

QUICK QUOTE

"Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."

Abraham Lincoln

What think ye of Christ?

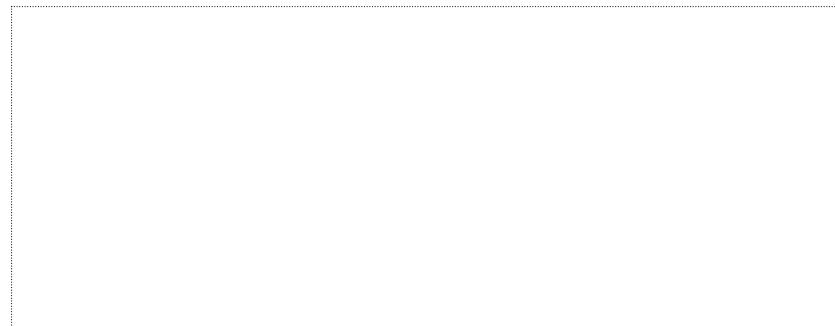
faith matters

fm

important spiritual matters for you

Issue 2

This copy of *faith*matters comes to you with the compliments of:



We hope you have enjoyed reading it and that you will follow up the suggestion made in the articles that you should read the Bible for yourself. We are not asking that you join a church, nor become 'religious' or turn over a new leaf, but that you find the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Friend. He can forgive your sins and assure you of peace in your life and a place in heaven.

If you do not have a Bible or New Testament of your own then do purchase one. They are available quite cheaply in most bookshops like Waterstones or W. H. Smith, and in different versions to suit your reading taste.



Contact us through our website www.faithmatters.org.uk where you can access a digital version of this magazine, order a New Testament and other helpful booklets, read the Bible, and of course email us. Distributors can order the next issue there as well.

Look out for the next issue of *faith*matters in early -2013, DV.

COVER STORY

As a matter of fact...

The title of our publication is like a double-edged sword, i.e., it cuts two ways.

In one sense it makes a claim – 'Faith Matters'. This is because what you believe does matter. It is nonsense to suggest that we can all believe what we want and it won't make any difference in the end. For instance, if I could choose to believe that every aircraft flying out of New York JFK Airport is destined for the Falkland Islands it wouldn't change the fact that despite there being two airports on the Falkland Islands there are no flights go directly from New York JFK Airport. All the genuineness in the world or enthusiasm for what I believe will not change the facts. This is why we want you to read our free leaflet. It talks about the truth, and as the Lord Jesus said:

'the truth will set you free'

'Faith Matters' could also be a question. So if you have a questioning mind then read on. Does it matter why we exist – yes? Does it matter



who Jesus was? Absolutely, especially as He claimed to come from God and stated that He came 'that we might have life'. If you miss this you miss everything.

It is also a title describing the information that is contained in this publication. It is about matters of faith. Please read some of the following articles. They are varied, interesting and informative. The people who write are from different places and do different jobs but they all have personal experience of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Their main desire is not to mislead you but to share with you what they have come to enjoy – peace with God, forgiveness, a clear conscience, purpose in life and the prospect of heaven at the end of this life.

Stephen Baker Huxton

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THE REASON WHY!



By Michael Browne, Bath

May I share with you the factual account of my conversion to Christ over 60 years ago. I would like to put on record how, as a young Royal Marine Commando fighting in the jungles of Malaya, I turned - in the language of the Holy Bible - from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God! That kind of language may seem strange to modern ears, but for all that, it accurately describes the moment of inner spiritual enlightenment which I experienced when I turned to God through faith in His living Son, Jesus Christ. At that moment I knew beyond all doubt I received the forgiveness of sins and assurance of everlasting life through faith alone in the promise of a sin-pardoning God.

As you continue reading this brief paper I want to ask you a personal question. Have you ever had a serious, inner-heart experience with God, that changed your life and gave you an assurance that all the wrong-doings and shameful deeds of your life had been forgiven, and you were

washed and cleansed forever in God's sight? What a question! But that's exactly what happened to me.

Many times in the combat situations we were living through in our jungle warfare my life had been endangered - and many times I could have been killed - some were, but we were spared. In those days we all lived with the possibility of death and it made an impression on our young hearts. But isn't it true even now as you read these words, that death, and the judgement that lies beyond death, is only a breath away, just as the Bible warns us,

'Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.'

While taking a specialist military course in Singapore I was given a gospel booklet called 'The Reason Why'. I read it sometime later after seeing a film 'Samson and Delilah' in which Samson, God's champion, was

enabled by his own strength to miraculously destroy a heathen temple after calling upon God for divine help. God used this incident in the biblical history of Israel to powerfully convince me of the reality of His existence. If God existed as the holy Creator of our universe, then I must be responsible to

'for the first time ever I understood the 'reason why' the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, needed to die upon the cross.'

Him for my life which was unholy and sinful! I came under powerful conviction of sin as a result and wanted desperately to find out how I could make peace with God. In a word, what I must do to escape the inevitable judgement of a Holy Creator God? What must I do to be saved?

I then read the booklet 'The Reason Why' and for the first time ever I understood the 'reason why' the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, needed to die upon the cross. Most importantly, what

that death meant for me as a sinful young man. I read that God hated sin but loved the sinner - and loved him so deeply He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to the brutal death of the cross so that anyone, no matter how guilty and sinful, who believed might not suffer eternal judgement but rather be granted eternal life. That while Jesus hung upon the cross, God was judging Him as standing in the place of guilty men, and that His death would be accepted as the sinner's all-sufficient sacrifice. The assurance that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice, and salvation was now obtainable for all who believed, was given in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus on the third day after His death.

This truth in essence is what I believed all those years ago, and through faith in the promise that 'whoever believes in Him (Jesus Christ) should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John ch3:16) I was wonderfully converted. My whole life was changed, and ever since that moment of faith or trust I have had peace with God. I know I am saved - but what about YOU?



Ian Jackson, Eastbourne

A developing area of law in the United Kingdom involves what are known as 'super injunctions'. A Sunday paper might get hold of a story which includes salacious details of the private life of a famous person. That person might just be involved in things that he or she does not want anybody else to know about. The secret details must not be published. The private facts must be kept private, whatever the cost price. And the cost is high.

Well paid lawyers are instructed. Application at short notice is made to a High Court judge. The intention of the applicant is that the court will issue an injunction against the newspaper to prevent his or her secrets being splashed across the front page. In some cases the terms of the injunction are so stringent that no one is even allowed to report that

an injunction is in existence! The press are not happy.

Sometimes this backfires spectacularly, as in the recent case of the famous Manchester United and Wales footballer, Ryan Giggs. After it was widely reported on Twitter that he had sought and obtained an injunction, the proceedings eventually failed to achieve the desired end.

The famous literary detective Hercule Poirot worked on the principle that everybody has something to hide. We all know how true this is. And not even the most super of super injunctions will hide the secret forever. The Bible speaks about the day when

'God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel'

To think that we can live as we like and there be no consequences is to live under a serious illusion. 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do'. 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God'. One day the Lord Jesus Christ spoke about the fact that 'there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known'. 'Therefore', He said, 'whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops'.

The Creator is the Judge and we are all accountable to Him. The day is set in the calendar of God for the last court sitting ever. There will be no 'not guilty' pleas, no lies told, no injustice done. There will, in fact, be no defence pleadings at all, as every person in the court will have brought again before them the sins of their life. The books of people's works will be opened and out of those books every single person will be judged and punished.

And yet, the Christian gospel is all about the love of God so acting towards all people that the whole record of their sin and failure may be cleared from those books of God. Of those who have acknowledged the fact that they are sinners, and have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, and

acknowledged Him as Lord, God says, 'Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more'. This does not mean that God ignores their sins, or conveniently forgets about them, but that He deliberately and judicially puts them away from His memory. Their sins will never again come up before God.

How can this be? Can God really be a just God and yet clear the guilty of their guilt before Him? The glorious answer is, 'Yes, He can'. And He will.

The message of the Christian gospel is totally different from any other religious message. Those others focus on the need for a person to earn or merit the forgiveness of sins and peace with God but the gospel offers salvation as a gift, to be received by faith. The message centres on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. There, the sinless, holy Son of God offered Himself to God as the great sacrifice for sin and sinners, bearing the sins of others, enduring divine wrath against sin instead of sinners and satisfying every claim of the righteous Judge of all. His resurrection from the dead and present exaltation in heaven shows that what He accomplished at the cross has been accepted for ever by God as the one ground upon which sinners can be saved.

'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Acts 16:31

RESCUED!

After more than
two months underground!

Andrew Barnes



On 5 August 2010 thirty-three men set out for a normal day's work, but little did they know that it would be a day that would change their lives forever, and that they'd be the subject of worldwide attention for the next three months.

The men were miners who worked at the San José gold and copper mine, 28 miles north of Copiapó in Northern Chile, South America. At about midday the men started their descent into the mine via a series of access ramps until they reached their rest area 700m (2300 ft) underground. At 2pm a huge rock fall completely blocked the access shaft and produced a thick dust cloud which travelled through the mine temporarily blinding the men.

Communication with the surface was completely cut off, so the only option the men had was to sit and wait. Above ground rescuers desperately tried to access the men through various shafts but with no success. They soon realised the seriousness of the situation - 33 men were trapped deep underground with no contact with the surface. The rescuers brought in a special percussion drill to attempt to reach the men.

The President of Chile cut short an official trip to visit the mine, where a small temporary village, 'Camp Hope', had been set up. The situation soon came to the attention of the media and the plight of the miners was broadcast worldwide.

After 17 days the drill broke through. When it was pulled out the rescuers found a note attached to the end of the drill - 'Estamos bien en el refugio, los 33' ('We are well in the shelter, the 33'). The words became the motto of the miner's survival and rescue effort and appeared on news stories, t-shirts, websites and banners worldwide.

The miners' supplies were sent down the hole in a special shuttle. Food, drink, clothes - everything that was needed for survival. Many big organisations came to their aid, Apple sent iPods, Sony gave PSPs and Oakley provided sunglasses. Amongst the miners was José Henriquez, a christian preacher. He realised the truth of God's

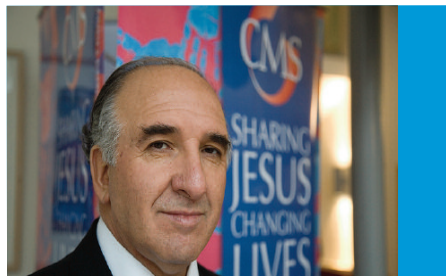
word, the Bible, where it says 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Their physical needs were met with the supplies, but he knew the men's spiritual needs were equally important. He ordered 33 Bibles to be sent down the hole, one for each man.

By candlelight, the miners read from their Bibles. They read about the greatest rescue mission ever, when Jesus Christ, God's Son, came down from heaven to earth in order to rescue and save us. They read of a God who loves them and cares for them, and wants them to trust in Him. Many of the miners realised that as well as being trapped underground, they were trapped by their sins and José Henriquez reports that many believed on the Lord Jesus Christ whilst underground, meaning their sins were forgiven and they were promised a place in heaven.



The rescue capsule used bring the men to the surface

For 69 days the miners read from their Bibles and prayed together. Meanwhile, the rescuers above ground were drilling a much larger hole, through which the men could be lifted. Eventually the miners were brought to the surface, watched live on TV by millions around the globe. If you saw the events, you may have noticed that most of the men were wearing beige t-shirts, with the words 'Gracias Señor!' – 'Thank you Lord!' printed on the front. They were truly thankful to God for preserving them for so long. Many of the men fell on their knees when they reached the surface, their hands together, prayerfully thanking God for their safe return to the surface.



José Henriquez is now a travelling preacher and in 2011 he came to the UK to tell of his experiences underground with his fellow miners. He said this - 'God gave me and my fellow miners a real hope and He wants to give that to you too.'



What does it say on the tag?

Andrew Dutton

I remember a conversation with someone a number of years ago; he attended church services and regularly sent his children to Sunday school and may well have considered himself a 'Christian'. The conversation was all about what it means to be a 'born again Christian.' It seemed that he associated the term or tag 'born again' with a specific group of Christians, perhaps of a more extreme persuasion. I recall him concluding 'I know nothing of that...' I understood that he felt uncomfortable with the label 'born again' in his own experience.

I suppose that my memory of this conversation shows exactly how the biblical label 'born again' is often misunderstood. The Bible doesn't teach of a superior group of Christians that are 'born again' or an extreme sect. Rather, the Lord Jesus Christ used the term to describe the wonderful experience of being right with God and having life 'from above.'

In the Bible, John chapter 3 describes a person named Nicodemus. He was a man of wealth, responsibility, authority and knowledge. He also followed the Jewish Law and would have lived a disciplined life. But for all his success, he knew that the Lord Jesus was different to other men. Nicodemus wanted to meet Him and speak with Him. I like to picture the scene in my mind. It was night time when Nicodemus came to the Lord Jesus. 'No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him'

Nicodemus stated. How correct Nicodemus was! But Nicodemus needed to learn more...

'Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God'

the Lord Jesus explained. I imagine Nicodemus must have had a look of bewilderment on his face. He just could not understand. 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Nicodemus questioned. The Lord went on to explain to Nicodemus that He wasn't speaking about natural birth, but spiritual birth. This was something different to what Nicodemus had first imagined. It involved cleansing; it involved receiving life from above. After all, birth is the start of life and the Lord Jesus explained that new birth was receiving life 'from above'; life from God.



But as the conversation between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus developed, matters were to become more personal. You 'must be born again,' the Lord Jesus said. This was addressed directly to Nicodemus. There wasn't anything theoretical or educational about the conversation now; there was a direct challenge from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ for Nicodemus himself. I wonder if Nicodemus thought about his position, success, and knowledge? Or, was he beginning to understand that for all he had, he lacked the real life that God offers? Was he beginning to see that he did need to be washed - not physically, but spiritually? Was he starting to realise that he needed something that only God gives? Nicodemus, you "must be born again."

Nicodemus clearly obeyed the command of the Lord Jesus since he followed Him as a disciple. It was just a few years later that Nicodemus, along with a friend, approached the cross on which the Lord Jesus had been crucified. They

carefully took down the Lord's body for burial in a tomb. Perhaps Nicodemus then thought of the price that the Lord Jesus paid on the cross for sin, so that he (Nicodemus) could be cleansed from his own sin and have the life 'from above.'

As I think back to the man I mentioned at the beginning, who was confused about the label 'born again Christian,' I wonder if he had what Nicodemus got - forgiveness and cleansing of his sin as he believed in the Lord Jesus; new life from above, from God, that lasts forever, that takes all those who have it one day into heaven; peace and a relationship with God.

Perhaps labels given to people are not important. But it is important that each one of us receives the cleansing and the new life that God offers. It comes through being sorry to God for sin and believing in the Lord Jesus, God's Son, who died to pay the price sin deserved.

Are you 'born again?'

