else) than is due: “Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he [the angel] said to me, ‘See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant . . . Worship God’” (Revelation 22:6-9; see also Revelation 19:10).

We are not to worship angels. We are to only worship God and should direct our prayers only to Him, as Scripture instructs. To learn more of angels and their roles, please request or download our booklet *Angels: God’s Messengers and Spirit Army*.

Q What does the reference to a “tutor” in Galatians 3:24-25 mean?

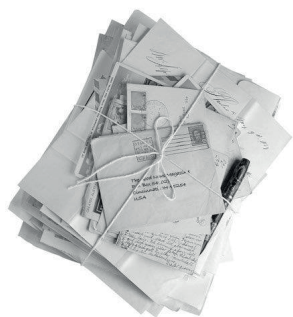
FAQ

A Galatians 3:24-25 reads: “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

In referring to “tutor” in this passage, the centre reference margin in some New King James versions of the Bible says, “In a household, the guardian responsible for the care and discipline of the children.” By way of analogy, the law of God cares for and guides us toward Christ. In Romans 7:7, Paul wrote similarly that the law teaches us the difference between right and wrong, and in verse 12 he called it “holy.” Through the law, we learn what sin is, that we have lived contrary to God’s way of life and that we need the forgiveness Christ’s sacrifice makes possible. We then need to avoid sinning again.

God promises to write His law on the hearts of true believers (Jeremiah 31:33). This is not so we can earn our salvation but that we can become more like our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

To study further please request or download our booklet *The Ten Commandments*.



Letters From Our Readers

Subscribers renew

Please continue my subscription. I enjoy reading *Beyond Today*. It helps me in my walk of faith. Good relevant subjects particularly on what lies ahead in the afterlife and describing the Bible as the world's answer to problems and what it all means.

Reader in Hale

Yes, please carry on sending your issues. My wife and I find them all so very helpful, interesting and inspiring. Thank you indeed. May God continue to direct you.

Reader in Colchester

My sincere thanks for the *Beyond Today* magazine. I find it most helpful in my continued "walk" with God, which has lasted for more than 65 years. I have found Him ever faithful and ever true.

Reader in Burnham-on-Crouch

I have really enjoyed reading *Beyond Today*. Thank you for making it clearer and easier to understand

the relevance and meaning of what is written in the Bible for today.

Reader in Rossendale

New Bible students

I really enjoyed the first lesson of this course. I think the course will give me a better understanding of the Bible. I look forward to receiving more lessons.

Student in Northern Ireland

I just want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn about Jesus. I cannot afford books or courses, so it means so much to me.

Student in East Grinstead

Editor's comment: We are pleased to provide the Bible Study Course free of charge. How we are able to do this is explained in the box below.

Grateful for Literature

Very good publications. Most thought and prayer provoking.

Reader in London

Thank you for your literature; it

really helps me to [grow] closer to my Lord. We need to be prepared for the return of Christ, to make sure our armour is in place ready for this fight. By the Spirit of Christ we will overcome the world.

Reader in Abertillery

Many thanks for all your publications over the years – here in the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and for the last few years spent in the Philippines.

Reader in Southsea

Thank you for your informative literature. It is really helpful and interesting. I am understanding God's word so much better now. God bless you all.

Reader in Tayport, Scotland

Our literature can be downloaded from our website at www.ucg.org or requested from the address at the bottom of the front page.

How you can help

The outreach work of the United Church of God in the British Isles, including the production of this Supplement to *Beyond Today* magazine, is carried out by a small team of part-time employees, together with the efforts of unpaid volunteers.

Distribution of *Beyond Today* magazine, this Supplement and other literature of the United Church of God is funded by the generosity of Church members, co-workers and readers.

Jesus Christ instructed His disciples that as they had freely received they were to freely give (Matthew

10:8), so we supply our literature free of charge, making Christ's message available to all. Our gratitude goes to those who assist financially in this aspect of the Church's work.

Donations may be sent to *Beyond Today* or United Church of God, PO Box 705, Watford WD19 6FZ, United Kingdom; or online at www.ucg.org.uk/donate.html through PayPal. Donations can also be made directly to our bank account. Please contact us for details.

The United Church of God – British Isles is a registered charity in England and Wales, number 1079192.