



Readings for this week:

Monday	Reading Matt 15:29–16:12 Pray for Anna Holme
Tuesday	Reading Matt 16:13–17:13 Pray for Dave & Chris Hoolihan & family
Wednesday	Reading Matt 17:14–18:6 Pray for Claire, Terry, Liam & Chloe Humphreys
Thursday	Reading Matt 18:7–35 Pray for Sebastian, Claudia & Nathan Ianos
Friday	Reading Matt 19 Pray for Emma Ion
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Tim & Alison Ingram
Sunday	Reading Matt 20:1–16 Pray for Annette & Mike Jones & family

Other Prayers:

Our prayers for Wendy's son David and extended family and others in recent bereavements (we hope to soon have details of Wendy's funeral)

Our continued prayers for John & Ann; Claire; Isobel; Anna's dad Ian; Sheila's dad Mike; Jon; Sebi; and for Kingdom & Debi who is expecting imminently.

We pray for Huw preaching next Sunday.

We pray for those affected by recent flooding particularly in south Manchester area

We pray for world leaders and especially the recently inaugurated President Joe Biden; we pray that world leaders will work together for the good of all.

Pray for Dave Lunn, and especially his mum who had a recent heart attack; Dave is an MA student who attends our church when he is at NTC from Canada each year.

Welcome to our Sunday morning service as we worship the Lord together. On this page of our *Update* we try to gather our thoughts; share news and a sense of what's happening; and, not least, to *encourage* our readers. It is a way for us all to keep in touch and be 'on the same page', sharing our common faith in the Lord.

We were sorry to hear that *Wendy Bailey*, a member of our church, passed away last weekend following a short illness. Her presence will be missed. She was a regular attendee at Vivienne's home group while it was running, and our thoughts are for her son David. We were also sorry to hear of the passing of *Tony Welsh*, aged just 44. Tony used to attend our young peoples' group for a number of years and lived locally to our church. Our thoughts and prayers are for his wife and family.

This morning in our service, we will include a short promo video from Nazarene Theological College. We hope you find this informative. The faculty have worked hard under difficult circumstances this past year. The video will keep us abreast of all that is going on at your local Bible College at NTC, in Didsbury. It includes the most recent *full-time and part-time courses*, the next *Online Open Day*, the *online Church History Course* – not forgetting the very helpful *Manchester Bible School* '5-week evening classes' to delve into during Spring, Summer and Autumn. Visiting their website at <https://nazarene.ac.uk/short-courses/> will be helpful to many.

The Regional Director of our global church, Rev Jim Richie has called us to *a Day of Prayer* collectively on **Saturday 30th January**. Local churches are invited to set aside one hour to join in the prayer requests that will be made available. We will be emailing you details of this and you can join our Zoom prayer gathering between 10.00am and 11.00am for all or part of this, or pray on your own.

The present need for prayer for our world is greater now than ever before. There is the need for unity, the need for level-headedness and wisdom in times of radically differing opinions. Floods, fires, and famine still threaten the livelihoods of tens of millions. The world population is now edging closer to 8 billion (in 1921 it was less than 2 billion!). We have had the most challenging year on record for a generation. It is at such times that *nations*, let alone our *churches*, need to call upon the Lord!

It's been said, "*It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without heart.*" Evangelist, Oswald Chambers, once wisely said: "*Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work*". **Blessings to all our readers.**

Grace and peace!



Message: [The Transition](#)

Readings: OT: Psalm 23; NT: Galatians 3: 26-29

Two weeks ago, I talked about '*the Transaction*', the phrase used to highlight *the price* Jesus paid for our salvation. Last week we looked at '*the Transformation*' made possible by faith, by having '*the mind of Christ*'. This morning, perhaps quite naturally, I want to look at '*The Transition*'.

I was thinking about the upcoming transition - from myself to Rev Mick Kane taking up this pastorate in February. Such transitions can cause anxiety and unnecessary worry, but only if people have not sought the Lord's will.

I have been thinking a lot about this. Indeed, as a church board, we have been trying to make *the transition* as smooth as possible. Whatever important tweaks might be required, they will receive the necessary prayerful attention.

The spirit of this transition is hugely important. Mick is looking forward to taking up the place of pastor at Brooklands, and I am good with this long-planned decision. We were certainly thrilled with the near-unanimous ballot last November, and so this morning I wanted to talk about *transitions*.

We find many 'transitions' in the Bible and they occupy a really *important place* in what God was doing in that situation. Firstly, there have been...

1. [Many Transitions](#)

The Old Testament contains numerous important transitions! Some notable transitions are found in the renaming of certain people. One example is that of Jacob to *Israel*. The change of name marks *a transition in his character too*, for before this he was a devious scoundrel. The name Jacob means '*deceives*' or '*he struggles*'. His final struggle was for superiority and that was against the angel of God, when he '*wrestles*' (*another play on his name and character*) all through the night with no less than *God*. (Gen. 32: 24)

As the story of the nation of Israel unfolds, we *also* have the transition of national leadership from *Moses to Joshua*! Moses had delivered his people from slavery (*so this was always going to be a hard act to follow*). And although Moses himself had made many mistakes, when it came to Joshua's succession of Moses, many were anxious.

These worries were soon proved unfounded as Joshua leads them to occupy the **Promised Land**! It is worth noting that God had a plan for Moses, and to lead Israel into the Land of Promise was *not* part of it.

Another significant OT Transition is from a series of Judges to a series of Kings. From *Samuel to King David*! David, unlike Saul, was '*a man after God's own heart*' (a phrase used twice of David in the Bible, see 1 Sam. 13:14, or Acts 13:22).

The Kingship of David was unique; and although he, like any other mere mortal, also made mistakes, there was coming *a greater King*, referred to by many as *King David's Greater Son*. So many people came to call Jesus, the '*Son of David*'.

The Transition from Old to New Testament needs to be mentioned here. What a singularly important transition that was. 'The old was the New *enfolded*, and the New was the Old *unfolded*'. We still need both the Old and the New Testaments today, and we need *wisdom* to appreciate *the transition*.

Furthermore, in the New Testament, we find these three *crucial and specific transitions*...

From John the Baptist to God's Son Jesus; from the Jewish nation to the Gentile world, and from the Law of God to the Grace of God! If you can appreciate the heightened significance of these three transitions, you might then *begin to grasp* how in each of them, **GOD WAS AT WORK!** God was *in* these times of change; they were *part of His plan*.

I just want to add that when God is at work, it is done gently, graciously and with *the best for everyone* in mind. God always '*works for the good of those who love him...*'

Friends, there are many important '*Transitions*' in life, but there is only...

2. [One Focus](#)

The Message of the Gospel must be our focus!

Jesus Christ is the promised '*Seed*', the promised '*Son*' and the promised '*Saviour*' that God made to Abraham. While many *transitions* have been made, these connections are important because they bring our focus to bear upon One Lord of Heaven and Earth.



Here are a few examples: The focus brought to bear by John the Baptist regarding Jesus was this, “***He is the one** who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.*” (John 1:27)

What a revealing exclamation - ‘He is the One!’ This is the focus, but who is *He*? He is the central figure of the teaching of the Old Testament in all the Law, the Prophets & the Writings. John the Baptist’s teaching in the New Testament. pointed to Jesus with these words, ‘*He must increase, I must decrease.*’

It is also there in the teaching of Jesus, who boldly proclaimed the seven ‘I AM’ sayings... [The Way, the Truth and the Life, The Good Shepherd, The Light of the world’, the Resurrection, etc.]

It is also there in the teaching of Paul. Contrasting faith and law he writes, “***If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.***” (Galatians 3:29)

And Peter wrote to the scattered church with these words, “***But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him [Jesus] who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.***” (1 Peter 2:9)

Friends, there are *so many things calling for our Focus* in life. There are *many legitimate* and worthy objects of our attention – such as family members, and especially those who are ill. There are friends we have known for a long time, brothers and sisters in Christ – some celebrating notable birthdays, others retiring (who could that be?); still others focusing on doing the right thing in all the situations of life.

But *what* or *Who* should be our main focus; one that won’t detract from the good things in life? In moments of crisis and turmoil, one focus rises above them all. King David said, ‘***the LORD is my Shepherd***’. Thomas said of Him, ‘***My Lord and my God!***’ Peter declared, ‘***You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!***’

All these and so many more have made *that Grand Transition of faith* in the LORD. What about you?