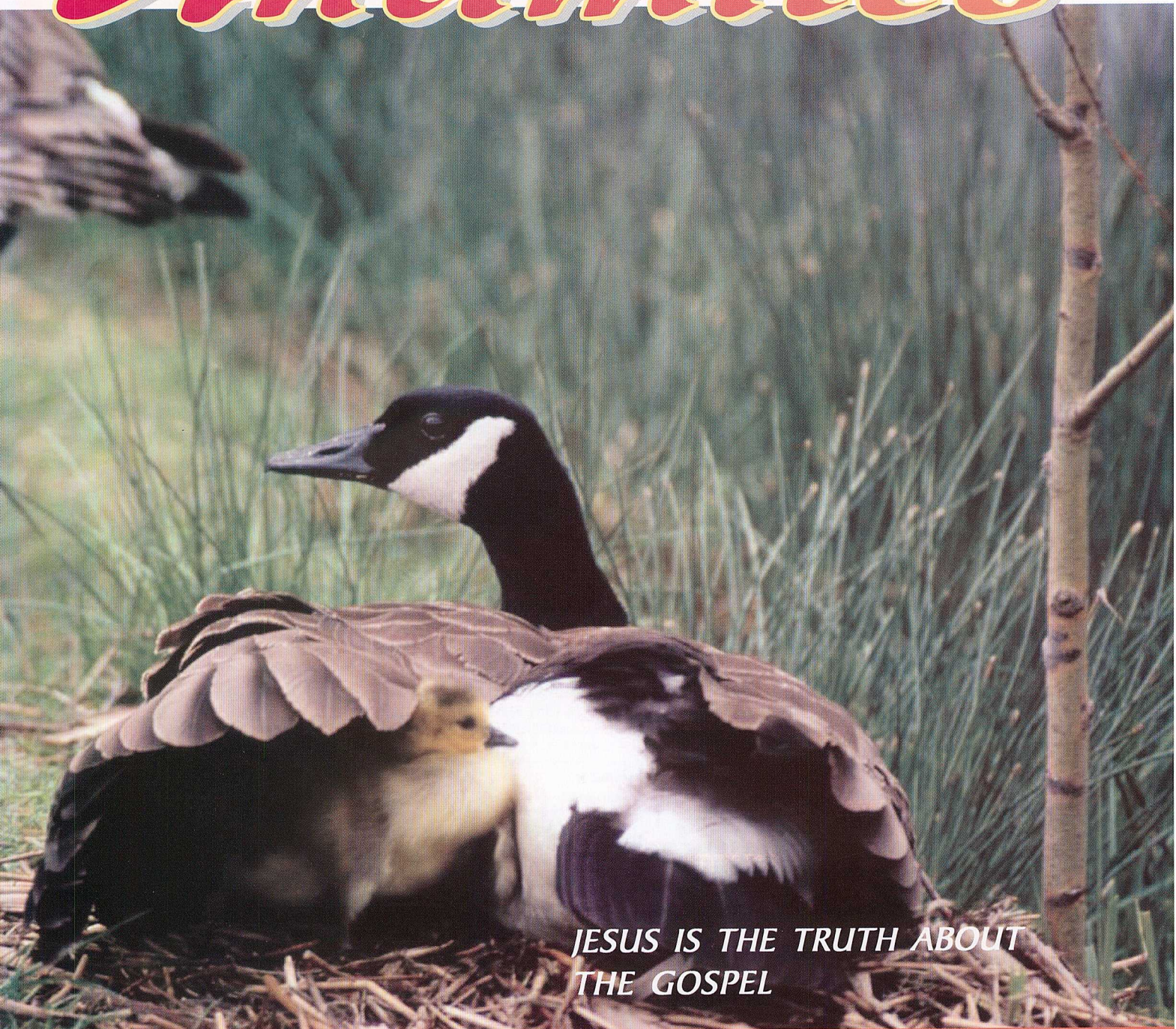


August 2012 Issue No. 8

# Good News Unlimited



**JESUS IS THE TRUTH ABOUT  
THE GOSPEL**

THE DOWNSIDE UP WORLD

A WOMEN'S VOICE AND GOD'S

DON'T GIVE IN  
TO BITTERNESS

WHY DOESN'T GOD STOP FAMINES AND WARS ETC.

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## EDITORIAL

**T**he apostle Peter's encounter with Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, was a critical moment for humanity. On one hand is a man who is not *kosher*. He is a Gentile, he is outside the law, he is uncircumcised, a stranger to the covenant and therefore a threat to the spiritual condition of Jews. On the other hand is a man who is a Christian, but for all that, a Jew. His inherited principles have been shaped by the theological development and history of the Jewish people. He is steeped in the law of Moses.

After their meeting, neither will be the same again. Cornelius will learn about Jesus and become his servant; Peter—who knows about Jesus—will realise he must choose between Jesus and the law.

And so they meet. Although Peter is the bearer of the good news of God's grace to Cornelius, God does not permit him to be any more than that. After giving a short sermon on what God had done through Jesus, Peter might have gone on to tell Cornelius that he must now repent and be baptised—not to mention circumcision and vowed obedience to the law. But this does not happen because God gets in first. God pours out his Spirit on Cornelius and his household.

For the most part, Christians at this time—most of whom were Jews—think that those who trust in Christ should accept all of Israel's accumulated religious traditions. But in this instance, God prevents this assumption from getting any air. Before Peter can say anything to that effect, before he can mess it up by telling him he must submit to Moses law, God baptises Cornelius and his

household with the gift of his Spirit, showing that he accepts them already.

God wanted Peter and Cornelius to know that they could be Christians, that they could be in God's family, belonging to him, without first embracing all of Israel's dogma. Christ is more than Moses. Jesus is greater than Judaism, and he is greater than any other particular brand of divinity.

Having been introduced to Jesus, Cornelius has found the all-sufficient spiritual centre. He needs no more. Having told him about Jesus, Peter has done all he can do. He need not labour to convince this Gentile man of his own brand of religion. Christ will take care of him. In order to be all that the Lord wants him to be, Peter must decide between the authority of Jesus and the authority of what he calls '*our law*' (Acts 10:28).

The same choice stands before us. We can remain bound by the consents and prohibitions of our historic conceptions of God, or we can permit Christ to be our governor. The love of God is greater than the teachings, rituals and conventions of religious movements. His love is too intractable, too wild to be encased in the Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-nine articles, the tradition of the elders or any other creedal expression.

Rather than take the daunting risk of being invaded, and directed by the love of God, many find it easier to stick rigidly to set programmes of belief and practice. But God is not confined to programmes or traditional procedures. His love literally 'knows no bounds.' Let us therefore be imitators of God. For who are we to oppose him?



*R. Allen*

—Ron Allen

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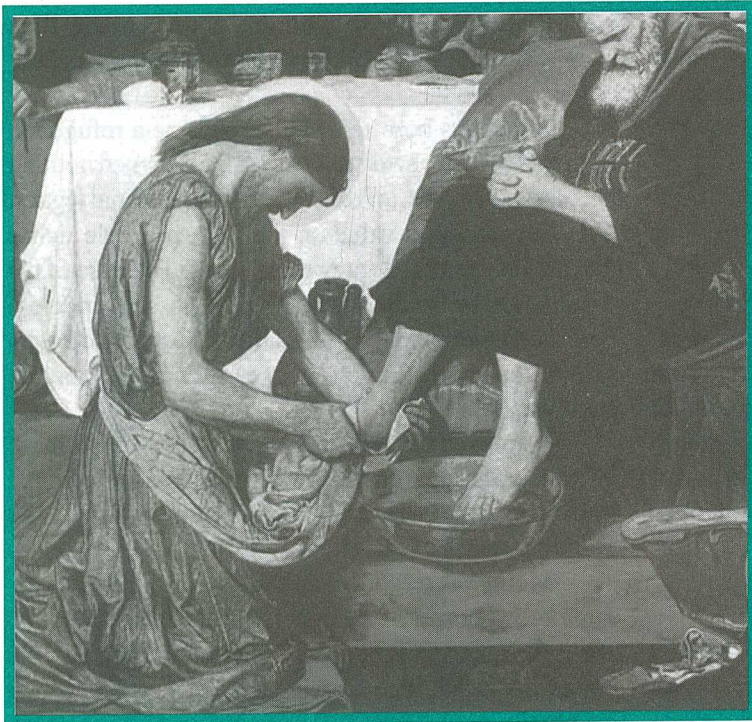
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### Mission Statement

Christians united in offering to all, meaning and direction in their lives by a knowledge of God's reconciliation with humanity through his Son, Jesus Christ.







# THE DOWN SIDE UP WORLD

Ritchie Way

**O**ne of the main contrasts between the nature of the world in which we live, and the nature of Christ's kingdom to which we belong, is that the world in which we live has made black white, and down up.

For example, it's not the person who forgives his enemies who is lauded in the movies, but the Rambo who goes out and mercilessly mows them down with a machine gun. It's not the child that is born in a stable that gets the press, but the one born in a palace. And it's not the person who is nailed to a rugged cross who is acclaimed, but the one who sits on a velvet-cushioned throne.

When the Lord came to our world he spun the wheel of public opinion 180 degrees, making up down, and down up. He revealed, for example, that a 'martyr' in this world is a 'victor' in the world to come, and that those who are regarded as the 'last' in this world will be regarded as the 'first' in the world to come. Here, below, are some of the contrasts between Christ's kingdom and the kingdom of this world:

## DEATH IS LIFE

**Matthew 16:25**

*"Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it".*

**Principle:** Only those who die to this world will live in the next.

Jesus gave up his life in this world for us, and

reaped eternal life in the world to come, not just for himself, but also for everyone in him.

**Application:** The repentant felon who was crucified with Jesus was willing to exchange life in this world for life in Paradise (Luke 23:40-43), whereas the unrepentant felon clung to life in the world that was crucifying him. The rich young ruler (Luke 18:23-24) and Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) preferred life in this world to life in the world to come.

What does it mean to die to this world? It means we need to respond to the attractions of this world as though we were dead. The things of this world include every wrong thought, attitude, decision, word, action and habit.

Does that mean we are saved by what we do, and not by grace? No! The good that Christians do, and the evil that Christians avoid, is not the means of their salvation, but it is the *evidence* that they *are saved* (Eph. 2:8-10). When we receive Christ we receive eternal life (1 John 5:12). However, if Christ is in you, then his life will be lived through you (2 Cor. 4:10), unless you choose to be lord of your life, instead of Jesus, in which case he will soon depart from you.

## HUMILITY IS EXALTATION

**Matthew 23:12**

*"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*

**Principle:** Those who humble themselves for Christ in this world will be exalted in the next.

Because Jesus humbled himself to death on a cross he has been exalted to the highest place in the



universe (Php. 2:7-9).

**Application:** Moses could have been a proud member the Egyptian royal family, but instead, he humbled himself and chose disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt (Heb. 11:24-26). The proud Pharisee who exalted himself before God will be humbled in the world to come, while the Tax Collector who humbled himself before God in this world will be exalted (Luke 18:9-14).

Humility is not a false abasement of yourself before God; humility is just acknowledging the truth about yourself. It is admitting the truth that no matter how many good works you do you are still a sinner in need of salvation. One person said, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less."

## SURRENDER IS VICTORY

### Luke 14:31-32

*"Suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

The more powerful king who comes against us is Jesus. As we cannot win a battle against him we must sit down and consider whether we can ignore his demands. There is a cost to having peace with him, but the cost of going to war against him is unthinkable.

**Principle:** Surrender to Christ in this world is victory in the world to come.

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus surrendered himself to the Father's will, the most difficult decision he had ever made (Matt. 26:42). That surrender cost him his life. But through his surrender he won the greatest victory ever achieved—the redemption of the world.

**Application:** The greatest victory ever won by Cornelius, a centurion in the Italian regiment barracked at Caesarea Maritima, was when he surrendered to Jesus (Acts 11:18).

Surrendering to Christ's will is not easy for human beings. But it's the only way out of the mess that the world and we are in. As the parable above reveals, we have two choices: surrender and live, or fight against Christ and die. There is no alternative.

## POVERTY IS RICHES

### Luke 6:20

*"Looking at his disciples, Jesus said: 'Blessed are you who are poor [because of me] for yours is the kingdom of God'."*

**Principle:** Those who are poor because they serve Christ in this world will be rich in the world to come.

Jesus was born in a stable, became a refugee in Egypt, lived in a bawdy town in Galilee, owned nothing but his own clothes, and died leaving no material legacy. Yet who can put a value on the immeasurable riches that are his, and the legacy that is ours? Because of his willingness to become poor he now has the priceless love and devotion of millions and the respect and worship of the whole universe. No earthly riches can buy such wealth.

**Application:** Jesus asked the rich young ruler to become poor so he could be truly rich, but he declined, preferring the insecure riches of this world to the unfading riches of eternity (Matt. 19:21-22).

Mother Teresa took up the responsibility of caring for the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta, living, dressing and eating as a poor Indian herself. She began the order, The Missionaries of Charity, which eventually established 610 missions in 123 countries, and in 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize. She has great treasure in heaven.

## MOURNING IS REJOICING

### Luke 6:21

*"Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh."*

**Principle:** Tears that are shed by those who suffer for Christ's sake, will turn to laughter in the world to come.

Empathising with his loved ones in all ages Jesus shed tears at Lazarus's grave. That day he experienced what the faithful in all ages experience as they lay their loved ones to rest, not to see them again until the day of resurrection (John 11:33-36). But their mourning was turned to rejoicing when Lazarus came forth from his tomb.

**Application:** When Jesus visited the town of Nain he met a funeral procession coming through the town gates on its way to the cemetery. The dead person was the only son of a very distraught widow. Jesus' heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." He went up to the coffin and said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. They were all filled with awe and praised God (Luke 7:11-16).

If we live long enough we shall all mourn the passing of loved ones. Even so, we don't mourn as do those who have no hope, because Jesus is the resurrection to life, and when he returns he will raise to eternal life those who are asleep in him. What a day of rejoicing that will be (1 Thes. 4:13-18).



## HUNGER IS SATIATION

**Luke 6:21**

*"Blessed are you who hunger now [because of me] for you will be satisfied."*

**Principle:** Hunger in this world will become satisfaction in the world to come.

Jesus, on the Cross, was hungry for the Father's presence (Matt. 27:46), but his hunger was not satisfied until after his resurrection.

**Application:** One of the reasons we are not as satisfied as we think we should be, is because we are not as hungry as we should be for what really satisfies. When Jesus came walking across the Sea of Galilee towards his disciples who were battling the wind in their boat, only one of them was hungry enough to want to go out on the water to be with him (Matt. 14:28-31). I wonder how many of the others regretted later that they didn't have the burning desire to go to Jesus also.

## GIVING IS RECEIVING

**Luke 6:38**

*"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."*

**Principle:** Giving to Christ in this world is receiving in the world to come.

No one ever gave as much as Jesus did on the Cross. He, who had everything, gave everything— withholding nothing. When he cried out, "It is finished!" it really was finished. Having given everything, his account was completely empty. But what joy there shall be on the Day of the Lord when the multitudes shall rise from their graves and stand before him, rank upon rank, singing, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13).

**Application:** When Jesus saw a poor widow put "two very small copper coins" into the offering receptacle at the temple he told his disciples that she had put in more than the "rich people who threw in large amounts". The wealthy had plenty left to live on, but she had nothing (Mark 12:41-43). But the Day is coming when she will learn what an encouragement her example has been to multitudes of others. She will receive a reward at the resurrection of the righteous that will 'blow her away' (Luke 14:14). And just as Jesus noticed her sacrifice, so he notices every other sacrifice that is made for him.

There are people like Sir Edmund Hilary and Dr. Fred Hollows who, although they wanted nothing to do with sick Christianity, revealed that God's Spirit was active in their lives by the immeasurable good they did for the poor. What a wonderful surprise it will be for

them when they are raised up to meet the Saviour himself. Jesus will say to them, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. Come . . . take your inheritance."

## SERVING IS RULING

**Mark 10:42-45**

Jesus said, *"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all."*

**Principle:** Servants of Christ in this world will be rulers in the world to come.

Jesus did not come as a king on a golden throne, nor did he ride in a chariot escorted by fifty footmen. He came as a servant who washed his disciples' feet, and who prepared breakfast for them on the beach. He said, "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Application:** Jesus said of his apostles who served the people by ministering to their needs, healing the sick and giving their lives for the sake of the gospel, that they would rule with him in his coming kingdom (Matt. 19:27-28).

Jesus also says to each of us who serve: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness" (Matt. 25:21, 23).

## LAST IS FIRST

**Matthew 19:30**

*"Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."*

**Principle:** Last in the eyes of this world will be first in the world to come.

Jesus was treated as 'the last' by this world. He, the Creator who came to redeem his lost world, was treated as the lowest of the low and crucified on a Roman cross. He who was the first, was made the last. But the day will come when that shall be reversed and he shall be exalted to the first place again.

**Application:** The very people that the Pharisees despised—the tax collectors, prostitutes and Gentiles—were the very people Jesus put first. These people, whom the Pharisees put on the end of the queue for God's kingdom, will enter the kingdom ahead of those self-righteous leaders.

To be the first in our world, whether in sport, religion, education, the arts, politics, business or the financial world, etc. is a great liability, because such people are tempted to serve the world that lauds their achievements, rather than the Lord of glory.

I know a man in his early forties who was born physically and mentally handicapped, and who works



in a sheltered workshop. At home he always keeps himself busy caring for the house and property, and each Tuesday he helps a local food bank distribute bread to needy neighbours. This same man loves the Lord and goes to church every weekend. In the world's eyes he is among the 'last', but the day is coming when he will be 'first', and those who have looked down upon him will be 'last'.

## REJECTION IS ACCEPTANCE

**Matthew 5:10**

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

**Principle:** Those who are rejected by this world because of righteousness, will be accepted by God in the world to come.

Jesus, the most righteous person of all, was rejected by those religious leaders who despised his form

of righteousness—his free gift of righteousness offered to harlots and tax collectors—in favour of the Pharisees' own 'hard-earned' righteousness (Luke 18:9-14). But while Jesus was rejected by men and nailed to a cross, he was accepted by God and raised from the dead to be King of the redeemed of all ages.

**Application:** The 11th chapter of Hebrews lists the names of many who were rejected by the world, but who have been accepted by God. Among those names is that of the prostitute, Rahab.

Jesus warned that the day is coming when his people will be hated by all nations because of him (Matt. 24:9). "At that time many will turn away from the faith" (v.10) because it had been their practice to seek the acceptance of the world rather than God's acceptance.

Only as we grow in grace daily, choosing the qualities of character that Jesus demonstrated in his life, will we stand with the redeemed on the Day when the Lord returns for his own. ✱

*Those who are rejected by this world because of righteousness, will be accepted by God in the world to come. Jesus, the most righteous person of all, was rejected by those religious leaders who despised his form of righteousness—his free gift of righteousness offered to harlots and tax collectors—in favour of the Pharisees' own 'hard-earned' righteousness (Luke 18:9-14).*

# DON'T GIVE IN TO BITTERNESS

Bob Gass

**"Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others ..." Ephesians 4:31 CEV**

When it comes to bitterness, there are two things you need to keep in mind:

**First, it is contagious.** You are a part of the body of Christ. So what happens to you, and in you, affects those you are connected to, both positively and negatively. The Bible says, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26 NIV). A snake bite just doesn't affect the body part that gets bitten: the venom spreads through the entire system. "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:15 NIV). Don't get upset and leave the church God has placed you in. You need them and they need you. By overcoming bitterness you spread God's blessing to others.

**Secondly, it can be overcome.** Here's how:

(a) Acknowledge and admit it.

(b) Don't rehearse it in your mind and recite it

to others.

(c) Repent and renounce any attitude that's not Christ-like.

(d) Ask God to give you self-control, then submit to his leadership.

(e) Don't infect others and don't let them infect you.

(f) Without waiting for admissions or apologies, verbalise to yourself, God and a trusted friend, your decision to forgive all wrongs against you. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32 NIV). This will set you free to enjoy your relationship with God, yourself, and others.

(g) Look for practical ways to "be kind ...[and] tenderhearted" toward those who hurt you (Ephesians 4:32 NKJV). ✱





# JESUS IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GOSPEL

*Ritchie Way*

**T**he Bible says, *'No-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ'* (1 Cor. 3:11). This study reveals that Jesus is the foundational truth of the gospel on which we build our lives.

The word 'gospel' is a translation of the Greek word, *euangelion*. The prefix *eu*, as in *eulogy* (good word), means good. The rest of the word, *angelion*, means message. The gospel, therefore, is a good message, or good news. The word 'evangelist' describes a person who proclaims the gospel.

What is the gospel? I like Paul's description. Here is what he wrote to the church in Corinth:

*"Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.*

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born"* (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

The gospel, for Paul, was about the death and resurrection of Jesus. He said Jesus "died for our sins", after which he rose from the dead, revealing that he had conquered sin's outcome—death.

Now here is how the apostle Paul described the gospel to the church in Rome:

*"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'"* (Rom. 1:16-17).

We learn from this that the gospel offers salvation to everyone who believes in Jesus, whether Jew or non-Jew. What is this gospel about? It is about a righteousness that is received by faith from the beginning to the end. This righteousness cannot be earned – it is received only by faith, because "it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'".

Let's now bring these two key features of the gospel together: In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul tells us that Jesus died for our sins, and in Romans 1 he reveals that we receive a righteousness from God by faith. He combines both of these features of the gospel in a single sentence in 2 Corinthians 5:21: *"God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* In other words, Jesus took our sins upon himself and paid the penalty for them on the Cross, and gave us 'the righteousness of God' as a free gift in exchange.

We can't get into heaven just because we have no sin. A cabbage has no sin, but no cabbage will ever become a citizen of God's kingdom. We must be one-hundred percent righteous, because, just one sin would be enough to destroy the peace of heaven. The righteousness required of us has to be a righteousness that is equal to 'the righteousness of God.' This kind of righteousness could never be earned; no matter how hard or how long we might try. The only way for sinners to get such a righteousness is to receive it as a free gift. The gospel teaches that Jesus, on the Cross, offered us his righteousness in exchange for our sins—but only if we earnestly desire that exchange. Such a gift is mind boggling, but it's true!

Two men were crucified with Jesus—one put his faith in the Saviour; the other didn't. One was saved and the other lost. The whole world, including you and me, is lining up behind one or the other of these felons. Which of the two will you stand behind?

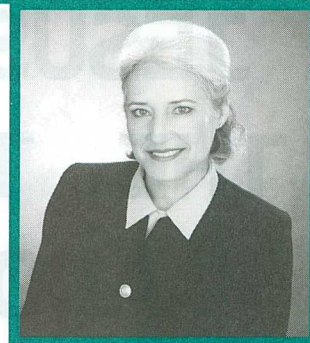
**Conclusion** The denomination we belong to cannot save us, our good works cannot save us, and the Virgin Mary cannot save us. Only Jesus can save us, because, *"salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). ✨



## Know Your Good News Unlimited Board Members, Staff and Volunteers

In this series we introduce to our readers members of the *Good News Unlimited* Board, and ancillary staff.

The Board member introduced this month is Elénne Ford.



**Q. What is your name?**

**A. Elénne Ford**

**Q. Where do you live?**

**A. On an organic farm outside Peachester, Sunshine Coast hinterland, Queensland.**

**Q. How many children do you have?**

**A. Two step-daughters**

**Q. What do they do and where do they live?**

**A. One is a lawyer in Brisbane undertaking her Ph.D. in Criminology and the other has completed her Ph.D. and is now a policy advisor in Canberra in intelligence and national security.**

**Q. What is your ministry with GNU?**

**A. Board Member**

**Q. What do you like about Good News Unlimited?**

**A. I like the fact that *Good News Unlimited* is not a denomination, but interdenominational. This makes the gospel accessible to those who have been hurt by organised religion everywhere, to those who do not attend a church and also to those who attend their own church but are hungry to hear more of the good news.**

**Q. What are your aspirations for Good News Unlimited?**

**A. I would love *Good News Unlimited* to become known around the world as a resource for gospel material and speakers, and for these to be widely used.**

**Q. What, apart from the Bible, is your favourite book and why?**

**A. I don't have a favourite book apart from the Bible, but one book that has helped me a lot recently is, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* by Paul David Tripp—'people in need of change helping people in need of change'. It has helped me on the journey to understanding my heart struggle and the resources that are mine in Christ which make change possible. This is helping me in my peacemaking as I seek to reconcile relationships through biblical principles and the power of Christ.**

**Q. What is your favourite passage from the Bible?**

**A. 2 Peter 1:3. 'His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness ...'. I interpret that passage to mean that I have everything I need for life on this earth and that I can grow to be like Christ because of his divine power.**

**Q. Name someone you would like to have a meal with ... and why?**

**A. I love visiting my father [Dr. Desmond Ford] at lunchtime! I can always be sure that his food is healthy and will taste good. There are so many happy memories associated with eating with my father. He is a great cook and since I was a child he has cooked the family a hot breakfast of baked vegetables etc. When we had to travel to school with him before dawn on winter mornings we would eat our hot breakfast in the old Kombi on the way.**

Before we owned a motor vehicle he and my mother used to take us camping and for picnics with everything we needed packed onto two bicycles, including my brother and me! On some camping trips he would wade out to gather clean saltwater as the basis for a great stew!

At eighty-three years of age he is still making up great new recipes. Recently he discovered a new way to make soya bean milk and also some great biscuits suitable for diabetics. Of course things don't always turn out so well—there has been the odd memorable meal!

A meal with my father also means a walk afterwards and great conversation—new ideas, new things to read and thought-provoking answers to my many questions. ❁

## MESSAGE OF THE MONTH

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# CHRISTIANITY 101:

## Why Doesn't God Stop Famines and Wars Etc?

Ritchie Way

**A**n innocent child is brought into a jungle hospital with her lower left leg blown off by a land mine. She is the third this month to be maimed this way. Reports come in that women in the enemy's refugee camp are raped and brutalised daily by soldiers. People in more affluent countries are refusing to give help because they have heard that much of the Aid money is diverted by recipient politicians to their own bank accounts and for the purchase of weapons. As a result, thousands are dying of starvation each week. Where is God in all this?

### WHY DOESN'T GOD DO SOMETHING?

To understand why God doesn't actively intervene in our affairs we need to go back to Adam and Eve. When God created the first couple he could have made them like robots so that they would have done everything exactly as he wanted and would never disobey him once. Or he could have given them the power of choice. He gave them choice.

But there is both a good side and a bad side to the power of choice. Moral creatures with the power of choice can love and appreciate you, but they can also hurt and kill you.

When God created Adam and Eve he breathed his Spirit into them to safeguard them from making any choices that would rob them of eternal life (Genesis 2:7; cf. John 20:22). As long as they had the Holy Spirit, they had holiness, eternal life and a place in God's kingdom—the Garden of Eden. When they chose to reject the Spirit, however, they put themselves and their offspring into a world where it became natural for them and their descendants to chose evil.

It wasn't long before Adam and Eve's first-born, Cain, murdered his own brother. Since that time evil acts have escalated and brutality, murder, rape, corporate theft, and wars etc. have become daily news.

If God is a righteous God, why doesn't he intervene and stop these evils? The simple answer is this: God can't intervene without robbing us of our freedom of choice. Remember: some choose bad, some choose good. It's all a part of choice. Our freedom of choice is more important to God than our destiny. If it weren't, he would be a dictator and would choose our destiny for us; end of story. But that's not the way it is.

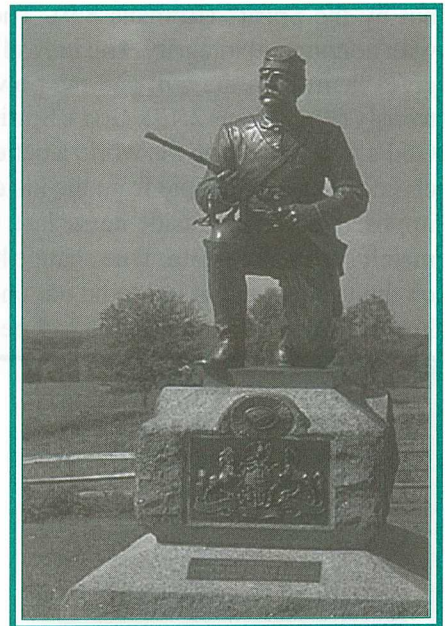
Those who want God to intervene in our world to prevent evil should tell him where to start, and how to go about it. Should he start with the arms manufacturers and put thousands of people in these industries out of work? Should he strike dead the soldiers who are only obeying orders? And if he made all the guilty politicians drop dead, how would he prevent others—equally guilty—from taking their place, without him becoming a universal Bully?

And why do we draw the line at wanting God to stop war, terrorists, serial killers and rapists? Why don't we want God to stop our personal lying, stealing and cheating on our partners? Why don't we want him to take away our fatty foods, alcohol and drugs etc.? It is because we see such intervention as a denial of our free choice.

Isn't it true that the real problem behind all the troubles in our world is not what happens

out there; it's what happens inside each one of us? If there is to be a lasting change for good, it has to start in the hearts of individuals.

God has two ways of transforming this world into something better. The first is to annihilate all sin. That would mean destroying every one of us, for there is potential for evil in all of us. Merely stopping a war





is no guarantee that another wouldn't start soon after. The only guarantee that there would never again be any trouble between humans would be to wipe out the whole lot and start again with a race that had no inclination to evil. But as far as God is concerned, that is not an option. To exterminate the human race would be to turn his back on those of us who really do want to live in a better world, which is something that a God of love could never do.

That leaves him with only one other option. God's second choice is to change people from within. The problem with this choice, however, is that many people don't want to be changed. As much as their choice 'goes against the grain' with God, he has chosen to respect it.

The predicament with allowing people to remain evil, however, is that such a choice creates serious injustices, because those who choose evil victimise those who choose good. Unfortunately, this is something we will have to live with until the final Judgement when everything will be made right (Romans 12:19). In the meantime, God promises his people that if they cooperate with him, all the evil that comes to them will work to their ultimate advantage (Romans 8:28), and they will be richly rewarded for their troubles (e.g. Hebrews 11:35-40).

Because believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, they are "controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit" (Romans 8:9). They wish to live with honour and integrity. The indwelling Holy Spirit gives them both the will and the power to live righteously (Philippians 2:13). God's Spirit in each of us is God's way of making the world a better place. It is his choice to change people from the inside out. Changes imposed from the outside never last, and result, ultimately, in a police state. True change has to take place on the inside—and it has to be our choice. No matter how much you try to control bad people, good will

never be the result, simply because 'it is not possible to make a good pie out of bad apples'.

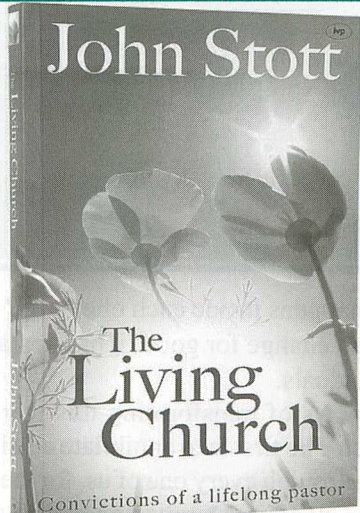
## THY KINGDOM COME

When Jesus comes again, he will wipe out forever the plague of sin that blights our world. Every vestige of sin, and all its results, will be annihilated. This means that all who cling to sin and refuse to give it up will be destroyed with it. The Lord will then create a new world where only righteousness exists:

*"The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God ... but in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13).*

God has a home—a home of righteousness—reserved for all who have his Spirit, a home free of injustice, disappointments, grief, death and pain. There will be no security fences, burglar alarms, police, criminal courts; criminal lawyers, judges, or prisons there. Padlocks, deadlocks and keys will not be needed there. There will be no hatred, murder, disrespect, adultery, corruption, stealing, or lying in Paradise.

Christ's coming kingdom is reserved for those who hate evil and love righteousness, and show it by their choices. No one will enter there who loves evil (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Revelation 22:14-15). Everyone who enters that kingdom can be trusted, because they have invited the Holy Spirit to rule their lives from the throne of their hearts. They have the deposit that guarantees their future in God's new world (Ephesians 1:13-14). ✱



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**Program:**

**1.00pm**

Doors open, meet and greet.

**1.30pm**

Session 1.

**2.30pm**

Fellowship and Refreshments.

**3.00pm**

Session 2.



# A Woman's Voice and God's ELIJAH (Part 3)

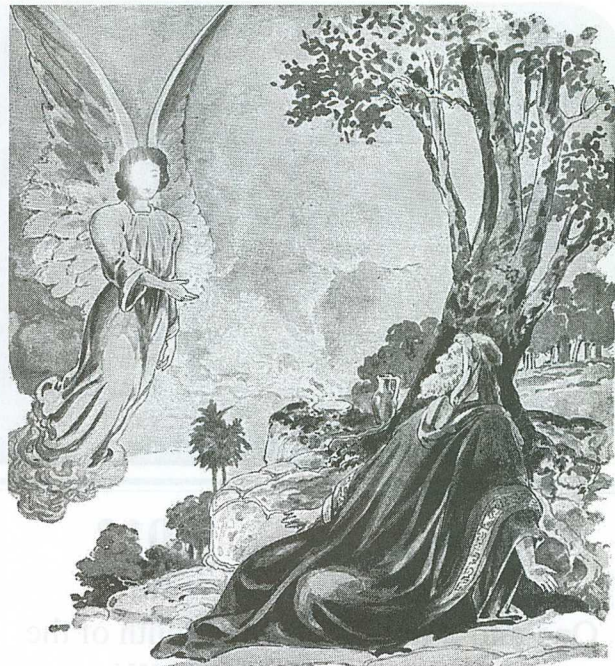
*Ritchie Way*

**F**or three and a half years Israel had been in the teeth of a severe drought. The LORD had said in effect to the people of Israel, "If Baal is truly your god, let him give you rain. He is the god of thunder and lightning, so let his voice be heard in your land." But through those long dry years Baal was utterly silent.

At the end of the three and a half years Elijah called the prophets of Baal and the people of Israel to meet him on Mt. Carmel for a contest to see who was truly the God of Israel—Baal or Yahweh (Jehovah). When Baal failed the test, and Yahweh revealed himself as the God who atoned for the sins of his nation, the people repented and turned back to him.

Elijah said to King Ahab, "'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you,' ... the power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel" (1 Kgs. 18:44-46).

The adrenaline-fuelled Elijah led the royal chariot through the gathering downpour to the imperial city, thirty-two kilometres away, where he was able to relax for the first time after several tension-packed and energy-sapping days. He was in a state of exhaustion when a message arrived from Queen Jezebel who was hopping mad because Elijah had overthrown her gods and killed her prophets: "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like one of the prophets of Baal you had killed."



If there was a time more than any other when Elijah should have consulted the LORD this was it. He had done the LORD's bidding, and now this she-wolf was lunging for his throat. What was he to do? Help, LORD!

Instead, in his enervated state, Elijah fled south toward Beersheba where he left his exhausted servant before travelling a day's journey out into the desert, where, totally depressed, he collapsed under a juniper tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said, "Take my life."

No doubt you can identify with Elijah under the juniper tree—exhausted and at the end of your tether.

The LORD expects you to give yourself totally to his work, but he is not in the business of burning you out; he wants you to be a living sacrifice for him, not a dead one. You get burned out when you take upon your shoulders responsibilities beyond your capacity to handle, responsibilities that were not given to you by the LORD.

Those who have had malaria know that it strikes when you get over-tired or are fighting off an infection or an attack of the flu. The devil is just like that. He hits you with a broadside at your weakest moment, when you are worn-out and not thinking clearly. That is the time, more than any other, when you should get down on your knees to seek guidance. To do otherwise will only make things worse.

In a state of utter exhaustion Elijah lay down under the tree and went to sleep. But sleep could not refresh him while his stomach was empty and his blood sugar low. As he was drifting off an angel tapped him on the side and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around and there by his head was a cake of bread



baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. In his fatigued state he ate and drank and then fell back and went to sleep again.

The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you."

Elijah's journey south was not part of his brief from God, and the angel did not try to deter him from his objective, but came to make sure that this man of God did not end up as a pile of bones out in the desert, thus cutting short his mission and giving Jezebel further reason to gloat.

God treats us the same way: the angels that care for us (Matt. 18:10) don't interfere with our choices, even when they are bad choices, but if we are committed to God's service they ensure that we live long enough to fulfil our divinely ordained mission.

After a long and sound sleep Elijah continued south on his journey to Horeb, the mountain of God, where he went into a cave and spent the night.

Why Elijah should think he would find God at Horeb, the mountain of law, rather than on Carmel, the mountain of grace, is not stated. Maybe he just wanted to go to the cleft in the rock where the LORD had spoken to Moses, to seek comfort and guidance there. It seems that he still associated God with sacred places, and had not yet come to the understanding that the omnipresent God was not limited to places.

Early next morning the word of the LORD came to Elijah: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" That was a very incisive question. God hadn't sent him there, so what was he doing there? Elijah justified his presence at Horeb by replying that the Israelites had killed the prophets of the Lord, and now they were out to kill him too. That's why he fled.

Elijah is not the only one who flees his post of duty fearing that the LORD is not able to conquer his problem. We are all guilty of that. The LORD asks: "What are you doing here, Hamish? Why have you left your appointed place of ministry? Return to it." "What are you doing here Cheryl? What are you running away from that is too big for me to handle? Go back the way you came and face up to your problem in my strength."

The LORD then told Elijah that he was about to pass by. At once a great and powerful tornado swept over the mountain hurling the rocks around, shattering them on the slopes. But the LORD was not in the tornado. After the wind there was an earthquake that shook Elijah to his knees. But the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a wall of fire swept past the cave. But the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went

out and stood in the entrance to the cave.

Jezebel used force to achieve her objectives, but that isn't the way the LORD works with his people. God doesn't accomplish his will in our lives with threats and raw power, but by through the gentle whisper of his Spirit (Zech. 4:6). So why was Elijah heeding Jezebel and not the LORD?

Once again the LORD asked, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah replied, "I am the only one of your prophets left LORD, and they are trying to kill me." The LORD corrected him: "I still have seven thousand in Israel whose knees have not bowed down to Baal. *Now go back the way you came.*"

The problem with running away from our God-given responsibilities is that we have just as far to travel back again. For every step we travel south, we must take a step back north. The biblical word used for such a change is repentance. The Hebrew word for repentance (*shub*) means 'to turn back'. The Greek word for repentance (*metanoia*) means 'a change of mind'. Elijah had to do both. How much easier it would have been for him to have consulted the LORD before fleeing. It would have saved him so much time, energy and embarrassment, and would have denied Jezebel a reason to gloat.

Before Elijah left Horeb the LORD gave him a list of things to do, among which was the commission to go and anoint Elisha of Abel Meholah as his successor.

## PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

The king who reigned in Judah at the same time Ahab reigned in Israel was Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat, a good man who worshipped Yahweh, had seven sons, but only his firstborn, Jehoram, could become king, so he gave each of his other sons a city and gifts of gold and silver (1 Chron. 21:1-3).

Jehoshaphat, however, made a serious mistake that had shocking outcomes for the next generation: the wife he got for his firstborn son, Jehoram, was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Can you believe it?

Jehoshaphat's mistake was in allowing political considerations to take precedence over his responsibility to the LORD. Subsequent history revealed that the woman he chose as a wife for his son had inherited the vicious controlling spirit of her mother, Jezebel.

Once Athaliah moved into the palace she quickly realised that if her husband, Jehoram, died without leaving any children, one of his brothers would probably take over the throne, putting her life at risk. So after King Jehoshaphat died she decided to strike first by persuading Jehoram to put all his brothers to the sword, which he did.

Athaliah, a forceful and conniving woman like



her mother, Jezebel, then cajoled Jehoram into erecting high places in Judah where the people could worship her gods.

Not long after this, Jehoram received a letter from the prophet, Elijah. Elijah told him, in no uncertain terms, that because he was walking in the ways of his mother-in-law instead of in the ways of his father, and because he had murdered all his own brothers who were better men than he, the LORD would strike him and his family with a heavy blow. Jehoram would suffer a lingering disease of the intestines that would become so bad his bowels would come out.

Not long after Jehoram received Elijah's letter a coalition of Philistines and Arabs attacked Judah. They stripped the palace in Jerusalem and took all Jehoram's wives, except Athaliah, and all his sons except the infant, Ahaziah. Shortly after this Jehoram died in great pain from his dreadful illness. The Scriptures note: "He passed away, to no-one's regret" (2 Chron. 21:20).

What a way to die! Because he turned his back on his father's God he made all the wrong choices. He allowed his heathen wife to control him; he became immoral to the point of murdering all his own siblings; he introduced paganism to Judah, and because he rejected the LORD as his protection, Judah was raped by the Philistines and Arabs. There were no eulogies for him at his funeral.

God is the source of all good, and those who walk away from that source, like Jehoram, move into the realm of moral chaos, social ostracism and vulnerability to one's enemies. Learn this lesson from history, not from your own experience. Don't ever walk Jehoram's road. Stick close to the LORD and you will live in his grace and die with a smile on your face.

Jehoram died and his son, Ahaziah, became king. His mother, Athaliah, lost no time in encouraging him to promote the worship of Baal and Astarte in Judah. One day Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see his uncle Joram, king of Israel, who had been wounded in a battle with the Arameans. But while there both Ahaziah and Joram were cornered and executed by Jehu who had been ordained by Elijah to bring to an end the dynasty of Omri and become the tenth ruler of Israel.

When her son's body was returned to Jerusalem, Athaliah hatched up a ruthless plan to secure her position as reigning monarch. She had her grandchildren—the only surviving members of the Davidic line—murdered. Unbeknown to her, however, in the confusion of the slaughter, the infant Joash was snatched-up and hidden by Jehosheba, the wife of Jehoiada, the priest of Yahweh.

Believing that there were no other contenders to the throne Athaliah appointed herself as monarch,

the only woman ever to ascend to the throne of Judah. She reigned in Judah for six years, spending much of her time consolidating the worship of Baal in Judah. During this time her sons broke into the temple of God and stole its sacred objects to use in the worship of Baal (2 Chron. 24:7).

When king Ahaziah's son, Joash, turned seven, Jehoiada brought him out of hiding and, in front of a handpicked crowd, crowned him king of Judah in the temple court (2 Kgs. 11). At the conclusion of the coronation, trumpets blew and all the people clapped and shouted, "Long live the king!" When Athaliah heard the sound of trumpets and shouting she came to find out what was going on. Jehoiada, seeing her, ordered the temple guard to take her. Athaliah fled but they seized her at the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

"Jehoiada then made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people that they would be the LORD's people ... all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars" (2 Kgs. 11:17-18).

"All the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword" (2 Chron. 23:21).

## CONCLUSION

What a web of evil was created when Ahab married the Canaanite princess, Jezebel. That one alliance brought nothing but unbelievable selfishness, a callous disregard for honour and justice, the establishment of a degrading religion, and misery. That web stretched across Israel and down into Judah, and almost succeeded in eliminating the line of David through which the Messiah would come (see 2 Chron. 21:7; Psalms 89:3-4). By God's providence young Joash alone was saved from the murderous hand of Athaliah. This young king continued the royal line into which Jesus would be born as the ultimate king—the Messiah—of the Davidic line.

About this time Elijah ascended into heaven (2 Kgs. 2:1-12). The prophet Malachi, however, promised that he would return to us before the Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5). We will explore the significance of this return in our next article in this series. ❁

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# JESUS' PARABLES

## THE TEN MAIDENS

**Our parable for this month is the story of the Ten Maidens in Matthew 25:1-13. Jesus said:**

*"The kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast and the door was shut. Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."*

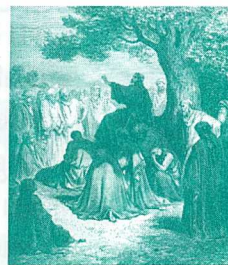
This is a parable about 'the kingdom of heaven', which Christ teaches is his kingdom here on Earth today. It reveals that the true citizens of this kingdom are people whose lights

never go out, even though they may be lulled into sleep by the delay in Christ's return. Norman H. Young says: "We notice two aspects related to the bridegroom's arrival: It was delayed, and then it came suddenly at an unexpected hour" (*Rebuke and Challenge: The Point of Jesus' Parables* (R & H Pub Assn, 1985), p. 82).

When it became apparent that Christ's return was near, the foolish maidens started to panic because their lights were going out. They rushed around in an attempt to get their lamps burning brightly again, but they had left it too late, and were denied entrance to the marriage. The door was shut!

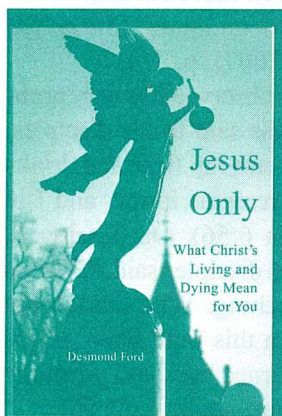
The punch-line of the parable is: Don't let Jesus' apparent delay lull you to sleep. Be always ready to meet the bridegroom, for no one knows the hour or day of his return. Only those who have their lights burning brightly will join him in the marriage.

Norman Young says, "The ten virgins stand for the Christian community—a community that has received the goodness of God in the salvation of Jesus and that now awaits his return. Only those members of the fellowship who observe and do the teaching of Jesus, with its emphasis on mercy and forgiveness, will be declared true disciples in the last judgement. To receive the gospel of Jesus is to live the gospel, and to live the gospel means to bear the fruits of the gospel—love, joy, mercy, grace, forgiveness, peace. For those who know the gospel will be judged by the gospel" (*Ibid*, p.85). Keep your light burning brightly!



## Special Project 2012 Update

**An abridgement of the book *Jesus Only* by Dr Desmond Ford is at present being translated into Ukrainian, Romanian Spanish and Samoan and we have plans to have it translated into Russian.**



The *Reader's Digest* sized book presents the gospel message simply, comprehensively and powerfully, and will be an eye-opener and life-changer for many spiritually dead 'Christians'. It will be an instrument used by God's Spirit to help these people cross over from death to life.

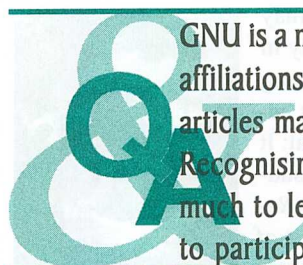
We have on hand the funds for each of these translations, or are in the process of raising them. What we need now is money to get the first editions of these translations printed. The more money we receive for this gospel outreach, the more books we will be able to print and distribute.

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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 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.

### WHY?

*Why did God let my brother die of cancer? He wanted to see his grandchildren get married before he died, but now that is not possible.*

**D.C.**

**Dear D,**

God doesn't see that death in this present evil world is an unmitigated evil. What God wants all of us to have is eternal life in a world of righteousness, and this present life is given us as our opportunity to accept or reject that free gift of life. We have no idea how short or how painful this life may be, but it is our time of choice—our only time of choice. This, more than any other consideration, should be our priority. We hope it was so with your brother.

**Ritchie.**

### MUSLIMS IN HEAVEN?

**Dear Ritchie,**

*I have read where you say that you expect to see Muslims in the New Earth. I seriously question this because the Bible says, "He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved." With my own two eyes I have read in the Koran that Muhammad, the Muslim prophet, says Jesus is not the Son of God, because God never had a son. He also claims that Jesus never died on the cross. He says it was someone else who died on the cross; not Jesus.*

*What I would like you to tell me is this: If Muslims believe their prophet, how can they put their faith in the Son of God who was crucified for their sins? That's what I would like to know.*

**M. D.**

**Dear M,**

First of all, God can save people in any religion or culture. If he could save a Canaanite woman, whose people had the most depraved religion in the world (1 Kings 17:7-24), then he can save people in any context—even Islam.

Jesus said, If people speak against him they can be forgiven, because many do it innocently; they just don't know the truth about him and have been put off him by bad 'Christians'. But the Holy Spirit still works on their hearts, encouraging them to love righteousness and hate evil. However, if they blaspheme (reject) the Holy Spirit, they will not be forgiven (Luke 12:10). There is no other avenue left for their salvation.

There is abundant evidence that many in Islam and other non-Christian faiths have the Spirit of God in their lives. They are people who love righteousness and hate evil. And if they have the Spirit of God they have eternal life, for the two cannot be separated. You can't have eternal life without God, and you can't have God without eternal life.

In this age such people may be ignorant of Jesus, but the day will come when they will see the nail prints in their Saviour's hands and will learn what their salvation cost him.

**Ritchie.**

### COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

**Dear Ritchie,**

*I have recommended some of your excellent articles to certain members in my church but when they discover that you are the author they refuse to read*

*them. They don't want to have anything to do with your writings, which is very sad because they are missing out on wonderful insights from God's Word that I have not found anywhere else. One of these detractors says some of your teachings are contrary to her beliefs and that because new truth will never contradict old truth she doesn't want to waste her time reading your speculative theories.*

*I have thought about their reactions and wondered what effect their responses would have on their destinies. If a person turns his back on genuine new light that shines from God's Word, and clings instead to his own fallible or limited formulations of Scripture, could he be saved? I would be interested in your answer.*

**P.S.**

**Dear P,**

The phenomenon that you refer to is called 'cognitive dissonance'. Bishop Tom Wright says, "'Cognitive dissonance' is what happens when people who badly want something to be true, but are faced with strong evidence to the contrary, manage to leap over the data that point the wrong way, and become even more strident in announcing their claims" (*Surprised by Hope* [2007], p. 71).

Jesus observed this very problem when he said to his disciples, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it"? ... from this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him" (John 6:60, 66).

Jesus' words were an important test for his Jewish disciples whose religion forbade the drinking of blood and the consumption of human flesh. The disciples who turned away from Jesus preferred



their own interpretation of the Scriptures to his. Those that stayed with Jesus had built a relationship with him that exalted him above any interpretation of Scripture—even their own.

And that's the test that comes to all of us sooner or later. What do we stick with: *the Truth* or our truth? If our truth has precedence over the Truth, then we worship, not Christ, but a faulty image of Christ that we have made with our own hands. Our destiny, therefore, will be determined by who or what we worship.

**Ritchie.**

### CHRISTIAN VS EASTERN

**Dear Editor,**

*We've become friends with a Sikh family that lives across the road. They are very devoted to their faith, and I've often wondered what the major difference is between eastern religions such as Sikh and Hindu, and Christianity. If you could put it in a nutshell for me I'd be very grateful.*

**R. B.**

**Dear R,**

Eastern religions tell their devotees to do their best. The Christian faith, on the other hand, demands that we be one-hundred percent perfect. Only those who are faultless and without sin will enter Paradise, for just one sin would spoil it—which is what happened in Eden. Unless we have the righteousness of God himself, we will be denied entrance.

Because it is impossible for human beings to attain this high standard, Jesus came to pay the penalty for our sins and to credit his perfect righteousness to our account (2 Cor. 5:21). All who accept his free gift become citizens of his kingdom.

While there are several other significant differences between Christianity and eastern religions, that is the primary one.

**Ritchie.**

### PARADISE TODAY

**Dear Ritchie,**

*I have a couple more questions for you. In II Cor 12:1-7 Paul makes mention of a visit to Paradise, which means that it was a literal place. I have discussed this a number of times with Jehovah Witnesses and have a copy of their New World translation Bible. Their translation of Luke 23:43 is: "Truly I tell you today, you will be with Me in Paradise." However, when I read the KJV there is no comma! The JW's have interpreted this verse and not translated it. If I take the normal sense of the English language then the dying thief would be expecting to be in Paradise that day i.e. 'today'. In other words it would be like if you sent me a message to say, "Today you shall be with me in New Zealand", then I would be expecting that to be the case literally. What do you think?*

*Also, just a word of testimony. In February 1982 I went to a church and heard a gospel message preached. I was not a church-goer at the time (I had gone a couple of times) and did not even own a Bible. That night I responded to the message accepting that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for my sins and rose again physically from the dead on the third day. God saved me that night and has continued to bless me ever since.*

*I was wondering when you got saved. I always find it a great blessing to hear other peoples' testimonies.*

*Thanks for your patience.*

**R. C.**

**Dear R,**

It is always a pleasure to hear from you. You have a heart for the Lord.

The natural, unforced reading of Luke 23:43 is as given by the *Contemporary English Version*: "Jesus replied, 'I promise that

today you will be with me in paradise'". The *Revised Standard Version*, the *New American Standard Bible*, the *New International Version*, the *New Century Version*, the *New King James Version*, and the *New Life Version*, etc. all interpret the passage as teaching that the repentant felon would be with Jesus in paradise that very day. And that's what happened, Jesus, by his death, opened the gate to paradise that very day, and the repentant felon entered as its first citizen.

It is also true of you, me, and all who put their faith in the crucified Christ, that we become citizens of Christ's kingdom the moment we believe—"today". So, R, you are right in the stand you have taken.

As for my conversion, God planted the seed of eternal life in my heart when I was about twelve years of age. A local farmer started a Sunday School in the district hall, and my brother and I attended. He taught us to read the Bible, to memorise verses, and to pray. This Sunday School lasted for about three months, and, for some reason unknown to me, it stopped. But in that short time a seed was sown, but it remained dormant for another eight years, waiting for the right conditions to germinate.

At the age of twenty I got a job during the summer holidays with a young engineer, Barry Martin, overhauling the machinery at Griffin's Biscuit Factory in Gracefield, Lower Hutt. Barry led me to Christ, but, through inexperience, didn't build me up in the Scriptures. It was Allan Lindsay who helped me build my house of faith on the foundation that had been laid. Those were the days that propelled me into a new life in Jesus—a life that has gotten better and better with each passing year.

Grace and peace to you R.

**Ritchie.**



# LEAVE A LEGACY

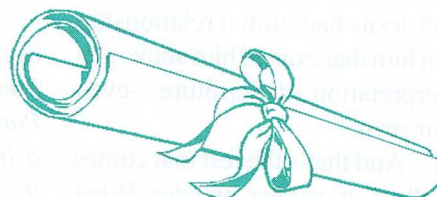
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**Because of the importance of your Will, it is advisable to get advise from legal professionals about how to write it.**

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\* You may leave a percentage (1 – 100%) of the residue of your estate to *Good News Unlimited Australia*, after you have made provision for your loved ones.

\* Or you may leave a percentage (1 – 100%) of



the residue of your estate to *Good News Unlimited Australia*.

\* Or you can leave a specific sum or piece of property such a real estate to *Good News Unlimited Australia*.

**E.g.**

"I give the sum of \$.....

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*Good News Unlimited* is supported by a group of people committed to praying for the needs of our readers. If you have a prayer request please share it with

Carolyn at the office. You don't have to be specific if you wish to keep the matter private. Your request will then be passed on to a group of intercessors who will take it to the Lord on your behalf. They would be honoured to support you in this way.

### Dr Ford Live on Broadband

Peachester meetings,  
2nd & 4th Saturday each  
Month 2.30pm-4.00pm at

[www.desford.org.au](http://www.desford.org.au)  
and click on 'Dr Ford Live'.

**Alternatively go to:**  
[www.ustream.tv/channel/  
dr-desmond-ford](http://www.ustream.tv/channel/dr-desmond-ford)

The link is on  
Youtube Channel page with times  
<http://au.youtube.com/user/pangear>

### GRACEGATE Auckland, New Zealand

There is an invitation to all  
GNU supporters who are in  
Auckland, New Zealand  
on a Saturday, to worship with  
us at **Gracegate**.

**Lunch is provided.**

We meet in the Oteha Valley Primary  
School Hall, on the corner of  
Oteha Valley Road and  
Medallion Drive in Albany.  
Worship starts at 10.30am sharp

### Narellan Sydney NSW Focus for Life Christian Fellowship

Those living in or near Narellan are  
warmly invited to meet for Bible  
study and fellowship in the Salvation  
Army Worship Centre on the corner  
of Exchange Parade and Narellan  
Road in Narellan, every Saturday at  
1.30pm. For further information  
contact Pastor Santo Calarco.  
**phone: 04 0402 9822**



# DR DESMOND FORD

RIGHT WITH  
**G O D**  
RIGHT NOW

How God Saves People  
As Shown in the Bible's  
Book of Romans

DESMOND FORD, Ph D

ROMANS 5  
7 Saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.  
8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.  
9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that righteousness is reckoned to Abraham for his faith.  
10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.  
11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.  
12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, who had being yet uncircumcised.  
13 For the promise was made to Abraham, saying, 'I will make thee a great nation; and I will bless thee, and multiply thee, and I will say of thee, Thy seed is as the stars of heaven.'  
14 And he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.  
15 And he was called the friend of God.  
16 Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the righteous, and blessed that day when he was circumcised, and was counted to him for righteousness.  
17 And he was counted to him for righteousness, and he was called the righteous, and blessed that day when he was circumcised, and was counted to him for righteousness.  
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has triggered every great revival of  
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Having been introduced to Jesus, Cornelius has found the all-sufficient spiritual centre. He needs no more. Having told him about Jesus, Peter has done all he can do. He need not labour to convince this Gentile man of his own brand of religion, Christ will take care of him. In order to be all that the Lord wants him to be, Peter must decide between the authority of Jesus and the authority of what he calls 'our law' (Acts 10:28).