

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

End-June 2010

Scripture citations are to the British English version of the New International Version (NIV-UK), unless noted.

JUDGMENT DAY

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns!' Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them! Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth (1 Chronicles 16: 31–33)

Do sinners really go to hell? Rather surprisingly, this topic was recently discussed in 'The Big Question', the popular BBC television programme. It elicited fierce defence of the notion on the one hand, and scornful ridicule on the other. Surprising? Yes. At this point in human history, where the increase of knowledge has tended to undermine religious belief, and faith in the Christian Bible in particular, doctrinal topics have little appeal to the majority, merely providing an opportunity for unbelievers to mock the stubbornly credulous who cling to the old ideas. Yet the discussion was conducted seriously, showing that what the future holds for the human race, and more particularly for each of us as individuals, is still a cause for serious concern. *It matters!* But it was an atheist who had the last word, paradoxically nearer to the truth than most Christians: 'When I come to the end of this life,' he said, 'I shall be *dead*.'

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From the History Corner

THE BRITISH TRADES UNION MOVEMENT (Part I)

Glasgow, from the Gaelic *glas-ghu*, means 'beloved green', or a favourite view of nature's idyll. The city once rivalled Liverpool for the number of ships that entered its docks. Her fortunes began in the mid-eighteenth century as a port for the tobacco traffic from British colonies in America. During those times of flourishing trade, Adam Smith (1723-1790) was awarded a professorship at Glasgow University. In 1776 he published his landmark, canny treatise on economics, *The Wealth of Nations*. The principles which Smith set out in that work form the basis of an understanding of the modern economy and are often cited today.

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'BORN OF GOD'

Question: Explain John 1: 12, 13:

[12] To all who received [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — **[13]** children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Answer: The begetting by the holy spirit is what is in view here.

There are two occurrences of the word 'born' in verse 13. The second appearance of the word has been supplied by the translators for continuity, and does not appear in the Greek. The first is the translation of the Greek word *gennaō*, which can contain the meanings of both begetting and its outcome, birth. Here it likely means 'conceived'.

These verses seem to suggest that the spiritual sonship of the believer was not conferred as a consequence of, say, Jewish maternal or paternal lineage ('natural descent'), legal adoption ('human decision'), or sexual intercourse ('husband's will'). Those individuals who accepted Jesus in faith as their Saviour and Lord were 'conceived' or begotten as 'new creatures' by the holy spirit, and thus became by Divine authority the children of God. (For an explanation regarding the 'new creature' see our Web site at <<http://www.ukbiblestudents.co.uk/Magazinehome/somethingnew.htm>>)

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Anthony Deane, *The Reformation* (London; James Nisbet & Co., 1907)

'The influence of [monasteries], scattered up and down the country, affected the whole social, as well as the spiritual, welfare of the nation. Through a considerable period, learning and art of every kind would have been almost extinct, had it not been for the work of the monks. . . . Moreover, one of the larger religious houses would become a centre of activity for all the neighbourhood. Attached to it were a large number of lay workers, and everything required both for them and for the monks themselves would be made within the monastic precincts. This included clothing, tools of every kind, agricultural implements, and domestic furniture. Whether a new aisle was to be added to the church or a new pair of sandals provided for one of the inmates, everything – the plan, the materials, the labour, and the execution of the work – could be obtained without going outside the monastery's borders. Not the least important of such pursuits was that of agriculture. People who visit to-day the ruins of some abbey are wont to remark that its builders chose a very fertile and picturesque neighbourhood in which to place it. But, more often than not, its original surroundings were barren and desolate. The monks themselves brought about the change; they drained the swamp, they irrigated the dry land, they planted trees and hedges, they transformed and improved out of knowledge the whole of the surrounding country, and the results of their labour remain to-day.'

DRAGNET

Items of interest from the World Wide Web

Britain

U.K. researchers to sequence 10,000 genomes

<<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2010/06/uk-to-sequence-10000-genomes.html?rss=1>>

Germany

Satellites snap 3D images of Earth

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science_and_environment/10422511.stm>

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