



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

VOLUME 10:3

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THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD

“Where was the merciful God when the tsunami hit?” This question in many forms has been asked often in the past months. It implies of course that a compassionate God would not allow such an awful thing to happen. It reveals too that many people, atheists, agnostics and doubters in particular, are ignorant of a basic understanding of the great human drama that began in the Garden of Eden long ago. For it was there that man sinned and separated himself from God his Creator. Since that time everything God has done has been in relation to that sin and its consequences, always seeking to turn people from their sin and to Himself.

Creation Contaminated

Because sin grew to such immense proportions that it covered the earth He sent the Great Flood to cleanse out the evil that had contaminated His creation. Noah and his family were saved and mankind began all over again. But it was soon on the pathway of sin once more. So God chose Abraham as a father of the faithful and through him His own special, covenanted people. He then sent Moses and rescued them from the bondage of Egypt. In His love for His people He gave them the Law and an understanding of the need for a blood sacrifice as atonement for their sins. Yet they continued to transgress His Law. Later He sent David to teach them of His love as the Good Shepherd. Then He sent His prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and others to turn them back to Himself. But every plan failed as they still continued to sin. Finally, God delivered His master stroke: He sent His Son. Throughout the centuries men had been slaying animals (sheep, oxen and goats) and offering the blood as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins. But when Christ came He made Himself the final sacrifice for sin when He shed His pure, precious blood on the cross. He truly is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Good Friday

This month we celebrate Good Friday, the day when the Son of God faced the mockery of a trial and was condemned to die the death of a common criminal even though He had done no wrong. As was so graphically depicted in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of Christ* Jesus was mocked, spat upon and repeatedly scourged with a whip of leather thongs embedded with pieces of bone or metal. He was then compelled to carry His cross (or rather the cross-beam) to the place of execution where great nails were driven through His hands and feet as He was nailed to the cross. So it was that He suffered the agony of the terrible whipping, the weight of the cross and the intense pain of a crown of thorns which had been viciously thrust upon His head. Then the crucifixion! Suspended between heaven and earth His body torn by pain, hunger and thirst, Jesus bore our sins as darkness covered the earth from noon till three in the afternoon. Then He cried with a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit”, bowed His head and died. It was finished – He had paid the price of mankind's redemption. No longer need the human race bear the guilt of its sins; they had been nailed to the bloodstained cross at Calvary.

No Afterthought

The cross was no afterthought with God. His beloved Son's sacrifice as “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world”, was conceived from the beginning of time to defeat the devil, death, evil and sinful nature. The practice of animal sacrifices was abolished with the crucifixion of Christ whom John

the Baptist called "The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world". In His atonement for sin He stood in the guilty sinner's place. Had God forgiven sin by a divine decree instead of through Christ's agony, suffering and death we could assume that a Holy God was indifferent to sin. But He will not tolerate sin; it must be punished – or forgiven; it cannot remain untouched by God. His holiness and justice cannot compromise; they demand the penalty of breaking divine law. That is, the wages of sin are death. But the gift of God is eternal life through our relationship with Jesus Christ His Son. The tendency today is to believe that God is too severe. And so we invent another gospel: that sin is due to psychological causes and people are not responsible for their behaviour. However, God says we are responsible. And we only have to look at the cross to see how drastically He deals with sin. If He had to send His beloved, sinless Son to the cross to pay its due penalty, then sin must be black indeed in His sight.

A Stumbling Block

Ever since Calvary the cross has been "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but those who are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1Cor. 1: 23-25). Indeed the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified is still foolishness to millions and much of the world has rejected Him and His salvation. To them the cross seems ridiculous and foolish, but those who faithfully believe, have experienced the cleansing of His blood and its transforming power, it has become the only remedy for the spiritual ills of each individual and the world – for in Christ Jesus we become the righteousness of God in His glorious kingdom.

God's Gift to Us All

Question, mock, even deny Him if you must, God is nevertheless a God of mercy and grace as we see from His gift to us all – eternal life through His Son. As the Scriptures state: "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16). Moreover, "he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him". Yet for all that God has done, His love has been widely rejected in many lands and consequently iniquity abounds across the globe. Terrible though the tsunami disaster was, it should be seen as a warning above all else. Let us learn a lesson from the days of Noah when the flood struck and only eight righteous people were saved. It really is time to seek God, truly repent of our sinful ways and turn back to Him in humble contrition. May this Easter season witness an awesome change in countless lives right across this Great Southland of the Holy Spirit – including you, dear reader, as you ponder its crucial message.

PRAYER

Lord God Almighty, the Great I AM; omniscient Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in it, the world and all who live in it, hallowed be Your Name. As blood-covenant children in Your Family of faith, yielded to Your Holy Spirit, we humbly come to thank and worship You in spirit and in truth for Your glorious gift of salvation to all mankind through Jesus Christ's shed blood for our sins on the cross of Calvary. We thank You, Abba Father, that Jesus died our death that we might receive His Life to know You personally in spirit through Your Living Word to reflect Your splendour and Your glory. Sovereign Lord, we acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Holy One by whom the earth is to be restored, evil vanquished, Satan defeated, justice established and the alienation between God and man terminated. We fervently pray for all lost souls to sincerely repent, believe in their hearts and confess with their mouths this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins, cleanse my heart with Your blood from all unrighteousness; take away every doubt, remove every fear and let Your Spirit bear witness with my spirit that my past is forgiven and everything is well with my soul. Lord Jesus, I believe You died on the cross of Calvary for me and I am asking You to forgive me and come into my heart and be reborn in me as Lord of my life. By Your Spirit help me to activate Your Word in faith, surrender my ego to Your Will to serve You forever in Your Kingdom of Righteousness to the glory of God. 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.