

# Latter Rain

Magazine of the Christian Israelite Church

Winter 1998 (No. 21)



The Spotlight is on Faith

# 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 Printing, Wilberforce, NSW. 2750 Phone: (02) 4575 1988.

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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.

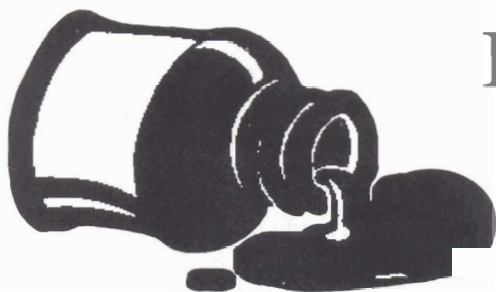
**Distribution: PO Box 127, Singleton, NSW. Australia. 2330.**

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

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# From the Inkwell

This Latter Rain gets back to some basic. What makes a person a Christian, and what then is the difference that makes a Christian Israelite?

The discussion on the relationship between faith and works is presented in the historical content of Martin Luther, and concludes that faith is essential, but that works support it.

The article on circumcision will be interesting to many - to see how man vacillates around God's superior instructions.

Yes, the Gospel is to all the world (see Expand your Bible ) and Luke did his part in preparing the documentation in order that it might be so. God does have a Plan (Children's story) and we must seek to Him to prepare us for the events that lie ahead. May our goal be to be alive when Jesus Christ returns, and to receive Physical Redemption in accordance with this Plan.

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*"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 5:17-19.*

# What Makes a Person a Christian?

## Is There A Difference?

When you see someone that you don't know in the distance, it is pretty unlikely that you would be able to tell whether or not they were a Christian. Even as you get closer it is still unlikely that any outward indication would tell you. When you talk to them, depending on the subject, it is still unlikely that you would be able to tell, although at this stage certain attitudes and approaches may indicate if they are probably not, but are unlikely to confirm if they are. And sometimes you can even work with people for a considerable period of time and not know whether they are Christians or not!

What is it, then, that makes a person a Christian, and why is it that it is so hard to tell purely by observation, whether a person is a Christian or not? And furthermore, does it really matter?

## What Is The Difference?

Perhaps one approach to help solve our dilemma is to look at what might be the differences between a Christian and a non-Christian in a number of specific areas. Appropriate areas to consider might be the attitudes within ones self, the relationship with others and the relationship with God, or the environment around them. In addition a number of key beliefs might help to bring out some of these points and further help to show the difference.

These differences have been collated in the Table below. The Table illustrate that whilst in regards to outward appearances there may be little to differentiate between Christians and non-Christians, inwardly there is a substantial difference.

The difference, in definition, is more

in what a person thinks, and the resultant impact that that might have on approach and reaction to situations. In practice, however, there ought to be a big difference in actions also.

## The Advantages

Through their belief Christians are able to more readily accept the environment in which they live, and accept it as part of God's plan. A certain belief in a hereafter life, a knowledge that there is a purpose for being here and an understanding that God is in control, all work together to give a peace of mind to the believer. But that is not all. Through a transfer of supernatural understanding we are able to believe in the sacrifice that Jesus gave when he laid down his life, and know that through this act we have been made right with God, the Creator and Master of the Universe.

## The Essence of a Christian Life

C. S. Lewis once made the analogy that becoming a Christian was somewhat like coming into a nice warm house, safe from the elements outside. The quality of life is greatly enhanced. However, within the house there are many rooms, and which one each may choose to stay in is up to the individual. The rooms within the house are like the different Christian religions. The one that is right for you will only be found by your "knocking on each door" and asking questions of those within each room. Some folk choose to stay in the one room all their lives, and if they are happy there, that may be quite in order. Many do not leave the room that has been favourite to their families. For many the quest of finding what is right for them continues over a long period of time.

Let us make no mistake. Christianity has never been promised as a panacea to ensure that only good things will happen to us. On the contrary, the Scriptures promise that through our Christianity, God will help us through our times of trouble and sorrow. Christianity at no time offers a platform for

superiority in the human dimension, for we are all equally dependent on the grace of God through Jesus Christ to be reconciled to Him. We can rest assured, however, in the promises that we will live and reign with Him in the World to come.☞

## A Comparison of Christian Beliefs, Attitudes and Values.

Area Considered	Non - Christian		Christian
Relationship with -	Non-Believer	Theistic Believer	
<b>God - or the Environment</b>	Does not believe in God, but wants to protect the environment.	Believes that God is in control	Believes God directs each human life
	Does not believe in Jesus	Does not believe in Jesus	Believes in Jesus
	Creation just happened - no purpose	God is life source	God has a Plan for this Creation and each individual
	There is no Authority in this Creation	Recognise God's Authority in different ways	Accept the Bible as God's revelation to mankind
<b>Others</b>	Standards are relative	Have standards	Acknowledge standards of right and wrong
	Relies on man-made laws for reconciliation	Accept God as the ultimate judge	Accepts repentance and God's Authority to forgive as a healing process
	Love is based on self-fulfilment	Love and fellowship are seen as human responses rather than God directed	Love and fellowship attained through Christ centredness
	May try to help others	Generally may try to help others of like mind	Will try to help all others -do unto others as you would have them do unto you
<b>Self</b>	Sees as innate goodness to be developed	Seek self development from a power beyond self - people are essentially good	Recognises innate weakness and a need for assistance from outside to improve
<b>Beliefs</b>	Accept that individual life is sacred	Life is from God	Uniqueness of individual life
	No belief in life after death	Belief in after life - not always clearly defined	Explicit faith in life after death and hope in the resurrection

# Going On...

## Physical Redemption

Most people who come into contact with the Christian Israelite Church for the first time are not a little surprised to find that here is a Christian church which shares many fundamental Christian beliefs, yet, at the same time it has some quite distinctive teachings.

The difference is not brought about by discarding the orthodox Christian beliefs nor by any eccentric interpretation of the Scriptures, nor by wishful thinking. As a matter of fact, no one can become a member of the Christian Israelite Church without first becoming an acknowledged and self-confessed Christian. The Christian Israelite Church is now, and always has been a Christian denomination. Our doctrine and way of life is solidly supported by the Bible, the divine commands of God being our measuring line whereby we are instructed to align both our religious and secular lives.

In studying the Christian Israelite Church doctrines you will find that the reason for the introduction of numerous principles in our way of life is because of the underlying framework within which we interpret the Scriptures. Whilst there are many passages of Scripture which join together to form the overall picture, this article looks especially at the important bearing that four particular quotations from Scripture have upon our beliefs. Christian Israelites believe they have discovered “*a new (although very old) and living (physi-*

*cal and spiritual) way*” in Christ Jesus that shows us a wider concept of the Divine Plan of God.

The concepts presented in the four quotations referred to above and printed below, open up, for the Bible student, many fresh fields of thought. These quotations form a good basis for understanding the tenets of the Christian Israelite Church teachings. The quotations are:

1. “*If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death*” John 8:51. We believe these words, refer to the original curse upon mankind mentioned in Genesis 3:19, and that Jesus, who made this promise, is able to help us to fulfil it;
2. “*...therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection*” Hebrews 6:1-3. The aspiration of not seeing death is what Paul was referring to in this verse (Perfect Obedience\*);
3. “*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people...and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah...*” Isaiah 11:11-12, “*And so all Israel shall be saved...*” Romans 11:26 (The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel\*); and,
4. “*New Jerusalem, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband.*” Revelation 21:2-9. To be of the Bride of the Lamb is an aspiration of members of The

Church, and calls for a vow now similar to the vow of the Nazarite in Numbers 6:5-7, a life dedication vow as in a marriage. This group is also mentioned in Revelation 14:1-4,12 (To Be One With Jesus Christ in God\*).

These four quotations and the main points they bring out will be the basis of this article, and three future articles, each attempting to show how the Christian Israelite Church is different from other Christian Churches. In pointing out these differences, it is not intended to divide Christian Israelites from other Christians, because our bond is the common belief in *“Jesus Christ who is the Saviour of all men, especially those that believe”* 1 Timothy 4:10. Only this is the foundation of access to God. Without this foundation, a life of faith and action could not be built, but by building upon it, our aspiration to become

a brother or sister of Jesus Christ can be fulfilled (Mark 3:35).

If our temporal ambitions rule our thoughts, then God cannot find a dwelling place in our body; but, by living a balanced life, and allowing time to meditate on God’s goodness, love, and promise to us, we can start to carry these attitudes into our daily routine so that Jesus’ words, *“be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”* Matthew 5:48, may be fulfilled in us. As the foundation to this belief, we need to realise that religion is personal, an integral part of our character and personality. This does not mean that it is private,

and cannot be shared, but God wants our thoughts, our actions, every minute of every day, to be right and positive, with our minds focussed on Him. It is the humbling of our personality to live as God requires that will make us fit vessels to be a house for His Spirit to dwell in. *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”* (spoken of as done), 1 Corinthians 3:16.

So this summarises the ambition of members of the Christian Israelite Church. Is it your ambition also? Once achieved, we won’t have the mix of good and evil thoughts that we have in this world now, because the goodness of God will work a

wonderful change in us. This change is spoken of in Phillipians 3:21, *“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body...”*.

*“If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death”*  
John 8:51

## Physical Redemption of the Body

The words of Jesus in John 8:51, *“If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death,”* can be applied in two ways. Firstly, that they will not see spiritual death at the resurrection after physical death, or, that they will enter the world to come without seeing physical death. There is no doubt from the context in the surrounding verses that the Jews understood Jesus meant that people who kept His sayings would not see physical death (v.53), and because of this they condemned Him. Jesus was not dismayed for He realised that here were professing believers who did not seek to God,

Many believe the above verse applies to the fact that they will live again in the resurrection, having lost their physical body through death. They believe God will recall their existence in a spiritual nature. This was believed by the patriarchs and prophets who offered animal sacrifices as a sign of their belief. If this were the meaning of Jesus' words there would have been no need for Him to state it as something new

Undoubtedly then, we believe, it applies to the physical redemption of the body – life without death. Now let us consider what each of us is composed of – in God’s sight. We do not mean to give a chemical breakdown, nor a scientific functional division, nor a medical analysis, but purely to state passages of Scripture to show how God defines us for the purpose of our existence here, and then in the future for an incorruptible or immortal state.

dle, the spirit needs to be lit by the Immortal Spirit from God. This candle (spirit) is taken back to God at death (Ecclesiastes 3:21), just as Jesus' Spirit went back to God when he said, "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" Luke 23:46, and then He died. So today, when our spirit is withdrawn, or returns to God, we see physical death. But, if we, through the mercies of God, seek to Him for our candle to be lit, then our spirit will seek to live in righteousness and will follow the instructions of God through the sayings of Jesus. We will present our lives a living sacrifice, by not conforming to the ways of the world, but by being transformed to "...that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" Romans 12:1,2.

Peter said, concerning Jesus' death, "*...that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption*" Acts

2:32,27. At death the soul<sup>1</sup> and body go to the grave. However in the case of Jesus, His soul was not left there, but was raised again on the third day, and His flesh (body made of dust) did not see corruption – for it was also raised from the dead.

Job 14:22 speaks of the flesh that has pain, while the soul within a person will mourn, but “...*thy visitation hath preserved my spirit*” 10:12. In chapter 32 verse 8 it mentions “...*there is a spirit in man (source of life); and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding (the soul with thoughts and reason)*”.

Paul tells us there is a spirit and soul and body in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which may be “...*preserved blameless unto Jesus’ coming*”. “*Faithful is he that calleth you, who*

also will do it" 5:25. When these three components are preserved alive to Jesus' coming, then the 'body' (physical) will undergo the change spoken of in Phillippians 3:21, *"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself"*.


Ecclesiastes 12:7 speaks of the body (made from dust – Genesis 3:19) returning to dust again, and the spirit, which came from God, returning unto God again. The curse of the human nature which emanated from the fall of man in the garden of Eden, has been upon all mankind; *"O thou Adam, what hast thou done, for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee"* 2 Esdras 7:48. This curse has caused the statement to be made, and often reiterated today, "Well, there is one thing we cannot escape, and that is death," (Hebrews 9:27). It is this appointment with hell that Jesus was speaking about when He said, *"...he shall never see death,"* John 8:51.

Now Isaiah saw a glimpse of this promise, and he said, *"...your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand"* (28:18). Hosea likewise prophetically declared, *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death"*. Paul, in his account of events at Jesus' return in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:35-37, declared, *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* (v55). These three Bible writers declared at different times, words supporting that which Jesus Himself declared, *"...he shall never see death"*. But, they did not declare the balance of Jesus' statement, *"If a*

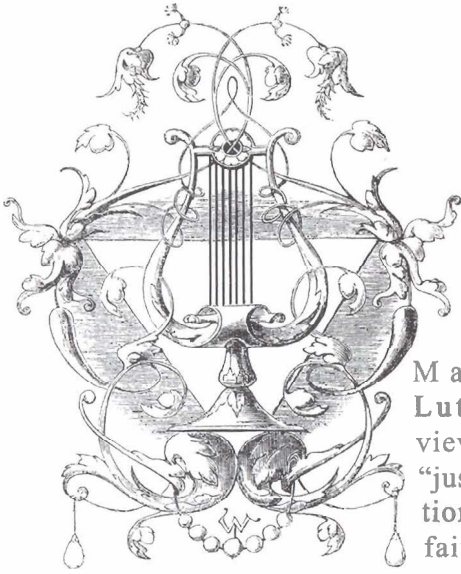
*man keep my sayings..."*, and it is only by keeping His sayings that we would be able to attain to this promise. Each of the prophets knew that there would be some attain to a state of overcoming death, and more Scriptures from other writers could also be stated to show this. However, by the mouth of two or three witnesses shall a matter be established, so where three prophets declare the same inspirational message, taken in context with their writings, it is sufficient for those who believe in God to know that this message is from God.

It is the living who shall show the power of God (Isaiah 38:18) and it is God's plea for the wicked to turn from their evil ways and live (Ezekiel 33:11; 14, 14-16, 19). David asked God to hear those in bondage under the curse of death and to *"preserve them"* (Psalm 79:11).

The Bible records that Enoch and Elijah, men of like passions as we are (James 5:17; Hebrews 11:5), were both *"translated"*, going from life in this world to life in God's Kingdom without seeing physical death (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11).

So we see that Paul, Job and Peter all show in their writings that there are three parts of man, a spirit, a soul and a body. They all agree that through death it is the body that is lost in the grave in accordance with the curse upon it (Genesis 3:19). They also witness that there is additional scriptural proof to prove Jesus' promise in John 8:51, that the physical body does not need to be lost to death. This passage applies to the redeeming of the physical body from death, so that it can enjoy the change of *"...mortal putting on immortality"* (1 Corinthians 15:53). 

**\* In the next issue we will look at the messages contained in the other three quotations. The title in brackets after the quotation will be the article titles in future issues.**



# Justification by Faith

Can Martin Luther's views on "justification by faith" be reconciled with a lifestyle of keeping the Old Testament laws?

In the light of the other articles in this issue talking about salvation, redemption, etc. Let us look at the concept of justification and more specifically the concept of "justification by faith" which of course Martin Luther examined in extreme detail, and as a result of his analyses and actions we had the Reformation. But what is Justification by Faith. To understand the phrase we must first understand the words.

**What is faith?** Christian faith concerns trust in the promises of God, faith is personal and faith unites the believer in Christ. Believers must accept that the historical details of the gospel and historical knowledge is not a faith that justifies. The faith that saves us as believers involves believing and trusting that Jesus Christ was born for us personally and has accomplished for us the work of salvation. Hebrews 11:1 says *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"*.

**What is justification?** Justification is being made righteous in the sight of God or entering into a right relationship with God. Justification came to be seen as dealing with the question of what an individual

has to do in order to be saved. *"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified"* Romans 8:30.

Martin Luther was born on 10th November, 1483 at Wittenberg in Germany. He had initially started his academic training to become a lawyer but, after gaining his Masters degree in Law and without permission from his family, left the law faculty and joined the order of Augustinian monks known as "Black Cloisters" who led a hermit lifestyle. He was noted for his dedication to self-flagellation in trying to atone for his and mankind's sinfulness which he saw as a insuperable obstacle to gain the favour of God. Not only had he this private dilemma to deal with, but the church to which he had placed his allegiance was becoming more and more corrupt and hypocritical.

To understand a little of the theologian's predicament it is necessary to briefly look at what was happening in their world at that time. During the late 1400's and early 1500's, as had been for quite some time, the Roman Catholic Church was the only Christian Church that was also a reigning political entity. With the election in 1492 of Rodrigo Borgia as Pope Alexander started the first of many debauched leaderships that left the Roman Catholic church, according to the history books, corrupt and publicly shamed for many years. Julius II was elected in 1503 and according to a contemporary Venetian Ambassador, he was violent, impetuous and untrust-

worthy. Leo X was elected next - he was a political double dealer who increased the sales of indulgences to such an extent that a general outcry was heard. The rot had set in with regards to pure religion in the established Church and it was not going to remain unnoticed. This corruption would continue for quite some time yet, with all this corruption the general masses still chose to believe in the divinity of the Pope and the clergy - with or without questionable scruples. The sale of indulgences to believers was a major source of revenue that had started in 1343 with a papal bull issued by Clement VI which asserted that Mary and the saints had been adding to the merits of Christ, and that this great reservoir of merit in heaven had been given to the Church to dispense to the faithful - at a price. Thus many of the popes abused this system to finance their personal building programs and their private treasuries. To understand what indulgences were I will quote from a book called "God's Outlaw" by Brian H. Edwards, *"Everywhere friars travelled with their holy relics which, for a fee, could be viewed and kissed. In Germany, in the city of Martin Luther, at Wittenberg in Saxony, the Castle Church contained over seventeen thousand (17,000) relics including part of the rock on which Jesus stood when He wept over Jerusalem, the gown of the virgin Mary and some milk from her breasts, a piece from the burning bush of Moses, thirty five portions of the cross, hay and straw from the manger at Bethlehem, some hair from Christ, His coat and girdle, and even a complete skeleton of one of the babes murdered by Herod at Bethlehem! The Elector of Saxony was proud of his collection. This was an Indulgence Church, and the pilgrim could earn one hundred and twenty*

*seven thousand seven hundred and nine years and one hundred and sixteen (46,649,474) days off purgatory by viewing them all; as a bonus he helped to increase the Church revenues."* And most troubling of all, all this time could be earned off purgatory without the sinner even having to change his ways! No wonder the 'thinking and discerning' monks of the time were in turmoil, men such as Erasmus, Luther, Tyndale, etc. Reform was long overdue, but it took men prepared to step over the limit to achieve the change in doctrine required to bring the church back into the guidelines as laid down by Christ.

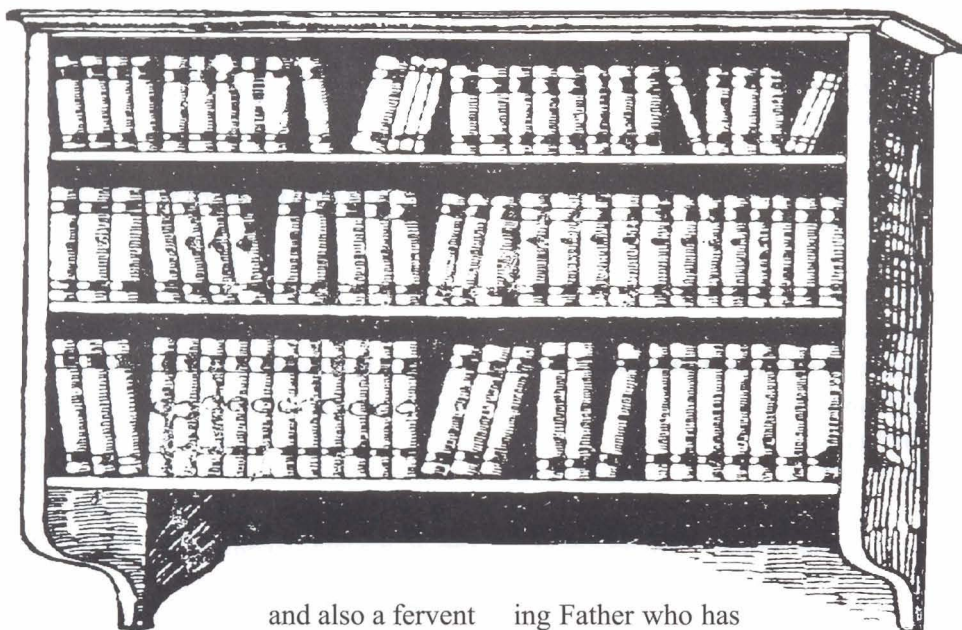
Luther, in his pursuit of answers, went to Rome, actually walking 1800 miles (nearly 3,000 kilometres) to get there, but was disillusioned by everything he saw in Rome. When Admiral Philip of Burgundy visited Rome two years before Luther he wrote, "The heathen live more chastely and innocently than these people who now draft the ecclesiastical laws for all Christendom". Erasmus also visited the city of Rome at about this time and was led to complain about the "abominable blasphemies against Christ and his apostles". Luther did all the penances and pilgrimages that a zealous monk could do in Rome, probably wondering all the time at the sanctity and sanity of what he was doing, but believing in the irrefutable power of the Roman Catholic church to act as mankind's mediator between himself and God.

As a monk trying to minister to and teach the people of Wittenberg, Luther was appalled that when he would castigate them for their sinful lives, they would cheerily wave their indulgence letters at him proclaiming that they had already purchased their pardon, irrespective of how they conducted themselves from herein. As a re-

sult of this habit of purchasing salvation, Martin Luther prepared his ninety five theses against indulgences and nailed it to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral. In 2 weeks all Germany knew of what Luther had done, in 4 weeks all of Europe had heard.

Luther was an enthusiastic scholar

nally regarded human works as a precondition of justification - something the sinner had to perform. Luther came to see, though, that this righteousness is something which God GIVES to the sinner, it is not the punishing righteousness of a harsh judge, but rather the loving gift from a lov-



and also a fervent and zealous monk, who had enormous problems with Romans 1:17, *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"*. What was the 'righteousness of God'? Luther had been taught to understand that this passage meant the punishing righteousness by which God is righteous and punishes unrighteous sinners. But this did not show a very merciful, loving God as the New Testament expounds, *"rather a retributive justiciar meting out justice in balances which were impossible to balance"*. How could mankind ever justify himself in the eyes of God - man was a sinner and nothing could overcome this. Luther had origi-

ing Father who has met the precondition for us. God graciously gives sinners what they require to be justified. Sinful humanity, as Augustine had always maintained, simply did not have the resources to meet this precondition.

As an illustration, imagine a person in prison and the warder comes to him and offers the prisoner his freedom for, say, \$2,000. The prisoner has no money, and no way of getting the money, so the offer of his freedom is useless because there is no way of meeting the precondition. As sinful humans, we do not have the resources to buy our freedom, thus the promise of freedom (through works) has little relevance when one has no hope of attaining

to it. The good news of the Gospel was that mankind had been given the resource to purchase their freedom. The precondition had been met and paid for by someone else. Thus, in this new light of thinking, Luther came to see God, not as the harsh retributive judge who awards according to merit, but God as a merciful and gracious entity who 'bestows righteousness on sinners as a gift'. The year of these momentous changes in theological thought was 1515. Luther believed that justification was by faith alone, not by works. But through justification would naturally come regeneration where the believers would wish to transform their lives and live a life as demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

Basically, we could say, that in the process of justification, God is the active element and humans are the passive receivers of God's gracious gift. Faith is a gift from God and it is through faith that mankind is justified based upon the grace of God. The 'righteousness of God' is not a righteousness which judges whether or not we have met the precondition for justification, but the righteousness which is given to us so that we may meet the precondition.

By 1540, Martin Luther was a household name and Church authorities were trying to quell the 'disruption'. To help do this and answer the many questions raised by the debates, the Roman Catholic Church summoned the Council of Trent in 1545 in an effort to regain credibility for the Roman Catholic Church. At the 6th session of the Council held 13th January, 1547, The Tridentine Decree on Justification sets out the Roman Catholic teaching on justification. Trent maintained that justification was both an event and a process; the event of being declared to be righteous through the work of

Christ, and the process of being made righteous through the internal work of the Holy Spirit. Protestants separate the two activities into two distinctive areas: justification and sanctification. Roman Catholic theology combines the two into one and name the total experience justification.

Luther firmly believed that justification was through faith alone and that good works followed justification, but the works did not cause that justification in the first place. Trent interpreted justification to mean both the beginning of the Christian life and its continuation and growth.

This has been a very brief overview of some of the issues involved at the Council of Trent. The fact is that this change precipitated by Martin Luther paved the way for the Reformist Churches, or what would become known as the Protestant Church to manifest itself. This period of Christian history changed Christian thought and ideas for centuries and came to be recognised in history as the Reformation.

So, where does that leave us as members of the Christian Israelite Church who believe that the OT law should be kept with the light of the Gospel to give us guidance in how to maintain and keep that law.

Being Christians, we believe that faith with works as understood in OT times is "dead". But through their faith, Christians should naturally go through a process of regeneration/sanctification whereby they spiritually renew themselves with the help of the Spirit of Christ, to become true followers of God, doing His will in His way. *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"* Matthew 5:17, 18. In

the words of Jesus Christ Himself, we are told that He did not come to do away with the law, but to fulfil, and that not the slightest adjustment would be made to God's Law until the end of times. Jesus and His apostles adhered to the Laws of the Old Testament, they were circumcised (having come from good Hebrew backgrounds) as well as being baptised (they had most of them undergone the baptism of John the Baptist as had Jesus).

*"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)"* Romans 2:12-15. So once believers decide that their hearts are guiding them to keep the law or certain aspects of the law, they must adhere to this decision and not backslide into their old ways.


We, as Christian Israelites, believe that there will be a group of people who will have the desire placed within their hearts, and the conscience placed within their minds, to guide them in keeping the law as given to Moses. These people will not be keeping the law out of a sense of duty or as a striving for salvation (for salvation by works is dead), but will keep the law because their hearts tell them it is the right thing to do and their conscience tells them that through this they will develop a 'right' relationship with their Creator. These guidelines for living (the law) were

laid down by God for a reason, and Jesus and his Apostles felt that they were important enough that their lives mirrored a style in keeping with the law. Jesus, though, showed Christians that it was possible to keep His Father's Law in a loving and caring manner, rather than in the legalistic traditional approach which had inculcated hatred and hostility. If you cloak the desires within you to keep the law, with love towards your fellow man, then you are doing what the Master showed us through His mission work, and are following His example. What greater glory could there be in this world than to emulate the lifestyle of the High Priest of this life and the next, Jesus Christ, to be made lesser priests but spiritually in His image.

Thus, Luther posed no danger to Christian Israelite beliefs. We agree that faith cannot be established with works and to seek such is futile. The duty bound obligatory form of keeping the law died with Jesus on the Cross and Calvary, when the veil of the Temple was 'rent in twain'. What we gained through His sacrifice was our redemption and in the knowledge that through His death God has saved us from our sins and literally wiped the slate clean. The Lord will leave it now for our heart's to decide. Some may have no desire to keep any of the law at all, therefore, that is okay for them, but all should allow others the scope to feel within themselves that these instructions were given for mankind's betterment and if the desire is within your heart to keep some aspect or all of the law, then don't for your own sake, ignore it. The Lord calls us all to different levels of understanding, for as Christ said, *"in my Father's house are many mansions"*. Don't ignore what your heart is telling you, for, in a true Christian your heart and your con-

science can also be said to be the Lord's way of communicating His will to you. Who would want to ignore that!

James sums up the argument perfectly, *"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"* James

1:25. God does not bless those that do not hear Him, but if we listen to our hearts and consciences God will guide us into the light of His presence. As James says, the law is the perfect law of liberty, in other words the law is freedom. Let God be your guide, as Luther did, and let your own spiritual reformation begin! 

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## **Hymn No. 47**

(Proverbs 7:2; Joel 2:1-7; John 15:10; 14:15; Revelation 14:1-5)

Blow th' trumpet in Sion, set th' standard on high  
Proclaim to the world that Jehovah is nigh;  
That th' slaves who of evil and Satan complain,  
May rally around it, their freedom to gain.

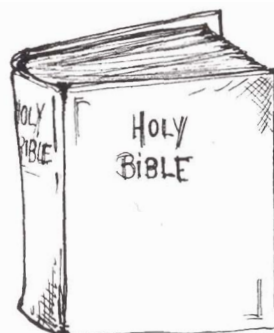
The standard of Sion's the law of the Lord,  
That He hath for ages reveal'd in His Word,  
Which He unto Moses on Horeb did give,  
And th' watchword is, keep My commandments and live.

In th' Gospel of John it may plainly be read  
How Jesus, the Son of Jehovah, hath said,  
Keep My sayings, and prove to My Father above,  
That ye, through obedience, abide in My love.

With Jesus in Sion the twelve tribes will stand,  
When they've fought and regained their forefather's land;  
When, through Him, they've overcome death and the grave,  
Then th' banner of love o'er the ransom'd shall wave.

# Debug Your Bible:

## God's Way Is Best!



### Introduction

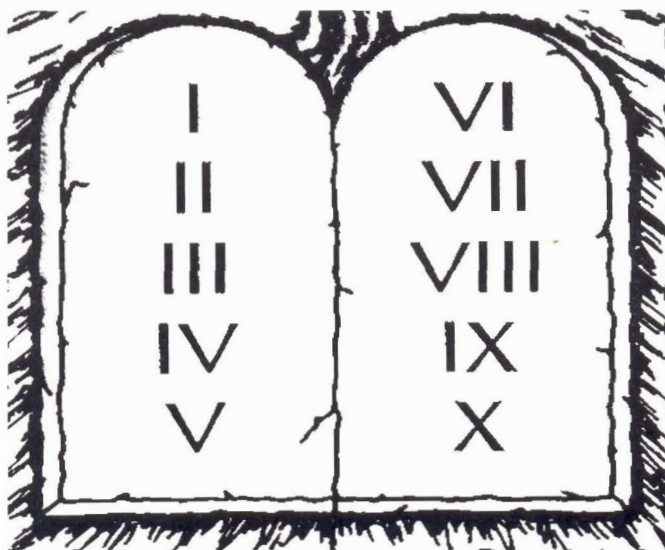
God's Law as given to Israel contains many instructions that people try to "explain away", but ultimately end up proving God's way is best. This article looks at the pro's and con's of circumcision. Medically, circumcision is a contentious issue these days, but it is interesting, when given the facts, to note that the pros of this issue far outweigh the cons. Spiritually it is also a contentious issue. It was commanded by God of His Israel people, and is not incumbent on Christians. This, of course, does not preclude the observance of the ordinance by those who wish to do so.

Genesis chapter 17 shows circumcision firstly as a spiritual sign, and secondly as a national ordinance for Israel. Whilst controversy surrounded circumcision in apostolic times, Paul made it clear that it was the insistence of the legalistic Jews in saying that Gentiles must be circumcised that created the problem. (Paul, however, as does the Old Testament, links circumcision with obedience). Circumcision, they concluded, was a law given to Israel, and was not required by Christian believers.

Those who choose circumcision must not do so as a means of gaining salvation. Salvation can only be gained by acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus, a gift

### Biblical Significance

Circumcision of the male child on the eighth day is the sign of the original covenant between God and the Israelite people through Abraham. It is not to be confused with the circumcision deferred until puberty or later adolescence which, in some cultures, is primarily of social importance. An account of the origin of circumcision, with the patriarch Abraham, is given in the 17th chapter of Genesis. It was later included in the laws of God given to Israel through Moses.



Donald Gray

of grace (Galatians 5). However, “the relationship between circumcision and obedience remains a Biblical constant. In this respect circumcision involves the idea of consecration to God but not at its essence”(1) and also refer to Romans 2:25.

## Health Perspectives

Several years ago an organisation NOCIRC (The National Organisation for Circumcision Information Resource Centre) established a branch in Australia in order to lobby against neonatal circumcision. Whilst NOCIRC claims to be objective, Edgar J. Shoen, Clinical Professor of Paediatrics at the University of California Medical Centre, San Francisco, CA says the following:

“NOCIRC has chosen to use visitation anecdotes, and testimonials to try and influence professional and legislative bodies and the public to adopt their point of view”.

Organisations like NOCIRC are making it increasingly difficult for parents to have babies circumcised in spite of increasing evidence of the benefit of newborn circumcision. Yet this same organisation has “never represented a scientific assessment of the objective medical literature in this field which has increasingly shown, particularly over the past decade, that newborn circumcision has multiple health benefits.”

Dr. Brian J. Morris (PhD Dsc) maintains that the arguments in favour of circumcision far outweigh the arguments against it. As a result circumcision has found a renewal in popularity in the United States for various reasons,

primary of which were the health risks associated with uncircumcision. Dr. Morris details that lack of circumcision:

- is the biggest risk factor for sexually-acquired HIV in men.
- is responsible for a 10 - 20 fold higher risk of urinary tract infections in the first year of life (from complications of urinary tract infections, which can lead to kidney failure, meningitis and infection of bone marrow).
- carries a higher risk of death in the first year of life
- one in approx 1000 uncircumcised men will die from cancer of the penis or require at least partial penis amputation as a result. (In contrast, penile cancer is completely prevented by circumcision of the newborn).
- often leads to balanitis (inflammation of the glans), phimosis (inability to retract the foreskin) and paraphimosis (constriction of the penis by a tight foreskin) - all of these conditions are unknown in circumcised men.
- means many will require circumcision later in life which is more complicated than in a newborn (complication risk = 1 in 100 against 1 in 1000).
- is associated with higher incidence of cervical cancer in the female partners of these men.
- much higher risk of acquiring sexually-transmitted diseases

## Statistical Observations

“A review of 136,086 boys born in US army hospitals from 1980 to 1985 showed that of 100,157 who were circumcised, 193 had complications (0.19%). There were no deaths. By con-

trast, though, the 'complication' rate among the 35,929 who were not circumcised was 0.24%, and included two deaths."(2)

There is no evidence of any long-term psychological harm arising from circumcision. There is, however, a finite risk of damage to the penis - fortunately though, badly performed circumcisions are rare. The best advice is to ensure the doctor is competent and experienced.

One of the great arguments raised by groups such as NOCIRC is that the benefits of circumcision can be achieved by "penile hygiene". Unfortunately, this is not the case. "A study done of British schoolboys, showed that 'penile hygiene' as such does not exist".(3) Uncircumcised boys have a 20 times greater risk of urinary tract infection(UTI) than circumcised boys (2).

### Further Support

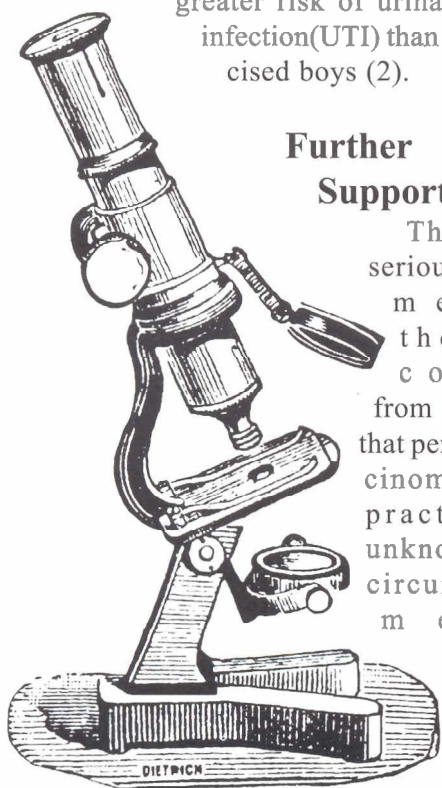
The most serious argument, though, comes from the fact that penile carcinoma is practically unknown in circumcised men.

Granted you do get penile

carcinoma amongst Muslim communities but these communities circumcise their males at puberty rather than at birth, and the trauma, etc. is far more significant as a factor. There are 750 - 1000 cases per year of carcinoma of the penis in the US, however over a period of 20 years there have been 3 cases of penile cancer reported in men who had been circumcised as newborns. (4)

Unfortunately the most noteworthy current facts for circumcision seem to be the most neglected - the relationship between lack of circumcision and the acquisition of HIV. Studies done in Africa by John and Pat Caldwell showed that rather than having odds of 1 in 1000, if the man has chancroid (a common STD) the probability of contracting HIV from a single encounter goes up to something like 1 in 2. Chancroid is a disease of uncircumcised men, usually due to lack of personal hygiene (thus it is common amongst soldiers during war). Chancroid disappeared in the western world at the turn of the century because of better hygiene, but this does not solve the threat of the AIDS epidemic that is now in Africa. People like the Caldwell's believe that "a higher rate of circumcision in that country could help reduce the disease". What better argument is there?

There is absolutely no comparison between male circumcision and the so called "female circumcision", the latter of which is a barbaric act with absolutely no foundation in the Bible. There is also no comparison between infant circumcision and circumcision at a later stage of infancy or puberty. Studies have shown that in infants up to 3 weeks of age, the pain and irritability that result from circumcision are restricted to the



immediate time of surgery.(6)

Interestingly, for blood to clot there are two different blood clotting factors that need to be present: Vitamin K and Prothrombin. These two blood clotting agents are at the highest level of your life (that is ever) on the eighth day of life. Vitamin K is formed in the blood of an infant from day 5 to 7 of its life. Of all the days in a male child's life, the eighth day is the best day for circumcision because the healing factor is at its all time highest.(7)

## **Science Proves God's Way is Best**

The circumcision debate has come a full circle - in 1971 the American Academy of Paediatrics(AAP) advocated "There are no valid medical indications for circumcision in the neonatal period". In 1987 the AAP found that "New evidence has suggested possible medical benefits from newborn circumcision". In 1990 Edgar J. Schoen (chairman of the AAP task force) found that "the benefits of routine circumcision of newborns as a preventive health measure far exceed the risks of the procedure".(4) Wiswell, who has been quoted above, made the following statement "As a paediatrician and neonatologist, I am a child advocate

and try to do what is best for children. For many years I was an outspoken opponent of circumcision.....I have gradually changed my opinion".(5)

## **Conclusion**

The importance of both physical and 'spiritual' circumcision is shown in Ezekiel 44:9. Circumcision, without obedience and a special relationship to God, is of no avail spiritually. The outward sign is insignificant when compared to the inward desire to keep the Laws and Commands of God.

For those seeking a special relationship with God, the concept of circumcision should not be overlooked.

Most parents, particularly Christian parents, desire to do what is best for their children. God gave the covenant of circumcision to Abraham and his descendants. Parents only need to consider the health benefits detailed above to realise that it is beneficial for a male infant. God knows the health giving attributes that this simple operation affords.

We believe that the medical experts should leave the decision about infant circumcision to the parents who have the best interest of the children at heart.☞

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# God's Plan

Have you ever thought about about what would happen if we had no rules for driving on the road? Imagine if everyone wanted to go first at a corner and no one wanted to give way to anyone.

Imagine what school would be like if there were no rules and everyone did just what they wanted to do and went where they wanted to go and talked all day and didn't do any work! You wouldn't learn very much would you? I think you would agree that rules are necessary for the good of everyone.

God gave laws and commands to Moses a long time ago. You can read about these in Exodus chapter 20. God asked the people to make a sacrifice to Him to show they were sorry for their sins. If the sacrifice was offered to God with the desire for forgiveness of sins then the people making the sacrifice had their sins forgiven. In the Old Testament we can read of many stories about sacrifices, about the Children of Israel seeking forgiveness of sins and offering a sacrifice of animals.

When Jesus came to this earth, grew up and was crucified on the cross - He was our sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice did away with the need for a sacrifice of an animal like they offered in the Old Testament.

This was all part of God's Plan. If we believe in Jesus and His love for us He can and will forgive us our sins. This is a wonderful thing to think about. Jesus, who grew up and lived on this earth, can and will help us in everything that we do.


Have you heard the story of Jairus? He was a ruler of the synagogue (or church) who came to Jesus and pleaded with Him to come to his house and make his little daughter better. You see, she was very ill and he was afraid she would die. On the way there were so many people that the journey took longer than expected. Before they reached Jairus' house some of his friends came up to Jairus and said, "your daughter is dead, don't worry Jesus anymore, it is too late."

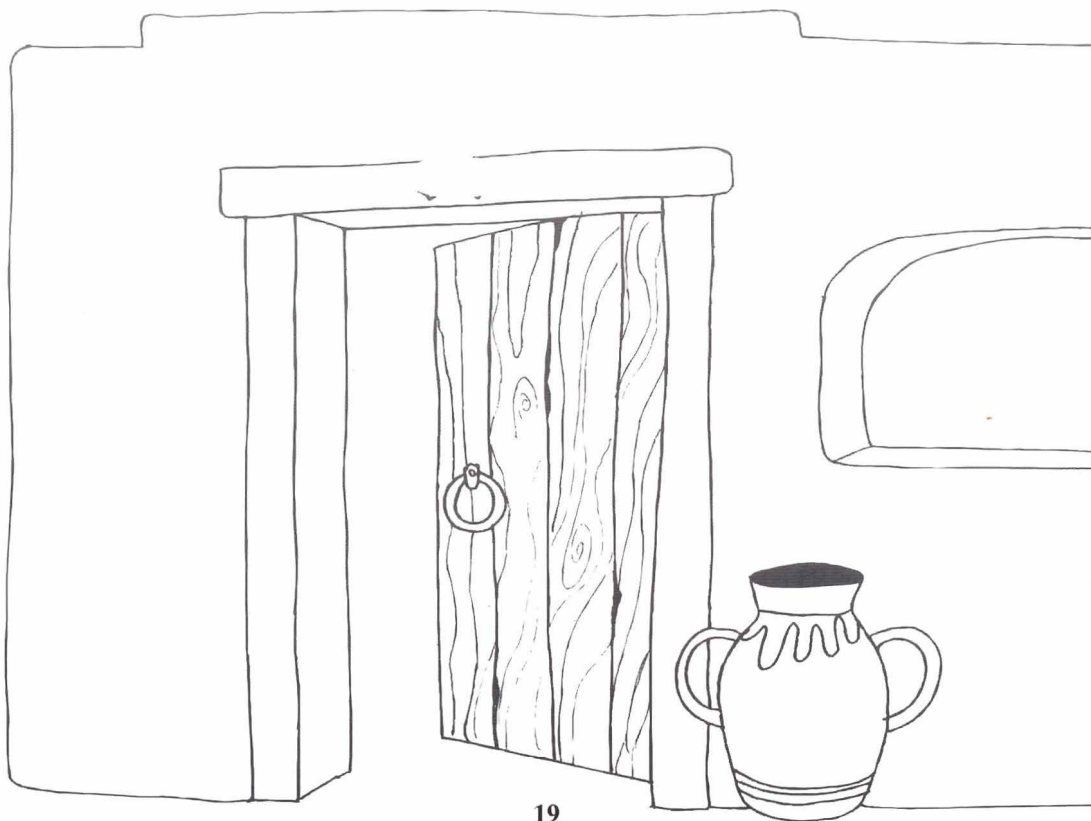
Jesus replied, “Be not afraid, only believe.” When Jesus and Jairus arrived at the home where the little girl lay, Jesus went in to see the sick girl. He told her to arise. The little girl arose and started walking. Everyone was so surprised as they felt sure she would not get better. Besides they had all been told that the little girl had died.

Because Jairus had so much faith in Jesus and believed that Jesus could make his daughter better, his faith showed that he believed and loved God.

We are told in the Bible that all we need to do is have faith and believe in God’s promises and God can do great things for us.

This is all part of God’s wonderful plan for each of us. Jesus loves us all and we in turn can love Him and keep His instructions. If we love God we will follow the ways that Jesus taught us and take notice of the rules and laws given in the Bible.

*“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” 1 John 4:7. *



# Puzzle Page

## The Hebrew Alphabet

Hidden in this puzzle are the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Hebrew was the original language of the Old Testament. Of interest is the fact that the sections of Psalm 119 are prefaced with letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

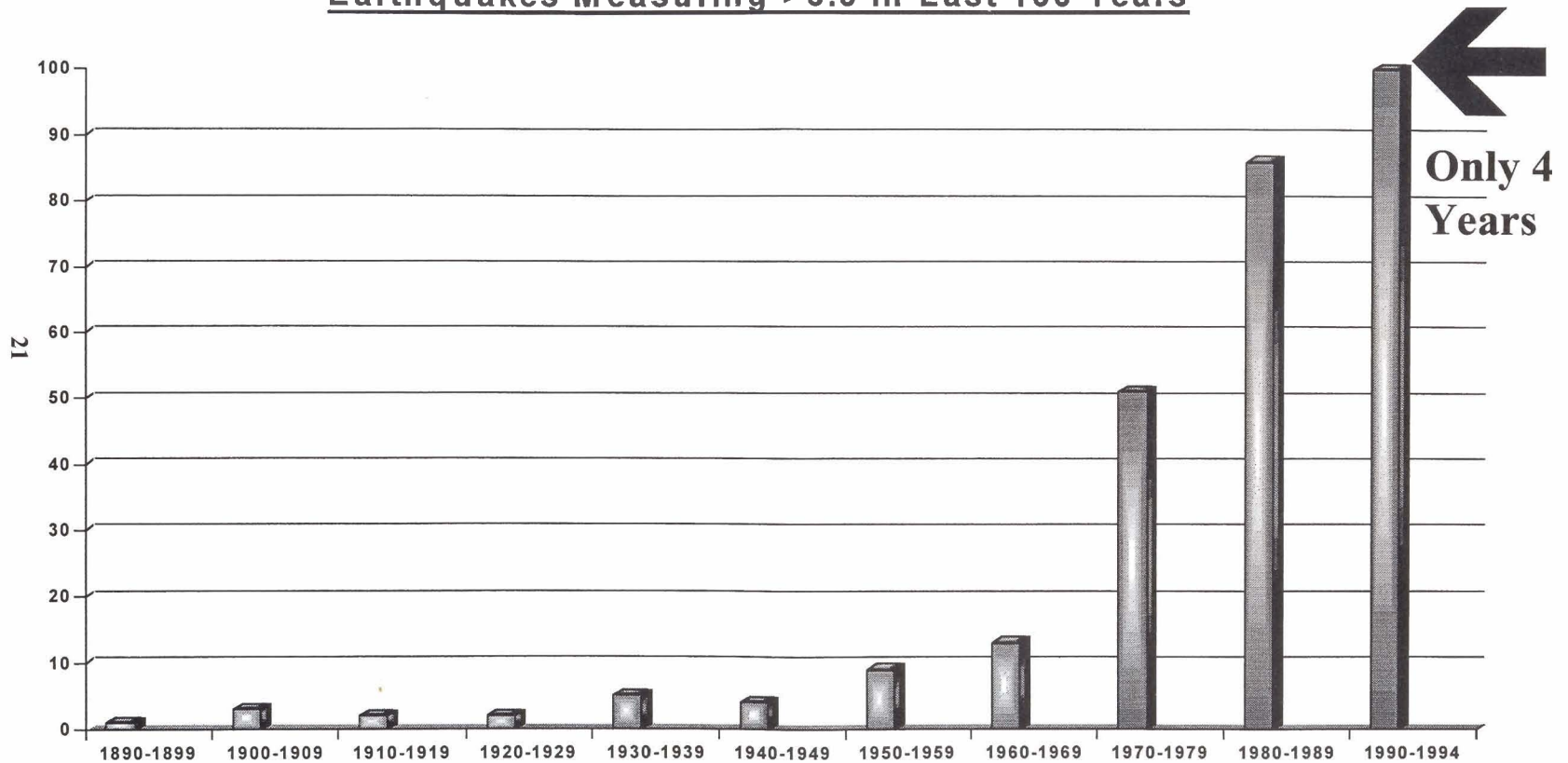
'aleph	teth	pe
beth	jodh	sadhe
gimel	kaph	quoph
daleth	lamedh	resh
he	mem	sin
waw	nun	shin
zayin	samekh	taw
heth	'ayin	



# Earthpangs!

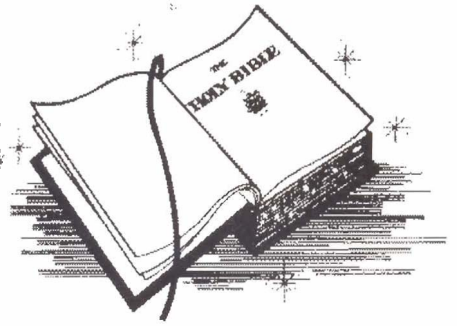
*"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" Matthew 24:7*

## Earthquakes Measuring >6.0 in Last 100 Years



Data gained from US Geological Survey and the Seismic Safety Commission as quoted in "The Signature of God" by Grant R. Jeffrey and Planet Earth - 2000 AD by Hal Lindsay.

# Expand Your Bible:



## Peter Solves A Problem

The story in this issue is taken from the book of Acts 10 – Acts 11:1-21

Peter the apostle was in quite a quandary. What did this vision mean?

Peter was staying at Joppa, with a man called Simon, who was a tanner. One day, about noon, as he waited for lunch, he went up onto the flat top roof to spend time in prayer and meditation.

As he looked into the sky he thought he saw something strange coming down from heaven. It appeared to Peter to be like a great sheet let down by the four cor-

ners to the earth. As he looked more closely he noticed that the sheet was full of animals, birds and reptiles – all sorts mixed together and, from what he could see, all the animals were unclean. While looking

at these animals he heard a voice saying, “Rise, Peter, kill and eat.”

Peter couldn’t believe the command – all the animals were unclean according to God’s laws as given through Moses. He had never eaten anything unclean in his life.

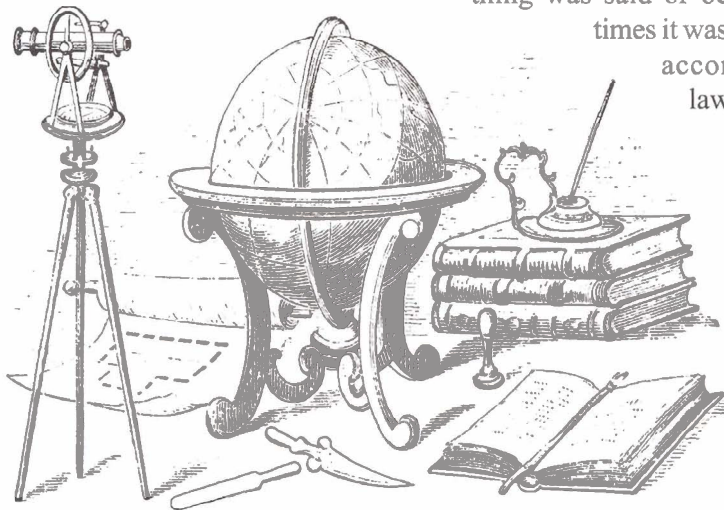
Again the voice spoke, “What God has cleansed do not call common or unclean”.

Three times this happened and if a thing was said or occurred three times it was true and sure according to the law.

Peter puzzled over this happening. What did God mean for him to do – what was the message? He knew it didn’t refer to the

actual eating, for Jesus had told them the Mosaic law, including the laws of eating, had not been done away with. What was the explanation of the vision?

While he wondered about this he



***“That the world may know”***  
**- the Gospel is for all**

heard a loud knocking at the gate of the house and someone demanding in a loud voice, "Does Simon Peter live here?"

When Peter went to the gate he found three men outside who told him they had come all the way from Caesarea from Cornelius, a famous Roman centurion, with a message to come and visit him. This again puzzled Peter. Why would a centurion wish to see him? Nevertheless Peter felt compelled to go to him, and so set out for Cornelius' home with the messengers.

Arriving at Cornelius' house Peter was surprised to see a great crowd of people waiting for him, and even more so when Cornelius fell on his knees to worship him.

"Stand up," said Peter, "for I too am a man."

By now, Peter was beginning to understand what the vision meant. Here was he, a Jew, associating with Romans – people from another nation – and an enemy at that – something which he had been brought up to believe was unlawful and that such a meeting could defile a Jew.

"Why then," he asked Cornelius, "did you send for me?" Cornelius explained that four days earlier in the afternoon while he was praying, a man in shining clothes had appeared before him and told him to send to Joppa to the house of one, Simon, a tanner, who lived by the seaside and find Simon Peter and *'ask him to go to Cornelius' home'*.

To Peter this was a great lesson. Up to this moment he had believed that the

Kingdom of Heaven was only for the Israel, but now he realised God is impartial and that anyone who loves Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.


The 'works' that Peter had done all his life were not necessary to start his Christian life, but rather acceptance of Jesus as God's Son was. This was the bottom rung of the ladder – the fundamental step which started the climb up the ladder to redemption.

Many questions were asked of Peter, and the people listened spellbound as he talked of his association with Jesus.

Then another unbelievable thing happened. As Peter explained "that through His(Jesus) name, whoever believeth on him shall have remission of sins", the Holy Ghost shone on them which heard the word, just as it had on the apostles at the original Christian Pentecost.

"How could this be?" thought Peter, "Uncircumcised Gentiles receiving the outpouring of the Spirit."

To Peter the situation became clearer still. It was the acceptance of Jesus as the Saviour, the Son of God, that brought salvation – not what you did. What you did was important and not to be neglected, but 'works' were not the fundamental step, but rather something which grew out of the basic faith of acceptance of the Jesus as the Saviour.

Peter certainly had to rethink many ideas. Not the least of these was that "*then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*" 



# Songs of Israel

Now shall the joyful songs  
As sung at Jesu's birth,  
Which sounded from the angels' tongues,  
Be verified on earth.

For by that heav'nly child  
Which Bethl'hem brought to birth,  
Shall God with man be reconcil'd,  
And reign o'er all the earth.

And then shall all on earth  
Their Maker glorify,  
As angels did at Jesu's birth  
When standing in the sky.

And peace, and love, and joy,  
In ev'ry place be found,  
And purest will, each heart employ,  
To earth's remotest bound.

For this all-glorious day,  
These sweet and heav'nly things,  
The souls beneath the altar pray,  
Till time the moment brings.

And those alive do join  
To make the same request,  
And heav'n and earth in pray'r combine,  
Nor from it will they rest,

Until Christ come again  
In all His glorious pow'r,  
And o'er the earth extend his reign,  
And rule for evermore.

And change and make His Bride  
In body like His own;  
And also seat her by His side  
Upon His glorious throne.

John Wroe

# Vegetarian Recipes

This issue we have two recipes that possibly date back to the Bible days - taste how your ancestors ate!

## **Seraphim Pudding**

1½ cups breadcrumbs	½ tspoon coriander, ground
1 cup milk	¼ tspoon cloves, ground
2 eggs	½ cup shredded walnuts
2 tblspoons butter	½ cup raisins
½ cup sugar	2 cups peeled and chopped apples
1 tspoon vanilla	pinch of salt
1½ tspoons grated lemon rind	

Bring the breadcrumbs and milk to a boil, stirring to prevent scorching. Let cool. Separate egg yolks from whites and set whites aside. Add yolks, butter, sugar, vanilla, lemon rind, coriander and cloves. Beat well. Add the walnuts and raisins. Stir apples in. Beat egg whites and salt until stiff and fold in. Bake in greased dish at 375 deg F for about 35 minutes. Serve warm with cream. Serves 6.

## **Cleopatra's Kisses**

This is a time-honoured recipe from Egypt that is very simple to make. It has just the right amount of sweetness without cloying your taste.

6 slices white bread, crumbed  
1 cup honey  
1 cup sugar  
½ cup butter

Heat honey, sugar and butter in a skillet until melted. Add bread crumbs and cook over low heat, stirring gently for 10 minutes. Drop by teaspoonful onto baking tray. Sprinkle with nuts if desired.

The recipes in this issue were taken from a fascinating and practical recipe book called **"Cookbook of Foods from Bible Days"** by Jean and Frank McKibbin, Whitaker House, 1971.

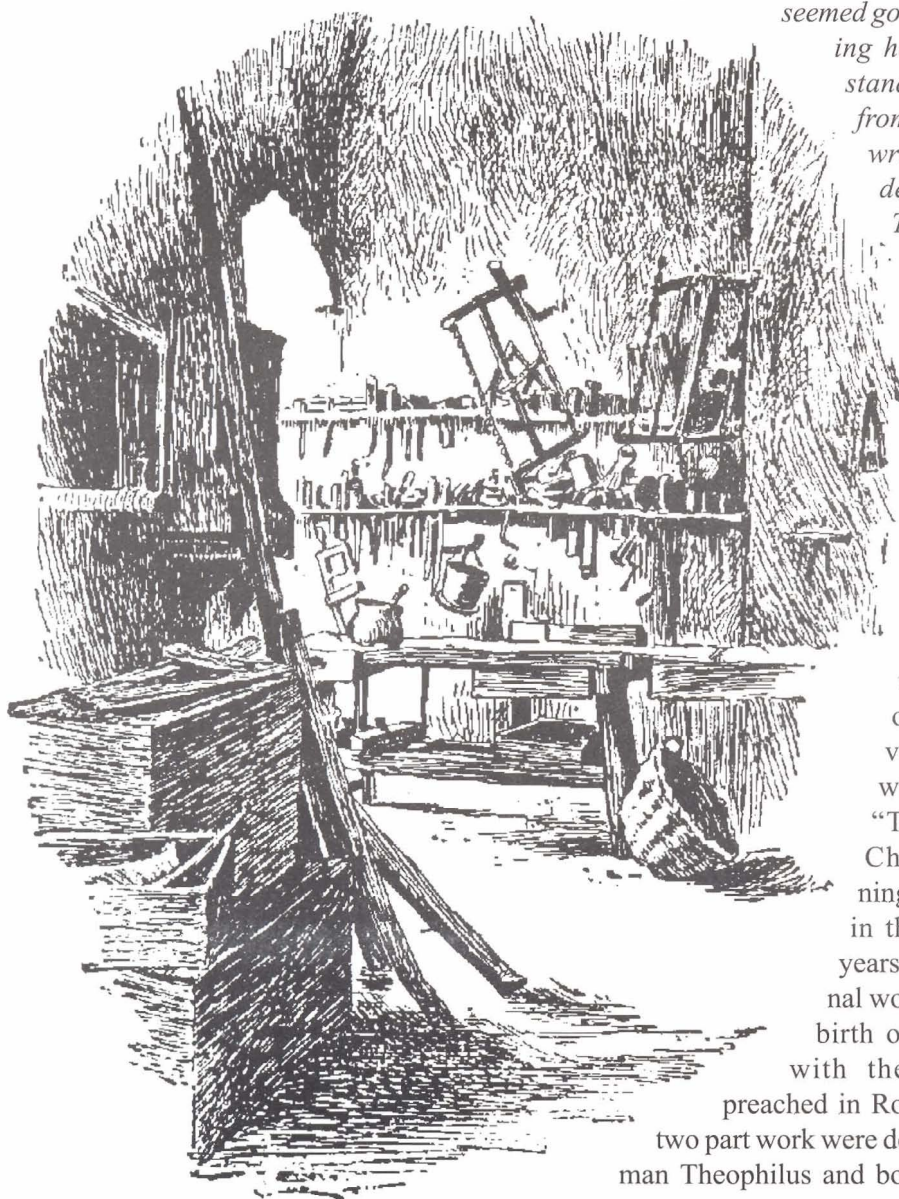
# Luke the Beloved Physician

Luke was a disciple of Jesus Christ, who was also an educated man – his occupation was that

of a physician, historian, theologian and evangelist. Luke states his purpose concisely and emphatically in Luke 1:4, “It

*seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed”.*

Luke is credited with the writing of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles – which was originally one two volume/part work which was called “The History of Christian Beginnings”. The division in the works coming years later. The original work begins with the birth of Jesus and ends with the Gospel being preached in Rome. Both of this two part work were dedicated to the Roman Theophilus and both are written for



the same purpose. The Roman Emperor, Tertullian, called the work "The Memorandum of Luke" and the Muratorian Canon referred to it as "The Acts of the Apostles" around the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century.

As far as dating the Gospel of Luke, this has led to much debate. There are three major arguments:

1. AD 151-130 generally discredited – based upon a German theologians view to play down the Peter versus Paul factions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
2. AD 80-95 based on the theory that Luke must have been written after AD 70 – ie. After the Fall of Jerusalem and thus Acts some time after this.
3. Pre AD 70

Paul was probably executed in AD 64 or 65 and this could explain the abrupt end to some degree. The two volumes may have been finished as early as AD 62. Of special note is that Luke was apparently ignorant of the Pauline letters; Luke's portrayal of Judaism as a legal religion which might have changed after AD 66; Luke's omission of Neroian persecution; and, the vivid detail given in the shipwreck passage (Acts 27:1-28:16) suggests it as being a recent experience.

Very few references are made to the disciple Luke in the Bible, he may also have been the Lucius mentioned in Romans 16:21 and Acts 13:1. If so this would give him a kinship with the apostle Paul.

*"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry"* 2 Timothy 4:11.

*"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you"* Colossians 4:14.

From the text we can see that Luke was a companion and fellow-worker (Philemon 24) with Paul. It is generally believed that Luke was a Gentile who was

born in Antioch in Syria. He was unmarried and thus had no children and is said to have died at the age of 84 in Boeotia. Luke was not an eye witness to the work of Jesus Christ, but tells us that he writes in accordance with information he received from those who were eyewitnesses and followers. His association with Paul and Mark in particular would have given him many of the details (Mark was a companion to Peter and the author of Mark's gospel said to have been written by Mark from the mouth of Peter). We also know that Luke, travelling broadly with Paul, would have encountered many other of the disciples and eyewitnesses of the events of Jesus' life. Thus Luke's sources were exemplary. The latter writings (the book of Acts) was generally written from his own eyewitness accounts of the events he describes, thus Luke is regarded as extremely reliable as a historian.

Luke is not simply a biographer. His chief concern is to get at the truth of what happened in Palestine in the critical years of Jesus' lifetime. His gospel shows Jesus as the Saviour of ALL men. He allows his readers to see Jesus the Man and his selection of stories reflects his own humanitarianism (hence his occupation of healing). In the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke conducts his readers on a whirlwind theological tour over 3 decades of Church History. He visits Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, Cyprus and many other places in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and finally Rome. He records everything from preaching and miracles to jailbreaks and ship wrecks. Throughout the work the reader has many companions, but chiefly Peter and Paul, who were each assigned an especial commission. Thus Luke wrote with apostolic authority, having known and accompanied many of the apostles in


their travels.

Luke was a companion to Paul during many of Paul's confinements and struggles. He would have seen firsthand the enormous drive behind the man, and the power of the Spirit to overcome adversity to spread the Word. The marvels Luke witnessed have all been recorded with the accuracy and historicity one would expect from a man of learning such as Luke was. Many surmise that Luke was Paul's companion as Paul's physician (due to the fact that Paul is said to have suffered from poor health) or perhaps as his 'record keeper'.

Luke was also with Paul just prior to Paul's martyrdom.

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is made up of 28 chapters but it is widely acknowledged that the final chapter of Acts is not a conclusion. Scholars have maintained for centuries that there must be another chapter or more to this book. As Christian historians know, the Christian church had a major division in the early centuries of Christianity, literally between the east and the west. The Church in the west had its capital as Rome and the church in the East had its capital in Constantinople. Rather than go into the intricate details of this division now, suffice it to say that the Church in the East became known as the Orthodox Christian Church and the

Church in the West as the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope at Rome as its head. In the archives of the ancient church at Constantinople (whose beliefs date back continuously as long as western Christendom does) was found a complete two volume/part work by the disciple Luke (a copy of the very early manuscript as written by Luke before its division) with one major difference – the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the work (now known as the Book of the Acts of the Apostles) contained 29 chapters, not 28 as western Christians' Bibles have. This 29<sup>th</sup> chapter detailed Paul's visit to Spain (which you will recall he had planned and intended to do) and also his trip to the island of Britain. Copies of this chapter are available, but sometimes difficult to get. Critics have studied the manuscript and state that the style and manner of writing is Lucan, even the flow continues smoothly from chapter 28 to 29. There is very little against chapter 29 being what it is – the Lost Chapter of the Book of Acts that has been looked for for centuries.

Traditionally it is stated that Luke died at the age of 84, unmarried and was buried at Achaia. In the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of the emperor Constantine, Constantine removed the remains of both Luke and the apostle Andrew from their resting place and reburied them at Constantinople. 

### **Bibliography**

The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel of Luke, Norval Geldenhuys, 1951, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Eusebius

The Book of Saints

King James Version Bible

If you will be visiting one of these areas over the next few months or would like to contact our group, please feel free to attend one of the following meetings at the church addresses shown. All are welcome.

- Melbourne** Regular service held each Sunday afternoon at 2:30pm.  
**Singleton** Regular discussions each week with the exception of the first Sunday of the month when there is a service at 7.15pm.  
**Terrigal** Special services and studies as advertised. Sunday morning discussion groups held at 11.15am when possible.  
**Sydney** Services/discussions every second Sunday at 6:30pm. Please call to confirm Meeting Sundays.

For further information please ring or write to one of the following contacts:

### **AUSTRALIA**

#### **Melbourne**

Church: 193 Fitzroy Street,  
**Fitzroy, Victoria. 3065**  
Ph: 03 9416 0807  
Write: 193 Fitzroy Street,  
**Fitzroy, Victoria. 3065**

#### **Terrigal**

Church: Cnr Terrigal Drive & Serpentine Rd,  
**Terrigal, NSW. 2260**  
Write: Lot 5, Bembooka Road,  
**Greenpoint. NSW. 2251**  
02 4365 1974

#### **Singleton**

Church: Cnr Bishopgate Street and  
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**Singleton. NSW. 2330**  
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#### **Windsor**

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#### **Sydney**

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**email:** [rgray@cichurch.asn.au](mailto:rgray@cichurch.asn.au)

Jesus said:  
*"If a man keep my saying, he shall  
never see death" John 8:51.*



It's True!