



### Readings for the next two weeks

Monday	Reading Rom 13:1–14:12 Pray for Margaret Gallagher
Tuesday	Reading Rom 14:13–15:7 Pray for Bill & Lorraine Graham
Wednesday	Reading Rom 15:8–33 Pray for Will Graham
Thursday	Reading Rom 16 Pray for Brenda & Keith Hambleton & family
Friday	Reading 1 Cor 1 Pray for Diane Hallam
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Nat & Christine Herbert & family
<b>Sunday 30<sup>th</sup></b>	Reading 1 Cor 2 Pray for Peter & Babs Hewitt
Monday	Reading <u>1 Cor 3</u> Pray for Anna Holme
Tuesday	Reading <u>1 Cor 4–5</u> Pray for Dave & Chris Hoolihan & family
Wednesday	Reading <u>1 Cor 6:1–7:16</u> Pray for Claire, Terry, Liam & Chloe Humphreys
Thursday	Reading <u>1 Cor 7:17–40</u> Pray for Sebastian, Claudia & Nathan Ianos
Friday	Reading <u>1 Cor 8</u> Pray for Emma Ion
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Tim & Alison Ingram
<b>Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Reading <u>1 Cor 9</u> Pray for Annette & Mike Jones & family

Thank you so much for *your* part in vital ministry of prayer and intercession for one another!

Good morning everyone! This edition of our *Update* covers the next two weeks, taking us up to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September. Below are a few news items and the all-important prayer requests. This newsletter comes to you with our prayers, hoping that we can encourage you through our Digital Services and in various other ways provide meaningful and spiritual support for you in these continued days of restrictions.

As I write this, it has been raining heavily for about 15 minutes, then the sun comes out for a while, and then the wind blows strongly; it has been like this all day! The weather is 'not quite sure what to do'. Sometimes, we are exactly like that too and life seems chaotic and all over the place. We get such days from time to time. All the seasons at the same time - and it's only lunchtime! Perhaps this has been one of those days for you. When life seems a bit of a muddle, it's time to stop – remember: "***Be still and know that I am God***" (Psalm 46: 10). So, enjoy all the seasons and know who made them...

### Grace & Peace

#### NEWS:

- On the 1st & 2nd of September, Nazarene Theological College will be hosting their final ***Open Evenings*** for potential students this semester from 8pm - 9pm (done by video conferencing). You can register online at [nazarene.ac.uk](http://nazarene.ac.uk) and look under 'What's on' and under 'Open Days'.
- The next church ***board meeting*** is Friday 4th September at 7.30pm
- We are building a ***barrier-free pathway*** by widening the present narrow walkway from the car park to the double-door emergency exit from the sanctuary. This will enable safer exiting for all, especially those needing to use wheelchairs or walkers.
- Our Harvest speaker this September will be Dr Samuel Hildebrandt, on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### Prayer requests for the next two weeks:

- We pray for Katie and Scott Cameron getting ***married*** on Sat 29<sup>th</sup>, and pray for their planned move to Manchester - to enable Katie to complete her studies at NTC.
- Please pray for our next ***board meeting*** and important business under consideration
- Pray for those who join us each Wednesday at church from 10.30am for a much-needed ***prayer time***; numbers are limited, but we encourage all who can to join us.
- We pray especially for new ***students at NTC***; all those who are struggling with pressing personal situations; and also those living with challenging health issues.



## Message: The Word of the Lord

**Readings:** Gen 1: 1-5; John 1: 1-5; Rev 22: 12-13

There is one single message that the whole Bible gives. It is a remarkable message and I am going to try to do it justice this morning. The Message of the entire Bible is encapsulated in 'Words'. It is incredible really. The word '**Bible**' means a library or collection of books. At source there are Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek words.

They are mostly translatable (the continuing discovery of nuances of the meaning of certain words is why the *final* translation will never be printed). They are certainly translatable for a children's storybook and yet also – so profoundly deep – that the writing of commentaries on the Scriptures is an on-going work and will continue until Jesus Himself returns to usher in the fulfilment of all things.

Everywhere we go in life, every piece of information we learn, hear or discover is ultimately reduced to one thing – words! From news and gossip, to social media and novels, science and faith, all use words. Certain quotes are known the world over. Here are a few examples we all recall the *person, place* and *context* from history... All of them are encapsulated in vocabulary: "**Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.**" J F Kennedy. "**Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few...**" W Churchill "**One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind...**" Neil Armstrong

Sometimes, it has just been a *single word* on its own! Like the word, '**Eureka**!' When getting into his bath *Archimedes*, the ancient Greek mathematician and inventor, realised how to determine the **density** of an object no matter what the shape was (because the volume of water it displaced provided an accurate measure of its **volume** which could then be compared with its **weight**). A **Eureka moment**! In those days people cheated (yes, it's hard to believe, but there's really nothing new under the sun!). When weighing in gold people would add less dense, inferior elements to the pure gold. But, there would **now be 'honest scales'** and this versatile mathematical principle is used today for so much more, like flotation & buoyancy. **It was as scientifically significant as** an apple once hitting someone on his head!

The word '**Eureka**' meant '**I have found it!**' So, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when much real gold was discovered in California, the word they cried out was '**Eureka**!' *This morning* we can likewise have a '**Eureka**' moment as we discover the very Word of God... We have then,

## 1. The First Word:

The first words in the modern English Bible are, '**In the beginning...**' I have a children's Bible at home, and it is entitled *The Beginners Bible*. The first page has a dark picture with the title: The Beginning – then these words, '**In the beginning, the earth was empty. Darkness covered everything. But God was there, and He had a plan.**'

The second page has a picture of a bright light and the words underneath read, '**Let there be light, God said**'... So then, for some time – no one knows how long it was – God was there in the darkness of that '**Beginning**'. And this is the point – when God spoke his first Word, He revealed Himself.

This revelation came with '**Light**'. Let's face it, it's what most of us are longing for right now in the middle of summer, a bright light in the sky. **The Big Reveal is Light**, which illuminates more **discoverable Facts** every day, just as it does to **discoverable Faith** as we follow Christ.

In this first chapter of the Bible, there is a series of six revelations during time-periods, and each one is better than the one before – until finally, everything is '**Good**'. And God says as much. Just think of it, '**Good**' is a God word!

It was in Athens where Paul saw an altar with the inscription, '**To an Unknown God**'. So Paul says to them, '**Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth...**'

That day a few of the people listening **had a 'Eureka' moment** and believed. Why? Because, secondly, there was a New Word.

## 2. The New Word

When John writes his gospel, he does so not as a historian, but as one who had experienced, as a disciple of Jesus, so many Eureka moments. He writes, '**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**' (John 1:1)

It is a '**New**' Word in that it is a new declaration of Good News that fulfilled all previous requirements, and it is better, greater, and more powerful in meaning than any word before it. It is a **Gracious** Word. It is a 'New' Word of **Hope** offering a New **Way** to live. It brings a newness just as each evening gives way to a New Day!

This **Word** that was Before us, and Above us, and Other-than-us, is now **amongst us**. That is what John says, '**He made his dwelling amongst us**'. Though the **Eternal Word**



returned to Glory, and particularly to God's Right Hand of authority, this '**living Word**' is amongst us today through the presence of the Holy Spirit. The **revelation** of this **New Word** can never age or grow old or wither or die. There is '**eternity**' in this Word. In dying for us, the Word of God did not come to condemn and judge but to proclaim forgiveness and acceptance. So then, his hands are open **now**, beckoning us to come to Him! This openness has lasted some 2000 years. It is on offer until His return. Then he will come to righteously judge the living and the dead. But until then, this is the age of His Grace. He has been **patient**; he has been **longsuffering** longing for all to come to repentance... Listen to this verse that we often reserve only for Christmas... "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:14)  
Just let that amazing truth seep deep into your heart and soul because we now come to...

### 3. The Last word

If we turn to the final book and chapter of the bible we read, "**Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to every one according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.**" (Revelation 22:12–13)

What strikes me about verse 13 is this **triple-triple declaration**. It is like a tri-une declaration of God. It is like **Jesus** saying, '**I am the Alpha and the Omega' (then the **Father** adds, '**the First and the Last**'), (then the **Holy Spirit** adds,) '**the Beginning and the End**!' This has been some year! No one saw this Pandemic coming when it did, and it has taken the world by storm. But this global story and episode **is not** the end – **Jesus is the Omega!****

In the national newspapers recently, there was a picture of Vladimir Putin **showing off his new Naval military power!** It looked spectacular – frightening even – as he warns the whole world what he is capable of. Since the end of the second world war so many have feared the end of the world will be nuclear annihilation – but can I make a bold declaration, one that I believe I need to say this morning – it is true and it is global – **Jesus is the End!**

And when you read a good book or watch a film, there is often a final statement you are left with on the page or screen – '**The End**'. **I wanted to tell you today –**

**"Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega; Jesus is the First and the Last; Jesus is the Beginning and - the End."** Let us place our complete trust in the truth in Him!