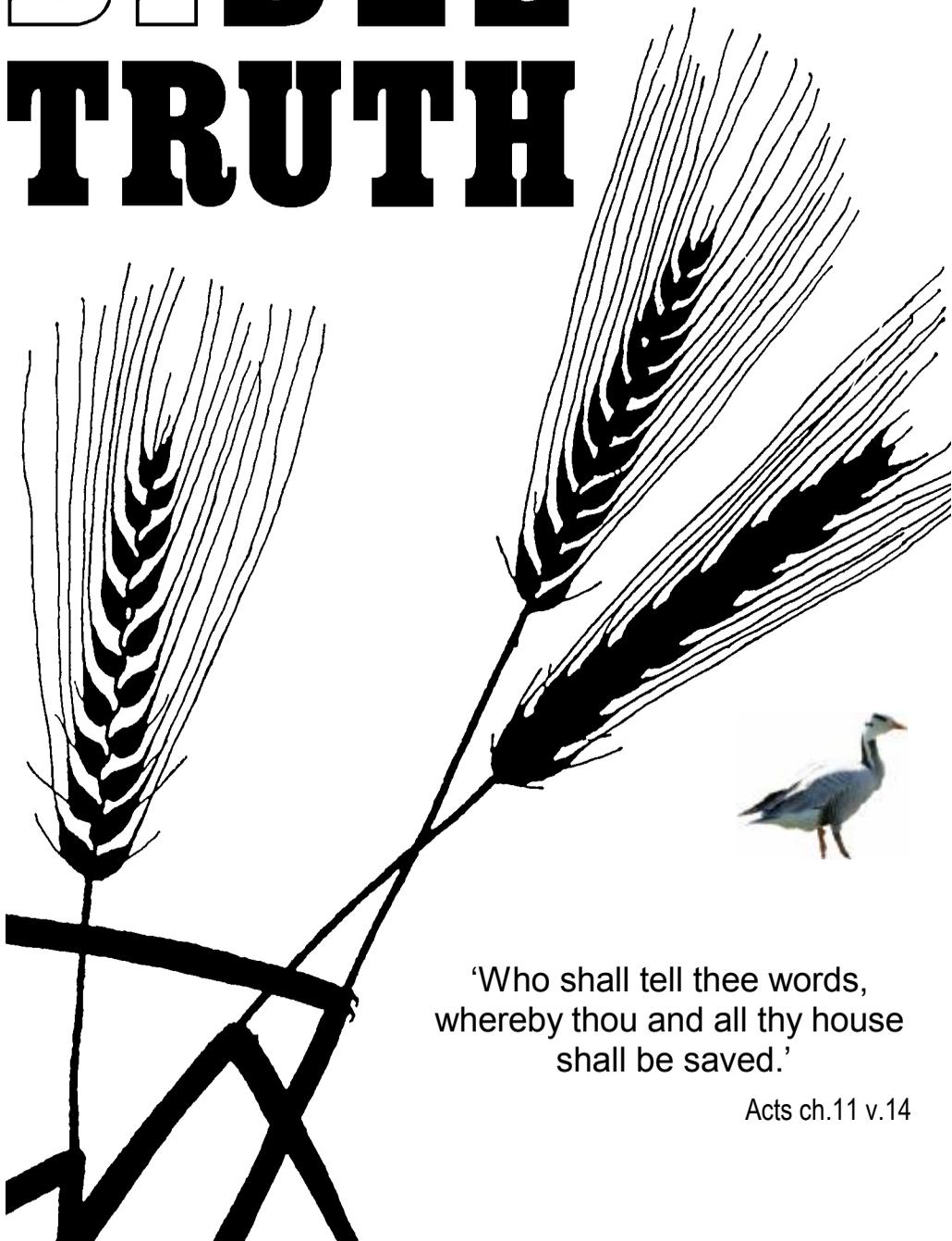


BIBLE TRUTH

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'Who shall tell thee words,
whereby thou and all thy house
shall be saved.'

Acts ch.11 v.14



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Chairman's Introduction to the 2009 AGM

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the British Israel Bible Truth Fellowship was held at Orange Street Congregational Church on Saturday 2nd May. After the meeting was opened in prayer, the chairman, Dr Michael Bennett, read from 2 Timothy chs 2 vv.19-26, 3 vv.1-7 & 13-17 & ch.4 vv.1-5. He then introduced the business with the following remarks.

I want to encourage you, both in your coming today, and in looking to the future. God is a faithful covenant keeper. He is the God of Israel, and we are the Israel of God. Our nation and world faces many major problems, and is tossed by stormy events. However, the Bible has much to say about these things, and of how we are to conduct ourselves. My problem now is to know which topics to omit, and which to focus on. Preachers should not choose their subject, but follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, to give them both the right subject and the words. Our AGM is not outside of this necessity. We seek help, so our business meeting has spiritual ministry and is blessed with a stream of living water from the Word of God and His Throne. God grant that it is so today, for His glory.

The past year saw unprecedented turmoil in the global economy and so it would be natural to consider financial matters at a business meeting, and I will briefly mention funds and giving later. Our fellowship is affected by such events, but we are wise to remember that our approach to them must differ from earthly thinking, because there is no problem with God's economy either here on earth, or with the incorruptible and limitless treasures in heaven. The bank of heaven will never crash. Its currency is underwritten and guaranteed by the promises of our God, who cannot lie.

'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

Philippians ch.4 vv.19-20

Much that we must do obeys God-given principles which hold true for all His people in all generations, while other things come into focus in the special circumstances found on earth in the last days just before His Second Coming.

Our readings from 2 Timothy gave clear examples and teaching on both matters. While things on earth, and indeed the earth itself, will rock and reel and then pass away, in God we have firmer foundations, which are unshaken and unshakeable, and give us good cause to remain calm and untroubled, despite all the tribulation, turmoil and change around us.

Our calling and destiny is set not by what men wish, wonder or worry about, but it is set and depends on what Eternal God knows and wills.

‘Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his ...’
2 Timothy ch.2 v.19

Moreover, our God is not remote, but is constantly close and involved, as these well known lines from Psalm 46 declare,

‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; ... There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, ... God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. ... Be still, and know that I am God: ... The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah’.

Psalm 46 vv.1-2, 4-5 & 10-11

When faced with persecution, storm and shipwreck St Paul found that, ‘... the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer ...’.

Acts ch.23 v.11

I have two grandsons aged three. I notice that they do not worry ‘Will Dad or Mum drop me?’, even if they are thrown into the air! Neither should we worry that God, our heavenly Father, will let us down. Our God has an incredibly safe pair of hands! He has not, and will not, drop or lose a single Israelite grain.

‘For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.’

Amos ch.9 v.9

So Jesus could pray to His Father,

‘... those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. ... I have given them thy word; ... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world’.

John ch.17 vv.12, 14 & 17-18

God's ways are not our ways, and His wisdom is past finding out. When Israel left Egypt at the Exodus, they took with them treasures of jewels borrowed from the Egyptians at God's bidding, as a loan they would never repay, in lieu of years of unpaid wages owed them for slaving to build Egyptian treasure cities. In the desert, God proved that Israel can live as a nation outside the global economy, completely dependent on Him.

In the Old Testament every named tribe was linked to a named precious stone on the breastplate, and these jewels were all worn close to the high priest's heart. None was lost, nor ever will be. Indeed, all the same tribes and jewels feature in the New Jerusalem, where gold is for walking on!

'And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'

Malachi ch.3 v.17

'And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; ... the twelfth, an amethyst. ... and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.'

Revelation ch.21 vv.19-21

And that city is our home and ultimate destination.

'But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.'

Hebrews ch.12 vv.22-24

When lost you need a map, but even if you have a map you need to know your position and destination. Well the Bible is a map telling where we are and where we are heading, giving us clear signs and signposts in time.

Our reading in 2 Timothy made clear statements about changing situations and the unique times at the end of the age prior to the Lord's Return.

'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.'

2 Timothy ch.3 v.1

‘For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.’

2 Timothy ch.4 vv.3-4

‘But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.’

2 Timothy ch.3 v.13

So contrary to common belief and hope, things won’t get better and better (due to improved education, advances in medical knowledge, and speed of transport etc.). Instead, due to evil men, they will get ‘worse and worse’, becoming worst of all at the end of the age (as other passages of scripture confirm).

The Bible map shows we are in ‘the last days’ at ‘the time of the end’ of this age, and near to the situation signs posted in Daniel ch.12 and Matthew ch.24.

‘ ... and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.’

Daniel ch.12 v.1

‘For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened. ...Behold, I have told you before.’

Matthew ch.24 vv.21-22 & 25

‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.’

Matthew ch.24 vv.29-30

When faced by banks which are folding and economic woes, our way through every crisis should be fixed and constant. Like Timothy, we are instructed to stay true to first principles, standing on the unshakeable foundation of Scripture (God’s written word), while continuing to preach the word (Bible Truth).

‘... evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, ... But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of ... from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.’

2 Timothy ch.3 vv.13-17

‘But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.’

1 Peter ch.1 v.25

It cannot be destroyed here on earth, because it is settled in heaven!

‘For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.’

Psalms 119 v.89

We are called to witness that God is, and are privileged to handle His word as His preachers – His chosen means of communication. That is the main purpose of our Fellowship, and the reason we welcome like-minded people to support its work. This includes financially with tithes and free will offerings, as donations in life and by deferred giving as legacies.

‘I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; ...’

2 Timothy ch.4 vv.1-3

We may imagine our AGMs will just continue year after year. But the Bible warns against this, and counsels us to grasp windows of opportunity while they exist, as times and situations change.

‘(... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)’

2 Corinthians ch.6 v. 2

The words of Habakkuk ch.2 v.4 ‘... the just shall live by his faith.’ are repeated three times in the New Testament (Romans ch.1 v.17, Galatians ch.3 v.11 & Hebrews ch.10 v.38). Moreover, Hebrews ch.11 v.6 shows that faith is essential for God’s blessing.

‘But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’

Consequently the BIBTF is a faith work. Our policy is to minister without charges while funds permit. All our activities depend on gifts (whether donations or legacies) from supporters. God gives us power to get wealth (Deuteronomy ch.8 v.18), instructs us to be not slothful in business (Romans ch.12 v.11), and He revealed sound economic principles and responsibilities. Thus, God ordained the principle of paying tithes in Israel, and of giving freewill offerings, both which we recognise and teach.

Unlike most organisations, the BIBTF has no fixed subscription, rarely mentions giving, and provides most of its ministry, including membership, Bible Truth magazine, and meals at meetings, without charge. However, the total annual cost of our ministry averages £20-25,000, as our accounts show. This needs to be paid for from current gifts, reclaimed tax, and legacies.

Our policy of neither charging for ministry, nor asking for gifts, can be misunderstood as indicating no connection between our activities and funds. Yet our ministry will continue only while freewill support allows. In fact well over half of our ministry has been funded by legacies, and hence by the generosity of past supporters whose foresight extended beyond their lifetime, whose kindness we still appreciate today. Living supporters may care to consider if this form of giving has a place in their planning, and if any need information or help, our treasurer* would be pleased to provide it. It is a well trodden path and often a prudent one to avoid inheritance taxes. King David gave a fortune amassed in his life to build God’s House after his decease.

‘Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee. ... Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; ...’

1 Chronicles ch.22 vv.11 & 14

Also Jesus counselled his disciples with these words, ‘And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations’.

Luke ch.16 v.9

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