

# REVIVE!

***"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." Habukkuk 2:14***

What a difficult, painful and isolating year 2020 was. The fragility of our democracies, economies, and indeed our health, are some of the many things that have been exposed by the pandemic. To add to the confusion, conspiracy theories and charges of fake news abound. Is it possible to understand what is really happening in the bewildering events around us? Is there an unveiling taking place?

This month, following Christmas, Epiphany was celebrated. The word means 'manifestation', and has the idea of '**unveiling**' or a '**revelation**' of something hidden. An epiphany occurred when the Magi visited the baby Jesus, revealing that embodied before them was God's mission to save the world (Matthew 2:1–11).

The subsequent Baptism of Jesus, when His identity as God's incarnate son was

unveiled (Matthew 3:13–17), and the wedding of Cana, when Jesus turned water into wine, 'revealing His glory' (John 2:1–11), were other significant epiphanies.

If we have our sight, we are indeed blessed to see the amazing beauty of creation around us. Epiphany reminds us that unless God opens our eyes to reveal and 'make manifest' who He is, what He is doing in our lives and world, and indeed what He is saying to us at the present time, we will see only '**through a glass darkly**.' (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Thankfully, and wonderfully, God wants to reveal Himself — that is the God He is! There are many '**RUMOURS OF GLORY**', in the words of the 1980 Bruce Cockburn song, for us to see and find comfort. Shall we explore some of them together?

*With love, David*

# Rumours of Glory

**A**bove the dark town, after the sun's gone down, two vapour trails cross the sky, catching the day's last slow goodbye. Black skyline looks rich as velvet; something is shining like gold ... but better! RUMOURS OF GLORY!

*Smiles mixed with curses, the crowd disperses, about whom no details are known, each one alone yet - not alone. Behind the pain, fear etched on the faces, something is shining like gold ... but better!*  
RUMOURS OF GLORY!]

Bruce Cockburn, in these two verses of his song, was clearly among those who had 'eyes to see.' What do YOU 'see'?

## The Parable of the Mantis Shrimp



We humans have three types of light receptors — red, blue and green cones through which we see combinations of colours. Mantis shrimps have twelve to sixteen different types and can perceive the world in a psychedelic rainbow of vibrant colours. They also have their eyes on stalks to give them all axes of movement. Reality is bigger than we humans can see. Take a moment to ask God to open your eyes to see more of His presence at work in you and in our world.

# Open our Eyes, Lord!

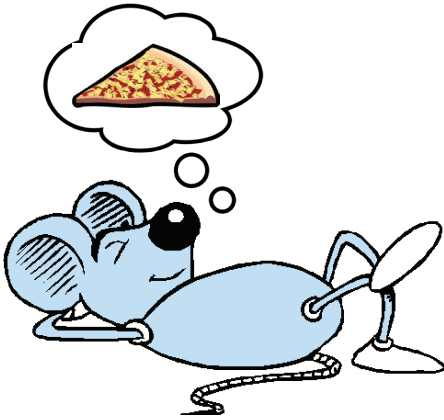
**T**here is so much God wants to reveal to us. Like a curtain, He desires to draw it back to unveil an amazing spiritual reality behind what is visible.

According to the Bible, here are some of the things He longs to reveal:

- ▶ **His nature, power and invisible qualities seen in what He has made** (Romans 1:20). *'The earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.'* (Habukkuk 2:14)
- ▶ **His love** — *'The earth is full of his unfailing love.'* (Psalm 33:5)
- ▶ **Who Jesus is** — *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Jesus replied, "Blessed are you Simon, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."* (Matthew 16:13–17)
- ▶ **Where we and the world have fallen short of the glory of God** (Romans 3:23; John 16:7–11)
- ▶ **The Gospel, the good news of salvation** *'In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed that is by faith, from first to last.'* (Romans 1:17)
- ▶ **The Father heart of God** — *'You received the Spirit of sonship, and by Him we cry 'Abba, Father!''* (Romans 8:15)
- ▶ **Who we really are** — *'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come.'* (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- ▶ **His purposes for our lives** — *'For I know the plans I have for you, to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'* (Jeremiah 29:11)

Is there something from the above list you would like God to unveil that might be hidden to you? Is there something you would like a greater awareness of? Ask Him now; He loves you!

## What's in a Dream?



In our modern Western culture, we see our dreams as deeply personal, a way to process what is happening to us, maybe the result sometimes of eating too much gorgonzola!

God used dreams many times in the Bible to transport people to the heavenly throne room and unveil who is really in control, especially in difficult and tumultuous times. He did this, for example, with Jacob in his family difficulties (Genesis 28:10–22), Isaiah living in geo-political upheaval (Isaiah 6) and the apostle John during the terrible persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Domitian (the Book of Revelation).

These Biblical (apocalyptic) dreams were given to reveal to God's people that He reigns at the centre of the universe – it's a reality we don't see with our natural eyes. He wants us in uncertain times to be comforted and encouraged, to have faith and live faithful lives to the end when all evil and injustice will be dealt with, and His kingdom of healing manifested. Read Revelation 21:1–7 and let the Lord encourage you!

## God's Majesty in a Tree

Brother Lawrence (1611–1691) who encourages Christians through the ages to '*practice the presence of God*,' even in menial tasks like kitchen work, began his faith journey with a revelation from God as he gazed at a barren tree in winter. For the first time he saw the majesty of God's grace and providence. He imagined himself like this tree, waiting for the life God would bring in season. The experience changed his life!

During this winter season, could a leafless tree 'speak' to you as it did to Brother Lawrence? Ask the Lord to guide you.



**Crowhurst tree in winter**

### Biblical Meditation

God has revealed himself to Christians down the ages through the practice of meditation. Psalm 1:2–4 says: '*Those who meditate on His word day and night are like a tree planted by a stream whose leaves never wither*.' Rather than letting the mind go blank, biblical meditation helps instead to bring our racing minds and scattered senses to focus and concentrate on ONE THING, such as something from Creation ... *like a tree or a flower, an attribute of God, a bible verse, or an episode in the life of Jesus*.

Choose one of the above to ponder and ruminate over for at least 15 minutes. Then ask God, who longs to make Himself known, to speak to you in and through it.



## Do you want more?

**B**elow are listed some of the many ways God reveals Himself, according to the Bible. If your desire is know Him better, look up the following bible verses and pray for the Holy Spirit to give you a fresh unveiling or revelation of who He is, perhaps even in new ways during these difficult times.

- ▶ **His written Word:** *'Your word is a light to my path.'* (Psalm 119:105)
- ▶ **When we cultivate a close relationship with Him:** *'Abide in me'* (John 15:5-11)
- ▶ **Jesus:** *'He made His dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth.'* (John 1:14)
- ▶ **His Holy Spirit:** *'He will teach you all things.'* (Acts 13:1-3)
- ▶ **His creation:** *'The heavens declare the glory of God.'* (Psalm 19)
- ▶ **Silence:** *'A still small voice.'* (1 Kings 19:12; 1 Samuel 3:1-14)
- ▶ **The desires of our heart:** (Psalm 37:4), especially when we are surrendered to Him (Romans 12:1-2)
- ▶ **Dreams and visions** (Acts 16:9; Genesis 28:10-22)
- ▶ **Our five senses:** (e.g. Sight - Jeremiah 18:1-6, smell - Song of Songs 1:1-4, touch - Mark 1:41)
- ▶ **Circumstances that confirm what God is saying** (1 Samuel 14:6-12; Judges 6:37)
- ▶ **Other people** (2 Samuel 12:1-14)
- ▶ **When we pray to him with earnestness** (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

## CCHC Prayer Corner

**W**e are SO grateful to the Lord for His continued amazing faithfulness. On the day workers started to install our new boiler system, the monies needed to make up the shortfall arrived through the post!

**Thank you for all your prayers and support!**

We are encouraged to *'seek the peace of the city ... pray to the Lord for it because 'if it prospers, you too will prosper.'* (Jeremiah 29:7) Let us bless and pray for our country, especially as it deals with the pandemic and post-Brexit reality.

**Please continue to pray with thanksgiving for:**

- ◆ the health and well-being of our staff, most of whom are on furlough at this time, as well as for God's wisdom for the Trustees who meet on February 10<sup>th</sup>;
- ◆ the season of *'new things and fresh springs'* (Isaiah 43:19) so we know what new future possibilities of ministry the Lord has for us;
- ◆ His continued provision of 'flour' and 'oil'

***'I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.' SO BE IT LORD! AMEN! (Ephesians 1:17)***

## CHALLENGE!

The Bible says incredibly that we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), and that if we belong to Jesus, we are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). That means God is in you and wants to reveal Himself through you to others (see Galatians 1:15:16). Ask God how you might reveal who He is to someone in these days of lockdown, whether in word, deed or prayer.

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