



# REPENT AUSTRALIA

*“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

*2 Chronicles 7:14*

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## GONE ASTRAY

Which animal is most like us humans? Evolutionists of course maintain it is the monkey, that we are only an advanced member of the ape family. Not so. Then is it the lion, the king of the beasts and master of all he surveys? No. Well what about the fox, renowned for his cunning? No. Or perhaps the owl, supposedly a very wise creature? Again, no. It is an animal we would never in a million years consider the one most like us. Yet the divine Word of God, the fount of all wisdom, states quite emphatically that we are like – SHEEP! But why the sheep of all animals? The prophet Isaiah explained why some 700 years before Christ when he wrote these profound words: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way”. Notice that the Bible does not say, “all we like wolves or tigers”, but “all we like sheep have gone astray”

### **A Perfect Analogy**

We do not usually associate the disobedience of the human heart with anything as silly and harmless as a sheep but rather with more cunning and vicious animals. Nevertheless the sheep is a perfect analogy for it is very much a creature inclined to go astray. If there is only one hole in a fence one of the flock is certain to find it and all the rest will surely follow. So it is with us humans. We are so quick to catch on to things we know are wrong. One discovers a ‘good lurk’ and others soon follow him. Moreover the sheep, so quick to wander, is the least likely of animals to return. The ox knows its owner and the ass its master’s manger; even pigs that may wander by day return to the trough at night; but not so the sheep. Sharp as it may be to discover opportunities for going astray, it seems devoid of all ability to come back to the fold. And such is man – wise to do evil but foolish toward that which is good.

### **Moral Weakness**

Indeed the Scriptures paint a very good picture – man’s going astray is not so much an innate devilry but a matter of pitiful moral weakness. Like sheep, like simpletons, we have gone astray. In large numbers, both men and women go wrong, not because they cannot help it but because they are fools and will not help it. A sheep does not go astray intentionally. It puts its head down to eat the grass and eats and eats and eats. When at last it looks up it finds it has wandered far from the flock and is lost. It was so engrossed in feeding that it paid no attention to where it was going. People too become so absorbed in something or other that they fail to stop and look to see just where they are going. They just put their heads down making money to be successful. It captivates them completely, and almost unconsciously they wander far from the fold of moral and spiritual uprightness, far from the ways of God.

### **“The Passion of the Christ”**

However God knew that man would go astray, so He provided a way back through forgiveness and restitution to the place for which he was originally intended. Isaiah goes on to explain God’s great plan: “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”. Here the Bible is foreshadowing the death of Jesus, God’s Son. He was to pay the penalty for man’s sin, so that sinful humanity could be saved from the wages of sin, even death. He, the innocent One, suffered for us, the guilty. Jesus’ death on the cross was more than the death of a martyr. It too was more than His setting a good example by offering His life for His fellow men. His was the sacrifice God had chosen to be the one and only sacrifice for sin. As has been graphically illustrated in Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” which has focused the world’s attention on the sufferings of Jesus as no other film has ever done, He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree”. It was not a case of pity; it was a case of identity, the identity of His love for us, wilful sinners.

## **Sevenfold Demonstration**

In just three verses of Isaiah Chapter 53 the Word of God presents seven distinct statements on the sufferings of Jesus: "He was despised and rejected by men." "He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions." "He was bruised for our iniquities." "Upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole." "And with His stripes we are healed." Nothing could be more emphatic than this sevenfold demonstration of the great truth that He lived and suffered and died for us because He suffered and died instead of us. If God had forgiven sin by a divine decree without atonement which involves the suffering and death of the Christ then we could assume that God was indifferent to sin. And so man would go on sinning and this earth would become a living hell. But in the suffering of Jesus we have God Himself bearing the crown of thorns, the savage scourging, the piercing nails, the agony of crucifixion, the thrust of the spear in His side. Here on the cross is the suffering love of God bearing the guilt of our sin, which alone is able to melt the sinner's heart and bring him to the repentance that leads to salvation. Yet sadly, man in his lost state does not understand God's plan and purpose for him and does not want to be saved. He is content to go his own merry way worshipping the god of this world - deceived and living in darkness till Judgement Day.

## **Talleyrand**

In the days of Napoleon one of the five directors of the government once asked Talleyrand, advisor and foreign minister to the emperor, what would be most helpful in establishing a new religion. Talleyrand replied, "I have but a single observation to make: Jesus Christ, to found His religion, suffered Himself to be crucified and then rose from the dead. You should try to do as much." Again ponder the words of Isaiah: "And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Whose iniquity is it? It is the iniquity of us all - all of us, poor wandering, self-destroying sheep. Many a Christian must have wondered some time or other how he or she could possibly be among the elect whom God has chosen. Yet there has never been anyone who wanted Jesus as Saviour whom He has refused. His promise is unequivocal: "All who come to Me, I will in no way cast out."

## **The Be-All and End-All**

Isaiah 53:6 begins and ends with "all". What each of us has to do is to go in at the first all and come out at the other. If you want salvation you must enter at the "all" of condemnation by acknowledging that you have gone astray like a lost sheep; and you must come out at the final "all" of justification by believing that God has removed all your sins and placed them on Jesus Christ His Son. When Jesus took our place on the cross our sins were laid on Him and they cannot be in two places at once. Christ has become the sin-bearer of countless believers down through the centuries and He can become yours too. Those who accept His sacrifice for themselves personally will never suffer the future shame of judgement or the terrors of hell while He is their Saviour and Lord. This too can be your assurance if you will accept Him who died for you. Will you?

## **PRAYER**

Loving Father, Lord of Life, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty God, as blood covenant children in the household of faith, we come boldly with hearts of praise and thanksgiving to Your throne of grace to obtain mercy as we look to our Shepherd, Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST in these testing times of need. Glorious Father, we sincerely thank You that by Your Will You set a great spiritual law into motion to produce eternal life for all who believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Holy Father, we receive this life from You that overcomes the law of sin and death. Omniscient God, Your invisible attributes - Your eternal power and divine nature - can clearly be seen in the things You have created which bring us to acknowledge You as our Creator. O Lord God, the earth is full of Your riches and, out of Your manifold grace, we fervently pray You will create in us a new heart and a right spirit and restore us to Your fold.

Sovereign Lord, we thank You we can don Your full armour daily - the breastplate of righteousness, the girdle of truth, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith and Your two-edged sword, the Holy Scriptures - to stand against Satan's evil schemes. Lord Jesus, in Your name and by Your authority, we come against the rulers and powers of this dark world, to pull down the strongholds of injustice, power, greed and deception; the principalities and powers planning lawlessness and terror on Your people in different parts of the world; and against the immoral forces in our midst. Merciful Father, we join Your Spirit of truth to pray for our leaders to look to the Lord Jesus Christ for wisdom to guide them by obedience to Your Word of Truth. O Lord, bring all those who have gone astray back into Your Kingdom of righteousness, justice, peace and liberty, for true security today can only be found in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. We pray this in Christ Jesus' majestic name. Amen.

R.A. Led by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify God with the Brotherhood of Man and in love and faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His Holy Name. Amen

**REJOICE & SHARE IN FAITH THIS MESSAGE IN PRAYER WITH OTHERS & BE BLESSED TO BE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS**