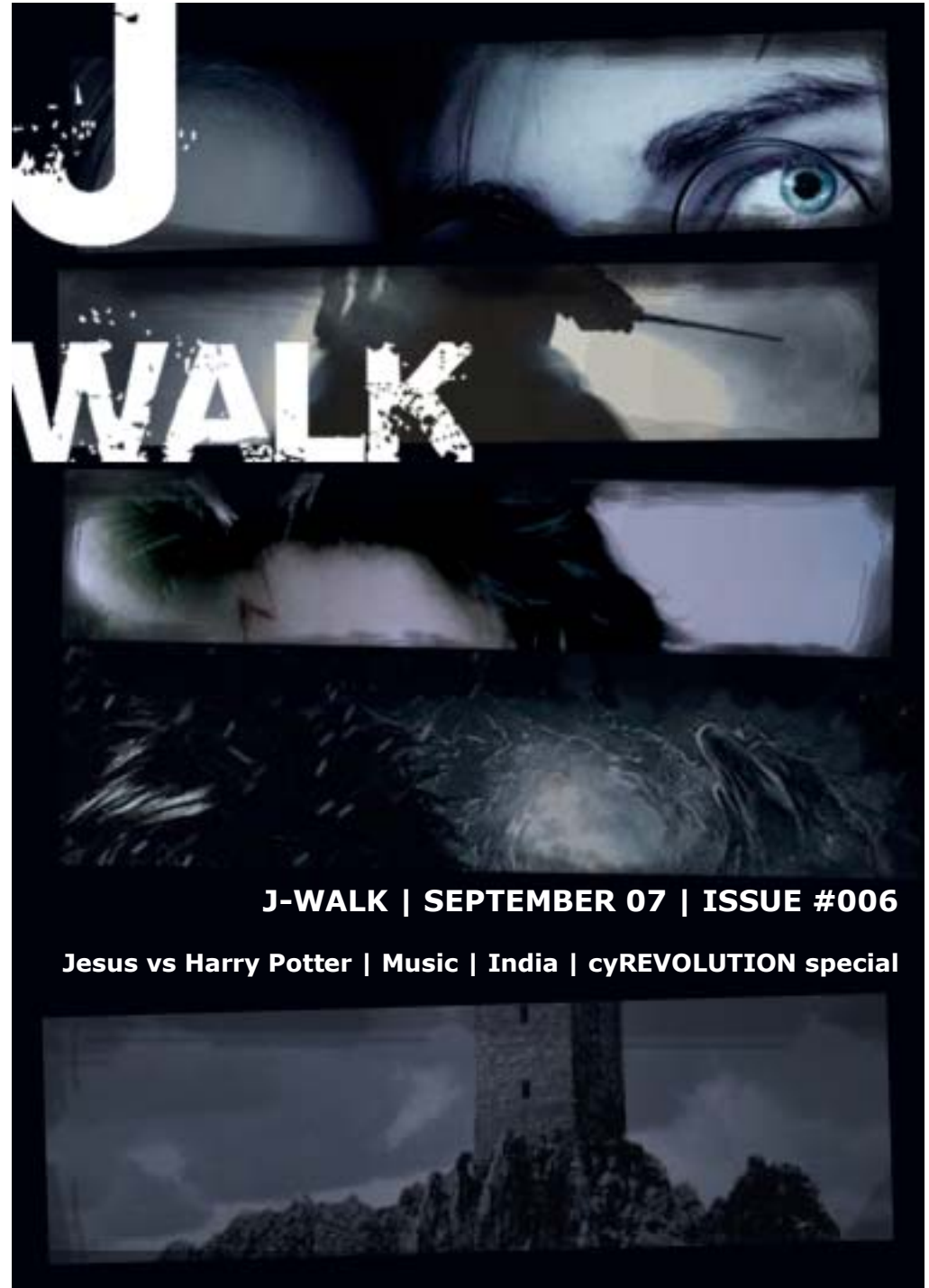




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J-WALK | SEPTEMBER 07 | ISSUE #006

Jesus vs Harry Potter | Music | India | cyREVOLUTION special



J-walk is the monthly magazine of CCECYOUTH.

CCECYOUTH is run by Central Coast Evangelical Church.

CCECYOUTH is for year 7-12 high school students

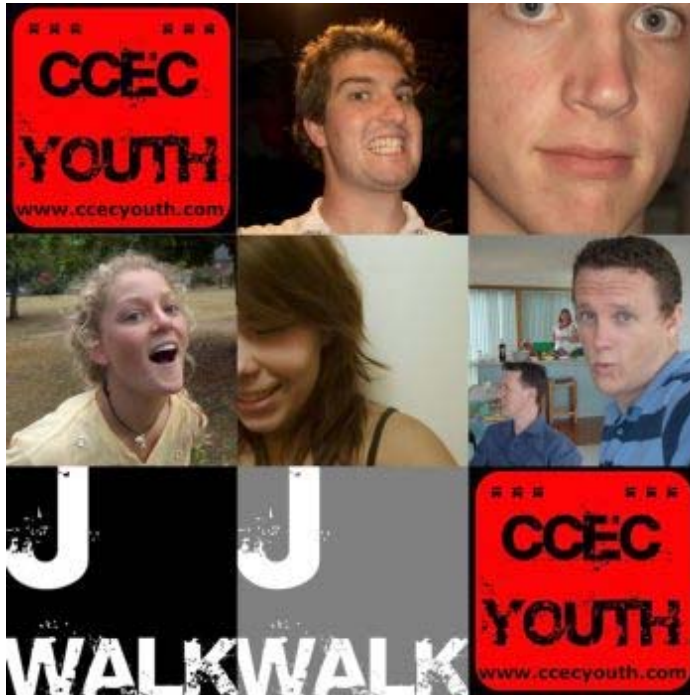
We meet on Friday nights from 7-930pm @ erina high school
Entry = \$5 (includes din)

GLADLY rejoice in Him.

We also have G-TEAMS - the aim of these is to GROW TOGETHER.

G-TEAMS are smaller groups where we dig even deeper into the Bible

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We exist to GLORIFY God in everything as we: GATHER to hear his word; GROW in godliness; GIVE in service of others; share the GOSPEL of Jesus' death & Resurrection; and

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J-WALK ISSUE #006

WELCOME to Issue #006 of J-walk. How good is this month's cover!! Sorry about the lame one last month (my fault) - Nicole did this month's and it looks sweet.

This might be your first J-Walk. Maybe you've downloaded it from our website or maybe you have picked up a copy from coast youth REVOLUTION—we hope you enjoy reading.

The aim of J-WALK is to help you think about the world we live in and what it will mean to be a Christian in that world.

This month we are stepping into a fantasy world.

The world of Harry Potter.

I haven't read any of the

books. This isn't because I'm opposed to reading them... I'm indifferent.

However, there are many Christians who think that Christians ought not read Harry Potter.

CAUTION: If your parents would prefer you not to read Harry Potter—obey them...

If you're not interested in reading the Harry Potter articles—there are plenty of great articles in this month's edition.

Have you got any ideas on articles for J-Walk? Competitions? What do you want to read more of? What do you want to read less of? Let us know ccecyouth@gmail.com

Keep trusting Jesus,
dnm

TEAM J-WALK

- Alex Hartley
- Dave Miers
- Jackson Stace
- Josh Bones
- Michelle Watt
- Nicole Maloney

Guests this issue:

- Rowena Miers
- Daniel Godden
- Graeme Goldsworthy

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EDITORIAL

By Dave Miers



**COAST
YOUTH
REVOL
UTION***

By
Dave Miers

In 2004 we began a combined youth event for a couple of like-minded youth groups. After running 6 great 1 night events.

For the first time we are running a 1.5 day conference.

- 3 great speakers
- 2 great bands
- 1 incredible God.

People have laughed at me when they know that I'm the one who put the promotional material together. I know why they laughed! But the above looks far catchier than below:

- 2 great speakers
- 1 okay speaker
- 2 great bands
- 1 incredible God

The idea behind coast youth REVOLUTION is about living differently.

Why live differently? In response to the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection.

The Bible makes it super clear that we are not saved by being different. We are saved by what Jesus has done. But the Bible also makes clear that because we are saved, we are to live differently.

2 Corinthians 4:14-15 gives a great picture of this:

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

How are we to live? No longer for ourselves but for him for who died for us and was raised again.

When we understand Christ's love for us expressed in his death for our sins, we are compelled to live differently.

coast youth REVOLUTION is all about living differently.

Have you come to put your trust in Jesus?? Yes? Then who are you living for:
yourself or
your Saviour

The talks on our 2007 conference will be all about this. Download them from our website after the conference.

www.cyrevolution.com

In the lead up to **coast youth REVOLUTION**—we have been recording a series of Radio shows called—**coast youth radio**. Each episode has been lots of fun. But one of the aims has been to think through issues that face Central Coast teenagers (all teenagers) and what it will mean to think about them in a Christian way.

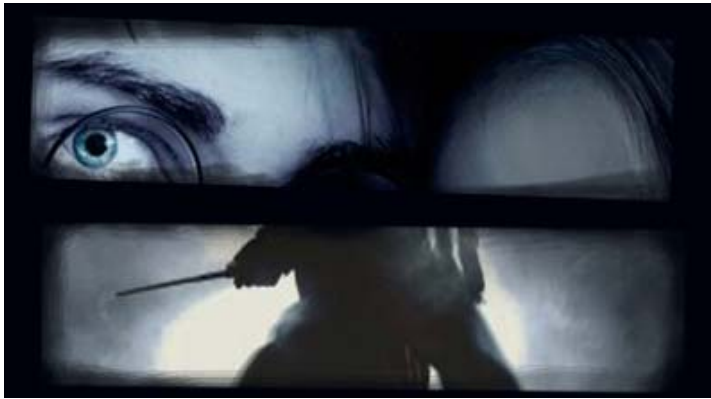
**BOREDOM
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CASUAL JOBS**

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HARRY POTTER IS NOT JESUS!

By
Jackson Stace



**Harry Potter Is
NOT Jesus...
although you would
be forgiven for being
a little confused.**

A big warning here- if you haven't yet read *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* and you care about what happens, don't read any further. In fact, you probably shouldn't have read the title of this article but oh well, can't help that now. If this is you by the way, it really is time to lift your game and just read it, we're *waaaay* past the time where sensitivity is necessary and if I meet you in person from now on- I'm so spilling all.

If you haven't read any of the books, then you may find this article hard to read. I haven't allowed space to explain particulars or plot lines of the potterverse.

It was always going to be the case, prophesied beforehand. He lived a life of immense expectation. He hung out with the outcasts of society and displayed compassion and love for them. He

was the hated enemy of evil, which he overcame by willingly facing death. In doing this he defeated the evil one and gave those he loved protection from this evil. He then re-appeared and was recognised as the saviour of the world.

Jesus?... or Harry Potter?

Well both obviously (you would have had this figured from the start I hope). There is little doubt, I think, that Harry Potter draws massively on Jesus. Google "Jesus and Harry Potter" and you will find countless articles discussing the many ways Harry is similar to Jesus- many that go way too far. I want to pick out some key ones, but let me also point out that there are some big differences between the two as well. The paragraph above this one was surprisingly difficult to write because I had to be quite vague with some ideas in order for them to apply to both Jesus and Harry.

As far as the internet can be trusted (it always seems that this level of trust goes down as someone's age goes up-

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like a see-saw really), it seems that J K Rowling has pronounced herself a Christian! Which is great news really, and particularly believable given the events of her most recent book. So in great faith that this is true, following are some of the similarities and parallels between Harry Potter and Jesus that I believe Rowling deliberately intended:

1. **They were both chosen and prophesied about.**

Since the first book, Harry was called "the chosen one" or "the boy who lived". He was the salvation that the wizard community was waiting for. Even more so, we find out in the fifth book that there was a prophecy regarding Harry and his triumph over Voldemort which is fulfilled in the last book.

Since forever, God's plan was for Jesus to come to earth. He is the salvation that mankind had been waiting for. For references of the many prophecies about Jesus and how he fulfils them, see **the entire bible**.

2. **They both willingly faced death in order to save the world.**

Many may argue that Harry was not trying to save the world, only his close friends, whereas Jesus died for all (2 Cor 5:14-17). But I think if you look over the entire series of Harry Potter, it is clear that Harry has always displayed a strong tendency to risk his life to save just about anyone. To name a few instances over the series, Harry goes into the Chamber to save Ginny, stays at the

bottom of the lake for longer than necessary to save Fleur's sister, goes out of his way to free Buckbeak, and risks cursed fire to save his long-time enemy Draco. Hermione even hesitantly suggests to Harry at one stage that he has a "saving-people thing". And so when he willingly walks into the forest, allowing Voldemort to kill him (and in turn killing Voldemort, removing him from the entire world), Harry is showing a similar level of concern and self sacrifice as Jesus for the benefit of the world.

3. **Both re-appeared after their death experience**

Jesus returned three days after his death and appeared to many so that we could know of his victory over death and sin (Rom 8:8-10). Harry chose to return from his near-death so that he could finish off Voldemort (representation of death, sin and Satan).

That's about as far as this parallel goes, although I mention it because I think in many ways it's the biggest indication that Rowling intended Harry to be a "Jesus figure". It completes the cycle that lifts Harry from being a common sacrifice character that fill many books and movies, to being a "whisper of Christ" in a similar manner to CS Lewis' Aslan. There are hints quite early on in the series that Harry would fulfil this role. From the first book, Harry's wand has been made from Holly (apparently derived from Holy) wood and a Phoenix feather (a mythical bird known for its ability to resurrect itself). Holy resurrection... sound familiar?

Apart from the above three,

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continued
from p7

there are numerous parallels, symbols and links which could be further drawn between Harry and Jesus. They may not all be intentional and there is certainly a danger in looking too hard to find things that aren't there, but the following are a few for interests sake:

- Harry fighting against the Ministry of Magic/ Jesus opposing the Pharisees and teachers of the law
- It had to be Jesus who died (fully man and fully God) in order to accomplish everything on the cross/ It had to be Harry to die because he had some of Voldemort inside of him.
- Jesus was betrayed by Judas just before he faced death/ Harry felt betrayed by Dumbledore just before his death (stretching things here)
- God as Jesus' source of authority/ Dumbledore as Harry's "God figure"
- Both are recognised as victor's over death

So what are some of the differences between Jesus and Harry? Well...like their similarities, there are lots:



1. Harry Potter is not perfect

Whilst there is a sense throughout the series that Harry has particularly noble or "good qualities" (remember the mirror or desire/erised? Harry couldn't see glory and fame like Ron could), Harry falls into some fairly major pitfalls inherent to his age. He becomes at times extremely self involved, moody, rebellious and snaps at his friends unjustifiably many times. He is, in short, not Jesus. Jesus on the other hand is our perfect, unblemished saviour who "knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21)

2. Harry does not ascend to Heaven

This brings up one of the biggest criticisms some Christians have levelled against the Harry universe- that there is no heaven, no mention of what happens after death, no mention of God. This isn't completely true. Rowling offers a few hints over the series. The mere existence of Ghosts and Nicholas' explanation that he chose "not to go on" is the earliest reference in the second book. There are also the

whispers behind the veil in the ministry where Sirius falls through, which Luna indicates are dead people (Book Five). There are all the pictures/photos scattered around everywhere which seem to act independent of their originals, Snape even takes suggestions and advice from Dumbledore's portrait in Book 7 after Dumbledore had died in book 6. And of course there is the chapter in *Hallows* named **Kings Cross** (note the double meaning of the name) where Harry meets Dumbledore again (who is dead) and is in some other realm which is insinuated to be between life and the life after death.

Nonetheless, Harry stays on earth, gets married, raises a family and by all appearances keeps a normal life at the end of the series. This is a far cry from Jesus who has ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of God! (Eph 1:20-23)

3. Jesus does far more in his death than Harry

In his sacrifice, Harry defeats one evil wizard for good. Quite an accomplishment, but again, paling in comparison to Jesus.

Jesus doesn't just defeat one piece of evil, he defeats all evil. He overcomes death and paves the way for all who accept him into heaven. He bore the sin of everyone on his shoulders, taking it from us, making us clean and blameless before God. He shields us from God's rightful anger and takes that upon himself also.

And so, whilst Harry Potter may be in some ways a reminder of Jesus, in a similar way to Aslan and perhaps even some old testament people (David). He is but a shadow of the real thing.

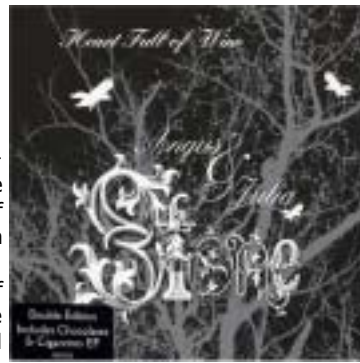
When I stand before God in judgement, I want Jesus in front of me, not a fictional wizard who's signature move is Expelliarmous.

**MUSIC
REVIEWS**

By
Alex Hartley

CD REVIEW:
*Heart Full of Wine/Chocolate
and Cigarettes*
Angus and Julia Stone

Sydney born brother and sister – Angus and Julia Stone are the collective genius of their self titled band. Both are eclectic in their talents; they choose to take half of everything the teams require upon themselves. The sound created is one while at times is barely audible is one which is none the less richly rewarding. By far the best track of the album is Mango Tree. The melody can't help but put you in a giggly mood. The lyrics are very cute are of course still meaningful and reflective. While there are suggestions that Mango tree is actually about Angus growing up the overall tune of the piece is about young love and being someone's everything. It's easy to get caught up in a relationship and having it become the number one priority in life because it something tangible that we have now. As hard as it may be we still need to have God as the priority within our lives. God tells us to have no idols, and at times relationships can become an overwhelming aspect of our lives, putting God in second place. Matthew 22:37-38 says 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your should and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment'. God wants and deserves to be the first person in lives, every action we have should bring honour and glory back to him. Each relationship should ultimately have God at the centre of it and be bring Glory to him through all your actions.



CD REVIEW
Band: Thrice
Album: Vheissu

The latest album by Thrice is one which it seems you can never tire of, no matter the mood this album has a selection of songs you just keep coming back to. Its not often either you find a band with seemingly obvious Christian connotations. 'We are sons and heirs of grace' is found the melodic beginnings of Music Box and looks at the amazing vastness of creation and the impact it has on us as humans, helping us to realise how insignificant we are. The amazing follow up, Like Moths to Flame, speaks of the events before Jesus death, 'once again



the bread and wine, But it seems the meanings may be deeper still this time. And you surprised me when you said I'd fall away, don't you know me; I could never be ashamed of you, no I?' There is an amazing contrast between verse and chorus with an powerful drum as backing and a continuous acoustic guitar playing overtop. While they're not an obviously Christian band, the lyrics have undeniable double meanings. Image of the Invisible is a great beginning to the album and says, 'we all were lost now we are found' which is a key component to the Christian life. We like the prodigal son in Luke 15:

32 says 'for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.' We too were once lost but through Jesus death on the cross we be forgiven for all our sins through trusting and by the grace of God.



Movie:
Spiderman 3.
Rated M – some action violence
Release DVD: 19th September

Hunky Pleasantville star Toby MacGuire comes back for a third time in Spiderman 3 this time displaying for viewers a new, darker side. While Mary-Jane and Peter star gaze unbeknownst them a meteor has crashed and spews a sticky black substance which slithers to our hero and turns him to the dark side. It's all very reminiscent of star wars without all the good times. The film seems to time to be packed too tightly with moments that are only there for the 'wow-effect' and slightly convoluted plot line. Though there is still an important message to be taken from this and it's to do with accountability. So often in our Christian lives we take actions and sin and live apart from God, we think that our way is better than God's because we may be going through a hard time at home or fighting with friends. The Bible says that God takes sin seriously. That's why Jesus came to die: to deal with our sin. In our daily struggle with sin, it can be helpful to be accountable to each other, but ultimately know that: "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

**MOVIE
REVIEW**

By
Alex Hartley

SHE IS ROSE - CH1

By
Josh Bones



The thick, rose-coloured clouds slowly rolled across Mark's vision, lethargy encasing his limbs as he struggled after the half glimpsed figure drifting steadily away from him into the mist. "Wait!" his cry shattered the stillness, "please, stop!" tears were streaming down his face as his mind cried out one desperate need again and again 'I must know who she is!' Of course it was a she, he was sure of that but everything else was obscured by he fog. Then just as his leaden limbs slowly began to disregard his desperate mental commands, the thickening clouds threw back a haunting echo: 'Rose'

She is Rose.

1. What a Find

The demanding keen of the emergency deceleration alarm blew away the clouds and launched Mark back towards wakefulness a fraction of a second before he was hurled from his bunk, his body making a meaty thud as it slammed into the steel decking. The shock of such a sudden awakening stopped any reaction to the pain of the collision more sophisticated than a dull grunt. It however did serve to sufficiently clear the cobwebs from

his sleep addled mind for a stab of concern to push itself to the forefront of his consciousness. 'What's going on?' and close on its heels, 'Why has the ship stopped?'

"Miranda, what's going on?" Mark's voice was sharp over the intercom,

"Not sure yet Cap" replied the distracted pilot. Her hands flew desperately over the keyboard trying to discover just why the autopilot cut power to the ship's wormhole generator.

"Looks like some kind of proximity alert" she suggested in a puzzled voice, "real close... and big, some kind of asteroid I think."

"A what?!?", Mark stiffened unbelievably, "an asteroid? That's crazy!"

"Well that's what it appears to be sir, high metal content, no active electronic systems-" her voice trailed off,

"Miranda? What's going on?" Mark asked nervously,

"Sir I've just started reading massive amounts of electronic activity, it looks like... a... ship?" the disbelief showed in her tone, "We're being hailed sir."

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Mark's facial expressions whirled through confusion to disbelief and finally to determined calm, "Sir?"

As he grabbed his pants and began to carefully pull them on, wincing at the bruises that he had already begun to feel from his rude awakening, Mark ordered,

"Ok Miranda, I'm coming to you now, wait till I'm there to accept the connection.",

"Sir", came her curt reply, accompanied by a short beep as the intercom connection was cut.

In his rush to reach the bridge, Mark was careful to think about how he was moving; placing his feet slowly, and not pushing off too hard. In the low gravity that existed aboard the *Ventura* even such a simple activity as walking required careful planning. He was told that generally you got used to it after a few days, but two months into his latest tour of duty and Mark still had to focus to avoid bashing himself on walls or door frames as he navigated his way around the ship. The first week he felt like an overripe banana and was still rarely without a good bruise or two, a fact that provided no end of entertainment to the crew though mostly behind his back.

Rounding the final corner before the bridge, Mark saw Miranda's head bobbing around just above ground level as she monitored the ships systems from the pilot's sunken console. Her head turned as she heard his boots clunking against the steel

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deck, then at his nod she accepted the hail and posted it to the main viewscreen. A black square appeared in centre view and green text began to scroll across, "Magnify it lieutenant", she complied, and Mark began to read the message, "Its nothing sir, just computer jargon"

Mark was about to agree when the text ceased printing and the last three words caught his attention: 'automated distress call'. The square disappeared and was replaced by a haggard looking man with thinning blonde hair. On each shoulder of a creased uniform he had 2 grimy looking stars, announcing his rank of captain. Staring straight out of the screen he began to speak in a weary monotone.

"Greetings, I am Captain Johan Walker of the *Bright Hope*" - Mark's heart leaped in his chest - "the current date is 24th September 2480. I am requesting emergency assistance from any ship that receives this message. The *Bright Hope* is finally running out of juice and we have sustained severe damage to our solar panels and so are unable to replace it fast enough. In short we're dead in the water. In fact we can barely spare the power required to keep this emergency beacon active so I'll have to be quick and direct. Our engineers have exhausted every possibility for survival bar one: long term hibernation. We have managed to scrounge together enough materials to provide hibernation support for 3000 of the crew and passengers. Unfortunately that leaves

some 400 of us out in the cold; regardless this seems to be our best and only hope. According to our calculations, the solar panels should still provide enough power to keep these sleepers alive for some 100 years which may just be long enough for help to arrive. Of course that's assuming that long term hibernation is even possible, all our knowledge on the subject is purely theoretical." at this he looked down and heaved a pain filled sigh, "Should anyone ever receive this message, please, help those of us who may have survived.", he straightened his head again and for just a second Mark saw a glimmer of fire in his eyes.

'This is a man of extraordinary strength who has been pushed to the very edge' he thought,

"Please, we need your help... Captain Walker. Out." he snapped a smart salute that belied his weary state, then reached forward to terminate the recording. The screen went black.

Silence. For a moment neither Mark nor Miranda spoke. Then,

"Did he say..." Miranda's voice trailed off as her mouth worked soundlessly, displaying her shock

"He did." confirmed Mark, "the *Bright Hope*... what a find."

INDIA AND POVERTY

By
Daniel Godden



It's been a long time since I last wrote about India and all the crazy people I came across there. That was way back in the first J-Walk. I promised then, and I mean to make good on it now, that I would write about poverty in India.

India is a country of paradoxes. As a nation it is upwardly mobile. It currently has the highest population in the world. Public works like train systems and airports leave Australia far behind in terms of technology and accessibility.

All this said India has the lowest minimum wage on earth. A majority of the population does not have running water within their houses and the infant mortality rate is soaring. As well as this there are certain practices in India that keep the problem going.

Firstly, Indians love expensive things. While most Indians live in sub-standard housing they all have mobile phones. An Indian man is much more likely to spend his money on expensive shoes or jeans rather than saving it and putting it to-

wards something more worthwhile.

The problem with this is that rather than saving their money and putting it away to gain interest or investing it for the future, Indians love to spend. I became friends with a family in Bangalore made up of a Grandmother, a Dad, a Mum, two young Kids, and a household servant, all living in a two bedroom flat. However, they also owned three tvs, all with digital set top boxes, and two dvd players as well as a computer, a fancy car, and a motorbike.

It is easy to judge this kind of living as unwise or consumerist, but my generation in Australia does exactly the same thing. We all have expensive mobile phones, and mp3 players but we haven't even moved out of home yet. Kids are getting credit cards earlier and earlier. We spend hundreds of dollars on music and dvds. What a waste!

God has given us his resources so that we can grow his kingdom. We blow it all on trinkets and shiny things. It would not surprise me if in

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the near future no one can buy houses anymore because they all have massive phone bills and car repayments. We live outside our means. As a school student you may only earn \$200 per week. Yet you frequently spend a quarter or more of your weekly wage on clothes or shoes. Think about your spending. Is there a way that you can be a better steward of the money God has given you?

Secondly, there are social practices and religious obligations in place that mean people stay poor. The predominant religion in India is Hinduism. Hinduism teaches that people are not equal but rather they belong in different 'castes'. A caste is your social position. It is fixed. So those who belong to the lowest castes are never expected to move beyond their caste. A rich Indian will rarely give money to a poor Indian because that is where they belong.

This caste system means that the rich in India do not take responsibility for the poor in their own country. This has been the case for thousands of years. India is full of massive palaces, temples and mansions that were built by poor Indians for rich Indians.

This also is similar to many in Australia. While we don't formalize our feelings into something called 'the caste system', we often don't take responsibility for the poor in our society because we see their poverty as something they have brought upon themselves.

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It would be interesting to see the difference between money that Australians send overseas to help the poor in other nations compared to what individuals give to help the poor in our own backyard. So often we gasp when we see the child starving on our TV screens but we avoid the drunken beggar in the streets of Gosford. These people are part of our country, our society, our community. We need to be meeting their needs.

But why? All this talk about India and Australia and poverty is nice because we feel something should be done... but is that it? Is that the only reason we help the poor - because it feels right?

No. I think there is much more to it than that. We should be caring for the poor firstly because God tells us to. Particularly in our own church. In Nehemiah 5 we see God's people ripping each other off. The rich Israelites are forcing the poor into paying tax and Nehemiah calls the whole country to account because of this. God's people are to be responsible for caring for the poor not making their lot worse! In James we also read: 'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.' (James 1:27)

In Deuteronomy 15:11 we read:

'There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.'

**continued
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Here it is a command for God's people to be generous to the poor even though they will always be with us. Caring for the poor is not just something that some Christians are to do. All Christians should be compassionate. It is a command. But it's more than that as well. It is also a response.

God is a compassionate God. The fact that he puts in place laws so that the poor will be cared for show that his heart is with the poor. God sees injustice and he feels the pain of those who hurt through poverty. Jesus, when he came to Earth, spent his time with those who were poor. You can see his compassion for the needy and the sick. You read about his care for widows and those with disabilities. Jesus was a compassionate person. But more than that. Jesus came to show compassion not just to those people but to people who were lost. People who were poor in spirit. People who had no hope. Jesus died in our place when we were at rock bottom. This is what God is on about in history. Showing compassion to the needy - us. How can we see

God's compassion and feel nothing for those who are poor around us. When we see Jesus attitude in Philippians 2, we should be modeling ourselves on that. Humble, generous, giving, compassionate. If you don't feel compassion then you need to pray and work hard at it.

As a youth group we need to think of ways that we can be expressing our compassion. I think that there are lots of areas where this can happen. Perhaps your G-team could sponsor a child from India. Perhaps we could sponsor a less fortunate Youth group overseas. Perhaps it can be as simple as offering a lift to those who are not fortunate enough to have a car to get to youth group. Perhaps it is caring for those who are poor in social skills that you come across.

Remember Jesus and be compassionate.



Annual Church Dinner
FRIDAY 14th September
6:30 @ Erina High School

\$10 for youth
\$15 for adults

Old people dress down
Young people dress up

Tammy and the Wolverines
all the way from the UK—will
be rocking out!



THE TRUTH ABOUT HARRY

By
Michelle Watt



(Oh yeah, I'm going to spoil the ending in this article. You've had long enough...)

I have to admit, I jumped on the Harry bandwagon late. Quite late. I only picked up *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* last year, when my mum lent me a pile of books to read when Anastasia (my daughter) was napping. Prior to that, I had steadfastly refused to read the series, as I found the hype a bit irritating. I figured there was no way they could be as enjoyable as everyone was making out: which, in the words of Albus Dumbledore, "goes to show that the best of us must sometimes eat our words" (1).

The book I read just before I started HP&PS was *The Da Vinci Code*(2), which I had also refused to read previously because of the absurd amount of hype that

came with its publication. Yet, whether you like it or not, the phenomenal following these two books have attracted will mean that they will leave an indelible mark on our society. A whole generation of young people have grown up with Harry, Ron and Hermione, and will have taken on board, to some degree, the ideals and themes Rowling has presented them with. So, as a parent, and a nearly-trained teacher, I thought it would be a good idea to bite the bullet, and find out what the hype was about.

So, yes, I'm now a bit of a HP fan, and I lined up at 9:01am on the 21st of July for my copy of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, desperate to find out how it would all end. I was worried I'd be left unsatisfied. I didn't

think JKR would be able to tie up everything nicely, I was sure I'd be disappointed. I wasn't. I'm actually amazed at how well all the loose ends were gathered up. And it was in the gathering of these loose threads that I discovered something quite remarkable...

You probably know that the era we live in is often referred to as *post-modern*. That categorisation denotes a number of things (3), but one of the key characteristics of a post-modern world is its lack of confidence in truth, and the emergence of *relativism*. Ever heard expressions like: "there's no such thing as absolute truth", "if that's true for you", and ideas like "it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you're sincere", and "there are many different paths to

God"? These are some pretty typical ideas these days, and they have infiltrated a great deal of society, and have spread to some Christian thinking and theology.

It's the school of thought I expect in contemporary literature. And so, one of the things I was completely surprised by in *The Deathly Hallows* was the re-occurring theme of truth, and Harry's need to seek it out:

"... 'Rita Skeeter hinted that Professor Dumbledore was involved in the Dark Arts when he was young.' 'Don't believe a word of it!' said Doge at once. 'Not a word Harry! Let nothing tarnish your memories of Albus Dumbledore!' Harry looked into Doge's earnest, pained face and felt not reassured, but frustrated. Did Doge really think it was that easy, that Harry could simply *choose* not to believe? Didn't Doge understand Harry's need to be sure, to know everything?"(4)

"He told Hermione everything that Muriel had told him. When he had finished, Hermione said, 'Of course, I can see why that's upset you Harry -'

'-I'm not upset,' he lied, 'I'd just like to know whether it's true or -'

'Harry do you really think you'll get the truth from a malicious old woman like Muriel or from Rita Skeeter? How can you believe them?' ... 'How can you let these people tarnish your memories of Dumbledore?'

He looked away, trying not to betray the resentment he felt. There it was again: choose what to believe. He

wanted the truth.”(5)

I find these passages quite intriguing, given the fact that our society has so little regard for absolute truth. These days, people who claim they have truth are labelled ‘arrogant’, ‘intolerant’, ‘bigoted’, and ‘narrow-minded’. Yet here, in one of the most widely read books for generations, we have our protagonist desperately seeking after that which society is so quick to tell us doesn’t exist. And we empathise with him. We follow Harry’s journey and we want that truth too. We need it as much as he does. (And when



we read TDH, and especially Chapter 33: ‘The Prince’s Tale’ and everything falls into place, we let out a collective “ohhhh ahhhh”, and are very satisfied).

Unfortunately, our world does not share Harry’s insatiable desire for truth. In fact, we have a despicable tendency to hide from truth, instead devising clever philosophies that argue that there is no truth. Consider Romans 1:18-23: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth*. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power

and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles”. (6)

The sinful human mind has tried throughout

history to suppress the truth about God. Post-modern relativism is perhaps one of the cleverest suppressions yet devised; claim that there is no truth, and then label anyone who tries to put forth truth an arrogant bigot; yet it is just a new disguise for a very old problem: human sinfulness. Modernists tried to disprove the truth of God through science and reason; post-modernists belittle those foolish enough to believe in the existence of truth.

The claim that there is no truth is absurd. Sire says “the idea that we have no access to reality ... is self-referentially incoherent”(7): put simply, to say “there is no truth”, is to make a claim

about truth, which cannot be true, because there is (apparently) no truth (these arguments always do my head in). The statement “there is no truth” can not be true, because if it was, it just disproved itself.

Fortunately, knowing the Lord Jesus frees us from these nonsensical arguments. “I am the way, and *the truth*, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”(8): The Lord Jesus is truth: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and *truth*”(9). Listen to the words Jesus speaks to some Jews who followed him: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and *you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*”(10).

Knowing the truth that is found in the Lord Jesus, the truth of salvation for sinners through his death and resurrection is infinitely more satisfying than knowing that Severus Snape really was good. Knowing that Harry dies a sacrificial death, and is raised to life again (Hmm, I think JKR stole her ideas from somewhere...), pales into insignificance when we know the true Saviour. The Lord Jesus laid down his life for wretched, truth-denying sinners, and was raised to life again that we might also live. Even my delight at knowing Harry and Ginny got married and had three very predictably named children will be nothing, *nothing*, compared to the eternal joy that awaits us, purchased for us by the

precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

ENDNOTES

- (1) *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, p. 243.
- (2) Incidentally, my opinion was justified in the case of *The Da Vinci Code*. What a lot of rubbish! I found it predictable, lame and really poorly researched. The problem is, I know far too many people who have been taken in by the claims Dan Brown makes. This is exactly why I read it- people believe it’s true, and I couldn’t engage with them until I understood what the books claims were.
- (3) My explanations are somewhat generalised and simplified, I know, but I this was necessitated by the fact that I’m writing an article, not a book! For a really good primer on post-modernism, and a bunch of other ways of understanding the world, check out James Sire’s *The Universe Next Door*. It’s probably on the bookstall at church.
- (4) *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, p. 127.
- (5) *HPDH*, p. 153.
- (6) ESV, my italics
- (7) *The Universe Next Door*, p. 188.
- (8) John 14:6 ESV, my italics
- (9) John 1:14 ESV, my italics
- (10) John 8:31-32 ESV, my italics

CHRISTIAN- ITY AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

By
Rowena Miers



Does the spiritual world exist?

For a long time as a young Christian I had questions about whether there was a spiritual world out there that people talked about. I'd never seen any evidence of this spiritual world (or so I thought) and so I had great suspicion of those who said they had. To deal with the questions I had about the existence of the spiritual world I turned to at what God said about this spiritual world in the bible.

In the bible God makes it quite clear that there are spirits that work within the physical world and which at time interact with the experiences of humans. Some examples of this occur in the context of Jesus' ministry where he had quite a lot to do with healing people who were possessed by evil spirits (see Matthew 4:24, 8:25, 12:22, 17:15-18).

Other parts of the bible also speak specifically about the spiritual world and people

interactions with elements of it. Some stories include the magicians of Pharaoh who tried to mimic the wonders that God performed through Aaron (Exodus 8), the visit King Saul makes to the "witch" (2 Chronicles 33:1-8), and the story of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-25).

Summary: The spiritual world is a very real thing.

How should we respond to the spiritual world?

In both the old and new testaments God's people are warned to steer clear of spirits, as spirits can be in opposition to God. 1 John 4:1 shows this: "dear friends do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world". Later in the New Testament the struggles of the early church against the destruction of the spiritual worlds are clearly seen where

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1 Timothy 4:1 says, "the spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons".

Both the Old and New Testaments outline that fraternising with forces in the spiritual worlds that oppose God is a sin where in Galations 5:20-2 we are told "the acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you as I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God".

Just like any other sin, fraternising with forces in the spiritual worlds that oppose God has as its motivation the rejection of God's rule where the individual seeks their own good at the cost of others and in rebellion to God. In appealing to forces other than God is to break the first commandment "you shall have no other God;s before me" (Exoduc 20:3) by placing trust in another force when you should be placing your trust in God. God says to have nothing to do with forces of the spiritual world that oppose God "what fellowship can light have with darkness, what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?" (2 Corinthians 6:14-15). God tells us to "flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14) just as we are to flee from all sin.

Summary: As believers we
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are to be very careful and steer well away from forces in the spiritual world that oppose God. Fraternising with forces that oppose God is sin. God tells us to flee from these things as we would flee from sin.

What exactly are the spiritual world that God in the bible tells his people to keep away from?

There is some dispute about what these forces are that we are told to steer clear of. Deuteronomy 8:9-13 is the most explicit passage in the bible that talks about this where God says:

"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God."

From this passage it is clear that the main things that God tells his people to keep away from are actions relating to trying to tell the future and those that consult with spirits or the dead. Based on this definition, the magic God warns his people against is magic associated with abnormal spiritual activities and not the medieval magic tradi-

continued
from p23

tions of witches with pointed hats and flying broom sticks, fairy tales or folk law.

While these common views of magic are not necessarily the things God is talking explicitly about in Deuteronomy 8:9-13 if they are forces (real or imagined) that distract people from serving God Christian's should have nothing to do with them where 1 Timothy 4:7 says "have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly".

Summary: The forces of spiritual world that God tells us to have nothing to do with includes: future telling, consulting with spirits consulting with the dead. In addition to these things we should also have nothing to do with any other forces (real or imagined) that may distract us from serving God.

How should we respond to those who fraternise with spiritual forces that are opposed to God?

As Christians who know what it means to be saved by God's grace, it is only natural that we should want to see others saved and come into a relationship with God. People who are involved in witchcraft or other spiritual forces that oppose God along with all other non-Christians need to hear the word of God in order that they might be saved. In responding to these people we ought to have courage and share with them what it means to be a Christian. "How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14).



- 10** - Ron returning, destroying a Horcrux and having Hermione ignore him (Book 7)
- 9** - Sirius' death and the aftermath where Harry destroys half of Dumbledore's office. (Book 5)
- 8** - When Harry learns from Hagrid that he is a Wizard. "Of course you're a ruddy wizard!" (Book 1)
- 7** - The battle between Dumbledore and Voldemort. Did anyone else think the movie gave that no justice? (Book 5)
- 6** - Harry's first Corporeal Patronus, defeating hundreds of Dementors and saving Sirius. (Book 3)
- 5** - Mrs Weasley coming out of nowhere to defend her daughter and defeat Bellatrix. Funniest moment in the series! (Book 7)
- 4** - Dumbledore's death. Tragic and intense stuff! (Book 6)
- 3** - When Harry and Voldemort's wand's connect causing Harry's parents to emerge, encouraging him to stay strong. (Book 4)
- 2** - Hogwarts mobilising into a fortress, led by McGonagall, the other teachers and Neville. (Book 7)
- 1** - Finding out that Snape was good and that he loved Lily. I shed a tear (or three). (Book 7)
- 0** - Harry walking into the forest to his death, allowing Voldemort to kill him and Narcissa betraying Voldemort for the love of her son.

*Yes I am aware that there are eleven, but I couldn't eliminate any once I'd written them.

TOP TEN*
HARRY
POTTER
MOMENTS
By
Jackson Stace

If you haven't read the books, good luck understanding these!!

MARTIN LUTHER ON YOUTH MUSIC

By
Daniel Godden



Martin Luther had a heart for Youth group music ministry. He wanted to make great songs relevant to the kids... check it out in his intro to his mate Johann Walters hymnal, the **Wittenberg Geistliche Gesangbuchlein**.

'Therefore, I too, with the help of others, have brought together some sacred songs in order to make a good beginning and to give an incentive to those who can better carry on the Gospel and bring it to the people... And these songs were arranged in four parts for no other reason than I wanted to attract youth (who should be trained in music and other fine arts) away from love songs and carnal pieces and to give them something wholesome to learn instead... It is unfortunate that everyone else forgets to teach and train the poor young people; we must not be responsible for this

too.'

I find Youth group music ministry really hard. In our context it is difficult to practice and get a team of youth and leaders together to do a good job. We generally run our music in a rock band format with a guitarist, bass player and the guitarist usually sings. This is partly because the sound we produce can be heavier and more fluid, but it is also because I'm always pushed for time. Unfortunately, I end up spending lots more time on Night church music than youth.

I think however that these two ministries are inextricably linked. Our night church singing culture has shifted dramatically over the last two years from being stiff and non-expressive to being

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more vibrant and joyful. This is mainly because of youth group guys coming to night church and shaping the culture to match what they loved about music at youth. This shift showed me how important the youth group is to church ministry. I had a chat with a mate of mine, Tim, about this phenomenon. He saw the same thing happen at his old church. He said that the youth became 'a dominant minority who were intentional in the way that they shaped night church culture.'

Last year I spoke to the senior youth group about their impact on church. They wanted to see it's singing culture change from the way it was to the way they saw Senior Youth music (alive). There were three main ways that they helped to change culture and these were the same three ways that stuff changed at Tim's church.

1) Don't hang in the ghetto. Too often Youth group guys who come to church choose a group of seats at the back or to the side of church and they all sit there. They don't mix with other guys and they end up becoming a ghetto. I asked the youth to move away from ghetto mode and to sit at the front and in the middle. The reason being that everyone else can then see them and the way they are singing and it will be infectious.

2) Sing loud, sing proud. For some reason Youth were singing their hearts out at youth group but were shy and timid when it came to

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church because they felt intimidated by the older guys. This had to change if they were going to have an impact.

3) Get involved in church ministries. We are blessed to have a youth group that is committed to seeing its members hook in to ministry at church. At youth, we have taught the guys to be passionate about having a life of ministry. We have youth group kids involved in teaching Sunday School, sound, music and the ministry of looking out for those younger than them at youth group. It was through the kids being involved in music ministry and being up the front that helped to shape the culture the most.

Youth group music ministry is strategic because the kids who are singing there may well shape the culture of church for the next ten years. While the situation our youth is in makes it hard to give youth music a good go, it is well worth investing the time and effort into making youth music the best it can be.

In light of all this we have decided to get a new dude in charge of music at youth. Max Burke will be looking after this side of things at our youth meetings. If you wish to be involved in some way in youth group music ministry you could speak to Max.

Another way to be involved is to stop sitting in an isolated area in morning church. This way we can be a positive impact on the church culture around us. Love Jesus and Rock on.



**INTERVIEW
WITH BEC**

By
Alex Hartley

1. The phone rings. What's your ring tone?

Captain Planet...woo!

2. What do you smell?

Garlic Bread

3. Do you remember your dreams?

Yes usually pretty detailed!

4. Do you consider yourself a study freak?

Na...I wish I had more motivation and discipline!

5. Do you speak another language other than English?

Yeh I know a bit of German...

6. Have you ever been in a beauty pageant?

haha no!

7. Last time you ate a home grown tomato?

Umm I don't think I've had one?!...well if I have I didn't know it was home grown...

8. The most annoying sound in the world?

SOMEONE EATING WITH THEIR MOUTH OPEN!!

9. How long have you been a Christian?

Hmm...as long as I can remember, but I think I started taking it seriously in Yr 10 when I got baptised...

10. Why are you a Christian?

..."Jesus loves me this I know, for the bible tells me so..."

11. Do you find it hard to tell any non-Christian friends about Jesus? What would you say to friend if they asks?

I find it hard to tell people about Jesus, simply because they already have preconceived ideas of Christians and they listen to you so intensely to try and prove you wrong...if you make a mistake or don't have answers to all their questions they may hold it against you...

I would tell them that Jesus died for us and loves us despite all the times we've stuffed up!

12. What are you looking forward to most about growing older and being in a church family?

I'm looking forward to having a group of Christian people I can grow, share and fellowship with.

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DO WE REALLY NEED THE OLD TESTAMENT ???

By
Graeme
Goldsworthy



The first three-quarters of the Bible is so boring! We can easily do without it. Or so many Christians seem to think, since you hardly ever hear the Old Testament read in church or preached from. To put it a little less "in your face:" not all Christians are convinced that the Old Testament should have a significant place in our concerns for God's word. Even when there is in theory an acceptance of its importance, we often find that it is neglected by not being treated with the same dignity as the New Testament. When it is used it is often on a very selective basis: Psalms in devotional reading; narratives about prominent characters for examples of faith (or lack of); Proverbs for titbits of practical advice; and maybe Prophets for building a doubtful view of the events of the future.

There are many reasons for the lack of use of the Old Testament, but I will suggest only the following:

1. It is very long (about

three quarters of the Bible).

2. Parts of it are rather boring.

3. It contains a lot of detail about ceremonial laws that were given to Israel but are no longer applicable to us.

4. It nowhere directly refers to Jesus.

5. It contains some references to God's actions that seem positively immoral.

6. Even if it does look forward to fulfilment in the New Testament, why can't we simply concentrate on that fulfilment?

I will attempt to deal with these in turn, and will add a few more suggestions about our need for the Old Testament.

1. It is very long (about three quarters of the Bible).

Length is irrelevant if we are concerned to hear God's word. There is no doubt that

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Jesus and the apostles regarded it as God's Scriptures that have the full authority of God's word. We are probably impatient of length because of bad reading habits and the desire for instant fixes. An antidote to this is to take time to read whole slabs; even speed-reading to get the overall picture. You don't have to neglect your devotional meditation on small portions. Do both!

2. Parts of it are rather boring.

Mostly the sense that it is boring comes from an inability to see how it holds together as a whole, and how it relates to the supposedly more interesting New Testament. Same antidote as in 1. above. If Jesus indicated that the Old Testament was somehow about him, then we should work at the business of discerning how it is about him (see. Luke 24:25-27, 44-45; John 5:39-47). The latter passage is pretty blunt as Jesus tells the Jews that if they don't believe the Old Testament they won't be able to believe him.

3. It contains a lot of detail about ceremonial laws that were given to Israel but are no longer applicable to us.

The ceremonial laws foreshadow the work of Jesus in various ways and, as with the other details in the Old Testament help us to understand what Jesus achieved by fulfilling them.

4. It nowhere directly refers to Jesus.

The Old Testament certainly doesn't refer to Jesus by

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name, but it does say plenty about the Christ who is to come. In fact, as pointed out in point 2 above, everything in the Old Testament foreshadows in some way the person and work of Christ. If we ignore the foundations laid here we will almost certainly end up with a superficial, even distorted, view of who and what Jesus claimed to be and do. Paul remarked that Timothy had known the Old Testament from his childhood and that these Scriptures were able to make him wise to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:15).

5. It contains some references to God's actions that seem positively immoral.

Mostly the objection to apparently immoral divine actions concerns the seemingly harsh judgments meted out on the neighbours of Israel. However, it should be remembered that these judgments are a) deserved (see Deut. 9:4-5), and b) only a pale foretaste of the real judgment that God will execute on all who resist his will and reject his kingdom. Jesus and the apostles did not seem to find the Old Testament offended their sensibilities, so perhaps we need to try to understand why.

6. Even if it does look forward to fulfilment in the New Testament, why can't we simply concentrate on that fulfilment?

If everything in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New, why can't we simply concentrate on the New? Sounds reasonable! But it really isn't. The New Testament, in declaring all things fulfilled in

continued
from p19

Jesus, presupposes knowledge of the Scriptures (the New Testament term for the Old Testament). All the terminology used about Christ and his saving work is carried over from the Old Testament. Even the titles Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David are meaningless without the Old Testament from which they are drawn and applied to Jesus of Nazareth. The number of direct references and allusions to the Old Testament contained in the New is in excess of 1500.



Constantly the Gospel writers refer to Jesus fulfilling the Scriptures. To try to understand the New Testament without the Old is like watching the end of the Iron Man race without having any idea of what happened between the start and this final run.

There are a few **other** significant reasons for paying attention to the Old Testament...

7. The Old Testament pegs the gospel event into history. So, for example, Paul's description of his gospel in

Rom. 1:1-4 includes the significant fact of Jesus' human descent from David. Matthew makes the same point in the genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1:1-17). The gospel is continuous with these historical events. It is what God did for us out there and back there, not what he does in us (which is the fruit of the gospel).

8. The Old Testament gives texture to the New Testament assertions about salvation in Christ. While it is true that the New Testament

gives the definitive meaning of all that the Old Testament was on about, it is also true that many of the technical words and ideas applied to salvation in Christ presuppose the ground-work of the revelation in the Old.

9. The Old Testament provides the pattern of saving revelation that is taken up in the New. While the New refers to and explicates the dimensions of redemption and the kingdom of God, the Old provides a carefully detailed

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description of these dimensions as they occur: election; calling; covenant promises; redemptive event (Exodus); covenant structuring of the redeemed community (Sinai); entry into and possession of the promised land; Davidic kingship; Zion; the temple.

10. The Old Testament contains the foundations of salvation history that are brought to their fulfilment in the New. In other words, the real eschatology of the gospel is rooted and grounded in the earthly existence of the people of God in the Old Testament. The Old Testament thus helps us to guard against one of the most pernicious errors in Christianity: the reduction of it to a timeless, spiritual ideal. This error promotes an ethical ideal as the essence of Christianity that sits lightly to the reality of the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of the body and the renewal of the whole creation. This Gnostic or Docetic Christianity is regarded as the antichrist in 1 Jn. 4.

The bottom line is, of course, simply this: if God gave us sixty-six books by which to know him, his will, and our salvation; who are we to say that we can discard the first thirty-nine of them? When we treat the whole Bible as a unity and learn to understand the "big picture" our grasp of the marvellously multifaceted gospel is greatly enhanced. To claim to be a disciple of Jesus while at the same time rejecting his view of the Scriptures is very inconsistent. It is also to deny ourselves much of the joy of

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knowing God as he reveals himself.

Personal note

It is because I feel so strongly about this subject that I have concentrated on writing books about the "big picture" of the Bible. The following are especially relevant to this subject:

∴ The Goldsworthy Trilogy (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000); this contains Gospel and Kingdom (1981), The Gospel in Revelation (1984), and Gospel and Wisdom (1987).

∴ According to Plan (Leicester: IVP, 1991).

∴ Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture (Leicester: IVP, 2000).

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LAST MONTH—AUGUST

What do you think of Harry Potter?
42% BEST FICTION SERIES EVER
24% IT'S OKAY
9% CHRISTIANS SHOULDN'T READ IT
24% I LIKE HARRY KEWELL BETTER

THIS MONTH—SEPTEMBER

Best episode of I agree with Dale?

- A) It's all about Jesus
- B) Jesus died because I suck
- C) Jesus is the ONE
- D) Jesus is my homeboy
- E) Fight for Jesus
- F) Hook in with Jesus people
- G) Jesus is coming back

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