

TIME TO **AWAKE**

CALLING THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST TO WATCH & BE ALERT

Summer 2022

**REBUILDING
WASTE
PLACES**

**THE
JOYFUL
SOUND**

**THE BIBLE'S
SUDDENLIES**





Christian
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TIME TO AWAKE is the official
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CMFI exists to advance the
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a fellowship for the furtherance
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of the gospel of the Lord Jesus
Christ through associated
Biblical churches and ministries.

*"And do this, knowing the
time, that now it is high time to
awake out of sleep; for now our
salvation is nearer than when we
first believed."* Rom. 13:11

www.cmfi.org.uk
admin@cmfi.org.uk

FROM THE EDITOR



Paul Sherbird
Secretary, CMFI

As we look ahead post-covid the world seems a very different place to that of 2 or 3 years ago. Not only does covid remain, we now have a major war breaking out in Europe, and various natural and man-made disasters across the globe, all of which have an effect on our lives, and, as believers, how we perceive the role of the church in the face of such significant life-changing events. For certain, wherever we are, and whatever challenges we face, the core mission of the church remains to, "Go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). CMFI remains committed to that great commission, and seeks with the Lord's enabling and guidance, to be of help to those who share our aims and doctrinal stance. That help may be provided in the form of encouragement, support, and accountability to those called to ministry, and in a wider sense, to be of service to all who seek to walk in Biblical truth, and want to fellowship with others of like-mind.

We value your prayers and support as we seek to fulfil the Lord's calling of CMFI, and so effectively meet the challenges of the present time, for the blessing of His people, and to His eternal glory. ■

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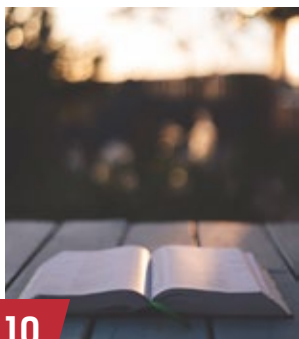


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CMFI offers various categories of membership. Based in UK and Ireland, CMFI operates internationally, and is represented by its members in several countries around the world. Email Paul Sherbird (Secretary) on admin@cmfi.org.uk for more information.



“
WHILE GOD'S LOVE, FORGIVENESS,
AND MERCY ARE CENTRAL TO HIS
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”

THE NECESSITY OF PREACHING REPENTANCE



Howard Green
CMFI, USA

Repent is one of the most important words in our vocabulary. Repentance was the first message of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 4:17). Repentance is the result of knowing we are completely undone before a holy God. King David summarized it well when he said, "Against you, you only, have I sinned." To repent is to literally turn 180° and change our thinking - *metanoia* (a transformative change of heart). Dave Hunt said: "By receiving Him, I am in fact repenting through a total change of mind toward God."

Many people think they can spurn the forgiveness Jesus so freely offers, and take the wide road to heaven. Meanwhile, eternity is rushing upon

them. In fact, during the Great Tribulation, people will be under the direct judgment of God but most will not repent (Revelation 9:20).

Preaching repentance is severely lacking in our generation. A growing number of ministers won't preach repentance. Perhaps it seems irrelevant or intolerant. While God's love, forgiveness, and mercy are central to His wonderful character, they are not His only attributes. God dwells in unapproachable light, and He is an all-consuming fire. Peddling a low commitment, me-centered Christianity may generate numbers and attendees, but it doesn't make true disciples (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Moody, Spurgeon, Tozer, and faithful ministers of the past preached repentance regularly. It occurs about 75 times in the Bible. To be certain, there are still faithful men of God today who aren't driven by the prevailing winds of ear-tickling, and who preach the need for repentance. Unfortunately, this is not mainstream teaching anymore.

Dear friends, let's continue to stand firm in our love for the lost as we witness and preach about the need to repent. It is a message of God's grace, forgiveness, and redemption that people in this dark world desperately need to hear (Luke 24:47).

Every blessing as you make Him known. ■

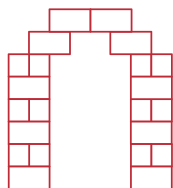
REBUILDING WASTE PLACES

NEW TESTAMENT
PENTECOSTAL
CHURCH,
BALLYNAHINCH,
NORTHERN
IRELAND



Pastor Tim McIlwrath

*New Testament Pentecostal
Church, Ballynahinch*



In 2016, the Lord opened the door for a small group of believers to purchase a run down, dilapidated building in our local town of **Ballynahinch**. With no finance, but simple faith in the God who fed a multitude with 5 loaves and 2 small fish we preceded, not knowing where the next penny

would come from. Within 3 months we made our first purchase of a building for £50,000 (a property once on the market for £800,000!). God showed Himself to be the same yesterday, today and forever! In the coming years to this day, God has provided every penny needed for His work.





Renovation works commenced costing £150,000. A subsequent purchase was made in 2019 of an adjacent building for £92,500. Further extensive renovations costing nearly £200,000 allowed for the properties to be joined and provide a Church Sanctuary, Christian School, Honesty

Box Café, and Christian Bookshop along with facilities for our youth and children's ministry. We have seen the mighty provision of God with nearly £750,000 provided by God through a small group of His own people over the last 7 years.

What is the purpose? At the beginning of our little

fellowship in 2005, the Lord impressed on our hearts this verse,

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. (Isa. 58:12).

BEFORE



BEFORE



AFTER

“

WE HAVE BUILT UP WASTED PLACES, REPAIRED AND RESTORED OLD BUILDINGS TO PROVIDE A SANCTUARY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, A PLACE OPEN EVERY DAY TO REACH A BROKEN AND DYING WORLD.

”

Old waste places, literally, we have built up wasted places, repaired and restored old buildings to provide a sanctuary

for God's people, a place open every day to reach a broken and dying world. The natural is often a picture of the spiritual. Waste places, broken down and decaying.

Sadly today, that can be said of the local church. The assembly of God's people has broken down, and as a result of this, towns and villages all across these islands lie as 'waste lands' spiritually. We do not necessarily need more buildings, we need the restoration of the local church, meeting together, called together

as a living expression of the body of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes, “*And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3:9-11).

BEFORE



If there is no assembly meeting in a local village or town how then can the manifold wisdom of God be revealed to principalities and powers in heavenly places?

We know that for the times we now live, scripture admonishes us, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching"* (Heb. 10:25).

Our prayer is for the reviving of the local assembly, according to the biblical pattern, to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know God's

AFTER



AFTER

work done in God's way, will never lack God's provision. Glory to God!

And so if there is no assembly near you, find

one, or pray for one to be birthed! God's purpose has not changed! Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. ■

REBUILDING WASTE PLACES



Watch the video to take a tour of the church, school, cafe and bookshop. (8 mins)





THE BIBLE'S SUDDENLIES



John Angliss
Chairman, CMFI



AT PRESENT, I HAVE
SUCH A SENSE THAT
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Iwonder if you have ever noticed both through Scripture and history that in the purposes of God, some events happened so *suddenly* that they almost take one's breath away. At present, I have such a sense that things are changing in the realm of principalities and powers, and we are going to see *sudden* overnight changes, both in the political realm and also in Christendom. For the purposes of this article, we will be examining this theme purely from a Biblical point of view, and there are salutary lessons the modern church can learn from such.

The Hebrew word *pithom* can be used as an adverb or adjective and a definition is, "Occurring or come upon, or made or done without warning, abrupt, abnormally rapid, hurried." We speak of sudden death play-offs, crashes, deaths, and some personal experiences

I have had have been sudden. When young, a friend suddenly fell through a tin shed roof which was rusty, and I well remember being on Lake Windermere in 1965 on a boat when the lovely sunny day suddenly gave way to a thunderstorm which appeared over the adjacent hills! The suddenlies in Scripture carry connotations both for God's blessing, and also His judgments, and dealing with situations. Some are purely God's sovereignty, but often they are associated with man's response for good or his disobedience.

OLD TESTAMENT SUDDENLIES

We commence in Numbers 12:4 and the background is in verses 1-3. Moses "delegated" authority was being challenged by members of his own family. God has set authority in the church as He has in society (Romans 13:1). The two dangers are "misused" or

“abused” authority, but God deals with His servants ruthlessly and direct (as in Moses case, no promised land!), and also with those who undermine or challenge God’s true authority (I recommend “Spiritual Authority” by Watchman Nee on this theme). Both extremes are present in the modern church. However, we are looking at properly exercised delegated authority in this instance. Moses was the meekest (not the weakest) man on earth, and he was marked by his humility. This undermining was considered very serious and verses 4-7 describe what happened when the Lord suddenly intervened. Note God’s anger at what happened, and resultant physical effect on Miriam. God’s anger is a missing element in modern Christianity. We should study what makes Him angry. Moses responded in *humility* which revealed the veracity of his God given authority in this case, and thankfully Miriam was brought to repentance. I wonder if much sickness in the modern church reflects rebellion, wrong motives, self-seeking, etc.?

The next *suddenly* is found in Numbers 16, and it is the rebellion of Korah and involved 250 princes! The real root of their rebellion was seeking the priesthood, and Moses warned them in verse 5 that the Lord would show who was chosen for what. Sadly, they already had some position but that was not enough for them. How often today churches are torn apart by those who are self-centred, narcissistic, and want a higher position than that which the Holy Spirit has given them. We should also note that this rebellion is delineated as one of three rebellious marks of the end


time church (Jude :11). I have observed from forty years of pastoring and fifty-five years of preaching, that every problem in the modern church took place in the Old Testament church (Acts 7:38, the church in the wilderness), and so we need to take heed to the lessons from typology (1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

We move to Joshua 10 where the Gibeonites have requested help from the Israelites against their enemies. As they prepare for battle, the Lord issues a promise in verse 8, and on that basis they attack *suddenly*. As they battle the Lord supports them with amazing supernatural help in a way that is probably unique in the whole of Scripture (see v.14). He rains down stones from heaven, and even the Sun and moon stand still! Many subsequent battles and victories are listed, and chapter 11:7 lists another *suddenly*. Somebody has well said that Joshua in the Old Testament answers to Ephesians in the New Testament where, “we are seated in the heavenly places in Christ.” Perhaps there are many more battles we can win when we engage in warfare, and also understand our position as believers.

2 Chronicles 29 onwards gives us the history of the reign of Hezekiah, and he was used to effect a great revival and restoration amongst the people of God. Herein is a pattern from which the New Testament believer can learn, “he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them” (2Chron. 29:3). He called the Levites to sanctify themselves, and carry forth filthiness out of the holy place. The temple was cleansed, and all the preparation for true worship was

completed. Offerings were re-instated. At the end of this chapter we read, "And Hezekiah rejoiced and all the people that God had prepared the people. For the thing was done suddenly." In chapter 30 the passover was restored and kept, altars to false gods were removed, followed by restoration of all the other feasts. It says, "So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David King of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem." Chapter 30 continues the exercise as idolatry was destroyed, the Davidic order of the ministry was restored, tithing for ministers was restored, and the cumulative effect of all these exercises was immense. It affected all Israel and Judah. If we prepare our hearts for revival, things can happen *suddenly*. This happened in the Hebridean revival of the fifties, the Argentinian revival and other great moves of God. We are long overdue for the Lord to visit us, and He will if we pay the price.

Psalm 64 verses 4 and 7 are two further *suddenlies*. The wicked *suddenly* attack the righteous but they do not realise that the Lord will shoot at them *suddenly*. What they sow they reap, and we are seeing this in some places where God is catching up on wickedness and sin, and not the least in remnant church where people have failed to put things right. Psalm 6 verses 9-10 carry a similar thought. Proverbs 3:25, "Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of wicked when it comes." We are reminded of September 11th, inter alia, and we shall see many such things in our day. As I write, 1000 people plus have perished in an earth quake in Afghanistan.



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Proverbs 6:12-14 lists seven sins of the wicked and then it states, "therefore shall his calamity come *suddenly*; *suddenly* he shall be broken without remedy" (Prov. 6:15). One of the most solemn suddenlies is found in Proverbs 20:1, "He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall *suddenly* be destroyed and that without remedy." In some cases the Lord pleads with a person right up until death, but in some cases a person can resist the Holy Spirit, and the door is closed forever; Then it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3).

PROPHETIC SUDDENLIES

The next batch of *suddenlies* comes in Isaiah 29:5 and 30:13 (these are part of a sequence from 28:1 to 35:10 where God is speaking to Judah and Jerusalem (the sequence contains seven woes - study these in your own time), and many commentators believe these are a shadow of what comes at the end of the age describing the Day of the Lord and Armageddon. As we move towards



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that period, you will now see *suddenlies* coming nationally and internationally. Read Revelation 8:3-5 to see what happens when God's people pray!

In Isaiah 47:11 we have the destruction of earthly Babylon. Verses 10 and 11 speak of desolation coming *suddenly*. This happened historically. At Isaiah 48:3 the Lord states, "I have declared the former things from the beginning, and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them. I did them *suddenly*, and they came to pass" (read to verse 8 to get a fuller picture). The Lord shows his prophetic servants what is coming. There is another Babylon at the end of the age described in Revelation 17 and 18 (actually starts in 16), and this describes two phenomena, a *religious* system and a *commercial* system which we can observe right now. Revelation 17:6 and 18:24 show these are enemies of the true people of God. We do not have time here, but it is vital that the Lord's people understand these systems

and how they operate. Suffice to say that Babylon means *confusion*, confusion of truth and also gender and sexuality. Notice in 18:7 that she is destroyed in *one hour*. The world trade towers in New York were destroyed in one hour, so we have already had a warning and a fore-runner! Particularly note 17:5,6, 14 and 18:4, 8, 13, 20, 23, 24. Notice *one hour* appears three times. Jeremiah 51:8 also prophesies the destruction of the first Babylon. At the end of this age there will not be denominations, only the *true* and *false* church. In His time and way all true believers will need to come out of Babylon. Religious Babylon will also be linked with commerce and trading.

Jeremiah 4:20; 6:26; 15:8; and 18:22 (19-23) also contain *suddenlies*. For my part, I always feel that Jeremiah's lamentations for Judah reflect throughout his writings God's heart for His people, and there are so many parallels with the modern New Testament church, he might almost have been living today.

Malachi 3:1, "The Lord whom you seek shall *suddenly* come to His temple ..." This describes the first and second advent of Jesus our Messiah. Notice: prepare, seek, *suddenly* come. A Divine order for God's people and subsequent blessing.

SUDDENLIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Briefly in the New Testament we list the following:

- ▶ Luke 2:13, the *sudden* appearance of the angels after the announcement of the incarnation to the shepherds.
- ▶ Luke 9:9, the *suddenness* of demon activity (which some readers may have observed and experienced).
- ▶ Mark 9:8, the Mount of Transfiguration, and *suddenness* of what happened, and then it was gone.
- ▶ Mark 13:36 (32-37), the *suddenness* of the rapture. A very important one which much of today's church has neglected and bypassed prophecy.
- ▶ I Thess. 5:3, *sudden* destruction coming after man-made peace treaties, and thinking he has all of earth's problems sewn up (Luke 21:34 is a similar passage).
- ▶ Acts 2:2, the *suddenness* of the Spirit's coming. A promise (1:8); Jesus disappears (1:9). They continued in prayer (1:14). Some changes and rectification (1:15-20); they are in *one accord in one place* (2:2).

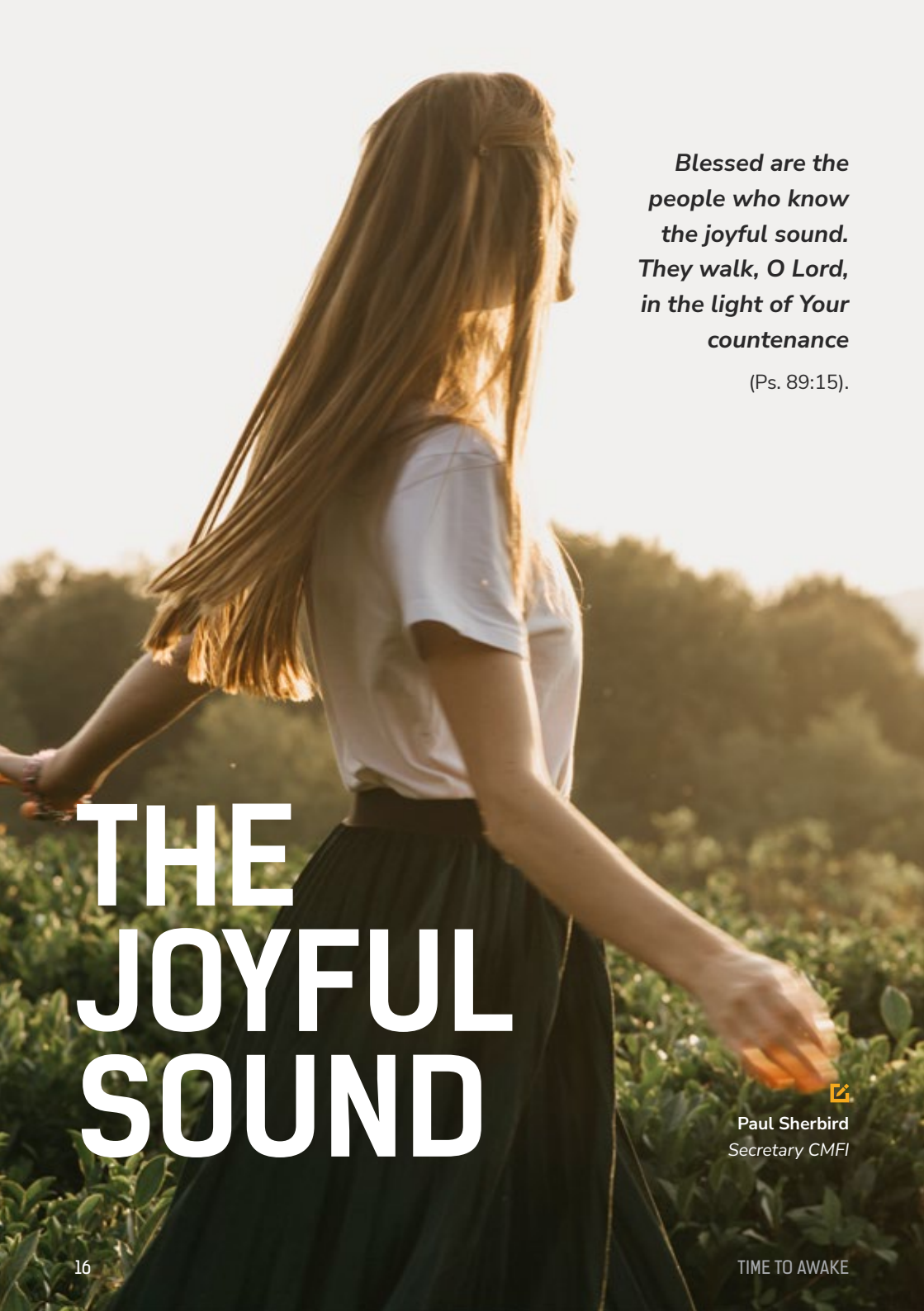
Revival comes when God's people are meeting together in one body in *unity*. Then *suddenly* a sound from heaven and the Spirit comes! It was worth all the preparation and waiting.

- ▶ Acts 9:3, Paul is *suddenly* converted on the Damascus road. His own story about this is in Acts 22:6. The one you are praying for is *suddenly* converted! Don't stop praying even for the hardest cases.
- ▶ Acts 16:26, Paul and Silas are in prison after challenging the occult. As they prayed and sang praises, *suddenly* there was an earthquake and God intervened. Could it be that many reading this are in a "prison," and if we are in the centre of God's will and do what these two did, perhaps the Lord is waiting to do a wonderful miracle for us.
- ▶ Acts 28:6, a devilish *suddenly* which the Lord overruled, fulfilling one of the signs in Mark 16!

TO SUMMARISE:

1. Sudden revival (2 Chron. 29:36).
2. Sudden arrival (Luke 2:13).
3. Sudden Conversion (Acts 9:3-4).
4. Sudden Release (Acts 16: 25-26).
5. Sudden Blessings. (Acts 2:2,4).
6. Sudden Return (Mark 13:35-36).
7. Solemn warning. (Proverbs 29:1).

May we all experience some of God's suddenlies in these last days according to His will and plan for our individual lives. Remember, some are sovereign in response to our prayers, and some require our heart co-operation. ■



*Blessed are the
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They walk, O Lord,
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(Ps. 89:15).

THE JOYFUL SOUND



Paul Sherbird
Secretary CMFI

Ethan the Ezrahite author of Psalm 89 was writing in troubled times, likely during the reigns of Solomon and/or, Rehoboam. Under King David, Israel had seen blessed times of victory over enemies, and prosperity in the land. Those times now seemed far away as God's judgment came upon Israel in consequence to Solomon's idolatry, and Rehoboam's foolishness (see 1Kings chapters 11; 12). Ethan remembers God's covenantal promises to David, but the fulfilment of them seems distant. As he takes stock, Israel seems to have been cast off and abhorred by the Lord (:38), while their enemies get the better of them (:42). In the midst of such difficult times Ethan seeks to encourage himself, holding on to God's covenantal promises (:3,4; 19-37; 49), and reminding himself of the might and true character of the Lord (:5-18). He understands that while there may be apostasy, and many may be forsaking the Lord, perhaps even denying Him, there will be those who continue to trust and believe, of these he says they, "know the joyful sound." But what is the joyful sound, and what does it mean in the context of the psalm?

HEARING AND KNOWING

The cross-references in my Bible refer Psalm 89:15 to three scriptures (Lev. 23:24; Nu. 10:10; Ps. 98:6), all referring to the blowing of trumpets. Leviticus relates to the Day of Atonement; Numbers to the feasts, and beginning of months; Psalm 98 being a song of praise with singers and various instruments joyfully worshipping and praising the Lord. The joyful sound is perhaps best

understood to be the call to worship, a time to draw near to God, to learn from His word, to give thanks, and to praise Him for His goodness and blessings. Things which perhaps were being forgotten and neglected, even belittled in the troubled times of Ethan's writing. Yet then, as always, there would be a remnant who continued to trust, to worship, and to steadfastly seek the Lord, these faithful would be those who knew the joyful sound and were blessed in doing so. Faithful servants of God will continue to trust, praise and give thanks even in the most difficult of times, they know Him to be worthy, faithful, and One who always fulfils His promises, such steadfast faith comes from true knowledge of God, and right understanding of His ways.



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When Ethan talks about knowing the joyful sound, he is saying something much more than that this is a simple recognition of, and response to, particular musical noises emanating from the temple. The context is all-important, and we note that from verse 5 to 14 Ethan



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has been describing aspects of God's character, and then in verses 15 and 16 noting that those who know the joyful sound walk in the light of the Lord's countenance and rejoice in His name all the day long. There is something very essential here, no doubt many would respond to the sound of the trumpets on feast days and sabbaths, and head off to the place of worship, but how many truly understood what it meant to worship the Lord in truth, and how many remained faithful to the Lord? In context, Ethan is saying that those who know the joyful sound, are those who have good understanding of the character and attributes of God, and who despite difficult times continue steadfast in faith. In Hebrew a correlation is made between hearing and the response - to hear is to know, and ought to mean to obey. It is possible to hear the songs and hymns being sung, to hear the preaching of the Word of God, to attend the church meetings, and yet not take heed to truth about God, to not be obedient to Him, and so miss out on His blessings. I feel sure that Ethan understood that

those who know the joyful sound are not simply the hearers of the sound but, more importantly, those who know and understand essential truths about the God who calls us to worship Him in spirit and truth, and have determined to live righteously before Him.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY

In 1961 A.W. Tozer (who many consider to be a true 20th century prophet) produced a small book of short essays on the attributes of God, the book is entitled, "The Knowledge of the Holy." In the preface Tozer expresses his opinion of the church of his day, a church which he considered to be in a lamentable state, for it had, "surrendered its lofty concept of God and has substituted it for one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshipping men." He saw that this poor understanding of the character of God was the root cause of most errors in doctrine and ethics, and he went on to say that, "It is my opinion that the Christian concept of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God, and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity" (p.8). One has to wonder what he would make of a church that has continued to decline in the subsequent 60 years since he wrote. For while we have lots of noisy singing and other activities, many in ministry have noted the lack of desire for deep doctrinal Bible teaching, a lack of interest in what are now considered dry, uninteresting doctrinal subjects but at one time were the meat and mainstay of Bible classes. How many professing

believers today could begin to give a sound, reasoned and Biblically true answer to the question, “what is God like?”

A right understanding of God is essential for a spiritually healthy and blessed Christian life. Jeremiah, writing to rebuke the people in a time of idolatry, apostasy and false prophecy heard the Lord say, *“But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,”* says the LORD (Jer. 9:24). Jeremiah also recognised that a people who failed to understand basic and essential elements of the character of God, were a people who fell into apostasy and all types of iniquity. They heard, but they did not know the joyful sound, and they did not live lives pleasing to the Lord.

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REJOICING ALL DAY LONG

Returning to Ethan in Psalm 89, we note the high esteem in which he holds the Lord, along with his recognition of certain essential attributes of His character. From verse 5 He acknowledges that the Lord is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, He is the all powerful Lord God of Hosts who rules the raging of the sea. Twice He mentions the Lord’s faithfulness,

understanding that while circumstances may be dire, the Lord will not fail to keep His covenants and promises. He notes that God is righteous and just, he mentions God’s mercy and truth, essential and eternal attributes of God’s character, acknowledging that a holy God must punish sin and iniquity, while holding out the hand of mercy to those who will repent (see Exodus 34:6,7). All of which relates in context to knowing the joyful sound, and the blessings which accompany a sound understanding of Biblical understanding of God.

I believe there is a great need for the church of today to restore its understanding of the attributes of God. Knowing and understanding essentials of the true character of God, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, is of great benefit in the Christian life. Such knowledge keeps from error, it sustains in the difficult times, it helps in prayer, and it heightens reverence and worship for Him who is worthy. Do you know the Lord as the source of joy, do you rejoice in Him all the day long, are you assured of His strength and favour in times of need, do you rest in His protection, do you cast your burdens on Jesus knowing Him as King and Lord of your life? Set yourself to know and understand the truth about the character and attributes of our God, in doing so you will join those who are blessed in knowing the joyful sound, and who walk in the light of His countenance with rejoicing all day long.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Prov. 9:10). ■



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Peter Paul Rubens artist QS:P170,Q5599 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rubens_apostel_thomas.jpg).

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

CONSIDERING THOMAS THE APOSTLE



Pastor Ian Huxham

Evangel Church, Sidmouth

I was recently speaking in church about Thomas the Apostle of Christ, and as is usually the case whenever I do so, found myself jumping to his defence. To my mind, Thomas is a much-maligned character, remembered largely throughout history as the one who doubted the resurrection of Jesus. However, in Thomas, or Judas as he was most probably called, (Thomas not being his given name but rather a 'nickname' in as much that in Hebrew Thomas is equivalent to Didymus in the Greek, both of which mean 'twin'), we find much to be admired.

Before I get to the bits that I really admire about Thomas, allow me first to make my case for the defence. Scripture

records in John chapter 20 that Thomas was not present with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them. Verse 24 says, *"Now Thomas, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came"*. However, it should not be overlooked that on that occasion, as can be read in verse 20, Jesus standing in the midst having greeted them by saying, "Peace be with you," then showed them His hands and His side. It appears to me that the Lord Himself accepted that sight of His wounds is acceptable verification of His resurrected body, and thus allowed the others the benefit of sight thereof. This we know, Thomas missed. Then, other than the lists of apostles that appear in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, the only other mentions of Thomas

occurs in the gospel according to John. In John 11:1-16 we find Thomas to be a brave and staunch follower of Jesus, urging his fellow disciples to go with Jesus to Judea, even though Jesus had already proclaimed His own forthcoming death there. Lazarus had died, and Jesus was intent on returning to raise him back to life, but still His disciples were clearly concerned for His well being if He does. Nevertheless, of all the disciples it is Thomas who says, "Let us also go that we may die with Him." The reaction of a loyal disciple, albeit a somewhat gloomy one.

II
IN JOHN 11:1-16 WE FIND THOMAS TO BE A BRAVE AND STAUNCH FOLLOWER OF JESUS, URGING HIS FELLOW DISCIPLES TO GO WITH JESUS TO JUDEA, EVEN THOUGH JESUS HAD ALREADY PROCLAIMED HIS OWN FORTHCOMING DEATH THERE.

II

In the second incident in which Thomas is mentioned, recorded in John 14:1-6 (the upper room discourse), we find Thomas pondering the imminent departure of Jesus, when Jesus informs His disciples He is going away and will prepare a place for them. Evidently, it is Thomas who is the one left wondering how they can find the way to follow (and is brave enough to voice his concerns). Again, we find a serious and loyal disciple struggling with understandable sadness, wanting to be absolutely sure and

certain that he can follow his Master wheresoever He may go.

The third incident I shall return to shortly. And in the fourth, recorded in John 21:1-6 we find Thomas fishing with Simon Peter, James, John, Nathanael and two others (perhaps Andrew and Philip who were known to come from the area of Capernaum). That which follows is the famous occasion when the disciples met with Jesus once again and enjoyed breakfast with Him. It is also the occasion when Peter is restored as leader of the twelve, despite his denials on the night when Jesus was taken (church history it seems to me has been far kinder to Peter and also to John, who fled Jesus rather than brave arrest, than it has been to 'doubting' Thomas). However, here on the beach we find Thomas right there in the thick of it, a solid and loyal member of the twelve.

Now, to return to the third incident famously recorded in John 20:26-29 when eight days after the Lord had first appeared in the midst of His disciples, He did so again – and this time, Thomas is with them. Thomas of course had previously said to his fellow disciples that unless he sees the 'tupos,' the mark of the stroke, or blow where the cruel nails were hammered into the precious hands of Jesus, and can put his fingers into the print of those nails and his hand into the side of Jesus, he will not believe. And of course, the Lord permits him to do so. And this results in one of the most wonderful confessions of faith in the entire Bible as Thomas refers to Jesus not only as Lord but as also as God, "My Lord and my God".

“

HE WHO HAD REFUSED TO BELIEVE
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”



THOMAS, LIVING AND DYING FOR CHRIST

Perhaps it is true that Thomas had doubt, doubt conceived in sorrow and painful hesitation. He had lost his Master to a painful and terrible death and if you remember, was it not Thomas who said he wanted to go with Him and die? Thomas wanted to identify with Jesus even to the point of death. And when Jesus appeared before him, Thomas did not want to gaze into His eyes, or lovingly embrace Him, and neither did he ask Him for a sign or a miracle. No, it appears to me that Thomas was not really looking for proof of the appearance of Jesus, but rather he wanted authentication of the suffering of Christ in His resurrected body, a body which had suffered not only for him, but for the whole world. It is Christ's suffering which dominates his mind and affection and elicits his most wonderful confession.

Then, having shared in the fellowship of Christ's suffering, Thomas is really ready to die for Christ, but not until he has lived

for Him first. Once Thomas sees the risen Jesus and gains his revelation of who He is, all that Jesus has taught him over the years now takes effect. To his death Thomas is an outspoken advocate for his Lord. Church tradition tells us that he preached in ancient Babylon, near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, where Iraq is today. He travelled to Persia, present-day Iran, and continued to win disciples to the Christian faith.

Then in 52 A.D. he sails south to Malabar on the west coast of India. He preaches, establishes churches, and wins to Christ high caste Brahmins, as well as others. So effective is he, that when the Portuguese land in India in the early 1600s, they find a group of Christians there, established through the preaching of Thomas 1500 years before. Finally, Thomas travels to the east coast of India, preaching relentlessly. He is killed near Mylapore about 72 AD, near present-day Madras. Tradition tells us that he is



“
HOW ABOUT YOU? I'M SURE YOU HAVE
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SUFFERING?”
”

thrown into a pit, then pierced through with a spear thrown by a Brahmin.

He who had refused to believe unless he could share in the fellowship of Christ's suffering, carried the Christian message of love and forgiveness to the ends of the earth in his generation. If he could, Thomas would speak to doubters today, to those of us who have seen our hopes and dreams destroyed. So called Doubting Thomas would tell his story of how the life of Jesus intercepted that of his own. He would tell us of his fears and his doubts. And then, the sombre, serious Thomas with a radiant, joyful face, Thomas, the Apostle of Christ, Apostle to India, would recount his joy at seeing the risen Jesus Himself, and of knowing the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. “My Lord and my God!” he would say, “My Lord and my God!”

How about you? I'm sure you have received Him as Lord, but do you know Him in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His suffering? One

day we shall fix our eyes on the Lord in His glory and majesty, and this will be our delight throughout eternity. However, whilst we remain in the world there is much work to be done in this earthly life, and the suffering Christ should command our mind and affection as we boldly proclaim the Gospel to every creature. May it be so.

*But what things were gain to me,
these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet
indeed I also count all things loss for the
excellence of the knowledge of Christ
Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered
the loss of all things, and count them
as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and
be found in Him, not having my own
righteousness, which is from the law,
but that which is through faith in Christ,
the righteousness which is from God by
faith; that I may know Him and the power
of His resurrection, and the fellowship of
His sufferings, being conformed to His
death, if, by any means, I may attain to
the resurrection from the dead.*
(Phil. 3:7-11; NKJV) ■



GRAIN FOR THE FAMINE

Book Reviews, and encouragement to read good Christian books.

✍ by John Angliss



**Fresh Wind,
Fresh Fire**

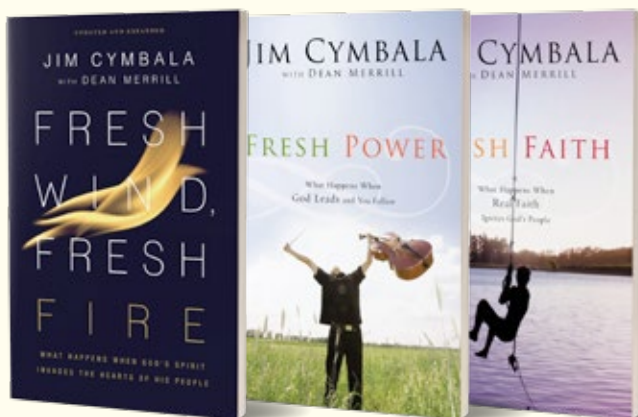


Fresh Power



Fresh Faith

Author: Jim Cymbala



These three books are from the pen of Jim Cymbala who has been pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle since 1972. This church is one of a few churches in New York where the Lord has moved powerfully. Pentecostal in background, this church is free from fads and fancies and emphasizes Bible truths - particularly prayer. They have seen amazing transformation of

sinful lives in their ministry including some of the worst kinds of perversion and backgrounds. They are honest books which do not hide battles and struggles, and I have also taken the trouble to see this church on the web. What a wonderful and anointed choir they have! It is not too often I get excited over stories of churches in USA - there is often some underlying "catch", but these books

I couldn't put down. If you are believing for a New Testament church and want inspiration, these are recommended to inspire and encourage you. (Incidentally, we do have a few copies of Jim Cymbala's books on the AIM bookstall).

Please contact me if you are looking for other good solid books amidst the famine of God's Word in these days. ■

RECOMMENDED AUTHORS

Other authors whom we recommend are as follows:

“Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1Tim 4:13).

These suggestions will help you to do that.

- ▶ The Bonar brothers
- ▶ EM Bounds
- ▶ John Bunyan
- ▶ David Baron
- ▶ Ray Comfort
- ▶ Jim and Elizabeth Elliot
- ▶ Arnold Fruchtenbaum
- ▶ Sam Gordon
- ▶ Ada Habershon
- ▶ Mark Hitchcock
- ▶ H Wayne House
- ▶ Harry Ironside
- ▶ David Jeremiah
- ▶ Tim La Haye
- ▶ Lance Lambert
- ▶ Martin Lloyd Jones
- ▶ CH Mackintosh
- ▶ FE Marsh
- ▶ FB Meyer
- ▶ G Campbell Morgan
- ▶ Andrew Murray
- ▶ Watchman Nee
- ▶ Stephen Olford
- ▶ J Edwin Orr
- ▶ Jessie Penn Lewis
- ▶ AJ Pollock
- ▶ Derek Prince
- ▶ JC Ryle
- ▶ Adolph Saphir
- ▶ Erich Sauer
- ▶ WG Scroggie
- ▶ CW Slemming
- ▶ CH Spurgeon
- ▶ FA Tatford
- ▶ RA Torrey
- ▶ AW Tozer
- ▶ WE Vine
- ▶ John Walvoord
- ▶ Warren Wiersbe
- ▶ David Wilkerson
- ▶ Herbert Lockyer - The ALL THE series plus others
- ▶ Rose Publishing - guides and pamphlets



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CHRISTIAN BOOKSHOP?**

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Southwest of England

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Midlands of England



**Christian
Ministerial
Fellowship
International**

Other one-day and weekend events are held throughout the year in various locations in both the UK and Ireland.

A West Africa Conference to be held in Ghana is in the planning stages for 2023.

To be kept informed of upcoming events, or to invite a member of CMFI to a meeting, do please contact us.

Email: admin@cmfi.org.uk
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TIME TO **AWAKE**

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KINGS PARK CONFERENCE CENTRE
Northampton NN3 6LL

Tuesday 20th, 4pm - Friday 23rd September, 2pm
£227 inclusive per person for full residential stay
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For availability and bookings please contact:

Paul Sherbird

E: admin@cmfi.org.uk

T: +44 (0) 1872 263 579

M: 07484 172 641



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