

### 307 *Two disparate threads?*

Do you believe in coincidences? Well, maybe, but the important thing is to be open: Is God trying to get my attention? So I booked a table in a small restaurant for eight editor friends for 6pm, but it's tight as there's a table for 10 booked for 7pm. Yesterday, we're all chatting away, and eight of their ten arrive – all strangers to me. The final two come in, and it's a couple I haven't seen for 10–15 years. Two days ago, I had been talking about them, especially about the way the chap led prayers in church. My antennae are alert.

So, two disparate threads, but as they also came yesterday, again my antennae are up: one friend recommended a book and another a short video.

I've often mentioned that when we 'read the Bible' – say, we 'read a Gospel' – we are actually reading an English translation. This means I'm reading what has been filtered by the translators, so I have to rely, to some extent, on what someone else believes. I'm not complaining, just saying.

So this book<sup>1</sup> pointed out that even if we knew NT Greek, we would *still* not be reading the words of Jesus – not directly. He spoke Aramaic, so the Greek Gospels are *translations* of Jesus' teachings – a totally new idea to me.

In Advent, I was thinking about bodily resurrection,<sup>[306]</sup> and about the wrong notion that just our souls will end up 'in heaven'. No, on that Great Day, heaven will come to earth, and our bodies will be renewed. And my point here is that it was the ancient Greeks that separated humans out into body, mind and spirit/soul – a wholly unJewish way of thinking, as they had a much more holistic view. Worth bearing in mind, eh?

The focus of the book was the Lord's prayer, the significance of which keeps coming more and more strongly to me. Let's see what I learn about the Lord's prayer *as Jesus actually spoke it and taught it...* in Aramaic!

The video was recommended by a friend who ministers in a very Muslim area of Britain. It featured an imam who had decided (for whatever reason) to sit down and read through his Qur'an and see what it actually said about Jesus (Isa). He is now a Christian.

I've only watched this short video<sup>2</sup> once so far, but I imagine that this chap felt a little like the folks in one of my favourite verses: 'Didn't our hearts burn within us as he... opened the Scriptures to us?'<sup>Luke 24:32</sup>

My personal view is that the writers of the Old and New Testaments were fallible humans, but that God inspired them to write words that would then inspire later generations to know, love, praise and serve our heavenly Father. And it sounds to me as if God has done the same sort of thing with the Qur'an – using any and every opportunity to make that wonderful love available to all. Praise Jesus' name!

Paul Bev. 9.1.24

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<sup>1</sup> *Prayers of the Cosmos* Neil Douglas-Klotz, 1990

<sup>2</sup> <https://bit.ly/47nbHGQ>