

Spiritual Blessings



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"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3

THE TWO MESSIAHS of the TALMUD

By Rom Harper, Brisbane.

Over the years you may have heard, as I have, that a reason for Israel rejecting Christ as their Messiah was that they were expecting the Messiah to be a King, and that, on His arrival, would free them from their bondage. I hope this article will help show how this reasoning came about and also if there was enough evidence in the Old Testament to form a different view.

The Jewish Talmud is a collection of Jewish Laws, customs, ethics and thought which began during their exile times. Many of these ideas were passed down orally throughout their history and some of this thought process used was known as Midrash.

Rabbis who studied messianic prophecies during that period, concluded that the prophets spoke of two different Messiahs. The Messiah who was to come, suffer and die was termed Mashiach (maw-shee-akh) Ben Yoseph, or 'Messiah, son of Joseph'. The second Messiah, who was to come and rule, was termed Mashiach Ben David, or 'Messiah, son of David'. These two Messiahs are also known as the 'suffering' servant Messiah and King Messiah respectively.

The Old Testament never clearly states that there will be two Messiahs and many contradictory descriptions are found side by side, indicating the same person. Nevertheless, the 'two Messiah theory' seemed to be the best answer and found its way into the Talmud and

into Jewish teaching.

Firstly, a quick look at the word Messiah. The Hebrew word for Messiah is Mashiach. It comes from the verb Mashach (maw-shak) and means to smear or anoint with oil. Strong's Concordance states that it means 'The Anointed One'. Throughout the Old Testament we see either

people being anointed, e.g. Priests and David who was anointed by Samuel, or things,

such as food that was used for special purposes. It appears that 'to be anointed' was a setting apart for a desired purpose.

There are many Scriptures that point to Israel's Messiah being a King ruling with all authority. The verses below are a selection that give us 'Messiah, son of David', who derives His name from King David. Please read the verses as I have only given a short note on each.

MESSIAH BEN DAVID

Gen. 22:17-18. A promise to Abraham that Israel would be a great nation and that His seed (the Messiah) would possess the gates of His

Cont. on page 3

"... the 'two Messiahs theory' seemed to be the best solution ..."

In this Issue:

The Two Messiahs Of The Talmud, p. 1;
President's Word & Editorial, p. 2; The Key That Fits, p. 5; Easter Reflections, p. 7;
Quotes Worth Considering, p. 8;
A Worthy Prayer; Notices etc. p. 12.



President's Word

Greetings once again to all readers of Spiritual Blessings.

The BBFA calendar is filling up fast - here's just some of

what's happening.

Michael Penny in Australia

Many of our readers will be aware that British dispensational author and speaker, Michael Penny, will be visiting Australia and New Zealand in September and October this year.

Michael Penny's talks are full of spiritual meat, and yet are interesting and easy to follow. He has authored over 40 books and booklets on a huge range of Bible and faith-related topics, including: "Approaching the Bible"; "The Miracles of the Apostles"; "The Last Days - When?"; "The Clear Will of God"; "40 Problem Passages"; "The Work of the Spirit in an Age of Grace".

You may view a longer list of Michael Penny's works on our BBFA Book Agency website at

www.spiritualblessings.org/book/amp.htm

Michael's speaking engagements around Australia will include meetings in New South Wales (Sept 14-29), Queensland (Sept 29-Oct 5), and Tasmania (Oct 5-10). To find out more, please contact us at admin@spiritualblessings.org, or by using one of the addresses on page 12 of this issue. Michael will also be speaking in New Zealand between Oct 11-25, and you may find out more about those meetings by contacting Graeme Abbott in New Zealand - graeme@ababooks.co.nz. If you live in any of these regions and are able to get to these meetings, we encourage you to set aside time to hear Michael speak. You will not be disappointed. He is also always happy to discuss topics of interest with audience members after his talks.

Annual Conference

Michael Penny's visit to Australia coincides with our Annual Conference, where he will be this year's guest speaker. We encourage you to mark Sept 18-20, 2010, as a time to keep free, so that you may join us for what always proves to be a special time in fellowship around God's Word. Registration forms will be sent out with a future issue of Spiritual

Blessings. Campers and day visitors are all welcome.

Newcastle Study Day

For the last few years the BBFA has held a Bible Study and Fellowship Day at Charlestown Multi-Purpose Centre (a Newcastle suburb), and this year is no different. The date is Saturday May 29th. Commencing at 10.00 a.m., there will be three studies over the day, plus lunch and light refreshments. For more details see page 11 and plan to join us.

As usual, details of all our regular meetings in different regions are listed on page 12. We'd love to see you there!

Until next time, may the Lord be glorified by our walk, our witness, and the study of His Word.

David Tavender.

Editorial

We have a nice variety of authors and styles in this issue, so each reader should find something to help and guide.

Easter has come and gone, and I was informed by a friend that this year, the Jewish Passover and both the western Christian Easter and the eastern Christian Easter all coincide. This is the first time that has happened for quite some years. I cannot explain the differences in the calculations for Easter, as I have not looked into it.

In one sense, it does not matter when we celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lord, for it is something that we should have in heart and mind daily. Of course, it was vital that the Lord's death occurred exactly on the right day and time that was prophesied, but once it had taken place, any remembrance of it need not be tied to dates. It is, however, good for us to gather together especially to remember the Lord's great work for us all and to praise Him for His great gift of love.

Many thanks to those readers who have expressed their appreciation of various articles recently. It is encouraging to know that our efforts meet a need and create a response in hearts and minds. There is so much all around us to distract and depress us, so anything that brings our attention back to our Saviour and Lord must be good.

I hope you enjoy reading our offerings given in the Lord's name.

Athol Walter.

cont. from Pg. 1

enemies. All nations of the earth would also be blessed via his seed. (These particular events are still future).

Gen. 26:4 & Gen. 28:14 &15. The same promise of blessing made to Isaac and then to Jacob, but with more information about their land and Jehovah being with them.

Deut. 18:18. More specifically now, God would raise a prophet like Moses. Moses is a type or picture of Israel's Messiah. This prophet, who would only speak what God commanded him, reminds us of Christ in Matt. 11:27 and John 15:10.

1 Chron. 17:11-13. Jehovah is to raise up a seed of David and establish His throne forever. We now see that the Messiah would be a son of David and a son of God.

Psalms 110:1&2. David's son would be His Lord and rule with a rod from Zion.

Isa. 9: 6&7. A son is born – He will rule upon the throne of David forever and ever. His name is Wonderful, Counsellor and The mighty God.

After reading these few passages, chosen from many others, I'm sure you can understand why Israel wanted, and still wants, this Messiah to be the one to arrive. He would assume His position as King, Israel would receive their promised land and rest, and all the nations of the world would be blessed through them.

MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH

The main passages that describe the suffering Messiah are found in Isaiah chapters 52 and 53. He gets His name from Jacob's son, Joseph. In Genesis, Joseph is introduced to us as having dreams of grandeur, but was lost to Israel thanks to his own family and actually considered dead. When he came back into the lives of his brothers who had rejected him, they bowed down to him. He saved his people by providing for them in time of famine. Again, I ask you to read the verses indicated.

Isa. 53: 14 tells us he would be terribly disfigured which prepares us for the sufferings in ch. 53.

Isa. 53: 1-3 brings out the Messiah's humanity and that there was nothing special about Him. In fact, He would be despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They would hide their faces from Him.

53:4-6. '... yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' This shows that, even though He was bearing their griefs, the people would think that God was punishing Him for His own sins. This describes Israel so well at the time of Christ's crucifixion. **V. 5** shows that the people will eventually realize that He was wounded, not for His own transgressions, but for theirs, and for their reconciliation and spiritual healing. **V. 6.** Now realizing they had gone astray, they understand that Jehovah has laid their own sin on His Servant.

53: 7-9. We now have His actual death detailed, **V7.** He humbly and silently submits Himself to unjust treatment. **V. 8.** His death sentence was unjustly pronounced in a court of law and He was taken and crucified and, **V. 9,** He was assigned a criminal's grave along with other criminals, yet He would be buried in a rich man's tomb.

53:10-12 contain the beneficial results of the suffering and death of the Servant of Jehovah. **V. 10** records how God was pleased to allow the Servant to make atonement for the people and to prosper Him. God knew He would live again because of His resurrection. **V. 11.** God will be satisfied because the sins of many are put on the Servant's account as 'paid in full' by His blood. **V. 12** details that the Servant will be greatly blessed above all others by God for four reasons:-

1. He willingly and voluntarily suffered and died.
2. He was humble enough to allow others to consider Him a sinner.
3. He actually bore the sin of many.
4. He makes intercession and pleads with God on behalf of the sinner.

Even though we see glory and honour placed upon this Servant of God in the end, these verses detailing all the suffering, are quite different to

the Messiah Ben David verses which clearly show the prosperity for Israel on His arrival to rule as King.

Perhaps a major stumbling block for the Jews was in understanding the fact that God's Servant had to die to obtain the atonement that God required. We have to travel back to the Garden of Eden to get the basis for this when, in Gen. 3:21, God made coats of skins and clothed Adam and Eve. Obviously, animals had to die to provide those skins, the deaths of the animals being sufficient sacrifice, as they pointed forward to the death of Christ. Then in ch. 4, Abel's blood offering was accepted. but Cain's grain and vegetable offering was rejected.

The means of atonement was chosen by God. He chose blood and explains the reason in **Leviticus 17:11**. Israel also had different blood sacrifices to perform, all, basically, with the same purpose, i.e. that the Jew might be rightly related to God. In fact, all seven feasts of Israel require the shedding of blood.

It was Isaiah the Prophet who provided the hope that the day would come when the yearly burden of blood sacrifices would be lifted. That is just what these verses from his 53rd chapter show that the Suffering Servant was to do. In verse 10, Isaiah states, 'you shall make His soul an offering for sin.' We should also remember that the Apostles, who walked with this very Suffering Servant, also could not comprehend that He had to die.

The reason why there are two different Messiahs in the Talmud is easy for us to work out in hind sight. We also have the completed Bible in which we accept the New Testament as part of God's Word. However, the early Rabbis, prior to Christ's birth, had trouble working it out. The Leaders of Israel at the time of Christ, through their hatred and rejection, also couldn't see it. Most Jews today still can't see the connection, many even believing that Isaiah is speaking of Israel as the suffering servant.

Evidence for the Messiah in the OT

Was there any evidence in the Old Testament to throw light on the fact that these two Messiahs could be one and the same?

Here are some verses from the Old Testament to look at and see if you think they might answer the question.

Jer. 23:5. A King shall reign;

Micah 5:1, a Ruler will come out of Bethlehem;

Isa. 7:13, Born of a Virgin;

Zech. 9:9, the King coming, lowly riding an ass, **Zech. 12:10**, Look upon Me whom they have pierced;

Isa. 52:13, My servant (suffering)

shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

There is another clue in **Gen. 35:18**. We see two different names given to one of Rachel's sons. The first name, Ben-oni, means 'Son of my sorrow', and the second name, Benjamin, means 'Son of my right hand'. Both names are titles of Christ.

The irony of God never ceases to amaze, as this idea or teaching about 'Messiah, son of Joseph' had been around for many hundreds of years before Christ. When we get to the New Testament, we see that Christ is given many names, e.g. the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Son of David and even the last Adam. The one name never mentioned is 'the son of Joseph'.

Putting it into modern terms, the two different Messiahs were two different 'job descriptions' given to the one Person. The suffering part needed to be completed before the King could reign on David's throne for ever more. Even though we can see that both of the Talmud's Messiahs are in fact one, viz. our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, one thing never contemplated was a 2,000 year period between the fulfillment of the two sets of prophecies. But it is reassuring for Israel as a nation, that one day they will accept Jesus as their Messiah, enter their Land of rest and then, all mankind will be blessed as was first intended. ❖

"... the two different Messiahs were two different job descriptions given to the one Person."

The Key That Fits

by A. J. Harrop

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” (Acts 28:28)

It has been suggested to me on more than one occasion that we make too much of Acts 28:28 as a definite dividing line.

Only recently, a writer said that he felt that the Church as we know it today was a gradual process, merging slowly out of the former dispensations, and not coming suddenly, as it were, into being, after the end of the Acts of Apostles. The writer suggested that we could not put our finger upon any one spot and say, “Now, there, that is when the Church of the One Body began”, because it was just a growth out of the believers of former days.

Well now, I want us to take a look at some of the many problems which are completely answered for us when we see Acts 28:28 as the great dividing line. In fact, I want us to see how wonderfully the key fits!

The Miracles of Mark 16

Take, for instance, those troublesome verses at the end of Mark’s Gospel. What a worry they have been to both translators and expositors alike. Mark 16:17, 18 tells us that these signs shall follow them that believe ... (1) they shall cast out devils, (2) they shall speak with new tongues, (3) they shall take up serpents, (4) drink any deadly thing unharmed, (5) recover the sick by laying on of hands.

You see, if any one of those things is the sign of a believer, then I am not a believer. No, friend, and neither are you, if you face it honestly. So fearful of the implications of that passage have some translators been, that they have left it out altogether! One manuscript has a place for them, but leaves it blank.

However, if you read the Acts of the Apostles, you will find these very signs are taking place.

Notice particularly, that in the very last chapter of that book, these signs are following. A poisonous reptile fastens itself upon Paul’s hand, but he takes no harm. Almost immediately afterwards he heals Publius of dysentery (bloody flux). So then, as these signs do not take place in the lives of believers to-day, a change must have taken place, since Acts 28:9.

Putting down the change as taking place at Acts 28:28, you see how the key fits. Then you find Paul makes two definite statements concerning himself. In the one, he declares that, “For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain”. In the other, he calls himself “a prisoner for you Gentiles”. When did that change take place?

It is “for the hope of Israel,” in Acts 28:20, so if you put the change-over down as Acts 28:28, you will see how the key fits. Nearly all the problems which have been so difficult to solve throughout the years can be answered by asking just that question - “Which side of Acts 28:28?”

Any Sick Among You

Take, for instance, those two verses in the Epistle of James (5:14,15) -

“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up”.

It is often tried today. Occasionally it may work, when a psychological factor enters in, but usually it only leads to disillusionment and disappointment. You see, it is Mark 16:18 over again. There have been no such miraculous healings since when? Why, Acts 28:28.

Then having seen that these miraculous gifts were in operation right up to the end of the Acts of the Apostles, it can be used to decide for us when certain Epistles were written. Take, for

instance, the Epistles to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians there are two or three chapters almost solely devoted to spiritual gifts, tongues, healings, prophecies, and so on. We see that, and we can recognise at once that that Epistle was written to the church which was existing before Acts 28:28. That explains so much, because the key fits.

The Lord's Near Return

Then again it explains another thing. It has often been noticed that the writers of the epistles in the New Testament all seem to have been expecting the very near return of our Lord Jesus Christ. James says, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (chapter 5:8). John says, "Even now ... whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:18). Peter says, "The end of all things is at hand". (1 Peter 4:7). Jude says. "They told you there should be mockers in the last time" (verse 18). Paul says, "This I say brethren, the time is short" (1 Corinthians 7:29), and many other places.

One could hardly call nearly 2,000 years, and perhaps more, as "nigh," "at hand", or "short"; but so long as the children of Israel — as a nation — had an opportunity of repentance, the early return of our Lord could have been expected. When they were set aside, the return had to be postponed. The Apostles who wrote those earlier epistles knew nothing of any postponement, and when was that? Why, Acts 28:28 - again the key fits.

Peter and Paul

Let us think once more about the healing ministry. Both Paul and Peter were great healers.

Acts 5:15 tells us that they "brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow them". (Verse 16) "Also a multitude ... bringing sick folks ... and they were healed, every one." So with Paul; Acts 19:11,12 tells us, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them".

How is it, then, that Paul has such anxiety about Epaphroditus? How was it that he left Trophimus at Miletum sick? Why did he recommend a little wine to Timothy for his many infirmities? The reason is that these things happened after Acts 28:28. The key still works.

Let us look at Epaphroditus for instance. Someone recently asked, "How do we know that Paul did not heal Epaphroditus by laying on his hands?" Well, if he did it must have been "fear healing", not "faith healing", for it says, "he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Philippians 2:27).

I did get a bit of a shake up though, when the same writer said that Trophimus was left at Miletum sick, and that was before Acts 28:28. I thought immediately. "Well, if that is so, something has gone wrong with the key," so I forthwith reached for my Bible and concordance to make sure. Well, this is what I found. Three times only is Trophimus mentioned, twice during the Acts and once in 2 Timothy 4:20. On the two occasions in the Acts, there is no hint of anything being wrong with him, but in 2 Timothy it says that Paul left him at Miletum, sick. As 2 Timothy is the last of Paul's epistles it must have been written long after the end of the Acts.

So, once again ... the key fits. ❖

This article is an edited extract from a longer article, also titled, "The Key That Fits", by the late A. J. Harrop. The original article was published many years ago in his Bible Study paper "The Babblers".

They on the heights are not the
souls
Who never erred or went astray,
Or reached those high rewarding
goals
Along a smooth flower-bordered
way.
Nay, those who stand where first
comes dawn
Are those who stumbled ...
but went on.

Easter Reflections

By Athol Walter.

The Easter weekend has now passed, and as I was working in the garden, I found myself thinking back over what I heard during the Easter period, and more particularly, what I didn't hear.

I was pleasantly surprised at how much coverage the TV programmes gave to church activities over the weekend, and they also featured short messages from the local Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops.

My wife, Eveline, and I went to a Good Friday service at a Salvation Army Fellowship where we have some friends. We were welcomed warmly, and the message we heard concentrated on the Lord's work on the Cross, finishing with the challenge that we should always remember we are redeemed people because of that work,.

During his message, the speaker mentioned the Lord giving up His spirit and dying, which had a profound effect on the Roman Centurion standing nearby.

This caused my thoughts to turn to a point that seems to be almost unknown amongst God's people. A reason for this may be that our English translations obscure the point.

Each Gospel records the moment of the Lord's death. These quotes are from the NKJV.

Matt. 27:50. "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit."

Mark 15:37. "And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last."

Luke 23:46. "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last."

John 19:30. "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

Note that Matthew uses a different expression to the other three, and so does John, while Mark and Luke use the same expression.

This means that three different Greek words are used by the Gospel writers to describe the Lord 'breathing His last'.

Matthew uses the word 'apheken', and 'yielded' is a good translation. Another good translation would be 'let it go'.

Both Mark and Luke tell us that 'the Lord breathed His last.' The Greek word here is 'exepneusen', and it is not hard to recognise the -pneu- part of the word. This is what gives us such words as pneu-matic and pneu-monia, all to do with air and breathing.

John, however, gives us a word that is quite different – 'paradidomi'. This word is not used anywhere else in the New Testament, nor in ancient Greek writing, of someone dying. The root word and its derivations are used 125 times in the New Testament, but John's use of it in relation to the Lord's death is unique.

Paradidomi is translated by such English words as delivered, gave, committed, recommended, cast, to name only some of them. The thing to notice is that it indicates a positive action, not a passive one. It is never used of surrendering or submitting anything in a powerless way. So a more accurate rendering would be 'And He handed up, or delivered up, His spirit'.

The Lord did not meekly yield up His life, or simply expire. Remember that He had previously said, "No man takes (my life) from Me. I lay it down of myself." (John 10:18) And when the work of atonement was complete, He willed Himself to die.

But this raised another question in my mind. If the Lord laid down His own life, with no man taking it from Him, how then can Israel be charged with His murder?

The answer is found in the type of execution the Lord underwent – crucifixion. Unlike other forms of execution, such as beheading, stoning,

cont. p. 9

Quotes Worth Considering

(The first group of quotes come from a book called "Forgotten Truths", published by the Philadelphia Bible Testimony of Illinois, USA, about the middle of the last century. They use passages from the writing of eminent Bible scholars to help set forth Dispensational Teaching.)

Harold P. Morgan, one-time President of the Buffalo Bible Institute, in his introduction to the fourth edition of 'Forgotten Truths', has this to say (p. 7 & 8):

"The key to the treasure house of Scripture is the correct partition of the Word which means 'distinguishing the things that differ' which leads to Dispensationalism. The importance attached to the knowledge of the existence of such a key is ably stressed by many men of God skilled in the exposition of the Word."

"The Biblical authority for recognising the Dispensation (of the Mystery) is found in such a passage as Philippians 1:9, 10. In the Authorised Version, this passage reads: 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.'"

"This word 'judgment' is variously rendered by the authorities: sense, moral tact, moral discernment, and perceptiveness. But the most important and most definitely needed modification in the translation is in verse 10. Dean Alford renders the first part of this verse: 'With a view to your distinguishing things that are different'. Recognising these alterations, we find our passage reads thus: 'I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and perceptiveness with a view to your distinguishing the things that are different'. *And this is the thing which is so sorely needed in all Bible study; yes! and in all Christian living – sense enough to distinguish between the things that are different.*" (Author's italics.)

"When we let our Lord give us sense enough to distinguish between the things that are

different, all doubt and cavilling concerning the Dispensations will disappear."

From p. 9: "These 'Forgotten Truths' (i.e. relating to the different things in Scripture that must be distinguished) are not new and novel ideas or theories destined to bolster spirituality or to inaugurate a new deal in the field of faith, but are mighty eternal truths from the Word of the living God as attested to by many well-known and capable witnesses which enlighten the believer, free him from the traces of tradition and make the Word of God of much effect in his life. They enhance the glory of our Lord and Saviour by giving Him His rightful place as 'Head over all things'; they do not detract by making some religious ceremony the means of grace or blessing, but rather, give Him the preeminence by stressing the fact that the believer is complete in Him – receiving all necessary nourishment from Him – and needs Him only, and nothing else besides Him!"

From "The Silence of God" by Sir Robert Anderson. On pp. 75, 77, 78, he discusses why judgement did not fall on Israel immediately after the Crucifixion:

"The Jerusalem Church then was Jewish. Their Bible was the Jewish Scriptures. The Jewish Temple was their house of prayer and common meeting place (Acts 2:46, 3:1, 5:43). Their beliefs and hopes and words and acts all marked them out as Jews. Hence the amazing numbers of converts.

It is recorded that the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). But what bearing has all this upon the question here? The Jews had crucified the Messiah. But now, when vengeance swift and terrible might have been expected to fall upon that guilty people, Divine mercy held back the judgment and called them once again to repentance. The testimony was full and clear, and it was confirmed by a signal display of miraculous power."

From pp. 49 & 50: “The Saviour’s prayer upon the Cross (Luke 23:34) has secured for the favoured nation a respite from judgment. And the forgiveness asked for carried with it a right to priority in the proclamation of the great amnesty. When ‘the apostle of the circumcision’ by express revelation, brought the Gospel to the Gentiles, they were relegated to a position akin to that formerly held by the ‘proselytes of the gate’, and even ‘the apostle of the Gentiles’ addressed himself first, in every place he visited, to the children of his own people. And this is not from prejudice, but by Divine appointment. “It *was necessary*,” he declared at Pisidian Antioch, ‘that the Word of God should be first spoken to you.’ (Acts 13:46; (R. V.) Cf. 17:2, 10; 18:1-4)

Even at Rome, deeply though he longed to visit the Christians there, his first care was to summon the chief of the Jews, and to them ‘he testified the Kingdom of God’. And not until the testimony had been rejected by the favoured people did the word go forth, ‘The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.’ (Acts 28:17, 23, 28)

From The Foundations Of Dispensational Truth” , p. 112, by Dr. E. W. Bullinger:

“We can quite understand, and fully sympathise with, those who like ourselves have spoken or written on 1 Thess. 4 as being the great charter of our hope of the Lord’s Coming.

But we ought thankfully to relinquish it when we find we have a better hope; which we can enjoy all the more because we need not reproach ourselves with having robbed Israel of their hope, which is only postponed, and will yet have a wondrous and literal fulfillment for them.

It may, after all, be *the pattern* of our hope, as presented later in Phil. 3:11, 14. The realisation of our hope may be framed on the same model as theirs. The order of the two events may well be the very same—

First, our “out-resurrection” corresponding with their resurrection, and

Second, our “calling on high”, corresponding with their being “caught up”. ❖

Easter Reflections, cont. from p. 7.

or even hanging, in crucifixion the victim usually takes a long time to die. It was not unusual for victims to stay alive on a cross for several days. You may recall that Pilate was surprised to learn that the Lord had died so quickly.

So the length of time between the victim being nailed to the cross and his death, allowed Christ to choose the moment when He willed His spirit to leave Him. But the actions of the leaders of Israel in condemning Him on a trumped up charge, then changing the charge when they went to Pilate because they did not have the power to execute anyone, clearly demonstrated that they wanted this Man dead. Crucifixion thus gave the Lord the opportunity to die at the moment of His choosing, while still maintaining Israel’s culpability for His death

One other point before we leave Golgotha’s hill. While all four Gospel writers tell us that the Lord cried out just before He died, it is only John who tells us what He actually said. It was the Greek word, “Tetelestai”. John 19:30 is translated as ‘It is finished!’ in our Bibles, but some archaeological discoveries of papyrus documents from AD 1 have provided a wonderful variation on that meaning.

Amongst the many documents discovered, most of which were written in the same Greek as the New Testament, there were a number of what we would call statements of account. These showed amounts of money people owed. Across these statements was written the one word ‘Tetelestai’, and it was very obvious that it meant ‘Paid in full’.

What a glorious truth! How grateful we should be that, when the atoning work of the Lamb of God had been completed and He could say that it was finished indeed, He used the term that also meant at that time, Paid in full.

Because of my sins, I was under the sentence of death. In a very real sense, I owed God. My life was forfeit. But my Kinsman-Redeemer died in my place, and on the page in God’s ledger, where my sins against the righteous laws of God were listed, is now written the one word,

Easter Reflections cont. from previous page.

“Tetelestai”. As Paul says in Romans 8, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus ...” (v. 1) and then, “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?” (v. 33) . The implied answer is ‘No one’, because it is God who justifies us.

Another thought then came to mind. The resurrection of the Lord does not seem to receive the same prominence as His Crucifixion. This is understandable as our Saviour’s sufferings and death on the Cross are extremely heart-wrenching.

Paul, however, makes it very clear that without the resurrection, we have no hope either in this life or the next. 1 Cor. 15 is the great treatise on resurrection, and in verses 12 to 19, he forcibly points out that without the Lord’s resurrection, the preaching of apostles and others was empty and the faith of the believer is futile. He goes further and states that if Christ did not rise, then we are still in our sins! Also, believers who had at that time fallen asleep in Christ have perished, and those believers who remain alive are the most miserable of all men. Sad state of affairs indeed!

Then verse 20 starts with the glorious words, “But now Christ IS risen from the dead ...” and this Biblical doctrine is equally as important as the doctrine associated with the death of the Lord. We must never forget it.

We find that, in the wonderful progression contained in Eph. 2, being raised with Christ has its place, and if it is left out, our ultimate hope of being seated with Christ in heavenly realms has no basis.

The beginning of our journey with Christ starts when we died with Him. This became a reality in our lives when we responded to the Gospel in faith, although in God’s reckoning it happened that day on Golgotha. Then we were made alive in Him. Obviously, the Lord had to be brought to life again before He could leave the tomb. Then we were raised together with Him, and then, when He ascended to the heights of Glory, we ascended there with Him in God’s plan. It is not hard to see that if we take out the resurrection

step, we cannot complete the whole journey.

The last thought that comes to mind as I think back on Easter – and it certainly is not the least thought, by any means – is to do with the events of the resurrection day.

Some women came to the tomb to prepare the Lord’s body properly for burial, while it was still dark on that Sunday morning. Of course they found the tomb empty. Peter and John were called, and after they left the garden, Mary Magdalene remained nearby, standing alone. The Lord approaches her, and she does not recognise Him until He speaks her name. She wants to hold His feet in reverence and love, but He forbids her, saying, “Do not cling to Me for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My father ...” (John 20:17).

The significance of these words had escaped me for years, until the truth behind them was brought to my attention by Arthur Custance in his book, *The Seed of the Woman*.

The first thing to note is that the Lord had ascended to Heaven quite some time before the disciples saw Him disappear up into the clouds forty days later. Secondly, we must know something of the Day of Atonement as recorded in Lev. 16 to appreciate what the Lord was saying. And the third thing is that, later in the day, when the Lord appeared to the disciples in the upper room, He stretched out His arms and said, “Touch Me ...”.

So what does it all mean? You will have to know Lev. 16 to follow what I say now. In preparation for the Day of Atonement, the high priest had to undergo a considerable cleansing ritual, and, until the important ceremonies of the day had been accomplished, he could not be touched by anyone who was not also ceremoniously clean.

The high priest dressed in plain robes for these ceremonies, not in his usual colourful robes of office. After making certain sacrifices, he went into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood from the sacrificial lamb on and around the Mercy Seat that covered the Ark of the Covenant. Then

when he had performed all the required duties, he left his plain clothes behind in the Temple and, dressed in His glorious robes, came out and presented Himself to the waiting people of Israel. I have passed over some details of both the High Priest's activities and also the type teaching behind it all, so that we can concentrate on the important point for us at the moment.

As we well know, the Lord fulfilled the meaning of all the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings in His one work of Redemption. He was the true Lamb of God, but at the same time, He was also the true High Priest who presented the offering on the altar of God.

And it was in His capacity as High Priest that He had to say to Mary that morning, "You mustn't touch Me Mary, for I have not yet ascended to My Father." If Mary had touched Him, He would have been made unclean, and would have been unable then to enter the true Holy of Holies in Heaven to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial Lamb, His own blood, on the heavenly Mercy Seat. And that was what He did that day, I believe, between the time He revealed Himself to Mary, and when He returned later that same day, and showed Himself to the disciples.

But when did the Lord come forth in the glorious robes to reveal Himself to His people? That does not happen until His return to earth, when His feet touch down on the spot He left from. That spot is on the outskirts of Jerusalem in Israel. That is when Israel's King, Messiah, Redeemer and High Priest reveals Himself to His people, and at long last, they recognise Him and accept Him in true repentance. May that wonderful day not be far away!

"Down from His glory, ever living story,
My God and Saviour came, and Jesus was
His name.

Born in a manger, to His own a stranger,
A man of sorrows, tears and agony.

Without reluctance, flesh and blood His
substance,

He took the form of man, revealed the
hidden plan,

O glorious mystery, sacrifice of Calvary,
And now I know Thou art the great I AM.

O how I love Him, how I adore Him,
My breath, my sunshine, my all in all!
The great Creator became my Saviour,
And all God's fulness dwelleth in Him."

From the song written by William-Booth Clibborn.

BIBLE STUDY DAY

**Charlestown Multi-purpose Centre,
James St. Charlestown, Newcastle, NSW.**

29th. May 2010

Speakers:

David Tavender & Athol Walter.

**Two morning studies commencing at 10 am,
with one study after lunch.**

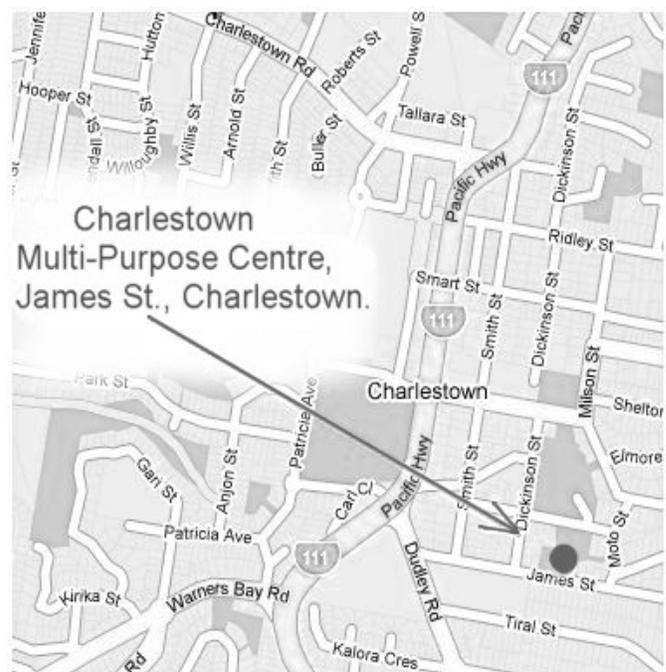
Lunch and refreshments provided.

**No offerings taken, but Free-will Offering Box is
available.**

**Warm fellowship! Good singing!
Great teaching!**

**YOUR PRESENCE WILL MAKE A
GOOD DAY EVEN BETTER!**

**(For catering purposes, please let David Tavender
know, on (02) 4950 6708, that you will be there.)**



A worthy prayer:-

*Grant, Lord, that none may love thee less
because of me;*

*That never word or deed of mine may turn
one heart from Thee;*

*And, greatly daring, Lord, one grace I do
implore,*

*That many hearts, because of me, may love
Thee more.*

Author unknown.

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You are invited to attend

Regular Bible study meetings are held in Brisbane, Sydney, Newcastle and Maitland. Meetings include some singing, prayer, and a Bible study, approx. 45-60 mins. in length, followed by refreshments. Questions and comments about the study are encouraged. Meetings free of charge; all welcome.

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231 Andrew Rd, Greenbank.
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Sydney:

4th. Sunday each month 3pm.
45/45 Philips St., Cabarita.
Group Co-ordinators: Peter & Anne Ward, (02) 9743 3452.

Newcastle:

Every Monday, 7:30pm.
34 Aroona St., Edgeworth.
Group Co-ordinators: David & Janelle Tavender, (02) 4950 6708

Maitland:

Alternate Wednesdays, 10.am.
20 Short St., Lorn.
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