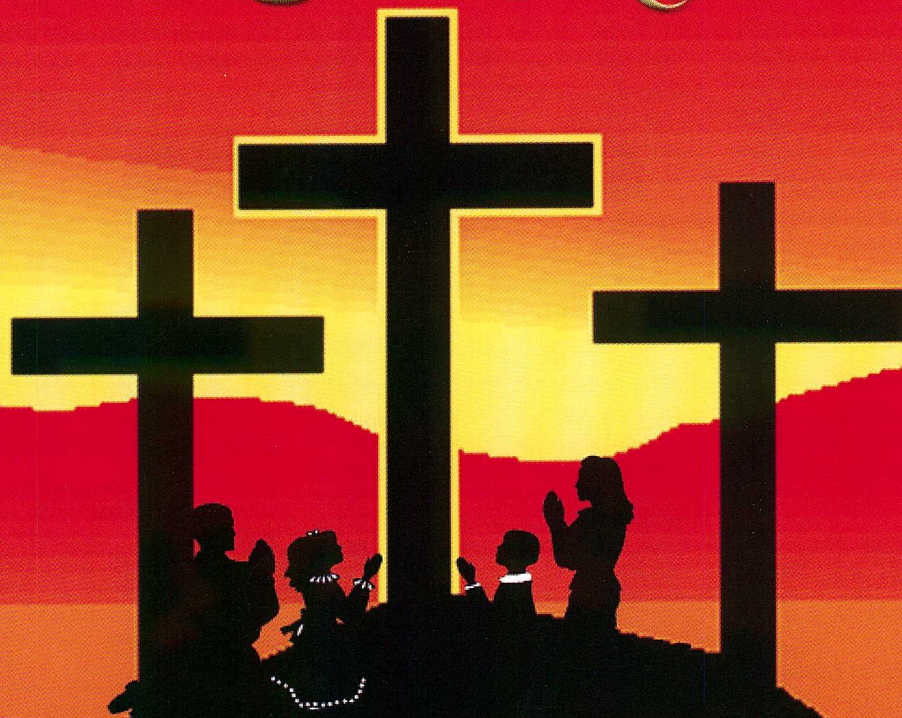


June 2009 Issue No. 6

# Good News Unlimited



HE IS WORTHY



Life through the Son

Forgiveness  
on the Beach

The Saint  
Must Walk Alone

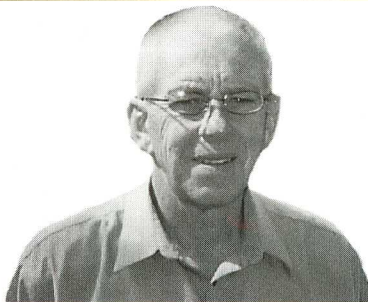
The Message  
About a Great War

Numbers  
in the Bible

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## EDITORIAL



**O**ne of the most profound and thought-provoking passages of Scripture is Revelation 5:12: *'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise.'* This verse encompasses both the lowest and the highest points in Christ's life—his crucifixion and his coronation.

Christ, as the sacrificial Lamb, was slain for the sins of the world (John 1:29). He died, not just for the redeemed, but for everyone (1 John 2:2). The penalty that he paid for the sins of all mankind would, therefore, have to be equal to the sum total of all those sins, otherwise his death would be insufficient to save; it would be like offering \$2.00 to cover a \$200,000.00 fine. If the wages of our sin is separation from the Lifegiver, that is, eternal death (Rom. 6:23) then Jesus had to die *that* death. Just sacrificing himself for three days and three nights would

not be sufficient to cover the accumulated cost of our rebellion against God.

We get some idea of the price Jesus paid for our sin when we see him in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he was faced with the greatest decision ever to be made in the history of the human race. Would he go ahead and give his life in exchange for ours, or would he back out? Would he—eternal Light—choose eternal darkness for our sakes? The battle between sacrificial love and self preservation was so great he became 'deeply distressed and troubled' and was so overwhelmed with anguish that the capillaries in his forehead ruptured with the strain (Luke 22:44). He would have died there and then (Mark 14:33-34) had an angel not come and strengthened him to drink the cup that had been placed in his hand (Luke 22:43).

On top of this Jesus had to face the gross humiliation of a mock trial, an unjust scourging and crucifixion on the roadside, where passersby gazed upon his nakedness and mocked the total helplessness of One, who earlier, claimed to have the power to rebuild the temple in three days (Matt. 27:39-44).

It was on the cross that Jesus experienced a nightmare even greater than the physical and mental torment—total abandonment by God. That his disciples should forsake him was bad enough, but that his Father, his Eternal

and trustworthy Companion with whom he was one, should desert him in his greatest hour of need was unbearable; it broke his heart and destroyed him. It wasn't the scourging or crucifixion that killed Jesus, but the extreme emptiness and purposelessness of a life without God.

What Jesus experienced in his last moments on the cross will eventually be experienced by everyone who dies without the Lord. According to 1 John 5:12 there is no life without the Lord. Life without God eventually results in a hopeless, futureless annihilation, and that is what Jesus experienced in his last hours. Even though he had confidently predicted his resurrection from the dead, his death when it approached, was devoid of this certainty. Our sins that were placed on him blotted out that reality. He paid the full price.

He who was 'in very nature God ... humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow' (Philip. 2:5-11). Yes, 'all authority in heaven and on earth' has been given to Jesus (Matt. 28:18). He has proved himself to be the only one worthy of it.

—Ritchie Way

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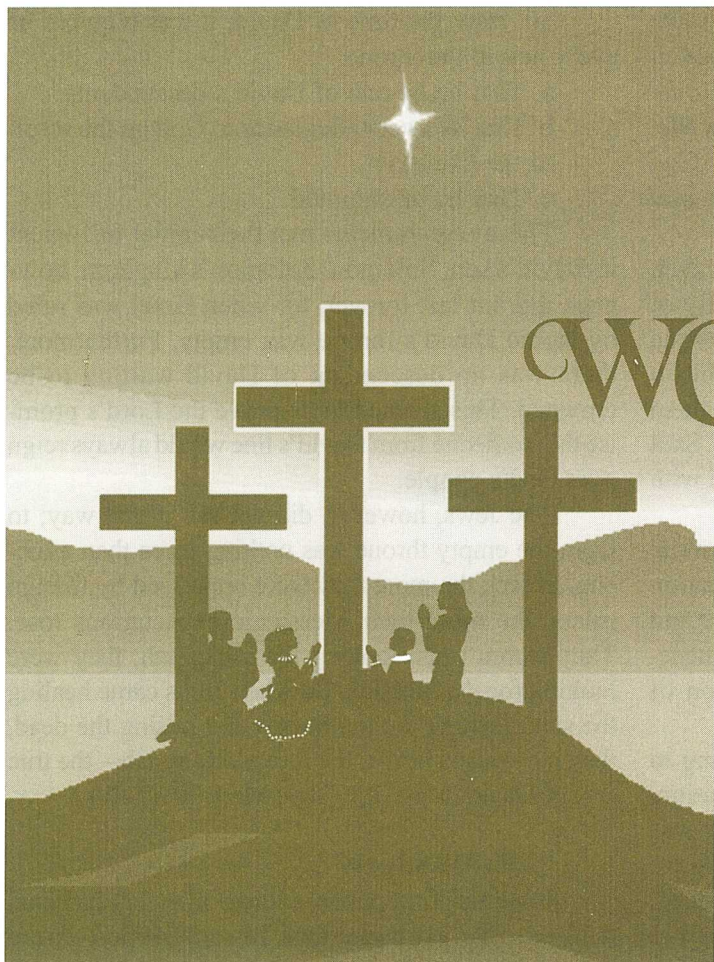
### Mission Statement

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

### Email







# HE IS WORTHY

Ritchie Way

About the same time that Joshua took the twelve tribes of Israel across the River Jordan into Canaan, to claim the Promised Land as their own, a large number of Philistines from Crete also entered and took over the Canaanite cities along the south-east Mediterranean coast. These Philistines, led by a single general, were formidable fighters with a strong military tradition. Their soldiers were disciplined and their iron weapons were superior to those used by the Israelites. They also had war chariots, which they used where the terrain permitted (e.g. 1 Sam. 13:5).<sup>1</sup>

As the populations of both Israel and the Philistines increased, the conflicts between the two nations over territory also increased. This mounting tension boiled over about 1050 BC near Aphek, at the

edge of the coastal plain (1 Sam. 4). The Israelites, who tried to stem the Philistine advance into their tribal lands, were badly beaten in their initial engagements with the

invaders, so decided to enlist God's help by bringing the Ark of the Covenant onto the battlefield. But in spite of this strategy, Israel's army was cut to pieces and the Philistines established garrisons at places in Israel that were strategic to their interests (1 Sam. 10:5; 13:3).

The Israelite elders realised that they were never going to beat the Philistines as long as they were just a loose alliance of twelve tribes. They needed a military leader, like Joshua, to unite them and to train and equip their army, so they appealed to the prophet, Samuel. Samuel, at first reluctant to agree to their request, finally consented, and, under God's guidance, chose Israel's first king, a Benjamite, Saul the son of Kish.

Samuel had misgivings about appointing a king to lead Israel because the king could decide the spiritual future of the country. If the king chose to worship a god other than Jehovah, then the nation would be compelled to follow him. It was important, therefore, that future kings be instructed in the ways of Jehovah, and that they take an oath at their coronation to serve Jehovah and Jehovah alone.

In preparation for this first coronation of an Israelite king, Samuel wrote the regulations of the kingship on a scroll. He based these regulations on what Moses had written, in Deuteronomy 17:18-20: 'When



*he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him and he is to read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees.'*

Accordingly, Saul, Israel's first king, was taken to the ancient shrine of Gilgal in the hill country of Ephraim for his coronation (1 Sam. 11:14). On the great day Samuel read the regulations for kingship to the king in front of all the people, then deposited them in the Sanctuary for safe-keeping (1 Sam 10:25). Saul swore fidelity to God on the Law, was anointed with oil and proclaimed king.

Moses stipulated that the new king had to write out his own copy of the law, then, at his coronation he had to swear on this covenant scroll that he and his people would be the Lord's people. That subsequently became the practice at the coronation of Israel's kings.

It wasn't possible, however, for every king to write out the law for himself prior to his coronation. For example, when the seven year old Joash was crowned as king, the high priest, Jehoida, handed the young monarch a copy of the covenant, then pledged, on behalf of the boy king, that the king, himself and all the people would be the Lord's people (2 Chron. 23:11, 16). Furthermore, as the Scriptures increased in size through the addition of other books, writing the whole by hand became impractical. Instead, the heirs to the throne would just swear loyalty to God on his Word.

### THE ANOINTED ONE

It was a practice, at each coronation, to anoint the new king with oil (2 Kings 9:6). Because oil was poured on his head the king was called 'the anointed one,' which, in the Hebrew language was 'messiah.' It was for this reason that the king was known as 'the Lord's anointed,' or the messiah.

From the time of David—Israel's second king—the Messiah also came to be known as 'the son of David' because God declared that one of David's descendants would always reign on Israel's throne.

The Lord promised David: *'I will raise up your offspring to succeed you—one of your own sons—and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him ... I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever'* (1 Chron. 17:11-14).

So, from the time of David, it was required of every heir to the throne:

- a. That he be one of David's descendants.
- b. That he swear allegiance to God on the scroll of the Covenant.
- c. That he be anointed.

These requirements met their initial fulfilment in David's son, Solomon. Solomon's kingdom, however, did not last forever, for when Israel was ruled by Rome David's throne was empty. Furthermore, there was no descendant of David waiting to be crowned. This seemed to disprove the Lord's promise that someone from David's line would always reign over God's people.

The Jews, however, did not see it that way; to them the empty throne was nothing more than a hiccup. In fact, the more they were oppressed by foreign rulers, the more their Messianic expectations rose. They weren't just looking for *a* messiah; they were looking for *the* Messiah. So when Jesus came healing the sick, feeding the multitudes and raising the dead, they recognised him as the foretold Messiah—the true Son of David (Matt. 1:1; 21:9; Mark 10:47-48).

### THE MESSIAH

In Jesus' first public address after his baptism, this heir to David's throne took the scroll of God's Word in his hands and declared: *'The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me ...'* (Luke 4:18).

In saying this Jesus revealed that he was the promised 'anointed one'—the one anointed, not by oil, but by the Spirit of God whom the oil represented. Jesus had come as King to claim his inheritance. He declared, *'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'* (Luke 4:22). Right there, at the beginning of his ministry, this Son of David, revealed that God had chosen him to be the Messiah, the King of Israel.

After announcing his messianic status Jesus defined the kind of people who would become citizens in his kingdom:

*'He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.'* A citizen of his kingdom would be a person who had been made rich by Christ's imputed righteousness.

*'He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.'* Citizens of his kingdom would be people who had been set free from bondage to their addictions.

*'He has sent me to proclaim recovery of sight for the blind.'* Citizens of his kingdom would be people whose eyes had been opened to behold what unbelievers cannot even imagine.

*'He has sent me to release the oppressed.'* Citizens of his kingdom would be people who had been set free from their spiritual oppressors.

*'He has sent me to proclaim the year of the*



*Lord's favour.*' This King would inaugurate a new era in which no citizen of his kingdom would be a slave, and no-one would be in debt.

In his next words Jesus made it clear that no-one would become a citizen of his kingdom just because they were a nominal believer, someone who had the externals of faith, but who had not internalised it. He said to the assembly, *'There were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, but he wasn't sent to any of them, but to a Gentile widow in Zarephath. And there were many lepers in Israel in Elisha's time, but not one of them was cured, only the Gentile Naaman from Syria'* (Luke 4:25-27). People like these two faithful ones were the kind of people who would be citizens in his kingdom.

For daring to suggest that anyone but Jews would be in Christ's kingdom, the members of the synagogue in Nazareth tried to kill him.

Yet there were both Jews and non-Jews who longed for the Messiah who would set them free. Once, while Jesus was on a journey through Samaria, a desperately empty woman there looked into his eyes and said to him hopefully, 'I know that the anointed One—the Messiah—is coming.' Jesus said, with a smile, 'Lady, he's talking to you' (John 4:25-26).

Later, when Pilate said to Jesus, 'You are a king, then!' Jesus replied, 'You are right in saying that I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born and for this I came into the world' (John 18:37). Yes, Jesus was born to be King.

### CHRIST'S CORONATION

Jesus, the God-man, had been anointed by God as the Messiah, but when would he be anointed by man as King? What event would mark his coronation by the people he had set free?

Six days before Jesus was crucified he was invited to a dinner in his honour at the home of Simon the Pharisee. While he was at the table a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town (Luke 7:37) came in with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which, according to Matthew 26:7 and Mark 14:3, she poured on his head. John identifies this woman as Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha (John 11:2). When the disciples criticised her for such waste, Jesus immediately defended her, saying, *'She has done a beautiful thing to me ... when she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial'* (Matt. 26:6-13).

Kings weren't the only ones who were anointed; the bodies of the dead were also anointed. In Jesus' case the two came together, because it was his death for us that ratified him as our King. Had he not died for us, he would have had no citizens for his kingdom,

so it was his death that made him King of you and me and ten thousand new citizens every day who choose him as their King. The cross became his throne, woven thorns became his crown and he held, as his sceptre, an iron spike in each hand. That was the price of his kingship.

After his resurrection from the dead Jesus returned to his disciples and announced: *'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'* (Matt. 28:18). He had been recognised by heaven as the greatest ruler in the universe. By virtue of his atoning sacrifice *'God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth'* (Philp. 2:9-10).

This coronation of Jesus had been foretold by the prophet Daniel in Daniel 7:13-14. He wrote that One like a son of man came to the Ancient of Days who gave him *'authority, glory and sovereign power,'* and *'all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.'*

### WORTHY IS THE LAMB

This same coronation scene is portrayed by John the Revelator. In Revelation 5 he pictures the Ancient of Days as holding a scroll that had writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals—the kind of scroll that every king of Israel received at his coronation. This was the covenant scroll, the scroll that the new king pledged to uphold, the scroll that guaranteed the King's subjects would belong to Jehovah and Jehovah alone. This was the scroll that pledged that God would be our God and we would be his people; that God would dwell among us, and walk among us (Lev. 26:11-12).

At this coronation scene in Revelation 5 everyone's attention was seized by a herald who asked in a loud voice, *'Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?'* When no-one was found to open the scroll John the Revelator wept and wept. Was there no-one worthy to be king of Israel? Was there no-one who could fulfil the covenant promise to restore the relationship between God and his people? Suddenly a proclamation is made, *'The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.'*<sup>2</sup>

There was hope, because Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and from David's roots. Then John saw an astounding thing; he *'saw a Lamb, looking as though it had been slain.'* This Lamb *'came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.'* As he took the scroll a heavenly choir



burst into song:

*'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,*

*because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God*

*from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

*You have made them to be a kingdom*

*And priests to serve our God,*

*And they will reign on the earth.'*

Then ten thousand times ten thousand angels sang,

*'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,*

*To receive power and wealth*

*And wisdom and strength*

*And honour and glory and praise.'*

Jesus is the only one who could open the ultimate covenant scroll that declared God to be our God and us to be his people, because he is the only one who could make that eternal relationship of God and man possible through his death for our sins. That was his triumph.

And that's what we celebrate today.

#### ILLUSTRATION

Just a few weeks ago I was sitting around a table with several ministers from other denominations who are all part of our local Minister's Association.

Several wanted to know about the beliefs of my church. I told them that our number one belief was that our salvation came one hundred percent from God

and naught percent from man. God has given us one hundred percent forgiveness for our sins and has accredited our accounts with one hundred percent righteousness. Salvation is a one hundred percent gift of God and not of our works lest any man should boast.

The priest of an Orthodox Church, who fasts for two hundred and ten days in every calendar year, asked, 'What about standards? Surely your church requires its members to live up to certain standards?'

'Standards are important to us,' I replied, 'but they are the *fruit* of our salvation and not the root. The root of our salvation is what Jesus did for us through his death on the cross.'

The others were too deep in thought to respond. After a while I continued, 'Thankfully, Jesus, who lived a perfect life, has credited his righteousness to me in exchange for my sinfulness. *'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God'* (2 Cor. 5:21). We *'become the righteousness of God'* by being in Jesus. If that is your standing, then Jesus is your King and you are a citizen of his kingdom." ☐

#### Endnotes:

1. I am indebted to John Bright, *A History of Israel*, second, revised edition (SCM Press), for the historical background.

2. Breaking the seals so that the scroll could be opened required a very special Person, someone, who in his own life, would experience the essence of that which was foretold by each of the seals, from the proclamation of the pure gospel, right through to the great earthquake and the sun turning black, followed by the deathly silence of the seventh seal.

Good News Unlimited invites you to:

## STAND FIRM!

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.  
Stand firm then and do not let yourselves  
be burdened again by a yoke of slavery  
(Galatians 5:1)*

**Considering Paul's letter  
to the Galatians.  
Celebrating joy and freedom  
through Jesus Christ.**

**Register now for *STAND FIRM!***

**Send \$5.00 for each person to Good News Unlimited**

Enjoy a day of fellowship at Ballina, Nth. NSW

with

**John Shaw**

and

**Ron Allen**

**Ballina Island Motor Inn**

(Best Western, Pacific Highway)

**Saturday July 18**

**10:00am-4:00pm**

#### Programme:

**10:00am Ron Allen.** *A bad case of Righteousness.*

**10:45am MORNING TEA.**

**11:15am John Shaw.** *Understanding our freedom in Christ.*

**12:15pm LUNCH** (Food cannot be brought into Hotel).

**2:00pm John Shaw.** *Enjoying Our Freedom in Christ.*

**3:00pm AFTERNOON TEA;** informal fellowship.

**4:00pm FINISH.**



# FORGIVENESS ON THE BEACH

Thomas Robinson

**I**t was a freezing cold morning. In the distance along that Coromandel beach, I could see a Maori woman with a small child. The woman, in her thirties, was leaning heavily on a driftwood branch that she was using as a walking stick. The little girl, who looked about three years old, was running in circles around her. The woman, who had a traditional moko (tattoo) on her chin, came off the lonely beach and climbed slowly and painfully up thirty-seven wooden steps to a bench that overlooked the vast expanse of deep blue sea. She told me her name was Elizabeth as she lent forward to rest her head on the stick.

‘Are you OK?’ I asked. She lifted her head as she replied.

‘My knee!’ she touched her leg as she spoke. ‘It is swollen.’

‘Let me see your leg!’ I said. I examined her knee; it was swollen and very hot. ‘You have cellulitis,’ I told her, looking deeply into her sad brown eyes. ‘You need to see a doctor immediately.’

‘I don’t care about my knee,’ she whispered. Then

she began to tell me how she had argued with her mother several years ago, and they had not spoken since. ‘It was my fault.’ She began to cry quietly.

‘What a strange place to meet this needy person,’ I thought. As the sun rose I began to tell her how forgiveness sets us free; free to live our own lives again, and to grow as a person.

‘I had to forgive my mother for what she had done,’ I told Elizabeth.

‘How did you do that?’ she asked. I could see the torment in her eyes as she breathed out her question.

‘I spoke out the words. I said, “Lord, I forgive Mum.” When I did that in the small kitchen of our Auckland home it was filled with the awesome presence of God, so powerful I couldn’t even breathe.’ I smiled as I added, ‘I remember clutching the bench to keep my balance.’

After telling Elizabeth my story, she asked, ‘If I pray will that happen to me?’

Her eyes looked into my soul and I cried out, ‘Yes! Absolutely yes!’

She began to cry out, wailing like a Maori mother mourning the death of her child. Tears flowed down her face. I had never heard or seen anything like it before. At that lonely place, sitting next to a strange European she had never met before, she cried out for forgiveness. Then it happened; she stopped wailing and her face lit up like the morning sunrise. A radiance surrounded this previously distraught woman.

‘Stand up,’ I said, ‘Move your leg.’ The pain had gone and the knee was normal. She ran down the thirty-seven steps and back up like a fairy. At the top she flung her arms around me and kissed me on the cheek. ‘Thank you!! Thank you!!’

Just then her husband came along, and when she told him the story he too began to cry. We hugged each other, and as we stood there with our arms about each other I could feel the breeze swirling around us as if a thousand angels were singing and dancing with joy.







# THE SAINT MUST WALK ALONE

A.W.  
Tozer

**M**ost of the world's great souls have been lonely. Loneliness seems to be one price the saint must pay for his saintliness.

In the morning of the world (or should we say, in that strange darkness that came soon after the dawn of man's creation), that pious soul, Enoch, walked with God and was not, for God took him; and while it is not stated in so many words, a fair inference is that Enoch walked a path quite apart from his contemporaries.

Another lonely man was Noah who, of all the antediluvians, found grace in the sight of God; and every shred of evidence points to the aloneness of his life even while surrounded by his people.

Again, Abraham had Sarah and Lot, as well as many servants and herdsmen, but who can read his story and the apostolic comment upon it without sensing instantly that he was a man 'whose soul was alike a star and dwelt apart'? As far as we know not one word did God ever speak to him in the company of men. Face down he communed with his God, and the innate dignity of the man forbade that he assume this posture in the presence of others. How sweet and solemn was the scene that night of the sacrifice when he saw the lamps of fire moving between the pieces of offering. There, alone with a horror of great darkness upon him, he heard the voice of God and knew that he was a man marked for divine favour.

Moses also was a man apart. While yet attached to the court of Pharaoh he took long walks alone and during one of these walks, while far removed from the crowds, he saw an Egyptian and a Hebrew fighting and came to the rescue of his countryman. After the resultant break with Egypt he dwelt in almost complete seclusion in the desert. There, while he watched his sheep alone, the wonder of the burning bush appeared to him, and later on the peak of Sinai he crouched alone to gaze in fascinated awe at the Presence, partly hidden, partly disclosed, within the cloud and fire.

The prophets of pre-Christian times differed widely from each other, but one mark they bore in common was their enforced loneliness. They loved their people and gloried in the religion of the fathers, but their loyalty to the

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their zeal for the welfare of the nation of Israel drove them away from the crowd and into long periods of heaviness. 'I am become a stranger unto my brethren and an alien unto my mother's children,' cried one and unwittingly spoke for all the rest.

Most revealing of all is the sight of that One of whom Moses and all the prophets did write, treading his lonely way to the cross. His deep loneliness was unrelieved by the presence of the multitudes.

*'Tis midnight, and on Olive's brow  
The star is dimmed that lately shone;  
'Tis midnight; in the garden now,  
The suffering Saviour prays alone.  
'Tis midnight, and from all removed  
The Saviour wrestles lone with fears;  
E'en the disciple whom he loved  
Heeds not his Master's grief and tears.*

—William B. Tappan

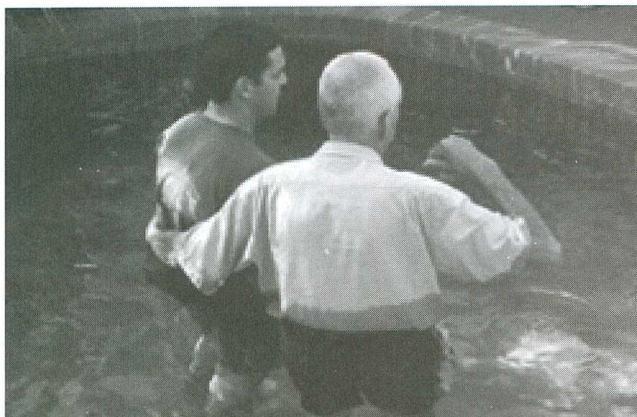
He died alone in the darkness hidden from the sight of mortal man and no one saw him when he arose triumphant and walked out of the tomb, though many saw him afterward and bore witness to what they saw.

There are some things too sacred for any eye but God's to look upon. The curiosity, the clamour, the well-meant but blundering effort to help, can only hinder the waiting soul and make unlikely, if not impossible, the communication of the secret message of God to the worshiping heart ...

The man who has passed on into the divine Presence in actual inner experience, will not find many who understand him. A certain amount of social fellowship, will, of course, be his as he mingles with religious persons in the regular activities of the Church, but true spiritual fellowship will be hard to find. But he should not expect things to be otherwise. After all he is a stranger and a pilgrim and the journey he takes is not on his feet, but in his heart. He walks with God in the garden of his own soul—and who but God can walk there with him? He is of another spirit from the multitudes that tread the courts of the Lord's house. He has seen that of which they have only heard, and he walks among them somewhat as Zacharias walked after his return from the altar when the people whispered, 'He has seen a vision ...'

The weakness of so many modern Christians is that they feel too much at home in the world. In their effort to achieve restful 'adjustment' to unregenerate society, they have lost their pilgrim character and become an essential part of the very moral order against which they are sent to protest. The world recognizes them and accepts them for what they are. And this is the saddest thing that can be said about them. They are not lonely, but neither are they saints. □



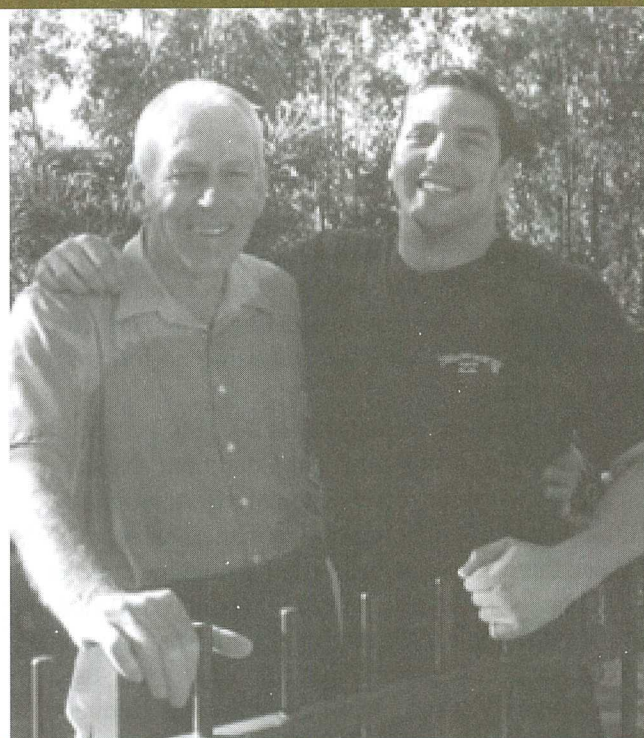


# A Day of Rejoicing

**N**athan Jenner of Mount Gambier, South Australia, who had been corresponding with GNU for several years, asked to be baptised at the time of the Melbourne *Good News Unlimited* Seminar on the 21st March 2009. Ritchie Way was honoured to lead out on this happy occasion.

The photos show Nathan and Ritchie during and after the baptism.

The joy that Nathan felt on this day is clear for all to see by the smile beaming from his face.



## STANDING IN THE

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A Bible (NIV) was found in the Thornleigh Community Centre after the *Good News Unlimited* Seminar in Sydney. If it is yours and you would like to claim it contact Carolyn on 07 55245040 as it is at the GNU office.



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# DANIEL 10-12:

## The Message About A Great War

*Part twelve in a series on  
Daniel & Revelation*

Angus McPhee



**T**he final three chapters of Daniel comprise one vision, the focus of which is ‘a great war.’ The wording of 10:1, 12 just might indicate that Daniel had already received, but not recorded, a symbolic vision. Chapters 10-12 are about the explanation.

### HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

The extended detailed message was one thing for this old man in his late eighties (536/535 B.C.); the appearance of the heavenly messenger was another. Daniel subsequently mourned, eating neither tasty food nor meat, drinking no wine and using no lotions for three weeks.<sup>1</sup>

*Time* magazine (September 24, 1965) carried an essay ‘On War as a Permanent Condition!’ Now, this prophecy, which covers events only from around 530 B.C. to the end of time, subscribes to this position. Until the end there is no conclusion to this ongoing conflict.

Daniel is told that the vision would be fulfilled in a time yet to come (NIV) and dealt with what his people would face ‘in the latter days’ (KJV).

The expression, ‘the latter days,’ is frequently used in biblical prophecy, pointing to the final part of whatever period of history the prophet has in view.

Jacob used the term ‘last days’ in reference to the ultimate fortune of each of the twelve tribes in the land of Canaan (Genesis 49:1).

Balaam applied the term to the first advent of Christ (Numbers 24:14).

Moses used it in a general sense of the distant future, when Israel would suffer tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30).

In the New Testament, the expression applies to the period of time since the cross (Hebrews 1:1).

Daniel has to be encouraged to consider this vision and its explanation. When strengthened, he agrees. ‘*Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength*’ (10:20).

### A CAUTION

The latter part of chapter 11, in particular, contains allusions to a variety of incidents, the details of which one should not dogmatise about. Not yet, anyway. It was J. S. White who wisely wrote: ‘In exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, where the history is not written, the student should put forth his proposition with not too much positiveness, lest he find himself straying in the field of fancy.’<sup>2</sup>

### THE MESSENGER

The individual who appeared to Daniel in answer to his concerns and prayers was very much like the risen Lord who appeared to John on Patmos (Revelation 1). Did this being conduct the whole conversation with Daniel in chapter 10? In verse 13 one speaks of ‘Michael.’ If the speaker is in fact the Lord, then one has to conclude that ‘Michael’ is someone other than the Lord. Some see a solution to the ‘problem’ by declaring that the person who speaks to Daniel in verses 10-14 could well be another individual, even Gabriel who had appeared to Daniel in chapter 8:16.<sup>3</sup> Anyway, behind the scenes, God’s heavenly agents are at work, interacting with human beings in the great controversy between good and evil, the conflict in which the covenant people are caught (10:13, 20-21).

### THE MESSAGE (DANIEL 11, 12)

‘Now then, I tell you the truth,’ he is told. ‘Three more kings [after Cyrus] will appear in Persia.’ We know that these were Cambyses (530-532), False Smerdis (522) and Darius I (522-486). The fourth, and richer, was Xerxes (486-465), the ‘Ahasuerus’ of the Book of Esther. The mighty king ‘who will rule with great power and do as he pleases’ was Alexander



the Great (336-323 BC). It was Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy to whom his kingdom was 'parceled out toward the four winds of heaven.'

## TWO DYNASTIES

Successors to Seleucus and Ptolemy, are introduced in verses 5 and 6 as 'the king of the North' and 'the king of the South.' From the geographical standpoint of Palestine, the Seleucids, ruling Syria, were North, and the Ptolemies, ruling Egypt, were South.<sup>4</sup>

Verses 5-20 contain a litany of particulars of an ongoing conflict between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids which would embroil the covenant people. Bible commentators, with some differences of opinion, have written much on how this forecast was fulfilled.<sup>5</sup> The angel tells of matters which, in and of themselves, do not buoy the Christian in his spiritual journey, but rather, tend to disappoint. Here are greed, pride, revenge, empire building, deception, treaty violations, scheming, lying, power struggles and the accumulation of wealth—not necessarily in that order. Who enjoys such things? This is the stuff that generates war. And as long as these tendencies are fostered by human beings, ongoing conflicts are inevitable.<sup>6</sup> These are the ways of the Gentiles.

From verse 28 a tragedy begins to unfold. The king of the North, at this juncture Antiochus IV Epiphanes (introduced in verse 21), now takes a great interest in God's people, not for the purpose of learning from them but with the express purpose of destroying their religion.

Angered that Rome prevented him from invading Egypt, Antiochus IV turned his attention on Jerusalem and Judea. With flattery he succeeded in corrupting not a few—a matter to which history testifies. The fact that Hellenism persisted in Judea after the Maccabean victory, right through to the days of Jesus, is testimony to both its attractions and his influence. However, Daniel was assured that some would be 'wise.' These instructors of many would not escape persecution; they would 'fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered.' They would even be joined by the insincere. These 'wise' ones would find their experience contributing to their refinement and purification.

In verse 40 the kings of the North and South are mentioned as such for the first time since verses 14 and 15.<sup>7</sup> However, prior to that, some commentators see the introduction of another power in the words 'he that cometh against him' (KJV) i.e. 'the invader' (NIV) of verse 16. Could this be Rome? This could be reasonable, given the references to a tax collector (Caesar Augustus?), a contemptible person (Tiberius?), a prince of the covenant (Christ's cruci-

fixion?) and the abomination that causes desolation (the destruction of the temple?).<sup>8</sup>

At the same time there are commentators who see the information throughout verses 21-35 applying to the King of the North.<sup>9</sup>

The NIV Bible Commentary reads, 'Verses 36-39 contain some features that hardly apply to Antiochus IV, though most of the details could apply to him as well as to his latter-day antitype, "the Beast." All of chapter 11 to this point contains strikingly accurate predictions of the whole sweep of events from the reign of Cyrus (during which Daniel brought his career to a close) to the unsuccessful effort of Antiochus Epiphanes to stamp out the Jewish faith.' It is equally as hard to apply these verses to Rome, the other 'contender' for protagonist.

Regarding the final verses 40-45 this commentary reads, 'It is utterly hopeless to try to tie the details of [these verses] into the known career of Antiochus Epiphanes.' Therefore, readers who might indulge in prophetic speculation over these verses should not forget the words of James White, quoted earlier. But, because this final paragraph points to something that is yet to happen, either just prior to the final events described in chapter 12 or concurrent with them, consider Hans K. LaRondelle's counsel: 'The biblical focus of prophecy is never on Israel as a people or a nation, as such, but on Israel as the believing, worshiping, covenant people, as the messianic community.'

Further, in Christ's applications of the divine promises to Israel, 'The removal of the old *ethnic* restrictions among the New Covenant people entails the removal of the old *geographic* Middle East centre for Christ's Church. Wherever Christ is, there is the holy space.'<sup>10</sup>

By accepting this thesis we now view 11:40-45 from a worldwide perspective. The antagonists are engaged in an end-time conflict with each other. The 'Beautiful Land' now refers to the Church, wherever her people are in this world. Edom, Moab, Ammon, represent old enemies who, in days to come, are her allies. The King of the North, still the avowed desecrator of things belonging to God, and now the obvious anti-Christ, gains control of riches in distant lands, 'Egypt, Libya and Nubia.'<sup>11</sup> But 'tidings' disturb this king so much that he engages in what appears to be a final struggle to survive. His final stand, depicted in geographical terms as 'between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain,' isolates the covenant people. Then his end comes, with no one coming to his rescue.

## MICHAEL

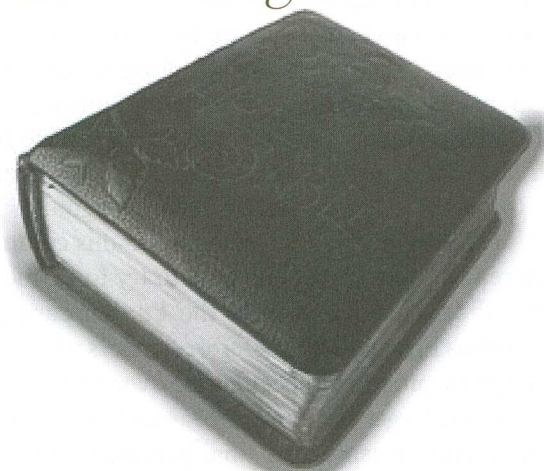
After the jostling for power by these two kings  
(Continued on page 13)



# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Part 6

### *Life Through the Son*



Ritchie Way

As an exposition of John 5:1-15 was covered in my article: 'An Exposé of Legalism', printed in the January 2008 issue of the *Good News Unlimited* magazine, it will not be included in this series.

**T**he Jews persecuted Jesus because he not only healed the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, but he also told him to pick up his bedroll and walk on the Sabbath. On top of that, Jesus piled fuel on the fire of their opposition by adding, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working' (John 5:16-17). What heresy to claim that God was busy at work on the Sabbath!

Yes, God was continually at work, through Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself (John 14:10). Jesus' work on the Sabbath was to build life-giving relationships with people through his ministry of healing. And those people who were reconciled to God through him, experienced rest of soul. Just as the Sabbath was a celebration of the liberty of the Hebrews who had been slaves in Egypt (Exod. 16:14-30), so it was also a celebration of the liberty of those who had been crippled with osteoporosis, blindness and other physical infirmities. Even more than that, it was a day celebrating their encounter with God—an encounter that

set them free from their bondage.

But when Jesus referred to God as his Father, in a way which clearly indicated that he was of the same nature as God, the Jews wanted to kill him. *'The Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only because he was breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God'* (John 6:18). 'How dare this Galilean Jew claim he was equal with God!' they snorted. 'What arrogance! God would never humble himself in such a manner as to appear among men in human form.'

In rejecting Jesus, the Jews chose to worship the idol of their own belief, rather than bow down to Immanuel—God with them (Matt. 1:23).

#### LIFE IN THE SON

Jesus went on to tell these Jews who thirsted for his blood, *'Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgement to the Son'* (John 5:21-22). As with much of John's writing both these sentences have a double application; both are also intimately connected. Firstly, Jesus is speaking here of raising the spiritually dead to life. When the spiritually dead accept Christ, the verdict of the final judgement is pronounced upon them—eternal life is theirs. Those who accept him are raised up from spiritual death to life in his kingdom; those who reject him judge themselves as unworthy of God's free grace.

At the end of the age when Jesus returns in glory, the dead in Christ shall be raised to life, because the verdict of the final judgement was brought down in their previous life when they gave Christ their sins in exchange for his righteousness (Rom. 8:1).

Jesus went on to say, *'I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and now has come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live'* (John 5:24-25).

In the above verse Jesus speaks of two 'times': The time that is coming, and the time that has now come. The 'now time' is when people put their faith in God who is disguised in human flesh. Those who do so, cross over immediately from the realm of death to the realm of life. Through Jesus, death has been abolished for those who put their trust in him. They may 'sleep' but they will never die, for he has promised that those who live and believe in him will never die (John 11:26). They have eternal life—now! Their names are written in the Book of Life now! (Rev. 3:5).




But in the coming age, when Jesus appears in glory, the faithful dead will rise to an eternal life that will be physical as well as spiritual (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Those who ‘hear’ Christ’s call to spiritual life in this age, will be the ones who will hear his call to physical life in the age to come.

*‘Do not be amazed at this,’ added Jesus, ‘for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil*

*will rise to be condemned’ (John 5:28-29).*

## CONCLUSION

Every sin we commit deserves condemnation. Either Jesus bears that condemnation for us (Isa. 53:4-6) in the ‘now’ time, and is crushed by it, or we will bear it ourselves in the ‘not yet’ time, and will be crushed by it. The good news of John chapter 5 is, We have ‘crossed over from death to life’ because we heard Jesus and believed. 

(Continued from page 11)

## DANIEL 10-12:

and their armies, the King for whom all of God’s people are looking will ‘arise’ or ‘stand.’ He is none other than Michael, the great prince who protects God’s people, intervening when all seems lost.

Then follows both good news and bad news; trouble like you’ve never seen before. Deliverance, but only for those who are registered in ‘the book’ [of Life].<sup>12</sup> Eternal life for the ‘wise.’

The words of 12:4, far from being a prophecy of advances in technology and transport, which are irrelevant in this context, foretell a renewed interest in Daniel’s record. Its sealing refers to its preservation. When all has come to pass, its students will say, ‘So that’s what was intended!’<sup>13</sup>

## THEN COMES THE END


The age-old question of the day was raised again. ‘How long?’ ‘How long shall it be to the end of these wonders’ (KJV, NASB, NRSV)? ‘How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled’ (NIV)? The answer: ‘It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.’ The Hebrew term used here translated ‘time’ is *mo’ed*, a word that focuses on the annual festivals, solemn assemblies and appointed times. This implies then a definite period, at the end of which the power of God’s people will be shattered (not scattered); a time of trouble for God’s people. Attempts to convert this period into a longer period, e.g., on the basis of a year for each day within each *mo’ed*, have been far from satisfactory. This period, and that referred to in verses 11 and 12, must be about the *duration* of the final crisis of about 3 1/2 years.<sup>14</sup>

Because in these last days the performance of the Jewish daily sacrifice (the continual burnt offering) is not important, except as a matter of history, the reference in 12:11 to its abolition and substitution with ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ would have to apply to the pollution of the Church ‘by a form of worship which will [be] execrable in the sight of God.’<sup>15</sup> Between the abolition of the one and the establishment of the other will be 1,290 days. However, a blessing awaits the person who endures another 45 days. Between that future event and the resurrection there will be, at the most, 1,335 days. Daniel



was then told that he would rest and, at the end of those days, rise to stand in his allotted place.

We first met Daniel when he was a captive of Nebuchadnezzar and trained to stand before that king. His loyalty to the King of kings will be rewarded with a place in God’s presence.

If the last chapters teach us anything they certainly tell us that there is a God in heaven who is prepared to allow the rulers and nations of this world to ‘do their thing’ and then He steps in. One day God will take the final step and establish his own kingdom. Although current events may seem as complex as those outlined in chapters 10-12, God appeals to us to be patient. We who are, will one day, with Daniel, rise to receive our allotted inheritance. 

## Endnotes

1. Gaebelein, Frank E. (ed.) *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI., Zondervan) 1985.
2. *Review and Herald*, November 29, 1877, quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on Daniel 11:45.
3. Ford, Desmond, *Daniel* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1978).
4. Daniel 10:8 confirms this.
5. See, for example, Ford, Desmond, op. cit.; Gaebelein, Frank E., op. cit.; Nichol, Francis D., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1978.
6. James 4:1-4.
7. The NIV employs the term ‘King of the North’ in verse 28, but it should be noted that the king of the North is the object of an invader mentioned in verse 16. In that case, it is this invader who is the subject of certain pronouns in verses 17 on. For that reason, this invader is understood by some commentators be Rome.
8. See Christ’s forecast in Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20. The term ‘abomination of desolation’ (KJV) applies to the installation of idolatry by an idolatrous invader. According to F. F. Bruce, while the temple was still burning, Roman soldiers set up their legionary standards in the sacred precincts, offered sacrifices and acclaimed Titus as *imperator*. This ‘was the supreme insult to the God of Israel.’ Quoted in LaRondelle, Hans K., *The Israel of God in Prophecy* (Berrien Springs, MI. Andrews University Press, 1983), 200.
9. For details regarding this view see Gaebelein, Frank E., op. cit.
10. LaRondelle, op. cit., 142, 209.
11. Ford, op. cit., 276.
12. Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19.
13. John 14:29.
14. Ford, op. cit., 283.
15. *ibid*.



# Discussion Point

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

## DID THE CROSS CHANGE JESUS?

**Ritchie**

I read your Editorial in the March issue of the *Good News Unlimited* magazine that was in my mail box when I arrived home from church today.

I was interested in your comment about Jesus: 'He went there [to the cross] to give his whole life as an eternal sacrifice for us.'

For many years I have held the view that Jesus was a different person before the cross to what he was after the cross. When I question ministers and others their answers are never clear. It seems to me that if Jesus' life was no different after the cross, then God only lent Jesus to the world, whereas John 3:16 teaches that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.' Note the word 'gave.' He gave his son to us forever. That reveals God's great love for mankind?

I believe that Jesus' life before the cross must have been different; i.e. before the cross he was 'God' and now he is 'Man' for he has taken on mankind for eternity.

I was interested that you almost seem to be agreeing with this view in your Editorial.

I'll welcome your thoughts.

Thanks

**C.V.**

**Hi C**

I think I understand what you mean, but I'd have to state, quietly emphatically, that the cross did not change Jesus. Scripture clearly says, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb. 13:8). The cross did not change the Lord,

but it revealed him in a way he had not been understood before. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the cross sealed God's decision to be fully human as well as fully divine. If that is what you meant then, yes, I agree with you.

Grace and peace to you

**Ritchie.**

## DO WE HAVE SOULS?

**Sir**

In reply to your letter on the state of the dead, there was never any question as to whether or not the Bible refers to believers which die as 'asleep'. The same word is used for those who are asleep (as in resting) and dead. The Lord Jesus made that clear in John 11:11-14 when referring to Lazarus.

The question is, 'What state are these believers in once they die? Are they in oblivion or some state of non-being'—commonly referred to as 'soul sleep'?

Some thoughts for you:

1. If Moses was 'asleep' in the grave, who was it that appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? Did Moses wake up for awhile?

2. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died. The Lord Jesus said that God was not the God of the dead, but of the living! (Matt. 22:32). How do we understand that?

Bear in mind also that the Lord Jesus said that it was Abraham who spoke to the rich man who died and went to hell (Luke 16:23-31).

3. How do we understand 1 Thessalonians 4:14? '... them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him' i.e. those believers referred to here have died and gone somewhere and God is

going to bring them with the Lord Jesus when he comes for those who are alive and remain on the earth.

4. What happens to the soul and spirit at death?

The following is a quote from Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, page 83: 'Note: This metaphorical use of the word 'sleep' is appropriate, because of the similarity in appearance between a sleeping body and a dead body; restfulness and peace normally characterise both. The object of the metaphor is to suggest that, as the sleeper does not exist despite his absence from the region in which those who remain can communicate with him, and that, as sleep is known to be temporary, so the death of the body will be found to be ...'

My comment: He makes a very valid point; the sleeping body is still functioning well, it is not in oblivion or nonexistent!

Regards

**R. C.**

**Dear R**

Contrary to what you say, Jesus never used the word 'sleep,' as a substitute for death; he used it only as a contrast to death which was believed to be endless. In other words, Jesus' ministry on earth converted death into sleep. In Luke 8:52 Jesus said of Jairus's daughter, 'She is not dead but asleep.'

Now if sleep were a synonym for death, as you believe, Jesus would have been saying, 'She is not dead, just passed away,' which is nonsense. As with this girl and Lazarus, they would wake up from their sleep—and they did. Paul tells us that all believers who are asleep in Jesus will wake up in the great resurrection (1 Thess. 4:13).

Early Christians believed, as did the Jews, that when they died their 'shades' went down to Hades to await the resurrection of the dead (See under 'Dead, Intermediate State of the' in *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, 1999). Jesus' story in Luke 16:23-31 (a story that was common in his day) was told in the thought-world of the Jews, who believed all the dead—both good and bad—went down to Hades at death. Please note that the only way a person could escape from Hades, according to Jesus in Luke 16:31, was via a resurrection. In other words, for a



good person to come back from the dead they would have to 'rise from the dead' rather than descend from heaven.

There is no question about how Elijah could appear to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, because Elijah was taken up to heaven at the end of his ministry. Jude 9 suggests that Michael had a battle with the devil over Moses' body. Why would there be a dispute over Moses' body unless the devil felt he was going to be deprived of his captive through a resurrection? That is a strong possibility that cannot be discounted.

The Sadducees argument in Luke 20:27-38 (also Matt. 22:23-33) is not about the existence of the soul after death, but about the resurrection of the dead. Jesus, in reply, defended the truth of the resurrection, not the intermediate state of the soul. He said, *'In the account of the bush even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"'* (Luke 20:37).

Concerning 1 Thessalonians 4:14, this verse should not be interpreted in a manner that will contradict verses 15 and 16. Paul tells us that when Jesus comes the living will not go to meet him ahead of the dead, but the dead will rise first and together they will go to greet the Lord. So how can it be maintained that Jesus brings back to earth those that sleep in him, when the very first time the sleeping believers meet him will be after their resurrection?

*The New American Standard Bible* reveals that the second part of 1 Thessalonians 4:14 must agree with the first, in other words, the restoration of the sleeping believers to life, will parallel the restoration of the Lord to life. This verse would be better translated: 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same manner God will bring to life, through Jesus, those who are asleep in him.'

If a person had a soul or spirit that departed the body at death, why is there no mention of this in Jesus' death and resurrection, and in 1 Corinthians 15, the great chapter on life after death?

**Ritchie.**

#### **BIBLE CHRONOLOGY**

**Dear Ritchie**

*A friend and I have been working on a chronology of the Old Testa-*

*ment prior to the time of Abraham, but have no anchor point with biblical history that will give us a date. We know, for example, that there were three hundred and fifty-three years from Noah's Flood to Abraham, but we can't find a reliable date for Abraham. Can you help us, or refer us to a reliable source of information?*

**Dear C**

At the present time there is no rock-solid date for Abraham; the best information available dates his birth about 2166B.C. This means that, according to the Bible, the Flood would have been about 2519B.C.

However, the problem with this chronology is that there is 'conclusive archaeological evidence that Egyptian Dynasty 1 went back to 3100 BC., with a long period of divided kingdoms in the Nile Valley before that. These could hardly have arisen until long after the Flood had occurred and the human race had multiplied considerably' (cf. Gen. 10) (*Expositor's Bible Commentary* 1:361). The Sumerian inscriptions also go back to as early as 3000BC. which puts them 500 years before the Flood. There would also have needed to have been a considerable period prior to these inscriptions for a civilisation to develop in Sumer.

What most people don't know, or don't want to know, is that both the Old Testament and New Testament genealogies often have large gaps in them. For example, Matthew 1:8 states that Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, 'begat' Uzziah. That's pretty clear, isn't it? Begat means he was the birth father of Uzziah. The Old Testament, however, reveals that Jehoram was actually the great-great-grandfather of Uzziah. So what may seem to us to be an unbroken genealogy is sometimes, in fact, anything but.

Because the genealogies in the Bible were given for the purpose of establishing the family line and not for the purpose of establishing a chronology, we should be very wary about using them to establish dates.

**Ritchie.**

#### **THANKS FOR YOUR MESSAGES**

**Hi there**

*I am sending this message for the GNU team to show how much I*

*appreciate your work. I have been listening to your tapes, CDs and MP3s for two years now. They have always been refreshingly original and have helped to answer some of the hard questions of life. I just wanted to share a story with you to let you know how GNU is affecting other lives.*

*About a month ago I met a man who used to attend the Seventh-day Adventist church as a child. As a professed homosexual he has had some negative views on Christianity. The other week I felt moved to give him a GNU CD of the month. I was looking through my car to find the one I wanted to share, called 'The Mystery of Iniquity', however; maybe it wasn't the one God intended for him at the time, because I had to end up giving him the only one handy called 'The Riches of God's Grace'.*

*A week later he told me how much he enjoyed it. He is a scientist and Des's message, which was largely about Creationism, interested him greatly as he told me he had just finished reading a book on Darwinism. He is amazed at how relevant he found the message to his own life. Today he told me he'd listened to it twice and asked for another one! Once again I had to give him the only one I could find in the car. I am really excited about his eagerness to hear more about the gospel and the love of Christ.*

*He has also come along to two different church services in the last two weeks with my group of Christian friends. So thank you for your work. I was wondering if you could pray for him as he is about to move away for a new job and will be starting over again in terms of meeting friends etc. I'm sure God has the same Christian support waiting for him in his new city but it would be nice if some prayers could be offered for him.*

*Many thanks and I hope Des and Ron hear about how the Lord is using their work for him.*

**D. B.**

**Dear D**

Thank you for sending in your message of encouragement. It is always a thrill to hear what God is doing in the lives of others through our humble contribution.

God bless

**Ritchie.**



# NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

Ritchie Way



**B**elow is a selection of numbers used in the Bible that sometimes have a literal meaning, and sometimes a symbolic meaning. Except in apocalyptic prophecy, where most numbers are symbolic, it is not always easy to determine whether any of the numbers given below are literal or symbolic. At best we must allow for either option and sometimes for both.

**2** Two (2) represents the minimum number necessary for life.

In the Book of Revelation there are 2 witnesses, 2 olive trees, 2 lampstands, 2 prophets, 2 wings and 2 horns.

\* The first 2 were Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:22-25).

\* To make sure there would be life in the world after the Flood Noah was told to take 2 of all living creatures into the ark, male and female (Gen. 6:19-20).

\* The minimum requirements of God's Law were written on 2 tablets of stone (Deut. 5:22).

\* Two witnesses were the minimum necessary to condemn a person (Heb. 10:28).

\* The 2 witnesses in Revelation 11 reveal that God will always have the minimum evidence necessary to support his case, even in the darkest hours (Rev. 11:3-4).

**3** The number 3 was a number that often signified a new beginning.

\* The new world, after the Flood, was populated by Noah's 3 sons (Gen. 9:18-19)

\* Jonah was rescued from the great fish on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (Matt. 12:40).

\* On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day Queen Esther set in process events that resulted in deliverance of Israel from Haman's pogrom (Est. 4:15-5:1).

\* Jesus was raised to life on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (Matt. 20:17-19; John 2:19-21).

\* On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day Jesus performed his first miracle—a miracle that pointed forward to the time when the Old Covenant ritual of cleansing by water would be replaced by the New Covenant cleansing through the new wine of his blood (John 2:1-11).

\* Saul (Paul) regained his sight on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (Acts 9:8-18).

\* The 3 angels of Revelation 14 proclaim a new beginning for those who accept the true gospel and reject the false gospel (Rev. 14:6-12).

**4** The number 4 is often used to indicate something that is worldwide or universal.

\* The (human) river that came from Eden, divided

into 4 streams to populate the whole earth as it was then known (Gen. 2:10-14).

\* The 4 living creatures around God's throne are thought to be a symbolic representation of all the redeemed (Rev. 4:6-8).

\* Four (4) angels stand at the 4 corners of the earth (North, East, South, West), holding back the 4 winds of the earth (Rev 7:1). This means all the gospel messengers, over all the earth, are restraining all the strife that will blow upon the earth at the end.

\* Every 'nation, tribe, language and people' (the 4 divisions of mankind) represent all 'those who live on the earth' (Rev 14:6).

**6** Six (6) is the number that falls short of perfection; it is Babylon's number.

\* From Babylon we get our hour with 60 minutes and our minute with 60 seconds. From Babylon we also get our circle with 360 degrees (60 X 6).

\* In Babylon 60 was the number of the city's chief god, and 6 was the number of the city's least god. And 600 was the number which symbolised all the gods and spirits of the Babylonian upper world (*Igigi*) and the lower world (*Anunaki*). 600 + 60 + 6 = 666. The number 666, therefore, stands for all false worship.

\* It was a common practice in ancient Babylon for the priests to wear copper amulets, each of which had 6 rows of 6 numbers engraved on it. These numbers ranged from 1-36. If you add together all the numbers from 1 to 36, e.g. 1 + 2 + 3 etc., the total is 666. In their amulets each of the horizontal rows and vertical rows added up to 111. This means that the total score, either vertical or horizontal, was 666.

Here is one example of the numbering on the amulet of a Babylonian priest:

1	32	34	3	35	6
30	8	27	28	11	7
20	24	15	16	13	23
19	17	21	22	18	14
10	26	12	9	29	25
31	4	2	33	5	36

\* Man was created on the 6th day (Gen. 1:26-31).

\* Goliath, the man who opposed God, was 6 cubits high (1 Sam. 17:4).

\* The great golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar



built to represent Babylon was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide (Dan. 3:1).

**7** Alexander Cruden wrote that 7 is 'a sacred number among the Jews, also indicating perfection or completion. It was used very often in a symbolic manner for the whole of a thing.'

\* It was on the 7<sup>th</sup> day that God completed his perfect work of creation (Gen. 2:2-3).

\* The 7 churches of Revelation 2 & 3 represent God's Church, in its various phases, from start to finish.

\* The dragon with 7 heads (Rev. 12:3) represents Satan's kingdom from start to finish.

\* Jesus' return to this world will impact upon all (7) classes of society (Rev. 6:15).

The Hebrew word for seven (*sheba*) could also be interpreted covenant or oath.

\* Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech about a well by giving him 7 ewe lambs (Gen. 21:28-30). The well was called Beersheba (*Beer* = well, *sheba* = covenant or seven).

\* The Hebrews covenanted to give Jericho to the Lord as the first-fruits of the cities they would conquer in Canaan (Josh. 7:11). They sealed this covenant by having 7 priests, blowing 7 trumpets, march around Jericho for 7 days, and 7 times on the 7th day.

\* Samson made a covenant with God by tying his hair in 7 braids (Jud. 16:13, 19). He broke that covenant when he opened the way for the braids to be shorn off.

\* Naaman made a covenant with God by dipping 7 times in the Jordan (2 Kgs 5:10-16).

**10** Ten (10) is the number of authority and power.

\* Obedience to the 10 Commandments was an acknowledgment of God's authority.

\* The dragon's 10 horns represented his power and authority (Rev. 12:3; 17:12-13).

\* Christ's millennial kingdom, which lasts for 10 x 10 (1000) years (Rev. 20:1-15), will be completely under his power and authority.

**12** Twelve (12) is the number of the heavenly kingdom.

\* There were 12 tribes of Israel (Gen. 49:28).

\* Jesus had 12 apostles (John 6:70).

\* The New Jerusalem, which is a symbol of the Church—the bride of Christ—has 12 foundations made of 12 precious stones, 12 gates made of 12 pearls, 12 tribes of 12,000 people each, a tree that bears 12 different kinds of fruit every 12 months and walls that are 12 x 1000 stadia long and 12 x 12 cubits thick.

**40** The number 40 is often, though not always, used in Scripture to designate a large but unknown number.

\* It was not known exactly how old Moses was when he fled from Egypt, or how many years he had been in Arabia looking after sheep, so each of those periods was given the numeral 40 (possibly to match the time he spent in the wilderness with the 12 tribes) (Acts 7:23; 30).

\* It is not known how many days Moses was up on Sinai with God, so it was written that he was up there 40 days and nights (Exod. 34:28).

\* It is not known how many days Jesus fasted in the desert of temptation so it is recorded that he was there 40 days and nights (Matt. 4:1-2).

**42** The number, 42 months, designates a period of persecution of the Church by its enemies.

\* The Gentiles (unbelievers) will trample on the Holy City (the Church) for 42 months (Rev. 11:2).

\* The beast exercised his authority for 42 months (Rev. 13:5).

**1260** The number 1260 days designates a qualitative, rather than a quantitative period, and has its origin in the 1260 days Elijah witnessed during a time of persecution (Luke 4:25; James. 5:17). This period is a difficult time, during which God cares for the faithful while they maintain their witness.

\* The two witnesses will prophesy for 1260 days clothed in sackcloth (Rev. 11:3).

\* The woman (Church) fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1260 days (Rev. 12:6). ☐

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## DID YOU KNOW?

### Crucifixion

Crucifixion was one of the cruellest and most barbarous forms of execution ever invented. The Latin word *excruciat*, from which we get our word 'excruciating,' means 'out of the cross.' Crucifixion was perfected by the Romans to create the greatest suffering possible as a punishment for the worst of crimes or insurrection. Victims were nailed to their crosses in such a manner that their slightest movement would cause them intense suffering. Some died quickly through loss of blood or heart failure, others took several days to die a slow and painful death.

In the article entitled 'Cross', *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* (1987) says, 'When a person is suspended by his two hands, the blood sinks rapidly into the lower extremities of the body. Within six to twelve minutes the blood pressure has dropped to half, while the rate of the pulse has doubled. The heart is deprived of blood, and fainting follows. This leads to an orthostatic collapse through insufficient circulation. Death during crucifixion is due to heart failure. Victims of crucifixion did not generally succumb for two or three days.' Often the crucified person was able to get some relief by pushing up on the nail that was driven through both feet.

When the women of Jerusalem weiled for Jesus

as he was being taken out of the city to be crucified, he turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children ... for if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:28-31).

Well, what did happen when the tree was dry? The Jews who rejected the 'Prince of Peace' as their Messiah and chose instead warrior Messiahs such as John of Giscala and Simon bar Giora, began a war with Rome. In response, Roman armies invaded Israel and encircled Jerusalem. It was the plan of the Romans to shorten the siege by starving the inhabitants into submission, so they crucified all escapees from the city as a warning to others who wanted to flee the misery and famine within the walls. Trees within a radius of many kilometres around Jerusalem were cut down to make crosses on which to execute these escapees. So many crosses were erected that it was difficult to move amongst them. And when the soldiers ran out of wood for crosses they crucified the starving Jews back to back.

Crucifixion was reserved for the very worst of people. Men condemned to die this way were nailed up completely naked and were unable to do a thing about the tormenting flies that crawled over their wounds. Their pain and thirst from loss of blood, was excruciating. This lowest of all kinds of death was the physical death that our God submitted himself to, exceeded only by the spiritual death he suffered. ☒

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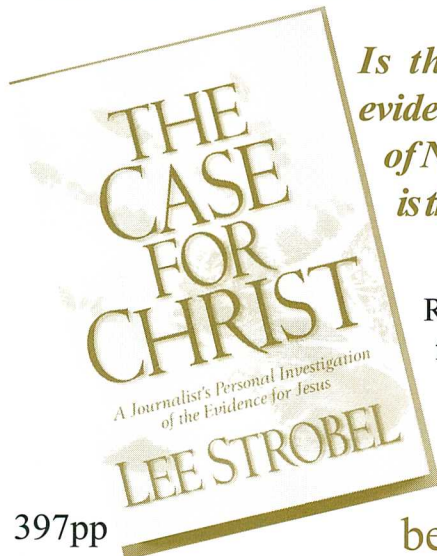
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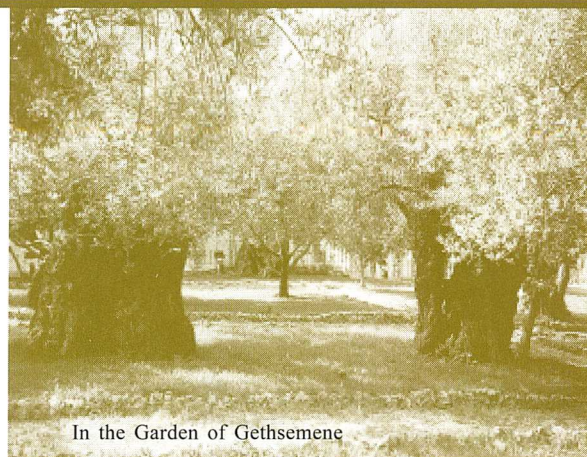
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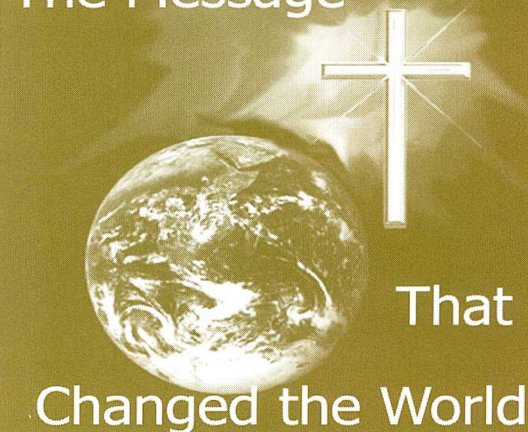
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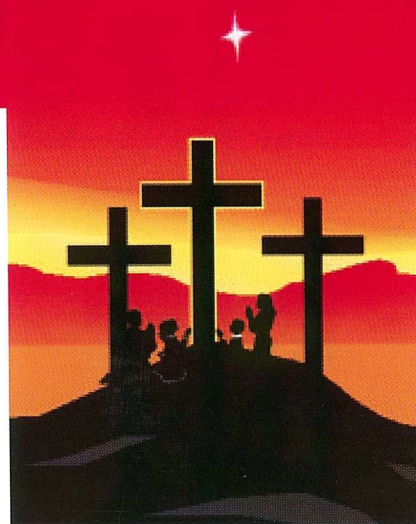
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