

January 2011 Issue No. 1

Good News Unlimited



WHAT JESUS
SAID ABOUT PRAYER

The New Israel
The Messiah King

You Are
My Witnesses

Power Napping

Gospel Nuggets

A GIGO
Transformation

Jesus' Parables

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EDITORIAL

We have come to 2011, a year closer to the return of the Lord Jesus and our eternal home. Scripture reveals, however, that the return of the Lord is not dated in terms of days, months and years, but in terms of the percentage of the world's population that has been reached with the gospel.

There have been times in the past when the graph has indicated that his coming is close at hand, only to have the line drop away again as the numbers of those who hadn't heard the gospel surpassed those who had. Before Jesus returns he wants everyone to be given the opportunity to either accept or reject eternal life through his sacrifice. When the

gospel of his kingdom has gone to all the world he will come back (Matt. 24:14).

It is the ministry of *Good News Unlimited* to proclaim this gospel of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, not only to our regular readers who love the Lord, but to those who don't yet love the Lord, simply because they are unaware of the sacrifice he has made for them. We encourage you, this year, to share your faith with a relative, workmate, neighbour, friend or acquaintance. Or, if that is not possible because of your circumstances, to support GNU's Ukraine outreach with your offerings and prayers. We want to produce magazines that will both encourage and facilitate this—magazines that you would be proud to pass on to an unchurched person.

If you have ideas about how we could make our magazine more

appealing to those who don't yet know the gospel of our Lord Jesus—both in church and in the world—please send me an email at ritchiew@kiwilink.co.nz or drop me a line care of the Australian GNU office. We would appreciate your input.

This month's magazine has three articles on 'Old Covenant and New Covenant Israel.' The intention of these articles is to highlight God's purpose for Israel, which was to share God's grace with the Gentiles, and to prepare the world for the first coming of the Redeemer God.

We have also started three new series: One on the *Parables of Jesus*, which we hope will be a blessing to all our readers; a series on *Gospel Nuggets*, which will help to build a strong gospel foundation for our lives; and *Health Snippets* featuring recent research that could be of benefit to you.

Finally, please continue to support us with your prayers, tithes and offerings. Our outreach would be impossible without your petitions and financial support. It is through much prayer that the Lord has opened doors for our ministry to grow and extend its lines of influence. And it has been through your generosity that this has been made possible.

God bless you and keep you safe in his care throughout this coming year.

—Ritchie Way

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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 hum-
anity through his Son, Jesus Christ.



**We wish you
a safe
and blessed
2011**

**Staff and volunteers
Good News Unlimited**

WHAT JESUS

SAID ABOUT PRAYER

Santo Calarco

One day, when Jesus had finished praying, ‘One of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray”’ (Luke 11:1).

What a good question to ask our Lord Jesus. Jesus answered this question by teaching them the prayer commonly known as the Lord’s Prayer. In this prayer, which provides an excellent framework for our petitions, Jesus lists some of the things that his followers should pray about (Luke 11:2-4). He then tells them a parable to teach them about God’s willingness to answer prayer (Luke 11:5-13).

Before we look at this parable we should notice what Jesus said about prayer before he gave his disciples the Lord’s Prayer. He said, ‘When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him’ (Matt 6:7-8). Jesus describes here the prayer practises of pagans to their deities. Pagans believe that their gods will only hear them if they keep on repeating their petitions over and over, as though their gods were unwilling to answer their requests. Jesus says that his followers should not adopt that practice. Our God knows what we need before we ask, and as our Heavenly Father he is not only able to answer our prayers but he is also willing to answer them. Such counsel went directly in the face of the prayer practises of Jesus’ day.

Sad to say, many genuine believers today who love their heavenly Father, pray just like pagans. They

beg and beg God in prayer in an endeavour to move him. ‘If we just pray hard enough and long enough God will answer us,’ they say. Jesus tells us not to pray like this because God is not reluctant to answer our prayers. He is our heavenly Father who delights in meeting his children’s needs (see Matt 6:25-32). This is the very point Jesus makes in his parable in Luke’s Gospel. Let’s look at that passage.

Jesus tells the story of a man who goes to his friend at midnight and asks for bread to feed someone who has arrived at his home unexpectedly. In response, he receives a negative retort: ‘Don’t bother me I am in bed and I won’t get up and give you anything!’ (Luke 11:7).

Jesus depicts a hypothetical situation here to make a point about prayer and the nature and heart of God. Jesus invites his eastern audience to imagine a scene that in their culture was utterly inconceivable. My background is Italian, so I can understand how offensive it would be in my culture if my friend refused to help me out of a predicament in the middle of the night. Well, this was even more offensive in first-century Palestine. No hearer of Jesus’ enquiry could imagine such a grudging response.

Throughout Luke, Jesus would begin a parable or saying with the query, ‘Who among you ...?’ (See Luke 11:11; 12:25; 14:5, 28; 15:4; 17:7). In each case the expected answer to this question is, ‘We would never imagine that!’ This means that Jesus, in this particular parable, is expecting that none of his listeners could

ever imagine a friend refusing a plea for help in a matter of hospitality—not even in the middle of the night.

As the parable continues, we read that the reluctant friend eventually got up and gave him the bread, but not because he was a friend, but because of his ‘persistence’ (Luke 11:8). Based on this verse many sincere believers have unfortunately developed a belief that God is just like this friend. If we badger our reluctant God enough, eventually he will respond to our request. Thus the conclusion is arrived at that the prayer which moves the arm of God is the prayer of persistence. We have already seen in Matthew, however, that Jesus has already said that we do not need to hassle God in this manner. God is not like pagan deities! So how should we understand this parable, which seems to teach persistence in prayer?

The Greek word which has been translated ‘persistence’ in Luke 11:8 is *anadeia*. This word actually means shamelessness, audacity or impudence¹. This word does not mean persistence at all. Rather, it is the caller’s shameless conduct in calling at midnight that verse 8 emphasises. The parable pictures a case contrary to Middle-Eastern culture in order to create a paradox.

Regardless of the hour of the night, the friend should have met the need of the caller because he was supposedly his friend. The excuses presented by the friend in the parable would have shocked a Palestinian hearer or reader. The initial refusal would have been interpreted as a breakdown of the friendship—offensive indeed. Since true friendship and hospitality failed, the caller had to rely on shamelessness and audacity to move the man in bed.

The caller’s success relied, not on friendship, but audacity. Jesus is here presenting a parable of contrast, not comparison. God is not like this so-called friend. In other words, if we would never expect a friend to fail us in such a way, then how much more can we trust God to respond to our request, no matter how awkward it might be? A self-centred person

will grant a request so as to get rid of the annoyance caused by the shamelessness of the caller. The contrast is that God is *not* like this self-centred man. God gives because it is his nature to give. ‘God so loved that he gave.’

This is confirmed by what the rest of the passage says. If we ask, God will give, and he will give without any reluctance. What earthly father would withhold requests for food from his child? Or worse still, what earthly father would give his child a scorpion when he asked for a fish (Luke 11:11-12)? Here Jesus makes a direct connection to the parable. God is a God who is a ‘much more’ God, in contrast to the reluctant and offensive ‘friend.’ ‘If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him’ (Luke 11:13)!

Jesus is telling us that when we pray we need not badger God, as the pagans did their deities, or as the man in his parable had to do in order to get a response. If you don’t expect your friend to turn down your requests, then be gracious enough to expect no less of a loving God. That is the point that Jesus is making.

Prayer is not needed to move God into action in the sense that we need to overcome his reluctance. The purpose of prayer is not to inform God of our needs (Matt 6:8), and yet we are called to pray and ask. Since God already knows our needs before we ask, our prayers do not convince or enlighten him, they just open the way for him to respond to our needs, for he won’t force anything upon us contrary to our will. We pray to God as to a good Friend who is never annoyed at us and is never reluctant to answer—even at apparently inopportune times. ☐

Endnote:

1. *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995. W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine’s complete expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, ©1996.

Health Snippets

POWER NAPPING



Researchers at the Berkeley Campus of the University of California have discovered that taking a twenty to thirty minute nap between 1.00pm and 3.00pm each day, actually makes people smarter.

Apparently a nap clears out the brain’s short-term memory storage to make way for new infor-

mation. Another research project, conducted by Olaf Lahl and colleagues of the University of Düsseldorf in Germany, has shown that as little as six minutes sleep is enough to significantly enhance memory.

It appears that as the day progresses the brain becomes clogged with information and struggles to cope. ‘It’s as though the email box in your hippocampus is full, and until you sleep and clear out those emails, you’re not going to receive any more mail. It’s just going to bounce until you sleep and move it into another folder,’ says professor Matthew Walker. ☐

GIGO

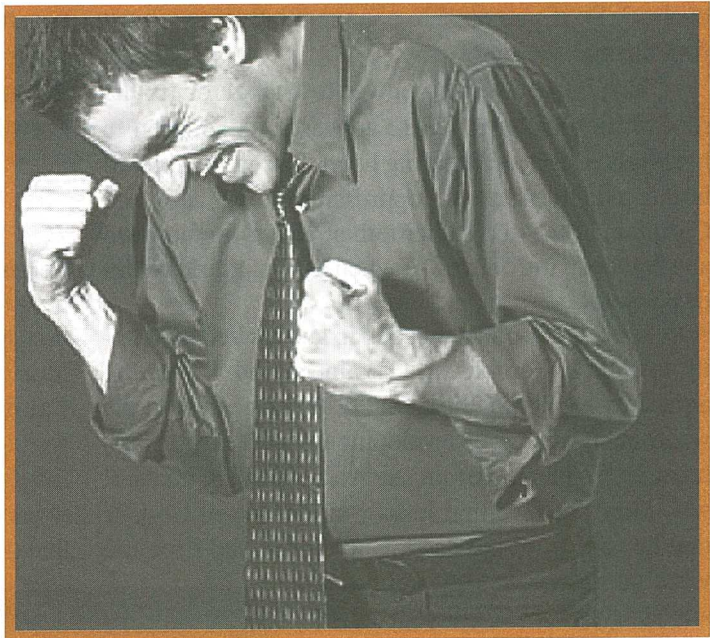
Ritchie Way

Vernon was angry and judgemental for much of the time. His children felt that life in his presence was like walking among steel-toothed bear traps that were covered by leaves; just the slightest miss-step and they would be snared. His wife's younger brother described Vernon as having 'a short fuse.' Vernon condemned his own kids because they did not do as well at sports or in rugby as some other kids in the district, and his constant negativity erected a barrier of fear that kept his family at an emotional distance from him.

Not only did Vernon's simmering anger spill over onto his family, it also adversely affected the animals that he worked with on the dairy farm where he was a share-milker. One of the cows was so traumatised by his evil treatment it would tremble in the yard while waiting to be milked. One day while she was in the bail he thrashed her on the spine and hip with a steel cup-prop because the terrified animal kicked the cups off and emptied her bowels when he came near.

Vernon's wife, Caroline, attempted to punish Vernon for his appalling behaviour by erecting a wall of silence between them, and by refusing to go out with him to local meetings. But that only made him worse. To escape from his family he joined two clubs in town where he attempted to dissolve his problems in alcohol and cigarette smoke.

Often at night, after the kids had been sent to bed, there would be fiery arguments in the kitchen in which Caroline threatened to divorce him and leave with the children if he didn't reform. Such arguments shattered the security of the kids and had them trembling under their blankets. Such threats of divorce,



however, only worsened Caroline's relationship with Vernon.

Most people didn't realise that there was a deep pain in Vernon's life. When he came home, badly injured from active service with the army in a foreign country, it was obvious that the affect of the armed conflict there on the soldiers, and on the citizens of that country, had left him deeply scarred. On top of this, the man who owned the farm on which he was a share-milker, would leave a brown envelope in Vernon's letterbox at least twice a month, containing a handwritten note criticising something Vernon was doing, or not doing on the farm. This continual irritation of Vernon's already raw nerves left him very much on the edge. No matter how hard Vernon tried, he couldn't measure up to his boss's expectations. He always felt under condemnation. And, according to the law of **GIGO** (**G**arbage **I**n; **G**arbage **O**ut) Vernon gave what he got. Because he felt condemned for his apparent shortcomings he was quick to condemn others for theirs.

A very good friend of mine, a Christian counsellor, often says, 'Hurt people, hurt people'. A person becomes a conduit for whatever happens to them. If they are angry because of what has happened to them, they dole out anger. If their lives have been trashed by their parents or bosses, they trash others in turn. If they have experienced unresolved injustice, they act unjustly.

What such people do, however, is not the cause of their problem, it is the result. Their problem, consequently, cannot be cured by addressing the result. It is the cause that must be fixed. If the fruit is the wrong type, it's not the fruit that needs fixing, but the root. As Jesus said, 'You can't get grapes from thorn

bushes'. So if you need to change the fruit you must first change the root.

But Vernon had no power to change or fix the root of his problems. There appeared no solution to his blighted past or festering heart. His eldest son left home, glad to escape the oppressive atmosphere, and Caroline, at the end of her tether, called on the Lord she had been introduced to when a young girl at Sunday School.

One day a minister called in and invited the family to church. Vernon and Caroline talked it over and agreed to go, hoping desperately for an answer to the widening rift that was developing in the family. Unfortunately, for them, the minister was a liberal 'Christian' who didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or that he rose from the dead. But Vernon and Caroline were so desperate they continued attending church even though the sermons weren't addressing their needs. Sometime later their minister was appointed to another parish and a new, evangelical minister came to care for their church.

Vernon came to respect the new cleric whose gospel messages ministered God's grace to his heart, expunging the terrors of the past and blotting out his guilt and pain through the blood of the Lord Jesus. Eventually **GIGO** took on a different meaning for Vernon. Instead of being **Garbage In; Garbage Out**, it became **Grace In; Grace Out**.

When the eldest son, now married with two children, returned home for a holiday, he was astounded by the change in both his Dad and his Mum; they were totally different people. The change for Caroline however, had been much harder, as, initially, she didn't see herself as part of the problem.

Vernon, instead of studying horse-racing guides,


was now reading Christian literature. Instead of going to clubs with his boozy mates he was now working as a volunteer officer in the church, and loving it. Caroline was also fully involved in church life.

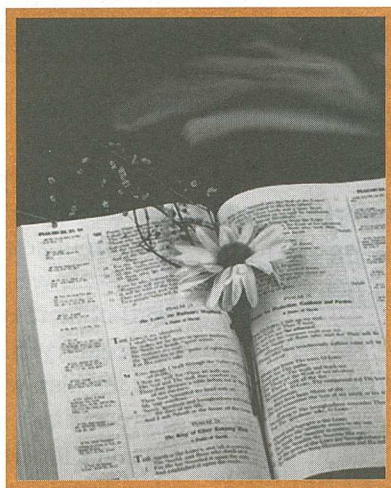
YOUR GIGO

Some who will read this article will identify with Vernon or Caroline. There are aches and pains in their lives that spill their poison into the lives of others—and they hate themselves for it. The solution to their problem is the same as the solution to Vernon's and Caroline's—the cleansing blood of Jesus. The Lord says to those who look to him: 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow' (Isa. 1:18). Jesus died on the cross to destroy the negative things that destroy his people, and to give them a new heart.

He atoned for all those wrongs, and if we claim that atonement for ourselves, we, too, shall be washed clean with his blood. Start by asking him for his grace, peace, forgiveness and joy to replace the negatives in your life, and then strengthen these new things by reading your Bible daily, starting with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Jesus addresses the root of your problems, for if the root is right, the fruit will be right. When you accept Jesus' forgiveness you will soon discover that because you

have been forgiven, you too will forgive. Because God has accepted you, you too will accept others. Because you have received peace from God, you will radiate his peace. Whatever is in your cup will overflow into the lives of others. So let your life be filled with the overflowing grace of God. Remind yourself daily that your **GIGO** is now **Grace In; Grace Out**. If it is to flow out daily, it must first flow in, so keep topping it up with God's Word. 



SPRING BIBLE SCHOOL AT BALLINA 2010

On the 6th November, the second Bible School for 2010 was held at Ballina NSW, with thirty-five people attending.

Pastor Ron Allen directed our attention to Phariseeism, an approach to worship which can readily find a foothold in the human heart. Although it begins with the highest of motives, with its 'joyless attention to selected obediences' it can foster pride, shut out love, and cause discouragement.

The necessity in any Bible study of studying the

context and historical setting of the passage of Scripture, was the subject chosen by **Dr Milton Hook**. By ignoring these criteria, false conclusions can be reached. This Milton illustrated with a study on the book of Daniel, chapter 9.

What a great day of Bible study and fellowship!



JESUS' PARABLES

THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU

In Matthew 5:14-15 Jesus says, *'You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.'*

In Luke 11:33-36 Jesus goes on to say, *'Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.'*


Jesus poured the oil of the Holy Spirit into us and lit us for a purpose—to provide light for a people living in darkness. For us to hide our lights is to deny the whole purpose of our being lamps for the Lord. If you feel unfulfilled in your life, it could be because you are not sharing your light with others. There is no greater satisfaction than that of bringing someone to the Lord.

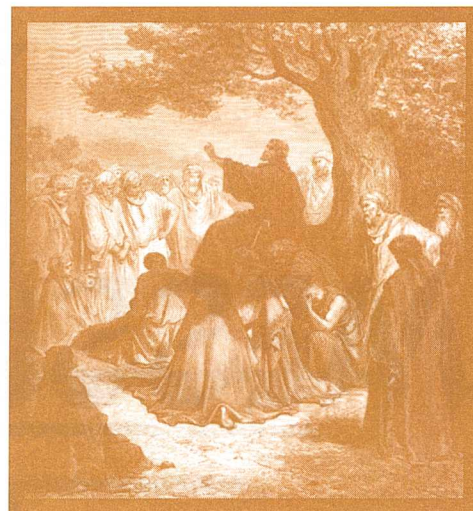
But what does Jesus mean when he says, 'Your eye is the lamp of your body'? The Jews had many colloquialisms, just as we do. We all know what is meant when someone says, 'I think I'll hit the sack'. If we took that literally we'd expect that person to get a wheat sack and beat the dust out of it. But we know that is not what is meant, because the expression is a colloquialism which means, 'I think I'll go to bed'. In the same way a 'good eye' or a 'bad eye' is a colloquialism among the Jews, even to this day.

To the Jews a person with a 'good eye' is a generous person. In Proverbs 22:9 the phrase 'a generous man' is literally, 'the good of eye'. Similarly, a person with a 'bad eye' is a stingy person. In Proverbs 23:6 the phrase interpreted, 'a stingy man' is literally 'an evil eye'. So Jesus is telling us that a generous person

is a person whose lamp is burning bright, while a stingy person is a lamp that has gone out.

Consider how generous God is. Our sun, which converts four million tons of matter into energy every second, is so large it is not expected to undergo any dramatic changes for 5,000 million years. But our small planet, which is almost 150 million kilometres away from the sun, receives only a tiny fraction of all that light and heat. God made the sun to provide far more light and energy than we could ever hope to use. And there is, likewise, far more air than we could ever breathe. In the same way, just as the Creator is worth more than his creation, so Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross is worth far more than the deaths of every sinner that ever lived, or will ever live.

It is God's nature to give and to forgive. His love and grace, like the ocean, is boundless. Jesus tells us to reflect God by having a 'good eye' and being generous with our time, talents and assets in blessing the lives of others. He says, 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.' 



Good News Unlimited Bible Seminar 2011

WHY IS LIFE SO HARD?

The Christian Solution

SYDNEY

March 19, 9.30am-4.30pm

Thornleigh Comm. Centre,
Cnr. Phyllis & Central Avenues
Thornleigh NSW

BRISBANE

April 16, 9.30am-4.30pm

Springwood Tower Hotel
9 Murrajong Rd.
Springwood QLD

MELBOURNE

May 7, 9.30am-4.30pm

Carey Baptist Grammar
School Chapel
349 Bakers Rd.
Kew VIC.



THE MESSIAH KING

Ritchie Way

When David's son, Solomon, came to the throne the Lord promised: 'I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son' (2 Sam. 7:12-14).

The promises that were made about David's son, Solomon, were, however, never completely fulfilled through Solomon or his descendants, for in Jesus' time Israel was no longer an independent kingdom with its own King. Israel's King was a Roman (John 19:15), not an offspring of David. The faithful in Israel, however, trusted that God would honour his promises, if not through Solomon, then through another 'Son of David'.

THE PROMISE IS FULFILLED

The Bible says, 'When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman ...' (Gal. 4:4). Before Jesus was born the angel Gabriel told Mary that the son she would give birth to would be 'the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end' (Luke 1:32-33).

Jesus, a direct descendant of King David (Matt. 1:1-6), was born in the same town as David, just as the prophet Micah foretold (Matt. 2:1-6; Mic. 5:2). When Jesus began his ministry the people recognised the kingly authority in his words and miracles and believed him to be the Son of David (Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3; Rev. 22:16). Some wondered if he was the 'Son of David', others acknowledged him as the rightful heir to David's throne (Matt. 12:23; 20:30-31).

Peter was the first of Jesus' disciples to recognise and confess that Jesus was the Messiah (King) (Mark 8:29). Jesus told the woman of Samaria that he was the Messiah (John 4:25-26). Under oath, Jesus confessed to the High Priest that he was the



It was the custom in Israel to pour oil on the head of their King at his appointment or coronation (1 Sam. 16:1-13; 2 Kings 9:1-13). Because of this ceremony he was known as the 'anointed one' (Messiah) or King. The Greek word for Messiah, is Christ (John 4:25).

When David became King of the United Kingdom of Israel, the Lord made a special promise to him. The Lord told him that he would be the first King of a dynasty that would never end. He said, 'Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever' (2 Sam. 7:16).

David himself would die, but one of his descendants would always be King. The Psalmist wrote: 'The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne"' (Psa. 132:11; see also Psa. 89:19-37).

Messiah (Matt. 26:63-64), and Jesus told Pilate that he was the Messiah (John 18:36-37).

When Jesus fed five thousand Jews with a small boy's lunch the people wanted to make him king then and there (John 6:15). With such a king they would have no trouble driving out the Romans, because Jesus could raise the slain Israelite soldiers, he could heal the wounded, and feed the troops. They would be unconquerable. But Jesus resisted them, because his kingship and kingdom were quite different from what the people wanted.

Some of the Pharisees once asked Jesus, 'When will the kingdom of God come?'

Jesus answered, 'God's kingdom is coming, but not in a way that you will be able to see with your eyes. People will not say, "Look, here it is" or, "There it is!" because God's kingdom is within you' (Luke 17:20-21 NCV).

Christ's reign would start first in the hearts of people who put their faith in him and in his sacrifice for them. Those who became citizens of Christ's eternal kingdom were those who had Christ reigning within them (1 John 5:11-12; Col. 1:27).

The Jews were expecting the Messiah to evict the Roman occupational forces and re-establish Israel as an independent kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital. Jesus' kingdom, however, would be radically different from what they were anticipating. His kingdom would not just be another human kingdom like David's; it would not be established on the broken bodies and shed blood of Israel's enemies, but on the broken body and shed blood of Israel's King. Christ would not sacrifice his enemies to build his kingdom; he would sacrifice himself.

That is why Jesus told Pontius Pilate, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place' (John 18:36). The word 'now' is crucial to the interpretation of Jesus' words. Right up until Jesus' talk with Pilate the kingdom of Israel had been an earthly kingdom with physical boundaries. But from 'now' on, that is, from Jesus' death and resurrection, it would be a spiritual kingdom. Until that time, the door to God's presence in this kingdom was a door that was sealed shut and guarded (Matt. 27:62-65).

But Jesus broke the bonds of death and opened the door to eternal life in God's presence. Through his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1:10). Now that the door to eternity has been opened by Jesus, all who have been united with him in his death, are also united with him in his resurrection (Rom. 6:5). It is through the torn curtain of

Jesus' body that they now boldly enter the presence of the Father (Heb. 10:19-22).

Just a few days before the Passover, Jesus, in fulfilment of the messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, rode a donkey into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1-11). The people strewed Jesus' path with palm branches and garments and shouted, 'Blessed is the King of Israel' (John 12:13). It appeared to them that Jesus was about to assert his authority and become their King, but he disappointed their earthly expectations.

Judas felt that Jesus was a reluctant monarch and needed a bit of help. Perhaps if he arranged to have Jesus painted into a corner by armed soldiers he would be pressured to use physical force to enforce his kingly authority and claim his rightful throne. So Judas went to the Pharisees and offered to lead them to Jesus (Matt. 26:14-16).

Jesus, aware of Judas's intention, did not want him to know where they would celebrate the Passover meal, as he didn't want it interrupted until he had finished preparing his disciples for his death and their mission. So when Jesus sent Peter and John into the city to prepare the Passover meal, even they had no idea where the meal was to be held. Jesus told them to look out for a man carrying a water jar near the city gate. They were to follow him and he would lead them to the house where they were to prepare the meal (Luke 22:7-13).

During the Passover meal Jesus pointed his disciples to his up-coming sacrifice as the event that would establish his kingdom on Earth. The broken bread pointed to his broken body, and the wine symbolised his blood that would be shed (Luke. 22:14-20). They had come to the point in time where the shadow was about to be replaced by the reality, and the prophetic Passover Lamb would reach its supreme fulfilment in the sacrifice of the Saviour himself (1 Cor. 5:7).

When the first Passover lamb was slain in Egypt, those who were protected from death by its blood were set free from slavery to become God's kingdom. But Jesus' disciples, like all other Jews, saw no connection between the Passover Lamb and the Messiah. They weren't looking for the death of the Messiah to inaugurate God's spiritual kingdom on Earth; they were looking for the living Messiah to free them from the Romans (Luke 19:11; 24:21; Acts 1:6).

THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL

The Jews often spoke of the redemption of Israel and Jerusalem, but what the Jews understood by this redemption was very limited compared to Jesus' interpretation of it. When the Jews of Jesus' day spoke of the redemption of Israel (Luke 24:21); the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:38); or the redemption of

the people (Luke 1:68), they were not talking about their redemption from sin, but the redemption of their nation from its Gentile overlords. When they spoke of 'salvation' it was salvation from their enemies and those who hated them (Luke 1:69-74); in other words, the Romans. They believed that such a redemption would involve driving out the Romans in order to restore the kingdom to Israel (see Acts 1:6).

In the main, their view of redemption and salvation was related to Jewish self-rule in the land that God had given them. The Messiah, however, was not just a son of David; he was also a Son of God. Accordingly, his concept of redemption and salvation was divine as well as human. He had come, not to save his people from the rule of Rome, but to save them from something far worse, the despotic and destructive reign of sin in their lives.

Restoring self-government to Israel would not accomplish the heavenly objective that Jesus intended. Even if Israel became a kingdom independent of Rome, its leaders would still be selfish and corrupt; the poor and the lepers would still be oppressed; the blind, crippled, deaf and dumb would still be treated as though they were under God's curse. A real and eternal change for good would not come to God's people by changing those who ruled over their nation, but only by replacing the one who ruled in the hearts of all people with the Spirit of Christ.

This redemption and salvation, made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus, is the message that God has commissioned us to share with the world.

There are many Christians who, like Judas, still look for the establishment of Israel's earthly kingdom; they still look for the temple to be built and for its services to be restored. Like Judas, they are following their own agenda, rather than the Lord's. Their interpretation of the kingdom is more important to them than Jesus' interpretation. They refuse to see that the promises made about David's Son have been completely fulfilled by Jesus, and instead of accepting this New Covenant reality, they want to return to live in the shadow of the Old Covenant.

The whole temple system had a past, but no future after the death and resurrection of Jesus, because it had its complete fulfilment in him (John 2:20-22). The Law, which condemned all of us to death for our sins—and which slew anyone who dared approach it (1 Sam. 6:19-20; 2 Sam. 6:6-7)—destroyed Jesus, our sin-bearer in our place. Once he had atoned for our sins the barrier to the Most Holy Place was thrown open, never to be shut again (Matt. 28:2-4).

Death is no longer something that can keep us from God. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, we too shall rise to live eternally in the presence of the Father (John 14:19b). □

March Muster Ballina NSW

with Ron Allen

To Jerusalem for the Feast

Themes from Christ's Last Visit to the Temple

March 5 2011 10.00am - 4.00pm

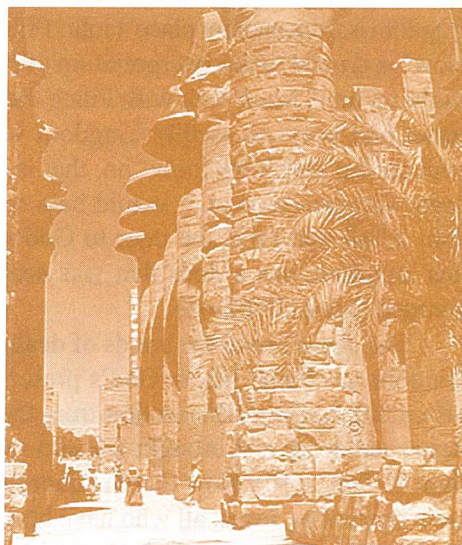
Ballina Island Motor Inn

One and a half kilometres south of town centre,
Pacific H'way Ballina NSW (Ph. 0266 868866)

Programme:

10.00am	<i>Jesus and the Merchants</i>
10.45am	Morning Tea
11.15am	<i>Jesus and the Clunkers</i>
12.15pm	Lunch (food cannot be brought into the motel; please make your own arrangements.)
2.00pm	<i>Jesus and the Scribes</i>
3.00pm	Afternoon Tea and informal fellowship.
4.00pm	Finish

Register now for GNU *March Muster* by sending \$5.00 per person to: Good News Unlimited, PO Box 6788 Tweed Heads South NSW 2486 **DO IT NOW!**



YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptising them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

I have come that they may
have life and have it to the full

John 10:10

My sheep listen to my voice,
I know them and they follow me

John 10:27

The nation of Israel began on the night of the very first Passover. Those who put their faith in the blood of the Lamb were redeemed from slavery in Egypt to become citizens in the new and independent nation of Israel (Exod. 12:1-42).

'YOU ARE MY WITNESSES'

God took his people out of Egypt and settled them in the land of Canaan, which was at the crossroads of three great continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. Israel was to be a living witness to the surrounding nations, of the blessings that come to those who serve and worship the one true God (Deut. 28:1-14; Isa. Isa. 43:10; 55:5; Eze. 5:5). This Promised Land was to be a base from which they could expand into the nations with the truth about the true God, who would, one day, come and dwell with his people and walk among them (Lev. 26:11-12; Eze. 37:27). The Hebrew tabernacle, where God dwelt in type, was a prophecy of this great truth.

Ritchie Way

When God gave Israel their own country, he gave them no more land than they could manage at that time. If Israel had been faithful to her trust, eventually the whole Earth would have become her inheritance, not just the land of Canaan. Abraham and his offspring received the promise that they would be heirs, not just of Canaan, but of the whole world (*kosmos*) (Rom. 4:13).

God wasn't just God of the Hebrews, he was also God of the Gentiles (Rom 3:29). He has a heart not just for the Israelites alone, but for *all* of Adam's descendants. It was God's will that Israel be a light to the Gentiles by displaying *his* splendour (Isa. 49:3). Their commission was to take his salvation to the ends of the Earth (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47). It was his desire that the whole earth be filled with his glory (Psa. 72:19), and that '*all* nations ... gather in Jerusalem to honour the name of the Lord' (Jer. 3:17), and that his temple there become known as a 'house of prayer for *all* nations' (Isa 56:7).

Israel, unfortunately, developed a very jaundiced view of the Gentiles, believing that it, alone, was exclusively God's nation, and that the Gentiles were outside of the walls of redemption and always would be. Jesus, however, revealed that people are not saved by the blood of Abraham, but by the blood of God's Son. No one is saved because they belong to an earthly nation; people are saved because they belong to God. This, however, was not good news for the Jews.

When Jesus tried to disabuse them of the danger of putting their faith in their ethnicity—by pointing out that there were Gentile people of faith whom God favoured more than most Jews—they were so enraged they tried to kill him (Luke 4:16-30).

JONAH

The story of Jonah is a historical parable of Israel's strained relationship with the Gentiles. When sent to call the Gentiles to repentance, Jonah was so incensed at God's totally 'unreasonable' commission, he took off in the opposite direction.

But the Lord stopped Jonah in his tracks, brought him back and sent him off to Nineveh to do what he had been commanded to do. Even then, Jonah preached forgiveness to the Gentiles under duress, hoping all along that they wouldn't repent so that God would destroy them. When they did repent he was extremely put-out because God had mercy on them and forgave them (Jon. 4:1-11).

The story of Jonah typified the experience of the nation of Israel, which was swallowed up by Babylon (the big fish) and spewed back onto its land to do the job it had failed to do. With the passing of time, however, Israel became even more exclusive: they would not eat with Gentiles, they would not permit a Gentile to stay in their home and some would even have a wash if the shadow of a Gentile passed over them.

THE COMMISSION IS GIVEN TO THE GENTILES

Jesus summed up this anti-evangelistic spirit of the Jews in a parable about them and the great gospel treasure the Lord had entrusted to their care. Instead of sharing this treasure with the sinners, tax collectors and Gentiles, they just built bigger repositories for it, so they could keep it all for themselves (Luke 12:16-21). But because they kept it all to themselves it would eventually be taken from them.

One day in Capernaum, a Roman Centurion approached Jesus and asked if he would heal his paralysed servant who was in great suffering. When Jesus said he would go and heal him the Centurion replied, 'Lord, I don't deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word and my servant will be healed.'

After the Centurion had departed Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the East and West [beyond Israel's borders], and will take their places at the feast with Abraham [who was also a Gentile who put his faith in God], ... in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom [Israel] will be thrown outside

into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt. 8:5-12).

Some time later, the Lord, at the limit of his patience, told a parable to the Jews about a landowner (God) who had planted a vineyard (his kingdom) and leased it out to some farmers (Israel). At harvest time he sent some servants to collect his fruit, but these servants were beaten, stoned or killed. Finally, he sent his son, believing that they would respect him. But they said, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance'. So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him (Matt. 21:38).

Because the keepers of the vineyard failed to produce the fruit the Lord required, and because they murdered those who came for the fruit, Jesus said to the Jews, 'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit' (Matt. 21:43; see 21:45 and Mark 12:12).

Jesus' words here clearly reveal that God has removed his kingdom from Israel's custody and has given it to others. This means that Israel, as a nation, no longer figures in God's plan for the redemption of the world. Over and over and over again they had their chance to bear witness to God's mercy, but they failed. Instead of sharing God's blessings with the Gentiles, they kept them to themselves. It was for this reason that Jesus pronounced his verdict: 'The kingdom of God will be taken away from you ...' In God's sight Israel today is no different from any other nation. The kingdom of heaven was stripped from Israel and given to others who would do what Israel failed to do—share God's glory with the world.

It was to those who followed him, both Jew and Gentile, that Jesus gave the task of producing fruit from among the nations. He said to them, 'This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples' (John 15:8).

JESUS' EXAMPLE

The Gospel of Mark reveals that Jesus' ministry centred around the Sea of Galilee. Jews inhabited the land on the western side of the Sea, and Gentiles the eastern side. Jesus performed similar miracles on both sides—casting out evil spirits, healing the people and feeding the multitudes with loaves and fishes.

In Mark 6 Jesus fed five thousand Jews with five loaves and two fish, after which the disciples gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. In Mark 8 he fed four thousand Gentiles with seven loaves and a few small fish, after which his disciples gathered seven baskets of leftovers.


Afterward Jesus warned his disciples, 'Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees ...' (Mark 8:14-21).

In Scripture, yeast is a symbol of evil. One of the evils of the Pharisees was to reject every sign Jesus gave, except the ones they personally approved of (Mark 8:11). Jesus had just miraculously fed the Gentiles of Decapolis, on the eastern shore of the lake, but the Pharisees did not consider that to be something their Messiah would do (Mark 8:1-10). The Messiah, in their opinion, would not feed the Gentiles, he would annihilate them.

By ministering grace to the Gentiles Jesus was establishing a precedent for his disciples. Before he left Planet Earth Jesus commanded them to 'go and make disciples of *all* nations ...' (Matt. 28:19).

There were two main reasons why the Jews rejected their God who came to them in the flesh, firstly, he wasn't interested in saving them from the Romans, and secondly, he was focused on preaching the gospel

to people they considered to be outside the reach of salvation (Matt. 9:13; 28:19; Acts 9:15). So they executed their Messiah. When the apostle Paul told the Jews that God had commissioned him to take the gospel to the Gentiles, the crowd wanted to kill him also (Acts 22:21-23; 1 Thes. 2:14-16). How dare he suggest that Gentiles were fit to share the kingdom with them?

Because Israel, according to the flesh, showed no mercy to Him who is all merciful, and because Israel according to the flesh refused to show mercy to those Gentiles who sought mercy, God had no mercy on them (James 2:13). There is no forgiveness for those who refuse to extend God's forgiveness to others (Matt. 6:14-15). So the Lord 'sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city' (Matt. 22:7) 

SPECIAL PROJECT I

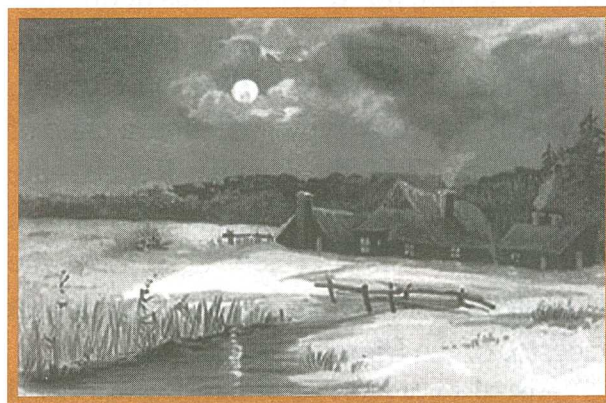
Part I

Towards the end of 2009 Ritchie and Rosemary Way responded to a call from Ukraine for someone from *Good News Unlimited* to go there and share the gospel with them. During their time in that country they discovered that the people in southwest Ukraine, near the Carpathian Mountains, had very little gospel literature apart from their Bibles. It became Ritchie's and Rosemary's desire, as the next phase of their mission to Ukraine, to get some inexpensive gospel literature into the hands of these subsistence farmers who loved the Lord.

On their way back to New Zealand they visited a group of *Good News Unlimited* supporters in Vancouver, Canada. Among these people were folk, originally from Ukraine, who were keen to get *Jesus Only*, one of Dr. Ford's books, translated into Ukrainian. These folks offered to pay for the translation and printing of these books. Dr. Ford gave his blessing to this project. By the time you read this we expect to have found a suitable translator. It is anticipated that once the translation has been completed and checked, the books will be printed in Ivano Frankivsk where a very good job can be done much more cheaply than elsewhere.

Part II


At the *Good News Unlimited* Board Meeting in September last year a decision was made to prepare and print a *Readers Digest* size quarterly *Good News Unlimited* magazine in Ukrainian for Ukrainian people who live in Ukraine and elsewhere. These magazines will focus on gospel issues, such as the Lord Jesus,



crucified and risen from the dead, the assurance of salvation; the difference between the root and fruit of salvation, etc.

There is a large independent Sabbatarian church in southwest Ukraine that would not only benefit from such magazines, but would also use them in their missionary outreach to their neighbours, near and far. Even the Baptist Churches, in and around Ivano Frankivsk and Burshtyn, would welcome such literature.

Should this venture prove successful, we would consider doing something similar for other language groups where there is a need for such literature.

Good News Unlimited has started an Outreach Ukraine Fund to finance this venture. At this stage we have no idea what it will cost us to get one issue of a magazine translated, set-up, and printed, but we will let you know as soon as the information becomes available. In the meantime we appeal to you to invest in this venture of faith for the salvation of souls. Some people will be able to make large donations, others not so large, but we'd like everyone to give something, so that you all may be blessed in return. What better New Year gift could you offer? Please designate your donation: **Outreach Ukraine Fund.** 

THE NEW ISRAEL

Ritchie Way

Many people assume that only those who can trace their physical lineage back to Abraham, are heirs to the covenant that God made with Abraham. But the Gentiles who left Egypt with the children of Israel also became heirs of the covenant that God made with Abraham, for 'all Israel' was defined by Joshua as 'aliens and citizens alike' (Josh. 8:33). The Bible reveals that the Cushite, Zipporah—Moses' wife—became a child of God (Num. 12:1), the Gentile, Rahab—the wife of Salmon—was accepted as a citizen of the nation of Israel (Heb. 11:31), and the Moabitess, Ruth—Boaz's wife—became an ancestor of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5).

The educated Jew, Paul of Tarsus, gave a radical interpretation to the question of who was a true Jew. He said, 'Not everyone born into a Jewish family is truly a Jew' (Rom. 9:6 LB). And in Romans 2:28-29 he pointed out that a true Jew is one who is a Jew in spirit, rather than in the flesh. If you are looking for a biblical definition of a true Jew, Paul gives you one in these verses.

It is significant that the New Testament sees Abraham as pre-eminently 'the father of all who believe', rather than as the physical ancestor of the Jews (Rom. 4:11). His spiritual legacy, rather than his physical legacy, is what counts with God. This means that most Jews in Israel today, who do not believe in the Jewish Messiah, are not Abraham's spiritual children. On the other hand, it also means that Arab Christians, who have faith in Jesus, are true children of Abraham. This has serious implications for Zionists who are looking for the restoration of the literal Davidic kingdom.

THE OLIVE TREE

In Romans 11 Paul uses a cultivated olive tree as a symbol for God's faithful people through the ages. It is important to note that, according to the apostle Paul, this family tree of God's people is not a tree of natural descent; it is a tree of faith.

Even though the ten northern tribes of Israel were



descendants of Abraham, 27,290 people from these tribes were pruned from this tree of faith because they had given up their belief in God; and Gentile believers, such as Rahab and Ruth, were grafted into this tree because they found faith in God. And those Jews who later returned to faith, through Jesus, were grafted in again.

The key to interpreting the nature of this tree is found in verses 20-23. The branches that were broken off were removed 'because of *unbelief*.' Those that remained were there 'by *faith*.' And if the ones who were broken off did not persist in *unbelief*, they would be grafted in again. Being a part of this tree had nothing to do with genes, and everything to do with faith in the Lord. Those who had faith in Lord were part of this tree; those who did not have faith in him were not part of this tree.

Paul then makes a rather enigmatic statement that has been interpreted in two different ways. Here is the statement: '*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved ...*' (Rom. 11:25-26).

Evangelical Christians claim that 'all Israel' consists of both Gentiles and Jews who put their faith in Jesus. Zionists claim that Paul is predicting a great ingathering of Jews after the Gentiles have accepted the gospel?' Which understanding is correct?

The word 'so', in the last sentence, is the key to the correct interpretation of this verse. 'So' means consequently. In other words, the consequence of the full number of Gentiles coming in, is that 'all Israel will be saved.' The natural conclusion arrived at from the pre-

vious sentence is that 'all Israel' includes both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. This also accords with Joshua 8:33 where the phrase 'all Israel' encompasses 'aliens and citizens alike'.

We can assume, therefore, that 'all Israel' does not mean every living Jew. The phrase 'all Israel' is a technical phrase referring to all 'aliens and citizens alike' who have faith in God.

Paul goes on to say, in the following verses, that through the converted Gentiles many Jews will be brought to faith in their Messiah (Rom. 11:28-31). Note that he is not saying that *every* Jew, nor even *most* Jews, will come to faith in Jesus. He is just saying that many Jews will come to faith through the ministry of converted Gentiles. And that is what is happening today.

THE TWELVE TRIBES

Almost all of the early believers in Jesus were Jews. Jesus, himself, was a Jew. His apostles were all Jews. The Church that he founded was Jewish. Their Scriptures were Jewish. They worshipped at the Temple. They kept the seventh-day Sabbath. They tithed their income. They observed the Jewish festivals.

The Nazarene Jews who followed Jesus were just one segment of the total Jewish pie that was made up of many sects. There was the sect of the Pharisees (Luke 5:30; Acts 26:5), the sect of the Saducees, the sect of the Herodians, the sect of the Essenes, and the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5, 14; 28:22).

The early Church was an integral part of Israel. On more than one occasion they were called to give an account of their actions before the Sanhedrin. Had they not been a part of Israel the Sanhedrin would

have had no authority over them, but, as a subset of Judaism they were held accountable to Jewish law (Acts 4:1-22; 22:30 - 23:5).

The ultra-orthodox Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, got permission from the High Priest to arrest any Nazarenes found worshipping in Damascus synagogues (Acts 9). If the followers of Jesus weren't Jews, what were they doing worshipping in Jewish synagogues on the Sabbath? And if they weren't Jews, what authority would the Jewish High Priest have over them?

Even though Saul of Tarsus became a follower of Jesus, he lived as a Jew for the rest of his life. Many years after his conversion he not only claimed to be a Jew (Acts 21:39; 22:3), he also claimed to be a Pharisee (Acts 23:6). Even the Gentiles, to whom Paul and Silas preached, understood that they were Jews (Acts 16:20). Paul did not see that being a Jew was incompatible with being a follower of the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth.

It was never the intention of Jesus to start a new religion called 'the Way' or 'Christianity'. His purpose was to revive and reform Israel, to bring the nation back under God, and back to its commission to reach the Gentiles with the gospel. His followers were Israel as God intended it should be, worshipping the Messiah and taking the gospel of the kingdom to every nation, tribe, language and people. But because both these things were rejected by the Jewish authorities of that time, they cut themselves off from God's purpose for them and forced a separation between themselves and the followers of the Jewish Messiah.

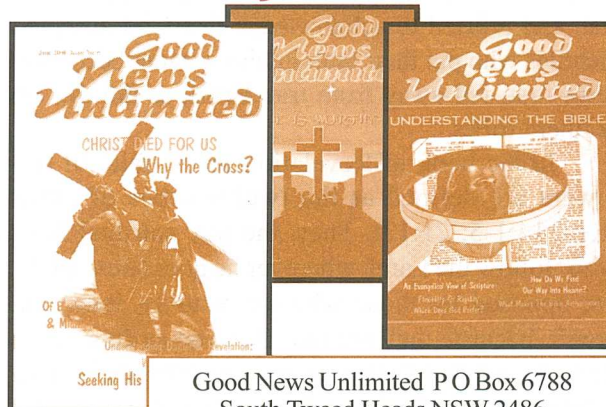
The final break between the Jews and the followers of Jesus came about two generations after Jesus when the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and

The New Zealand office had an enquiry from a married couple in the United Kingdom who are keen to establish a Chapter of *Good News Unlimited*, with a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, in their realm.

These two people are evangelists at heart, and are keen to share the gospel with people near and far. To help them with their mission we have begun airmailing a bulk order of fifty magazines per month to them. The total cost of this outreach is about \$AU4000 per year. We anticipate that it may take a couple of years until the people in the UK begin covering the cost of their magazines with subscriptions and donations. Even then they may still need help to spread the gospel net wider in their nation—a nation that was once a great bastion of the gospel, but which, today, is itself in desperate need of that same gospel.

If the Lord lays it on your heart to participate in this outreach, please send your gift to the GNU office, labeled **Outreach United Kingdom Fund**.

SPECIAL PROJECT 2



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the Temple. There was also one other factor that handicapped the work of the early Church. As long as it had its base of authority in Jerusalem, its mission to the Gentiles was hampered by Jewish religious culture. But with the destruction of Jerusalem, the leadership of the Christian Church fell, by default, to the Gentile believers. The Gentiles, not having grown up with a Hebrew religious culture, gradually developed their own religious culture that better fitted their own world.

Through the Jewish followers of Jesus, who accepted his commission to preach the gospel to all the world, the Gentiles became 'heirs together with Israel' of the nascent promises given to Abraham (Eph. 2:12-13; 3:6). They taught that Jesus had 'destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility' that existed between the Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-15).

This 'dividing wall' (*mesotoichon*) was the name given to the wall that kept the Gentiles out of the Temple. On it was an inscription that read: 'No foreigner may enter within the barricade (*mesotoichon*) which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.' It was thus that the Jews kept the Gentiles at a distance from God. But Jesus destroyed this barrier by reconciling both Jew and Gentile with God through the cross (Eph. 2:16).

But in bringing the Gentiles into Israel the followers of Jesus were not creating a new body called the Church; they were only doing what Israel should have done all along. The Christian Church *is* Israel, as God intended, committed to the Messiah (Christ), witnessing to the Gentiles, and embracing those who believe.

The Church, therefore, does not *replace* Israel; the Church *is* Israel. It is Israel's only continuing stream of believers in her incarnate God. The Christian Church continued the line as God's people—the true Israel and the faithful offspring of Abraham—just as Judah did after the ten northern tribes turned their backs on God. On the other hand, those Jews who rejected the Messiah and refused to acknowledge that God accepted Gentiles who put their faith in him without becoming Jews first, fell away from true Israel, as did the ten northern tribes.

In the book of Revelation Jesus' faithful followers are defined as the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 14:1-5; 21:12). They, the true spiritual Jews who 'follow the Lamb wherever he goes (Rev. 14:4), are opposed by those who claim to be Jews, but aren't, because they are only Jews according to the flesh (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). James, the Lord's brother, wrote a letter 'to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations' (James 1:1). In chapter 2:1 he identifies the recipients of his letter as 'believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.'

JESUS' PARABLES

Many of Jesus' parables had two layers of meaning. The first layer of these parables was for the individual: it contrasted one individual with another and revealed which of the two was made right with God, and why. The second layer was for the nation: it contrasted Israel with the Gentiles who came to faith in Jesus. It is this second layer that we shall focus on below.

In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, the wise were those who built their spiritual house upon the rock—Jesus (Luke 6:47-49). The foolish were the Jews who built their spiritual house on the sand of false messiahs. In AD68 Rome invaded Palestine like a storm and the house of Israel, which was not founded on Christ, collapsed.

In the parable of the new wine in old wineskins (Luke 5:37-38), the new wine represented Jesus' gospel message, which the old wineskins of Judaism could not contain. Jesus' message of God's free grace could only be contained in the new wineskins of the Gentile Church.

The parable of the tenants, in which the leaseholders of the vineyard refused to give the owner some of its fruit, and then murdered his son, concludes with these words: 'The teachers of the law and chief priests ... knew he had spoken this parable against them' (Luke 20:9-19).

The Good Samaritan represents the Gentiles who had pity on the wounded Jesus, while the priest and Levite who passed on the other side of the road represent Israel, who turned their backs on the wounded Christ (Luke 10:30-37).

In the parable of the great banquet, the Jews who rejected the invitation were replaced by Gentile 'sinners' who accepted (Luke 14:16-24).

In the parable of the two sons, the son who sinned greatly against his father, but who repented (the Gentiles), was invited back into the father's house. The elder son, who saw no need to repent (the Jews), resolutely refused to go in (Luke 15:11-32).

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man represented the Jews who cared little for defiled sinners, while Lazarus represented the Gentiles who craved for the spiritual food that the Jews had an abundance of. They were rewarded according to their faith (Luke 16:19-31).

In the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (Luke 18:10-14), the self-righteous Pharisee who felt he had nothing to repent of, represented the Jews who believed they were worthy of God's grace because of the 'good' things they did, whereas the tax collector, who acknowledged his sinfulness and craved God's mercy, represented the Gentiles who were made right with God by faith in the free gift of his grace.


NEW COVENANT ISRAEL

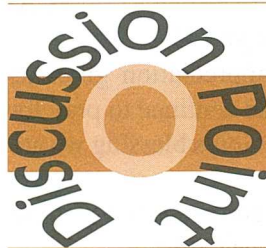
God promised the Hebrews that he would come and dwell among his people (Lev. 26:11-12). And, in the fullness of time God in the flesh made his dwelling among them (John 1:14). Jesus did not boast of the purity of his earthly ancestry, for, although he was a son of Abraham, he also had many undesirables, like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Uriah's wife in his genealogy (Matt. 1:3-6), showing that he iden-

tified with the Jews and sinners alike.

In his inaugural address, Jesus made it clear that his people were not those who trace their genetic line back to Abraham, but those who had the faith of Abraham (Luke 4:16-30). His whole ministry was to include in his flock those who had been excluded by Israel. He would lay down his life for them (John 10:14-16). To these aliens, Jesus promised more than the Promised

Land, he said they would inherit the whole Earth (Matt. 5:5).

When Jesus returns he will say to his flock that has been gathered in from every nation, tribe, language and people, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world' (Matt. 25:34). And that inheritance is not just the land of Israel; it is the whole world (Dan. 7:18). 



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?

Dear Ritchie

The 2010 spring in New Zealand delivered some rather horrific weather to the country. A huge storm from the Southern Ocean blasted New Zealand with gales and snow, killing several hundred thousand new-born lambs in Southland and Otago. It made my heart ache to see, on the News, large piles of the frozen bodies of these little creatures.

I can't understand why God would allow such a terrible thing to happen? Can you?

W. G

Dear W

God didn't take the sheep to New Zealand and put them in the extreme south of the country, then fence them into paddocks where they couldn't escape to find shelter. **That was the work of man—man who, regrettably, has shown little concern for his animals.** I have driven through that same country in summer to see these sheep lined up in the thin shade of a power pole trying to get relief from the extreme heat. There were no trees to give them protection from the burning sun, and none to protect them from the

icy winds in winter and spring.

While the spring storm of 2010 was the worst for many years, it is not the only spring storm in recent times to kill large numbers of lambs. Half a million lambs died of hypothermia in 2004, and another twenty thousand in 2006. Yet few lessons seem to have been learned from the past. Sheep farmers could either delay putting their rams to the ewes for a few weeks, and/or provide their sheep with shelter appropriate to their needs.

Why is it that when a farmer abuses an animal the RSPCA acts, but when large numbers of his stock are killed by his failure to provide adequate shelter for these animals he is exonerated? Why? He is guilty of raising lambs in a climate known for its equinoctial extremes, without making appropriate provision for their survival. As someone who spent three years working with sheep, I say he should be held accountable. These are not turnips he is dealing with, but live animals.

Ritchie.

FUNDAMENTALISM

Dear Ritchie

In spite of your comments about fundamentalist Muslims,

there are a multitude of moderate Muslims who are truly lovely people. They should not all be lumped together in the same basket. We shouldn't naturally assume that all terrorist activities by Arabs have their roots in Islam. President Obama rightly pointed out that 911 wasn't a religious issue.

P. I.

Dear P

President Obama was wrong. The people who flew passenger planes full of innocent people into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were devout Muslims. The President would have been wiser to define these terrorists as fundamentalists. There are fundamentalist Muslims, just as there have been fundamentalist Jews and fundamentalist Christians. All fundamentalists, regardless of their creed, are fanatical extremists.

My wife and I have been working with Muslim immigrants for several years. Of these six or seven families, only one person has revealed real antagonism to Christianity. When one of our helpers talked to a Muslim woman about Jesus, a young man came storming out of an adjacent room, took his shoe off, whacked the wall with it by her head and yelled abuse at her.

Moderate Islam, however, is like an ocean. Without this body of water there would be no tsunamis. But wherever moderate Islam

goes, Islamic fundamentalism, with its destructive nature, follows. That has been the case in the United States, in Spain, in the UK, and in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, Jewish fundamentalists didn't put Jesus off, so we shouldn't allow Islamic fundamentalism to stifle our witness either. Only Jesus can offer these people eternal life. They have no hope apart from him.

Ritchie.

GNU A GREAT MAGAZINE

Hi Ritchie

I have wanted to say this for a long time but have always put it off. I've been receiving the GNU magazines for many years now and have very much appreciated the content of the messages all these years.

I have found you to be an

excellent writer with very thought provoking messages since you first began your ministry with GNU. I like the way you explain things. You do so in a way that even blokes like me, that have not completed their secondary education, can understand. I have found a lot of depth in so many articles and I consider you to be a walking library. I don't know how you know so much.

It must be difficult to take so much criticism when you openly express your views in the articles and it is something that I'm sure I would not be able to do. Nevertheless, I think the material has been great and I even go back and appreciate the gospel messages received from many

years past.

Keep up the good work. I don't care who says what, I consider GNU to be the best Christian magazine I've read, and its Editor the best going. Thanks again for the wonderful gospel messages received over the years.

May the Lord continue to bless you in this ministry for a long time to come. My prayers are with you and your family.

Cheers

G K.

Thank you G

Your appreciation gives us wings. Please continue to pray for us. Without God's blessing we are ineffectual.

Grace and peace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ

Ritchie.

GOSPEL NUGGETS

THE PROTOEVANGELIUM

In this series on *Gospel Nuggets* a good place to start would be with the very first gospel message in the Bible. It is found in Genesis 3:15. After the serpent deceived Adam and Eve into rebelling against God, the Lord pronounced judgement upon it in the following words:

'You and this woman will hate each other; your descendants and hers will always be enemies. One of hers will strike you on the head, and you will strike him on the heel' (Contemporary English Version).

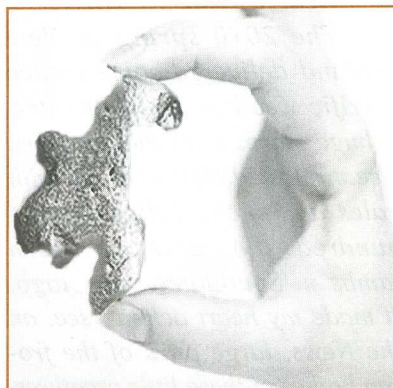
This very first prophecy, given by the Lord himself, predicts that, as a result of Adam's and Eve's introduction of sin into our world, the world would be divided into two groups; on one side there would be the woman and her offspring, and on the other, the serpent and its offspring. Just as the serpent represents Satan and those who serve him, so the woman rep-

resents those who commit themselves to a relationship with Christ, the bridegroom. Throughout Earth's history there would be continual conflict between Satan's offspring and the woman's offspring. This battle is depicted in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation.

The time would come when one of the woman's offspring, Jesus (Rev. 12:5), would do battle with Satan. Satan would strike Jesus on the heel, but Jesus would strike the devil on the head.

The head, which is at the top of the body, represents a person's life. If the head is crushed the person dies. The heel, which is at the bottom of the body, represents a person's flesh. If the heel is crushed the person does not die, but experiences excruciating pain.

Satan struck Jesus' 'heel' when his offspring had Jesus crucified. Jesus' suffering on the cross was intense, but he was not robbed of eternal life. Rather, his suffer-



ing resulted in eternal life for the woman's offspring.

On the other hand, Jesus' sacrifice crushed all that Satan's head represented. The God, who became human and sacrificed himself for the benefit of his people (Phlp. 2:5-11), rang the death-knell for all humans who make themselves god and who sacrifice others for their own benefit.

Satan, who was cast down by the cross (Luke 10:18), will be crushed underfoot by God's people when Jesus returns from heaven (Rom. 16:20) When this serpent is ultimately punished and destroyed (Rev. 20:10, 14), rebellion against God will cease to exist and we will be back in Paradise. ☐

Good News Unlimited Announces:

Good News in the City

THE CROSS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

With

Dr Desmond Ford

Part 1 February 19, 2011

1.00pm - 4.30pm

Part 2 August 6, 2011

1.00pm - 4.30pm

**City Star Motel, 650 Main Street,
Kangaroo Point, Brisbane QLD
Programme**

1.00pm Doors open, Meet and greet.

1.30pm Session 1.

2.30pm Fellowship and refreshments.

3.00pm Session 2. **4.30pm** Finish.

STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER

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 and click on 'Dr Ford Live'.

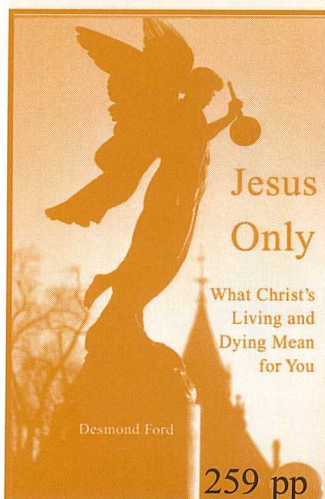
Alternatively go to:

www.ustream.tv/channel/dr-desmond-ford

The link is on

Youtube Channel page with times

<http://au.youtube.com/user/pangear>



Jesus Only

Dr Desmond Ford

\$24.95
(Plus PP&H)

#1JO0001

This book is Christ-centered, Cross-centered and Gospel-centered. Those who give it close attention will conclude that compared to the knowledge of the glad tidings from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all other knowledge is chaff. Gems from scores of Christian scholars are encapsulated in these pages. To gather them can make anyone richer than Solomon.

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

Good News Unlimited

Saturday Bible School 9.30am

**Bible study at
the GNU office**

**2/54-60 Industry Dr.,
Sth Tweed Heads NSW**

Morning tea provided
Please bring your Bible

For further information

Phone: 07 5524 5040

Email:

carolyn@goodnewsunlimited.org.au

**Feb. 5 April 2 June 18
July 2 August 20 Sept. 3**

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

Good News Unlimited

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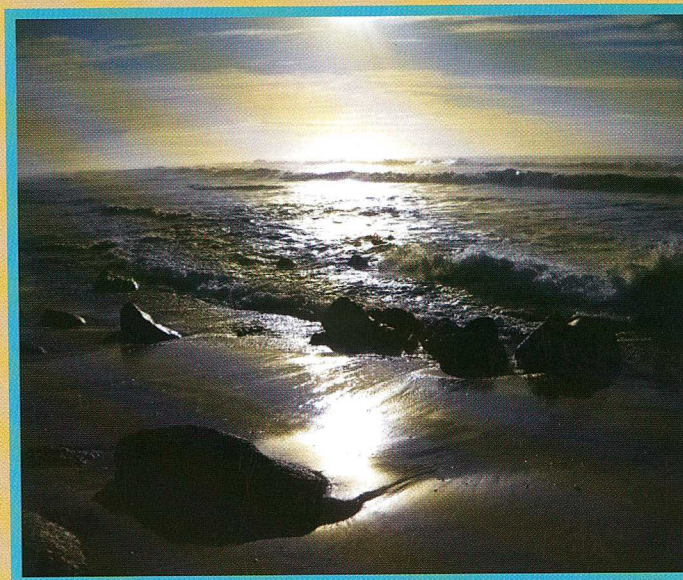
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Jesus said, 'When you pray, do not
keep on babbling like pagans, for
they think they will be heard
because of their many words. Do
not be like them, for your Father
knows what you need before you
ask him' (Matt. 6:7-8).