

# outreach

---

## The New Horizons Newsletter

e-mail: [coguk@aol.com](mailto:coguk@aol.com)  
web-site: [www.cgom.org](http://www.cgom.org)  
mobile: 07949942180  
Editor: James McBride

Churches of God, UK (coguk)  
Unit 14356  
PO Box 4336  
MANCHESTER  
M61 0BW

January/February  
2019

visit our website:  
[www.cgom.org](http://www.cgom.org)

providing  
leadership,  
information and  
Biblical teaching

Matthew 28:19-20

representing  
The Churches of God  
Outreach Ministries



### Dead! So what's next?

It's a mystery, that 'world of the dead'. We all visit it sooner or later—yet truly only one individual has ever returned from it to spill the beans. However, we do like to know, and there are myriad speculative answers.

One reason for ignorance of the true facts is our readiness to turn a blind eye to the sole authentic source—the Christian Bible. There, right at man's beginning, we are informed of the truth, and then given a living example.

### Mankind in the Making

Forget the fairy tale ramblings of those who fabricate our origin to bolster outdated theories. Rather than requiring billion of years to 'evolve', *Homo Sapiens* (that's us) appears suddenly; two unique beings perfectly adapted to produce a race of sentient beings.

Made uniquely from earth's elements, man was an inanimate 'clay model' of the being God was in process of creating, and made in His image. The LORD then '*...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [Heb.nephesh]*' (Genesis 2:7). Thus entered him the '*spirit in man*' which animated—gave 'soul' (life) to the inert body of newly-created Adam.

### Life Force

The 'soul' is simply the physical life-force of *all* living creatures, including man. Moses writes of '*...every living creature [nephesh] that moves in the waters, and of every creature [nephesh] that creeps upon the earth*' (Leviticus 11:46). But it

(the life force, 'soul') is, in humanity, empowered by that 'spirit in man': '*...there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding*' (Job 32:8).

The spirit is the 'home' in which resides our spiritual qualities—integrity, choices, will, motivation, creativity *etc.* It activates all life—and is species specific. King Solomon noted a fundamental difference: '*...Who knows the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth?* (Ecclesiastes 3:21). It is indeed something of a mystery! The King later confirms *where* our spirit goes when we die: '*...Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*' (ch 12:7).

Death occurs when the spirit exits the body, as exemplified by the death of Jesus: '*...crying again with a loud voice, Jesus released his spirit*' (Matthew 27:50). A further example is the death of Stephen: '*...they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*' (Acts 7:59-60).

### State of the Dead

There's an almost universal belief that there is for the dead an immediate life of un-ending activity—in 'heaven' or in 'hell'. Not so, according to the Word of God. The apostle Paul sums it up as 'sleep', using the usual Biblical term for death: '*...we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed*' (1 Corinthians 15:51).

The Psalmist, for example tells us: '*...The dead praise not the LORD, neither any cont'd p.2*

## The Son of God

Jesus—the ‘Word’ (Gk. *logos*)—has always co-existed in perfect harmony with the Father, sharing the same holy Spirit. In due time he offered himself to pay the legal penalty for mankind’s sin.

The Word divested himself of divine qualities and was transformed as human flesh: ‘...*the Word was made [became] flesh, and dwelt among us...the only begotten of the Father*’ (John 1:14). The apostle Paul adds: ‘...*being in the form of God, [he] thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*’ (Philippians 2:6-7).

### His Human Spirit

Becoming human, Jesus shared our ‘spirit in man’ as illustrated by various texts: ‘...*Jesus perceived in his spirit*’ (Mark 2:8, 8:12, Luke 1:80 *etc*). He was like us but because of his divine origin exempt from all the baggage we inherit since Adam: ‘...*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and for this reason that Holy One being born of you will be called Son of God*’ (Luke 1:35, Matthew 1:18).

The ‘spirit in man’ is the energizing force that activates the body’s cognitive processes. It is the seat of our will, and regulates expression of our overt behaviour, our emotional responses, through our living flesh, in which in our present corrupted state ‘...*there is no good thing*’ (Romans 7:18).

Jesus had our human nature and shared the same struggles we have with sin—but always defeating temptation victoriously: ‘...*[he] in the days of his flesh offered up both prayers and supplications, with loud crying and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard as a result of his reverence*’ (Hebrews 5:7). An example for us, surely!

He lived a perfect sinless life, culminating in his death just before which he stated: ‘...*I have glorified You on the earth. I finished the work that You gave Me to do*’ (John 17:4), and on the cross saying ‘...*it is finished*’ (ch 18:30).

### When He Died

When Jesus released his human spirit he died (Matthew 27:50) and his body was entombed in ‘*the heart of the earth*’ for three days and three nights (ch 12:40). He is described as being for that period in *hades*—the grave [KJV-‘hell’] (Acts 2:31), and his spirit, - as per King Solomon—‘*returned to God who gave it*’. But, being sinless, ‘...*God raised him from the dead*’ (Acts 13:30).

Paul details what followed: ‘...*[God] raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavenly places, above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name named*’ (Ephesians 1:20-22). That same holy Spirit communicates with us through our human spirit: ‘...*The Spirit itself bears witness [witnesses together, interacts] with our spirit, that we are the children of God*’ (Romans 8:16).

### A New Role

Following his resurrection, Jesus, having experienced life as a human [*...the man, Christ Jesus*] (Romans 5:15), assumed a new relationship with the Father—but as a Son, and the inheritor of the universe, the ‘...*the firstborn from the dead*’ (Revelation 1:5).

As such he retains all his divine glory, power, majesty and authority.

The Godhead is repeatedly referred to as having separate roles—in both the Old Testament and the New. In the Old it was the Logos who not only ‘...*created all things*’ (Colossians 1:16) but interacted, sometimes face-to-face, directly with mankind executing the plans of the Godhead. In the New ‘...*all judgment*’ was committed to the Son (John 5:22). The Father and Jesus are frequently described separately. For example: ‘... *God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ*’ (I Timothy 1:1), ‘...*God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*’ (Titus 1:4). [*see also the introductions to many of Paul’s letters.*]

### Our Relationship

On repentance and baptism believers receive God’s Spirit and become the children of God: ‘...*and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*’ (Romans 8:17). As says the apostle John, ‘...*now are we the sons of God...we will be like him*’ (I John 3:2). All those in whom resides the holy Spirit are viewed by the Father as ‘...*sons and daughters of the almighty*’ (II Corinthians 6:18), sharing with Jesus Christ as His co-heirs.

God’s Spirit during our lifetime since baptism transforms our human spirit to prepare us for our resurrection at Christ’s return, when we will be clothed with our spirit body (I Corinthians 15:44) and become joint-heirs of the Kingdom.

How awesome that, when we remain faithful, we will share that same relationship with the Father, as does our Saviour, the Son of God. Ω

### What’s Next? ...from p.1

*that go down into silence*’ (115:17). Solomon again: ‘... *the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing*’ (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

In sum, when the ‘spirit in man’ leaves our body we die and the spirit returns to God. But the spirit is inert and has no consciousness until united to a glorious incorruptible spirit body at the return of Messiah: ‘...*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body*’ (I Corinthians 15:44) . Ω

## Letter from England

Hello again

Do you get a sense that we are all riding a wave, that we are being wafted helplessly towards an unknown destination, that we are being torn, as with an invisible tsunami, from our roots?

It would seem that all those values that underpinned our Western societies, certainly for several centuries, are being swept away, eroded by a rising tide of ultra liberalism promoted in our schools and colleges by teachers and professors nourished on the same faulty diet.

There is, too, the assault on what has hitherto been the bedrock of civilized societies everywhere—the family. Infants are deprived of continuous guidance by parents whose priorities lie elsewhere, where economics trumps relationship, discipline and respect for legitimate authority.

The rocks of national self-destruction appear perilously close! Yet supine leadership allows the ship of state to drift aimlessly.

On the other hand it seems to me that there is also a rising anti-current, an insidious drift away from globalism, a rise of ‘right-wing’ authoritarian nanny state-ism—and not just in the UK. The subtle nudging of the population to abandon firmly ingrained beliefs—whether on child-rearing, or gender, or even our religious beliefs—signal the decay of our hitherto stable civilisation.

The Christian world is fairly evenly divided between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, with roots extending back five centuries to the Reformation. The Roman version gripped Europe for over twelve hundred years, Protestantism being a reaction to its excesses. But that, too, is changing, for most evangelical leaders now seek to heal the rift—not by standing for Bible truth but by submission to the Roman Pope. The buzz-word is ‘Doctrine is pointless; let’s just love one another. The Reformation was a grave mistake’.

And not just church leaders but also the political leaders of the world, all of whom sooner or later bow before the Pope and who now acknowledge him as the world’s moral guide. Indeed on the present Pope’s visit to the United States he was accorded the deference given to the US President. He was the first Pope to address the world’s leaders at the United Nations—others have merely addressed delegates. Change certainly is afoot!

The present drift to the right, to imposing government authority, to embracing Romanism in politics and religion, to the Papal call for Sunday to be made a universal rest day—all have echoes of the Biblical scenario for the end of this era of human rule. It is a clarion call for all true believers to draw ever closer to the Father and to our Saviour.

James

## Is Your Faith Secure?

It is no easy path to follow Jesus Christ—as he himself pointed out (*eg* Mathew 7:13-14). We may not, most of us, be overtly persecuted and certainly not by our Western government authorities. Nevertheless we face opposition—which can be personally distressing.

*Family* aren’t always happy with our beliefs, for these beliefs can commit us to practices that are culturally different to the Christian mainstream. Then there’s our *work*, where we may have to wrestle to persuade our employer to accommodate our beliefs, which may not fit with their work practices. And even in our enlightened era of ‘diversity’ there can be a frustrating challenge with *school* authorities. There is, too, our *food*—as we seek to follow divine guidance on our more limited choice.

Especially at this time of year we can empathise with Lot in that our society largely reflects his, in Sodom. The apostle Peter comments: ‘...[God] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation [wanton, licentious behavior] of the wicked: For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds (II Peter 2:7-8).

Lot was delivered from his tormentors, and all true believers can with confidence rely on this same God. As wrote the Psalmist: ‘...How precious also are your thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! (ch 139:17). Such is His care for those who are His children that He willingly experienced the death on our behalf of His Son! He understands our weaknesses, realizes we don’t get everything spot on, is there for us when we call on Him.

What He seeks is that we continually nourish our relationship with Him and His Son, Jesus: ‘...The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit’ (Psalm 34:18). While He wants us to conform increasingly with His guidance through His written Word (all for our benefit), yet He is patient and ‘...not willing that any should perish’. And through the power of His Spirit dwelling in us we have the on-going presence of our Saviour in our daily life: ‘...I am with you all the days until the end of the age/ (Matthew 28:20).

We may never fully understand God’s revealed Word, we may be completely wrong about prophesied end-time events, we may stray a little from the path of pure ‘truth’—still ‘...we are the apple of His eye’. The crown is ours, if we faithfully endure all that life throws at us until the end. Doctrine is the foundation, the ‘skeleton’ that shapes our outer life in Christ. But the fleshly covering is the transformed way that we express our inner being—our compassion, our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ and the world around us. This must be our focus. Ω

## Chaotic Countdown

It was never going to be easy, negotiating as it is with the sclerotic and obstructionist European Union bent on ‘punishing’ Britain’s temerity in leaving the Union (and reducing the EU’s income). It was always destined to be chaotic, given the opposition from MPs, friends and foes—both at home and abroad.

The Prime Minister, however, persisted in pressing for the defective agreement she managed to wrestle from devious EU negotiators.

With but a slim four per cent majority for taking back Britain’s sovereignty, division was inevitable, as the choices of all citizens had somehow to be harmonized. Yet two years of tortuous hapless negotiation have failed to deliver what the Referendum promised—a clean break from the tentacles of Rome and its brood of oppressive Treaties .

The Prime Minister’s weak compromise ‘solution’ (the Chequers Agreement) has been widely criticized by MPs in all parties, Labour seeing it as an open door to their Marxist takeover of Government.

Many Conservatives brand it a ‘betrayal’.

### Fatal Flaw

But there is here—from a Bible perspective—a fundamental flaw, for the ‘economy’ has, wrongly, been elevated to be the prime reason for compromise in the exit process.

Anciently, Israel [*see side-bar*] were – sometimes voluntarily—subject to the domination of foreign powers, often for many decades. They lost divine protection through straying from godly principles and thus experienced increasing moral decay. Our nation has followed suit and will suffer the same adverse consequences. Perhaps, for example, we do not sacrifice babies to Moloch but instead we slaughter nearly two hundred thousand unborn annually (UK) to the god of consumerism and promiscuous

### A Glance Back

The United Kingdom is an heir to the material promises God gave to a remote ancestor, Abraham—to be passed on through the ages by the clans of Israel. It was based on his faithfulness to God: ‘...I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give to your seed all these countries; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws’ (Genesis 26:4-5). A firm promise.

Over many centuries they migrated from the middle east, arriving in north-west Europe having acquired a new language, many different customs and beliefs and a mix of non-Israelite citizens—yet retaining strong traces of life in Palestine. They became ‘...a nation and a company of nations’ .  
(Genesis 35:11)

self-indulgence.

### Change

However, when Israel—even if half-heartedly—returned to the true worship of the Creator and restored true values, God then restored them to prosperity. Our nation has indeed turned its back on the God of the Christian Bible and is as a result sinking in a morass of immorality. A wishy-washy gospel is proclaimed half-heartedly but not leading to the necessary change of heart..

Squabbling MPs *may*—it’s remotely possible—accept compromise when they vote mid-January. But without general nation-wide ‘change’ on a grand scale the democratic majority (to exit the EU) will mean little. In or out the UK will continue its downward plunge with increasing violence and immoral and perverse sexual practices. The public’s taste for debased entertainment will grow. Family life will be further eroded. Foreign faiths and tastes will continue to smother traditional and Christian values.

### Example

Our older generations have in general an ingrained moral sense nurtured by experience and an education rooted in the once-prevailing Christian values—and largely still resistant to modern values. A generation arose that disdained such values, and many became the opinion setters exerting influence over public opinion through universities, schools, the legal profession, the media, fashion, business. And, sadly, through religion.

The overt degenerate public behaviour of so-called celebrities, of ‘entertainers’, of politicians is emulated by children who are too often left to their own undisciplined devices. Our leaders in all fields are drunk with the wine of egotism and a weak feel-good philosophy. They prioritize personal wealth and public acclaim while neglecting public responsibility.

Our traditional laws and customs were a ‘hedge’ that protected our civilized society for hundreds of years. The erosion of those laws and customs (laws based on tested and age-old guidance), the up-rooting of that hedge—will undermine our nation and jeopardise the prosperity and peace we crave.

*Change is possible.* Note the example of ancient Nineveh’s King, who himself changed in the light of Joel’s warning: ‘...he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles [his ‘Cabinet’];’ ...let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not’ (Jonah 3:6-10).

**It is our choice!**

Ω