

# *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.  
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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.

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## Resource booklet

### 'The Battle For the Bible'

**The editor has written many articles and preached sermons on the *Inspiration, inerrancy and preservation* of scripture.**

**We have put together a concise summary tract/booklet detailing the main points on these topics. This booklet is free of charge and can be sent out with the next newsletter or by PDF, or donation for postage.**

## Editor's Comment

Has anyone noticed that pastors and church leaders often stumble and even sound confused when asked to give an answer on moral issues facing society and now the church? Has anyone noticed that church leaders and prominent pastors too often seem to be impaled on the fence of compromise when challenged on issues such as same-sex marriage, homosexuality or even abortion? When confronted by the media I have often seen leaders struggling to put forth the Christian viewpoint against a society that is rapidly shifting to increasingly subjective secular views on these issues.

On issues such as same-sex marriage, homosexuality and even abortion a common response seems such as this: '*Well, um...God loves everyone...he loves the homosexual..and er...God will be their judge not me...*' Pastor Joel Osteen, pastor of the biggest church in America, when asked about same-sex marriage and abortion, stated: '*You know...I don't go there...I have thoughts. I just, you know, I don't think that a same-sex marriage is the way God intended it to be. I don't think abortion is the best. I think there are other, you know, a better way to live your life. But I'm not going to condemn those people. I tell them all the time our church is open for everybody*'. Osteen went on to say he does not call people 'sinners'. (1) Likewise Brian Houston of Hillsong has refused to give an objective answer when asked by the media.

Surely, as ministers of God, pastors need to have clear and objective answers to such issues? They do not have to offer their opinions, but simply state what the Bible literally says and what the historical faith has taught for nearly 2,000 years...(until now?).

It seems to be that now many churches do not want to state what they really believe? Although many churches will have a 'mission statement' or a philosophical statement of 'values', many church websites now have no statement of faith at all. Often I am asked if a particular church is sound in doctrine before a person might attend. And equally as often I am unable to ascertain where that particular church stands on doctrine when there is simply no or little statement of faith. (The denomination of the Churches of Christ prides itself in having no statement of faith - '*no creeds but Christ*'). The reason given by some pastors for not having any statement of faith is that doctrine is not important and so people will not be offended or put off and that we be 'inclusive' of all doctrines.

The idea is to get a 'unity', but what occurs is a *union* rather than a true unity. There is no unity when people believe different things on important doctrines or practices within the church. Such 'unity' is nothing short of hypocrisy. This is in fact the trademark of the ecumenical movement. Just go

to the World Council of Churches (WCC) website and see the range of views tolerated on subjects like Baptism. There is a huge effort to cover and include all the views. It's simply a mess of pottage of varying beliefs. Is the Lord fooled by this apparent counterfeit 'unity'? Who are we kidding?

*True unity is in things believed.* John chapter 17 is often cited for an ecumenical 'unity'. Yet the unity referred to there is '***that they may be one as we are***' (vs.11). This is the unity of the Trinity! Can you imagine the Father, Son and Holy Spirit differing in doctrine on the sufficiency of scripture, baptism, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and issues like same-sex marriage, homosexuality and abortion? The problem with churches attempting to create a unity in a vacuum of doctrine is that sooner or later the varying beliefs come to roost and the pastor has an unholy mess on his hands trying to pacify differences.

Where are the men of faith, integrity and courage? Where are the men who will say what they really mean and mean what they say? Where are the leaders who will tell their flocks where the church stands on any divisive issue that comes up? Where are the men who will tell the media what the Bible objectively says?

Has anyone noticed that many pastors are not preaching the Gospel any more at events like funerals? I always thought that was the minister's job - to preach the Gospel at such public occasions? We will surely give an account for every idle word (Matt.12:36) and for not having done what we have been called to do? Perhaps some of us need a good dose of books like '*Why Our Reformers Were Burned*', '*Foxe's book of Martyrs*' and similar? In the Great Reformation there were men who did not shrink back in the face of death from testifying for the Lord and His Word. What would they think today of the many fence sitters, religious leaders and pastors who have no answers to offer for modern day moral issues that society is grappling with? Is not the church supposed to be 'salt' and 'light' to a dying generation? (Matt.5:13,14)

If real persecution ever comes to this country (Australia) and to other western nations, many Christians may well be ill equipped to take a stand. I personally believe most churches would empty if Christians were put under such pressure!

In all this it must be remembered that the truth must be spoken in a timely love. There is a *time* and a *place* and a *manner* to speak the truth in love. '***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear***' (1Pet.3:15).

**Terry Arnold**

(1) *Diakrisis* Sept/Oct/2013

## Graham Family Continues Onward To Rome

*At the August 15-17, 2014 'Three Rivers Festival of Hope' in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Franklin Graham...brought in Roman Catholic Bishop David Zubik to give the opening prayer...During the bishop's prayer, he acknowledged belief that Protestants and Roman Catholics are all part of the same church...*

*While we know that Graham's father, Billy Graham, allowed Roman Catholic counsellors at his own crusades (which set a precedent), and views Roman Catholicism as thoroughly Christian, it's a big jump to give a Catholic priest the platform at an evangelical event to lead in an ecumenical prayer...*



*...Bishop Zubik [opposite] said the festival dovetails with calls by recent popes to a 'new evangelisation'... 'We felt as long as there was a Roman Catholic component to this crusade, we wanted to be a part of it', Bishop Zubik said.*

*Those who respond to Rev. Graham's invitation to make a decision for Christ, and who identify as Roman Catholic, will be given the opportunity to go to Rome's Epiphany Church...for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or Confession... 'We're right next door', Bishop Zubik said.*



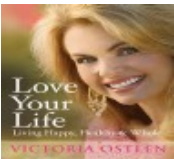
*One man [opposite] carrying a large statue of the Virgin Mary was halted at the entrance...But what is the point of keeping a statue of Mary out of the crusade but allowing a Roman Catholic bishop to give the opening prayer?...This Roman Catholic man stated that the way to truly know God or Jesus is through Mary and that she will actually even*

*usher in world peace and the second coming of Christ...*

*(Apostasy Alert, September, 2014)*

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## Victoria Osteen: Obey God For Yourself?



*A Video surfaced on August 28 of Victoria Osteen, wife of famed pastor Joel Osteen...In the clip, Mrs. Osteen implores the audience to 'realise that when we obey God, we're not doing it for God...we're doing it for ourselves'.*

*As her proud husband nods approvingly, Osteen continues. 'Do good for your own self. Do it because God wants you to be happy. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God, really - you're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?'*

**Editor's Comment: Can any Christian who knows their Bible say 'amen' to this? The scriptures that teach that we do NOT please ourselves are too numerous to mention (Rom.15:1-3; Jn.8:29...). Is not 'self' the very thing God saves us from? These are the pastors of the biggest church in the U.S. Joel Osteen does not preach sin in the Gospel but favours a prosperity gospel and is sympathetic to universalist ideas.**

## Pope Francis: Advised by an Angel?



*‘And when we do not want to listen to his advice, to listen to his voice, it’s like saying, ‘Go away!’ It is dangerous to chase away our travelling companion, because no man no woman can advise themselves. I can give advice to others, but not to myself. The angel advises me. This is why we need him.*

*This is not an imaginative doctrine on the angels: no, it is reality. It is what Jesus said, Ask yourself this question today: How is my relationship with my guardian angel? Do I listen to him? Do I say good morning to him in the morning? Do I ask him: Watch over me when I sleep? Do I speak with him?*

*Do I ask his advice? He is by my side. We can answer this question today, each of us: how is our relationship with this angel that the Lord has sent to watch over me and accompany me on my journey...’*

*(Apostasy Alert, Oct, 2014)*

**Editor’s comment:** This is in direct opposition to the clear teaching of the Bible. The Holy Spirit, and Him alone, is our ‘comforter’ and our ‘guide’. *‘Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come’ (Jn.16:13).* Yet the Pope says *‘God said: ‘I send an angel before you to guard you, to accompany you on your journey, so you will not go wrong’*. When did God ever say this? What book or what spirit does he get this from?

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## Shock Survey: Most Christian Men Regularly View Pornography

*‘A new survey from ‘Proven Men Ministries’ claims that 77% of Christian men between the ages of 18 and 30 look at pornography at least monthly. The study was conducted by Barna Group and sampled 388 self-identified Christian men. According to the study, 36% of men view pornography daily and another 32% admit to being addicted to pornography. For middle-aged Christian men, the survey found that 77% look at pornography while at work and 64% are looking at pornography at least monthly. Married men also reported that 55% look at pornography monthly and 35% of married men had an extramarital sexual affair.*

*‘These statistics knock the wind right out of you. They also confirm what we already know; that there definitely is a problem with pornography and affairs among Christian men and that they are starving for the church to step forward with solutions’, according to Joel Hesch, who sponsored the survey and is the founder of the biblically based Proven Men Ministries’.*

*(Religion Today, October 08, 2014; cited in Apostasy Alert)*

## The Insanity of Islam....

*A female fruit picker in Pakistan last week lost her appeal against a death sentence for 'blasphemy'. Asia Bibi had taken a drink of water from a well...but had inadvertently used a cup that was reserved for Muslim women.*

*...A Christian by law must not eat or drink from the same utensil, as food and water becomes instantly 'unclean'. Once her mistake was discovered she was beaten unconscious. When she came to, she is alleged to have uttered the words, 'Jesus Christ might have a different view of that law'. She was beaten again and the angry mob went to her house and beat her husband and children before reporting her to authorities for having committed blasphemy against the prophet Mohammed. Battered and bruised, Asia was then dragged before the local Imam who told her the only way she could redeem herself was to convert to Islam. 'Otherwise', he said, 'you will face death'.*



*A lone supporter of Asia, Pakistani Minister of Minority (Christian) Affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti [pictured with Asia's family], was later murdered.*

*In November of 2010 Asia was sentenced to death by hanging in a Sharia law court...She has been kept in jail under the worst conditions imaginable for four years. Under...Shariah Law, Pakistan carries an automatic death penalty for 'blasphemy'...Judges have been attacked for acquitting defendants of 'blasphemy' charges and two politicians who openly discussed reforming the law have been murdered...*

*(The Pickering Post, 20 October, 2014 [Excerpted]; cited in Apostasy Alert)*

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## Islam

*'Soon Islam will become the dominating force in the world, occupying first place in the number of followers amongst all other religions...We don't shy away from declaring that Islam is ready to rule the world'.*

*(Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran)*

*'Peace initiatives, the so-called peaceful solutions, and the international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem, are all contrary to the beliefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement'.*

*( Hamas Charter 1987, Article 13)*

*'Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it'.*

*(Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood; Ahmed Yassin, Hamas co-founder [and assassinated] spiritual leader)*

## Epilogue to ‘The Day They Evicted Our Church’

In *Diakrisis* Jan/Feb/2014 we wrote of how the Queensland Churches of Christ had evicted the Hervey Bay Bible Church (HBBC) from its premises.

In late August 2013 the affiliated church, HBBC, received a letter from the CEO of Churches of Christ Queensland (CofCQ) stating the Bible Church was ‘*following a different path to CofCQ*’ and that this was ‘*not in the best interests of CofCQ*’. The situation led to a final letter that the Hervey Bay Bible Church was to be evicted from their church property on the 8th of November. (The signatures of the authorised elders were subsequently removed from the church’s bank account without them being notified).

A members vote conducted revealed that there were 88% against the action of CofCQ. Hervey Bay Bible Church was forced to begin services elsewhere.

The editor, and now pastoring elder of HBBC, began a campaign of writing to every Church of Christ in Queensland with information about the doctrines of the Churches of Christ ‘*Restoration Movement*’. (1) As well, he urged the Queensland executive and Conference to agree to the following: 1. A meeting with Conference and the Executive to ascertain exactly why the eviction had occurred and what the charges were; and 2. That HBBC be disaffiliated as required by their own Constitution. However, the CofCQ executive and Conference consistently refused to meet or disaffiliate the Bible Church.

After six months of writing articles, exposing the event and some churches offering verbal support, the editor was approached by one of the Queensland executives and asked what was desired that would help bring ‘closure’. The first request for a meeting was granted; the second request for disaffiliation was denied. A monetary ‘gift’ was offered to the HBBC to help with ‘closure’.

I am thankful to the one executive member of Churches of Christ who eventually took it upon himself to bring the two parties together and bring truth to the issues. At a subsequent meeting in Brisbane several matters were resolved. There were misunderstandings, but there were also some outright untruths which had been reportedly told by a few in the local church (now Hervey Bay Church of Christ). These were some of the same people who for years had troubled previous pastors and the church. (One untruth spread was that both the editor and others intended to ‘take’ the monies in the bank accounts).

When the facts were reviewed the Conference men present at the meeting apologised to the editor and another elder present - for the misleading information received, ‘perceived perceptions’ and for ‘hastiness’ in action. A letter was afterward sent to the editor from the Queensland Conference acknowledging ‘*that we learn from the experiences*’. The Conference ‘*acknowledged that in respect we could have perhaps done things differently from our end in trying to resolve the issues and perceived differences*’.

The editor acknowledges that his writings against the Ecumenism and doctrines of the Churches of Christ were offensive to many CofC leaders. It was also revealed that selected material and sermons by the author had been sent to the denomination which aggravated the situation.

However, one of the first things that should have been done in this tragic event was simply *a meeting with the entire leadership* of HBBC, which sadly was never done in the 12 months prior (despite Queensland executives wrongly stating this was done). We, the leadership of HBBC, have in fact still never met the 'CEO' of CofCQ. There are lessons to be learned in dealing with such serious issues - not by hearsay or from a minority of troublemakers in a local church, but with the *leadership* who also, in this case, represented the *majority* of the members. This should have been done in a Biblical and open fashion.

The leadership of Hervey Bay Bible Church do not shrink from our judgement that this eviction should never have occurred in *the way it did* - particularly using demonstrably false information and without any meetings with the leaders for over 12 months prior to these events.

The editor has publicly written to all Queensland Churches of Christ and the Queensland Conference to apologise for any offence caused by things said or written in letters or articles circulated.

However, the leaders of HBBC see the hand of God in separating his people from a denomination that has drifted further and further away from Gospel based moorings and become increasingly Ecumenical. There had been a lack of Biblical teaching and a shift on issues such as same-sex marriage, homosexuality and women in ministry. At the root of much of this is the weakening on the doctrines of 'Inspiration' and the all sufficiency of scripture, as shown in many articles in CofCQ magazines in the last few years.

### **Where is HBBC today?...**

Finally, it might encourage our readers to know God has turned these unsavoury events into a blessing! Following the eviction HBBC immediately grew and has almost doubled in numbers in just 12 months (from approximately 35 hurt and confused people). But more importantly people have come forward to use their giftings as never before. An extra home study group has been added and nearly two thirds of the church are now involved in one of these groups. Prayer meetings are well attended. The people have grown into a deeper, more mature understanding of God's Word. (The doctrine we teach is not any different to that which was taught a decade or more ago). There has not been a single divisive issue within the assembly in the last 12 months. There is a great unity and blessing that we have not seen in a decade or more.

We pray this encourages those reading this and that it displays just how *God can bring about such blessing from adversity*. May the true Gospel go out in increasing measure in days to come.

**Terry Arnold** (Pastoring elder for Hervey Bay Bible Church)

(1) *'The Churches of Christ and the Restoration Movement'*.



## **The Millennium: Interpretation Factors**

Today there exists a divide between those who apply a ‘figurative’ or ‘metaphorical’ interpretation to eschatological scriptures and those who take those same texts ‘literally’. We want to make it clear that we have many friends who will take a different view to some of the material in this article. We do not love them less, or lower them in our estimation. Indeed, in the church in which the editor pastors and teaches there are close and God-fearing brethren who hold to differing views on prophetic subjects, for example - the ‘millennium’.

### **The ‘Views’**

Many would say the thousand year reign of Christ is to be interpreted literally. Others say it must be a period to be taken figuratively or that we are in the ‘Millennium’ now and Christ is seen to be reigning. Many see this as a divide between ‘Pre-mil’, ‘Post-mil’ or ‘A-mil’ eschatology. But *the issue is, at it’s root, ultimately one of interpretational methods* (hermeneutics).

The ‘Post-mil’ view sees Christ’s second coming occurring after the millennium. The church becomes more influential in the nations and the world continues to improve as a society. The 1,000 years is a metaphor only. This view is not currently popular considering the world is far from improving.

The ‘A-mil’ (meaning ‘against, or no millennium’) is similar in that the millennium revealed in Revelation chapter 20 is a period of indefinite time and not literally a 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth.

### **Israel - Past or Future?**

Both the ‘Post-mil’ and ‘A-mil’ positions deny the promises of a regathered Israel. Israel has been set aside permanently. The Millennial reign of Christ in conjunction with Israel is denied. This means that much Old Testament scripture is to be taken figuratively.

In contrast, ‘Pre-mil’ advocates would cite many prophecies in the Old Testament. Before Israel entered the Promised Land, Moses prophesied her complete history and warned of judgement if she turned from God’s Law. This prophecy written in about 1450 B.C., describes Israel’s defeats, her eviction from the land, her dispersion to other lands and her return. Moses said Israel would be scattered among all the world’s peoples (Dt.28:63-67). Certainly for the last 1,900 years Israel has been dispersed, despised, and driven out of many countries. Hitler’s slaughter of 6 million Jews was only one example of this.

Several prophecies (Dt.30; Ezek.37) describe Israel’s return to the land. In 1948 Israel was not only restored to the land, but officially became a modern state. Immediately Israel was attacked by Arab armies. Israel won against overwhelming odds. Then the ‘6 day war’ in 1967 saw Israel again attacked by

a coalition of countries. Outnumbered again they secured another miraculous victory. In 1973 there was the Yom Kippur war when Israel was attacked from the north and the south on her most holy day, the Day of Atonement. Israel was caught off guard but again won a miraculous victory. Yet Israel remains largely blinded toward her Messiah and therefore the saving Gospel.

‘Pre-mil’ advocates would also point to the numerous Biblical texts which have the Messiah ruling as king in Jerusalem on the throne of David as a fulfilment of God’s covenant to Abraham (Gen.12:1-3), to Israel as a nation (Dt.20:1-10), and to David (2Sam.7:10-13). They would also point to references to a kingdom and Jerusalem as the capital (Zech.8:3). Jeremiah speaks of Jesus ‘our righteousness’ reigning on the ‘throne of the Lord’ (Jer.3:17-18; 23:5,6). Ezekiel also confirms that the Jewish people will be given a new heart toward God (Ezek.11:19-20; 16:60-62).

One of the most telling scriptures is Zechariah 14:1-9. Zechariah here graphically states the Lord will return to the Mount of Olives, *the same location from which He ascended into Heaven*. Do we take one ascension to be ‘literal’ and not the other on His return? In Isaiah’s account of the same event, he refers to the Lord returning to this same ‘Mount Zion’ (Is.31:4,5).

## **Contradictions to Consider**

Roman Catholics and many of the Reformed persuasion hold to an allegorical or figurative approach. The last book of the Bible is simply too difficult to understand in a literal sense and is mostly ‘figurative’. However, when read at face value the book of the Revelation makes perfect sense when taken literally except in parts of the text that are quite obviously allegorical. Arguably, most people reading the Bible for the first time do this. (In countries such as China where there is revival, most take a literal view of texts revealing a Millennium).

When Jesus said to ‘*eat his flesh and drink his blood*’ (Jn.6) it is understood that it would be an absurdity to interpret that literally. The context reveals He was speaking of the symbolic food and drink represented by His flesh and blood. Any other interpretation would be cannibalistic. He made this clear in John 6:63 when He explained ‘*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*’. The *context* shows He was speaking of *spiritual things* and using ‘figures’ of eating and drinking for the ‘manna’ and His ‘words’ of life. It also matches other scriptures with similar figures (Jer.15:16; Ps.110:103).

When one first reads in Genesis the ‘days’, ‘nights’ and ‘darkness’, there is no reason why they should not be accepted as literal ‘days’ and ‘nights’. Yet most people who take the texts revealing the 1,000 year millennium to be figurative, when it comes to Genesis they understand it literally. Why change the interpretative rules when we come to ‘eschatology’ and the millennium?

Why do many take literally Old Testament Messianic prophecies, yet believe the many promises and prophecies regarding the future of Israel figuratively?

Many people say to us ‘*I don’t believe in a rapture*’ when quite obviously scripture speaks plainly of such an event? 1Thessalonians 4:17 is unavoidably a literal ‘snatching away’ (*‘harpázo’*) of believers. Despite the differences of when this might occur, surely this word cannot be understood in any other way except that which the Latin word ‘rapture’ simply and literally describes.

When we read of the ‘election’ of individuals (Rom.16:13) or those within a group of people predestined to salvation (Rom.8:33; Eph.1:5,9,11; 1Thess.1:4; etc), it is surely imperative that we take that ‘election’ literally? Yet most who reject the notion of a future for the nation of Israel and a literal 1,000 year millennium, also accept unconditional election. But how can they reject a future for national Israel and at the same time embrace unconditional election? ‘*As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*’ (Rom.11:28,29). Will not God save those He elects? Israel is clearly unconditionally elected (Is.45:4; Dt.7:6-8; 10:15; Ps.135:4). It is inconsistent doctrine to believe in one (individual election) and not the other (the national election of Israel). God’s love for Israel is not determined by her performance, as election demonstrates (Dt.7:6-8). We are not ‘elected’ because we deserve it - and we cannot therefore lose it or be cut off because of ‘disobedience’.

The ‘A-mil’ interpretation demands that when the Jews forsook God, they were cast aside and their promises, of judgement and ultimate restoration, were transferred to the church.

In contrast, the ‘pre-mil’ view holds that the partial hardening and blindness of Israel is only until the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ come in, and then all Israel will be saved. ‘*For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written...*’ (Rom.11:25,26).

## **The Real Issue**

Despite all the doctrinal differences held concerning Israel and the various Millennial views, *at the root of the differences is the issue of interpretation*. When it comes to eschatology many abandon the accepted rules of interpretation and in doing so misinterpret over one fourth of the Bible!

In the hundreds of biblical instances where the word ‘thousand’ is translated literally in the Bible, most thinking people accept this as being literal (e.g. the numbers of the tribes (Nu.1:41;2:16,28; 31:34); gold and silver (Ezra 2:69), etc). In the New Testament the mention of ‘thousand’ to do with the ‘*loaves and fishes*’ is universally accepted literally (Matt.13:21; 16:9,10); as in the ‘*two thousand swine*’ (Mk.5:13); and the ‘*thousands*’ of souls saved in Acts.

Yet there are some ‘figurative’ texts which are often selectively presented as

examples for allowing a figurative one thousand year millennium.

*‘The Cattle On A Thousand Hills’ (Ps.50:10)*

Who would sensibly interpret these words literally? It is offering a ‘strawman’ to use this text against a literal 1,000 year millennial reign of Christ? The *‘thousand hills’* obviously cannot be taken literally, it is Hebraic poetic language. The word *‘eleph’* here is elsewhere used to denote a large quantity.

The *‘last days’* (Heb.1:1-2)

If one studies the same expression elsewhere it will be seen to be anywhere in the church age (Acts 2:17; 2Tim.3:1; 2Pet.3:3). Joel spoke of the *‘last days’* and mentioned events that span a vast time and many events. Hebrews chapter 1 also tells us the *‘last days’* had already started in the phrase *‘these last days’!*

*‘...one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day’* (2Pet.3:8)

The very words *‘as a thousand’* show the meaning here - to illustrate God does not measure time as we do. There is no argument here as to whether it is figurative or literal language. The purpose of this text is to show that God is *‘longsuffering’* (vs.9) toward the election of the saints. The contrast is to clearly show the difference between a divine and a human concept of time.

If we are to apply sound exegesis the meaning of any word or phrase must necessarily fit the context in which it appears. This is one of the most important principles of hermeneutical interpretation. If the passage contains figurative language then there will be some degree of absurdity if taken literally.

### **The Millennium - Literal or Figurative?**

The 1,000 years (millennium) is mention 6 times in the book of Revelation 20:2-7. The Devil is *‘bound a thousand years [chilio]...that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones...I saw the souls...they lived and reigned with Christ the thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison’*

Does the context here give any reason why the 1,000 years should be figurative and not a definite period? If 1,000 years is not literal then why did John say that the time period had *‘finished’* or *‘expired’* (vs.3). And why the definite article (‘the’) four times in the original Greek, arguably defining a

certain period?

Additionally, in the New Testament, when the text requires the figure 1,000 to be indefinite, it uses a different Greek word for 'thousand' and the *context* will also show it to be an *indefinite* period of time. An example of this is found in 1Corinthians 4:15 '*For though you have ten thousand [muriós] instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers...*'; and in 14:19 '*Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand [muriós] words in an unknown tongue*'. Here for 'ten thousand' the Greek word '*muriós*' is used - an indefinite number - and what some call an 'idiom' of expression. Note that the Greek word used here is not the same as found in the Revelation passages ('*chilio*'). The Revelation passages do not use this indefinite Greek word '*muriós*' from which we derive the word 'myriad'.

The earliest of the church fathers were in fact called 'chiliasts', the same Greek word used in Revelation - they believed in a literal 1,000 year millennium. (Many early Church fathers can be cited, including Justin Martyr, Papias, Tertullian, Victorinus...).

The context of '*a thousand years*' in Revelation does not necessitate a figurative meaning. *There is no 'absurdity' in an understanding of a literal period of time.* The Greek word is not an indefinite '*muriós*' as in other scriptures. *Just because the book is prophetic does not mean the rules of interpretation need change,* which appears to be a later allegorical invention added to the actual written beliefs of the early church fathers.

Many will argue the 'thousand years' is clothed in 'highly symbolic apocalyptic language'. However, the passage itself is not as 'symbolic' as one might think. Is there not a literal 'angel come down from heaven', a 'bottomless pit', 'nations', a 'Devil', and 'Satan'? Are there not 'thrones', a real 'Lake of Fire' and 'torment', a 'beast' and a 'false prophet'? Why relegate the 'thousand years' to the 'symbolic apocalyptic' language when other terms are not?

The two sides to this debate need not harshly separate brethren. The issue must be seen as a matter of interpretation long before it becomes a divisive doctrinal issue. However, inconsistent interpretation of Biblical eschatology may lead to a view that is contrary to what the Bible is saying regarding the near future. If a literal approach is taken in interpretation of scripture then that must prevail consistently excepting for obvious samples of figurative or symbolic language that if taken literally would have at least some measure of 'absurdity'.

Whatever the final conclusions the reader may have, or whatever eschatological theology we employ, may we all agree that we are in an age of apostasy from the 'faith once delivered'. May we all in unity look with eagerness to the coming of the Lord and the restoration of all things. Maranatha!

**Mike Claydon & Terry Arnold**

## **Rowland Taylor of Hadley - Martyr**

Rowland Taylor (1510-1555) was an English Protestant martyr during the Marian persecutions in England. At the time of his death by burning at the hands of the Roman Catholic authorities, he was Rector of a small church in Hadleigh, Suffolk. Being a doctor of the civil and church (canon) laws and teaching simple Biblical principles he had once been well recommended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. He had a reputation for humility and holiness of living and was renowned also for his generosity and provision for the poor.

When Queen Mary succeeded the throne after Edward VI, the country was plunged into Roman rule and persecution of Protestants began afresh. Taylor had supported Lady Jane Grey, a rival of Queen Mary and He opposed the Roman Catholic idea of celibacy for the clergy. And although Taylor had the support of most of his parish against the doctrine of Transubstantiation in the sacrifice of the Mass (the bread and wine literally changed into the real body and blood on the altar), two of Rowland's parishioners petitioned that the Catholic Mass should be celebrated on a Monday before Easter. Taylor resisted, but one of the men forced him out of the church and informed Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, who summoned Taylor to appear to answer complaints against him.

Taylor's friends implored him to escape to Europe for a time, considering a few Christians had already been martyred. But Taylor met the Bishop. Bishop Gardiner said: *'How darest thou look me in the face! knowest thou not who I am?'* Taylor replied, *'You are Dr. Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and lord-chancellor, and yet but a mortal man. But if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear ye not God, the Lord of us all? With what countenance will you appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and answer to your oath made first unto King Henry VIII, and afterward unto King Edward VI, his son?'*

Taylor gave a defense of his faith. Gardiner replied: *'Thou art a blasphemous heretic! Thou indeed blasphemist the blessed Sacrament, and speakest against the holy Mass, which is made a sacrifice for the quick and the dead'*

Taylor was committed to prison and there he found another pastor, John Bradford. They prayed and conversed in the scriptures.

Some weeks later Bishop Gardiner visited Taylor and tried to give him ornaments and vestments to do with the Roman Catholic Mass. Taylor refused them but they were forced on him. The next night his wife and one son were allowed to visit him. With tears they prayed together and kissed one another. To his son Thomas he gave a Latin book, containing the notable sayings of the old martyrs, and in that he wrote his testament: *'I say to my wife, and to my children, The Lord gave you unto me, and the Lord hath taken me from you, and you from me: blessed be the name of the Lord! I believe that they are blessed which die in the Lord. God careth for sparrows, and for the hairs of our heads. I have ever found Him more faithful and favourable, than is any father or husband. Trust ye therefore in Him by the means of our dear Saviour Christ's merits: believe,*

*love, fear, and obey Him: pray to Him, for He hath promised to help. Count me not dead, for I shall certainly live, and never die. I go before, and you shall follow after, to our long home’.*

On 4th February 1555, the Sheriff of London brought Taylor out at 2am to the Woolsack, an inn near Aldgate. Taylor’s wife suspected they would take her husband in the night and she waited near Aldgate with two of her children. When she saw her husband she cried out to him. The Sheriff allowed Taylor to speak with his family. Elizabeth kneeled down and said the Lord’s Prayer. The Sheriff wept at this sight. Taylor arose and kissed his wife, saying: *‘Farewell, my dear wife; be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience. God shall stir up a father for my children’.*

All the way to death Taylor was joyful and merry at the thought of being with his Saviour. He also spoke many things to the sheriff and the guards urging them to repent and live holy lives.

Taylor arrived at Aldham Common and found a large number of people had gathered. Many people were in tears when they saw his face and some cried out *‘God save thee...Jesus Christ strengthen thee, and help thee...!’*

Taylor went to the stake, kissed it and set himself into a pitch barrel, which they had made for him to stand in. Taylor ceased not to pray. His final words to his son Thomas, as reported by Foxe (in ‘Foxe’s book of Martyrs’): *‘Almighty God bless thee, and give you his Holy Spirit, to be a true servant of Christ, to learn his word, and constantly to stand by his truth all the life long. And my son, see that thou fear God always. Fly from all sin and wicked living. Be virtuous, serve God daily with prayer, and apply thy boke. In anywise see thou be obedient to thy mother, love her, and serve her. Be ruled by her now in thy youth, and follow her good counsel in all things. Beware of lewd company of young men, that fear not God, but followeth their lewd lusts and vain appetites. Flee from whoredom, and hate all filthy lying, remembering that I thy father do die in the defense of holy marriage. And another day when God shall bless thee, love and cherish the poor people, and count that thy chief riches to be rich in alms. And when thy mother is waxed old, forsake her not, but provide for her to thy power, and see that she lacks nothing. For so will God bless thee, give thee long life upon earth, and prosperity, which I pray God to grant thee’.*

They bound him with chains, and made ready the fire. One bystander threw a faggot at his head cutting his face. A Sir John Shelton struck him on the lips when Taylor began reciting the Psalms in English. *‘Speak Latin: I will make thee’.* (Latin was the language of the Roman Catholic services). They lit the fire and Taylor held his hands up praying: *‘Merciful Father of Heaven! For Jesus Christ, my Savior’s sake, receive my soul into Thy hands!’* He remained in this position until a sympathetic guard with a halberd (a pile fitted with an axe head) struck him on the head until his brains fell out and his body fell into the fire.

Rowland Taylor became Mary’s third Protestant to be burned to death and be received into the presence of the Lord.

## Your Comments and Questions

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

*Dear Terry, Thank you for your newsletter and your understanding of the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit. What is your understanding of the Bread to be used at the Lord's Supper at Communion - should it be leaven or unleavened, or has it changed in the New Testament and now it doesn't matter?*

**(Name withheld at editor's discretion)**

**Editor's reply: I personally prefer unleavened but that is a *preference*. The bread is a symbol (a 'figure') of the body of Jesus and has no particular 'sacramental' properties. I don't see any *command* to have it unleavened. I personally leave it as a personal 'preference' rather than any scriptural command. To raise such matters may cause legalists to 'strain at gnats' when they might well be 'swallowing camels' in other areas?**

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*Dear Terry, Thanks so much for your continued sound teaching in 'Diakrisis'. We are thankfully now in a fellowship whose pastor preaches with authority and power and is fearless in teaching the scriptures as it is, without the secular humanistic tickling of ears.*

*We were on a holiday cruise recently and on the look out for fellowship with Born Again believers or any to share Christ. We discovered a couple, but it turned into 'if you don't speak in tongues you are not filled with the Holy Spirit' confrontation. Their attitude was such that we disengaged ourselves.*

*...And your recent article 'Dealing With the Past [Diakrisis Sept/Oct/2014] was a reflection on the way the Lord enabled me to deal with incidences in my childhood prior to my salvation. As you said all such memories were laid on Christ on the cross. What a wonderful liberating Saviour. He is all sufficient!...*

**(E.P., Qld)**

**Editor's comment: The speaking in tongues is mentioned in Acts in connection with the 'Baptism with the Spirit' transition to the Jews (Acts 2), then the gentiles (Acts 10). They were known human earthly foreign 'dialects' ('*diálektos*') heard '*in their own language*' (vs.6) as listed in Acts 2; and words that were understood and that '*magnified God*' in Acts 10:46. The modern day 'tongues' movement is a counterfeit invented in 1901. The founder of the experience admitted this before he died. (See our DVD seminar on the Holy Spirit; also the book '*Strange Fire*' has a complete history of the events of 1901). Being 'filled with the Spirit' has nothing to do with speaking in tongues. In fact, the result of being 'filled with the Spirit' is clearly itemised in Ephesians 5:18-21. Tongues is not mentioned.**

**The teaching of 'tongues' being the 'evidence' of the Baptism with or the filling by the Spirit is a *new teaching* invented by Pentecostal groups early in the 20th C. It has been a most divisive teaching amongst Christians.**



## Your Comments and Questions

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

### **Mail on the article: 'The New Covenant – For The Church or Israel?'** **(Diakrisis Sept/Oct/2014)**

[Mike Claydon's reply in **bold** and brackets]

*Dear editors, I find the idea that there was no gentile in sight at the Lord confirming the New Covenant very confusing. [Gentiles did not attend a Seder meal unless they were proselytes - and no mention is made of even one being present in the upper room. The Church had not been formed as such at this time] This was in the Upper Room discourse of 5 chapters (13-17)...As such the other sections don't apply to us either. As well most of the gospels don't either. [Agreed] Like the Sermon on the Mount and John 3 especially verse 16 etc! [There is no verse 16 in 3 John?] As the the OT was not written for non-Jews, Isaiah 53 is out as well. [The OT is addressed to the Jews - and proselytes to Judaism. Yet it is obvious that God intended the OT scriptures and prophecies to be studied by the coming church. But they are not to be 'applied' to the church?]*

*This issue is whether the Apostles were first Jews or believers (Christians). They were Jews who became 'believers'. Are we first Christians or Aussies? [The term 'Christian' is not even used among the disciples of Jesus, to describe one another. '...and when he had found him (Saul), he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch' (Acts 11:26).*

*In Galatians there are 3 references to Jews/Gentiles. Vs.7 'Those who are of the faith who are sons of Abraham'; vs.25 'Neither Jew or Gentile...all are one in Christ Jesus'; and vs.29 'If you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's offspring heirs according to promise'. There is no such thing as the so-called 'replacement theory'. [Replacement Theology claims that God has cast off the Jews - when in fact scripture is replete with texts promising a national restoration in the latter days - a regathering of the Jews to Israel largely in unbelief. This is denied by Replacement Theologists who state that the promises to Israel now apply to the Church. A 'Remnant' of Jews left alive at Christ's coming will be saved...and during the church age many Jews have come to Christ - and in the church there is no 'replacement' taking place of course...we Gentiles were 'grafted in' to the Jewish root]. The believing gentiles are ADDED to the believing Jews in the blessings. [True!]*

*What God has joined let no man separate! [You must separate the nation of Israel and the Church! Within the church there is no distinction between Jew or Gentile - but there is a distinction between a Jew and a Gentile outside of that body of people]*

## Your Comments and Questions

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

### More on the Israel Article

[Re: *Diakrisis* Sept/Oct. article by Mike Claydon. His reply in **bold** and brackets]

*...While I believe that to speak of engrafting etc is right (e.g. Rom.11; Gal.3; Eph.2), the NT does teach a replacement theology. [The Church was never to replace the nation of Israel. 'All Israel [the remnant] will be saved'. The Church is a body of people called out of all races - Israel was called out of Ur of the Chaldee's to a promised land. In the end Christ is to return there - why would that be if Israel has been discarded?]*

*This author...I believe his understanding of Rom 9:4 to be in error. Paul is speaking of the nation of unbelieving, Christ-hating Jews and (aside from Judas) these were not present at the Lord's Supper (Luke 22), nor were Jesus' words establishing any covenant with them. [Paul is speaking of the Jewish nation in 9:4 - saying he would gladly give up his salvation for theirs! Then he goes on to say of these unbelieving Jews: 'Who are Israelites to whom pertains the adoption, glory, AND THE COVENANTS...and the PROMISES']*

*Rather the New Testament/covenant in his blood was only with believers - whether Jew or Gentile, represented by the 12 apostles. [For national Israel this covenant, into which we have been grafted, will not see its fullness until Israel is grafted back in at Christ's return] In the Gospels we see Jesus Himself as the true Israel [Jesus is now 'Israel'?] (e.g. true vine Jn.15 and compare with Is.5) and establishing a new Israel on the basis of faith in Him and obedience to Him (12 apostles for 12 tribes). [This is pure Replacement Theology]. Paul says of the NT church, 'We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh' (Phil 3:3 - in v.5 he contrasts this with being a native Israelite and Hebrew). I believe the context of Gal.6:16 also means the Israel of God is a reference to the existing church of Jesus Christ (NT/gospel church). [The 'Israel of God' is NOT a synonym for the Church - it is referring to Jewish Christians in the Church resting in the Grace of God without the need for circumcision or other works of the law. Again, this is Replacement Theology].*

*We also can consider, among many passages, Matt.21:43, 'Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof'. [Yes, they have been largely set aside - only 'until the fullness of the Gentiles' be come in]. Who is the new nation? The NT church, a new Israel - made up of Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, 1Pet.2:9,10 says, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called ...you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now*

## Terry's Itinerary

November/December (Sundays) 9.30am Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld  
Ph.0411489472 www.herveybaybiblechurch.org

### **Your Comments and Questions**

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

*...have obtained mercy'. What was true of OT Israel is said of the NT church (Ex.19:6). The prophecies in Hosea 1 & 2 concerning the return of the Northern Kingdom of Israel are fulfilled in the NT church. [On what scripture would such be based? If this is true what of Zechariah 14 and many other texts in the Major and Minor prophets - detailing the final restoration and salvation of Israel? Replacement Theologists make up their own exegetical rules when it comes to this subject? Why would Jesus return to Jerusalem; better that He comes to New York or London if Israel has been done away with?*

*There are the three entities: 'Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God' (1Cor.10:32). God sees these divisions, why can't Christians? To insist Israel no longer has any claim to her ancient homeland, has been replaced by the Church and that her return thereto is a mere coincidence, a political device, is illogical and unscriptural]*

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*Dear Terry, One of my encouraging Christian blessings was when a dear friend and Christian mentor before he died subscribed me to 'Diakrisis'. It has continued to be an important encouragement and information/learning tool. God is ever astounding in how He works in lives...After reading the latest issue and the article by Mike Claydon [The New Covenant – For The Church or Israel?] it truly blessed my heart, especially after just having read Romans and Hebrews again. I always pray for discernment to read, understand and rightly divide the truth of the word of God. The Word thrills me. So, thank you Mike for that particular article, for what should be simply understood, as it is so basically but importantly fundamental to Scripture, a Bible study in two small pages. Yours in Christ with grateful appreciation...*

**(G.F., Tas.)**

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*Hello Mike, Thanks for your article regarding the New Covenant in the recent issue of 'Diakrisis'. I found it very helpful as I have struggled to understand how the idea of the church replacing Israel fits with the teaching of Romans chapter 11 and OT prophetic passages regarding the House of Israel. I believe that with interpretation of scripture we should start with the plain teaching of scripture and use that to help in interpreting less plain passages. Romans 11, particularly verses 25 -29, seem to plainly teach that God is not yet finished with Israel.*

## **Your Comments and Questions**

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

### **Bible College Closure?**

We are saddened to report that *Pacific Bible Institute* has been ordered to close the Masters degree course because of a 2011 Law enforced by the 'Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency' (TEQSA) which states that any 'higher education' in Australia must be registered with the Government. The Act forbids the conducting of courses with the names 'Diploma', 'Bachelors' or 'Masters'. The Act also forbids 'Distance' courses being offered from overseas colleges where any content is done on Australian premises. The government requires approximately \$22,000 which covers 7 years and includes various requirements which are reviewed each year. (Some colleges have in fact had to close or move offshore).

To comply with the Government we have changed the course name to 'Graduate of Theology'. The current students will complete the course under the new name. At this stage *PBI* will not be enrolling any more students.

### **Prayer and Praise Points**

- Praise the Lord for the support and donations for the Bible college. Pray for wisdom as we complete the current courses (see above).
- Pray for the editor and Hervey Bay Bible Church as it continues to grow and establish itself in the local community. Pray for souls to be saved and discipleship programmes to be effective.

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