

May 2004

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# THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

## Editorial

### Hellfire

**As I entered the Garden of Gethsemane on the lower western slopes of the Mount of Olives, the request of my dear friend, Tom Robinson, came to mind: 'Would you please bring me three olive leaves from the Garden?'**

I soon discovered, however, that all the olive trees there, were now protected by an encircling two metre high fence and there wasn't a leaf in reach. I eventually found a few leaves that had drifted out onto the path, so, selecting the best of these, I carefully placed them between the pages of my notebook for safe transport back to Tom.

In the far corner of the Garden I came upon a group of Chinese Christians praying near the place where it is believed that Jesus committed himself to die for our sins. Several young adults were unashamedly shedding tears of gratitude and empathy as their pastor prayed aloud. Not wanting to disturb them I stood to one side and waited, joining in the spirit of the prayer though unable to understand a word of it.

When the pastor had finished I went up to him, smiled and gave him a bear hug. In response he threw his arms around me, clung to me and sobbed on my shoulder. We couldn't understand each other's earthly language, but we

spoke the 'language' of heaven. One day we will meet again and reflect on that precious day and the special event that drew us both to that place.

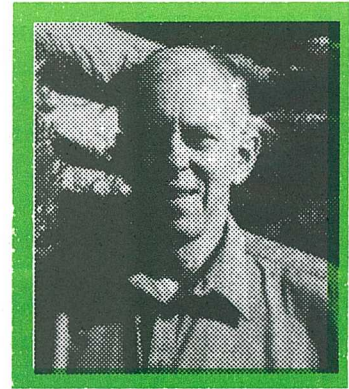
It was quite a different emotion that Jesus experienced in Gethsemane, almost 2000 years earlier. 'Deeply distressed and troubled,' he disclosed to his companions that he was 'overwhelmed with sorrow' (Matt 26:38). So great was his trauma, he collapsed to the ground, close to death (Mark 14:33-35).

So why was Jesus' spirit crushed, but ours so full of peace? Isaiah gives us the answer: '*He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him*' (Isa 53:5).

Right there in Gethsemane, Jesus came face to face with the decision of all decisions. No single decision before or after, could ever approach the magnitude of the decision that he wrestled with that evening. And no decision before or after, would ever require as much of the One making the decision as that decision did.

He who created a trillion living galaxies and before whom multitudes of angels bowed in adoration, had arrived at the place where he needed to decide whether or not he was willing to give all that up and go into eternal oblivion for the sake of repentant sinners and the future security of the universe.

Jesus understood that the Fa-



ther intended to totally annihilate sin. He also knew that sin existed only in people, which meant that God could only destroy sin either in man, or in *the* Man. The decision that Jesus had to make was, was he prepared to be that Man and accept annihilation in the place of man?

There in the Garden, He, who had no beginning, was torn apart over the possibility that if he drank the cup of wrath that was ours to drink, he would have no future. He, who Is and Was and Is to Come, knew that if he died for the sins of the world, he would soon become the One who Is and Was and Is no more?

That was the choice that Jesus wrestled with in Gethsemane. It was the choice between having absolutely everything and being absolutely nothing.

—Ritchie Way

*Focus on the Gospel*



# The Good News About Hell

Ritchie Way

**T**he Bible reveals that Jesus took our place and received our punishment when he died for us. (Rom. 4:25; 5:6, 8-9; 2 Corin. 5:14-15, 21; Ephes. 5:2; 1 Pet. 2:24). In other words, the punishment that Jesus endured for us, is the same punishment that we will suffer if we are unrepentant.

A correct understanding of the kind of punishment that unrepentant sinners will experience, therefore, will give us an understanding of the kind of punishment that Jesus experienced when he died in our place. So what kind of punishment will unrepentant sinners endure?

1. Many Christians, today, believe that each person has an immortal spirit that survives the death of the body. According to this belief, the spirits of the unrepentant dead are currently enduring unending hell-fire as the punishment for their sin, while the spirits of the repentant dead are enjoying eternal bliss in heaven because Jesus took their punishment for them.

If, however, the punishment for sin is an eternity in hellfire, and if Jesus took our punishment for us, then why isn't he currently suffering the agonies of eternal hellfire? Either Jesus took our punishment as Scripture says he did, or he didn't. If he did, why isn't he in hell at this very moment and forever more? Scripture, however, reveals that Jesus is not down in hell, but in heaven above at the right hand of the Father (Col 3:1; Heb 1:3). The concept, therefore, that eternal hellfire is the punishment that will be meted out to sinners, does not

square with the substitutionary death of Jesus.

2. There is another group of Christians who reject the Greek teaching of the immortal soul and accept, instead, the Hebrew teaching, that there is no conscious life apart from the body and that the rewards for our deeds will not be meted out to us in the spirit after death, but in the body after the resurrection (Luke 14:14; John 5:28-29; Rev 22:12).

The plain language of Scripture reveals that 'the wages of sin' is not everlasting anguish in hell, but 'death' (Rom 6:23), meaning the death *after* death (Rev 20:14). Unrepentant sinners will not be tormented eternally with fire and brimstone but will 'perish' (John 3:16) after they have been justly punished (Matt 16:27; Luke 12:47-48). The Bible teaches that the unrepentant will be 'punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord' (2 Thes 1:9). And the only way a person could be shut out from the presence of the Omnipresent One, would be for them to be totally annihilated.

Sin is so overwhelmingly destructive that all who carry their sins to the grave will be utterly and irrevocably consumed by them in the Judgment. '*Evil will slay the wicked*,' wrote the Psalmist (Psa 34:21). Upon the cross Jesus became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). As he hung there in our place, God judged and condemned him for our sin.

Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, highlights the physical torment that Christ suffered. But the death that Jesus died

for you and me was much more than just the first death; it was also the 'second death.' On the cross Jesus died the hopeless, despairing death that all unrepentant sinners will die when they are cut off from God and eternal life. The darkness that surrounded the cross reflected the deep, deep darkness in his soul at that time. Crushed by our sins he was slowly and irretrievably sucked into the black hole of annihilation from which there would be no escape.

Jesus experienced exactly what it is like to die eternally—dying with no hope of ever returning to life again. No unrepentant sinner will ever experience the torments of hell to the degree that Jesus did, because his burden of sin was far greater than any man's and he had infinitely more to lose. That is the price he willingly paid for you and me.

The good news of hell is that Jesus has already experienced its torments in my place and yours. The price for our sin has been paid in full by him and God doesn't require payment twice. We have been 'saved from God's wrath through him' (Rom 5:9). Therein lies the power of the Gospel—the incredible, matchless, unbelievable and unlimited power of God's forgiving love.

## EndNotes:

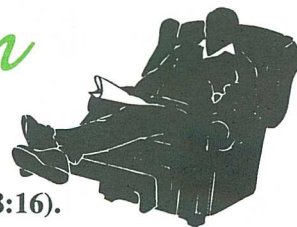
1. Christians who believe in everlasting torment in hell, do so because they base their faith on the highly symbolic apocalyptic passages (e.g. Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 14:10-11; 19:20) rather than the clear, plain language passages of Scripture (e.g. Matt. 7:13; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 10:39; 2 Pet. 3:7). A basic principle of interpretation is that the unknown must be explained by the known and symbolic language by plain language.

2. On what basis was God able to raise his annihilated Son up from the dead? Jesus was raised from the dead because our sin was *on* him but not *in* him. In other words, because his character had not been stained or blemished by our sin, he belonged to the realm of light, rather than the realm of darkness.



## Take a minute with Clem

**'Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door.' (John 18:16).**



**H**ave you ever known someone who was in the know—someone who had contacts and who could arrange to have doors opened? Its very handy to know such a person, and it can be very frustrating being someone who does not have such a network of contacts. Knowing the right people with influence can save a lot of time and speed up the task at hand.

Peter was an ardent follower of Jesus, as he had demonstrated, risking the wrath of the authorities by drawing his sword in Gethsemane. However, when it came to entering the precincts of the priesthood, Peter clearly did not have the right contacts to gain entry to the courtyard. It must have been very frustrating for Peter to have to wait, while the other disciple went in and sought to secure his entrance—perhaps Peter was even a little resentful that this should be the case.

How often do we find ourselves on the outer and being frustrated by that very fact—to the point where it can affect our health and wellbeing? It is difficult for human nature and ego to accept such a situation.

There is a sense however, in which it might be best to wait outside. Perhaps life has not yet prepared us for what lies on the other side of the door. Peter may well have reflected after, that the experience of denying his Lord was too high a price to pay for entry into the courtyard. The point being, that we can fulfill Gods role for our lives wherever we may find ourselves and in whatever situation.

It is not given to all of us to be an Apostle or an Evangelist. God, in his wisdom, gives unfettered access to himself and his love. We must trust in his leading with all of our weight and believe that he will place us where we need to be. This is not to walk away from responsibility, but nevertheless to say, 'Thy will be done.'

  
Clem Moss

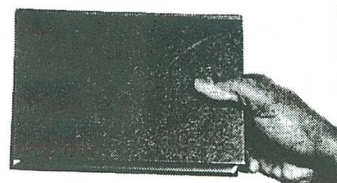
### WE NEED YOUR HELP . . .

**Dr Desmond Ford has donated to GNU  
a 350+ page manuscript of his new book:**

**September 11, 2001  
Christ and Antichrist,  
and the Last Days**

***What the destruction of the twin World Trade Towers can mean  
for thoughtful Christians as they survey the threat of world-  
wide terrorism and the Arab-Israeli crisis.***

**If you would like to help meet the cost of publishing  
this book please send your donation to GNU marked  
'for Des' book'. It would be greatly appreciated.**





# The First Judgement

Ritchie Way

**M**ost Christians have heard about the Judgement, but few know that there are *two* Judgements, one at the First Advent and one at the Second.

In the First Judgment, Jesus was judged and condemned for the sins of the entire world (1 John 2:2). In the Second Judgment, all who have chosen not to give their sins to Jesus will be judged and condemned for their own sins (Rev 20:15). So either our sins are paid for by Jesus in the First Judgment, or they will be paid for by us in the Final Judgment. There is no other option.

When Jesus died on the cross, He split the entire spiritual world—represented by the criminals who were crucified with him—into two. On one side are the repentant sinners who look to Jesus for eternal life—they will live eternally (Rom 6:23b). On the other side are the unrepentant sinners—they are destined to die eternally (Rom 6:23a). Your destiny and mine is decided by our response to the crucified Christ: If

we choose him we receive eternal life; if we reject him we are destined to perish.

Our God is a God of mercy. He wants to save us—not punish us. Jesus has already taken the punishment for our sins so that we could go free. The apostle Paul wrote: *‘God did not appoint us to suffer wrath (in the final judgment) but receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ—who suffered wrath in our place in the first judgment’* (1 Thess 5:9).

In both Judgments, the punishment for sin is the same—the guilty are *‘shut out from the presence of the Lord’* and experience *‘everlasting destruction’* (2 Thess 1:9). When Jesus died for us on the cross he was judged and condemned for our sins. He endured all the torments of hell for us and was rejected by God (Matt 27:46). Jesus died the hopeless, futureless, despairing death that all unrepentant sinners will die in the Final Judgment. When he died on the cross, he experienced the full force of what it is to be totally annihilated forever. And he did it for us.

That is the gospel truth about hell.

While Jesus had taught that he would rise again from the dead (Matt 16:21; 17:9, 22-23), that hope was completely crushed out of him when our sins were placed on him during the three hours of darkness. The weight of our sins totally blotted out any glimmer of hope that he would be resurrected. And while Jesus had taught that he and his Father were one (John 10:30), on the cross, that precious life-giving union was severed. There, at Calvary, the barrier of our sins that kept us from God and eternal life, became the barrier between Jesus and his Father. On one side was the Father in the realm of life; on the other, was Jesus plummeting across the event horizon into eternal oblivion.

The Gospel reveals that on the cross, the barrier between man and God became the barrier between *the* Man and God. The good news is that when Jesus died, his death destroyed that barrier, thus making a new and living way for everyone to come into God’s presence. Our greatest sin, therefore, is not in being sinners, but in rejecting God’s way of escape from sin and its consequences—a way of escape that cost him everything.



## Be Still

Elenne Ford

Do not fret because of evil men  
or be envious of those who do  
wrong; for like the grass they  
will soon wither, like the green  
plants they will soon die away  
Psalm 37:1-2.





# Discussion Point

I we continue not sure  
discuss faith hope faith agree faith believe faith

GNU is a meeting of minds from a wide range of church affiliations, and therefore opinions expressed in our articles may differ from that of many of our readers. Recognising that opinions can differ and we all have much to learn and unlearn, we encourage our readers to participate in this forum.

## A Reminder from Ritchie's first Editorial

...as the new Editor of *The Good Newsletter*, I want to share with you in the feature articles some of the things that I have learned. Your response to what I write will be predictable. If your faith is built on your beliefs, your security will be threatened and you will react strongly. On the other hand, if your faith is built on Jesus, you will be free to examine what I write without being threatened.

My feature articles will have two purposes, firstly, to challenge you with new concepts, and secondly, to get you into some serious Bible study, checking whether these things are so ...

## Dear Ritchie

Congratulations on your new editorial position. We look forward to some interesting material. However, I would like to make some observations on your series *Will Christians Go to Heaven When Jesus Returns?*

Essentially, I think you have presented your side of the argument very well and have used some good supportive evidence and sources.

I'm not 100% happy with some of the references to the Greek, though most readers would probably not have much idea of that. Of course, the position you have taken is not new. In different forms it has been around for years. However, there are other good sources who present strong biblical arguments for going to heaven when Jesus returns. I think that in all fairness these need to be dealt with to keep a balance of argument.

Neither do I see the issue as an 'either or' situation. That would be arguing for black and white thinking. All we can do is present evidences, and that means both sides have points in favour—though it is by no means a two sided argument. Other positions are upheld by different writers. For me, that means we need to be accepting of one another in a Christian perspective, regardless of theological positions. I like to think of Ezekiel 47 as presenting an analogy in this setting.

As we move into the waters of truth about God and his word, we come to the place where we face a swollen torrent. In other words, there is much more beyond our present thinking and understanding, which calls for a greater openness to a broader perspective.

Sincerely yours in Christ

J. O. France.

## Dear J

I agree with you 100% that we need to be accepting of one another regardless of our theological positions. It is our treatment of those who don't believe as we do—rather than our 'correct' beliefs—that marks us as Christians. Furthermore, I openly acknowledge that there are scholars who are more skilled in interpreting the Scriptures and who know a great deal more about the Bible than I do.

That, however, doesn't prevent me from asking questions where I feel they ought to be asked. And the question that others seem to keep on dodging is: Do you know of one indisputable plain language passage in the Bible that says God's people will go to heaven when Jesus comes? I don't. There's not a single clear text that mentions God's people going to heaven above at the Second Advent. Not a reference to them in heaven during the millennium and not a solitary allusion to their return to earth. It appears to me that the concept of God's people going to heaven above is a remnant of Platonism that we haven't yet dealt with.

—Ritchie

## Dear GNU

I've read Ritchie's papers with interest. Anything I have seen of his I have always valued. Clearly Ritchie has shown that we should not take lightly our 'proof-texting' regarding heaven. As well, he has given timely emphasis to our not taking the book of Revelation necessarily literally. Still there may be other matters to be raised.

Both the Gospels and the Epistles encourage the believer to focus on heaven as part of the consummation of all things e.g., Matthew 5:12, Luke 6:23 and Col. 1:5 speak of reward/hope in store there; Matt. 6:20 bids us lay up treasure there and 1 Pet. 1:4 tells us that heaven is where our inheritance is kept securely.

It would be possible to argue,  
(continued page 6)



(From page 5.)

## Discussion Point

I suppose, that the rewards spoken of in the above, are only kept in heaven in some kind of celestial strong-room and are transferred to our account in the earth made new at Jesus' return. However, that may be pushing the point too far. Rather, are we not being reminded yet again, that the things that are seen (as presently on this planet) are the things that are transient and the truly lasting things are those not presently visible—our hope is held in God's hands and there it is forever secure.

William Barclay (*Gospel of John*, v. 2, p.156) has an excellent commentary on this matter: 'For the Christian, heaven is where Jesus is. He is our reward, our hope, our treasure. With him we have everything, without him we have nothing! Whether in another cosmic (or non-cosmic) reality, or on this earth made over afresh, if Jesus is there, that is heaven.'

Prayers and blessings  
Your brother

T.L. NSW.

Dear T

Your first question is addressed by the second paragraph of Part 1 of 'Will Christians go to Heaven When Jesus Returns?' (Jan. 2004 issue of *The Good Newsletter*).

I agree with your observation that heaven can be now as well as later. The synoptic Gospels, which were written for the early Christians, focused on the soon coming of Jesus and the establishment of God's visible kingdom on earth. Many years later, when it became apparent that the Lord had delayed his coming, John wrote his Gospel to encourage the disappointed believers with the truth, that heaven is not only a future, revealed kingdom, it is also a present, concealed kingdom. Barclay's contention that 'heaven is where Jesus is', is up-

held by John 14:23.

—Ritchie.

Dear Ritchie

As a longtime associate of Good News Unlimited, I wish you well as the new Editor of *The Good Newsletter*. Your January editorial touched a responsive cord and I feel sure many of your readers will congratulate you, as I do, and will look forward to some very interesting articles.

Twenty eight years in my church, I have never been able to accept what I refer to as the 'rapture theory'. I have just recently exchanged correspondence with my pastor on this subject, so I was delighted to be able to send him your article 'Will Christians Go to Heaven when Jesus Returns?' I am in complete accord with all you have written and am praying that many will come to learn the truth and be prepared to meet our Lord when he returns soon, to establish his Father's kingdom on earth.

With best wishes,

A.T. NSW.

Dear Sir/Madam

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I can no longer in good conscience continue to receive it in view of Desmond Ford's blasphemous remark, that 'the beginning of the Bible was a book of theology, not to be taken at face value.' (*The Good Newsletter*, September 2003, p. 5) a question from W.A.

I agree with all that I.M. Vic. said on page 5 of the January publication and feel my time can be better spent reading *only* the Scriptures with the Holy Spirit as my *only* interpreter rather than reading the theories of men about its teachings.

I praise God for preserving his Word, the Bible, so that we may know the Living Word, Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Saviour of the world.

All glory to his wonderful name.

Yours in Him

A.C. Vic.

Dear A

As you requested, we will respectfully remove your name from the GNU mailing list. However, please permit me to converse with you for just a moment.

I note that you attribute to Dr Ford a remark not made by him. It was made by I.M. Vic., who claimed to be reporting Dr Ford. I realise that it is entirely possible that you yourself was present at Dr Ford's lecture. In which case, you could be fairly certain that he was not being accurately represented by I.M. Vic. But if you were not, you might run the risk of believing about a person something that was untrue.

We share with you your passion for Jesus Christ, may he bless you ever.

Yours in Him

—Ron.

Dear Des

I am sorry to be so long in answering your letter of December 1, 2003. My heart responded at once, but my bank account needed more time. Even now, what I can send seems inadequate for the needs of GNU. I can only hope that the combined efforts of your many friends and supporters will help . . . thanks to the messages we have been enjoying from you and Ron and the positive articles in the magazine, I am closer to Jesus and better able to share the Gospel without too much doctrinal clutter. I'm sure this is the case of most to whom you have ministered through the years . . .

With best wishes

L.W. NSW.

Dear Friends

Sorry to hear that GNU is currently having a rough ride financially, but isn't that how it is always with the Gospel truth? While error, deception and falsehood in the spiritual world are all too often supported with an abundance of this world's material goods, although truth often hangs by a thread, it never breaks.



I believe GNU was raised up to preach the Gospel in these last days. I didn't know or truly understand the Gospel until Dr Ford and his team spoke out in a style unique to GNU. What they have made known is very precious and Ron Allen's letters are an eternal treasure. I believe resources will be made available, it is God's work. I'm sure he will sustain it. I have enclosed a few dollars.

Thanks for your services, bless you  
Regards

**M.F. SA.**

#### Dear GNU

What a tragedy it would be if GNU were forced to close its operations due to lack of funds. I find the wealth of experience, knowledge and wisdom that comes from this ministry to be awesome and would be ashamed of myself if I did not give of my finances to keep this true kingdom message running.

Yours in Him  
Sincere regards

**J.T. NSW.**

#### Dear Ritchie

In your article (part 1) January 2004, you mention that 'Millions of Christians believe they will be taken up to heaven at, or near, the time when Jesus returns to the earth.'

Your reference to the SDA Bible dictionary in the March issue of the Good Newsletter, led me

to read on to what the dictionary had to say on the Second Death: 'A term appearing four times in the Bible, describing the death suffered by the wicked at the close of the 1000 years, or Millennium.

At the beginning of the Millennium, the wicked are struck down at the presence of Christ. At the end of the Millennium, they, together with all the wicked of previous ages are resurrected. They then join the final act of defiance against God, at which fire flashes from heaven to consume them (Rev. 20:8,9) this is the second death (v 14).'

Verse 9 of Rev. 20 tells us that the camp of the righteous is with the 'beloved city' at that time and both are surrounded by the wicked as an act of defiance against God. It is the wicked, therefore, who are the residents of this world, along with Satan (who is loosed from his earthly prison at that time) and he is destroyed with the wicked when the fire from God out of heaven devours them.

I could not imagine John the revelator suggesting that the righteous saved throughout the world from all the ages, would be meant to spend a millennium on this world with the countless millions of unburied wicked dead—do you really want us to believe that?

Christian greetings to all our friends at Good News

**MS QLD.**

#### Dear MS

No doubt you are aware that there is a diversity of opinion among Christians over the interpretation of the Millennium, with 'big name' theologians in each camp. Two books dealing with this diversity are *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, Ed. Robert G. Clouse (1997), and, *Three Views on the Millennium and beyond*, ed. Darrell L Bock (1999). With such disagreement among high-level theologians how can you and I ever know the truth about the thousand years?

I would suggest there are some basic principles for the interpretation of Revelation 20. Firstly, the unknown must be interpreted by the known. In other words, the symbolic language of apocalyptic prophecy, must be interpreted by the plain language of the rest of the New Testament. Without this NT framework our interpretation of Revelation's symbols has no more authority than anyone else's. In fact, it is worse than that, without this framework our interpretation of Revelation's symbols has no more authority than anyone else's. In fact, it is worse it is worse than that, without this framework, our interpretation of Revelation's symbols only adds to the confusion that already exists. This would mean that we cannot introduce any concept

**(Continued page 9)**

## The Painter

There was a tradesman, a painter, called Jack, who was very interested in making a penny where he could, so he would often thin down the paint to make it go a little bit further.

As it happened, he got away with this for some time, but



eventually the Baptist Church decided to do a big restoration job on the painting of one of their biggest buildings. Jack put in a bid and because his price was so low he got the job.

And so he set to erecting the trestles and setting up planks, buying the paint, and yes, I am sorry to say, thinning it down with turpentine.

Well Jack was up on the scaffolding, painting away, the job nearly completed, when suddenly there was an horrendous clap of thunder and the sky opened. The rain poured down,

washing the thinned paint from all over the church and knocking Jack clear off the scaffold to land on the lawn amongst the gravestones, surrounded by telltale puddles of the thinned and useless paint.

Jack was no fool. He knew this was judgement from above, so he got on his knees and cried 'Forgive me! What should I do?'

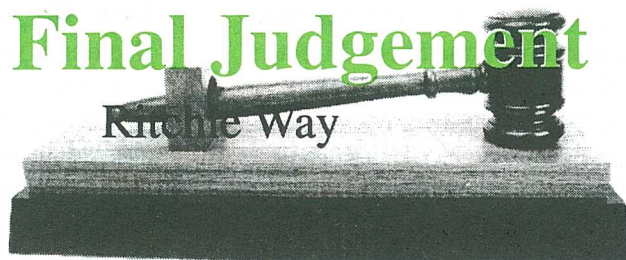
And from the thunder a mighty voice spoke . . .

'Repaint! repaint! and thin no more!'

—(Kookie)



# The Final Judgement



## Jesus is the Judge

**S**cripture reveals that Jesus is the Judge (John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1). From his throne (the cross) he separates the repentant and unrepentant (Mark 15:27; Luke 23:39-43). In this present life people are being judged and separated into 'sheep' and 'goat' categories by their response to the crucified Christ.

Those who accept Jesus' death on their behalf are accepted into Paradise; those who reject his death on their behalf are destined to repeat it (Matt 25:31-46).

## The Final Judgement

The New Testament reveals that the Final Judgment—the judgment that will reveal what is now concealed—will take place when Jesus comes back to Planet Earth. *'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the people, one from an-*

*other, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats' (Matt 25:31-32). At that time He 'will give to everyone according to what he has done' (Rev 22:12).*

Everyone who has ever lived will be judged at this time—the dead as well as the living. In John 5:28-29 Jesus says: *'Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.'* According to Jesus, the dead of every age and country will be raised together for the Judgment (Matt. 12:41-42; Rev 20:11-15). At the end of this age the wheat will be separated from the weeds, the good fish from the bad fish, and the sheep from the goats (Matt 13:36-43; 47-50; 25:31-46).

Now note carefully this very important truth: this Final Judgment will not *decide* our destiny, it will only *reveal* it. Our destiny

is decided by the choice that we make in this life before we die. When the followers of Jesus are raised up from their graves at the Final Judgment, they are *not* raised up to see if they are *worthy* of eternal life; they are raised up *already* possessing eternal life or immortality (1 Cor 15:51-54). And when the wicked are resurrected, they are not resurrected to see what their destiny should be, they are resurrected to be condemned (John 5:28-29). Everyone's ultimate destiny is determined in *this life*, not in the next.

While the Final Judgment is not good news for those who have rejected Jesus (see Matt. 24:30; Rev 1:7; 6:15-17), it is certainly good news for his followers. Not a single one of them will be condemned (Rom 8:1) for the simple reason that Jesus has already been judged and condemned in their place. The verdict of the Executive Judgment will be pronounced in their favour (Dan 7:22, 26-27) and the Father will gladly give to each one an inheritance that will never fade away or perish (Matt 25:34; Luke 12:32).

### Endnotes:

1. While the New Testament reveals that God's people will be judged in the Final Judgment (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10), *they are judged to decide their rewards, not their destiny* (Matt 25:14-30).

## In View Of Tragedy, Evil and Pain, Why Believe?

**Dr Desmond Ford 2004**

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(From page 7)

## Discussion Point

into Revelation 20—such as a third event, or the saints going to heaven above—that is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

Secondly, we must never forget that as the book of Colossians was written for contemporary churches (Col. 1:1,2; 4:16) so was the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:11). The book of Revelation, like Luke 21, had an application in the days

of the early Church (Rev. 1:3; 22:10). Any interpretation of the Millennium, therefore, that does not accommodate an application to the early Church, must be suspect.

There's just one other point I would like to make: Why is it insisted that the Millennium is one thousand literal years, when the other time periods in Revelation are generally understood to be symbolic? And if the 'Abyss' and the 'great chain' and the 'ancient serpent' are all symbolic,

wouldn't consistency require that one thousand years be symbolic also?

What I am saying, M, is this; we cannot build our doctrinal framework on symbolic prophecy, otherwise there is no litmus test to decide whether it is right or wrong. Our doctrines must be founded on the plain words of Jesus and his disciples, illustrated by the book of Revelation.

—Ritchie.



## Biblical Genealogies

### Ritchie Way

**A**rchbishop James Usher (1581-1656 wrote a book in Latin, called, *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* In this book Usher computed the dates for creation, Noah's flood, the birth of Abraham, the Exodus etc., by adding up the ages of the Patriarchs. From the year 1701 onwards these dates were printed in the margins of the KJV Bible.

What Usher didn't know was the Jews did not keep chronologies. They weren't interested in dates and time-lines as we are in the Western world. The list given in the Bible aren't chronologies, they are genealogies—there is a vast difference. Genealogies were kept so a person could trace his ancestry back to Abraham, to prove he was a Jew; or back to Levi to prove he belonged to the priestly line; or back

to David to prove he belonged to the royal line; or back to whoever, to prove that a certain plot of land belonged to his family. For this reason they did not consider it very important to include every single generation in a genealogical list. Quite often undesirable persons and less important names were omitted. Ezra, for example, leaves the names of Amariah, Ahitub, Zadok, Ahim-aaz, Azariah and Johanan out of his genealogy in Matthew 1:7-9 (see 1 Chronicles 3:10-13).

Often genealogies were telescoped in order to achieve multiples of 7, as an aid to memory. For example, Matthew gives 14 generations (2x7), for the period from David to the Exile, while Luke gives 21 (3x7) for the same period. A chronology based on Matthew's genealogy would therefore provide a shorter span between David and

Jesus, than would a chronology based on Luke's. All this means is that Hebrew genealogies cannot be relied upon for estimating periods of time between distant individuals.

According to Usher, Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees 352 years after the flood. The Al Ubaid dynasty, however, is reliably dated as ruling Ur 3000 years before Abraham. We are, therefore, faced with a serious problem if we follow Usher's Chronology which, as we have shown, is based on misconception. It is also known that pyramid building had been going on in Egypt for 700 years before Abraham. It would have taken many hundreds of years for civilisation in Egypt to get to the place where it had sufficient resources to construct the first of these pyramids.



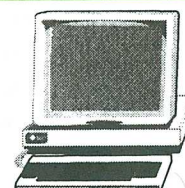
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# A Book of One-liners and short Statements



## Dear GNU Supporters

For many, many years you and I have had the privilege to be exposed to one of the 20th Century's great teachers of the Gospel, Dr Desmond Ford. We have been uplifted by his God-given insight into the deeper things of God's Word. He, as no other that I know, has the ability to express grand thoughts and concepts in one-liners and short statements.

I believe that it is time for the wider community of 'searchers for meaning to life' to have access to these enlightening short statements from Dr Ford. I would like to think we could work on a project together that will bring to fruition a book of Dr Ford's one-liners and short statements that can be published and distributed worldwide in Christian bookshops and good book outlets.

My proposal is this, that we as a Christian community who have been blessed and inspired by his ministry, bring this publication to the world together. The publication will be a beautifully bound hardcover

book that will have titles on every aspect of Christian life for easy reference. For example:

'Living for God's glory can be regarded as the rent we owe for the space we occupy here on earth.'

'Christ is the only man who ever lived who claimed to be God, yet was judged sane by his wisest contemporaries.'

'Philosophers are like someone, who, on a dark night in a dark room with no windows is looking for a black cat that isn't there.'

'Just as there can be no shadow without light, there can be no doubt unless there is truth.'

'People prefer to believe what they prefer to be true.'

We need volunteers to listen to his sermons and isolate statements that can encapsulate grand thoughts in short statements. I would imagine that most of us would have many tapes, books and magazines with Des' sermons or answers to questions, etc. We should exhaust these avenues before we duck into the archives.

We do need all hands on deck to make this happen. I know we will all find great satisfaction in producing a quality publication that we all had a part in. This is a huge task due to the volume of Des' life's work, but it is worth doing and we can achieve it together. Let's make it happen, and when we bring it to fruition, we will deliver a valuable contribution to God's literary collection.

Please register your interest in being part of this endeavour by contacting me in any of the following ways, **Email:** [briancherry@optusnet.com.au](mailto:briancherry@optusnet.com.au) or **Fax:** 02 94843464 or **by writing to:** 19 Warne Street, Pennant Hills 2120 NSW.

Yours sincerely  
**Brian Patterson**

## Hands and Feet

by Terry Gaw

Jesus' hand on the leprous man  
'To make you clean I will I can!'  
The coffin touched of the widow's son  
'Back to your mother I bid you come!'  
'Save my daughter!' Jairus' plea  
The hands of Christ from death set free.

Whose feet are those upon the waves?  
The feet of One the storm obeys.  
The feet that walk which sinners follow  
To beg forgiveness; voice their sorrow.  
From the town on dusty track  
Face set like flint, not looking back

Hands and feet to bless, never failed  
Now on the cursed tree are nailed.  
Cannot touch us now, nor walk  
His enemies of victory talk.  
But from the place of seeming loss  
Alluring power from the cross  
Without the use of legs or arms  
His love encircles, captures, charms.

Tomb to Emmaus—O blessed walk!  
Hands break bread, excited talk  
Scars of love on hands and feet  
In faith I kiss them till we meet!



*Terry lives in Watsonia,  
Victoria.*



**2004 Meetings with  
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