



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

Vol. 26 No. 34

LORD’S DAY 21 AUGUST 2022

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>	
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 147:1, 5, 11-12	Psalm 148:11-14
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Opening Hymn *</i>	RHC 86 – “ <i>Safely Through Another Week</i> ”	RHC 88 – “ <i>Praise Him! Praise Hm!</i> ”
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 18	---
<i>Second Hymn *</i>	<i>Psalm 18 verses 1-5, 18-19</i> (to the tune of St Magnus)	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Exodus 4:22-23	Song of Solomon 8:6-7
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>The Bondage Liberator</i>	<i>The Love that Cannot be Purchased</i>
<i>Closing Hymn *</i>	RHC 397 – “ <i>Behold the Amazing Gift</i> ”	RHC 4 – “ <i>Love Divine, All Loves Excelling</i> ”
<i>Benediction/3-Fold Amen *</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Postlude</i>	<i>The Lord Bless You</i>	---
<i>* Congregation Stands</i>		

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence,
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,
and give you peace, and give you peace;
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 22

Q: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A: Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Comments:

The last answer told us the fact that the Son of God became man; this answer tells us how he did so. He did so by assuming a human body and soul. And this was assumed in a miraculous manner, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The purpose for which Christ became man was that he might stand in our place and work out our redemption.

Scriptural Reference:

Luke 1:35, Galatians 4:4. Hebrew 7:26

SELF-EXAMINATION AND REPENTANCE

“Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes” (Haggai 1:5-6).

Having pointed out and rebuked the sins of Judah, God now calls them to self-examination and repentance. He commands them to see that their ways are sinful and displeasing to him by acknowledging their sin and turning from it. Though God does not explicitly call for repentance, that is what he has in mind. There is no value in considering our ways if this does not lead us to turn to ways that are pleasing to God. It is much the same with God as with an earthly father who says to his child, “Look what you’ve done.” He means, “Do you not see that you have done wrong? You must acknowledge it and turn from your wrongdoing.”

We should note too that dealing with our sins always involves a consideration of our ways and a turning from the old ways of sin. The person who considers his ways but goes on in them has not truly repented of his sins. This becomes abundantly clear in verses 7–8, where God does call Judah to new ways of obedience.

This call for repentance and conversion is addressed not only to Judah but also to us. If we have neglected the house of God, the church, or have shown a lack of care for the church as the place of God’s covenant, we too must consider our ways and turn from whatever evil we have done. We must consider our ways and see that Judah’s sins are ours and that God is speaking to us as well as to them. If we do not, we are as blind and ignorant as they were before this word of God came to them.

God enforces that call to self-examination and repentance by telling Judah that he had been punishing them for their sins, though they were unaware of it. Among the troubles they had suffered were famine, crop failure, bad weather, drought, and disease (see also 1:10–11; 2:17). These troubles had come from God as chastisement for their sin. Not all their problems, therefore, could be blamed on their enemies or on the decree of Artaxerxes. God makes sure that they see these things as his judgment and not as an excuse for forsaking the work of rebuilding.

God says that their crops had been small, so no one had enough to eat and drink or even sufficient clothing. These are the judgments that had been threatened in Deuteronomy as punishment for disobedience: poor crops in Deuteronomy 28:38, lack of food in Deuteronomy 8:10, and insufficient clothing in Deuteronomy 10:18; and God was fulfilling his own word in sending them. Under these judgments it had been as though everything they earned was put in a bag full of holes. And so it is always. Those who will not obey God cannot be and are not blessed and do not prosper.

All this raises the question concerning the relationship between obedience and material prosperity. Especially in the New Testament, is it true that those who live in obedience to God can expect material prosperity or receive it when it comes as a sign of God’s favour and blessing? That is a question that needs answering.

Material prosperity, according to scripture, can be an evidence of God’s blessing. That would be impossible to deny. In the Old Testament this was far truer than in the New Testament. God made it clear to Israel that prosperity in the land of Canaan was evidence of his good pleasure and that drought and enemies were signs of his displeasure. Even in the Old Testament, however, this was not true absolutely. The book of Job is a lengthy lesson otherwise and shows

that prosperity does not equal blessing on a personal level. In the Old Testament therefore, prosperity was a sign of God's blessing nationally, but not individually. Times of national prosperity did not mean that everyone in the nation was blessed by God, and times of trouble did not mean that every individual was under God's curse.

What is more, there were times when God sent enemies and other troubles for reasons of his own and not because the nation as a whole was living wickedly. Had Hezekiah and Judah been unfaithful when God sent Rabshakeh and the Assyrians against them? There is no evidence that they had. The people of God, therefore, needed the prophets and the word of God to interpret their circumstances and to tell them that God was pleased or displeased with them.

What was true individually in the Old Testament continues to be true in the New. Individual prosperity or the lack of it cannot be interpreted as a sign of God's favourable or unfavourable attitude. God can, as Psalm 73 so clearly teaches, send prosperity as a curse or send evil things for our good, so that all things work together for good to those who love God (Rom. 8:28). There is no common grace or favour or mercy of God in things, and those who think so have no explanation for God's giving prosperity and earthly gifts to the ungodly whom he will send to hell, or for his sending cancer and other ills to those he loves.

However, we often feel that God is displeased with us when we are not living in obedience to God and when he, in those circumstances, sends trouble and grief into our lives. It is also possible that, walking in sinful ways, we have all we want and prosper in our wickedness. That is not proof of God's blessing but of God's setting us in slippery places (Ps. 73:18) or filling our mouths while he sends leanness in our souls (Ps. 106:15).

The only nation of God that now exists is a spiritual nation, the Church. No earthly nation, not the USA, not Scotland, not the Netherlands, can claim to stand in the favoured position that Israel had in the Old Testament, and even Israel in its favoured position was a type and foreshadowing of the Church. That the church is that favoured nation is taught in 1 Peter 2:9: *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

The prosperity that God gives his church when she is faithful and obedient is not crops and good weather and freedom from hunger and disease, but spiritual prosperity. The church that is being blessed by God is not necessarily the wealthiest church, but the church in which the members are enjoying all the riches of God's grace and salvation. When the church is not prospering spiritually, when the people of God go spiritually hungry and thirsty, and when they are like the church of Laodicea, spiritually poor and blind and naked, they may certainly conclude that there is something desperately wrong and they must consider their ways.

Let us then, as members of the church, be always busy considering our ways. Let us observe the spiritual condition of the church and not be blind to the fact that God may very well be sending his judgments on the church for her unfaithfulness. Certainly we must not think that because the members of the church are prosperous in material things and because the church has many members and enough in the offerings to pay for all sorts of programs, these things are evidence of God's blessing. The church is blessed when the members of the church are clothed in the spotless robes of Christ's righteousness and when they have the bread of life as the food of their souls and the water of life as their refreshment.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our Lord's Day activities begins with the **Pre-Worship Prayer Meeting** at **10:15 am** followed by the **Worship Services** at **11.00 am and 3.00 pm**. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, we extend a warm welcome to you this Lord's Day. We hope that you have a blessed time of worship with us today.

For those unable to attend Church in person, we are streaming our worship services online. To join our online services or for more information, please call the church manse, or email us at [admin 'at' newlifebpc.org.uk](mailto:admin@newlifebpc.org.uk).

Tithes & Offerings – There will be an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

After-Service Fellowship – Join us for lunch fellowship after the morning worship service. Please bring your own lunch as only drinks will be provided.

Worship Service Collections: Last Sunday - £235.00, 31/07/22 - £407,
Maintenance Fund - £100, 07/08/22 - £246.50

Church Maintenance Fund Total: £9,100.50

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

*“Whither is thy beloved gone,
O thou fairest among women?
whither is thy beloved turned
aside? that we may seek him
with thee.”*

Song of Solomon 6:1

This Week

*“And God said unto Moses, I
AM THAT I AM: and he said,
Thus shalt thou say unto the
children of Israel, I AM hath
sent me unto you.”*

Exodus 3:14

Next Week

*“His left hand should be
under my head, and his right
hand should embrace me.”*

Song of Solomon 8:3

Pre-cautions for Worship Services held at the church premises:

With the lifting of the legal Covid restrictions on 24th Feb 2022, we will continue observing the following precautions:

- No offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- Temperature measurements will still be taken for every worshipper and visitor for the time being. We continue to urge those who feel unwell (especially with Covid symptoms) not to come to the church services but join us at our online services.
- During worship services, please continue to sit with your own households.
- As per the current government advise, we suggest you use a face covering when attending the services. Please bring your own face covering.

To join our online services or for more information, please visit the church website (www.newlifebpc.org.uk) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim,
Task Force Members