

College News

The Graduate course was again well attended with 16 students attending the Homiletics week-long course in August and then the eschatology course the second week.

2015 will likely be the last of the lectures in Pacific Bible Institute. Government regulations and costs have required the board to complete the existing graduate course this year. We are looking to the Lord to see what might be the future in 2016. It is the editor's constant desire to see pastors and preachers equipped in doctrine, preaching, teaching and pastoring. Many students have testified of the impact upon them in the courses attended. It is hoped the material and resources will be used by the pastors and students in several churches around Australia and overseas.

Praise/Prayer Points

- Praise the Lord for the college courses recently conducted. Please pray for the students who attended, that they will take the material presented and use it in preaching and teaching in their local churches.
- Pray for the people who will listen to the sermon and article Terry has distributed on the issue of 'Same-Sex Marriage'. Pray that hearts will be convicted of what scripture says on this issue. Pray for the media and unsaved people Terry is in conversation with.
- Pray for a growing young peoples group developing within Hervey Bay Bible Church. A husband and wife team have now been appointed to help lead and pastor this group.

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Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,
teaching, informing and equipping the church.
Editor: Terry Arnold (D.Th; MABS; Dip.Bib.&Min.)

The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments or items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

Articles in this newsletter may be copied or reproduced provided it is in context and proper credit and references are given. We encourage distribution of this newsletter that others might be *taught, informed and equipped*.

This Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donation to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Correction

In the last newsletter (July/Aug) in the article '*Same Sex Marriage*' (P.9) we wrote: '*In machinery you cannot join a 'male' hose to a 'female' hose*'. This should have read: '*In machinery you cannot join a 'male' hose to a 'male' hose (or 'female' to 'female')*'.

We apologise for this error. If any readers need a revised newsletter or a revised article please contact us.



The Blood Moons Have Come and Gone - The Apparent Mystery of the Shemitah has been Revealed - What Happened?

The Blood Moon lunar eclipse in Jerusalem, Sept.28, 2015

There is much wisdom in the old adage concerning Christian speculation - 'If it's new it is likely untrue?'

Christians around the globe are puzzled as to why the final in a 'tetrad' of blood red moons - the last one visible in Israel, and the end of the much heralded 'Shemitah' year came and went and nothing happened. Hundreds of articles have been written 'revealing' seemingly converging prophetic signs pointing to the last quarter of 2015, most notably during the Fall Feasts of Israel. The 'hidden' planet Nibiru on course for earth, a complete collapse of the global financial system, a global stock market plunge, a massive Californian earthquake, wars mentioned in Isaiah, Ezekiel and perhaps the Psalms. On and on it went.

A secular publication in October 2013 was first to link the word 'apocalypse' with the Blood Moons. In six months the news escalated, until publications were claiming that the authors personally believed the world might end.

Add to that mix the books authored by a Mark Biltz from U.S. based El Shaddai Ministries, and messianic Rabbi Jonathan Cahn. Biltz claimed to have discovered that the coming 'blood red moons' fell on Jewish feast dates, and Cahn that another Biblical 'Shemitah' year was to end in September - a year in which all debts were once cancelled in Israel, and from some estimates a Jubilee Year began. He claimed that in past Shemitah years world economics and conditions had taken a sharp slide for the worse. Both these men raked in squillions of dollars from multi-million book sales. Vast numbers of readers became swept up in the hysteria - and derision was reserved for those who dared to urge that caution be taken.

Yet, the warning signs were there in abundance. The Fall Feasts of Israel are held to the lunar calendar - it therefore follows that the red moons would also be appearing during that time. A series of blood red moons, or tetrads have occurred before. Biltz claims that they have fallen on past feasts during climactic Middle Eastern events, such as Israel's War of Independence in 1949 and the 1967 Six Day War.

In 1949 the Passover Blood Moon rose on April 13 yet The final Armistice Agreement of Israel's War of Independence was not signed until July 20. There was also a Passover Blood Moon on April 24, 1967. The Six Day War, which reunited the divided city of Jerusalem, did not start until more than a month later, on June 5, 1967.

The final Blood Moon of the 2014-2015 tetrad and the end of the Shemitah year came and went without incident.

Rabbi Cahn openly admitted to be revealing something missed by theologians

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Dear Terry & Beth, we have had the rich blessing of your newsletter for many years (lost count). A piece in the July/August issue was particularly helpful to me, namely; 'If I am to contend for the doctrines of the sovereignty of God, then I had better make sure I don't worry and be anxious, as that is not trusting in the 'sovereignty of God'. What a great comfort this has been, to think in this mindset. God's timing is perfect.

With God's sovereignty in my thoughts I have excitedly started to read Arthur W. Pink's book titled 'The Sovereignty of God'. Such a treat to find an author I'd not discovered before, and new at that. (Compared to my current reading list - Richard Baxter, Ralph Robinson, J.C Ryle, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, Robert McCheyne.)

Thanks again for another great newsletter. It's all gone now, (so sad, have to wait till November now for more). 'But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Thess.2:13,14).

(K.L, Bris.)

Same Sex marriage Quote

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that men and women are anatomically, biologically, physiologically, psychologically, hormonally, and neurologically different from each other. These unique differences provide lifelong benefits to children that cannot be duplicated by same-gender 'legal' parents acting out different gender roles or attempting to substitute for the missing male or female role model in the home.

('A Warning from Canada: Same-Sex Marriage Erodes Fundamental Rights' by Dawn Stefanowicz; April 24th, 2015 The Witherspoon Institute Public Discourse)

Sermon on Same-Sex Marriage

Terry Arnold has delivered a 'one-off' publicised sermon on 'Marriage and Same Sex Marriage' in an effort to equip Christians with concise answers to the common arguments for 'same sex marriage'.

We urge readers to distribute this sermon and provide it to pastors who might use the information where necessary. This sermon is offered free of charge (suggested donation for postage). Contact this ministry.

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Salvation Army and 'Same Sex Marriage'

Hi Terry, Thanks for the recent 'Diakrisis' newsletter [Sept/Oct].

Below is a media release that the Salvation Army Eastern Territory has released on the matter of same-sex marriage [privately to officers only]. It basically says, Wait, let's see, we're not really sure, we must remain popular with the community (or lose money)...

Keep hanging in there and keep doing what you are called to do.

(N.R., Sth. Aust)

Media release - Salvation Army (excerpts only):

'...The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church and as such holds, along with the majority of other mainstream Christian churches, to the traditional view of marriage, being a sacred and voluntary union ordained by God between one man and one woman...

...The Salvation Army respects the right of all individuals to hold an opinion...on this topic. Among our own people...there are differing views on this issue...The Salvation Army would like to reiterate its unwavering commitment to its mission statement, that being, to meet human needs in the name of Jesus Christ and to do this without discrimination.

The Salvation Army is aware that over time society has developed a greater understanding of same sex attraction...The Salvation Army believes LGBTIQ identifying people should be afforded the same respect and courtesy as all other people in society...

...No person is excluded from worship, fellowship or service in The Salvation Army on the basis of sexuality or marital status;...No person is excluded from employment by The Salvation Army on the basis of sexuality...No person is excluded from volunteering with The Salvation Army on the basis of sexuality...'

Editor's comment:

I would question if the 'majority' of mainstream denominations hold to the 'traditional view of marriage'. Most are either for same sex marriage, fence sitting, or silent.

The 'mission statement' - to 'meet human needs in the name of Jesus Christ and...without discrimination' - Is this really the mission of preaching the Gospel to see people saved from their sins?

And this: 'Society has developed a greater understanding of same sex attraction'?...Really?...Greater than the unchanging God and His word?

down the running centuries. He wrote that he was expanding on a 'mystery' first revealed in a previous book 'The Harbinger' which claimed to '*hold the secret of America's future*'. Alarmingly he writes: '*I wasn't looking to write a book, nor was I seeking to come up with any message or revelation. It began without being sought after and then basically wrote itself. The Harbinger contains fourteen major revelations or mysteries. One of those is the Shemitah. I heard an inner voice say; 'There's a mystery here, you must seek and find it'. The Harbinger has taken on a life of its own. It has borne the marks of another's 'fingerprints'*'.

Surely this would be sufficient for any thinking Christian to shun his work? But no, multitudes purchased these writings which were endorsed by well known Evangelical ministries. Millions of gullible Christians who vigorously defended the prognostications of these men were left devastated, their faith weakened and surprised that the authors went to ground. Once more Christianity was open to scorn and derision. The secular media made a welter of it.

However, this in no way means nothing is happening on the geopolitical/prophetic stage. Far from it. The concern is that so many of God's precious people have now walked away disappointed and disillusioned with the study of Biblical prophecy to avoid further embarrassment and despair, preferring to ignore the subject and the signs of the times, let alone speak out on them.

The news out of the Middle East paints a chaotic, incendiary picture. Russia has now engaged Iran [Persia], Iraq and China in a coalition on Israel's northern border. A third Intifada is in the making within Israel, The Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount have become hotspots for violence and terror. The United Nations is screaming for a cessation of 'settlement' building and the flag of a fictitious 'Palestinian' state flutters above the building on New York's East River. That the world is teetering above an economic abyss becomes more evident by the hour. Each day now you can see the foundations being laid for the wars prophesied throughout scripture for the 'latter days'.

Just at the very time when Christians should be looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord so many are now shaking their heads in disbelief brought on by imbibing at the polluted well of so-called Christian luminaries who appear to be obtaining information from outside this realm?

This is simply confirmation of the statement from the lips of Christ Himself - that in the last days great deception would come, and many false prophets would arise and deceive - even the very elect if that were possible.

Nevertheless, it is hard to accept that so many once sound ministries rushed headlong into these deceptions dragging with them those that slavishly seek and believe each 'mystery' and 'revelation' supposedly found to be hiding in scripture. Yet another glaring 'signpost' showing just how close we are to our complete redemption.

Don't despair, or avert your gaze - our Saviour is coming for us - and sooner than many think?

Mike Claydon

'The Cross a Failure'? - Pope Francis

The Pope: *'The cross shows us a different way of measuring success. Ours is to plant the seeds. God sees to the fruits of our labors. And if at times our efforts and works seem to fail and not produce fruit, we need to remember that we are followers of Jesus Christ and his life, humanly speaking, ended in failure, the failure of the cross'...*[The sermon ended here!]

(Geoffrey Grider, Sept.25, 2015; Pope Francis, St. Patrick's Cathedral; <http://wp.me/p1kFP6-9kW>)

Editor's comment: It is because of Jesus on the cross as our mediator that our sins can be satisfied and judged in Jesus! This is salvation, not a 'failure'! Without this, Hell is our destination.

Bishop T.D. Jakes Compromises on Gay Issue



Megachurch leader and author T.D. Jakes [pictured] was asked by a viewer if he believes that homosexuals and the black church can co-exist. *'Absolutely...I think it is going to be diverse from church to church. Every church has a different opinion on the issue...to speak that the church - the black church, the white church or any kind of church you wanna call it - are all the same, is totally not true'...* 'LGBT's of different sorts have to find a place of worship that reflects your views and what you believe like anyone else'... 'The church should have the right to have its own convictions and values...find somebody who gets what you get about faith'...He said the issue of homosexuality is 'complex'...his position on homosexuality is both 'evolved and evolving'.

(Apostasy Alert, Aug.7, 2015)

Editor's comment: T. D. Jakes denies the essential Christian doctrine of the Trinity and has God playing three different roles or manifestations. This view is called 'Modalism' and it has always been heresy. His teaching is also full of psychology and theories, which is why TV productions such as 'Dr. Phil' have lauded his views.

Jakes says homosexuality is 'evolving'? This is one of the Pentecostal tenets - the word of God is progressive, evolving. (A similar sentiment was echoed by Hillsong leader, Brian Houston). But has God changed his mind about what He has written against homosexuality in both the Old and the New Testaments? Contrary to what Jakes says the church should be united in believing the scriptures on this issue! And why is the issue of homosexuality 'complex', when the Word of God is absolute on this?

Underlying this is disbelief in the Word of God as inerrant, inspired. *'He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'* (Jn.12:48).

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

1260 Days or Years?

Terry, I was given the following by SDA's:

'How long was the true church to remain out of sight in the wilderness? The prophecy declares it would be for 'a time times and half a time'...What is meant by this strange description of the time...When would it end? The answer is in Rev.12:6 'And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of god, that they should feed her as 'thousand two hundred and three score days'...One verse says the woman was in the wilderness for 1260 days and the other verse says for 'a time, times, and half a time'. These two periods are equal. This means a 'time' has a year in prophetic symbolism 'times' is two years, and 'half a time' is half a year? When we add up these we get 3.5 years? That is equal to 1260 days using the Bible reckoning of 30 days to the month. There is one more principle of prophetic interpretation to take into account. In symbolic Bible prophecy a day always stands for a year. You will find the key for that in Ezekial 4:6. It is written elsewhere....40 days each day for a year (Numbers 214:34 and Numbers 13:25). A day is versed for a year...

Terry how can they change the days to years? Could you please help me...

(R.M., Qld)

Reply by Mike Claydon*: The 'church' has not been assigned to any 'wilderness'. This is the 'Time of Jacob's Trouble'. It is true the different texts of '1260 days' (Rev.11:3; 12:6) and 'a time, times, and half a time' (Dan.7:25; 12:7,14) are equal periods. But the idea that 'in Bible prophecy a day always stands for a year?' is false. The days shown in multiple Biblical texts stand for actual 24 hour days. Ezekial 4:6 and Numbers 14:34; 13:25 do not teach this as a 'prophetic rule'. The years by multiplication ('time, times and half a time') confirm they are years and then the days are given in actual '1260 days' to show the time as being 3 years and 6 months.

However, the whole premise of the question here is erroneous - *'the woman'* is not the 'church' but Israel! The 'woman' in Rev.12 is a 'sign' (vs.1) representing Israel. In Genesis 37 Joseph had a dream that the sun, moon and eleven stars would bow to him (vs.9). The twelve sons of that family were to become the twelve tribes of Israel. In Revelation passages themselves the identity of the child is revealed as Jesus Christ who rules *'with a rod of iron'* (Rev.2:27,19:15). Christ is born of the nation Israel (Heb.7:14). Israel is often characterised as a *'woman'* (Mic.4:9,10; Is.54:5, Jer.3:8,14; 4:31; 31:32) (also compare Gen.39:9 and Rev.12;1).

* Mike Claydon specialises in prophecy and is the editor of the free 'Apostasy Alert' and 'Israel Report' - contact: apostasyalert@hotmail.net.au or israelreport@hotmail.net.au

because it is an issue churches are grappling with and *people ask me to answer questions on this*. ‘Arminianism’ (not ‘Armenianism’ as you spell) is rampant in most churches. But this is not the faith once delivered and not the faith of most of the Reformers, evangelists, revivalists, Puritans and prominent leaders down the running centuries. (The very denomination you are in also derives its traditions from the Puritans *and had these ‘Calvinistic’ doctrines exactly*).

I do not brand people as either ‘Calvinist’ or ‘Arminian’. The issue is whether people are Biblical - whether they believe in sovereign election and predestination ‘*before the foundation of the world*’ and whether they accept God chooses man (Eph.1:4). These are all issues clear in scripture. (Read Eph.1 and see here the God who is *active and sovereign* in these things).

I enclose a study that may help you to see the Doctrines of Grace, not in the label of ‘Calvinism’ which I do not use, but in the truth of scripture alone. Let scripture be your guide, not any reaction against ‘anger’?

I respect your right to reject these doctrines. But I simply stand where almost all the great divines stood.

SDA and Days for Years

Terry, in Numbers 14:34 and Ez.4:6 there is days made into years. The Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) take this scripture and use it to be years for the book of Daniel and their eschatology.

(R.M., Qld)

Editor’s reply: The SDA eschatology is similar to their doctrines on the Sabbath - the logic is 1+1=3. Numbers 14:34 or Ezekiel 4:6 cannot be applied to a day to years interpretation in Daniel 8-9. Numbers 14:34 is referring to punishment on the Israelites for lack of faith over entering the promised land. God punished them for every day they refused to believe and decided on 40 years *so that generation would not enter in* (vs.32,33,35). This cannot be taken as a hermeneutic for other passages which each need to be exegeted first on their own.

But personally, I spend little time with SDA’s on this issue. Much more serious is their teaching on the deity of Jesus (as the archangel Michael), the teaching of keeping the Law for salvation, keeping the Jewish Sabbath *in the wrong covenant*, the acceptance of the false prophet Ellen G. White (their co-founder) with her false prophecies, false visions and plagiarisms, and the adding to the doctrine of the atonement with their ‘shut door’ atonement theory.

I would want to refute these first, many which *concern salvation*, before I got to their eschatology?

Pope Francis: ‘Be Transformed by the Eucharist’



Pope Francis said that the Eucharist is no mere symbol, but is in fact the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which has the ability to transform our hearts and minds to be more like him. ‘The Eucharist is Jesus who gives himself entirely to us. To nourish ourselves with him and abide in him through Holy Communion, if we do it with faith, transforms our life into a gift to God and to our brothers’, the Pope said, August 16. To let ourselves be nourished by the ‘Bread of Life’...means to be in tune with the heart of Christ, to assimilate his choices, thoughts, behaviours’. It also means that we enter into ‘a dynamism of sacrificial love and become persons of peace, forgiveness, reconciliation and sharing in solidarity’, he added.

Pope Francis...turned to the day’s Gospel reading from John Ch.6...‘whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day’...‘Knowing that he will die on the cross for us, Jesus identifies himself with that bread, broken and shared, and it becomes for him the sign of the sacrifice that awaits him...This process culminates in the Last Supper, when the bread and wine actually become Jesus’ Body and Blood, the Pope said...Communion...is assimilation: eating him, we become like him...’

He then prayed for Mary’s intercession in helping us to always be faithful to Jesus...

(Papal Mass, Aug.16th 2015; cited in *Apostasy Alert* 18th Aug.)

Editor’s comment: Roman Catholics are taught that the ‘Eucharist’ (communion bread) is miraculously changed into the *real* body of Christ by the words of a mediatorial priest. This ‘christ’ is then consumed or worshipped. This teaching was made doctrine in AD1215. Most Reformation English martyrs were tortured and burned by the Catholic religion for refusing to accept this invention. Yet it remains one of the central doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion. At every ‘Mass’ Jesus is ‘sacrificed again’ contrary to the ‘*once for all*’ sacrifice as stated in scripture (Heb.6:6; 9:26-28; 10:10). The Bible rather says ‘*do this in remembrance of me*’ (Lk.22:19).

‘*Eat my flesh and drink my blood*’ in John ch.6 is figurative. Vs.63 says ‘*The words I speak to you are spirit and life*’. Similar figurative language is: Jer.15:16 ‘*your words were found and I ate them*’; Ps.119:103 ‘*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth*’. Peter, in verse 68 of the same passage, concludes: ‘*...you have the Words of eternal life*’.

The context of the passage is about believing - vs.32-35 ‘*Jesus said...my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world...I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst*’.

The Evidence For the Jesus of Nazareth

Recently in a local newspaper after being involved in a debate on the issue of 'same sex marriage', the 'your say' columns invariably turned to attacks on Christianity. One of the writers made a statement that '*Jesus is...not mentioned in any history*'. This is not the first time I had come across such blatantly ignorant statements. Atheists also often say references to Jesus are only 'obscure'. Often these statements also include the idea that the books of the Bible were put together by biased men and are not accurate.

Evidence from the New Testament itself

There is overwhelming evidence as to the accuracy of the New Testament even in the copying process with the vast number of manuscripts and fragments of the originals. Copies of the Bible dating to the 14th century A.D. are nearly identical in content to copies from the 3rd century A.D. There is no major doctrine of the Bible that is questionable as a result of the minor differences that exist between the majority of manuscripts used for nearly 1,800 years. Textually only 1 part in 1,000 passages in the Bible has any textual 'variation' in the copies. Almost 99% of the copies of the texts are the same. There are as many as 5,700 manuscripts and plenty enough to ensure that the Bible is consistent and accurate. *This quantity, quality and preservation is not found in any other secular works.* The copying errors are actually astonishingly minor, being mostly found in numbers, spelling and some punctuation. Most scholars agree that the 'variant readings' in the New Testament manuscripts do not affect the faith and practise of the Christian faith. We have every assurance and evidence that a good translation is a faithful rendition of the original manuscripts.

Archaeology has also more than once proved Bible 'critics' wrong. It has consistently supported the history recorded in Scripture.

Added to this, *history well attests to the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth who was crucified by Pontus Pilate.* This article examines a small portion of that evidence and tests the statement: '*Jesus is...not mentioned in any history*'.

Evidence from Tacitus

The historian Edwin Yamauchi speaks of '*probably the most important reference to Jesus outside the New Testament*' when reporting on Emperor Nero's decision to blame the Christians for the fire that had destroyed Rome in AD 64. (1) Roman historian Tacitus is quoted: '*Nero fastened the guilt...on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians...Christus, from whom the*

Continued next page >

(1) Edwin Yamauchi, quoted in Lee Strobel, '*The Case for Christ*' (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), P.82.

ignorance of the history of the Doctrines of Grace and confusion between terms such as 'Calvinism' and 'hyper-Calvinism' (not '*ultra-Calvinism*' as you use the term which we have never used). *Before that one article this year I could not find any article on any 'Calvinism' issue since mid 2013!*

We most certainly do not '*attempt to convince of the wonders of Calvinism*' as you say, for I do not even like it or use the term for myself! I simply do not use or accept the terms 'TULIP' or 'Calvinism'. We have gone to great lengths to express this in our articles and our book '*Calvinism and Arminianism - Out of the Maze*'. 'Calvinism' today is a 'nickname' that does not represent what I see in Scripture. 'TULIP' was not invented till the 20th Century and 'Calvinism' is not a term I use for what I believe in the 'Doctrines of Grace'. As for 'Hyper-Calvinism' - it is dangerous and a threat to evangelism and far removed from the Doctrines of Grace.

Any '*anger*' you mention concerning any '*ism*' or doctrine, whether it be true or not, is not of God. But *I have seen people sound in doctrine get angry.* Anger or no anger does not prove sound or false doctrine. Actually, I find Arminians often have got angry when I have shown them scriptures which show clearly that nothing in unsaved man can save, including their 'free will' and that they are in fact inherently sinful, depraved and unable to discern spiritual things at all. Spurgeon wrote of the anger that can arise in men who think they can have something to do with their election.

If you are reacting to the anger and not testing for truth then you will be deceived yourself. Do you want to be 'confronted' with truth regardless of whether it is anger or perceived anger? Should we be easily offended by people who have a different view?

In fact let me give you an example of 'anger' sent to me from an Independent Baptist pastor against myself and our book:

'Terry, [re: the book '*Calvinism and Arminianism - Out of the Maze*'] - '*I have copied what I have said and my father has said. [His Fathers comments]: I found the book to be interesting but tainted by a bias of something smouldering like 'hatred'...The same murderous tendency of early Calvinists who 'gracefully' executed Christian believers whose opinions varied from their own...In my admittedly limited experience, I have not found many Calvinists without an arrogance and anger ...'biblical Calvinists' full of grace and truth are rare...I think Terry has...taken it into a vendetta...We are to defend the faith but not have a spirit of murder towards Christians, who are so obviously ill informed, compared to us who have ALL the truth!...*'

If, as this pastor above, you disagree with the Doctrines of Grace, I would gladly like to see where we are in error. The Doctrines of Grace I have believed for decades, including when I was with you also in person several years ago. (Many of the people in your church you speak of had also held to these beliefs for many years). The only reason this issue may have featured more prominently to you in the more recent newsletters is

fulfilled in Acts 28:3-6. The only sign not mentioned as fulfilled was the 'drinking of poison' (vs.18). But again, if this text is exegeted carefully one will see the phrase '*and if*' is a *hypothetical concessional clause*.

The church fathers were unanimous in thinking these signs waned and ceased. Some groups have tried to bring them back without understanding the *purpose* of them and the fulfilment of them in Scripture and history.

The signs and wonders movement has done enormous damage to the content of, and the delivery of, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It has produced in many cases, '*another Jesus...another gospel...another spirit*' (2Cor.11:4).

Interestingly, most Christians who cite this passage for doctrines of healing, ignore the snake handling? Why have one and exclude the others? Yet some in a deadly exercise do focus on the snake handling and each year they are simply dying of snake bites! ...And Christianity is mocked.

We now have a closed canon of Scripture. We are warned that the signs and wonders in the end time will be 'lying', false - counterfeit (Matt.12:39;24:24; Mk.13:22; 2Thess.2:9; Rev.13:13)...and in this case of snake handling, they are deadly.

Anger or Truth?

Terry, I used to welcome your newsletter, but during the last year or so I have noticed that most of it was taken up attempting to convince us of the wonders of Calvinism. You wrote of Calvinism vs. Ultra Calvinism. My experience with any doctrine is that if it can become 'ultra' this or that, then it should be tossed out. If in doubt...toss it out!

Our church became infected with Calvinism about 2 years ago...they were challenged about their teaching...They became angry, branded us as 'Armenians' and left the church...If they were so absolutely right (as they claimed to be) why did they get so angry? Therefore I do not wish to get confronted with Calvinism ever again, or for that matter, any other 'ism'!

So I wish to be taken off your mailing list please. Just because I am not a Calvinist, I get branded as an Armenian. It is like saying I am 'heterosexual' because I am not a 'homosexual'! I consider both these statements are offensive.

(From Sth Australia. Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Editor's Reply:

Thankyou for your letter...I will take you off the mailing list. I would like to ask you to consider some comments below:

We have only done *one* article this year that addressed any 'Calvinism' issue and that was to expose the misrepresentation of, and the confusion of such in the *Herald of Hope (HofH)* magazine. I make no apology for that *one* article and the strong rebuttals of *HofH* authors who showed unscholarly

name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of...Pontius Pilatus...' (2) The word 'Christus' is Latin for Christ. Note that the '*extreme penalty*' here was Roman execution and this is also mentioned with '*Pontus Pilate*' and the reign of '*Tiberius*', exactly as the New Testament states (Lk.3:1).

Evidence from Pliny the Younger

In letters to the Roman Emperor Trajan (a Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor), Pliny the Younger writes in AD112 asking advice as to how to proceed against those accused of being 'Christian'. It appears he was inundated with people accused of such. (3) Pliny states: '*They [Christians] were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to do wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food - but food of an ordinary and innocent kind*'. (4) The fixed day of worship was historically the 'first day of the week' (Sunday or '*resurrection Sunday*'). The letter shows the worship was directed to '*Christ*' as a divine being ('*as to a god*'). The food of an '*innocent kind*' may well refer to their 'love feast' or perhaps eating not in a riotous fashion as did the heathen.

Evidence from Josephus

Josephus was a first century Jewish historian. In two of his writings he mentions Jesus. One described the trial of James by the Jewish Sanhedrin. Josephus calls James '*the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ*'. (5) This agrees with the New Testament book of Galatians where he is mentioned as '***the Lord's brother***' (Gal.1:19).

Another mention of Christ by Josephus says: '*About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had*

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((2) Tacitus, Annals 15.44, cited in Strobel, '*The Case for Christ*', P.82

(3) Pliny, Epistles x. 96, cited in Bruce, Christian Origins, 25; Habermas, The Historical Jesus, P.27,198.

(4) Pliny, Letters, transl. by William Melmoth, rev. by W.M.L. Hutchinson (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1935), vol. II, X:96, cited in Habermas, The Historical Jesus, 199.

(5) Josephus, Antiquities xx. 200, cited in Bruce, Christian Origins, 36.

foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared'. (6)

Evidence from the Babylonian Talmud

There are a few references to Jesus in the Babylonian Talmud, a collection of Jewish rabbinical writings compiled between AD 70-500. Between AD 70-200 the most significant reference to Jesus from this period states: 'On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald...cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy'. (7)

'Yeshu' (some say 'Yeshua') is how Jesus' name might be written in Hebrew. The phrase 'was hanged' here was a synonym for 'crucified'. This agrees with the New Testament usage of the word in Galatians 3:13 which declares Christ was 'hanged on a tree' and Luke 23:39 which applies the same term to the thieves on the cross with Christ. This quote from the Talmud also shows Jesus was killed 'on the eve of Passover'. The charge of 'sorcery' is well understood when one reads the charges laid against Christ by the Pharisees who accused Jesus of casting out Demons by the power of 'Beelzebul the ruler of the demons' (Matt.12:24). Jesus was obviously performing miracles which infuriated the Pharisees, who were eager to lay charges against him. The charge of 'apostasy' agrees with Luke's accounts in the Gospels and the book of Acts of the charge by the Jewish leaders.

Evidence from Lucian

Lucian of Samosata was a 2nd century Greek writer. In one of his works he wrote: 'The Christians....worship a man to this day - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account...[It] was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws'. (8)

The denying of the Greek gods, the worshipping of Jesus, and 'living after His laws' is clear from Luke's accounts of Paul's preaching in the book of Acts.

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(6) Josephus, Antiquities 18.63-64, cited in Yamauchi, 'Jesus Outside the New Testament', 212. (Based on the translation of Louis H. Feldman, The Loeb Classical Library.)

The above quote has been contested by some historians as having been added to or embellished, mainly on the grounds that a Jewish writer would not say such a thing. However, most agree the core of it concerning Jesus was attested to by Josephus.

(7) The Babylonian Talmud, translated by I. Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935), vol. III, Sanhedrin 43a, 281, cited in Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, P.203.

(8) Lucian, The Death of Peregrine, 11-13, in The Works of Lucian of Samosata, translated by H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), vol. 4., cited in Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 206.

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Mark 16 and the 'Signs'

Terry, in Mark 16, what is your interpretation of who Jesus is referring to in verses 16-18 when He says 'he', 'those' and 'they'?

C.B. (Tas)

Editor's reply: Jesus was speaking to the Apostles. Exegetically and grammatically the text is written to 'the eleven'. The words 'the eleven' and 'they' and 'them' all show this clearly. 'Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen (vs.14)...And these signs shall follow them...' (vs.17).

A large section of the modern church extends this passage to every believer *without reading vs.14*. The problem with faulty interpretation today is in 90% of cases the question 'who is this written to' is not asked. Yet this is one of the first steps in Hermeneutics of a text!

The antecedent of 'them' is 'the eleven' (vs.14). The antecedent of 'they' (vs.17 'they shall cast out demons') is likewise 'the eleven' apostles. (Pronouns agree with their antecedent in gender and number). There is no grammatical device by which these pronouns may be understood as reference to any persons except 'the eleven' apostles. The only way this could be changed to others than the 'eleven' is to change the singular pronouns in Mark 16:15-16 into plural pronouns, contrary to the Greek text. But you do not need Greek to see this. There is nothing difficult in this interpretation, since it is also basic English.

Some modern Bible versions pervert this text to make it refer to plural pronouns or to believers now. But the original text will not have this.

But there is more to this text that needs to be understood for today. The signs in Acts were predominantly for the Jews (1Cor.1:22). 'Signs' point to something. They were to prove Jesus was their Messiah, the One sent by God (Is.61:1; 35:5,6 cp. Lk.7:18-22; Jn.20:30,31; Acts 2:22; 2Cor.12:12). They were also 'signs of an apostle' (2Cor.12:12) and showed that the apostles were authenticated by God by these signs.

The passage states signs shall 'follow' (or 'accompany'). This word is referring to those apostles in their limited journeys, not for everyone for all time. The proof of this is also true in that faith filled Christians today *cannot perform these signs*.

The signs in Mark 16 were also fulfilled. The demonic deliverance and healings were fulfilled many times (eg. Acts 5:14-16); the 'Tongues' were fulfilled in Acts ch.2,10 and 19; and the handling of snakes was

understanding. They look upon you as children that must be forever kept in leading strings...Boldly examine the scriptures, and you will easily discover the absurdity of the teaching of your doctors...As for the comparison drawn from the plough, the leaven and the eye...is it necessary to justify these passages of scripture? Must I tell you what plough, what leaven, what eye is here meant? Is not our Lord's teaching distinguished by those expressions which under a popular form conceal a spiritual and profound meaning? Do not we know that in all languages and in all speeches, it is not on the image that we must fix our eyes, but on the thing which the image represents? Latimer then cast a piercing glance at the priest 'if we see a fox painted preaching in a friars hood, nobody imagines that a fox is meant, but that craft and hypocrisy are described, which are so often found disguised in that garb'. On these words the friar left in haste.

In 1528, Latimer was called before Catholic Cardinal Thomas Wolsey and was given a warning. However, increasingly Latimer was drawing crowds with his sermons. In 1535, he was appointed Bishop of Worcester but continued to preach the Reformed doctrines. In 1539, he opposed Henry VIII's Six Articles, with the result that he was forced to resign his bishopric and be imprisoned in the Tower of London. When King Henry's son (Edward VI) reigned, Latimer was restored to his ministry, as the English churches moved more in favour of the Reformation doctrines. Latimer also became the king's court preacher.

However, when Edward VI's sister Mary came to the throne, England fell into the grip of Roman Catholic power. Mary became known as 'Bloody Mary' because of the hundreds of Christian slaughtered and burned under her reign for refusing to accept the Roman doctrines.

Latimer was now imprisoned for his beliefs. In 1554 Catholic commissioners Bonner and Gardiner 'examined' Latimer and other Christian prisoners, Ridley and Cranmer. Latimer argued strongly that the doctrines of the 'Mass', Transubstantiation' (the change of the bread and wine into the *real* body of Jesus), and other doctrines of works for salvation were unbiblical. He stated that souls would be saved or damned by what they believed in these things. Latimer finally added, 'I thank God most heartily that He hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may in this case glorify God by that kind of death'.

On 16th October 1555 Latimer was burned at the stake with Nicholas Ridley outside Balliol College, Oxford. On that day they prayed together earnestly. They were then forced to listen to a Roman Catholic sermon. Ridley's last words were: 'Heavenly Father, I give thee most heartedly thanks that thou hast called me to a profession of thee even unto death...' Latimer is quoted as having said to Ridley: 'Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out'. As the flames licked his body Latimer cried out 'Father of heaven receive my soul'. The older Latimer died quickly but Ridley suffered long and painfully because of the executioners poor handling of the lighting of the fires.

Lest we forget.

Terry Arnold

Conclusion

The above is but a *small selection* of early *non Christian sources* where Jesus is mentioned in history century after century. There are also many Christian historic early sources which could also be brought to bear.

But will this information above convert anyone? No. It might act as an 'ice breaker' and create interest. In fact, *the New Testament itself is an accurate historic document that surpasses all these other historic records*. However, the idea that this Jesus Christ is some kind of invention or myth and that '*Jesus is...not mentioned in any history*' is demonstrably false in the light of the evidence shown. Truly the evidence of the New Testament, the Christian and non Christian historical records and archaeology - demands a verdict.

But then there are the prophecies in scripture which deserve another full article. Suffice to say, numerous prophecies have been fulfilled to the minutest detail and all written long before the events occurred. There are many Messianic prophecies: The Messiah born of a virgin (Is.7:13,14) and born in Bethlehem (Mic.5:2); He would be rejected by Jews (Is.53:3); be silent when accused (Is.53:7,8); would be buried with the rich (Is.53:9); betrayed by a friend (Ps.41:9); sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech.11:12); and would have His hands and feet pierced (Ps.22:16-18). Numerous prophecies concerning Jerusalem have and are being fulfilled exactly. Writers predicted Israel would become a great nation (Gen.12:1-3); would split into two groups of ten tribes and two tribes (1Kgs.11:31); would be taken captive in Babylon (Jer.25:11-14); and would reject and kill her Messiah (Is.53:3; Dan.9:26). The destruction of Tyre was foretold in Ezekiel 26. In Daniel chapter 2, four kingdoms are described in the interpretation of the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar (Dan.2:39-43). These four kingdoms came into being just as prophesied.

No other leader claimed or was claimed to be raised from the dead with hundreds of eyewitness accounts. No other religion teaches a gospel of grace through faith alone and not of works. No other religion claims a person can be fully justified by faith alone and not of any works. No other religion claims the righteousness of God imputed to the sinner when the sin of the sinner is imputed to Christ, and all by faith in the work of Jesus Christ alone.

But arguably the best of all the evidences of the existence of Jesus is *changed lives!* Millions of lives who were once 'dead in sin' and with rebellious hearts have been changed by the power of the Spirit of this same Jesus. This Jesus promised to regenerate the nature of the man who will believe in Him as the Christ and that God has punished his sins by substitution in Christ crucified. This is the Gospel of the One who historically was on earth but now sits on the throne of God.

Terry Arnold

Sections of this article adapted from <https://www.probe.org/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources-2/>

'Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever'?

There are verses in the Bible which have been used as mantras for certain movements and subjected to misuse. One of those verses is Hebrews 13:8 '*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever*'. This verse is often quoted by the Pentecostal/Charismatic teachers for non stop healings and miracles throughout history and for signs and wonders today.

When I was newly saved I was shown this scripture and believed the premise concerning healings and miracles without checking the context. Later when reading through the book of Hebrews I came across this verse *in context* and realised immediately it was not speaking of the sign gifts as being for today.

The context of the verse has to do with such things as faith, perseverance, Christian duties and sanctification. The 'faith' is described in the previous chapter 11. That faith is then shown in *deeds* in the following chapters. Miracles and healings are simply not the context! *The text does not state what Jesus is doing but who Jesus 'is' - in his person, his nature and character.* There are things Jesus did in the past which he is NOT *doing* now. For example, He does not offer up sacrifices now (Heb.7:27; 9:12,26; 10:10).

If the Pentecostal/Charismatic use of this verse for healings and miracles persist then lets apply the same logic to other things: At one time Jesus was not '*in the flesh*' (1Tim.3:16; 1Jn.4:2,3; 2Jn.1:7). But if Jesus is '*the same yesterday today and tomorrow*' then has he ever come in the flesh? The logic for the use of this verse for gifts of miracles and healings continuing today obviously breaks down under such logic. In these areas Jesus is obviously not '*the same yesterday today and tomorrow*' *in what he did*. It is his nature and character that is '*the same yesterday today and tomorrow*'. The book of Hebrews is about a 'better' covenant and based on the *person* of Jesus Christ which has not changed.

Albert Barnes says of this passage: '*This independent proposition here is, to encourage them to persevere by showing that their Savior was always the same; that he who had sustained his people in former times, was the same still, and would be the same forever. The argument...for perseverance is founded on the 'immutability' of the Redeemer. If he were fickle, vacillating, changing in his character and plans; if today he aids his people, and tomorrow will forsake them...there would be no encouragement to effort...Who would know what to expect tomorrow?...At the same time, also, that this passage furnishes the strongest argument for fidelity and perseverance, it is an irrefutable proof of the divinity of the Savior. It asserts immutability - sameness in the past, the present, and to all eternity but of whom can this be affirmed but God? It would not be possible to conceive of a declaration which would more strongly assert immutability than this*'.

Terry Arnold

(Excerpts taken from: <http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-hebrews-13-8.htm>)

Lest We Forget - Hugh Latimer

In my early Christian years I once read a book titled '*Such A Candle - The Story of Hugh Latimer*' by Douglas Wood. I was so moved by it emotionally that I purposed to read it again to understand better the history of the events. This book is one of the best history books I have read because it reads more like a gripping suspense story than an historical analysis of the times.

Bishop Hugh Latimer was perhaps the greatest preacher of the English Reformation. He spoke the truth as he discovered it from the pages of the Bible, and it cost him his life. I was fascinated to read the amazing history of political intrigue and the events of the time. It was a valuable insight into what it took to restore the Word of God to England.

Latimer was once a staunch Roman Catholic priest and opposed to an English version of the Bible before he was converted to Christ and his Word. As he began to dig into the Word, one by one the false doctrines began to fall. He led a holy and exemplary life and was responsible for exposing and reforming many evils in the Catholic religion. But for this he endured torture, deprivation, isolation and finally, along with others, he was burnt to death because of His stand for the Bible. But he lit a candle in England that was not to be put out.

Latimer was born in Thurstaston, Leicestershire. He attended Cambridge University and received a Master of Arts degree in 1514, was ordained a priest in 1515 and received a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1524. For his final degree his thesis was *a refutation of the Reformation then emerging from Europe*.

After listening to a Thomas Bilney he had a change of heart and accepted the Reformation doctrines. Latimer began to publicly declare the need for a translation of the Bible in English, despite a recent English Bible by William Tyndale being banned. At that time the Roman Catholic authorities did not believe the people should have the Bible in their own language and that this would lead to misinterpreting it and confusion. Hence they banned it or chained it up, even when it was still not available in the native tongue of the average person.

One Catholic priest, Bokenham, publicly refuted Latimer's desire for an English Bible. '*If that heresy should prevail there will be an end of everything useful among us. The ploughman, reading in the gospel that no man having put his hand to the plough should look back, would soon lay aside his labor. The baker, reading that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, will in future make us nothing but very insipid bread; and the simple man finding himself commanded to pluck out the right eye and cast it from thee, England, after a few years, will be a frightful spectacle; it will be little better than a nation of blind and one-eyed men, sadly begging their bread from door to door*'.

On the next Sunday Latimer said he would reply publicly. Bokenham sat in front of the preacher Latimer. Latimer took up the arguments against him one by one and then finally said '*This is how your skilful guides abuse your*