

Richard III's Royal Re-Interment A Biblical Perspective

On 26 March 2015, the remains of Richard III will be reburied in Leicester Cathedral. But is the former English sovereign aware he became the ignominious 'king in the car park,' with his grave walked on for centuries and later driven over by 'commoners'?

It was in September 2012 when Richard III's bones were discovered near Leicester Cathedral in the former Greyfriars Church turned car park. As the last Plantagenet king, representing the white rose of the House of York, Richard had died in the Battle of Bosworth in late August 1485, defeated by the armies of Henry VII, the first king of the Tudor dynasty. In an attempt to reinforce the legitimacy of their new royal dynasty, the Tudors are believed by some historians to have given Richard III a bad press, depicting him as possessing both physical and moral blemishes. A century after the king's death, William Shakespeare's play *Richard III* reinforced this reputation. Other historians, however, speak more positively about the Yorkist king.

Whether saint or sinner, the question will arise in the minds of many Christians: Will this former king be aware of his upcoming re-interment? Will he be able to view the event 'from above'? What answer does

the Bible give?

Let us focus briefly on the biblical perspective of what happens when a person dies – whether 'king or commoner.'

The Bible defines death

Although God has a great plan of salvation worked out for His creation, as the initial part of this process He created man a physical being. With access to the Tree of Life closed (Genesis 3:22-23), he could only live for a while and then die. The Creator's verdict is echoed in the Bible: 'For dust you are, and *to dust you shall return*' (Genesis 3:19, emphasis added throughout).

The patriarch Job pondered life's most important question about what happens when people have completed their allotted days: 'For now *I will lie down in the dust*, and You will seek me diligently, but *I will no longer be*' (Job 7:21). Later the patriarch asked the question we all do, 'If a man die, will he live again?'

His answer indicates by what process a person can live again when he said, 'All the days of my hard service will I wait, till my change comes. You shall call and I will answer You' (Job 14:14-15). This is referring to a resurrection from the grave.

The prophet Daniel, living many centuries later, wrote, 'Many of those *who sleep in the dust of the earth* shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Daniel 12:2). Here we see that all the dead, both the saints and the ungodly, would still be in 'the dust of the earth.'

Scripture defines death as a temporary sleep of total unconsciousness until the resurrection. Jesus, before He resurrected Lazarus, told Mary and Martha that 'Lazarus sleeps' (John 11:11). Elsewhere Jesus gave this promise to His disciples when referring to the time of the resurrection of the just: 'The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live' (John 5:25). That includes Job, the other patriarchs and faithful Christians. But exactly where will they be when they hear God's voice? The answer is given in verses 28 and 29: 'Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which *all that are in the graves*

will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good to the resurrection of life . . .’ We see here that those who ‘will hear His voice’ are not in heaven, but will hear God’s voice from their graves.

Resurrection at Christ’s return

The divinely inspired Scriptures make it clear and beyond doubt that none of the saints of God who have lived in Old Testament times have yet received salvation. They are still ‘sleeping’ in their graves. ‘No one has ascended to heaven, but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven’ (John 3:13), is what Jesus told His disciples. The elderly apostle John wrote late in the first century. Having almost certainly outlived the other original twelve disciples and Christ’s mother, not to mention the patriarchs of the Old Testament who had long been dead, he felt no need to add

anyone else into the conclusion of his statement.

The apostle Peter spoke these words at Pentecost, ‘For [king] David did not ascend into the heavens’ (Acts 2:34). The context of Peter’s words is God’s throne in heaven. The fact that David is still ‘asleep’ is verified by the apostle Paul when stating, ‘But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep’ (1 Corinthians 15:20). Paul is referring primarily to the saints in Old Testament times. In verses 22-23 he wrote, ‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterwards those who are Christ’s at His coming.’

Can anything be clearer? *No one has yet inherited everlasting life except Jesus Christ.* He will bestow that gift of salvation on all His followers when He returns – and not before that event still in the future.

The book of Hebrews, chapter 11, describes the Old Testament faithful saints, and at the end of the chapter we are told, ‘And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise’ (Hebrews 11:39). The promise here refers to salvation. They are still asleep in the heart of the earth, awaiting the voice of the archangel and the last trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:16) when they will be given everlasting life at Christ’s return (1 Corinthians 15:52).

God is offering all human beings everlasting life, and the Bible provides the process by which we can attain to that gift from God. But each person must personally choose to follow that process in order to inherit life everlasting in God’s family. To understand what is required of us in seeking God’s offer of everlasting life, please write in for our free booklets *The Road to Eternal Life* and *What Happens After Death?*

Gerhard Marx

Are We All Just Animals Too?

An item on animal cruelty in the *Metro* on Monday, 6 October 2014, elicited an interesting response from its readers. Several were of the opinion that humans are just another variety of animal, and not necessarily a ‘superior’ variety, considering the mess they are making of the planet.

Whatever one’s opinions of mankind’s achievements as the dominant species on planet Earth, it is clear that there is a gigantic gulf between the abilities of people and members of the animal kingdom. Being able to think and reason, to plan and to build is far beyond the capabilities of all other creatures. Sadly, man’s inhumanity, greed and sheer carelessness for his surroundings has produced an environment that is in a precarious state for all living things.

But are we really just animals?

Made after the God-kind

In very first chapter of God’s manual for human life, the Bible, we see how the Almighty created everything. It explains how God caused the earth to produce first plants and then all kinds of animals. God states that the flora and fauna that were created would then reproduce ‘according to its kind’ (Genesis 1:11-12, 21-25).

However, when we reach verse 26, which describes the creation of man, there is a change to this pattern

of words. God said: ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’ In addition, God gave man dominion over everything He had created. Therefore, not only was mankind made in the likeness of God but His Creator had given him a measure of divine authority (verses 26-28).

Sadly, man soon lost his dominion to the wiles of Satan the devil (chapter 3) and chose to be subject to him, instead of to God. The results of this change are clearly seen in the chaotic and dangerous world today.

Judging by the current conditions of this world, it is understandable that some *Metro* readers were of the opinion that man’s behaviour made him the least of all the animals. However, things are not going to remain like this forever. Almighty God is working out a plan here on earth. That plan will enable man to regain his lost dominion and receive even greater authority, as God intended from the beginning of Creation.

We are not animals. Indeed God wants human beings to care for the animals He created for our use (Proverbs 12:10).

All human beings have the potential to be a part of God’s great plan. To understand more, please request or download our free study aid *What Is Your Destiny?*

Ademola Adesupo

David's Psalms of Repentance: How They Can Help

Many Christians are familiar with Psalm 51, the Psalm King David composed during his repentance of two capital sins (adultery and murder). However, most are much less aware of the significance of Psalms 32, 38, 39 and 40.

King David of Israel wrote: 'Bless the LORD, O my soul; all that is within me; bless His Holy Name! Bless the LORD O my soul, and forget not all of His benefits: Who forgives all of your iniquities [sins], Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction' (Psalm 103:1-4).

Sin remains destructive to the very purpose of human life – entering into the Kingdom of God. It stands between us and our eternal salvation. Only the application of the sacrifice of Christ can blot it out (1 Peter 1:18-19). We know that God completely forgives sin, but we have our own role to play as partners with God in the salvation process (see Philippians 2:12-13). Our Creator gives us something very important to do.

We must first repent of transgressing God's spiritual law, the biblical definition of sin (see 1 John 3:4). But we cannot accomplish this on our own without God's active help. 'Or do you desire the riches of His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?' (Romans 2:4).

Many times in his life, King David had to struggle in prayer with his own sinful nature. God inspired him to write several psalms involving repentance – not only for the benefit

of his own generation, but also for all who would come after. His troubled thoughts and prayers to God are recorded for all Christians to read, study and meditate on.

Psalm 32

David begins by emphasising God's generous forgiveness. 'Blessed is he [or she] whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man [or woman] to whom the LORD will not impute iniquity' (Psalm 32:1-2).

Then the king describes the futile agony of procrastination – putting off repentance. 'When I kept silent my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer' (verses 3-4).

Finally, he confesses, 'I acknowledge my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin' (verse 5). This passage also applies to Christians. 'For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found' (verse 6). The simple message remains: Don't put off repentance; go to God on your knees.

Psalm 38

Psalms 38, 39 and 40 come right after Psalm 37, one of David's most positive writings emphasising our ultimate and eternal reward.

Reaching for the goal of everlasting life in the Family of God is not a bed of roses (see Psalm 34:19; Acts 14:22). Even the apostle Paul clearly stated, 'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good

dwells' (Romans 7:18). Further: 'But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified' (1 Corinthians 9:27).

A thousand years before, David had forthrightly described his own plight at a time of great difficulty. 'There is no soundness in my flesh because of my sin. For my iniquities [meaning 'lawlessness'] have come over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me . . . I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long' (Psalm 38:3-4, 6). These are the king's agonising thoughts expressed to God in a pleading prayer.

He recognised that repentance before God is the only solution. 'For I will declare my iniquity [not hide it]; I will be in anguish over my sin . . . Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O LORD, my salvation' (verses 18, 21-22).

Psalm 39

We should realise that these prayers are not just about David. They apply to you and me as well (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17). Today we live in a chaotic world that is increasingly cavalier about sin and casually makes light of it. Many accept and even embrace pagan practices that God plainly says are an abomination in His sight. Our Creator views sin very seriously. He well knows the harm transgressing His holy law does to human beings. God's spiritual law is self-enforcing (see Jeremiah 2:17, 19).

So David wisely asks God to help him examine his life in the light of how much time he may have

left. 'LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, you have made my days as handbreaths, and my days are as nothing before You' (Psalm 39:4-5; compare Psalm 90:9-12, a prayer of Moses).

Repentance and God's merciful forgiveness remain the only solution. 'And now, LORD, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions' (verses 7-8).

Psalm 40

As the king's thoughts of contrition progressed, he realised more deeply that God is for us — and not against us. 'Many, O LORD my God, are your wonderful works which you have done. And your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order. If I would declare and speak

of them, they are more than can be numbered' (Psalm 40:5). Our Creator desperately wants each one of us to be in His Kingdom (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Still, the flesh, the world and the devil are all formidable opponents, and David cried out to God: 'Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me' (verse 11).

The king's utter dependence on God becomes clear in these arduous and protracted struggles. 'For innumerable evils have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me . . . They are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart fails me' (verse 12). His urgent plea to God follows: 'Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me!' (verses 11-13).

David and you

These three psalms show that on occasion a man or woman, even a great king, can be overwhelmed by negative circumstances in his life. We need God to deliver us. Sin itself can become tragically addictive and habit forming. The apostle John tells us that we all have sins to overcome and deal with (1 John 1:7-10; 2:1-2).

When you run into grave difficulties in your life, why not use these three psalms of David as prayers. In 1961, I was enrolled in a college class called Old Testament Survey. When we reached Psalms 38, 39 and 40 the instructor told us to read and study these three psalms privately on our knees. This turned out to be wonderful and helpful advice. God will help!

John Ross Schroeder (1937-2014)

Repentance – Blotting Out the Past

Observers of history have often remarked that humanity tends to repeat the same mistakes. However, do we as individuals have to replicate errors in our own lives?

Last year (2014) marked the centenary of Britain's entry into the First World War. There were many commemorations of this major historical event, as well as television documentaries on the subject. This may have prompted some to think about what part their own forebears played in this war.

However, man did not learn from this event and the tragedy of world war continued nearly twenty years later with a second outbreak which caused an even greater loss of life.

Since the end of the Second World War, there have been many other conflicts both great and small. Humanity seems incapable of preventing one blood-soaked mistake after another. Highly intelligent men have remarked on this tragic tendency. George Santayana famously said, 'Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.' Freidrich Hegel gloomily observed, 'We learn from history that man can never learn from history.' In a similar vein, Laurence Peter a former Professor of Education at the University of California remarked, 'History repeats itself because nobody listens.'

God expects Christians to learn and to change

While humanity refuses to learn the lessons of its collective past, Christians must learn the lessons from their individual pasts. God expects His people to think back upon the course of their lives, instructing us to 'consider your ways' (Haggai 1:5-7).

While God does not want us to morbidly obsess over our past mistakes, even ones that have had irreversible effects on our lives, He does desire that we should repent of our wrong thoughts, actions and behaviours and turn to Him for help to strive not to repeat them.

The apostle Paul wrote, 'Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on . . . I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3:12-14).

For more information on this important subject, please request our reprint article, 'Repentance: A Profound Turnaround!'

Philip Perry



QI have been taught that [in our prayers] one should also ask God's mother and His Saints for help.

A H, Norwich

AIn offering up our prayers to God the Father, we are instructed to do so in the name of Jesus Christ. As God's divine Son and our High Priest, He is the only Intercessor between God and man. 'It is Christ who died . . . who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us' (Romans 8:34).

Since Jesus sacrificed His life as an atonement for our sins, He qualified to be our High Priest and Intercessor. The book of Hebrews shows this clearly, 'Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens' (Hebrews 7:25-26).

Jesus the Son of God is the proper Intercessor between God and man. It is His prerogative and desire to intercede for us, seeing that Christ is able to 'sympathise with our weaknesses' (Hebrews 4:15) as both Son of Man and Son of God.

The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews contrasts the limitation of the Old Testament office of high priest among the Israelites with that of the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ. Christ is the living Interces-

sor and can mediate for us any time we come before God in prayer and make our requests known. A Levitical high priest could only intercede for the sins of his people once a year, on the Day of Atonement. During Old Testament times,

whoever held the office of high priest had the divine right and obligation to intercede for his people. So it was with Christ. He is presently not only the High Priest of His people, His Church, but He is also the perpetual Intercessor between God and man.

The Bible is silent about addressing any other intercessor in our relationship with God the Father, seeing that Christ was 'separate from sinners' – unlike His mother, Mary, and other saints of God. 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' the apostle Paul was inspired to write (Romans 3:23). That included Mary, the mother of Jesus, who declared her own need for a Saviour (Luke 1:47), as well as the need of every other human being who ever lived. Christ exhorted us in Matthew 11:28, 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' We are not to pray to any saints nor to the mother of Christ. We are to come to Him exclusively, because He is the only one worthy to carry the title of divine Intercessor. Jesus is also the 'firstborn from the dead' (Colossians 1:18) and lives for evermore, and is the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

The Bible tells us that 'our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3). In our relationship with God, we can approach both the Father and His Son, customarily addressing our prayers to God through Jesus Christ, ie, 'in Jesus' name.' He is our High

Priest who intercedes on our behalf.

Another reason it is futile to pray to any saints who have died in the faith is explained in the article on page one of this issue of the Supplement and more fully in our booklet *What Happens After Death?* Please request a free copy.

While her early Christian contemporaries no doubt respected Christ's mother, veneration of Mary as the 'Mother of God' is totally wrong from a biblical perspective. Only God is worthy of worship, that is, the Father and His Son – to the exclusion of all others (Revelation 22:9).

Prior to the advent of Christianity and well into the first few centuries of the Christian era, migrant peoples had brought with them other religious beliefs which were unlike the biblical concepts that God revealed to the Israelites in Old Testament times. 'Some of the most powerful divine invaders who came from the East to conquer the West were solar divinities (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings, v. 8, p. 59).

One of these wrong teachings was the belief in the 'mother of god' which spread from the East and was embraced by later Christianity. In Old Testament times she was referred to as the 'queen of heaven' and was at times worshipped by the Israelites in place of the true God (Jeremiah 7:18). In Egypt, she was known as Isis.

With no basis in Scripture, the idea of elevating Christ's human mother, Mary, to the status of 'Mother of God' was clearly borrowed from non-Christian customs – a practice called syncretism. In defining Christian doctrine and beliefs, God's Word must remain the ultimate source of divine revelation – on all questions, including the one above. It teaches that Jesus Christ is the only Intercessor on our behalf in our relationship with the Almighty.



Britain's debt time bomb

As 2015 begins, the average adult in Britain will find he or she owes £576 more than in October 2013, according to The Money Charity [themoneycharity.org.uk/money-statistics/]. Citizens Advice Bureaux are apparently dealing with over 6,000 debt problems every day as people face eviction, having their homes and possessions repossessed, or utilities cut off.

In spite of this, the spend, spend, spend attitude of mind seems to dominate as loan companies offer supposedly simple ways to borrow money, even without a good credit rating, and stores tempt the unwary into buying items they often don't really need. Shopping has become a pastime for many and credit cards make spending beyond one's means all too easy.

Around three millennia ago, King Solomon wrote, 'The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender' (Proverbs 22:7). The same holds true today.

What advice does the Bible offer about wealth and our attitude toward it? Is money really the root of all evil? Do you know what God thinks about bankruptcy? What does the Bible say about charitable contributions? How much should we give?

To discover biblical answers to these important questions and more, please request a copy of our booklet *Managing Your Finances* or download at www.ucg.org/files/booklets/Managing-Your-Finances.pdf.

German debate shows anti-Semitism can worsen quickly

The heightened religious tensions in Jerusalem caused by ongoing Jewish-Muslim conflicts are spilling over into Europe.

Germany in particular is struggling with the re-emergence of hostility against the Jewish people. After the endemic anti-Semitism which resulted in the Holocaust during World War 2, Germany had effectively stigmatised any form of institutionalised or personal anti-Semitic dialogue. But, according to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*, Germany's reputation as a safe haven for European Jews is threatened by the resurfacing of a 'long-simmering debate of how much criticism of Israel is appropriate in German politics' (Anton Troianovski, 'Anti-Semitism Debate Roils German Left,' Nov. 19, 2014).

The situation came to a head after two journalists who compared Israel's actions against Palestinian Arabs in Gaza to Nazi Germany's genocide of Jews, were blocked from attending an official leftist party meeting. This was not the first salvo: 'The debate comes on the heels of protests this summer touched off by the Gaza conflict, which Jewish organisations say led to the worst outbreak of public anti-Semitism seen in Germany in years' (ibid).

Resurgence of anti-Semitic sentiment in Germany shows how widespread anger at Europe's Jewish population has become in past months. As secular and biblical history reveals repeatedly, cultural stigmatisation of Jewish populations often leads to violence. Keep a close eye on Europe in the coming weeks, months and years. (Source: *The Wall Street Journal*.)

The global economy and Russian sanctions

Following the Russian takeover of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, the Western powers imposed economic

sanctions on Russia. President Vladimir Putin had hoped to ride out these sanctions, relying on massive oil exports to support the country's economy. Recently, however, oil prices tumbled towards \$50 a barrel and Russia began to struggle.

The Economist states: 'The immediate worry is the oil price. Mr Putin is confident it will recover. But

The economic system at times seems very stable, but the truth is that the world economy is all very interconnected and shaky.

supply seems set to increase, with OPEC [the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, including states in the Middle East, Africa and South America] keen to defend its market share. American government agencies predict oil prices could average \$83 a barrel in 2015, well below the \$90 level Russia needs to avoid recession' ('Russia: A Wounded Economy,' Nov. 22, 2014).

The economic system of the world at times seems very stable, and at other times seems to be teetering on the edge. The truth is that the world economy is all very interconnected and shaky. Little movements here or there can impact national economies for years. The Russian example is still playing out, but we can see how sanctions can affect a country.

God's coming government and global economy will be stable, just and true. Look to the pages of your Bible and see what God has in store for His coming Kingdom. (Source: *The Economist*.)

Why bad news in *The Good News*?

Speaking of conditions before His return, Jesus Christ said our planet will experience ‘a time of great distress, such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again’ (Matthew 24:21, Revised English Bible).

The United Church of God, whose members and supporters provide the financial backing for *The Good News*

and other publications, proclaims the good news of the imminent return of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet we often report on the negative consequences of human behaviour leading to the very conditions Jesus described.

Following Jesus’ example, part of our purpose is to highlight the lessons mankind is writing in its self-centred way of living and to warn of where this way is leading. But more than that, our intention is

to illustrate the need for an alternative way of life – the godly way of life Jesus revealed and personified. Today’s world is filled with bad news. Yet the future holds incredible promise – Christ’s return to establish the Kingdom of God (Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 11:15), ushering in a wonderful world of peace, prosperity and plenty during which all people will at last learn to live God’s way of life. ***This truly is good news!***

Horrific Accidents – *Random Chance or Divine Punishment?*

The last weeks of 2014 saw some horrific accidents: A runaway lorry in Glasgow killed six shoppers and injured several others; at least ten people died in a ferry fire off the coast of Greece; and 162 passengers and crew were lost when a Malaysian aircraft came down in the Java Sea. All this as South East Asia remembered the multiple thousands who died ten years ago in the ‘Boxing Day’ tsunami.

What is the meaning of seemingly random accidents? Have the victims done something that deserves such punishment? And what, if anything, does God want us to learn from such events?

How Jesus approached disasters

Long ago, Jesus spoke about a couple of grievous events that had struck the Jewish community. Luke 13:1 begins, ‘There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.’ Pilate had apparently put to death some Galileans as they were offering sacrifices in Jerusalem. We do not know the complete story, but Galileans had a reputation as hotheads, and perhaps they had tried to stir things up and the military had responded.

Since the theology of the day attributed individual suffering to individual guilt, people would assume the Galileans had sinned. But Jesus posed a challenging question, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.’ He refocused the audience’s attention away from the victims, as if to say, ‘How does your life stack up against God’s standards?’ Now is the time for complete and incontrovertible change – repent!’ (verses 2-3).

Moreover, He did not say it just once. In verse 4 He brought up another recent calamity, asking about ‘those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?’

Again, Christ separated the disaster from sin: ‘I tell you,

no; but unless *you* repent, you will all likewise perish.’

A message about repentance

Wise King Solomon once wrote, ‘Time and chance happen to everyone’ (Ecclesiastes 9:11). We do not always control the events that happen to us.

In effect, Jesus was telling His audience, ‘You’re going to die, not necessarily in the same manner, but death will come to you all. Learn from this. Change your life. Examine yourself and your relationship with God, realising life can be very short.’

These poor people were just like everyone else, with human weaknesses and strengths. While going about their daily routines they were suddenly caught up in events that ended their lives.

Life is short

It is a sobering thought. We do not like to think about it, and to be blunt, most of us do not consider that life is really like this. But it is. There are no guarantees.

Events happen over which you have no control, and sometimes good and well-meaning people – people just like you and me – get hurt. Time and chance could unexpectedly strike at any time.

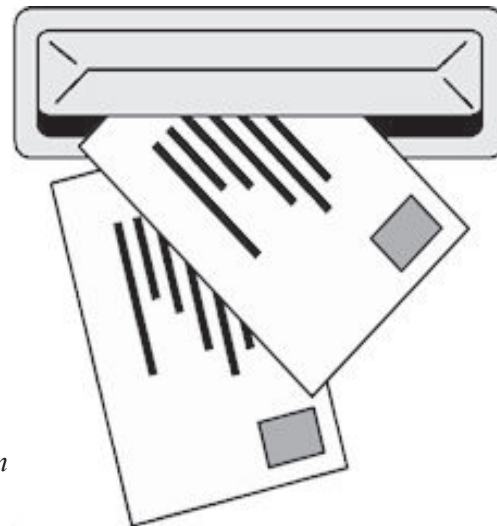
So what should we do?

Repentance is not a fashionable word today. Its basic meaning is to change, to stop going in one direction, and to turn around and go in another. Biblically, and as Christ meant it here, it means to stop breaking God’s law and begin to obey it, to turn away from sin and turn instead to God.

If you want to make sense out of this confusing, sometimes frightening and tragic existence, please download or request our booklets *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* and *Transforming Your Life*.

Keeping close to God may not prevent every accident or incident in our lives – we will all die at some point, and we are told to expect many trials (Psalm 34:19). However, God is able to, and often does, protect those truly seeking Him.

Letters from our readers



Sound biblical teaching

Your magazines are so inspiring and enlightening. It is rare to read sound biblical teaching that is accurate when compared to God's Word.

M W, Hertfordshire

I have learned more from your publications than in any Bible study group or church. They are so interesting, far-seeing and truly biblical.

I A, Paignton

I always look forward to receiving *The Good News* as everything comes from the Bible, so you know it is the truth.

W B, Leeds

I find your articles answer things I've often wondered about. Also your 'Questions and Answers' have been spot on. The one about 'Today you will be with me in paradise' (July/August 2014) particularly answered a question I had always wondered about.

N C, North Yorkshire

I love the thought-provoking articles in *The Good News* magazine. The truths expressed in each issue are timeless.

L O, Bradford

Many thanks for all the literature you have sent me. I find it very interesting, well-presented and easy to understand.

J F, Dublin

Yes, please, I would like to continue receiving *The Good News*. It is an important part of my day-to-day life. Sometimes I struggle to effectively answer my friend's Bible questions and always, in each issue of *The Good News*, there comes an article which is right on the button. This time it is 'God's Plan as Revealed Through the Resurrections' [September/October 2014]. Very many thanks to you.

M G, Bolton

No hope without God

Thank you for all your kindness in sending me *The Good News*. I am 83 years old. If God did not exist there would be no hope for anyone.

Reader in the Isle of Man

Bible Study Course

The *Bible Study Course* is superb. It has given me a real hunger for God's Word. I have particularly

enjoyed Lesson 4. It has helped me understand the suffering of mankind.

K S, Aberdeen

Current events and God's purpose

Like so many of your readers, I am fed by your knowledge and insight, not just on the Bible, but current events being worked out in God's purpose.

I W, Cheadle

Many thanks for *The Good News* magazine. I very much enjoy the articles and explanations of God's promises in relation to the problems in the world today.

Y B, London

Transforming lives

I love reading *The Good News*. It is packed with information of help and is good reading. Please send me the booklet *Transforming Your Life*.

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