

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.

Matthew 13: 31-32

When I was young, I assumed nobody liked potatoes. I mean, come on – boiled potatoes are just bland and boring! So I was genuinely baffled when I discovered (in my mid-twenties) that there were people who actually liked potatoes. I have to confess that I found it hard to believe them at first...

I have since caused similar bafflement in this country by revealing to Brits that I can't stand baked beans – and sometimes encountered the same attitude of "you don't really mean that".

It's very easy to assume that our assessment of the world around us, including other people, is objective and neutral – after all, it's our only natural frame of reference! But the thing is, our interpretation of reality is to very high degree based on our past experiences, personal preferences and subjective choices. It may not matter when it comes to potatoes, but it does matter when it comes to people.

I see this especially in online faith discussions, and it's not helping anyone. I'm talking about Christians who assume that atheists are simply running away from God – they must surely be aware that God exists!? – and atheists who are convinced Christians are just desperately holding on to a belief system they deep down know is false...

And yes, there may well be individual cases of wilful rejection of what you fear might be true – on both sides! – but you can't assume that's always the case.

Assumptions are dangerous, especially when dealing with people: why would you assume anything about those who believe differently to you? The first step in any serious dialogue must surely be to find out from them what they actually believe, rather than make assumptions about them.

This hits both ways: a lot of atheists dislike Richard Dawkins, and most Christians are neither belligerent fundamentalists nor traditionalists who keep going to church simply because that's how they were brought up...

And let's not forget that there are a whole lot of people in between the convinced atheist and the committed Christian. There are unbelievers who find it hard to shake off the feeling there's more to this world than what can be measured and analysed scientifically; and there are believers who find certain aspects of biblical teaching hard to stomach (not to mention church itself).

Basically, you can't tell what somebody thinks unless they tell you – so if we want to reach people with the gospel, the first step must surely be to get to know people around us better. This is one reason I spend time sitting in Costa, inviting people to come and talk to me.

As a preacher and ex-missionary, my hope is of course that I might be able to help the doubting and the uncertain take another step or two towards Jesus; but I can't do that unless I find out what it is that's holding them back.

And the only way to find that out is to talk to them – otherwise I might find I've been defending the potatoes when all the time it was the broccoli that was the problem...

David

Mon	29 th Sept	8pm	Prayer Course
Tue	30 th	10.15am	Little Fishes
	October		
Wed	1 st	8pm	Zoom Prayer Meeting. Meeting ID 619 679 7453 Password Jesus
Thurs	2 nd	11am-2pm	Harm Reduction, with Shower Box
Thurs	2 nd	2pm	Prayer Course – Church Hall
Sun	5 th	11am	Worship Service led by Mary Bond
Mon	6 th	8pm	Prayer Course – Church Hall
Tues	7 th		CTiR Prayer for Redditch – see note
Thurs	9 th	2pm	Prayer Course – Church Hall
Mon	27 th		Breakfast Club - See note below

David on annual leave 30 September to 15 October

As usual we will be opening up Breakfast Club during the school half term holiday which start on Monday 27th October. We will run each morning from Monday to Friday.

Volunteers need to be available from 9am until 11am to help set up and tidy away. We open to guests from 9.30am to 10.15am. It is really helpful to know in advance who can be there each day.

If you feel you can volunteer for one or more day please could you add your name to the rota, available here: [Breakfast Club Rota October 2025.xlsx](#)

Thank you in advance,
Simon

As you tidy your garden for winter...

Gardens are preparing to go to sleep, but next Spring will soon be here. So why not consider some changes now:

~ Install a water butt now, to store up the winter rain for the Spring.

~ Reduce the hard standing in your garden. Instead, let rain soak into the soil, rather than go down a drain.

~ Plant something tall to create shade in your garden next year – the soil will remain wetter.

~ Put in more plants – the more you have, the more protection they give the ground. Try to use native species, as your local wildlife depends on them.

~ Consider adding a pond – it will be a great boost to your local wildlife!

Baptist Union of Great Britain Hong Kong Response Project

Newsletter 21 – September 2025

This autumn, the UK Government may start the consultation on its new Immigration White Paper, particularly on whether the 5 year pathway to permanent residence will apply to which immigration routes, with a decision expected at the end of this year. You may have seen news reports or even local protests about refugee and immigration issues. While these protests have not directly targeted Hong Kong migrants, they inevitably shape the wider debate on immigration and could influence future policies.

At present, the Home Office has not yet clarified whether groups such as Hong Kongers on the BNO visa will be affected. Perhaps some of you have already heard the quiet worries of Hong Kong families in your congregations. Some of you even joined us in July and September for prayer meetings, lifting up this issue together before the Lord, or you may be part of our WhatsApp group *“Immigration White Paper Concern”*. We thank you for standing in prayer with us.

If you have not yet had the chance to hear these voices, this newsletter is for you. We invite you to listen to two stories—one from a young family (Edmond and his wife with their young children) and another from Olive, a young professional. Through their words, may the Spirit open our eyes to the challenges, fears, and hopes of Hong Kongers who are navigating this season of uncertainty.

Story 1: Edmond Chan

As a father, husband, and son to elderly parents, leaving Hong Kong was the hardest decision I have ever made. It was not a move for comfort or ambition—it was a step of faith when the future back home seemed uncertain.

After the 2019 social movement in Hong Kong, the UK condemned the breach of the Sino British Joint Declaration, it opened the British National (Overseas) visa route in 2021. This was not just an immigration pathway—it was a humanitarian lifeline. Many families, like mine, came seeking freedom and the rule of law, trusting that the UK would keep its word.

Over the past three and a half years, we have been slowly rebuilding our lives. We have made friends, joined communities, and begun to feel that we truly belonged. Yet, recent proposals in the Immigration White Paper have brought fresh uncertainty. If the new measures apply to those already here, it could mean longer waiting times before we are allowed to settle permanently. For families like ours, this feels like living in between two worlds—neither fully secure here, nor able to return to what we left behind.



This weighs heavily on us. My daughter Emma has five more years of secondary school, yet she now wonders whether she will be able to continue her studies here. A close friend, with two children preparing for university, faces tuition costs far beyond what most families can afford without home-fee status.

Let me do a few simple calculations below:

The average household cost of living for a family of four is around £45,000 a year. International tuition and accommodation can add £100,000 a year for two children (For instance, at King's College London, a UK student pays £9,535 per year for Nursing undergraduate, while a BNO holder is charged £31,600 as an international student). Together, this would require a family income of over £145,000 annually—far above what is realistic for most households.

For families who came on humanitarian grounds, these challenges feel overwhelming. We continue to hope and pray that clarity and fairness will come, so that our children

can look to the future with confidence. We are grateful for the welcome we have received, for the friendships formed, and for the support of churches and communities who stand with us. Please keep families like mine, and many others walking the same journey, in your prayers.

Story 2: Olive Lau

I am a young professional originated from Hong Kong who came to the UK in 2020. I would like to share something personal that has been heavy on my heart. The UK government has recently proposed to extend the settlement period from five years to ten. For many of us who came from Hong Kong, this change brings deep concern and uncertainty.

I came to the UK in 2020 to pursue my MSc in Engineering. After graduating, I chose to stay here under the BNO visa route. This country has become a place of new beginnings for me after leaving Hong Kong and after the passing of my late father, who was a BNO passport holder. I now work as an engineer in the rail sector, focusing on safety engineering. My dream is to further my studies by pursuing a PhD in railway safety, a field where I hope to make a meaningful contribution.

The proposed policy change, however, makes this dream feel uncertain. Extending the settlement period means I would remain classified as an international student for many more years, facing tuition fees that are far beyond reach. More than the financial challenge, it leaves me feeling unsettled—as though, no matter how hard I work or how much I contribute, the stability of belonging is always kept at a distance.

Even more than my own struggles, I think of the many families among us who have given up everything to come here. They left behind homes, careers, and savings to start afresh in the UK, carrying their hopes and values with them. Yet now, it feels as if the government has placed all the burden on them, stripping away much of the stability and financial security they brought from Hong Kong. It is painful to see their sacrifices met with heavier uncertainty.



In moments like these, I turn to prayer. I pray for peace in my own heart, but especially for the families who are carrying such heavy loads. I pray that no one will lose hope, and that our community will stand together in support and love. And I pray for those in authority, that God would grant them wisdom and compassion to govern with fairness and humanity.

How You Can Respond

These are not just political issues—they are deeply **pastoral concerns**. Hong Kongers in our communities are brothers and sisters who need our listening ears, our fellowships, and above all, our prayers.

We invite you to:

- **Pray** intentionally for the Immigration White Paper consultations this autumn, and for clarity and fairness in the final decision.
- **Listen** to the concerns of Hong Kong families in your churches and communities. Sometimes the most powerful gift we can give is simply to hear and hold their fears with compassion.
- **Encourage** one another with God's promises. Remind those who feel uncertain that our ultimate security is in Christ, even when earthly systems feel unstable.
- **Action** write to your MPs, either in your church name or individual name, ask for the government to keep its promise on BNO visa scheme and share the stories of Hong Kongers in your congregation.

Please mark your diaries on Wednesday 12 November 7 – 8.15 to join our

Bi-monthly prayer meeting. For more information or need a chat, please contact Sharon or Londy on sshek@baptist.org.uk or lchan@baptist.org.uk.

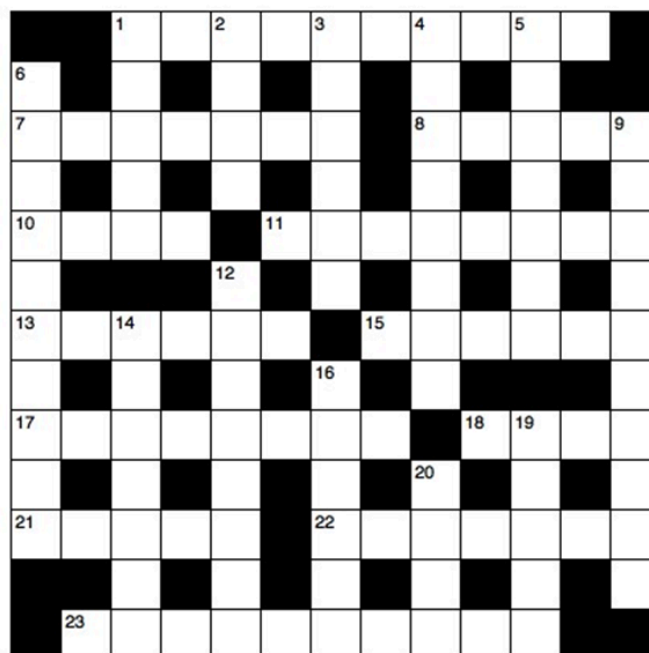
Crossword for October

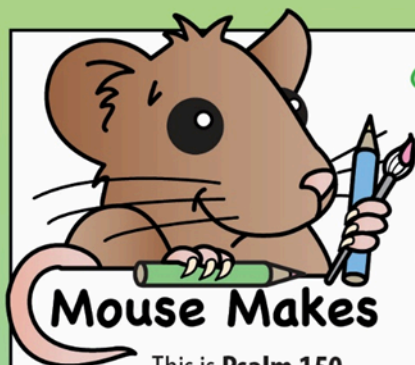
Across

- 1 He was replaced as king of Judah by his uncle Mattaniah (2 Kings 24:17) (10)
- 7 'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus... who for the joy set before him — the cross' (Hebrews 12:2) (7)
- 8 Relieved (5)
- 10 Impetuous (Acts 19:36) (4)
- 11 Surprised and alarmed (Luke 24:37) (8)
- 13 'It is — for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10:25) (6)
- 15 Directions for the conduct of a church service (6)
- 17 One of the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19) (8)
- 18 and 20 Down 'She began to wet his — with her tears. Then she wiped them with her — ' (Luke 7:38) (4,4)
- 21 'We will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an — , — the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:51–52) (3,2)
- 22 'But he replied, "Lord, I am — — go with you to prison and to death"' (Luke 22:33) (5,2)
- 23 Third person of the Trinity (2 Corinthians 13:14) (4,6)

Down

- 1 He betrayed Jesus (Matthew 27:3) (5)
- 2 Paul's assurance to the Philippian jailer: 'Don't — yourself! We are all here!' (Acts 16:28) (4)
- 3 'Fear God and keep his commandments, for this — the whole — of man' (Ecclesiastes 12:13) (2,4)
- 4 The sort of giver God loves (2 Corinthians 9:7) (8)
- 5 Sun rail (anag.) (7)
- 6 Naboth, the ill-fated vineyard owner, was one (1 Kings 21:1) (10)
- 9 Paul said of young widows, 'When their sensual desires overcome their — to Christ, they want to marry' (1 Timothy 5:11) (10)
- 12 This was how Joseph of Arimathea practised his discipleship 'because he feared the Jews' (John 19:38) (8)
- 14 Mop ruse (anag.) (7)
- 16 Foment (Philippians 1:17) (4,2)
- 19 Where Joseph and Mary escaped to with the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:14) (5)
- 20 See 18 Across





Mouse Makes

This is **Psalm 150**,
a song of praise to God,
it tells us why and how
to worship God.
*How do you praise and
worship God?*

Praise God in His Temple,
Praise Him in His mighty heavens.
Praise Him for His acts of power,
Praise Him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise Him
with the sounding trumpet,
Praise Him
with the harp and lyre,
Praise Him
with tambourine and dancing,
Praise Him
with the clash of cymbals,
Praise Him
with the resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath
PRAISE THE LORD!

P	K	G	C	Y	M	B	A	L	S	A
O	L	R	H	E	A	V	E	N	S	B
W	T	E	M	P	L	E	T	U	A	R
E	T	A	M	B	O	U	R	I	N	E
R	H	T	L	U	T	E	U	A	C	A
D	A	N	C	I	N	G	M	P	T	T
R	R	E	P	I	P	E	P	R	U	H
U	P	S	F	L	U	T	E	A	A	H
M	D	S	G	O	D	E	T	I	R	O
S	T	S	T	R	I	N	G	S	Y	R
O	Y	L	E	D	L	Y	R	E	Y	N

PRAISE • GOD • TEMPLE • HEAVENS • SANCTUARY • POWER • GREATNESS
TRUMPET • HORN • PIPE • FLUTE • HARP • LYRE • LUTE • STRINGS
TAMBOURINE • DANCING • CYMBALS • DRUMS • BREATH • LORD

The Poppy Appeal – could you help by giving some time this autumn?

The 2025 Poppy Appeal will be launched this month.

The Poppy is a powerful symbol worn by people right across the UK to commemorate the sacrifices of our Armed Forces and to show support to those still serving today.

The Royal British Legion was first set up to help those returning from the First World War. Almost a century on, they're still helping today's Service people, veterans, and their families coping with bereavement, living with disability or finding employment.

However, the Poppy Appeal would not be able to continue without the dedication of the teams of volunteers who stand in the streets, shops and supermarkets. Each town and village has their own Poppy Appeal Organiser - also a volunteer - who runs these teams, arranges for cover, drops off and collects the boxes.

The Poppy Appeal is always grateful for the work of these dedicated people, but the volunteers say they're proud to be selling Poppies to show support for those who sacrificed their lives for us.

If you want to volunteer, or if you would like a visit from a local volunteer who can speak to your community/church group, please go to:

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer>.



And now – a poem celebrating the glories of the season...

Autumn Glades - By Nigel Beeton

We stroll through leafy autumn glades,
An amber carpet 'neath our shoes;
As Nature's summer beauty fades
She clothes herself in golden hues.

They also warm the southern breeze,
Which comes upon us, as it may,
Releasing crispy, ochre leaves
To gently patter on our way.

The stillness of October days,
The chillness of a frosty dawn,
Yet autumn sunshine's slanting rays
Caress us with their glowing warmth.

Soon, soon comes winter's icy grip,
Of freezing wind and driving snow,
But, just for now, we'll gladly slip
Through gentle autumn's golden glow.

October Crossword Solutions:

ACROSS: 1, Jehoiachin. 7, Endured. 8, Eased. 10, Rash. 11, Startled. 13, Easier. 15, Rubric. 17, Impurity. 18, Feet. 21, Eye at. 22, Ready to. 23, Holy Spirit.

DOWN: 1, Judas. 2, Harm. 3, Is duty. 4, Cheerful. 5, Insular. 6, Jezreelite. 9, Dedication. 12, Secretly. 14, Supremo. 16, Stir up. 19, Egypt. 20, Hair.



Rules of Cricket as explained to foreign visitors:

You have two sides out in the field, one in and one out. Each man that's in the side that's in goes out and when he's out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out. When they are all out the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out. Sometimes you get men still in and not out. When both sides have been in and out including the not outs, that's the end of the game.

Editor's note: You will probably have read this before, I put it in as I amuses me. However, it is only fair to say that we have had some wonderful ladies' cricket too!!!

All in the month of October

It was:

200 years ago, on 25th Oct 1825 that Johann Strauss II, was born. This Austrian composer is best known for his waltzes, including *The Blue Danube*.

125 years ago, on 20th Oct 1900 that the American aviation pioneers the Wright Brothers made their first untethered glider flight at Kill Devil Hills, in North Carolina.

60 years ago, on 8th Oct 1965 that the Post Office Tower (now the BT Tower) in London was officially opened. It was the tallest building in the UK until 1980.

50 years ago, on 9th Oct 1975 that the IRA detonated a bomb near the Ritz Hotel in Piccadilly. One person was killed and at least 20 injured.