



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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Preaching Itinerary for Interstate

A preaching/teaching itinerary is being planned for the editor for Qld, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania during February-April 2020. A tentative itinerary will be printed in the next November/December edition and finalised and updated again in the January/February edition.

If any churches or fellowships would like to join in please contact Terry on taministries@bigpond.com or phone 0411489472. A topic list is available on request.

Editor's Comment

There have been many great spiritual deceptions unleashed upon the church. The last 200 years have seen arguably more than most centuries combined. Thus this may well be the last of the last days. In the space of just a few decades in the 1800's the Mormon, Adventist and Jehovah Witness were founded. Then excesses in the holiness movement of the late 1800's led to the new Pentecostal movement in 1901 which instituted new 'baptisms' and an unknown 'tongues' movement. From this later in the mid twentieth century came the Charismatic movement. That century saw a plethora of new teaching on the Holy Spirit and now other new 'gospels' of 'health' and 'wealth' teaching. All these have led to great deceptions against the 'faith once delivered'.

The Greatest Deception

But there is one deception that rivals all of these. It is the great deception Jesus warned of in Matthew chapter 7. This deception is horrifying and frightening to any thinking person. The deception is simply that '*many*' will be believing and confessing Jesus as their '*Lord, Lord*' and yet be sent by Christ to a lost eternity into the fires of Hell! It is the stuff of nightmares to which every pastor, Bible teacher and Christian should address. Let's hear it again from our Lord Himself: '*Enter you in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat...Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity*' (vs.21-23)

These people are 'believers' worshipping whom they think is '*Lord*'. They are 'christians' by name and decision. They built their 'faith' on the foundation of shifting 'sand', instead of the 'rock' (vs.24-26). They were not doers of the word but doers of their own religious works (vs.22,23); workers of sin unforgiven, not imputed to Christ (vs.23); their 'faith' and deeds not acceptable to God. They claimed to know Him as '*Lord, Lord*' but *He did not know them!* (vs.23)

In this editorial I state some things many people simply do not want to hear in this age of 'easy believism', decisional evangelism and 'seeker friendly' ministries. The first is that if the above scripture is true then there are '*many*' professing christians, likely in every church, who are simply not 'born again'. They do not have the fruit of a true experience of regeneration *from above*. There is a lack of repentance, a lack of separation from the world and to holiness, a lack of desire to hunger after Christ and His word and be doers of His word.

The more the church falls away from the true Gospel and into other gospels of social, political and cultural trends, *the more obvious the warning in Matthew 7 should become*. Yet churches are increasingly filling with 'cultural christians' - 'christians' clinging to a past decision under false gospels, or 'christians' by the culture of the times. Continued next page >

What Is a Christian?

What is a 'Christian' today needs to be defined!

If we are a true Christian we would surely believe in what God believes and be followers of and doers of his one and only revelation today - the holy scriptures. Just as Muslims follow the Koran and Mormons follow the Book of Mormon, would it not be that Christians would follow the Bible? If we say we know and accept fully the person of Jesus Christ, why is it that statistics today show that many Christians do not accept the Bible as inerrant, infallible and all sufficient to know and follow Christ and live a spiritual life? Many today receive their revelation and understanding of God from extra biblical sources - in dreams, visions, prophecies and their own thinking of what God is like to them. The problem is that the source of revelation has changed - from that of the Bible to what many want God to be *according to the new culture of the day*. It's now *our thinking, and not the 'more sure word of prophecy...the prophecy of the scripture'* (2Pet.1:19,20).

What is a 'Christian' today needs to be defined.

A Christian is one who has been born from above by God rather than just by any decision from beneath. They will agree with, *desire* and *follow* God's revelation as found in His Word. They will have the fruit of a radical salvation plan of God as laid out in several epistles, especially that of John where the apostle closes with this statement '***These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God***' (1Jn.5:13).

But what does '*these things*' refer to? A short list is given here from John's epistle and elsewhere:

The Fruit

1. *The born again have Christ first in heart and in practise - 'Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...'* (5:1); Jesus also said '***He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me***' (Matt.10:37,38).

2. *The born again do not practise sin but show repentance - 'Whosoever is born of God does not commit [practise; habitually] sin...because he is born of God'* (1Jn.3:9). A Christian is not a slave to sin, but battles against the flesh as an 'overcomer'. They no longer have a heart to sin. The power and lordship of sin is broken. There is initial and continual repentance - the changing of the mind from sin to righteousness.

3. *The Born again do not accept the worlds standards and seek Holiness in living - 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...'* (1Jn.2:15,16); '***...friendship of the world is enmity with God?...'*** (James 4:4); '***And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure***' (1Jn.3:3). A christian's speech, fashions and testimony are distinctive (Rom. 12:2).

4. *The born again will love the brethren and want to be with them - 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...'* (1Jn.3:14).

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5. *The born again will suffer and survive persecutions, trials, testings, temptations* (1Pet.5:9; Matt.10:22).

In summary - the born again will bear fruit - the **fruit of repentance** (Matt.3:8-10); the **fruit of holiness** (Rom.6:21,22); the **fruit of righteousness** (Phil.1:11; Heb.12:11; James 3:18); **the fruit of our lips** (Heb.13;15) and the **fruit of the Spirit** - **'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance** [self control]' (Gal.5:22).

The new birth changes the heart to one of a 'new creature' - 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (2Cor.5:17).

The above is not a 'reforming' of character but a radical transformation of the *inner nature* which affects the whole person.

The Warning

The great English expositor Martyn Lloyd Jones came under fire in the 60's and 70's when he stood against the ecumenical movement for redefining 'christian' as one who simply 'believed in Jesus'. Biblical concepts such as the wrath and justice of God, substitution, the depravity of sinful man...all were being swept away and it seemed that everyone in a wide sway of religion, including Catholicism, were now 'christians'. Lloyd Jones in addressing this issue of what is a Christian, showed the huge divide which developed between evangelism then, and the ecumenical movement then and now: *'The churches organise whist-drives, fetes, dramas, bazaars and things of that sort, so as to attract people. We are becoming almost as wily as the Devil himself, but we are really very bad at it; all our attempts are hopeless failures and thus the world laughs at us. Now, when the world persecutes the church, she is performing her real mission, but when the world laughs at her she has lost her soul. And today the world is laughing at the church, laughing at her attempts to be nice and to make people feel at home. My friends if you feel at home in any church without believing in Christ as your personal Saviour, then that church is no church at all, but a place of entertainment or a social club. For the truth of Christianity and the preaching of the Gospel should make a church intolerable and uncomfortable to all except those who believe, and even they should go away feeling chastened and humbled'* (Biography, Vol.1, P.142).

Lloyd Jones argued that the ecumenical movement centred on *fellowship at the expense of doctrine*. In contrast he argued *'doctrine before fellowship'*. Indeed, today one of the doctrines now almost lost is the sufficiency, the authority of scripture. At the heart of modern Christianity is the idea that it does not matter what a christian believes. *And this is what brings us back to Matthew 7!*

The biggest hoax on the day of judgement will not be evolution or any other false or extra biblical teaching invented in later years. It will be people crying out *'Lord, Lord'* and being sent to Hell for not 'knowing' the true Jesus. Perhaps this is also why Jesus warned *'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'* (Jn.3:3).

Terry Arnold

Joshua Harris Admits Apostasy



Pastor Joshua Harris who wrote many best selling books including *'I Kissed Dating Goodbye'*, and *'Sex Isn't the Problem: Lust Is'*, has admitted to no longer being a 'Christian'. He wrote: *'I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. The popular phrase...is 'deconstruction,' the biblical phrase is 'falling away.'* *By all the measurements I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian... 'But it can get to feeling, like, what are you holding onto in Christianity? Why do you need it still?'* He said he is optimistic about his departure from the faith. *'All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'.*

Harris said he has conversely been *'repenting'* of views he once held and taught. He has had an about-face on homosexuality, and asked for forgiveness from those who identify as homosexual and has since publicly marched with them. *'I am sorry for the views that I taught in my books and as a pastor regarding sexuality. I regret standing against marriage equality...'* *To the LGBTQ+ community, I want to say I am sorry for the views that I taught in my books and as a pastor regarding sexuality. I regret standing against marriage equality, for not affirming you and your place in the church'.*

Harris also recently separated from his wife of 20 years: *'We're writing to share the news that we are separating and will continue...as friends...In recent years, some significant changes have taken place in both of us'.*

Harris is the former senior pastor of Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland, the founding church of Sovereign Grace Ministries. He left in 2015 to study at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Last year, Harris asked his publisher to stop printing *'I Kissed Dating Goodbye'*. Yet he rejected calls to throw out all of his teaching on purity.

Harris' wife, Shannon, recently posted a video stating that being taught by the Church that her *'heart is deceitful'* was *'damaging'* to her, and her *'fundamentalist conservative Christianity experience taught [her] to ignore [her] inner voice...Healthy churches don't use fear, bullying, shaming. They don't need to manipulate behaviour or manage image. Love feels: Safe Love feels Accepted'.* Shannon says she still believes in God and is now creating secular music as a singer/songwriter and creating a musical that will *'explore themes like identity, authenticity, gender roles and power in the conservative church'.*

Editor's Comment:

Although I did not agree with all of Harris's materials he did have some challenging teachings. In particular I found helpful the material in his book *'Stop Dating The Church'*.

It should not surprise that there will be apostasies. There are scriptural examples of people falling away from the faith, being *'shipwrecked'* and the Demas' of this world. The fact that this is a popular writer, preacher, pastor makes it more public and *'shocking'*. But let's not forget that multitudes

each year make professions of faith and ‘fall away’ in the same way, some immediately (see the parable of the Sower), others at later stages.

I here reproduce a letter by a concerned Christian who sums up well with a loving and truthful reaction to this sad event of public apostasy (excerpted):

Josh,

My first memory of you was...when you were about nine years old. I saw you many times as your dad and I spoke at many conferences over the years. How can I forget that meeting in...New York when you told me you had signed a book deal for ‘I Kissed Dating Goodbye’? I told you it was a bad title and wouldn’t sell...it outsold everything I have ever written...We knew each other very well for many years. And I loved you like a younger brother. And still do.

I don’t think I can reach you in private and what you have said and done is very public, so I am reaching out to you in this way. You have walked away from your marriage. That’s not right. You have walked away from your faith in Christ. That’s even worse.

This says nothing about Jesus and a great deal about you.

Jesus told us there would be false prophets and teachers among us. Your story doesn’t invalidate Christ’s message because He predicted that people would do exactly what you have done. I just didn’t expect it would ever be you.

I do commend you for the intellectual integrity for recognizing that your secondary views (embracing the LGBT agenda, etc.) are utterly inconsistent with Christianity - as is your view that it is ok to walk away from your marriage for the reasons you have stated. Both of these proved that you had renounced Christianity before you said so publicly.

My heart aches for you...It seems that you thought that Christianity was a series of formulas. Formulas for marriage. Formulas for systematic theology. Fear of choosing the wrong formula. Fear of failing to live up to your formula.

You know that I believe in the general approach to courtship that made you famous and pretty rich. You included the story of my oldest daughter and her husband in your second book.

I still believe that purity of mind and body before marriage is the right ideal. But it is not a formula for a happy marriage. It is simply a guiding principle that has to be applied with wisdom, grace, and often forgiveness.

I would never reach this conclusion about you on my own but what you have said yourself can be fairly summarized as this: you thought your faith and your marriage were based on formulas. They never went deeper than that.

Jesus says about people like you that in the last judgment, He will say, ‘Depart from me, I never knew you’. You know that this means you never actually knew Him. As immersed as you were in Christian culture and a career as a pastor, you never actually knew Jesus. It gives me only heartache to say these things to you. And Jesus will take no pleasure in pronouncing those words in judgment of you or anyone.

You haven’t walked away from a relationship with Jesus. You have walked away from the culture you were raised in.

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Jesus still loves you at this moment. And so do I and countless others. I will love you no matter what in the days ahead. But my love is tinged in deep sadness.

Josh, you and your story are not the measure of the validity of Christianity. Jesus is real. He doesn't want you to return to your prior formulas. He wants you to come to Him for the first time and learn to love.

I am praying for you, Josh. With love and sorrow.

Mike Farris (<https://www.christianpost.com/voice/a-letter-to-josh-harris.html>)

Hillsong Writer 'No Longer a Christian'



Marty Sampson, a prolific worship music writer...with Hillsong Worship, Hillsong United, Delirious and Young & Free, revealed he is losing his faith and believes Christianity is 'just another religion'. He said 'I'm genuinely losing my faith, and it doesn't bother me...I am so happy now, so at peace with the world it's crazy...How many preachers fall? Many. No one talks about it. How many miracles happen? Not many. No one talks about it. Why is the Bible full of contradictions? No one talks about it. How can God be love yet send four billion people to a place, all coz they don't believe? No one talks about it. Christians can be the most judgmental people on the planet - they can also be some of the most beautiful and loving people. But it's not for me'.

The 'All I Need Is You' writer said he's 'not in' anymore and desires 'genuine truth...Not the 'I just believe it' kind of truth...Science keeps piercing the truth of every religion. Lots of things help people change their lives, not just one version of God...just seems to me like another religion at this point...Be generous and do good to others absolutely. Some things are good no matter what you believe. Let the rain fall, the sun will come up tomorrow'.

John Mason, founder of the God First, Life Second movement, said 'When sound biblical theology is neglected for an American, spiritualized, cultural friendly replacement, exposure to that theology will naturally turn away a mind, heart & soul that has never submitted to that eternal truth. In other words, the falling away is the right response'. Answers in Genesis founder Ken Ham said 'This sad situation about this person is a reminder to the church & parents need to teach apologetics to counter today's attacks on God's Word'.

(Leah Marie Ann Klett, Christian Post Reporter)

Editor's comment:

Real faith is not lost by what we do not understand or can test with our human minds. It is given by God at regeneration (Jn.3:3 'Gennáo ánothen' - born from above).

That 'faith' cannot be lost although it can be tested and tried. If these cultural 'christians' have been born again, they will return to the faith; if apostates then they are simply going back to what their earthly nature demands. Continued next page >

Hillsong presents a false Gospel with a mixture of human ‘potential’, healing, wealth and other earthly and temporal excitements with an emphasis on ecstatic worship through music. Marty Sampson is correct when he says he has seen - ‘*preachers falling*’ - many are falling; not many real ‘miracles’ are happening - in the modern signs and wonders movement and the many claims of healing which are simply *not* happening. The Bible is ‘*full of contradictions*’ to those who do not have a high view of the Word of God as inspired and the preserved revelation of Jesus Christ. He is correct in not hearing about ‘*billions*’ of people being sent to Hell for ‘*not believing*’ - how many sermons, if any, are heard on the subject of Hell in such circles as Hillsong, especially sermons on the judgement of, and the reason for Hell? He says ‘*Science keeps piercing the truth*’ of religion - really? Increasingly science is actually *confirming* the truth of scripture (in archaeology, etc)! But such things are not the reason to believe. *Faith itself stands on its own and must be from above*. Yes people can ‘*change their lives*’ without religion, but does that give eternal life?

John Mason is correct in pointing to the modern problem of ‘*cultural christians*’ who ‘*never submitted to the eternal truth*’. Ken Ham here also makes a point of the necessity of ‘apologetics’. But that still does not go to the heart of the issue - these false movements have strayed a long way from the true Gospel which is the only method God uses to permanently change the *nature* of someone of the world and who is ‘*dead in sin*’!

Persecution - Sudan

Today, Christian persecution is so commonplace that it barely rates a headline. Compass Direct News reported the execution of a Christian woman in Somalia - for possessing six Bibles. An influential leader of the Islamic Al-Shabab group, a warlord identified as Sheikh Arbow from Middle Juba region of Somalia, shot a Christian lady, one Mariam Muhina Hussein on September 28, 2009. Local sources, reported the warlord sent his wife to pretend to be interested in Christianity. The Christian lady gave one of her Bibles to the warlord’s wife, who took it back to her husband. Sheikh Arbow went back the next day saying he was ‘*looking for Christians who defiled the Islamic religion*’ and ordered Mariam Hussein to surrender her Bibles. She retrieved them from hiding, whereupon Arbow fired three bullets into her, killing her instantly. It didn’t make the newspapers because if the papers reported every case in which a Christian is murdered for his faith, there would be no room to print anything else.

In Sudan, the entire Christian population is being systematically exterminated by the Islamic janjaweed under orders from Khartoum...The UN estimates the Sudanese Islamic Republic has managed to exterminate half-million or so Christians and other non-Muslims. Since the targets are primarily non-white and Christian, nobody seems particularly concerned.

Christians are routinely murdered for their faith in almost every country on earth. In the West, persecution is so far confined to harassing Christian teachers and schoolchildren, churches, veterans' groups and so forth.

... 'Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also' (John 15:20).

Jesus said it begins with persecuting Him – then persecuting His followers naturally follows. Persecution starts small, taking tentative steps, but once the camel's nose is in the tent, so to speak, the rest of the camel will eventually follow...

Persecution - Iraq

Christianity in Iraq is 'close to extinction' and those who remain may 'face martyrdom', yet some Christian leaders in Britain refuse to condemn the atrocities perpetrated by Muslim extremists for fear of being accused of Islamophobia, the Archbishop of Erbil has said. During an address delivered in London, Rev. Bashar Warda said Iraq's Christian population is down to 250,000 - an 83% decrease since the U.S. invasion of Iraq... 'Christianity in Iraq...is close to extinction. Those of us who remain must be ready to face martyrdom'.

Although Islamic State terrorist group was driven from its last stronghold in Iraq this year, religious structures and Christian homes have been destroyed; thousands of families have not returned, 'Our tormentors confiscated our present', he said 'while seeking to wipe out our history and destroy our future. The archbishop, who has been outspoken about the plight of Christians in his country, also said Britain's Christian leaders are so concerned with 'political correctness' they refuse to speak out against atrocities committed against Christians in Iraq by Muslim extremists. 'Will you continue to condone this never-ending, organized persecution against us?' he asked. 'When the next wave of violence begins to hit us, will anyone on your campuses hold demonstrations and carry signs that say 'We are all Christians'?' Warning Christians are 'facing our end in the land of our ancestors', Warda said, 'the entire world faces a moment of truth... Will a peaceful innocent people be allowed to be persecuted and eliminated because of their faith? And, for the sake of not wanting to speak the truth to the persecutors, will the world be complicit in our elimination?'

...Iraq is ranked No.13 on persecution watchdog group Open Doors USA's 2019 World Watch List of the top 50 countries in the world where Christians face the most extreme persecution for their faith...

(Christian Post)

Persecution - India

Christian persecution has grown much more severe in India, and tribal villagers are being taught that Christianity is anti-Indian.

Upset about his daughter and son-in-law leaving the animistic Sarna religion

to become Christians, 60-year-old Sanpitha Majhi recently attacked a 28-year-old Christian mother he believed had 'forcefully converted' them. When her husband came to rescue her, he too was beaten, said her pastor, Girish Chander Marandi. The same man had attacked nine people who had gathered for worship. He pounded their heads into the wall and ripped pages from a believer's Bible.

Such violence comes against the backdrop of a draconian 'anti-conversion law' that has given rise to spurious accusations of forcible or fraudulent conversion. Hindu extremists are turning animistic villagers against Christians.

In Pandanwa Tanda of Hazaribagh District, two families put their faith in Christ after years of losing family members to 'healers' known as tantrics. Pastor Manoj Munda told Morning Star News, 'The tantric would thrash them with a whip and exorcise on them, and they'd get even sicker and fall prey to death'. Families who put their faith in Christ four years ago have broken the cycle of death from such treatment, though they have to travel miles to neighbouring villages for worship due to hostilities from local Adivasis.

This year, local villagers practicing Sarna mixed with Hinduism began collecting funds for puja (idol worship of gods and goddesses). When Christians refused to contribute, villagers became enraged. They surrounded the wife of Christian Belu Ganjo as she went to draw well water at 9 pm. 'The entire village surrounded her and had decided to tie her with a rope and drown her in the well', Pastor Munda said. Her husband came running to rescue her, and the women in the mob attacked her as the men attacked Ganjo, he said. They beat them with lathis, a bamboo stick bound with iron, and kicked them. The mob also threw their 4-year-old daughter to the floor. 'By God's grace, the child suffered only minor injuries. Ganjo ran for his life with his child and wife to another Christian's house, but the angry mob followed them, so they locked their houses, and that night they fled away from the village', Pastor Munda said.

In Ranchi, Hindu relatives filed complaints of forced conversions against newly wedded Christian couple Risha Toppo and Roshani Kachhap. After Toppo became a Christian in 2015, his family restricted him to his house. 'I continued praying and reading the Bible. My mother did not allow me into the kitchen for more than two years until I finally left the house in 2017'. They gave him only leftover food once a day, sometimes nothing. 'Even through that when they were hating me, I questioned my parents, 'Why are you worshiping the trees and plants? Why not worship the One who created them? The trees and plants do not hear or speak, but the living God sees us, He hears and speaks. Why are we not acknowledging the Creator?' he said. 'We married in court secretly because family members were planning to attack me if...marrying a Christian'. Toppo's family banished him from the community. 'I left everything behind and followed Christ', he said. 'Today we are surviving with the help of a basic salary from working in a private clinic and my wife's payments from tutoring school students. We are working very hard but are happy that we are leading a Christian life'.

India ranks 10th on the Open Doors 2019 World Watch List of the countries that persecute believers.

(Morningstarnews.org; and Israel My Glory, July/August 2019)

A Fresh Look at Revelation

Part 2 - Chapters 4,5

In Part 1 ('*Diakrisis*' July/August) and the parts to follow in this series, the intent is to show that the book of Revelation *is to be understood* at least as far as *what John saw and described*. And *what is figurative and what is more literal can be determined with study and referencing to other scriptures*.

The *timing and the order of events* in the first three chapters are presented as events in John's day with a divide in time and order at chapter 4 (see 1:19).

In the first three chapters the purpose is to 'unveil' Christ, his plans, his judgements. His deity is shown as the 'lamb' on the throne. Again, *the symbols, signs and sights can be interpreted and understood by referencing other scriptures where the same figures are mentioned*. Many of the figures and signs in this book are not found alone but displayed in other books.

The continued study of this book is guaranteed to produce a '*blessing*' (1:3) and may well engender a heightened sense of how precious the true redeeming Gospel is and thus of our Lord's return for his beloved saints!

4:1-4 '*After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up here, and I will show you things which must be hereafter*' (vs.1)

'*After this*' shows clearly a chronological order here. As stated in Part 1, the timing and the order of events in the first three chapters are clearly presented as immediate events in John's day with a divide in time and order at chapter 4. In particular *chapter 1 verse 19 is a defining verse* in that it separates the *time and order* of the visions given to John: '*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter*'.

'*After this*' now tells us that this is another vision after his vision of the glorified Christ and the message to the seven churches (ch.1-3). The scene now shifts from earth and the church on earth, *to heaven*. (The church is nowhere found on earth after chapter 4).

The '*voice*' heard here was '*as it were*' of a '*trumpet*'. As in chapter 1:10 ('*I...heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet*') - heavenly voices or speaking seem unique to the heavenly places, and with sounds like '*thunder*' or '*many waters*'. In 1:10 the words '*as of*' and '*as it were of a trumpet*' show how John literally heard the voice.

The '*voice*' conveys to John '*I will show you things which must be hereafter*'. After what? '*Hereafter*' is after the events of chapters 1-4 and the 'seven churches'. The '*hereafter*' arguably also adds weight to the understanding that the seven churches were indeed existing churches of that day.

4:2 '*And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne*'

John was to '*come up*' and was '*immediately...in the spirit*' which was necessary to see heavenly things. Other examples of people being taken out of

body and *'in the spirit'* are found in Ezekiel 37:1 and 2 Corinthians 12.

The *'immediate'* action here is similar to the phrase *'a moment, in a twinkling of the eye'* - the instant changing of the body to a spiritual body (1Cor.15:52,53).

4:3 *'And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald'*

A *'throne'* (same Greek word translated *'seat'* in vs.4 for the 24 elders') is described in Heaven. The word *'throne'* is a key word in this book and mentioned more than 30 times. The scene here is similarly described elsewhere throughout the book of Revelation with the main person on this throne as He *'who lives for ever and ever'* (vs.9). God has a *'throne'* with Christ on it (Acts 2:30; Heb.8:1; 12:2). (Another vivid description of the throne is also found in Ezekiel 1:26-28).

The description of the precious stones and the rainbow are also found elsewhere and in the *'new Jerusalem'* (Rev.21). (Sardius and Jasper were also the first and last stones in the breastplate of the high priest which represented the firstborn and last born of the tribes of Israel).

4:4 *'And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.'*

There are twenty four *'seats'* surrounding the one *'throne'* of Christ. *'Twenty four elders'* clothed in *'white raiments'* and with *'crowns of gold'* sit on these seats. The Greek literally reads *'four and twenty'* and should no less be taken as literal than any other number where the original language has a cardinal number. This is literally what John *'saw'*.

Who are the twenty four elders? Many symbolic and allegorical interpretations have arisen to do with these elders, too common to detail here and most lacking exegetical accuracy or reasoning. The best we can ascertain is to *search what is in scripture alone*. These elders are mentioned elsewhere as those who worship the one on the throne (vs.10; 5:9-14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4); they proclaim him as Christ (5:5,6); and have the *'prayers of the saints'* (5:8). The text indicates they are redeemed men from earth as they are *'clothed in white raiment'*, a phrase used for the imputed righteousness of the saints; and are made *'kings and priests and shall reign on the earth'* (5:10). Some say they are angels, but angels are never said to reign with Christ, are not called *'elders'*, and do not have *'crowns'*.

Their *'crowns'* are also not crowns of kings (*'diadema'*) but crowns of victory (*'stéphanos'*) as redeemed by Christ.

4:5,6 *'And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind'* (vs.5,6)

The sights, sounds and *'voices'* of this unique place called Heaven are mentioned numerous times in this book. These are often associated with the

presence of God. Any wonder John had to be ‘*in the spirit*’ to withstand the shock of this distinct and holy place!

The ‘*seven spirits*’ are mentioned in earlier chapters (1:4; 3:1) as that which emanate from Christ, the ‘*lamb*’ (see Part 1, 1:4) and arguably referenced in Zechariah 4:10. (Note also the reference to the number seven as an expression of the perfect or complete).

‘*Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal*’ - the words ‘*sea*’ and ‘*like*’ show figurative language for what John saw of the area ‘*before the throne*’. A similar sight was seen by Moses (Ex.24:10). Heaven is a place of brilliant, shining light refracted with magnificence of colours!

The ‘*four beasts full of eyes before and behind*’ are not normal lower earthly beasts (‘*therion*’) but ‘*zoós*’. They resemble the creatures in the vision to Ezekiel chapter 1 and the Seraphims in Isaiah chapter 6.

4:7-11 ‘*And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*’. *And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created*’.

Is there significance to the four animals? Jewish literature represented these as the primary forms of life in God’s creation. Some commentators believe the four faces represent the four domains of God’s rule: the man represents humanity; the lion, wild animals; the ox, domestic animals; and the eagle, birds. The twelve tribes of Israel camped under the banners of these animal symbols.

The ‘*worthy*’ One who is the centre of worship is described emphatically as being ‘*Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty*’ who has eternally existed (‘*was, and is, and is to come*’ and ‘*lives forever and ever*’). He is rightfully given ‘*honour and thanks*’. The elders ‘*fall down*’ - here the literal definition of ‘*worship*’. They ‘*cast their crowns*’ down in an act of humiliation and submission. Our own ‘*crowns*’ of any excellence, works or achievements are insignificant before the consuming presence of the Almighty One!

‘*All things and for your pleasure they are and were created*’ - this phrase is pregnant with His sovereignty! - God does not exist for us, we exist and were created ‘*for his pleasure*’ (vs.11).

5:1-4 ‘*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man*

was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon

There are various 'books' described in the Bible. Some believe this particular 'book' was the title deed to the earth and only able to be opened by the creator. Others believe the book here is '*The Book of Life*' described elsewhere and which contain the names of the '*overcomers...clothed in white raiment*' who will have their names confessed before the Father (Rev.3:5) and enter the New Jerusalem (21:27). Any not found in that book will be '*cast into the lake of fire*' (20:12-15).

John initially '*wept*' because '*no man...in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth*' can be found '*worthy to open*' this book (vs.6,7).

('Under the earth' is literally '*under down*', considered by some to be Hades or the place of the dead as understood in the Old Testament (Is. 14:9; Job. 10:21,22).

5:5-7 '*And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne*

The identity of the only one worthy to open the 'book' is described as a '*lion*' descendant from the '*tribe of Judah, the root of David*'. This is none other than Christ, '*the lamb who had been slain*'. In the midst of the beast and elders He '*looses the seven seals*' of the book. He has the perfection, the completeness of '*seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth*'.

The '*seven spirits*' was first mentioned in chapter 1 and then again in 3:1; 4:5. Again, by collecting data we saw they are '*before the throne*'; they are '*of God*'; are '*seven lamps of fire burning before the throne*' and the person who has these spirits is the '*lamb*' (Jesus Christ) '*having seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God*'. (These seven spirits are also mentioned in Zechariah 4:10 and Isaiah 11:1,2). At best we can say they are a searching ministry to the world. Again, it is what John '*saw*' that is literal here.

'*And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne*' (vs.7). The anointed of God, the only worthy one, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the lamb slain, is the only one who can take the book from God, elsewhere called '*the ancient of days*' (Dan.7).

5:8 '*And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours [incense], which are the prayers of saints*'.

The figure of '*golden vials full of odours*' is here interpreted as '*the prayers of saints*' which are also mentioned as an offering to God in chapter 8:3-5. The whole scene is again one of worship '*before the lamb*'.

How important are our prayers to God!

5:9,10 '*And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book,*

and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth

The worship continues with a 'new song', again centred on the person who is the 'worthy' one to open the book, and the work done by Him in redeeming a people to God by His own blood. These people 'redeemed to God' are those saved by God 'out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation'. They have been 'made kings and priests' (also mentioned in chapter 1:6). The redeemed are 'kings' in that they will rule and 'reign' with Christ and are 'priests' because they offer worship to God.

The phrase '*and we shall reign on the earth*' is refused as literal by many today, yet many early church fathers saw it as a literal event. The word 'reign' and 'on' ('epi' - upon) are hardly ambiguous in their plain meaning. There is also much scripture throughout the Old and the New Testaments which clearly has the saints *reigning with Christ, and in Jerusalem*. If we do not take such passages in Revelation to be literal, then why would we take other prophetic books such as Zechariah to be literal, where Jesus is physically coming to the Mount of Olives (Zech.14)? This latter passage also directly correlates with the prophecy in Revelation chapter 20 - that Jesus the Messiah will reign *on the earth* for a thousand years. Similarly, there are many other references to the Messiah's 'reign' on 'David's throne' on earth (Is.9:6-7; Zech.14:1-21; Jer.23:5-8...).

5:11-14 *'And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in ['epi' - 'upon'] the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that lives forever and ever'*.

The 'angels, beasts and elders' number 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands'. Is this number a literal number or figurative? The Greek has the words '*muriás muriás*' which is the word for the English 'myriad' - an innumerable number. The repetition here of '*muriás*' would show a large innumerable number as seen by John.

Again, the 'lamb slain' is the centre of worship here by 'every creature'. He is described with a series of adjectives - *power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory...* This worship will go on '*forever and ever*'!

Believer, are you looking forward to and ready for this unfettered and pure worship in a place where we will need to be 'in the spirit' to withstand the shock of seeing and falling down before the lamb slain, our Lord and Saviour?

'Come Lord Jesus'! (Rev.22:20)

Terry Arnold

The Importance of ‘Exegesis’

It is common today for Christians to ‘read’ into Bible verses doctrines or ideas that are simply not in the text. As a young Christian I once was corrected by another minister when he stated I had ‘read’ into a text an opposite meaning. (Revelation 3:5 ‘...I will NOT blot out his name out of the book of life...’ - I had read that God will blot names out by reading over the word ‘not’).

Exegesis is the art of pulling apart a text of scripture to define and clarify *exactly* what the original author meant to say. It involves word studies, investigating grammar, context, looking for main points and asking questions of who, what, where, why. This author has been accused of being ‘too precise and accurate’ in this, but if we are speaking about what God says, is there any limit to achieving accuracy in what is inspired?

One of the masters at this was the great British expositor Martyn Lloyd Jones. He was somewhat influenced by his training in medicine. Lloyd Jones once stated ‘*The most astute and clear thinker I ever knew was my old teacher, Lord Horder. ...In his outstanding success as a doctor...He was a thorough diagnostician and after he had collected his facts, he would reason until he had reached his diagnosis. His method was to work always from first principles, never jumping to conclusions. Having gathered all the data on a patient he would then set up all possible explanations for his illness like a group of skittles. These he proceeded to knock down one by one, as objections were applied to them, until there was only one left.*’ (‘D. M. Lloyd Jones - The First Forty Years’ P.52, by Iain Murray).

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

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

On ‘God loves the sinner?’

Terry, [Re: ‘The Myths We Believe’ - ‘Diakrisis’ May/June/2019 P.8-11] I respectfully suggest you malign God’s love in suggesting it is not present or operative...to sinners...Dear Brother, I would ask you prayerfully consider what you have portrayed of the love of God. I appreciate your article is aiming to provide a balance in understanding our sin nature and the judgement of sin that Christ has borne, over against a false presentation of a God of love that excuses, tolerates or ignores judgement of sin, but in so doing you go too far in suggesting God does not love sinners and that it is unscriptural for us to say such. I plead with you that your eyes might be opened more to His great love!...

[Excerpts here only; John 3:16 was mainly used for the argument above]

(E.L., NSW)

Editor’s comments:

I do not see the Bible explicitly stating that God loves unsaved sinners. I

admit I may have not written the article well enough to show my main point which was *to argue for a Gospel that does not begin with 'God loves you'*. I believe this phrase given to the unsaved minimises the sin factor in the Gospel and the very reason why judgement and the wrath of God is upon them. Emphasis on 'God loves you' is arguably part of the reason we have a huge fall away rate in people confessing salvation. (Many modern tracts today state 'God loves you' and then ignore detailing sin). 'God loves you' was not in the Gospel messages of the great awakenings and the revivals of old. In those there was an emphasis on the law as a means to show sin and thus the reason for the need for salvation from God's judgement.

You *'plead'* that my *'eyes might be opened more to His great love!'*. My eyes were opened when I was saved, *not before*. I then understood the love of God to me personally from Scripture and from His Spirit - His love to all his 'beloved' - *a term he never uses for the unsaved*. If it is said God has a love for the unsaved I fail to see how this is the same love shown to his 'beloved', the elect 'before the foundation of the world'. I agree we must love the unsaved *with the love of God* shown to us in receiving His Spirit. (I fail too often in the battle between the flesh and the spirit - Rom.7&8). But I am reminded of John's epistle (the same author as Jn.3:16): *'Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not...Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren'* (1Jn.3:1,16). This did more *'open my eyes to his great love'*.

Terry, the love of God or God's love is mentioned many times in scripture. But I agree with your article ['The Myths We Believe' - 'Diakrisis' May/June/2019 P.8-11]. I don't see it stated the love of God for the unsaved sinner. It's a hard pill for many to swallow...

(M.C. NSW)

Editor's comment:

Many will imply that God loves the unsaved sinner. But even in this, is it the same as his love for the 'beloved'?

This is a further brief word study on 'love' as used in the New Testament: *God and Christ love believers* (Rom.5:5,8; 8:35,39; Eph.2:4; 3:17; 5:2; 1Jn.3:1; 4:9,16; Rev.3:19).

Christians are to love their enemies (Matt.5:44; Lk.6:27,35).

Christians are to love their neighbour (Matt.19:19; 22:39; Mk.12:31; Gal.5:14; James 2:8).

Christians are to love God and Christ (Matt.22:37; Mk.12:30; Lk.10:27; 2Cor.5:14;13:14; Eph.6:24; 2Thess.3:5; Philemon 1:5; James 1:12; 1Pet.1:8).

Christians are to love other Christians ('one another') (Jn.13:34,35; 15:12,17; Rom.12:10; 13:8; Gal.5:13,14; Eph.1:15; 4:2; Phil.2:2;

1Thess.3:12; 4:9; Heb.13:1; 1Pet.1:22; 2:27; 3:8; 1Jn.3:11,14;3:23; 4:4,11,12).

Christians are to love their leaders (1Thess.5:13).

Husbands are to love their wives (Eph.5:25,28,33; Col.3:19)

Wives are to love husbands and children (Tit.2:4).

Some use John 3:16 for God loving the unsaved sinner but even here the context is to the 'whosoever believes' (vs.15,16), the 'born again' of the earlier verses (vs.3-8). In this passage the unbelievers are 'condemned' (vs.18,19).

This is a 'hard pill to swallow' for some. Gospel presentations, in contrast to those of old, often now begin with 'God loves you'. Martyn Lloyd Jones stated: *'First and foremost we are face to face with the fact of the wrath of God...We have sinned against God...It is the idea of the judgement and the wrath of God have fallen into the background that our churches have become increasingly empty...The more the church has accommodated her message to suit the palate of the people the greater has been the decline in attendance...The great problem is the holy nature of God. Sin must be punished with death...How can God pardon man? Christ crucified is the answer. It is primarily a transaction between God and the father and God the son - God has acted...Only at the cross can I see the enormity of sin, revolt against God. It shows me how helpless I am, the cross shows the futility of human effort...the answer to the power of sin is also through the cross. By seeing the cross in the holy scriptures, through the Holy Spirit, I come to hate sin, to understand the nature of sin. And I come to realise that I am not my own and that I have no right to myself'* (P.22,158 Biography Vol.2)

Israel Falou

Terry, We have been interested in following the Israel Falou stand for Christ and agree that it was not the best way to present it [the Gospel].

We already made a post to open up from those scriptures he quoted. It is perilous times but then when a nation is given over what do we expect? We have to be ready to give an answer for the hope we have with grace seasoned with salt. And what happened in the early church - many lost their money, possessions and lives for Christ. So why have we been so silent when we have had such freedom? So we want to make every opportunity count when this incident comes up...namely 'what do you think of Israel Falou and his comments' etc. And we do also ask where is the voice of the Church leadership' about this event?

(B.S., Sydney)

Editor's comment:

A good point is made here. These events can be used as at least 'icebreakers' and conversations to present the Gospel. All sin is doomed to a lost Christless eternity unless an atonement is found to satisfy God. Christ was that perfect once for all sacrifice to those who will believe in Him.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Blessings Terry, I have a question... We know the Lord Jesus appeared over 40 days after His resurrection to many and he ate, talked and walked through walls... Since that time He has been in glory at the right hand of the Father. Do the Scriptures tell us there is a difference between His resurrected body and His glorified body... I cannot understand how a glorified Christ with His glorified saints can rule in Jerusalem with ungodly flesh where sin still has dominion...

(R.B., NSW)

Editor's Reply:

There may be differing viewpoints on this from those far better than me in their understanding. The scriptures do not give much detail regarding Christ's resurrection body apart from what you have written...

We know two things about Christ's resurrected body. First, from the Gospels and Acts we know that Jesus' resurrected body is *real and substantial*. It could be touched and felt. Luke 24:13–32 depicts the resurrected Jesus as a real person with a physical body. He walked and talked with His disciples; He ate a broiled fish in their presence (Luke 24:41–41). (For more, read John 20:17, 22, 27).

A second thing we know is that Christ's resurrected body is a glorified body. He was unrecognizable to Mary in the garden and to the disciples on the road to Emmaus until He revealed his identity to them. Christ wilfully here held back His true glory and light while He was in the presence of sinful men on the earth after the Resurrection.

Did Jesus' ascension bring about a change that He ceased to have a glorified body of flesh? It is difficult to combine what we know of Christ's risen body before the ascension with what we find after His ascension. My understanding is that Jesus rose from the dead in the same body he died in, but now glorified. (It retained his scars - Jn.20:27, etc). The resurrected body was the glorified body which is imbued with glorious qualities adapted to the magnificent environment yet to come. Christ now dwells with the Father '*in unapproachable light*' (1Tim.6:16). This is evident from the awesome though symbolic description recorded in Revelation 1:12–18 and can also be seen in Christ's blinding appearance to Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1–9). I think Christ retained the same form after His ascension: '*Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven*' (Acts 1:11).

When the saints reign with Christ in the millennial reign '*on*' ('*epi*') earth in Jerusalem (Rev.5:10; Zech.14; Is.9:6,7...), no sin will be in that place. Revelation and Isaiah have many scriptures that speak of this as being a holy place but that outside the gates will be sin and people still in flesh - as I understand it?

Your Comments and Questions

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

Hi Terry,

Thank you for your service. I downloaded your sermons onto USB and play them in my car. I pray daily for all the ministries that preach the One True Gospel to the World. Your talks help me day by day to walk in the Way. God Bless you and your family and guide you in Righteousness. Again, thank You

(M.H., Sth. Australia)

Terry's Itinerary

Ministry trips are being planned for the rest of the year and early next year for Queensland, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania. If any more churches are interested please contact Terry on taministries@bigpond.com or 0411489472

Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord the new pastoring elder added to Hervey Bay Bible Church is well settled in the ministry and seeing fruit for the labour. Please pray as Chris and Gloria take on the pastoring role within this growing church and in discipleship, evangelism and outreach. Pray that more leaders will be trained up to take on roles within the various ministries and study groups in the church.
- Please pray for open doors as the editor attempts to re-establish ministry with other pastors and churches. Pray that this itinerant ministry will be an encouragement to many in its mission of *informing, teaching and equipping.*

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