



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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MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? AN EASTER MESSAGE

Hedley Vicars was the dashing young cavalry officer played by Errol Flynn in the film "The Charge of the Light Brigade" who died at Sebastopol in the Crimea in 1854 leading on his soldiers, crying out, "This way, men of the 97th". One day while waiting for a fellow officer he picked up a Bible on the table to while away the time. The first verse to catch his eye was: "*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin*". "Is there really something that can cleanse away all my sins?" he pondered, "If so, by the blessing of God, I'll have them cleansed away." Very soon he was rejoicing in JESUS CHRIST who died for his sins on the Cross and from that moment was his constant companion. This verse of Scripture reveals the central fact of Christianity. For at the heart of the Gospel is the atoning death of the Lord of heaven and earth to set mankind free of sin and guilt.

"Redeem the World"

When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem 2000 years ago He came on a mission. And what a mission it was! Surely nothing in *Mission Impossible* could remotely compare with the magnitude of His task. His commission from the Father was: "Redeem the world!" But why should the world need redeeming? What is wrong with man that needs cleansing from within him? The answer is found in the Garden of Eden when the first man and his wife disobeyed God. Ever since, men and women have continued to disobey God and break His moral laws. "Man is actually a paradox," says Billy Graham. "On the one side there is futility, degradation and sin; on the other side there is goodness, gentleness and love. As Seneca said, 'Men love their vices and hate them at the same time.' Wherever we look we see the paradox of man. On the one hand he is a helpless sinner, and on the other hand he has capacities that would relate him to God. No wonder Paul spoke of man's disease as the mystery of iniquity." For, indeed, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Missing the Target

Man's life has been greatly influenced by this iniquity, or sin, as we often call it. But what really is 'sin'? It is the missing of the target at which we should all be aiming. That is, sin is a failure to measure up to God's spiritual standard spelled out in the Ten Commandments. And since none of us is capable of fulfilling God's laws at all times, we are all target-missers. The prophet Isaiah sums us up pretty well when he says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way." This tendency to do wrong has been inherited down through the human race, but too, we are sinners by our own choice. And the result is that sin affects our mind, our will and our conscience. The main reason why people will not accept Christ and His redemption is that sin casts a veil over their hearts and minds. The Gospel is not anti-intellectual. It requires the use of the renewed mind, but the mind that is affected by sin is rebellious to it. It is a mind that is channelled along a groove of earthly passions, of satisfying self and its physical desires. Sin also affects the will. Today there are multitudes of people living under the tyranny of pride, ignorance, unbelief, jealousy, prejudice or selfishness. The result is all kinds of conflict and violence, greed and gluttony, promiscuity and perversion, callousness and cruelty, anxiety, pain, heartache, fear and misery. Sin also hardens the conscience. Many people have desensitised their consciences by constantly excusing themselves and rationalising their behaviour when they knew that what they were doing was wrong. In fact, they have lied to themselves for so long that they don't know the difference between fact and fiction, truth and a lie.

A System of Sacrifice

Sin can do us all much harm. While sin remains, we are on the wrong track to happiness and success. Yet by ourselves we cannot overcome sin, nor remove the stain on our lives which it leaves. We are no different from the ancient Hebrews whom God provided with a means to help deal with their sins. We too somehow need to be cleansed of them. The religion of the ancient Israelites was founded on a sacrificial system. When God made a covenant with them as His chosen people their relationship was based on law. Of course, they could not keep the law entirely; they broke it, and the breaking of it was sin. This sin had to be atoned for, to remove their feelings of guilt and to show their repentance. God then made a way out for them by decreeing that those who had done wrong should offer animal sacrifices to Him. In this way, God was leading His people to see the wickedness of sin and that it was necessary to shed blood to satisfy His demand for justice. The essential part of every sin offering was the blood, because the life is in the blood. In fact, the Scriptures say that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Yet, in spite of all the countless beasts that were slain throughout the history of the Hebrews, it was not enough. Still the people sinned, and went on sinning. Consequently, in His divine grace God sent His own Lamb, His only beloved Son of whom John the Baptist declared, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world".

Wounded for Our Transgressions

When Jesus Christ was crucified on the Cross of Calvary He was the sacrificial Lamb dying for the sins of mankind. Seven hundred years previously Isaiah had prophesied, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities" (Is 53: 4, 5). The Eternal God descended from the heights of glory to share mankind's sufferings, its temptations, and its death. He came to suffer instead of to punish. On behalf of the Eternal Lord of Righteousness, Jesus came to earth to express God's condemnation of human sin. His blood was shed to cleanse us from the guilt of our sins. In that blood there is such virtue as to transform the sinful nature of man through a process of sanctification to maturity, measured by nothing less than the fullness of Christ. *And the blood of Christ goes on cleansing continually!* This is God's way to bring His peace and happiness. It is folly to the world and those blinded by the allurements of pleasure and personal gratification; but it is God's way. We must never consider our sins of such no consequence to our spiritual relationship with the Father in heaven that they can be ignored. They must be *confessed* and *repented* of, as Scripture assures us: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness".

Reconciling the World

Moreover, by God's saving grace, the blood of Christ cleanses us completely from all our sins to live a new life of faith in Jesus. Through Him who loved us enough to die for us and wash us from our sins in His precious blood we are now cleansed of those sins, and are as truly forgiven as we shall be on the day we meet our Lord face to face. That is, if we belong to Him. **Is JESUS CHRIST your Saviour?** Do you believe and accept Him as the Son of God who gave His life, shedding His very life blood so that you can be forgiven for all your sins? Do you have any love in your heart for Him who loves you so? Know this: "That God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5: 19-21)

PRAYER

Lord God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as covenant servants filled with Your Holy Spirit and cleansed in Jesus' blood, we humbly fix our faith in Him, the Living Word, and rejoice in the freedom He gives us. Sovereign Lord, give us a deep desire to please You as we worship in Spirit and in truth filled with a firm faith in His finished work on the Cross. Abba Father, clothe us in Your full armour as we go forward in battle against the forces of evil in this world, our credentials being the blood, the Holy Spirit and Your Holy Word. Grant us, O God, the power of Your godliness as we proclaim the saving grace of a risen Saviour to a lost, deceived and confused world. Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for being our great High Priest, always interceding for us as Your new creation with the divine ministry of reconciling the world to God. As we yield to Your omnipresent Spirit, may rivers of living water flow out to many lost, thirsty souls. Blessed Jesus, in Your mighty name we pull down principalities and powers at work in various demonic organisations and put them under Your feet. Sovereign Lord, help us fulfil Your purposes on earth, hastening the great Day when all things are consummated in the return of the King of kings and Lord of lords. In Jesus' majestic name we pray. Amen.

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

REJOICE IN COVENANT PRAYERS FULLY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT DAILY FOR AUSTRALIA'S REVIVAL.