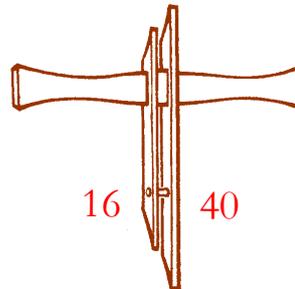


The RECORD

The Magazine of
BROADMEAD BAPTIST CHURCH



*Mr Thomas Ewins
preaching
from the prison,
1664*



March, 2018

BROADMEAD BAPTIST CHURCH

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welcome!

If you are curious and have come to see us
If you are weary and have come to rest
If you are grateful and have come to share
If you are hurt and have come for solace
If you are listening and have come to pray
If you are seeking and have come for answers

welcome!

For your information

SUNDAY WORSHIP: 11 a.m. every Sunday; there will be no evening services except for special occasions. (Communion on the first and third Sunday mornings.)

CITY PRAYERS: Tuesdays at 1.10 p.m.

CITY COMMUNION: Thursdays at 1.10 p.m.

The minister will usually be at church on Thursday mornings. You are always welcome to pop in for a chat, but please phone first if you are making a special trip as events frequently mean that the minister's plans have to be changed.

NOTES from the MANSE

TODAY the cross is universally recognised as the symbol of Christianity. It was not the first symbol chosen by the church. In the ancient world crucifixion was considered a terrible form of execution. Cicero, a Roman historian, described it as “a most cruel and disgusting punishment.” During the second century we have evidence that the church used a number of symbols, including the fish (the letters in the Greek word for fish stood for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour), a peacock (representing immortality), a laurel wreath (for victory) and the dove (representing the Holy Spirit).

By the end of the second century we know that the practice had developed of Christians crossing themselves. Tertullian, writing about the year AD 200, wrote that Christians made the sign of the cross on their forehead throughout the day as an invocation of God. This observation is backed up by Hippolytus and Cyprian writing slightly later.

It is probable that the cross became the dominant symbol for Christianity after the Battle of Milvian Bridge in AD 312-313. On the eve of the battle the emperor Constantine saw a vision in the sky of the cross and the words, ‘conquer by this sign’. Thereafter Christianity became the official religion of the empire and the cross its symbol.

The church might have chosen other symbols, perhaps a manger to focus attention on the incarnation, a carpenter’s bench to point to Jesus’ humanity, or to the empty tomb to remind people of the resurrection. The cross points to Jesus’ death. Is this really the heart of the Christian faith?

In the New Testament, I think an unanswerable case can be built to support the choice of the cross. Apart from the very short books in the NT, and the letter to James, the cross plays a significant part in all of the gospels and epistles. The fact that the cross was only slowly accepted as the symbol of the church shows how offensive it was to many people.

Opponents to the church subjected Christians to ridicule. The Kircherian Museum in Rome has a piece of graffiti from the second century showing a figure on a cross with a donkey’s head. A person is standing by it worshipping. The legend is “Alexander worships God”.

Even so, the cross has remained the most recognised symbol of the Christian faith. **JOHN HOUSEAGO**

Sermon themes

All services are at **11 a.m.** and will be led by the minister unless otherwise noted.

4th March, 2018

Jesus cleanses the Temple. *1 Corinthians 1:18-25 and John 2:13-22*

11th March, 2018

Service for Mothering Sunday

18th March, 2018

Jesus Speaks About his Death. *Hebrews 5:5-10 and John 12:20-33*

25th March, 2018, PALM SUNDAY

Jesus' Triumphant Entry to Jerusalem. *Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29 and Mark 11:1-11*

30th March, 2018, GOOD FRIDAY

→ 10.30 Reflections of the Cross

1st April, 2018, EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus and Mary Magdalene. *1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and John 20:1-18*

fellowship matters

Edited for the Internet

Please submit copy for the next edition of *The Record* any time **BEFORE SUNDAY, 11TH MARCH**. JACK APPLETON, *Editor*

<i>Church Flowers</i>	4th March	Edwina Hayden <i>(in memory of Roger)</i>
	11th March	Joy and Glyn Duggan
	18th March	The Undercroft
	25th March	—

THURSDAY AFTERNOON STUDIES FOR 2018

The Thursday afternoon study group will continue to explore the Reformation, principally through the biographies of some of the key personalities.

The first study in 2018 will on **Thursday, March 22nd**. The meeting starts at 2.15 p.m. and lasts for one hour. Everyone is welcome.

JOHN HOUSEAGO

CHURCH MEETING

The next Church Meeting, which will include the AGM, is on **Wednesday, 23rd May, 2018** at 2.15 p.m. in the Hiley Room.

All members are encouraged to attend.

The Baptist Times Round-up

WHEN LIFE IS BEYOND BEARING

And what the book of Job reveals about the nature of God and human suffering. By Colin Sedgwick

You know those times when you are having a completely unimportant chat with someone, and somehow it takes on quite a serious, even solemn, note?

It happened to me once with a friend I'll call Ellen. A lovely

Christian; Ellen has had a hard, painful life. Our chat began to touch on this, and I think I must have said something like, “Well, we have to thank God for the good things – when all is said and done there’s a lot in life to be thankful for.” Her reply left me rather lost for words: “Yes, I suppose so. But I must admit that personally *I would have preferred never to have been born.*”

I didn’t know what to say. At one level her remark seemed almost blasphemous: if life is a gift of God, how could it possibly be right to say that you’d prefer never to have had it? But her words were spoken without any bitterness or anger; they were just a plain statement of fact. I couldn’t possibly have judged or criticised her.

And then I thought of Job – like Ellen a godly and greatly respected person.

Job 3 must surely rank as one of the oddest passages in the Bible. *After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said, “May the day of my birth perish, and the night that said, ‘A boy is conceived!’ That day – may it turn to darkness; may God above not care about it, may no light shine on it...”* (verses 1-4).

In his terrible suffering, Job calls down bitter curses on “the day of his birth”. Which seems, surely, slightly crazy – how can you curse a day that is long gone? How can such a day *perish*? How can you wish a day ill? Indeed, there is a moment which seems, to me at least, almost comical: “May those who curse days curse that day” (verse 8) – as if there are people around, along with bus-drivers, teachers and office-workers, whose role in life is “cursing days”!

]Well, of course, it’s all very emotional, poetic language: we may find fault with Job’s logic, but I think we know very well what he means. And it certainly puts Ellen’s mild, matter-of-fact remark into perspective.

If ever there was a Bible book that demands to be read right to the end, surely it must be Job. And though it can be quite a difficult read at times, I think we must thank God that this

strange book has found its way into scripture.

Two key questions arise in my mind regarding Job.

First, *how does he confront his miserable, wretched suffering?*

The answer that must spring to the mind of anyone who knows their Bible at all is: *with massive patience*. James the brother of Jesus (in James 5:11) speaks of Job's "endurance" (NIV) or his "staying power" (The Message). And that must surely be right. Sheer *stickability* is a precious thing. Do you have it? – do I?

But there is another vital thing about Job that he deserves recognition for: his extraordinary *honesty*. Job can't understand why what is happening to him is happening – and he decides to say so, loud and clear. He refuses to swallow the shallow, trite explanations of his so-called comforters. And he is even prepared to stand up to God himself, so to speak – take a look, for example, at 13:20-27.

It is, certainly, right for human beings to be respectful and humble in the presence of God. Of course. But Job teaches us that God respects us when we are totally honest with him; he has no time for platitudes, clichés and truisms. Is this a lesson some of us need to learn

The second question is: *How does Job's story end?*

And the answer, of course, is: *in triumph and joy*. This is why I said we absolutely must read the book right through.

I don't imagine for one minute that all the catastrophes of Job's earlier life were simply blotted out of his memory by the time we get to chapter 42; where there have been wounds there must, after all, be scars. But the fact is that "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part" (42:12). He ends up with massive prestige and stupendous wealth (not to mention three fabulously beautiful daughters).

I would sum up the great truth of this book like this: *there is no such thing as a child of God whose story doesn't have a happy ending*.

Yes, God “*will* wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4) – yours, mine – and Ellen’s too, of course.

Here’s a prayer perhaps we could join in:

Father God, I think of all those who feel today as Job felt so long ago. Give me, please, eyes to see, a heart to feel, and hands to help them in their troubles. Amen.

MISSION MATTERS

NEWS FROM NEPAL

Our overseas links, the Chadwell family, have faced challenges over the past year. Following the death of Ian’s father last February, Cynthia has had news of family illness – particularly concerning when loved ones are far away. More recently, Ian has had some health issues, hopefully not serious. A major event in the educational sphere has been the move of Justin and Lucy’s school to new premises. Justin has been making applications for a UK university place in September. We remember the family in our prayers.

SERVING IN THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM

Nepal, with its breathtaking scenery and the world’s highest mountain well deserves the name ‘The Mountain Kingdom’.

Our mission links Cynthia and Ian Chadwell went to serve there with different mission organisations in the early 1990s and married in 1996. Previously, Ian was an NHS manager and Cynthia (who is American) a primary school teacher.

One of Ian’s main roles has been as an advisor on the administration of mission and government district hospitals. He welcomes the valuable part that mission hospitals play in missionary work but also has a particular concern that Christians in government hospitals should witness to Jesus Christ by the quality of their

lives and work. Ian's visits to district hospitals frequently involve long journeys over challenging roads!

Cynthia has been involved with women's groups, has taught in the Sunday School of their Nepali church, has worked for an organisation that trains pre-school teachers and has herself been trained as a 'facilitator' in connection with a programme to improve the relationships between children and their carers. She hopes to use the latter training to conduct a parenting group at their church.

Cynthia's and Ian's children Justin (18) and Lucy (15) have been studying at Kathmandu International Study Centre, a school where children of many different nationalities receive an education which combines excellent teaching with a range of out-of-school activities. Justin (who reaches the end of his schooling next year) is thinking about applying to universities while Lucy is getting ready for her next options.

The family has served, despite tough experiences – the devastating 2015 earthquake followed by the extreme hardships caused by the blockade of the India/Nepal border and this year by the sudden death of Ian's father in February.

We thank God for their service and pray for their future.

BELATED THANKS

Many thanks to all who signed greetings cards last November as part of the annual campaign organised by Action by Christians Against Torture. Some of the information sent by ACAT was very disturbing and made clear just how much people in appalling circumstances needed to receive news that they were not forgotten. 34 cards were sent. A letter from ACAT's Treasurer expresses thanks for the donation of **£38** (the balance remaining after postage costs had been deducted from the total of donations) and for the church's participation in the campaign.

CREATION QUIZ

We are all familiar with the account of creation at the beginning of Genesis, in the first chapter. Or are we? On the seventh day God rested from the work of Creation. What did he produce on each of the other six?



1. First Day
2. Second Day
3. Third Day
4. Fourth Day
5. Fifth Day
6. Sixth Day



ANSWERS TO H₂O IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. On the banks of the river of life in the city of God in Revelation. Rev 22.1-2
2. In a fish's mouth, which he caught in the lake. Mt 17.24-27
3. From six stone water jars at Cana in Galilee. Jn 2.1-11
4. The swimmers swam and the rest used planks and ship's wreckage. Ac 27.42-44.
5. After the Resurrection. Jn 21.11-14
6. Jesus healed an invalid who had been hoping for a cure from the water in the pool for a long time. Jn 5.6-9
7. He walked on the water to where they were crossing the lake in a boat. Mt 14.22-27 (also Mk 6.49 and Jn 6.19)
8. Simon and Andrew, and James and John, two pairs of fishermen brothers. Mk 1.16-20
9. "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." Lk 8.22-25
10. Philip met him on his way home from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, told him the good news about Jesus, and baptised him.

PRAYER AT BROADMEAD

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart, that so desiring, we may seek and find you. (*Anselm*)

25th February - 3rd March

Dear Lord, remind us what a precious gift we have in your word and help us to seek fresh guidance from it. By the power of your Holy Spirit lead us to make right decisions for your Church in Broadmead and for our own lives. May we continually put our faith and trust in you and respond in obedience. AMEN

4th - 10th March

Loving Lord, we hold before you today's society – which seems unable to solve the problems of addiction, mental health and unemployment that lead people to become homeless and sleep in the shop doorways of our city. Help and guide those who minister to all such and inspire and empower those in authority who seek solutions.

AMEN

11th - 17th March

Our Heavenly Father, on Mothering Sunday we give thanks for the care and nurture we have been given by our mothers and fathers, and by members of caring professions and charities. We praise you for the care given by our mother church, which points us to your supreme love for us your children, through Jesus Christ your Son.

AMEN

“Christ in hearts of all that love me.” (*St Patrick's Breastplate*)

18th - 24th March

Lord of Creation, we thank and praise you for the new life we see emerging as Springtime begins. We pray that we will be infused with energy to take hold of life as we see the beauty around us in nature and respond in loving action as we care for one another and for your world. AMEN

25th - 31st March

“Did e'er such love and sorrow meet.” (*Isaac Watts*)

Almighty God, we beseech you graciously to behold this your family for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. AMEN (*Book of Common Prayer for Good Friday*)