

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

Mid-January 2009

Unless noted otherwise, Scripture references are to the New International Version, United Kingdom version (NIV-UK). Where not quoted in full, you can read the entire Scripture text by clicking on its citation.

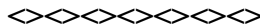
FRIENDSHIP

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you (John 15: 14, 15).

The end of Jesus' earthly ministry was come. During those three-and-a-half years He had taught truths which served to test His followers, but which proved to be a cause of stumbling to many – truths which had brought the opposition of the orthodox Jewish church. Even some of His followers had said: 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?' – and left Him ([John 6: 66](#)).

But now this work of separation was over. Even Judas had gone out, and Jesus and the Eleven were alone. He had been telling them some things regarding their high privileges, their new relationship with God to be realised after His death, and about the great changes they would experience after He would ascend to the Father, when His work of redemption would be recognized as complete, accepted as perfect by His Father. Then would come power from on high – the spirit which would bestow on them the ability to understand heavenly things.

[\[continue reading at the site\]](#)



THE RANSOM

Why did Jesus have to die? For this overview we'll take Romans 5: 19 as the basis for our explanation: 'For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous'.

Adam the Sinner

To properly understand the question and its answer, we need to go back to the time when Adam fell into sin through disobedience. (For simplicity, we will leave Eve out of this equation.) By his transgression Adam came under the dying process and lost his perfect standing before his Creator. God had warned Adam that the penalty of disobedience was *death* (not life on another plane) ([Genesis 2: 17](#)). Adam's offspring came under his penalty.

Jesus the Offset

In order for Adam to be acquitted, Divine Justice demanded an *equivalent* substitutionary payment: Adam the perfect man could be bought out from under the sentence of death only by another perfect man. The redemption of Adam would mean the redemption of his race, the entire human family. But as no one could be found amongst Adam's race to pay such an exact redemption-price, [\[fn1\]](#) it was necessary that the Son of God be born in the flesh, but not of Adam's lineage. Hence the Virgin birth. On the cross Jesus paid the Ransom-Price with His own self ([1 Peter 2: 24](#)).

Couching this in another figure, we might say that bail has been paid at the front desk, but the cheque has not yet been cashed. The release of the prisoner is guaranteed, but there is a delay between Cross and Deliverance. The hiatus has been a difficult, fruitful one. Difficult, because of the unspeakable sufferings through which the human family has had to pass, collectively and as individuals; troubles so complex that many have lost belief in God and have abandoned what faith

they may have had. Fruitful, because in the interim God has been selecting a Bride for His Son, a small company of faithful followers who have proved loyal during this period in which faith is essential, the age of Election. The age to come (the Millennium) will be one of Free Grace, during which the full benefits of Christ's sacrifice will be applied for all and God's love for mankind will be irrefutably demonstrated and the present distress compensated for.

[\[fn1\] Romans 3: 10; Psalm 49: 7-9 \[back to text\]](#)



ISRAEL

The state of Israel has rarely been out of the headlines since her inauguration into the company of nations in 1948. She occupies a pivotal place in world geography. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that *wherever* Israel were located would be pivotal. She is a magnet for trouble. As the chosen people of God, from the days of Moses on, the history of the world has been tangled up with hers.

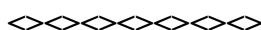
Israel attracts controversy: she has many fans but a growing body of detractors, especially in large swathes of the world media. [\[fn2\]](#) The recent military campaign against Hamas in Gaza has stoked up resentment against her and has cast her government in a bad light. Israel may not always be loveable, but she is always loved by God – though not for her own sake. In its current secularizing phase – Jewish by nature and tradition, if not necessarily by belief – Israel is, as St. Paul notes, cherished by God for the memory of its ‘fathers’ – those faithful patriarchs who apprehended the Abrahamic promise by faith ([Romans 11: 28, 29](#)). As the earthly repository for the promises of God (which still await fulfilment), the nation of Israel is the visible and raw guarantee of God's intention to bring eternal blessings to all mankind.

As noted in our [December 2008 Newsletter](#), the Jewish people were sponsored and protected by the two most powerful Christian nations of the 19th and 20th centuries (Britain and America). Though well-endowed as a military power in her own right, [\[fn3\]](#) Israel is not yet fully independent from Gentile power. The United States stands between her and any mortal threat to her existence, a situation which likely will prevail for some years yet, at least until the political and economic price which the U.S. must pay to support its protege is either too high or impossible. However it may come about, Israel will be left to fend for herself, forced to the brink of destruction, but ultimately delivered ([Zechariah 14: 1-3](#)).

[\[fn2\]](#) In [this](#) overview, the BBC lumps Israel and the Palestinian Territories together, perhaps presaging the inevitability that Palestine will become a fully fledged state. This cheek-by-jowl arrangement promises to be a wedge of pressure against the Jewish state, especially with the Palestinian claim to Jerusalem. There are calls by some for a ‘one-state’ solution: a joint Palestinian-Israeli nation. [\[back to text\]](#)

[\[fn3\]](#) Although not a declared nuclear state, Israel is estimated to possess between 150 and 200 nuclear warheads. The Israeli Defence Force is superbly trained and well-equipped with non-nuclear materiel by the United States and Britain. Israel is also exports weaponry to other countries.

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DRAG-NET

Items of interest from the Web

No getting away from Him . . .

Jesus declared that if He were ‘lifted up’ – an allusion to crucifixion – He would draw ‘all’ to Himself ([John 12: 32, 33](#)). Whether atheist, agnostic, Christian of any or no denomination, or a believer from another faith, there is no avoiding the question of Jesus. [Here](#) the Australian commentator, Clive James, reflects on the powerful attraction of Jesus.

Sunday Schools . . .

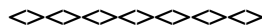
Many Britons who grew up in the 1950s and 60s learned their Bible and their love of hymns at Sunday School. In addition to the religious benefits they bestowed, the [Sunday School movement](#) changed the face of British society in ways you might not have imagined.

Islamic worship in Britain . . .

The building of [mosques](#) in Britain, a touchy subject these days, is not a recent phenomenon.

Cooling off on warming . . .

U.S. Senate Minority Report [Update](#): More Than 650 International Scientists Dissent Over Man-Made Global Warming Claims



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