

May 2009 Issue No. 5

# Good News Unlimited

Promises to a Perplexed  
but Praying Prophet

The Bad Samaritan

Justified By Grace

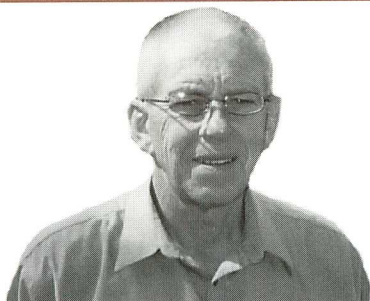
Tony Blair's God Thing

Fallible Men  
in God's Hands

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## EDITORIAL



**C**an you imagine what a boring world it would be if we were all the same, like a garden containing nothing but radishes? Fortunately for us that is not the case, either in the Church or out of it.

Jesus' own disciples were an eclectic mix of personalities. Matthew, the educated and entrepreneurial tax collector was quite a different personality from Simon the Zealot, and the super-confidant, impetuous Peter was in a different league from Thomas the sceptic.

But altogether each person adds structure and colour to the garden of the Lord. There were things that Matthew could do that Simon the Zealot couldn't and vice versa. And Peter needed some sharp edges removed from his character that Thomas didn't.

The Lord has different strokes for different folks. We see that in our own families. One of my daughters was a super-sensitive melancholic;

the other, more sanguine, was less introspective. If I said to Ruth, 'This is not up to your usual standard of excellence,' she would be so upset she would shut herself in her room and there would be no further communication with the family for the next three days. On the other hand, I could tear strips off Roseanne for a failure to fulfill her commitments (which was rare, I have to admit) and five minutes later she would be asking if I could help her with her homework, as though our previous encounter had never happened. You can't treat everyone the same, simply because people are not all the same.

This month we look at the lives of two men who loved the Lord—two lives that differed greatly, yet both of which had a significant impact for good on the kingdom of God. The first man, Joseph, went through a very difficult thirteen year training period for his ministry at Pharaoh's right-hand. By contrast, the second man, Peter, began his training at Jesus' right hand for his ministry, and it was there that he ran head-first into a 'brick wall'. Both these men had serious defects of character that needed changing if they were to be effective in the weighty ministries the Lord had planned for them, and making that change was painful.

Because Joseph and Peter were such different personalities and be-

cause they each had different backgrounds, God dealt with them in totally different ways. But each one had to have the character to endure the Lord's disciplining without dropping out. Their training was very tough on them, but they have to be given the credit for sticking with it until the end. Only when they came through their tests were they ready for the leadership roles God had waiting for them.

The same is true for you and me. Our aptitudes may qualify us for a particular place in God's service, except for an inherited or developed negative character trait that acts like water in our petrol tank. Everything else may be fine with our 'vehicle'; it may be exactly what's needed for the job, but until that cupful of water is removed from the petrol, the vehicle is unfit for service.

Alternatively, we may lack the fortitude necessary for a certain job, simply because we have not been given the necessary training and experience. Whatever the case, the Lord can fit us for our job if we are prepared to stick with his training regime until the very end. God promises that we shall reap a harvest in due course if we do not give up.

—Ritchie Way

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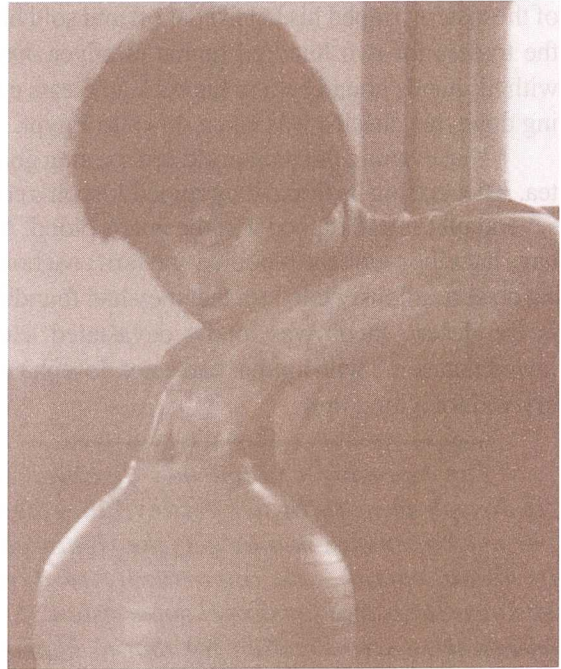




# FALLIBLE MEN IN THE LORD'S HANDS

## Part 1

Ritchie Way



**J**oseph was unfortunate enough to be born into a family of half-brothers. All the older boys were sons of Leah, while Joseph and his baby brother Benjamin were sons of their deceased mother, Rachel.

The problem with Joseph's upbringing was his father. Jacob spoiled Joseph and his baby brother because their mother, Rachel, was his favourite wife. He had never intended to marry Leah, but had been tricked into it.

Anyway, it was Jacob's practice to send Leah's sons out to care for the sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys, but he kept Joseph back in the safety and comfort of the encampment where he could be home-schooled. He also made a special coat for Joseph, the kind of coat that only leaders of the family wore. That was another bad mistake.

The older boys noticed how Joseph was Jacob's pet, but dare not say anything in the presence of the old man. Out in the fields, however, away from his hearing, they vented their bitterness to each other.

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*At that time the heavenly council came together and decided it was time for Joseph to move out of the suffocating care of his father into a more accelerated stage of development for his high calling.*

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At breakfast, the next morning, Joseph told the family about two dreams he'd had. 'In my first dream,' he said, 'we were out binding sheaves of corn in the field when my sheaf stood upright while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.'

The brothers held their tongues so as not to of-

fend their father, but were still fuming inside at the thought that they would bow down to this spoiled brat, when Joseph told them about his second dream: 'I dreamt,' he said, 'that the sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down to me.'

This time Jacob also was incensed. 'Will your mother and I and your brothers come and bow down before you?' he asked. However, while he was upset by what Joseph had said, he tucked Joseph's dreams away into a corner of his mind.

Not long after this Joseph's half-brothers were moving the flocks around the countryside seeking out the best places for them to graze when Jacob called Joseph aside and said to him, I want you to go and see how your brothers are and bring a report back to me.

When the brothers saw Joseph coming they sneered, 'Here comes the dreamer, Daddy's tell-tale. Let's kill him and then we'll see what comes of his dreams.' Reuben, however, wanting to protect the lad, said 'Hey, Don't load yourselves up with guilt by getting his blood on your hands. Just put him in this cistern here and leave him to his own fate. There's no way he can escape.'

It was Reuben's intention to come back later, when the brothers weren't around, and set Joseph free. But the scale tipped the other way, because while Reuben was away looking after his flock, a caravan of merchants came through the area on its way to Egypt with merchandise to sell. As soon as Judah spied them he called out, 'Hey guys, here's a smarter way to get rid of Daddy's pet. Let's sell him as a slave to these traders. That will get him out of our hair, and we'll make some money on the side.'

So that is what they did. They pulled Joseph out



of the cistern, ripped his hated coat off and sold him to the traders for two hundred grams of silver. Joseph, with his hands bound behind his back and tears coursing down his cheeks, was taken down to Egypt.

That evening the brothers killed a young goat for tea. After cutting its throat they ripped Joseph's coat in several places and dipped it in the goat's blood. A few days later they took the bloodied and torn coat home to Jacob and callously told him that they had found it out in the desert. Jacob was totally devastated. He believed that some wild animal had eaten Joseph and he grieved for a long time.

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*The heavenly council met a second time. 'If Joseph is to fulfil his destiny,' they agreed, 'we need to ensure that he gets the right training in management—the opportunity to develop business skills and personnel supervision.' So the wheels were set in motion for that to happen.*

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When the caravan reached Egypt, Joseph was taken to the slave market, and there the traders made a tidy profit on their investment by selling him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

At first Joseph was given menial tasks to perform on Potiphar's estate. He quickly learned the Egyptian language and customs and it didn't take Potiphar long to discover that this young man was very talented and good spirited, so he promoted Joseph, eventually appointing him as his household manager in charge of his whole estate.

It was Joseph's job to order in the supplies for the household, to arrange the schedules for all the servants working there and to pay their wages; to oversee the stables and the gardens, the maintenance of the buildings and the payment of the accounts.

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*The heavenly council gathered for the third time. 'The time has come to test Joseph to see how morally responsible he is,' said the Leader. 'If he passes this test, we have another for him. He is still a bit weak in some areas and needs toughening up for the calling that we have lined up for him. Are we all agreed that the time has come to move on this?' There was a unanimous chorus of 'Amen!'*

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Now every time Mr Potiphar sat down to a meal with Mrs Potiphar his mouth was full of praise for Joseph. The trouble was, Mr. Potiphar didn't sit down to many meals with his wife because he was so frequently away on palace business, so Mrs. Potiphar had plenty of time with her thoughts and the handsome and highly-praised Joseph.

One day she caught Joseph off guard and threw her arms around his neck. 'Come and lie with me,' she bade him.

'No, I can't do that,' Joseph protested. 'Mr. Potiphar has put me in charge of everything in this estate, except you.' He slipped out of her embrace and quickly went outside.

But she followed him around, day after day, with the same plea, 'Come and lie with me.' But Joseph refused to listen to her or even to be with her alone.

One day Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties unaware of the fact that Mrs. Potiphar had given all the household servants duties elsewhere. As he moved through the room she stepped out of the shadows and grabbed him. 'Come to bed with me,' she ordered. 'You are still our slave and must do as I say.'

Joseph twisted out of her grasp and ran outside, leaving his cloak in her hands. She was so incensed that this slave refused to submit to her authority, she let out an unearthly scream and the household servants came running to see what the matter was.

'That Hebrew slave came in here to sleep with me,' she cried, 'but when I screamed he ran away. See, I still have his cloak.'

A messenger was sent to the palace and Mr. Potiphar came racing home in his chariot. When he heard what his wife had said about Joseph he was at first surprised, then very angry and had Joseph committed to the state prison.

But Joseph had passed the test of character, which was absolutely essential for his future appointment, because there would be no way that he could handle the pressures of a large administration with its endemic corruption unless he was a man of integrity. He had proved himself to be trustworthy.

Joseph, however, needed more than integrity to handle his future job; he also needed toughening up, because he would have to stand up to the subversive power of the priesthood which would be greatly threatened by this new leader who didn't worship their gods. The question was, could he handle this toughening-up process without breaking?

The jails in ancient Egypt were like jails everywhere, they held the worst kind of people in society, thieves, rapists, murderers, violent and deceitful men. The majority of the prisoners thought of nobody but themselves.

It wasn't too long before the chief warder at the prison discovered Joseph's talent in administration and that he could be trusted. After a few trial runs he left Joseph to handle the running of the prison while he spent his days fishing on the Nile.

Joseph didn't find it easy or pleasant handling these violent and conniving prisoners, every day he had to



make decisions that upset somebody, but he made them anyway because they were right.

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*The heavenly council came together to review Joseph's progress. After examining all the reports that had come in they decided that he was doing well, but needed another two years in that hell-hole to thoroughly mature him so that he would automatically make the right decisions in very difficult and pressing situations.*

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At that time Pharaoh became very ill from food poisoning. No one was sure whether the poison had been put in his food or his drink, so both his chief baker and his chief wine-bearer were put in prison to await the result of the investigation. The remnants of Pharaoh's suspect meal would be fed to one dog and his drink poured down the throat of another. They would soon discover who the culprit was.

Well, the very first night in prison the chief wine-bearer had a dream about a vine with three branches on it. It flowered, budded and produced luscious grapes. The chief wine-bearer squeezed the grapes into a glass and took the fresh juice to Pharaoh.

When he shared his dream with Joseph, Joseph asked if he knew what it meant. When he shook his head Joseph said, 'It means that in three days you will be back serving wine to Pharaoh. But when you return to service, I would be very grateful if you would mention my case to Pharaoh, because I have been imprisoned on a false charge.'

Encouraged by this interpretation, the chief baker spoke up. 'I too had a dream,' he said. 'In my dream I was on my way to Pharaoh with three trays of pastry goods on my head, but as I went the birds flew down and ate the pastries out of the third tray, the one on top.'

Joseph looked at the man with a sad face. 'I'm afraid I can't offer you any consolation, because on the third day you will be hanged and the vultures will eat your flesh.'

And it happened just as Joseph foretold. The chief wine-bearer, however, forgot Joseph's plea and said not a word to Pharaoh about him.

Two years went by, two years during which Joseph honed his skills in people management—the management of the most difficult kind of people. When it was judged that he had mastered his skills sufficiently, Pharaoh had two dreams, but no-one amongst his spiritual advisors had an inkling as to what either of them meant.

At that point the chief wine-bearer remembered Joseph who had interpreted both his and the chief baker's dreams correctly. He discretely recommended Joseph to Pharaoh, who called for him to be brought to the palace.

The palace servants gave Joseph a bath, a shave and a haircut, decked him out in a new outfit and he was ready for his God-appointed assignment of providing a home and sustenance for the children of Israel, while they grew in number from a tribe into a nation.


### CONCLUSION

God took a young lad of seventeen, with great potential and put him through a thirteen-year training course as a slave and a prisoner, so he could serve the kingdom of God with distinction. That's what it took—thirteen years to undo the damage his father had done and to give him the administrative skills he would need for his high calling. It was tough, but it was worth it.

Just think, if you were Joseph and you were given the choice of remaining with your family or spending thirteen years as a slave and a prisoner, which would you choose?

What's your life been like up to the present? Has your life been like Joseph's before being dropped into the cistern, or after he was pulled out? What do you think God might be doing in your life to prepare you for a greater ministry?

Will you, like Joseph be able to say, 'It was not you who sent me here, but God' (Gen. 45:8). 'It was not you who created this situation, but God. What I thought was intended for evil, was intended for good.'

In the light of Joseph's experience there is a lesson we all can learn, and that is to make the very best of every situation, because if we co-operate with God, he will bring much good out of it. 

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# TONY BLAIR'S GOD THING

Rusty Wright & Meg Korpi

**T**ony Blair has this thing about God and faith. He thinks they're important. Sometimes, this lands him in hot water. Speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC, recently, Britain's former Prime Minister related an amusing anecdote:

During a crisis, he wanted to close an address to his nation with 'God bless the British people.' 'This caused complete consternation,' recalled Blair. 'Emergency meetings were convened. The system was aghast.'

As Blair tried to defend his choice of words, 'a senior civil servant said, with utter disdain: "Really, Prime Minister, this is not America you know."'"

Blair's Washington audience roared. Now free to speak his mind, the former PM—whose press secretary once famously told reporters, 'We don't do God'—has been talking a lot about God and faith.

## DOING GOD

Addressing the DC gathering, Blair affirmed faith as a significant force for good in the world. Decrying both religious extremists and aggressive secularists, he commended the billions whom faith inspires to caring, sacrifice and good works. Said he, 'Faith is not acting according to ritual, but according to God's will.'

Blair described his 'first spiritual awakening' when he was ten. His forty-year-old father had a life-threatening stroke and his mother, seeking to preserve some stability in the crisis, sent young Tony to school.

When his teacher knelt to pray with him, Tony felt obliged to explain that his father, a 'militant Atheist,' didn't believe in God. 'That doesn't matter,' replied the teacher. 'God believes in him. He loves him without demanding or needing love in return.' Leo Blair survived and is now eighty-five.

'That is what inspires,' commented Blair in Washington, 'the unconditional nature of God's love. In surrendering to God, we become instruments of that love.'

## ADVICE TO LEADERS

Blair cautioned the Breakfast's international

audience of leaders: 'The Twenty-first Century will be poorer in spirit, meaner in ambition, less disciplined in conscience, if it is not under the guardianship of faith in God.'

Reflecting on his own experience, Blair acknowledged the courage that faith can provide when leadership's challenges become overwhelming. He wished President Obama faith-strengthened leadership: 'Mr. President, you are fortunate that, as has your nation, you have already shown in your life, courage in abundance. But should it ever be tested, I hope your faith can sustain you and your family.'

## A CALL TO FAITH

As we listened to Blair, we were intrigued to hear this seasoned statesman, who currently works to facilitate Middle East peace, call for restoring faith 'to its rightful place, as the guide to our world and its future.' Careful to advocate 'the correct distinction between religious and political authority,' Blair seemed to call individuals, not governments, to faith. He explained the need: 'There are limits beyond [which] only God can work.'

According to Blair, faith engenders humility. 'We can forgive, but only God forgives completely in the full knowledge of our sin. And only through God comes grace; and it is God's grace that is unique.'

Blair's sentiments reminded us of the biblical Paul, who wrote, 'God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast.' (Eph. 2:8-9 NLT 1996, 2004 Tyndale House Publishers)

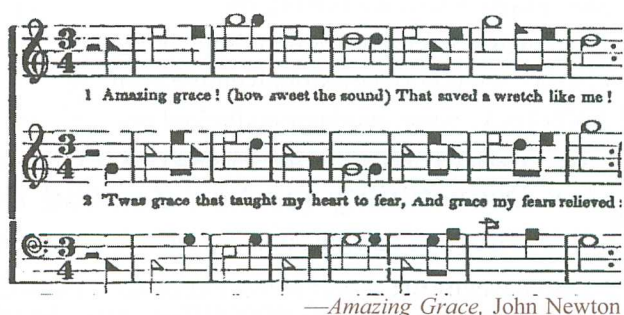
Blair cited British slave-trader-turned-pastor and hymn writer, John Newton, who wrote in *Amazing Grace*, 'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear. And Grace, my fears relieved.'

'It is through faith, by the Grace of God,' claimed Blair, 'that we have the courage to live as we should and die as we must.'

Sobering thoughts, capped by his clever DC closing line:

'And by the way, God bless you all.' □

—Used with the permission of ASSIST News Service



—*Amazing Grace*, John Newton



# FALLIBLE MEN IN THE LORD'S HANDS

## Part 2

### Ritchie Way

**Our second story from the Bible is about another man the Lord was preparing for service, Peter. Peter, however, was quite a different kettle of fish to Joseph. Peter was a muscular, hairy-chested, loud-mouthed fisherman who was a natural leader.**

Jesus loved Peter and Peter loved Jesus. The only trouble was, there was a lot about Jesus and the kingdom that he was about to establish on Earth that Peter didn't understand. And he was about to learn the hard way.

Peter was proud to be associated with Jesus because there was no problem that Jesus couldn't handle. If there wasn't enough wine at a wedding, Jesus would fix it. If there wasn't enough food to feed the multitude on the hillside, Jesus would fix it. If there was a storm on the lake that threatened their ship, Jesus would fix it. If a delegation of Pharisees turned up and tried to threaten Jesus, he would fix them too. There was nothing that could beat Jesus. Peter was proud to be associated with a person like that.

When Judas turned up in the Garden of Gethsemane with a delegation of Temple guards to arrest Jesus, Jesus called out in the darkness, 'Who are you looking for?' They called back, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' When Jesus replied, 'I AM,' they all stumbled backwards and fell over.<sup>1</sup>

Peter, as always, proud to be associated with a Lord who was always in control, whipped out his sword and rushed forward in Jesus' defence. He was no coward. He swung his sword at the neck of Malchus, the



servant of the high priest. Malchus ducked, but wasn't quick enough and lost an ear to the sharp blade.

While Jesus restored Malchus's ear, he said to Peter in a quiet but firm voice, 'Put your sword away. You're interfering in God's plan for me. If I needed swords I could summon twelve legions of them.'

What Peter didn't realise, that when Jesus flattened the opposition with his declaration he was Jehovah, and when he healed the high priest's servant, it would be the very last time he would use that kind of power before his resurrection. From now on a different kind of power would be needed—a power Peter knew very little about. From this point forward Peter would see a side of Jesus' character he hadn't taken much notice of earlier.

Peter and John followed the detachment of soldiers with its commander who had arrested Jesus, to the house of Annas, the man who was the power behind the High Priest. The two of them went into the Courtyard of the house where Jesus was held and Peter saw things there that distressed him; things he never believed possible.

The soldiers put a bag over Jesus' head and one of them punched Jesus' face with his fist and sneered, 'OK, if you're a prophet, tell me who hit you.' Another swung back and punched Jesus in the solar plexus with such force Jesus doubled up in pain. 'Who hit you that time, prophet?' he jeered.

Peter couldn't believe what he was seeing. This was not the Jesus he knew—the Jesus who mastered every difficult situation. The Lord was now like Samson with his hair cut off—powerless to do anything to protect himself.

Peter had always been proud to be associated



with Jesus, so when Jesus predicted, earlier that night, that all the disciples would forsake him, Peter protested very strongly that while the others might do so, he never would. If necessary he would die for Jesus. And he meant it.

But Jesus looked Peter in the eye and said, 'Peter, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' 'Never, Lord! Never!' asserted Peter.

But back in the courtyard, Peter, who was so full of courage when Jesus was in charge, was shamed and distressed by what he was now seeing. He couldn't understand it. Jesus was unable to stand up straight because he had been really hurt by the blow to his stomach and blood was running down his face from a split eyebrow. This wasn't the Jesus he knew. It seemed to Peter that Jesus had lost his power. He was no longer God—just a helpless human with less power than Peter himself.

Peter had had total faith in Jesus but that faith was now severely shaken. He didn't understand what was going on and felt very threatened by the change of circumstances. Jesus now seemed to be the Victim rather than the Victor that he had known. Peter's whole world was crashing down around him. Jesus was no longer in charge and Peter's hopes of being someone great in Christ's kingdom were being dashed to the ground. Everything was turning to water.

Just then the lowest person in the household of Annas, a slave woman, looked up at Peter and asked, 'Aren't you one of Jesus' followers?'

Peter, who had always been proud to be associated with Jesus when things were going well, suddenly felt very vulnerable. Jesus had changed, his conquering divinity had been replaced with a conquered humanity. Jesus appeared to be a slave rather than a Saviour.

'No!' replied Peter to the slave woman. 'I'm not a follower of that fellow. I don't believe I've even met him.' And that wasn't a total fabrication, for Peter had not met the Jesus he was now beholding.

Judas wasn't the only one who betrayed Jesus; Peter also betrayed him, not once, not twice, but three times. When Peter denied Jesus the third time and the rooster crowed again Peter suddenly recalled what

Jesus had said to him earlier: 'Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' His head snapped around to look at Jesus. Jesus looked back with such hurt in his eyes at Peter's betrayal that Peter crumpled and rushed outside with tears rushing to his eyes.

So Jesus knew. And if Jesus knew what was going to happen to Peter, then he must have known beforehand what was going to happen to himself.

### WHEN WE PETER-OUT

We are all Peters, happy to acknowledge our relationship with Jesus when everything is going well for us, but quick to deny him when things turn against us. In the hour of testing we 'peter-out.'

What was it that turned Peter around from being a betrayer to being a loyal disciple? There were two things: The first was the fulfilment of Jesus' prediction, and the second was a look at Jesus. Those same things will help us when we find ourselves in a similar situation. In order to bounce back we need to see how Jesus' word has been fulfilled in our lives and we need to get our focus back on Jesus.

If, like Peter, we have wandered away from Jesus, then the predictions in his Word about what happens to those who choose to go their own way will also come true for us. It's not nice trying to manage your life while denying you are a Christian, because you are always on the defensive. But a good look at Jesus can change that. When Jesus looks at us he does not do so with a look of condemnation because of what we have done to him, but a look of sadness because of what we have done to ourselves. But there is healing in that look and a desire to restore the broken relationship.

But in the end it comes down to this: Am I still willing to follow Jesus, even though it appears he is no longer in charge of the circumstances of my life and seems to be losing the plot? □

### Endnote:

1. 'I AM' is the Hebrew name of Jehovah, and when Jesus declared, 'I AM' (*ego eimi*) they were overcome. The word 'he' is not in the original.



## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

An Adventist Perspective

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# JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

Santo Calarco



**G**od demands our perfect righteousness and obedience in order to save us. The only people who will enter a perfect heaven are those who are morally perfect, without spot or blemish. Just one blemish, just one moral imperfection, and entry is denied.

This is man's dilemma. God demands perfect obedience; man cannot deliver it and God will not lower his standard. But because 'God is love' he sets in motion his pre-planned rescue mission: God will justify man (i.e. make him right) not by man's own obedience, but by his faith in Christ's perfect obedience (Rom 3:21-22; 5:19) which God offers as a substitute for man's imperfect obedience.

How does this all work out? On what basis can God justify (declare righteous) those who have sinned, who continue to sin and also continue to fall short in obedience? How can he justify the wicked (Rom 4:5) and yet be a just God?

In Romans 3:24 Paul outlines God's rescue mission. He says: 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace...' This word 'freely' is used in John 15:25 where it is translated 'without a cause'. In that passage Jesus says, 'They hated me without a cause'. That is, he was hated even though he did nothing to deserve it. When Paul says then that we are being justified 'freely' he is telling us that we are justified (i.e. declared 100% righteous) even though we did nothing to deserve it. That, frankly, is rather astonishing. How could God do this?

Paul goes on to say that we are 'justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.' It is through faith in Jesus, who died as our substitute, that we are made right with God. Jesus' death, in our place, is God's free gift to us. It is by this gift of God's grace that we are made right, and not by anything that we can do. God considers us righteous even though we are not righteous. It is like having several million dollars credited to our bank account when we are deeply in debt.

Paul tells us that this free righteousness comes at a great cost to God—the death of his Son. Jesus' death provided the legal grounds for our justification. Jesus became a sacrifice of atonement, it is through the shedding of his costly blood that we are provided with our free gift! God can pronounce us legally righteous, free from any liability to the broken law, because Jesus not only paid the penalty for our sins, he credited his perfect righteousness to our account (2 Cor. 5:21).

Paul tells us that the basis of our justification (being made right with God) is not our imperfect obedience, but Christ's perfect obedience. It is 'through the obedience of the one man [Jesus] the many will be made righteous' (Rom. 5:19).

God's part is to make provision for our salvation and man's part is to receive it through faith. 'For by grace you are saved through faith' (Eph. 2:8). Paul tells us in Romans 3:28 that we are 'justified by faith apart from observing the law.' In other words, we are not saved by our imperfect obedience to God's Law; we are saved by Christ's perfect obedience. In Galatians 2:16 Paul wrote: 'So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus *that we may be justified by faith in Christ* and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.'

One more thing about faith; faith must be 'in' Jesus as mentioned above. We have lost the meaning of the word 'in' today. The original word 'in' means 'into' in the Greek language and it denotes trust. Faith 'into' Jesus means trust in Jesus.

So in summary, Paul tells us that whilst we are still sinners, and still falling short in good works, we are continuously covered by God's grace and fully acquitted by Jesus' blood if we constantly trust in him. 'Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes [present continuous tense] is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses' (Acts 13:38-39).





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# DANIEL 9:

## Promises to a Perplexed, but Praying Prophet

*Part eleven in a series on  
Daniel & Revelation*  
Angus McPhee



**I**n 538 BC, the first year of Darius the Mede—the year that Daniel was probably thrown to the lions, which was about ten or eleven years after the vision in chapter 8<sup>1</sup>—Daniel was pouring over the writings of Jeremiah.

He read that the whole country would become a desolate wasteland and certain nations would serve the king of Babylon seventy years. But the Lord had promised: ‘*When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil my gracious promise to bring you back*’ (Jer. 29:10; 25:11-12). So Daniel clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, began a fast, and turned to the Lord God in prayer.

### WHAT PROMPTED DANIEL TO DO THIS?

1. Jerusalem had lain desolate for seventy years (Dan. 9:2). According to Jeremiah’s prophecy it was time for the captives to return home and rebuild the city.

2. There seemed to be a conflict in Daniel’s mind between what had been revealed to him in the previous vision about the future desolation of Jerusalem and the bringing to an end of its worship, and what God had promised about the restoration of the city and its worship after the seventy years (Dan. 9:17). He therefore sought understanding of his previous vision (Dan. 9:23). What did the future really hold for Israel?

In his prayer, Daniel traced Israel’s history of rebellion in the face of God’s unfailing love. Daniel readily recognised and confessed that their deportation from their homeland about seventy years earlier was both a fulfilment of prophecy and a result of sin (Dan. 9:4-12). His repeated reference to the mercies of God, in spite of their rebellion, is a poignant reminder of the founding

of the nation about nine hundred years earlier. At Mount Sinai, in the presence of God, his ancestors had declared, ‘We will do everything the LORD has said’ (Exod. 19:8). Forty years later, their descendants had been warned of the results of disobedience, which would include invasion by ‘a nation from afar, swift as the eagle, of fierce countenance’ (Deut. 28:49ff). How true that prophecy was!

‘We have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept his laws ... all Israel has transgressed, turned away, refusing to obey you. Therefore the curses written in the Law of Moses have been poured out on us ... under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like this.’

### DANIEL APPEALS TO GOD TO MERCIFULLY RESTORE THE NATION (9:16-19)

‘Lord ... turn away your anger from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. ... for your sake look with favour on your desolate sanctuary. O Lord, listen, forgive, hear and act! ... because *your city and your people bear your name*’ (9:19).

Israel exists only as God dwells with them. So, the restoration of the Sanctuary as God’s dwelling with Israel was crucial for the restoration of the nation.<sup>2</sup> This is prayer, discussing the matter with God and expecting a response. Responses from God come in two ways, words (here, of the angel) and in subsequent history. Having seen the history of Israel through Daniel’s eyes, we are about to see the future through God’s eyes!

‘While I was still praying, Gabriel came and said, “I have now come to give you insight and understand-



ing. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision.” Gabriel has heard Daniel’s expression of sorrow for Israel’s sins—the root cause of the mess they were in. Although Daniel was praying for his own people, thinking of their situation geographically, politically and spiritually, Gabriel foretold the solution to the sin problem for *all* people, because all have sinned.

### IN ESSENCE:

1. Sin will be dealt with by an atonement accomplished by the Messiah.

2. There will be an extension of time for Daniel’s people and holy city, but for a period only.

3. The Sanctuary, though restored, will be destroyed again.

4. A new kingdom will supersede Daniel’s. It will feature a new and living way to God.

‘Seventy ‘sevens’ (Heb. *shabuim*)<sup>3</sup> (490 years) are decreed<sup>4</sup> for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint a most holy place<sup>5</sup> (9:24).’<sup>6</sup>

### THE PROMISES FALL IN TWO GROUPS OF THREE.<sup>7</sup>

1. To finish *transgression* (*pesha* = high handed sin, rebellion<sup>8</sup>), to put an end to *sin* (*chattah* = to miss the mark), to atone for *wickedness* (*awon* = guilt).

These three Hebrew terms, covering all wickedness, could be read: ‘to shut up wilful transgression, to seal up mistakes, to cover up guilt—as though sin were a prisoner to be imprisoned in a tomb, then to be sealed up and then to be buried by an avalanche.’<sup>9</sup> Daniel, worried for his nation, is hearing the gospel! God has sent his angel to foretell how everything can be rectified. There was nothing that Israel could do to make things right, but God, out of love, was going to provide atonement.

**2a. to bring in everlasting righteousness**

Through Jesus’ death on the cross sin will have been removed and righteousness credited to *all* who choose to become part of the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul grasped this truth (Rom. 3:21-25).

**2b. To seal up [confirm] vision and prophecy.**

Christ’s death would authenticate the prophecy of Daniel 8.

**2c. and to anoint the most holy**

This refers to the anointing of Christ, himself, as Saviour of the world.

### WHEN WOULD THIS HAPPEN?

Not at the end of the seventy years forecast by Jeremiah, but seven times longer than that; after sev-

enty ‘sevens,’ ‘decreed’ for Daniel’s people, had passed.

Seven ‘sevens’ followed by sixty-two ‘sevens’ (483 years) would elapse from the proclamation of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince. Because four decrees<sup>10</sup> were made, this time period would begin sometime within their period. Suffice to say that, for all who accept that Christ was baptised and anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah<sup>11</sup> around A.D. 27 (Luke 3:1-21), the relevant decree was made in 457 B.C. In the meanwhile there will be a significant way-mark: ‘Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.’

‘After the sixty-two ‘sevens’ have passed, the Messiah will be *cut off* (Heb. *karath*) and will have nothing’<sup>12</sup> (9:26a). With Isaiah’s prophecy (53:8), that the servant of the LORD would be ‘cut off (Heb. *gazar*) from the land of the living,’ this predicts a violent death for the Christ.<sup>13</sup>

‘The people of the prince (Heb. *nagid*) who is to come, shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary’ (26b, NKJV).<sup>14</sup> This could well mean that Rome would accomplish the will of the Messiah, for the Hebrew word ‘*nagid*’ for ‘prince/ruler’ in this verse is the same as that for Messiah ‘the prince’ in verse 25.<sup>15</sup>

The invasion of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 B.C. after a three-month siege, the massacre of priests while performing their duties, the incursion into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement,<sup>16</sup> the invasion in A.D. 70 and the setting up of Roman standards in the Temple area; the destruction of the Temple, the banning of Jews upon pain of death, from Jerusalem in A.D. 135 and the erection of a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of the Temple, might all have been intended to fall within the scope of verses 26-27. These lines depict war, destruction, the termination of the Jewish Sanctuary service and, in the phrase ‘abomination of desolation,’ the installation of idolatry by an idolatrous invader.<sup>17</sup> Among the Jews an idol or other heathen symbol was often termed an ‘abomination’ (1 Kings 11:5, 7 *et al*).

The prophecy also forecast that, in the middle of the final ‘seven,’ i.e. three-and-a-half years after the anointing of the Messiah, he would bring an end to the Jewish sacrifice and offering with his being ‘cut off’ for us all (See Isaiah 53).

The focus of Daniel’s prayer of concern has been the restoration of the nation. The focus of the answer has been on how restoration could be really effected through the Messiah—the atonement, his kingdom and the passing of Jerusalem and Judaism as a centre for salvation. In fact, this predicts a new order of things Daniel could not at that stage have imagined—an or-

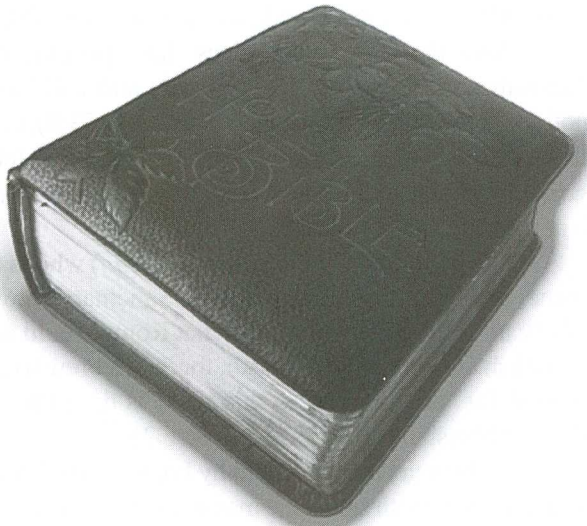
(Continued on page 18)



# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## Part 5

### *The Bad Samaritan*



### Ritchie Way

Jesus set out with his disciples on a long journey from Judea in the South up to Galilee in the North (John 4:3-4). The shortest route was through Samaria, a route which orthodox Jews avoided because it often brought them into contact with the loathed, ‘demon-possessed’ Samaritans. The greatest insult in Israel was to call a fellow Jew a Samaritan (John 8:48). These mixed-race people with their half pagan, half Jewish religion were to be avoided at all costs. But, to the surprise of his disciples, Jesus took them North through Samaria.

About midday they came to Jacob’s well, longing for a drink of water there, but because there was no jar on the well rope they couldn’t draw up any water. The disciples then decided to go to the nearby town of Sychar to buy some food, but Jesus, who was tired from the journey, said he would wait for them at the well.

Hardly had the disciples departed when a Samaritan woman arrived in the noonday heat to draw water. She noticed Jesus sitting there and, observing that he was wearing Jewish clothing, said nothing to him, because Jews and Samaritans didn’t get along. She tied the rope to the handles of her jar and let it down into the deep

well. When it was filled she hauled it up and untied the rope. She was about to hoist the water jar onto her head when Jesus asked her, in a kind voice, for a drink.

The woman froze at Jesus’ request, not sure how to respond, for Jews did not speak to Samaritans and certainly not to Samaritan women. Furthermore, a Jew would rather die of thirst than drink from a Samaritan’s dish. Straightening up she turned to him and said, *‘You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?’*

*‘Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water”’* (John 4:10).

Jesus, ignoring the conventions of society for the sake of the woman’s soul, opened communication by asking a favour of her. When she responded, he deftly turned the conversation to spiritual matters. Her response, however, revealed that she was not familiar with spiritual things. She did perceive, nevertheless, that what Jesus was offering her was greater than the legacy Jacob had left by digging this well.

*“‘Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his flocks and herds?”’*

*‘Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”’* (John 4:11-14).

Once Jesus had the woman’s attention he told her more about the living water by contrasting it with natural water and by revealing its superior qualities. This living water would not only eternally satisfy the woman’s spiritual thirst, it would reproduce itself in order to offer the same benefits to others. But she still didn’t get it.

*‘The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water”’* (John 4:15).

Jesus decided that the time had come to present his credentials. If the woman was unable to comprehend spiritual things, then he would reach her through natural things—he would speak to her in the context of her own small world.

*‘He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”’*

*‘Jesus’ request to call her husband was both proper and strategic—proper, because it was not good etiquette for a woman to talk with a man unless her husband were present; strategic, because it placed her in a dilemma from which she would not free herself without admitting her need.’<sup>1</sup>*

*‘I have no husband,’ she replied.*

*‘Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is quite true”’* (John 4:16-18).

Jesus hadn’t got through to the woman with his



earlier words, but this revelation certainly penetrated her defences. Strangely, even though Jesus revealed her rather liberal past and her present immoral relationship, she did not feel offended because he had only words of praise for her honesty. She was also acutely aware of the fact that Jesus, unlike other Jews, was not judgemental (see John 3:17).

*'Sir,' responded the woman, 'I can see that you are a prophet.' While she had acknowledged that Jesus was no ordinary person, she wasn't yet convinced that he was greater than Jacob. But she didn't want him probing her wound too deeply so decided to change the subject. She said in effect, 'We Samaritans worship in the ruins of a temple on Mt. Gerizim, the temple that you Jews destroyed one hundred and sixty years ago, while you Jews worship in a temple on Mt. Zion. Who's right, prophet, you or us?'*

*'Jesus replied, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem ... a time is coming and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is a spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth"' (John 4:21-24).*

Under the Old Covenant, God manifested himself in a literal Sanctuary made of dead stones. That Sanctuary pointed forward to the New Covenant Sanctuary which would be made of living stones (Eph. 2:19-22; Heb 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:5). Wherever such a sanctuary existed, even if it consisted of only two or three members, God would be there in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). No longer would God be limited to a single location, and no more would he be limited to the Jews. From henceforth God would be with all who worshiped him in spirit and in truth, regardless of their ethnicity, culture or location.

God, as an immaterial being is not like us, absent from one place while present in another. He, who dwells in temples made without hands, is omnipresent—able to be present and worshiped by the faithful in a multitude of places all over the world at the same time. This would be the new reality in the age of the Messiah.

The woman, impressed by Jesus' wisdom, said hopefully, *'I know that Messiah, called Christ, is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.'*

*'Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."' (John 4:25-26).*

Not even to his own disciples did Jesus declare he was the Messiah. At a later date he managed to wring the acknowledgment of this reality out of them (Matt. 16:13-16). It was a sinful Samaritan woman, whose faith was a syncretism of paganism and the Old Testament Pentateuch, to whom Jesus openly revealed who he was. And he was able to tell her because she was open to this revelation, and, unlike the Jews, had no preconceptions of what the Messiah would do, other than that he would teach them the truth.

Very often the greatest barrier to the truth is our own preconceptions. If a cup is empty you can fill it with truth, but if it is full of error there is no room for the truth until the error is removed. The Jews outrightly rejected

Jesus as the Messiah because he didn't fit in with their preconceptions.

This bad Samaritan, unable to restrain the new water of life which was bubbling up out of her, left the old water at the well and rushed into the village of Sychar to share her new-found faith and encourage the people to come and see Jesus.

The Samaritans came and listened and urged Jesus to stay with them—so he stayed two days, preaching the good news. As a result *'they said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world"' (John 4:42).*


When we preach the gospel to the hungry and thirsty they become attached to us or our church. If that, however, is our objective we have failed as messengers of the gospel. Our duty is to introduce the people to Jesus, to get them to trust in and follow him. Our work is to be like scaffolding; we are to assist in building the temple of the Lord, but once the temple is built and filled with the glory of the Lord, our work is done and we are to go off to erect another building to his glory. That was the practice of the apostles.

### JESUS, THE LIVING WATER

The Samaritan woman Jesus met at Jacob's well was a serial adulteress. She had known six men in her life and who knows how many more 'husbands' she might have had, but the divine 'seventh' man come along and filled the void within her that she had been so desperately trying to fill with human relationships. She had been drinking the water of this world, but it had failed to satisfy her thirst. Only One could give her the eternal water of life that would assuage her craving forever, and that was Jesus.

How much like her are we. Our problem, however, may not be partners; it may be wealth, or a great name, or a position, or leisure, or pleasure, or some other addiction. While these things may be good in themselves if sought with the right motives and handled with temperance, they will never meet our eternal needs. Only Christ can fill the void within.

How sad it is when a man or woman gets to the top of the ladder of their desire, only to find that they are up the wrong ladder. You can win the accolades of the world, reach the highest office in the church or land, make your millions, own a magnificent yacht, have all the delights this world can offer, and be totally empty inside because you either don't have Jesus in your life, or he hasn't been your primary motivation in life.

If you, like the woman at the well, have been trying to fill the emptiness inside you with the things of this world, go into your room, shut the door, get down on your knees in repentance and ask Jesus to come into your life to fill your spiritual vacuum. If you are sincere he won't let you down. 

#### Endnote:

1. Merrill C. Tenny, *The Gospel of John; The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Ed. Frank E. Gaebelein).



# 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.

## PAUL'S ESCAPE

**Dear Ritchie**

*I read in Acts chapter 9 that when Paul became a Christian and preached in the synagogues of Damascus that Jesus is the Son of God, the Jews waited at the city gates to capture him. Why didn't they try to capture him inside the city?*

**Dear J**

Not knowing all the facts I can only speculate on an answer. I suspect that because Damascus was a Nabatean city and not an Israelite one, the Jews may not have had any authority over a Roman citizen, such as Paul was, inside the city.

Paul reveals, in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33, that not only did the Jews want to arrest him, but the governor (*ethnarch*) of Damascus was after his hide also. It seems as though the Damascan civil authority and the Jews were co-operating in their venture to capture this radical convert from Judaism, as he left the city.

**Ritchie.**

## ANIMALS IN NEW EARTH

**Dear Ritchie**

*After a good life of fourteen years our beloved dog, Bowser, died recently. He got lymphoma and it cost us thousands for chemotherapy to extend his life a bit, but it was worth it. We miss him terribly, as do our children. The question we often ask is, Will we see our dog again in the New Earth? Does the Bible give any assurance that we will be reunited with our pets?*

**Dear P**

There are few families that haven't experienced the trauma of los-

ing a beloved pet. It has happened to us many times. But would we want all our pets to be resurrected? I'm not sure that we would. Anyway, the answer that I will give to your question will need to be weighed by you.

Man was created to live forever. When God breathed his eternal Spirit into Adam, Adam received eternal life. Life comes only though having the Eternal One. 'He who has the Eternal One has life, he who does not have the Eternal One does not have life' (1 John 5:11-12 Paraphrase). When Adam rejected God as his Master and chose Satan instead, he lost his immortality. There is no immortality without God in your life.

It is important to notice that while God breathed his Spirit into man, he did not breathe his Spirit into any other creature. To man alone was given conditional immortality—conditional upon having God within. The only hope of glory is having Christ within (Col. 1:27). That seems to suggest that eternal life was given to humans alone.

Our biggest moth in New Zealand is the chartreuse Puriri moth, as large as the palm of a man's hand. For six years this creature lives as a grub in a hole in a tree. It then emerges to full glory in the beautiful Puriri moth which mates, lays hundreds of eggs, then dies, all in the space of twenty-four hours. The wonder about its life-cycle is overpowered by the thought that such beauty is wasted. We speculate if, back at the beginning of creation, this moth would have lived for much longer. But we then discover that this moth has neither mouth nor intestines; it wasn't designed by God to live any longer than necessary to fulfil its function as a link in the chain of

its endless life-cycle. So it's not the creature itself that is given unending life, but its species.

It is the function of every human being, however, to have unbroken fellowship with the Eternal One. Humans alone were created with this capacity. So love and enjoy your pets while you have them and thank God for them. They can be a real blessing.

**Ritchie.**

## REVELATION: PRESENT OR FUTURE

**Dear Ritchie**

*What's the point of reading the Book of Revelation if it's just for the future? I mean, I have enough problems coping with the present without bothering about what might happen down the track.*

**D. S.**

**Hi D**

Yes, you have a point, but there's more to it than what you have indicated. If you want to know how a mystery novel finishes you go to the last pages. It's the same with the Bible. It starts out with a lost Paradise, tears, death, mourning and pain. And it finishes with Paradise restored, no more tears, death, mourning or pain. That has to be a comfort for any Christian.

But it's much more than that. The Book of Revelation is definitely for our time as well. We are told, 'Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy ... and takes to heart what is written in it, because the time is near' (Rev. 1:3).

Had people known that the current recession would have come when it did and had people known that the devastating Victorian bush-fires would have come when they did, how much better prepared they might have been; so with the spiritual threat that will come upon all mankind. Revelation tells us to get ready lest we get caught spiritually naked. Most people today do not have the spiritual resources to cope with a major disaster.

In addition, many Christians, believing that the great Antichrist applied only to the Endtime, weren't ready to meet him in the Communist governments that overran their countries. Neither were they ready when Islamist, Buddhist and Hindu extremists burnt their churches and murdered the leaders and parishioners. Every week



scores of Christians are being slaughtered because they confess Christ. The book of Revelation, which is apotelesmatic, would speak hope and encouragement to these people if only they understood that it applied to them in their situation, as well as to people in Earth's last days.

If you want an instant application of the Book of Revelation, study the Seven Churches in chapters 2 and 3. One of those churches will describe the church that you attend. See what rebuke and counsel Jesus has for your church and do something about it.

There's a blessing in that book for you.

**Ritchie.**

## RE: THE CHURCH

**Hi Ritchie**

*Wow! I was reading the February GNU magazine and thought what a great article you wrote: 'A City Without Walls'. Then I went browsing and thought the article by Smuts van Rooyen, 'Is the Church a Hole in the Head', excellent also. I Read a couple of other articles then went to 'Discussion Point' and what a surprise... my question was there, then I saw another SG and thought, 'Oh Ritchie has made a typo,' but on reflection after reading the question it seemed to me that it could have been from our dear and questioning son. I phoned him this morning and sure enough it was.*

*What are you going to do with this mother and son combination, both having the same initial for their first name?*

*By the way, this is not a question so don't worry: Would some of the die-hards consider the acceptance of all denominations, wherever they are at on their journey, succumbing to being lead astray in the last days. I agree with you, we are all on a journey. I have listened to some—very few I might add—of the ETWN programmes by the Catholic Church and they are very interesting, giving the acceptance of the shed blood of Jesus Christ top priority in one's conversion.*

*Anyway, just an observation. Looking forward to catching up in May, but then so will everyone else, which means it will probably be just a 'Hi Ritchie, good to see you,' which will be a shame.*

*Have a great and blessed week*

**S. G**

**Dear S.G.**

I look forward to having a chat with you in Brisbane.

God bless

**Ritchie.**

## CREATION

**Dear Ritchie**

*Science says the world began with the 'Big Bang.' My Bible says, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made' (Psa. 33:6). Now God either spoke the world into existence, or he created it with a Big Bang. What's your take on this issue?*

**C. C.**

**Dear C**

A general rule of exegesis is that the Old Testament must always be interpreted by the New Testament. The New Testament reveals that the word which created the worlds was more than a spoken word; it was the living Word. It says, 'In the beginning was the Word ... through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made' (John 1:1-3). It was by this Word that the heavens were made.

Now if the Word chose to bring the universe into being through a Big Bang, then I think that is truly wonderful, and we should praise him for it. Besides, it's not for us to tell God how he should, or should not go about creating things.

**Ritchie.**

## MASTURBATION

**Dear Editor**

*Some Christians make a big thing of being against masturbation, but I don't read anywhere in the Bible that it's wrong. I'd be interested to know what your view is on this.*

**X**

**Dear X**

I suppose masturbating once or twice a week would not put any more strain on the body than having sexual intercourse once or twice a week. That, however, is not where the problem lies. I doubt that anyone could masturbate without committing adultery in their heart (Matt. 5:28-30). And according to the Bible that is definitely wrong.

What do you crave more: the hankering of the flesh or Jesus' blessing?

**Ritchie.**

## THE JEWS

*There's one thing about John's gospel that is a mystery to me. According to my understanding the apostle John was a Jew. Why then did he refer to the people of his race as 'the Jews'? He does this, not just once, but many times. See John 1:19; 2:18; 5:10, 16; etc. It doesn't ring true.*

**P.D.**

**Dear P**

You may have noticed that whenever John writes of 'the Jews' he invariably refers to people who were enemies of Jesus, or, at least, not whole-hearted believers in him (see 6:41, 52).

Now what John wrote would have sounded strange had he written his Gospel in Jerusalem, but according to our best knowledge he wrote it in Ephesus, and he wrote it for Gentile believers all over the world. So when John identified certain people as 'the Jews' it clarified matters for these non-Jews.

**Ritchie.**

## PASSOVER

**Dear Editor**

*If Jesus ate the Passover meal on Thursday (Luke 22:8), how could he have died as the Passover Lamb on Friday (1 Cor. 5:7)?*

**W.S.**

**Dear W**

There are two possible explanations for this seeming discrepancy and neither may provide the correct answer. There is evidence that the Jews of the Diaspora observed the Passover a day before the Palestinian Jews, which would have made it possible to celebrate the day twice. This is akin to a person celebrating the Queen's birthday on the 1st June in New Zealand and on 8th June in Australia.

On the other hand, Jesus and his disciples ate the Last Supper on Thursday evening, after sundown, which would have been the beginning of Friday in the Jewish calendar—the day Jesus was crucified. The Sabbath, likewise, began at sunset on Friday.

**Ritchie.**

## Overseas Readers

When ordering books, tapes etc., credit cards are a preferred method of payment. However, if paying by cheque please take into account the conversion rate on cheques, which is \$10.00 Australian.



## THE SHACK:

*Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity.*

By William P. Young.

(Published by Windblown Media, 248 pages).

I had heard good reports about *The Shack* from other people, so when I saw it in the library of a friend I asked if I could borrow it. As soon as I had finished reading it I went out and purchased my own copy so I could loan it to others. I can understand why this book has sold more than three million copies.

The author, William Paul Young, was born a Canadian and raised among a stone-age tribe by his missionary parents in the highlands of what was New Guinea. Young wrote this book for his six children, with no thought or intention to publish, but was persuaded by friends to make it available to the general public.

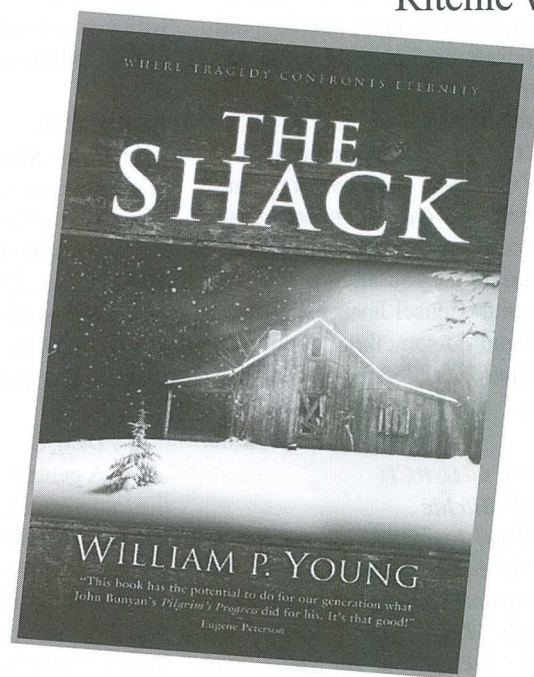
The person at the centre of the story is Mackenzie Allen Philips, whose youngest daughter, Missy, was abducted during a family vacation. Evidence that she may have been brutally murdered was found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in the midst of his great sadness, Mack received a suspicious note, purporting to be from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend.

Against his better judgement he arrived at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walked back into his darkest nightmare. What he found there changed his world forever.

*The Shack* wrestles with the timeless question: Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain? The answers that Mack got will astound you and

## BOOK REVIEW

Ritchie Way



perhaps transform you as much as it did him.

Reviewers of the book wrote: 'When I read it I felt like I was fellowshipping with God.'

'This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his.'

'Riveting, with twists that defy your expectations while teaching powerful theological lessons without patronising. I was crying by page 100. You cannot read it without your heart becoming involved.'

For further information on this book see [www.theshackbook.com](http://www.theshackbook.com)

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with**

**Ron Allen**

**June 20, 2009 from 10:00am - 4:00pm**

**Dynasty Room, Winning Post Motor Inn  
Cnr. Church & Denison Sts. Mudgee NSW.**

### Programme

**10.00am** *Jesus, the More Powerful One*

**11.00am** Morning Tea (provided)

**11.30am** *A Bad Case of Righteousness*

### Lunch

(We are not permitted to bring our own food into the conference venue.)

**2.00pm** *Jesus Meets a Hopeless Case*

**3.00pm** Afternoon Tea (provided)

**4.00pm** Finish

### Register Now

Indicate your intention to attend NO SHAME! Bible Study by sending your name with \$5.00 (each person) to *Good News Unlimited*.





## Temple Banks



**D**id you know that the temples of the ancient world also served as the nation's banks? For example, the temples of Apollo at Delphi, Zeus at Olympia in Rome and Artemis at Ephesus, all had great treasuries. Frequently, cities with temples were attacked by an enemy, simply to furnish the attacking general or king with treasure from its temple to pay his troops.

What about the temple in Israel? Was that also used as a treasury? It is written of Solomon's new temple: 'When all the work King Solomon had done for the Temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver, gold and the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple' (1 Kgs. 7:51). And officers were appointed over 'the treasuries of the house of God and the treasuries for the dedicated things' (1 Chron. 26:20, 22).

In times of national strife, however, the treasure kept in the temple at Jerusalem was no more sacrosanct than the treasure in any pagan temple. It is recorded, in 1 Kings 15:16-22, that King Asa 'took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the LORD's Temple,' to buy

Judah out of a potential war with Israel.

Later, King Joash also, in order to save the city and its people, 'took all the sacred objects dedicated by his fathers—Jehoshaphat; Jehoram and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah—and the gifts he himself had dedicated and all the gold found in the treasuries of the Temple of the LORD ... and sent them to Hazael, king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem' (2 Kgs. 12:18).

It is evident that the only safe treasury, which cannot be violated or robbed, is the one in Jesus' care (Matt. 6:19-21).

**DID YOU  
KNOW**

## STANDING IN THE

*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.*

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email: [carolyn@goodnewsunlimited.org.au](mailto:carolyn@goodnewsunlimited.org.au)

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**South Tweed Heads NSW**

May 2 June 6 July 4

July 18 GNU Bible Conference at Ballina  
Nth NSW (see advertisement on page 18)

**Narellan,**  
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(Continued from page 11)

## DANIEL 9:

### Promises to a Perplexed, but Praying, Prophet



der in which Daniel's people, with all the Gentiles, will have to look elsewhere for salvation.<sup>18</sup>


We still happily agree with Darius, the Mede, when he said: 'He is the living God who endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth' (Daniel 6:26-27).

#### 'IT IS FINISHED'<sup>19</sup>

*See Him on the cross rejected,  
God's own Lamb without a stain.  
There in death for us perfected,  
As the veil is rent in twain.*

*Hear His cry, then, 'It is finished.'  
Now the dark account is paid—  
Every stain, not one diminished;  
O my soul, be not afraid!*

*Come, my friend, and be forgiven;  
Still God's mercy waits today,  
Guiding sinners safe to heaven  
By the new and living Way.*

This prophecy then, poetical like Genesis 3:15, is just as important. 

#### Endnotes:

1. See G. Arthur Keough, *Let Daniel Speak* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 91. George McCready Price, *The Greatest of the Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1955), 219.

2. cf. Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'

3. Although the KJV reads 'weeks,' for students who un-

derstood these as weeks of 'days' and then, employing the 'year for a day' method of interpreting time periods in apocalyptic prophecies, as 'weeks of years,' the following statement is instructive:

'In the pseudepigraphical *Book of Jubilees*, as well as in the *Mishnah* [the collection of interpretations and discussions of the law of Moses by the rabbis, codified c. 200 A.D.] *shabua* ['sevens'] is used to denote a period of seven years. Here, [in Daniel 9] evidently, weeks (sevens) of years are intended rather than weeks (sevens) of days . . . Seventy weeks of years would be 490 literal years, without . . . applying the day-year principle.' Nichol, Francis D., ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978).

4. Heb. *chathak*, a word that occurs only here in Scripture. Hebrew scholars, including those who translated the LXX, translate it 'decreed,' 'determined'. The same Greek equivalent is employed by Paul in Romans 9:28.

5. 'Place' as in NRSV, NASB, et al. See Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), 227.

6. [Readers should also see Desmond Ford's book, *In the Heart of Daniel: An Exposition of Daniel 9:24-27*, where these numbers are interpreted as chronography rather than chronology (Ed.).]

7 Ford, *op. cit.* 225.

8. A reminder of Daniel 8:12-13

9. Ford, *op. cit.* 226.

10. 538 B.C., Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4; Isaiah 44:28); 519 B.C. (?), Darius the Great (Ezra 6:1-12); 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:13-28); and 444 B.C., Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah 2).

11. 'Messiah' is the anglicised version of the Hebrew word *Meshiach* which means 'anointed.' The Greek translation is *Christos*, the anglicised form of which is 'Christ.'

12. The Hebrew for this phrase is so vague that no translation can claim to be definitive.

13. Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius' *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), entries 3772 and 1504.

14. Here I have depended on the poetry of the NKJV. The LXX reads: 'He (the anointed one) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary with the prince that is coming.'

15. Cf. Isaiah 41:2; 44:28; 45:1; Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6; 43:10; Habakkuk 1:6. The LXX reads, 'He [the Christ] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary with the prince that is coming.'

16. *NIV Study Bible*, art. 'The Time Between the Testaments' and *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, (*National Geographic Society*, 1967), 291.

17. See also Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matthew 24:15 for variations of the same term.

18. Cf. Hebrews 13:11-14.

19. H.M.S. Richards, *Have Faith In God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1952), 49.

Good News Unlimited invites you to:

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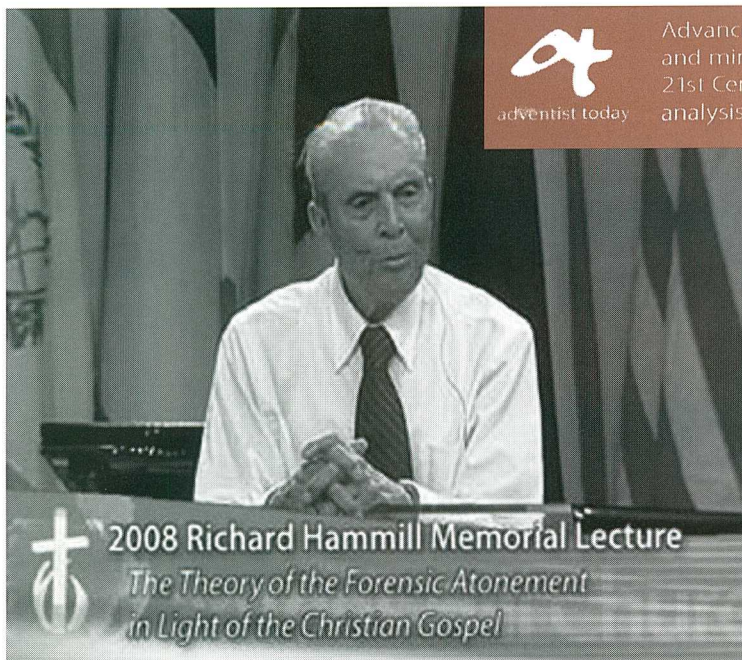
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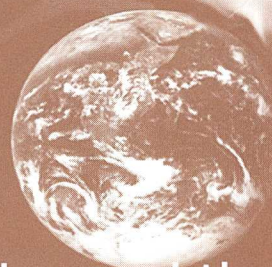
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**Pr Ritchie Way**

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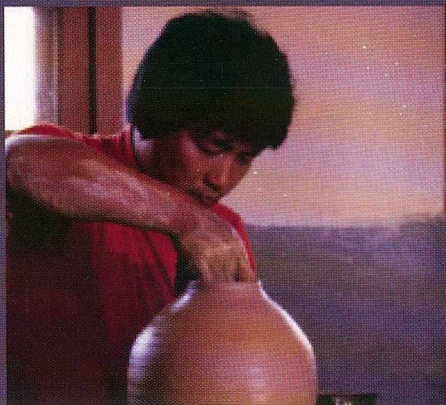
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