

Latter Rain

Magazine of the Christian Israelite Church

(No. 33)



*Create in me a clean
heart, O God; and
renew a right spirit
within me*

Psalm 51:10

Why "Latter Rain"?

"One shall say I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel" Isaiah 44:5.

Christians (those who say I am the Lord's) believe in Jesus as their Saviour and are looking for life after death. They believe it is no longer necessary to keep all the Old Testament laws given by God. The Jews (those who go by the name of Jacob) do not accept Jesus as their Saviour. They have only the law and the justification that brings for a life after death.

Christian Israelites (those who subscribe with their hand unto the Lord and surname themselves by the name of Israel) try to combine the two. Jesus, our example, lived by the Old Testament laws but he tempered them with love. He showed us a new way to live them. With the help of the

latter rain, that is Christ and the Holy Ghost, we can achieve life without death.

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month" Joel 2:23.

The moderate early rain came in Autumn. It was needed to prepare the ground for ploughing and planting the crops. It is symbolic of the first gift of the Holy Ghost, needed for the preparation and establishment of the early church. The heavier latter rain came in Spring to help the crops mature for the harvest. We, like the plants, must grow spiritually before we have the strength to receive our latter rain. This second gift of God's Spirit will prepare us for maturation in preparation for our harvest at Jesus' return.

"Latter Rain" is the Outreach magazine of the Christian Israelite Church, published quarterly by **Fitzgerald's Printing, Wilberforce, NSW. 2750 Phone: 02 4575 1988.**

Further Information: If you desire further information on any of the topics dealt with in this publication please write to **The Editor, 1411 Legetts Drive, Brunkerville, NSW. Australia. 2323. or email: rgray@cichurch.asn.au**

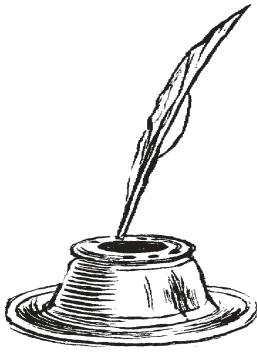
Articles contained in this magazine are not all doctrinal but rather seek to include thoughts and interesting facts which may assist in bringing the reader to a greater understanding of God.

Distribution: PO Box 127, Singleton, NSW. Australia. 2330.

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All quotations are taken from the **King James Version** of the Bible unless otherwise stated.

Editor: Rodney Gray
Production: Lynne Gray



From the Inkwell

The articles in this issue of Latter Rain challenge us to think not only about what we as individuals should do (or should not do) - see the articles "Time For God" and "AntiChristos" - and what influences try to control us ("What Should We Be Thinking?"), but also about why we do things - see "Strength Made Perfect In Weakness". Ultimately God requires obedience from His followers.

This can be either counted obedience through repentance and forgiveness after we have done wrong, or true obedience through us not sinning - see "Ways To Be A Winner". This latter is not possible in our present state, but we believe that God has promised power to do a work of obedience in those who ask.

Throughout the Bible the goal of obedience is linked to the covenant between God and Israel. It may well be in these latter days that it is obedience to God's laws and commands that will prove who are His true Israel people and who are not. Following God's way of life will truly "Help Reduce Stress". Do you feel a calling from within urging you to want to follow the Christian principles set out in the New Testament and as well the everyday way of life laws set out in the Old Testament?

Jesus said, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" Revelation 22:12. Would you be ready if He were to come today, or would you say, "I thought there was more time!" Are you just waiting, or are you doing Christ-like acts while you wait - like the Wise Man in "A Search For The King"? To be alive when Jesus returns, and be changed in spirit and soul and body to be made like Him is something really worth striving for.

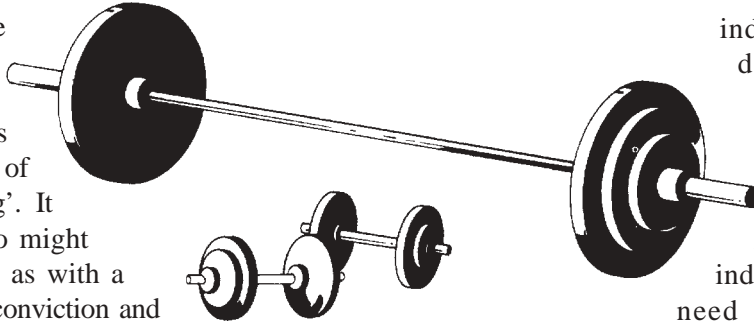
*Remember the closing words in the Bible? Revelation 22:12 records: "**Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen**".*

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Strength Made Perfect In Weakness

The dictionary refers to strength as 'the quality of being strong'. It can refer to might and power, as with a lion, or to conviction and strength of character in



purpose as with Jesus. The wedding vows make a commitment one to the other, but how many who repeat these words have thought of what they mean and their implication? Too often we are tempted to act on impulse not considering the full repercussions of our actions and then have to try to make amends later. Many times, our strength of character is shown by backing down, by saying we are sorry, or by an apology instead of trying to force our ideas. Some may regard this as weak but look at the impact Jesus had by living this way.

'Peer pressure' is a phrase we hear more and more. It is when an individual acts, not upon their own conscience because that is the way they want to go, but they act because they feel that is what they are being 'dared' to do. This causes individuals to do things they would not normally do, and all too often leads to problems, ie. people talk about how long it takes to go a certain distance in the car, so others try to do the journey in a shorter time; they will break the speed limit, run red lights, and drive dangerously in different ways because of the pressure to do the journey quicker. This is perhaps indirect Peer Pressure, but it causes the

individual to do things they normally would not do.

As an individual we need to weigh each situation, and to

decide if we should or should not go through with the actions. Often by backing down from what others expect of us, we are showing greater strength of character.

As a practising Christian I believe we are often put in the same position, where our strength is shown because we make a stand on an issue. We may appear to others around us to be weak. Consider the times Jesus walked and talked out of the accepted opinion, but He was following a conviction, a way of life, for a purpose. Peer pressure has caused grief afterwards, or even many accidents because people do not stand up for what they believe and take unnecessary risks – being afraid of what 'others may think of us' is in danger of shaping our lives unless we take 'control' of our own actions.

It boils down to the cold fact – how strong are we in our convictions? How firmly do we accept what commitments we have made? Do we have a life vision which directs our daily actions, everyone of them, right now?

I often think upon the words used by the father of the child that was possessed by an evil spirit, "*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*". Read the incident in Mark

9:14-29. Yes, I believe, but how strong is my faith? How great a temptation or trial would cause me to fall. I hate to think on that negative, but rather I, like the father of the child, recognise that I am human and not as strong as I should be or as I would like to be, so I must continually ask the Lord to increase my faith to give me understanding and spiritual inner strength.

In Hebrews chapter 11 are listed a number of examples of Bible characters who showed faith in their action and life. Some even died for their convictions. But the interesting point is made in Hebrews 11:39-40, "*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*". There is something our great God is holding out for faithful believers that will exceed the promise of these patriarchs. Could we be one of these faithful believers and receive it?

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 12, Paul spoke of a man who was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words

which it is not lawful for a man to utter (v4). This to me would be referring to parts of God's knowledge which mankind at that time were not meant to understand, but which Jesus said would be revealed to mankind when the Comforter came to give them understanding (John 14:26).

Paul then records about another mystery that affected him in his own life. "*...lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I sought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me*" 2nd Corinthians 12:7,8. I believe Paul here is speaking of the inherent evil condition which each one of us receives at birth. This is due to the fallen nature which we received when our first parents sinned and the curse was placed upon the physical body - dust thou art and unto

dust shalt thou return (Genesis 3:19).

In Paul's writings we can find where he spoke of the change of the mortal body to immortal, and I believe he sought God that he might be one that would receive that

Hymn No. 122

(Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 7:21)

Into a world of ruffians sent,
I walk on hostile ground;
While human bears on slaughter bent,
And ravening wolves surround.

The lion seeks my soul to slay,
In some unguarded hour;
And waits to tear His sleeping prey,
And watches to devour.

But worse than all my foes, I find
The enemy within;
The evil heart, the carnal mind,
Mine own insidious sin.

My nature, every moment waits
To render me secure;
And all my paths with ease besets,
To make my ruin sure.

But Thou hast given a loud alarm;
And Thou shalt still prepare
My soul for all assaults, and arm
With never-ceasing prayer.

O do not suffer me to sleep,
Who on Thy love depend;
But still Thy faithful servant keep,
And save me to the end!

promise, but, God did not reveal to him those words from Paradise, so his understanding was limited, and he, although he could see the promise he knew he would not receive it (1st Corinthians 13:9-12).

Read Romans chapter 7 where Paul recognises his inherent weakness and that there is a war within him, *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members”* (v22,23).

His conclusion was, *“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* (v24).

Again he recognises the thorn in his flesh, the fallen nature, which all mankind have to contend with.

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord; so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin”. Yes, that was Paul’s lot, through the sacrifice of Jesus he would be resurrected from the grave when Jesus returns to this earth.

So Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 12:9 that he recognised he would not receive the change from mortal to immortal, which he spoke of in 1st Corinthians 15:51-55, where death would completely lose its sting, and the grave its victory, because mortal would put on immortality, but that he would receive the grace of God.

“For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”.

We are human like Paul. We have

inherent evil which stops us from having sufficient faith; which stops us from doing the things we know are right and true and of good value; which stops us from standing up for right, but accepting to do little wrongs which we think we will get away with; which stops us from living after the law of our mind, but instead we follow the law of the flesh.

We can take control of circumstances whatever they are. Paul records in many places the promises that God has made to us, so let us ask in our prayer for our faith and understanding to be increased so we can have this thorn in our flesh removed. *“And the*

very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity”

Proverbs 10:29

Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” 1st Thessalonians 5:23,24.

Paul summarises these points in a letter to the church at Rome. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”*. And how are they to do this?

“And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect, will of God”.

At the return of Jesus our apparent weakness will be turned to power as we manifest God’s victory so keep your dignity intact and don’t live up to your peers but rather live up to your Creator.📖

What Should We Be Thinking?

This is the first of at least two articles on what we should be thinking. The second will be on envy and jealousy.

Philippians 4:8, “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*”.

This message from Paul can stand on its own as a summary of behaviour. This is true especially for all Christians when we realise that this letter was written by Paul when he was in prison in Rome and written to the Christians at Philippi not in response to an error that needs to be corrected as other letters written by him.

It is a newsy letter, written to friends in response to expressions of concern and care for Paul’s well-being (Philippians 4:10). From this letter we know that the Philippian Christians have love because Paul says in Philippians 1:9 that he prays that they will have more love and more knowledge and judgement.

These Philippians are his dearly beloved (Philippians 2:12 & 4:1) who have always obeyed God and have shared fellowship with Paul in the Gospel (Philippians 1:5) and as expressed in Chapter 4 verse 1 Paul’s joy and crown.

“*Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved*” Philippians 4:1.

Let’s review Philippians 4:8 (written above) which is paraphrased in ‘The Message’, “*Summing it all up, friends, I’d*

say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse”.

Paul is asking for action and that action is thinking not doing.

He doesn’t say think about ‘what’ is of good report; he says think about ‘whatsoever’ is of good report and by inference not thinking about what is not of good report.

That is more than just thinking about what is right as the opportunity arises but looking for and discerning what is the right thing to think about. And the right things to think about are those that are honest, just, pure, lovely as well as of good report. From the context we can see that it is these things that have virtue and are worthy of praise.

What does this mean for us?

One example would be not to listen to gossip or have discussions that impute bad motives for people’s actions. Why? When you next meet the people who have been the subject of the gossip or discussions your reactions are likely to be different: based on that gossip rather than on what you know.

A friend who suffers from depression gave me this example. When her husband came home and gave her a distracted greeting she felt unloved and unwanted when in fact he had been under extreme stress at the office. She had imputed lack of love and concern into his behaviour when this was not the case.

In my own instance I was walking with my daughter when she said hello to

someone we both knew. I had not said hello to that person as we had already walked past. Was I rudely cutting or ignoring that person? No I was merely walking along in my own little world and did not see her. Did she think I had cut her? I don't know.

Another example is watching films that encourage all the things that the Bible condemns. When we do this we are storing in our hearts and thinking about things that are not honest, just, pure, lovely or of good report. And definitely not virtuous or praiseworthy.

What is the danger in storing these

unacceptable things in our heart?

Matthew 12:34b-35 "... *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*"

And what is the benefit - Philippians 4:9b, "*Those things, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*"

What more reason could we have to store good things in our heart than to think of things that are acceptable to God and discard those thoughts that are not acceptable.📖

Use Your Talents

If only I were someone else
The things that I would do -
Some people always talk like that,
I've heard them, so have you.

Why envy other people's gifts
When you have talents too,
For in God's service there is work
Which only you can do.

That chance to speak a kindly word,
Or maybe just a smile
That cup of water in His Name,
Small things, but all worth while.

God only asks that each of us
Will do our very best
To use what talents we may have
And He will do the rest.

Next time there's something to be done,
Whate'er the task may be,
Let's say as once Isaiah said,
"Lord, here am I, send me".

How To Help Reduce STRESS

If you were to go on a 1,000 kilometre trip across the country in today's environment, you would not saddle the horse, or get out the bicycle, not unless you were re-enacting some historic journey. It would be too much stress on the horse to expect it to travel on today's countryside and urban roads. Life is like a journey and as we travel from day to day we need to have an understanding of our environment and a vision of where we are going so that the stress doesn't weigh us down.

What is stress? It is something we all talk about today, but what is it? In the Macquarie Dictionary it is defined as, 'a state of physiological or psychophysiological tension'.

In the analogy of the horse, too much tension would be placed on the horse for it to travel that distance on the road with all the other vehicles, and so it would experience 'stress'. Some stress is healthy as it challenges us to meet new ideas and horizons, but too much stress, however, is unhealthy and can sap our ability to work efficiently and enjoyably. We get overloaded with so much decision making but we also get overloaded by the number of jobs we try to fit in to a given period of time. Perhaps we allow ourselves to be pressured by other's demands or requests and still we expect more of ourselves. Do we allow external forces to control our mind, when God has given each of us

freedom to think and to act, to plan and make decisions? Do we spend time listening and talking about negative possibilities, allowing our positive views to be overruled by negatives? We do have control. We are not puppets governed by someone else pulling the strings!

'Stress' is our body telling us we are overdoing it. It is our inner voice, our voice of health, acknowledging that we are getting out of balance, trying to give more than we are putting back into ourselves; trying to exert more effort than the mind, physical body and spiritual strength is able to bear. With an electrical circuit when an overload is created the safety switch will stop the mechanism from working. Our body works on electrical impulses governed by currents and in extreme cases the body does switch off with a black-out, or memory loss, but in between there is a lot of damage that can be done. So let us look at 'stress', not as a negative, but as a positive warning signal. It can become a negative and dangerous condition if we do not do anything about it.

In today's modern society most of us feel 'stress'. So what can we do about it? We will try to give a holistic overview to this subject, however this is of a general and not a medical perspective. Each individual is different and will have different needs.

Our scales should always be

balanced. Stress occurs when we lose this balance. Stress can be seen to fall into the categories:

1. The Mind: *“Be still and know that I am God”*
2. The Body: Sickness, suffering, overwork, conflict, etc.
3. The Spirit: Vision, prayer, hope and faith.

The Mind

I guess it comes back to the fact of whether we have accepted to control our mind or whether we allow external forces, events and ideas to dominate our thinking. I once heard the saying that we spend hours of time in the garden of despair and loneliness. As I pondered this point, I realised that we do have control of our thinking, or where we allow our mind to wander or vegetate; we do have the ability to switch from one topic to the other. It is important to recognise this control of our mind.

It is certainly not easy to understand the difficulties in our lives, the sufferings some people experience and the tragedies in the World, eg., Iraq, Africa, the Tsunami of 2005, September 11th, etc., and also events within our local communities. Of course we ask for the reason why. I guess we, like children, naturally ask questions. Unfortunately we are only aware of part of the Creator’s Master Plan, and often the part we are involved with does not make sense, but we must accept through faith.

At times we understandably may find our mind in turmoil. At these times we must remember God’s message from the Psalms, and we quote Psalm 46:10, *“Be still and know that I am God...”*. Believing God is in control, we bring ourselves into a calmer state of mind.

Through our soul we search for right

and wrong, good and bad, which manifest in our mind.

Common Sense Suggestions to help decrease Anxiety

1. Get adequate exercise - ideally three times per week.
2. Get adequate sleep. Most people need 8 hours of sleep per night.
3. Do what you can to deal with the fear or problem causing the anxiety. Examine different alternatives or possible solutions and try one.
4. Talk with a close friend at least once a week about your frustrations.
5. Get adequate recreation - ideally two to three times per week.
6. Live one day at a time (Matthew 6:34).
7. Imagine the worst thing that could possibly happen. Then more realistic possibilities will not look so bad.
8. Divert attention from self to others. As individuals get their minds off their own problems by helping others, their anxiety often decreases.
9. Do not put things off.
10. Set a time limit on your worries. Set aside a definite period of time each day in which to focus on a given problem. If the issue surfaces any other time, say, “I cannot consider that issue right now. I will consider it later during the designated time period, but I refuse to consider it at this moment”. By doing so you set free much of the mental energy that would otherwise be wasted in worry.

Introduction to Psychology and Counselling, Christian Perspectives and Applications, Paul D. Meier, Frank B. Minirth, Frank B. Wichern, Donald E. Ratcliff.

The Body

Have you ever wondered why Eastern religions, especially those who encourage

meditation and similar practices (yoga, Tai Chi, etc.) have become so popular and even moved into main stream medicine? Maybe it is because they are designed for the individual to recognise and to come into harmony with a power that is greater than themselves: the universe, nature, and some even an Almighty Creator. This brings relaxation of body and mind and relieves stress. Christianity and Judaism are monotheist in that they recognise one Almighty source of power, love and understanding, and individuals are encouraged to come into harmony with this source through meditation, prayer, singing hymns, reciting prayers, etc. These are all ways we can regain 'equanimity' within ourselves through seeking contact with the Loving Creator.

We have also been encouraged to share one another's burdens. Here is some practical advice which is emotionally useful in helping others and ourselves in reducing the stress in our bodies:

- . Counselling stems from the old fashioned 'getting together and talking about our problem' that was customary with family and friends. We must not expect to be able to give advice when someone talks to us, but we can think the situation through, using their eyes, listening to their helpful conversation and thoughts, encouraging them to discuss and air their views. If we find they are not getting any satisfaction from talking to us, perhaps a third person, or advice from someone experienced in that field, will be more helpful.
- . Listen with an open heart and mind.
- . Be aware of letting go of your own preconceived ideas.
- . Offer support, physically as well as mentally: send flowers, drop a note, a

phone call, let others know you care about them. Ask what they need and be practical in helping where you can.

- . Take a deep breath and be prepared to hand over to God.
- . Conflict is an inevitable part of life. When it occurs, analyse why you are feeling stress, reflect upon the circumstances and see if there is another way it could have been handled. Meditate upon the situation, reflect upon the circumstances, then let it go and bring yourself into a calmer state of mind.
- . We can relieve stress by enjoying the marvels of nature: flowers, trees and sunsets, so many things we are inclined to take for granted.
- . Go for a walk, exercise if you can.
- . Look after your nutrition and get plenty of sleep.
- . Ask for help if you are overworked and get balance in your life.
- . Have interests and hobbies in your life.
- . Laugh as much as you can.

The Spirit

Our spirit is our strongest means of relieving stress as it puts us in touch, through an invisible means, with our source of power and strength, our Creator.

Do we have a vision – a high point we are looking for, or do we just accept one day after another as being part of a routine that evolves and is called life? Everything does not have to fit in exactly, but we do need to give ourselves a vision, a point or plan in life where we want to be. Proverbs records the words, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he*" Proverbs 29:18. On what do we need to base our vision if it is going to be lasting and make

us happy? On God's Word, the Bible and the Laws and love contained within its pages. The ultimate in understanding will only come to us when we individually, through our prayer and personal meditation and study, seek to God to give us understanding. It is then that we will receive peace of mind in such a way that even though we do not understand, we are able to accept what is happening, knowing that a divine purpose is unfolding.

We do not know all the answers. We are privileged to have some and to know some practical ways to deal with situations, but have we acknowledged that we are not in complete control? Are we expecting knowledge beyond what we are able to understand at this time? There have been great prophets in the past who have met this same difficulty. Just think of Daniel's rebuke, *"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: ...and I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end...for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"* Daniel 12:4,8-9,13. Read the whole section. Just imagine Daniel, that great prophet who had stood, by now, before the kings of three dynasties, to be told that this is enough, you are not going to be told any more at this time, but that a future generation would understand these things.

Our challenge is to become enough in tune with God so that we can maintain our vision and accept the path we have been given to follow. Paths can be difficult. The Lord's Prayer asks for daily food and similarly we need to ask for strength daily, even hourly, or minute by minute, to meet circumstances one by one. We also need to recognise that some meet more

Principles That Decrease Anxiety

A number of biblical principles, taken from Paul's writings, can help believers decrease anxiety:

- 1. Obey God. God commands us not to be anxious (Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6; 1st Timothy 6:6).**
- 2. Pray (Philippians 4:6).**
- 3. Realise that God can guard our hearts and minds as we obey him (Philippians 4:7).**
- 4. Meditate on positive thoughts (Philippians 4:8). There is no better place to find positive thoughts than in the Bible.**
- 5. Focus on godly behaviour (Philippians 4:9). Anxious individuals need to avoid sin and join small fellowship groups.**
- 6. Realise there is a twofold responsibility (our's and Christ's) in doing anything (Philippians 4:13). An individual can overcome anxiety through Christ.**
- 7. Realise God will supply our needs but not always our wants (Philippians 4:19).**

Introduction to Psychology and Counselling, Christian Perspectives and Applications, Paul D. Meier, Frank B. Minirth, Frank B. Wichern, Donald E. Ratcliff.

challenges than others, and our lot is to help each other where we can. Remember God is always there for us to talk to and through our faith and hope we will be strengthened to accept what is happening. Do not allow yourselves to be overwhelmed by situations because God can provide the peace and calm that we need as we take refuge in His love. Day by day. He will give us peace of mind to accept.

With such knowledge let us lift our


eyes from the trials and difficulties which are as pebbles on the pathway of life and look ahead, with faith, hope and love, knowing God is in control.

Psalm 23 sets a scene of peaceful surrender in which we look to God to provide for us. Surely this is the way to reduce our stress.

Psalm 23

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.*

He restoreth my soul:

*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”* 

A 17th Century Nun’s Prayer

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself, that I am growing older, and will someday be old.

Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from the craving to try and straighten out everybody’s affairs.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details - give me wings to get to the point.

I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others’ pains. They are increasing, and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old woman or man is one of the crowning works of the devil.

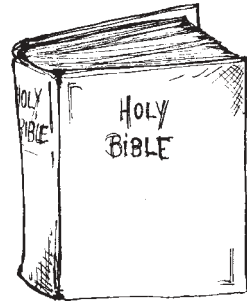
Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it; but Thou knowest, Lord, I want a few friends at the end.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And give me, Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Debug Your Bible:

“Antichristos”



Many people believe that ‘antichrist’ is a person. Nowhere in any of the Scripture (see opposite page) does the word refer to an individual or a particular person. The word literally means ‘*antichristos*’ or ‘against Christ’ so therefore it is more likely to be any spirit or action that is against Christ. This doesn’t mean one specific person, but rather hosts of people who refuse to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. Satan, of course, is responsible for this ‘spirit-against-Christ’, and Satan’s time is running out, so he must try harder and harder to deviate followers from following Christ back to themselves and their worldly pleasures.

We are warned in our Bibles that at the end of times there will be trials and pestilences as never seen before. Satan will test us as never before. Many feel that we are living in these times, but we are also told not to predict or try to foresee the time of His return, for it will happen when God is ready for it to happen. We must though look around us and note that things have gotten worse and most particularly in the area of godlessness or rather antichrist. 2nd Timothy 3:1-5 is particularly descriptive and gloomily familiar when you look at it with today’s society in mind: *“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,*

unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

Not a pretty picture, but familiar isn’t it? Let’s look at these danger signs individually, for it is in these like actions that antichrist is present.

“lovers of their own selves” – this comes from the word *“philautos”* from *philos* meaning ‘loving’ and *autos* meaning ‘himself’. In reality it is not the one who simply loves himself but one who loves himself more than he ought to, involving self-conceit and selfishness. The *philautos* is one who loves his life so much that he seeks ignobly to save it. More than at any other stage in human history mankind is preoccupied with him/herself. Depression, anxiety and mental illness are rampant in a society where belief in ‘self’ is absolute. Hedonism ran rife in the Greek empire and ultimately resulted in a selfish, powerless society and today we don’t seem to be much better. Everybody is preoccupied with how they feel and why they feel that way, and more and more we become a society where we give less and less of ourselves and become more isolated and vulnerable to the very nervous disorders that are dominating society today. Alternatively, we can be lovers of God and through that love have a healthy respect for ourselves and our bodies

These are the only 4 verses in the Bible where the word ‘antichrist’ is used:

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” 1st John 2:18.

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” 1st John 2:22.

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, where of ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” 1st John 4:3.

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” 2nd John 7.

to live God’s way, but when God is not the focus, when man makes himself the focus, then man becomes his own god and thence the decay sets in – a reliance more and more on self, rather than God, and the imminent disappointment which comes from relying on man which leads to all different types of mental illness. Stay God focussed, love God and through that respect yourselves, but always acknowledge that God is in charge, not you. Love of self is the basic sin from which come all other sins. Once the focus comes onto self in this way Christian attributes such as charity and obedience, most especially to God, become impossible to perform.

“covetous” – from the Greek word *“philarguros”* meaning ‘fond of money’ and only used elsewhere in Luke 16:14 with regards to the Pharisees. This is a very old fashioned word but the concept it covers is still as pertinent today as it was yesterday. The love of money has caused more social problems than any other evil – mankind has set up money as a form of god and the acquisition of wealth is of prime concern to many. To covet something also means to want something that isn’t yours, most especially when the desire for this object brings about envy and jealousy. We’ve all

heard the phrase ‘the other man’s grass is always greener’, well the covetous person is never happy with their own blessings, their bucket is always half empty and never half full. Everybody seems to have better than they do and when they do acquire what they feel ‘keeps them up with the Joneses’ the victory is shallow because there will always be something else they need, or someone else they have to impress. We should be grateful for the individual blessings God has given us and don’t compare them to others, but rather share in the thrill of other people’s blessings without any envy. We should be able to show others how happy we are for their good fortune, rather than resent the fact that we think they are doing better than we are. This sort of attitude develops one thing – ‘chips on the shoulder’ – and God cannot work with a person who bears grudges and develops ‘chips’.

“boasters, proud” – From the greek words *alazon* meaning self-exalted or a braggart and *huperephanos* from *huper* meaning ‘over’ and *phainomai* meaning ‘appear’, in other words ‘one who shows himself above his fellow men, in honour preferring himself’. We can wrap these two up together. Both of these traits exalt the self, not God. We all know how difficult it

is to put up with someone who is constantly bragging or crowing about their own achievements. He is the man whom God resists, the Bible tells us many times that God receives the humble but resists the man who is proud, *huperephanos* (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Proverbs 3:24). So what is the difference between these two: the braggart blusters his way into power, but the arrogant man is a greater danger because his sin is inward where it cannot be seen, it is in the heart. Many faces and posed behaviours can mask the state of the heart but God knows at all times the state of the heart and the motive behind our actions.

“blasphemers”, blasphemy is any insulting remark or curse, even attributing to Satan the works of the Holy Spirit. It is unforgivable if done maliciously and knowingly (Hebrews 6:4-9; 10:26-31; 1st Timothy 1:13). How times have changed. Go back a couple of hundred years and anyone who blasphemed or ‘took the Lord’s name in vain’ had the word ‘blasphemer’ burnt into their forehead as a sign to all of their sin. These days, forms of blasphemy would have to be one of the most common descriptive adjectives in the English language. All ages, all types of people, feel free to take the Lord’s name in vain, and not only God but Jesus Christ as well. How times have changed, yet here in this passage we are told that it forms part of those qualities undesirable in the godly life, the qualities that are antichrist. The Ten Commandments haven’t changed and neither have these instructions written by Timothy nearly 2000 years ago. Society has changed and with that change has come greater disrespect for God and Jesus Christ than has ever been shown before.

“disobedient to parents”, another ‘big’ issue for today. More and more families are finding their teenagers

rebelling, the influence of peer groups, television and society are pressing more and more on these young people. Rather than the family unit growing stronger in these final days, governments actually support children against their parents for the first time in human history. The family was the most revered and stable unit in society until the 20th century got hold of it! By the latter part of the 20th century governments, in Western countries, had interfered with so many aspects of parenting that they had left parents with no rights and children with all the rights and none of the experience. It was a cataclysmic mixture for the concept of ‘family’ which today is still taking a battering. As we move closer to the end times families have to remain God-focussed to remain intact and keep the pressures of the outside world at abeyance. Murdering of parents, and grandparents has become a commonplace form of killing which has no historic equal in Western history. Mothers and fathers were always respected, but not now. This same lack of respect within families manifests itself with other authority areas, such as police, schoolteachers, etc., where many of the youth of today have no respect for themselves let alone anybody else. It is a society breeding amoralism, which cannot make for a healthy outcome.

“unthankful” from the Greek word *acharistos* meaning ungrateful (also used in Luke 6:35). We are all familiar with these concepts too aren’t we. Ingratitude is another frustrating element of the 21st century that has developed because of the preoccupation with self. Many have lost the graciousness to thank people for anything, be it their time, a gift, a card, a greeting. Many of us are so preoccupied with ourselves that we fail to think of

others, outside of our family, and their needs at all. Accompanied with the physical aspects of ingratitude, there is also the spiritual, where people fail to thank their Creator for his many blessings and refuse to accept the grace which God so freely gives to all who will come to Him. Like the prodigal son mankind would rather grovel in 'pigslop' than return to the Father.

“unholy” from the greek word *anosios* meaning without piety, no reverence. The man who is *anosios* offends against the fundamental decencies of life – nothing is sacred. To be ‘unholy’ is to be self-focussed not God-focussed.

“without natural affection” from the Greek word *astorgos* meaning ‘without family love’ and is speaking about those who feign affection for people for self gain or gratification, either sexually, emotionally or monetarily – the root word it comes from *storge* is the word used especially for family, eg., the love of a parent to a child and a child for a parent. In these latter days people will become so focussed on themselves that even those closest to them (their families) mean nothing to them. These days you would term these type of people ‘users’ and they are becoming more and more common. It could also be referring to those with unhealthy and unbiblical sexual preferences, which is where the concept of hedonism (or, if it feels good do it) comes in.

“trucebreakers” from the greek word *aspondos* meaning ‘the absolutely irreconcilable who, being at war, refuse to lay aside his enmity or to listen to terms of reconciliation, implacable’ and could also mean ‘a covenant breaker’. These types of people are not morally bound to keep any agreement, cannot be relied upon, are undependable and faithless to promises – they literally cannot be believed. Everyone

of us can relate to this type of betrayal where a confidence has been broken or a trust sacrificed – it shatters the recipient and irreparably damages relationships.

“false accusers” from the Greek word *diabolos* – this word is used either in reference to the Prince of Devils (Matthew 4:1) or for evil spirits in general. The Lord Jesus calls Judas *diabolos* in John 6:70 but the most common usage of *diabolos* is in reference to Satan. False accusers use slander to achieve their goals. Knowing gossip isn’t true they spread it around, darkening the names of good men and women for self gratification’s sake. Slander can be the most ruinous of evils. Money, possessions, these can be replaced, but one’s good name – slander can ruin people’s entire lives by destroying their name. How often in the tabloids, media coverages, etc. is the focus on slander, and how much damage has slander done to people over the ages. Perhaps this is why this particular sin’s root word is also closely entwined with the Greek word for Satan – it is the most pervasive of sins that leaves people defenceless.

“incontinent” from the greek word *akrates* meaning that the person has no control over their appetites and passions – this would cover things such as gluttony, alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual perversion, pornography, etc (the list is endless). We would say these days that the person has become a slave to their addictions.

“fierce” from the Greek word *anemeros* meaning wild, savage or uncivilised – the word description fits aptly, it is to act more animal-like than human. We understand that animals do not discern good and evil, yet even a dog can be sorry it attacked its master. Humans have the ability to discern right and wrong and yet

time and again we humans unfeelingly become vicious with each other. In the heat of anger many of us would be seen as no better than animals, and yet we have the capability to know exactly what we are doing and what hurt we are inflicting.

“despisers of those that are good” from the Greek word *“aphilagathos* meaning a person who despises goodness or good men. People will seek out peers who support their sins, not Christians who try to show and demonstrate a better, humbler, peaceful way. People will gravitate to others with whom they don't feel accountable – what is the old saying, ‘Misery loves company’, well that's the type of thing spoken of here.

“traitors” from the Greek word *prodotes* meaning betrayers. People who will go to unusual lengths to betray other people. This epistle was written just prior to the commencement of Christian persecution in Rome where it was actively encouraged for friends to ‘dob’ in Christian friends who would then be fed to lions, or become sport for Roman lethal amusements. The idea here is that some people will betray anyone if the price is right, yet this not the Christian way. Also people will betray their faith in God for pre-eminence in the world.

“heady” from the Greek word *propeteis* where our word precipitate comes from, and it means rash, hasty, reckless, headstrong (only other use in Acts 19:36). We are all familiar with the saying “Think before you speak”, well ‘heady’ people don't, and as a result leave a pathway of hurt feelings and distrust in their wake.

“highminded” from the Greek word *tuphos* meaning smoke symbolising pride, insolence, to be drunk with pride, with a heart lifted up not only against man but against God. To be highminded means you

are senseless, conceited and more commonly today it would be said that they were ‘full of their own self-importance’. There are many, many biblical passages that tell us the uselessness of a prideful heart to God. Humility is the key, God can at least work with that.

“lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” This covers the concept of the Sunday Christian, who makes himself look good for 1 hour, or 1 day, but then for the rest of the week he treats his God and fellow man as if they are an accessory, rather than a fact. How much damage has hypocrisy done to Christianity. When asked what unpractising Christians have against standard religions their reply is usually ‘the hypocrisy’, and in these latter days this will all get worse. They go through the right movements, say the right things, but their hearts are unchanged. Christ hasn't taken up residence in their hearts.

There is a very similar listing given by Paul in Romans 1:21-32 which could be read as well and compared with this. In 2nd Baruch (Apocrypha) we get an even more vivid picture of the moral chaos of these latter times: *“And honour shall be turned into shame, And strength humiliated into contempt, And probity destroyed, And beauty shall become ugliness...And envy shall rise in those who had not thought aught of themselves, And passion shall seize him that is peaceful, And many shall be stirred up in anger to injure many; And they shall rouse up armies in order to shed blood, And in the end they shall perish together with them”* (2nd Baruch 27).

With the advantage of hindsight, General William Booth's comment

regarding the 20th Century was ominous but true, “The chief danger of the 20th Century will be religion without the Holy Spirit, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, and heaven without hell”.

Just as the spirit of ‘antichrist’ will manifest itself, most particularly in the latter days, the Bible does give guidelines and direction for believers to follow to keep the focus God-ward, to be pro-Christ (rather than anti-christ). We are given the record of Jesus’ life amongst us and the demonstration of servant-hood He provided us with. We are also left with directions in many of the Pauline letters with regards behaviour and what habits to avoid and beware of.

So what qualities should a Christian manifest and how should a Christian behave especially during this turbulent and troublesome period time? There are many passages outlining the wholesome, Spirit-filled life and how it can be achieved, but space prevents as in depth a study of the good as has been done on the bad. The point of this article being that in these latter

days when the return of Jesus Christ is imminent, the antichrist is not a single person, but rather a general feeling or spirit away from Christ. Satan is responsible for this as he is running out of time testing this world as he is, and knows that his adversary who defeated him before, will be back this time to finish the job for good.

Galatians 5:22-26 would seem the most appropriate ending, to show us what to pray for, the behaviour to attain to and the focus we should try to achieve – vertical (Godward) rather than horizontal (selfward), “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another*”. As it says “*the fruit of the Spirit*”, so if Christ’s power is resident in your heart, shouldn’t these be the attributes you are manifesting whilst prayerfully asking for divine assistance to stay obedient to God’s Law and manifesting His Will. 📖

The Fate of the Fallen Angels

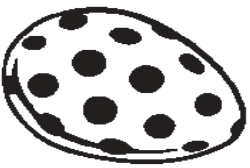
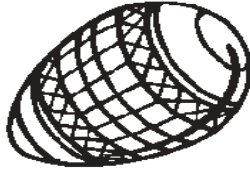
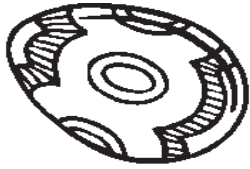
“Although evil is so pervasive in the world, it does not have the last word: the Lord, as the God of justice, must punish all sin, including that of the evil angels. Sometimes it is said that God killed off the evil angels (or at least the first generation of them); alternatively, it is often claimed that they were imprisoned until their final judgment, either below the earth in ‘a chaotic and terrible place’ (1st Enoch 21) or in one of the seven heavens.

The Book of Jubilees includes an interesting attempt to explain how, in spite of the confinement of the demonic forces, evil still remains so active in the world. According to Jubilees, the chief of the evil spirits was allowed to retain a tenth of his followers as agents of punishment on humanity, while the remainder was imprisoned.

Although accounts of how God acts toward the fallen angels vary, the Pseudepigrapha are unanimous that they will meet their final fate at the Last Judgment, when their power will be utterly destroyed, and there are several vivid descriptions of the ultimate destiny that awaits them.”

page 21, **The Lost Bible, Forgotten Scriptures Revealed**, J. R. Porter., 2001.

The First Easter



‘Jesus Loves Me’ these are the words from a little song that most of us know. It is such a happy song, for it is a happy feeling to know that Jesus loves us isn’t it? How do we know this? The song tells us that ‘the Bible tells us so’.

You know too that your Mummy and Daddy love you - they do so much for you - look after you very carefully and if it were possible, would rather be hurt themselves than have you hurt. That is how we all feel for our loved ones.

Jesus tells us more. He said to love our enemies and do good to them that hate you. My dears, Jesus loves everyone and we have a special time for remembering this - yes, at Easter.

Nearly two thousand years ago there were those who hated Jesus. They had Him arrested and took Him to be judged. Finally Jesus was taken away and nailed to a cross - this was the first Easter. Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”. He loved those who hated Him - He died on the cross for everyone. Jesus had said, “Greater love hath no man than this”.

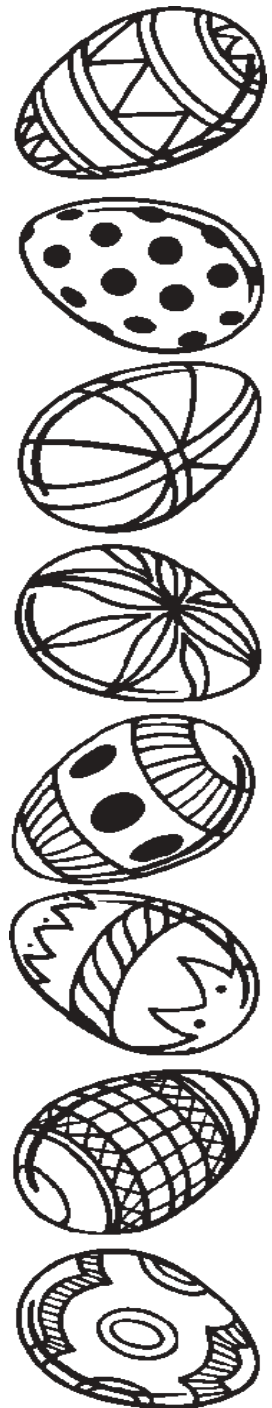
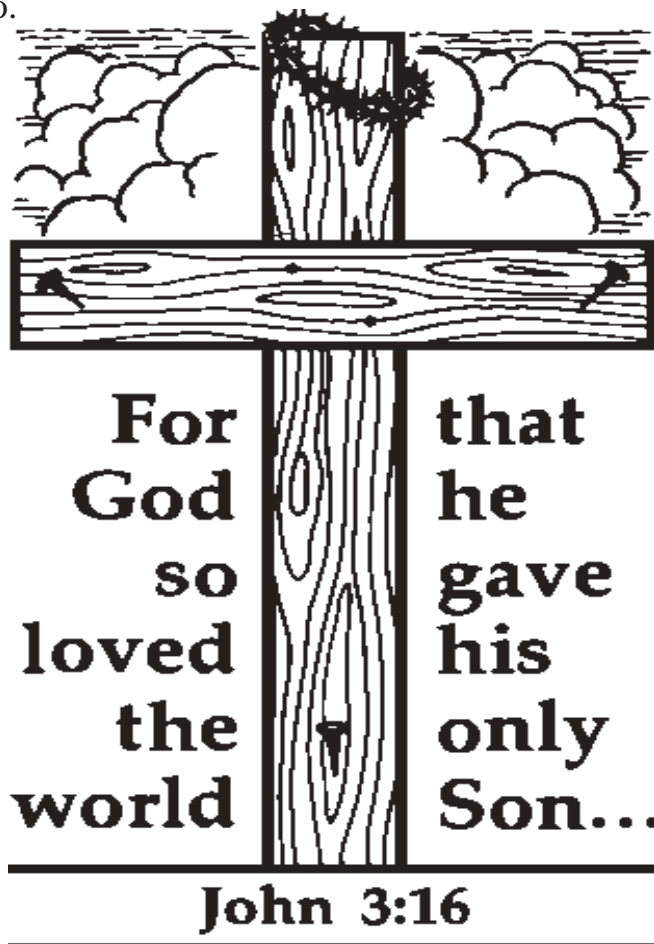
Many people loved Jesus and they were very sad. Joseph of Arimathea begged for Jesus’ body. He wanted to take the body down from the cross and put it in a tomb he had cut in a rock.

On the third day a wonderful thing happened - yes, Jesus rose from the dead! People then remembered that Jesus had said this would happen. He had a body like the angels - a spiritual body - He talked with some and they knew Him. Later,

Jesus came to where His disciples and others were assembled together. At this stage He no longer had a spiritual body but a glorious body of flesh and bone!!! They could see the marks the nails had made in His hands and feet, they could touch Him and they knew it was Jesus.

God loves us - He sent His Son that first Christmas Day. Jesus in turn showed how He too loves all mankind by dying on the cross that everyone's sins might be forgiven and that everyone might have hope of some reward.

God loves us, Jesus loves us - the Bible tells us so.



Puzzle Page

Acts 28

As a prisoner in Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with only a soldier to guard him.

Paul called together the leaders of the church in Rome and told them his story. He said it was because of the "hope of Israel" that he was bound in chains. Who was Paul talking about? _____

Paul remained in his own house for two years, preaching and writing letters of encouragement to other people and churches.

Unscramble the books of the Bible that Paul wrote as letters.

1 & 2 NISSANLASTOHE	SHEEPNAIS
1 & 2 ACTSINHINOR	SNORMA
PIPILANSHPI	MELONHIP
1 & 2 HIMOTYT	STUIT
SNICALSOOS	SLINGATAA

Use the code to find out how Paul ended some of his letters.

The $\overline{H-1}$ $\overline{P+2}$ $\overline{D-3}$ $\overline{G-4}$ $\overline{A+4}$ of our $\overline{O-3}$ $\overline{M+2}$ $\overline{S-1}$ $\overline{C+1}$

$\overline{F+4}$ $\overline{T-4}$ $\overline{P+3}$ $\overline{X-3}$ $\overline{Q+2}$ $\overline{E-2}$ $\overline{G+1}$ $\overline{S-1}$ $\overline{F+3}$ $\overline{U-2}$ $\overline{P+4}$ be

$\overline{W+0}$ $\overline{J-1}$ $\overline{R+2}$ $\overline{G+1}$ you $\overline{B-1}$ $\overline{K+1}$ $\overline{M-1}$ $\overline{D-3}$ $\overline{O-2}$ $\overline{F-1}$ $\overline{L+2}$

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Statement of Belief

The Christian Israelite Church beliefs can be fully supported by the Scriptures. Here is an outline:

We Believe

- * In God Almighty creator of all things (Genesis 1:1).
- * In the existence of Satan, the Devil, in whom God allowed iniquity to be placed (James 2:19; Ezekiel 28:14,15).
- * That God created a spirit-existence in which the devil manifested evil and caused some of the spirits to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Jude 6).
- * That God created our physical world, to which each person comes with a body and a soul made alive by a spirit from the spiritual creation (Luke 9:55; Genesis 2:7).
- * That God gave His people instructions on the way they should live, which instructions were "*for their good always*" (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- * That all have sinned and come "*short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:19).
- * That God has reconciled the (whole) world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:16,17).
- * That through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus believers are counted as righteous before God, and can be assured of the resurrection of their souls (a Spiritual body) at Jesus' return (1 Timothy 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:44).
- * That there will be a small number who will fully prove their faith by a work of true obedience to God's instructions and will thereby receive the prize of the highest calling of God, the redemption of spirit and soul and body - this living mortal Body made Immortal without seeing death (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:1-5; Hebrews 11:39,40).
- * That Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, subdue the power of Satan and reign forever and ever (Revelation chapters 19 and 20).
- * That the return of Jesus Christ is near and we are living in the period described in Scripture as the latter days (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21).
- * That there are promises in the Scriptures especially to Israel - God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9).
- * That although Israel of old did not accept the challenge of spiritually being God's peculiar people, a remnant of their descendants will come forward in the latter days to fulfill the obligations and receive the promises (Revelation 7:1-8).
- * That the Mission of the Christian Israelite Church is to awaken the lost ten tribes of Israel to this special inheritance to be the physical Immortal "Bride of the Lamb" and to be the vehicle for the task of bringing them all together at God's appointed time (Matthew 10:5,6; Revelation chapter 19).

We believe that God is the absolute Judge and Arbiter and that we as His servants have an obligation to respond to what He puts in each heart, and that whilst we seek to proclaim and discuss our beliefs, we have no right to contend with other people about them.

Time For God

What is your attitude to the 'rat race'?

When I was younger I used to think how wonderful it would be to reach my senior years so I could slow down a little and have more time for leisurely spiritual study. Well after many time management courses, the addition of many labour-saving devices and many years of time sharing, Satan is still throwing things in my way so that I find my mind is willing but my flesh is weak.

We all have responsibilities that take our time, work, family commitments etc. When we take on too much, it is out of our hands a lot of the time, Satan is trying us. Should we be asking ourselves if this is what Jesus wants for our lives? I spend a lot of time trying to do 'Godly' things but find that the time to do them is getting shorter and the ability to do

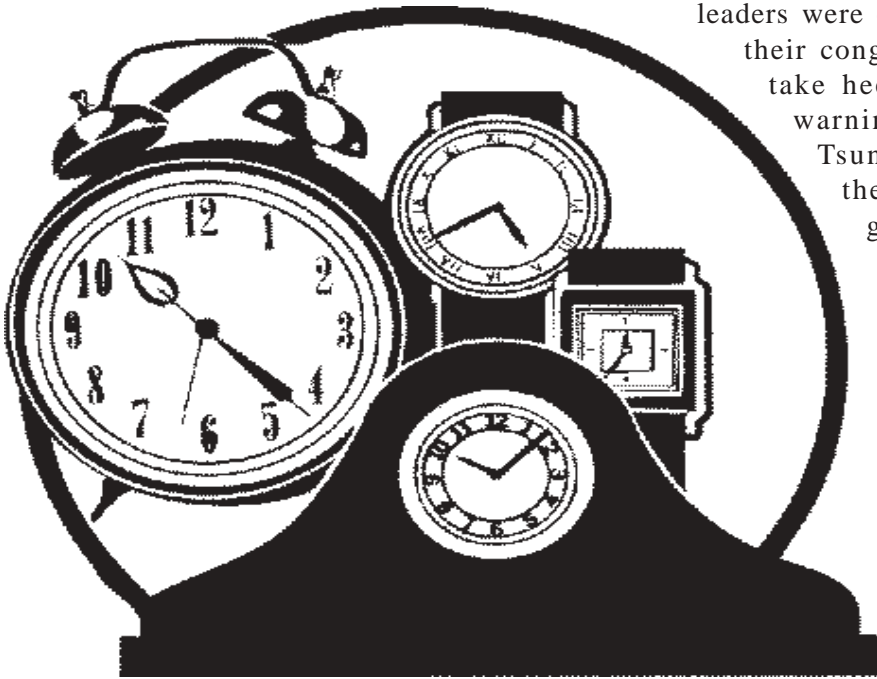
them in a short time is fading. I believe that God is allowing Satan to try me. I make time to thank God for letting me be tried (Hebrews 12:6-13).

I know of a man who runs a business that has been trying to retire for the past 10 years. He cannot find a manager to take on the responsibility of the business. He tried a couple, but found they were more interested in their own interests than their employers. He is still working. Satan is still trying him. Satan doesn't want God to succeed in saving people's souls, much less bodies, so he is working harder than ever before to try us (Revelation 12:12).

2005 commenced with many people throughout the world still in a state of shock in the aftermath of the Tsunami Disaster. Many people started to question their faith. Many reports were written in the press of how religious

leaders were either telling their congregations to take heed of God's warning of the Tsunami or else they couldn't

give a satisfactory explanation why God would do this. God advised us in His word that He would allow Satan to try us greatly before



Christ returns. The main thing that people must remember is that this is a world of trial. We believe we are in the last days before the return of the Lord. We will be tried more than in the past. Evil, disbelief and sin in this world will get to the stage it was before the flood. When we hear of these devastations we know it is a fulfillment, a step closer, of another piece of the puzzle (Matthew 24:21,22).

This however may be little comfort to the victims who are left without their loved ones. I understand this as I lost two of my loved ones within a few months of each other 25 years ago. I know now only God's guidance gave me the courage to hold onto my faith and go on with my life. At the time my feelings weren't quite so strong. The one comfort to me was that my loved ones were Christians and I believed that they were taken away from the evil to come (Isaiah 57:1).

Any person that studies the Bible would know that we are living in the time that the return of the Lord is imminent. Matthew 24 tells us that we shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: but he says "...see that ye be not troubled for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet"(v6). We have been hearing of wars and rumours of wars for years. It is not happening here in Australia so we become complacent. The wars are overseas and as long as we keep away from those places we will be fine - or so we think.

"There shall be famines, and

pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows"(v7). The droughts throughout Australia over the last few years have been followed by devastating storms or infestations of grasshoppers or locusts plus bushfires, etc. When we see these things they can either strengthen our faith or weaken it.

Then we hear of tragedies like September 11th. *"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (v9).*

What more proof do we need that scripture is being fulfilled before our very eyes?

Ok, so if we know that the Lord will be returning soon, what do we do now? *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord*

doth come" (Matt hew 24:42). At a time like this we need to understand that God is in control. He has a plan for all our lives whether they are short or long.

I have 2 options to put to you. Which will you choose?

1. Are you predestined to live in fear that worse is about to happen?
2. Are you predestined to live in joy that your faith in Our Lord is strong enough to see you through these tribulations?

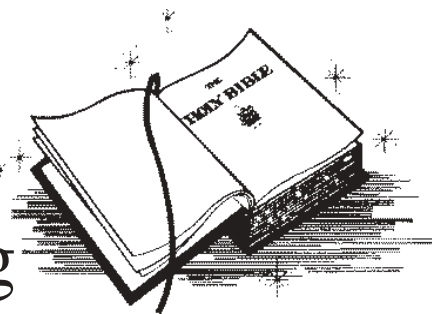
My choice is the latter. Let us thank and praise God for past mercies and pray that they will continue through the adversities we are likely to face in the future (Psalm 34:19).

Always remember God is in control.📖

Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come"
Proverbs 102:13

Expand Your Bible:

A Search for the King



Recently I read a small book by the author Henry Van Dyke entitled “The Story of the Other Wise Man”. The story told is not a legend. It is not biblical, though biblical times and events are its background, but to me this book presented some challenging ideas and thoughts, one being “This could be me, always following a goal, but always feeling far from achieving it no matter what effect is made”.

All have heard of the three Magi – Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, who travelled from Babylon from the East to seek the Saviour, the Prince of Peace. These men were astrologers who for years had studied the star signs and prophetic writings (of many cultures) and linking these studies recognised that this was the time to seek the new ruler.

Artaban was also of the Magi and had decided with his three friends to seek the Messiah, travelling East. He thought it his duty to keep the other Magi in his group informed of their quest, but could find nobody willing to travel with him – although they believed the time was right they could not leave their position and their comfort. Artaban had sold his home and possessions and purchased a gift to offer the new king – three beautiful jewels: a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl. He was sure he would find Him.

So, Artaban set out alone riding his faithful horse to reach the arranged meeting spot at the appointed time. He had to ride hard and fast. With only three more hours ride to the meeting place, as Artaban passed

through a small grove of trees, his horse became very cautious as if approaching trouble. Across the path was lying the form of a man. Dismounting, he examined the man, assessing quickly that he was already dead, but as he moved away a sigh escaped the man’s lips and his hand reached out and caught the Magi’s robe.

Artaban was faced with a difficult decision. “Should he risk the great reward of his divine faith for the sake of a single deed of human love?” He knew that if he moved aside even momentarily to help this man, he would surely miss the time appointed to meet his companions. He prayed silently to his God of Wisdom to help him make the right decision.

For several hours he laboured with the man, helping him with his healing herbs, and eventually felt he was sufficiently recovered to leave him – telling him of his journey and need for haste and leaving with him the rest of the food he had. The Hebrew man was concerned that he had nothing to repay Artaban’s kindness, but he did tell him that Jewish records indicated the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, not Jerusalem.

Artaban rode as never before in the wild hope that his companions might still be waiting, but on reaching the meeting place he found a little message, “We can wait no longer. Follow us across the desert”.

So Artaban sold his sapphire and equipped himself to follow his three companions, eventually arriving in Bethlehem.

“Yes, they have been here.”

“Yes, we have seen these three men. They were splendid in their rich robes. They came and they disappeared quickly and quietly and nobody knew where they went. But the baby and his family – they disappeared silently too – some said they went to Egypt.”

As Artaban made his inquiries he was suddenly caught up in a sad and terrible happening. The Roman soldiers were coming down the streets killing all baby boys under two years of age. The woman who had befriended him had a baby son and the Captain stood at the door, ready to search and kill. Without hesitation, Artaban

drew out the ruby which glowed with a deep light.

“There is no child here”, he told the soldier.

Another of his treasures for the King had been sacrificed to alleviate human suffering.

Once again Artaban took up his search, travelling to Egypt encountering all sorts of people in need on the way – visiting the sick, the helpless, the prisoners...always searching for the Messiah. Many times he visited Jerusalem, seeking but never finding the King.

One more visit to Jerusalem, and this time there was much excitement. An

execution was to take place...everyone was going to witness it in one direction. As he was swept along with the crowd, following with the slow and painful steps of an old man, a group of soldiers came down the street dragging a young girl. As she passed Artaban she noticed his dress of the magi and breaking suddenly from the hands of her captors she threw herself at him, clasping him around the knees. She pleaded with him, “Have pity on me”. Her father had been a merchant but had died before he could pay his debts and she was to be taken as a slave to pay them.

Once again Artaban faced conflict. Twice already the gifts he had dedicated to his quest had been taken from the help of humanity. Once again he questioned how he should act. Slowly he withdrew the pearl he had carried all these years – never had the lustre been deeper



and more beautiful. He placed it in the girl's hand, "This is your ransom", he said, "the last of the treasures I had for the King".

Suddenly the sky darkened, the earth shook and loosened tiles and stones fell to the street. Soldiers and others ran for shelter. As the rescued girl and the old man crouched in the street, a loose tile fell and struck him on the head. As he lay dying from the blow, he felt himself to be a failure – he had not in his 30 years of searching found the King. Artaban's lips began to move as if in answer to a voice that was faint, but growing louder by the moment.

"Not so my Lord. When did I see you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you a drink. These thirty three years I have looked for you but I've never seen your face or done anything for you."

The voice continued, "Verily I say unto thee, inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren thou hast done it unto me".

Artaban understood. He had found the King – his treasures had been accepted.

A poignant story and applicable in so many of our lives. Are we like Artaban and find that everyday events alter our noble ideas and goals. Does love for humanity spring from a deeper love for God? In all of his searching Artaban never lost vision of his goal or his purpose. His whole life was committed to the pursuit of truth.

Is this story a Christmas Story, or an Easter Story? Are the two celebrations widely separated? Easter is indeed a time of sadness but also a time of joy as we realise and appreciate the great sacrifice Jesus made that we might have salvation and redemption.

And what happened to the other wise men? I like to think they returned home and maybe later in life became Christians – all conjecture...but who knows?

What is more important in your religion – to be on time or to help others?📖

Bibliography

Henry Van Dyke, "The Story of the Other Wise Man".

A Timely Reminder of what Jesus did for you

*"Surely he hath borne **our** griefs,
And carried **our** sorrows:
Yet **we** did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for **our** transgressions,
He was bruised for **our** iniquities:
The chastisement of **our** peace was upon him;
And with his stripes **we** are healed.
All **we** like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way:
And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of **us all.**"*

Isaiah 53:4-6

Ways To Be A Winner!

A number of articles in this issue of *Latter Rain* make reference to the fact that if we want to do right things, there is something that always makes it difficult! The Bible teaches that all bad things emanate from Satan - the epitome of the anti-Christ - so we say that Satan has made us do wrong, or has put obstacles in our way to make it difficult for us to do right! But Satan has this power over us because of evil that is inherent within us - an evil nature with which each of us was conceived when we were born into this world.

The evil is present within us, and it is this which Satan attracts to cause us to do wrong. As Christian Israelites we believe that we can seek to God for power from the Two Immortal Spirits (Christ and the Holy Ghost, Jerusalem Above) to remove the evil from within our physical bodies so that there is nothing for Satan to attract. If we could achieve this condition, then we would not do wrong. And if we do not do wrong, then we would be entitled to live, for the wages of sin is death, and conversely the reward of obedience is life. In this instance, we believe that eternal physical life without death could be given as a gift from God - our mortal bodies could put on immortality - which would be manifest at Jesus' return.

Of course, there is another situation in which Satan would not be able to tempt us - that is if he were removed, or his power taken from him. This is what we believe will happen

during the millennium when Jesus Christ returns to the earth and binds the power of Satan in the bottomless pit. Without his influence there will be no wrong, and all will understand about God's greatness and righteousness. We believe that there will be a group of people who will be saved physically when Jesus returns, but from whom the evil will not be removed. These are referred to in Scripture as the aliens. These people will still have the evil within them, but will not sin during the millennium, because Satan's power will be removed and he will not be there to attract the evil within them to cause them to do wrong.

And for those who have died in Christ, and lost their physical bodies, thereby removing the ability for Satan to attract them to do wrong, there is the wonderful hope of the resurrection. This prize is to become celestial or spiritual beings, comprising a spirit and a soul, the physical body having returned to dust in the grave.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53: "*Behold I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality...but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

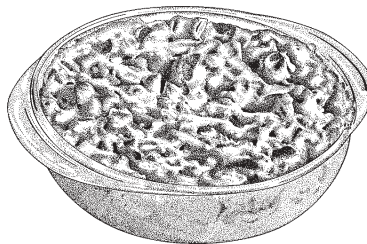
In God's plan, and through His grace, everyone will be a winner. But what prize are you seeking to obtain?📖

Vegetarian Recipes

Zucchini & Potato Rosti

Serves 4

- 2 tblspns vegetable or olive oil**
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced**
- 1kg (2lb) potatoes, peeled and grated**
- 2 zucchini, trimmed and grated**
- salt and pepper**
- ½ level tspn ground coriander**
- 40-50g (1½oz - 2oz) gouda or cheddar cheese, grated (optional)**



Heat half of the oil in large pan, add onions and fry until soft. Place grated potatoes in a bowl and mix with zucchini and fried onions. Season well with salt, pepper and coriander.

Heat remaining oil in pan and add potato mixture. Cook gently, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes, then flatten down into a cake and cook until brown underneath and almost cooked through (6-8 minutes).

Sprinkle top of Rosti with grated cheese and place under a moderate griller for about 5 minutes or until lightly browned.

Serve hot, cut into wedges.

Carrot & Cheese Bake

Serves 4-6

- 6 large carrots, sliced**
- ½ cup white wine**
- ½ cup vegetable stock**
- 2 spring onions, sliced**
- 2 tblspns lemon or lime juice**
- 1 tspn grated lemon or lime rind**
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten**
- 125g grated Gruyere or Gouda cheese**
- ½ cup parsley, chopped finely**

Place carrots, white wine, vegetable stock, spring onions, lemon or lime juice and rind into a sauce pan. Bring slowly to the boil. Reduce to simmer and cook until the carrots are tender.

Put carrot mixture in a bowl. Add eggs, cheese and parsley. Combine well.

Pour carrot mixture into a well-greased 20cm springform tin. Bake at 180degC for 20-25 minutes or until the bake has set.

Remove from oven. Allow to cool slightly before turning out. Release base from tin. Cut into wedges and serve.