

Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin

Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Psalm 34:4

41 Waratah Street, Katoomba NSW 2780.

October 2020.

Pastor: Steve Cooper. Contact: mob. 0451 954 675; email cooper.steve.j@gmail.com.

Sunday service, 10am. In compliance with the NSW Government rules.

Katoomba Baptist Church website: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au>; Sunday messages on You Tube.

Bible Study: Second and Fourth Wednesday of the month, on Zoom

(to participate, please email Grahame McCraw: mowogmaca@gmail.com).

Church prayer meeting: Each Saturday, 9am. Prayer for Israel: Third Friday of the month, 1.30pm.

From the Pastor

Studying the Book of Habakkuk has reminded me that the Christian life is a **journey**. Habakkuk himself was on a journey. The Book begins with Habakkuk perplexed and annoyed at God. He was distressed at what he observed – a world that is unjust and violent. He prayed for God to intervene. But God did not seem to answer the prophet's prayers, or do anything to address the evil. Habakkuk expresses his honest questions and complaints to God (1:2-4; 1:12-2:1).

The Lord replies to Habakkuk's questions and complaints (1:5-11; 2:2-20). God does have a plan, a plan to punish those who do evil and rescue those of his people who are faithful. The prophet has to learn to trust this God – the God who is sovereign, holy and just. In the end, God will bring justice and peace to his world.

The Book ends with Habakkuk offering a prayer and a hymn to the Lord (3:1-19), a response to what he has learned. He now has confidence that God knows what he is doing. Habakkuk reaches a point where he can say, even in the midst of difficulties, 'Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength' (3:18-19).

For Habakkuk, there was a journey of struggle, honesty, learning, listening, and a growing faith in the Lord. It took time before the prophet came to this place of trust and confidence in God. That's a journey we all must take. Whatever stage we are at in our Christian pilgrimage, there is more progress to make.

That's one of the reasons why belonging to a local church is so important. The church is meant to assist each of us on the spiritual journey. We are to look out for each other, supporting and encouraging each other as we walk with God together. Let me encourage you to join us each Sunday for our worship service, develop closer relationships with our church people, and if possible, attend the Saturday prayer meeting and the zoom Bible Study on Wednesdays. Let's also remember each other in prayer, praying we will all make progress as we follow Jesus.

My role as your Pastor is to be your companion on the journey. I want to get alongside you, and support you with my friendship and prayers. In a sense, Habakkuk was a Pastor to God's faithful people in his own time. Although the Book describes the prophet's prayer life and his growing faith, it shows others how they too can be people of trust and confidence in God when the world around them seems so violent and unjust. Like Habakkuk, as your Pastor I can encourage you to continue holding on to God in faith, and make progress as you travel on.

Your companion on the journey,

Pastor Steve Cooper.

Please pray

- for our Pastor Steve, for the Lord to guide him and bless his ministry
- for the Lord to help us through these times in which we live, and grant us strength and wisdom.
- for our leaders and authorities, for medical staff and indeed all those who are dealing with this crisis.
- that the Lord will minister to all who are undergoing trials and suffering, here and everywhere.
- for Israel, for the "Peace of Jerusalem" (Ps 122:6) and for the Gospel there "To the Jew first." (Rom 1:16).
- for our persecuted brothers and sisters in nations rich and poor and for those who persecute them.
- for the people whose livelihoods have been impacted by the Coronavirus, the drought and fires.
- for revival in our community, state, nation, and throughout the world, and for our faith to increase.
- that the Lord will help us to use our gifts for His glory and to share the Gospel with others.
- that the Lord will draw to Him our unsaved loved ones and all for whom we have a burden.
- for missions to be fruitful, especially those we support as a church, and for the preservation of converts.
- that we continue to grow in Christian love as a church, serving the Lord and each other.
- Maranatha! ("Come, O Lord!")

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks:

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Church announcements:

1) Have you thought about being baptised?

The Lord Jesus instructed his followers to 'make disciples' - and part of that process is baptising people in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (see Matthew 28:18-20). The early church took this instruction of Jesus seriously, so that when people became Christians they were baptised soon after their commitment to Christ (e.g. see Acts 2:38-41). Baptism involves full immersion in water, identifying with Jesus in his death and resurrection (see Romans 6:3-4). The person baptised is making a public commitment to live as a disciple of the Lord Jesus (see Acts 8:35-38). If you would like to find out more, and explore if you should take this step of baptism, please contact Pastor Steve.

2) Costa would like some folk to help him distribute gospel tracts to letterboxes in the North Katoomba area. Please contact Costa if you are interested. And please support him in prayer and for the Lord to give the increase.

“Some day you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody of East Northfield, is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all, out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal — a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint; a body fashioned like unto His glorious body.” [D.L. Moody]

From The Pocket Testament League website [https://tptl.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/TPTL-Newsletter-Sep-Nov20.pdf]

Myanmar

David our representative from TPTL writes, “Some of the restrictions in Myanmar are beginning to relax. People are starting to go back to work and some factories are reopening. Churches are still closed and it has been many weeks since they have been able to meet together on a Sunday. Some church members are struggling to feed their families as there is no work. The team are helping as much as possible but would appreciate continued prayer for their country.”

Colombia

Norberto, The Pocket Testament League representative in Colombia writes, “Quarantine is still continuing here in Colombia and the situation is getting worse everyday. There is lack of food and medicine in many places. We are continuing to get together for church services twice a week on Zoom. Sometimes I get out with permission as Chaplain to give away gospels of John to people on the streets and police officers. Other evangelists from the League are doing so too. We take care and keep the safety protocols to continue doing our ministry.

Silvana Ortega (a woman who has been working with TPTL for 5 years) got a infection inside her spine and hips a few months ago and can now no longer get out of bed and walk by herself. Please pray for her health and full recovery.”

October birthdays: Barrie K 10th, Colin N 12th, Adrian O 30th. May the Lord bless you abundantly on your special day and through the year ahead in your walk with Him.

Spurgeon on meditating on the word of God

There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on his Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them.

Truth is something like the cluster of the vine: if we would have wine from it, we must bruise it; we must press and squeeze it many times. The bruiser's feet must come down joyfully upon the bunches, or else the juice will not flow; and they must well tread the grapes, or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted. So we must, by meditation, tread the clusters of truth, if we would get the wine of consolation therefrom.

Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth, but the process which really supplies the muscle, and the nerve, and the sinew, and the bone, is the process of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with the inner life. Our souls are not nourished merely by listening awhile to this, and then to that, and then to the other part of divine truth. Hearing, reading, marking, and learning, all require inwardly digesting to complete their usefulness, and the inward digesting of the truth lies for the most part in meditating upon it.

Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord, and be this our resolve this morning, “I will meditate in thy precepts.”

[Charles Spurgeon, from “Morning and Evening”: Devotional for Morning, October 12th. Text: Psalm 119:15.]

Friday October 16th, 1.30pm — Prayer for Israel (please contact Irene Robertson for venue details)

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” [Romans 11: 25]

Contributions welcome: The KBC bulletin is available in print on the first Sunday service of the month and a longer PDF version of the Bulletin is on the church website: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au/library/bulletins/>. Contributions and enquiries can be made to the editor, Bill Fewer (email: hillbillyfewer@gmail.com).

Giving: Please remember that you can give online to Katoomba Baptist Church at BSB 704-922 and Account Number 100008926. Thank you for your faithful commitment to giving.

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” [John 17:24]

Katoomba Baptist Church Bulletin Online Extra

** Please note that to access websites referred to in the Bulletin, please copy and paste the link into the address bar of your web browser.**

A reminder that KBC now has a website <https://katoombabaptist.org.au>

Again we thank the Thomas brothers, Daniel and Joshua, who are responsible for creating the church's website.

A reminder too that the longer online version of the church Bulletin is not being sent out by email anymore. To read the current issue and have access to a twelve month archive of previous Bulletins you need to visit the KBC website: <https://katoombabaptist.org.au/library/bulletins/>

Let's pray that with this new internet presence that the Lord will draw people to Him through our church. In all our ministries, individually and as a fellowship, may the Lord be blessed and glory be to Him.

Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT website

In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the Baptist Union has put together a very helpful page on their website which is an excellent guide for local churches and their fellowships: <https://nswactbaptists.org.au/covid19/>

Plus, there is a national call to daily prayer at 7pm to seek the Lord about the crisis:
<https://www.baptist.org.au/covid-19-national-call-to-prayer/>

And there is also the previous disaster which is still affecting many people:
Bushfire Relief and Recovery Campaign, <https://nswactbaptists.org.au/bushfire-relief-and-recovery/>

And, finally, you can contact the Baptist Union website and request to be added to the prayer mailing list.

"I remember myself, that when I was young, I had sometime the company of one ancient godly minister, who was of weaker parts than many others, but yet did profit me more than most; because he would never in prayer or conference speak of God, or the life to come, but with such marvelous seriousness and reverence, as if he had seen the majesty and glory which he talked of." [Richard Baxter]

J.I. Packer (1926-2020) on the Lord's Prayer

An analysis of light requires reference to the seven colors of the spectrum that make it up, so analysis of the Lord's Prayer requires reference to a spectrum of seven distinct activities: approaching God in adoration and trust; acknowledging his work and his worth, in praise and worship; admitting sin, and seeking pardon; asking that needs be met, for ourselves and others; arguing with God for blessing, as wrestling Jacob did in Genesis 32 (God loves to be argued with); accepting from God one's own situation as he has shaped it; and adhering to God in faithfulness through thick and thin. These seven activities together constitute biblical prayer, and the Lord's Prayer embodies them all.

So the Lord's Prayer should be put to service to direct and spur on our praying constantly. To pray in terms of it is the sure way to keep our prayers within God's will; to pray through it, expanding the clauses as you go along, is the sure way to prime the pump when prayer dries up and you find yourself stuck. We never get beyond this prayer; not only is it the Lord's first lesson in praying, it is all the other lessons too. Lord, teach us to pray.

*Further Bible Study
The naturalness of prayer:*

- Psalm 27; 139.

[Packer, J.I., *Growing in Christ*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1994. pp. 158-9]

“Humble And Holy – What It Was Like To Study And Serve With J.I. Packer” by Nerida Peart

[Sourced from *Eternity News*, <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/opinion/humble-and-holy-what-it-was-like-to-study-and-serve-with-j-i-packer/>, viewed 26/9/20]

I studied under J.I. Packer at Regent College in Vancouver from 2006–2010.

I also had the privilege of going to church with him at St John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church in Vancouver, where I served as a ministry intern during my studies. As part of our training we got to hear his insights on vocational ministry, and to serve alongside him in leading services and preaching at the early morning Sunday service at St John's.

*Packer was the reason I'd chosen to study at Regent College. I'd read *Knowing God* and a number of other Packer titles, and in the front of each of these books I'd read a phrase: J.I. Packer works at Regent College, 5800 University Boulevard, Vancouver.*

On a working holiday, I went to check out the home of J.I. Packer, and discovered the wonder of Regent College, its gifted faculty and wonderful learning community.

The thing I responded to in Packer's books was not just his clarity of thinking and his ability to explain deep truths of the gospel in clear and relatable terms, but also his obvious and genuine faith. This faith shines through all his writing, and motivated his years of service in writing and teaching for the worldwide church.

*In the introduction to *Knowing God*, he related a story about a person walking along, and sharing with a friend that it didn't matter what else happened in life, because he had “known God” as the deepest truth and joy of his life. That was a knowledge Packer himself clearly shares.*

Even now, remembering that story has the power to make me tear up.

When I arrived at Regent I was keen to study under Dr Packer and I began with his class ‘Systematic Theology Overview’. He would start every class with the doxology. “Arise friends,” he would say, and everyone would have to stand and sing. At first we all felt very self-conscious, and the singing was patchy and embarrassed. We only did it because, well, who says no to J.I. Packer! But by the end of the semester we sang together sincerely and tunefully because we had learned Packer's primary lesson: ALL theology is for doxology – for the glory of God.

Here was a once in a generation mind, an unparalleled published author and theologian, and always his focus was on Jesus Christ his saviour, in making the name of Jesus great. Packer's focus was on seeing Jesus honoured. His theology came out of a desire to help others understand the “glory” and profundity of adoption into God's family.

J.I. Packer, who loved to refer to himself in class in the third person as “Packer”, had an amazing mind, and a photographic memory. He might start speaking about the fifth century fathers, and you would watch him gaze up and to the left – you could almost see the cogs turning as he accessed the file in his mind, and then he would continue talking for an hour or two without notes, in incredible detail about the history of the church and its theology. But it was when we got to the Puritans that you got a glimpse into Packer's soul.

As he talked about the Puritans, and their devotion to God and holiness, he would begin to tear up. The great J.I. Packer, happy to show his deepest love of God and emotion in front of snotty nosed graduate students, because he couldn't hide his love for Jesus even when lecturing.

At Regent there was an expression that “you take the professor not the course.” During my time at Regent, I gradually came to understand that the great gift of any Regent course, no matter the subject matter, was getting to know the professor, and getting a glimpse into their faith and spiritual practices, as well as how their unique mind shaped their theological approach. Packer and his faith, along with many other professors, were a lasting gift of encouragement to perseverance and faithfulness (as those in Hebrews 11).

Although known primarily as a theologian and author, Packer was a pastor at heart. He faithfully served under Rector David Short at St John's Shaughnessy as an honorary assistant. He helped out with leading services, and preaching, as well as adult education and bible studies. His humility and pastoral heart was an example of faithfulness in following Christ and a willingness to be involved in all the mundanity of church life and relationship.

I well remember something that happened after a service at St John's. We were finishing up and an elderly lady accosted J.I. before he could even remove his surplice [a liturgical outer garment], regaling him with her maladies for a full 20 minutes. Not once did Packer try to move her on. He listened attentively, and compassionately, and this

attitude I saw repeated with students at Regent, whether they be outrageously loud and demanding, or those with pressing theological questions.

Packer loved the liturgy and the depth of insight and faith it fostered through its recitation week after week in church. Well known for personally reciting the morning and evening prayer services as part of his spiritual practice, he was also one of the best people I have ever seen lead liturgy. Despite having recited the Communion service from the Book of Common Prayer hundreds if not thousands of times, every week he spoke it afresh. He never hurried, but imbued it with expression and meaning as though it was the first time he was reading it.

And as he recited the communion introduction, this 80+ year old saint, who looked like a gust of wind would blow him over, would fall to his knees on the hard flagstones, despite it no doubt paining him. He was humbling himself before his God in faithful service, week in week out, as he led God's people in worship.

As part of my training at Regent, and part of my duties as an intern at St John's, I was required to preach at the 7.45am service. The first time I had to do this, having been allocated my passage, I sweated for weeks over the preparation. I had never preached in a church before, and now I would be preaching while J.I. Packer led the liturgy. What an incredible privilege, and what a daunting task!

I admit that what I wanted most was to impress Packer, to knock the socks off him with my preaching prowess – and of course the insight and depth of my biblical exposition. But the reality was I was a completely inexperienced preacher, who no matter how hard I tried would almost certainly not impress. I duly gave my mediocre sermon, and many more, and Packer, while never effusive, never failed to make an encouraging comment or thank the preacher for their words and work.

I have one memory of Packer in particular that I will treasure all my days. After preaching one Sunday, he said to me "God has blessed you with the gift of preaching, so you must continue faithfully, and use the gifts he has given you to be a blessing to others, both here and in Sydney." So when people question the hard choices I have made to continue to be Anglican, and to continue to answer God's call to preach, I always think of the humble and holy J.I. Packer, that great servant who has gone before us to show the way.

It is not just his legacy as a writer, teacher, pastor, and theologian that will remain, but his example as a good and faithful servant, motivated in all things to honour and proclaim his Lord – the Lord he has known and pursued for all those many years, and is finally seeing face to face.

"The Surgeon's Prognosis"

by Costa Karagounas

Quoting from Spurgeon's Lectures to His Students (pp. 208-220):

"Some things are true and some things are false. I regard that as an axiom, but there are many who evidently do not believe it. The current principle of the present age seems to be, 'some things are either true or false, according to the point of view from which you look at them. Black is white and white is black according to circumstances; and it does not particularly matter which you call it. Truth of course is true, but it would be **rude** to say that the opposite is a lie, we must not be bigoted, but remember the motto, 'So many men so many minds.'"

In the lecture to his students from which this quote is taken, Charles Spurgeon speaks of the fundamentals of his faith, the faith of any regenerate Christian, and lists them: the certainty that God exists, that He is maker of heaven and earth, that the Bible is His Word, a divine production, that God is One but three distinct persons, however much he could not explain that very doctrine, the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, the working of the Holy Spirit, the absolute necessity of the new birth, the tremendous evil of sin, salvation through grace alone.

He then says that if there are questions about other points, secondary doctrine, 'we shall speak with such a measure of decision about them as may be comely'. This last turn of genteel phrase belies Spurgeon's unashamed forcefulness with which he expresses himself throughout the student lectures delivered about 150 years ago, and doubtless that seen and heard by his church congregation.

Spurgeon was prescient about the state of the Church and men's opinions. I'm surprised he accurately predicted the state of our society but I'm not surprised. Does much in history which is of great consequence happen overnight? Isn't change always long in the making, then the momentous visible turning point? Are we not as Christians informed about all this, because Jesus answered the disciples' very questions concerning these things? Black is presently being called white or vice versa. Even parliamentarians in the UK and the USA are now required to attend 'training courses' on the oppressiveness of white Christian forefathers.

What did Surgeon prescribe?

'We ought to preach the Gospel, not as our views at all, but as the mind of God; the testimony of Jehovah concerning His own Son and in reference to salvation for lost men. If we had been instructed with the making of the Gospel, we might have altered it to suit the taste of this modest century, but never having been employed to originate the good news, but merely to repeat it, we dare not stir beyond the record.'

'It is quite certain that now or never we must be decided, because the age is manifestly drifting...it is going down the tide; the anchors are pulled up, and the vessel is floating to destruction.'

Let's praise the God of all creation for His wonderful works!



From the Editor

I took this photo when Trish and I were on our holiday a few weeks ago. We have family who live in a small coastal town north of Woolgoolga (which is itself 30kms north of Coffs Harbour). I love rivers and on the long drive there are plenty to enjoy: the Nepean, the Hawkesbury, the Hunter, the Manning, the Hastings, the Macleay and the Bellinger. The last is the one that flows through the dairy town of Bellinger. Trish and I always visit this lovely place on our travels north. The town is situated in lush pastures of the picturesque valley with a backdrop of mountains to the west. The mountain in the photo is popularly known as "The Sleeping Giant" because of the shape of the ridge-line.

While Trish was wandering around the town I went down to the river. I had a wonderful time of prayer, meditation and Bible study. I made a point of reading Psalm One and felt like I was living in its metaphors. It was a very peaceful scene. The gently flowing water. The clear blue sky with the warmth of early Spring sunshine. Birds were singing, ducks made rippling wakes as they swam. People sat on the grassy bank reading or just soaking up the sun. A group of young mothers were playing with their toddlers in the shallows, splashing and laughing. And a short, white-haired man was reading a battered Gideons Bible and praying. Quietly rejoicing, enjoying God and all His glorious handiwork. I felt blessed to have such a day. To have the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. To belong to the family of Almighty God. To be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. And I know this life, these blessings, this love, will never end. Yes, it was a real Psalm One day.

I hope you like my photo of the Bellinger River. If you have a photo that glorifies God in creation and want to share it, please email it to me at hillbillyfewer@gmail.com. You could also send in a short description or testimony too if you feel led.

May the Lord be glorified and His holy name magnified,
Your brother in Christ, Bill.

“Purposeful” a poem by Jemima Woolley

My soul is in turmoil,
My mind is afire,
I'm pacing and anxious
Aware fear's a liar.

I'm torn into pieces,
Debating my fate,
I argue for reason,
Emotions don't wait.

Help me, my Saviour.
Help me, my Lord.
May your peace rule in me
As I dwell in your word.

Distress is now leaving,
All conflict is gone.
I know you can heal me
Wherever I'm torn.

My heart cries for mercy,
And freely it's given,
As I pray, hopeful, yearning
Knowing that I'm forgiven.

Before your throne kneeling,
My petition is clear.
May I live to your glory,
And see heaven draw near.

Soli Deo Gloria.

“The Conflict Begins” by Dr. Renald Showers (1936-2019)

**[Sourced from *Israel My Glory* website,
<https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-conflict-begins/>, viewed 30/9/20]**

Have you ever asked yourself, Why is the world the way it is? What's going on here? Most people have. Here is a brief explanation in an edited excerpt from Dr. Renald Showers' extraordinary book What on Earth Is God Doing?

Satan worship, witchcraft, spiritism, and astrology. The present revival of the occult is merely one phase of the continuing war of the ages between God and Satan. Apart from knowledge of this war, it is impossible to understand what life is all about; and the only way to learn about this conflict is to study the philosophy of history presented by the Bible.

For centuries mankind has been wrestling with three major issues: Where have we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? The Bible deals with all three questions.

The Bible's philosophy of history begins with the eternal, personal God who exists as three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. Prior to creation nothing existed but God.

In eternity past God decided to have a kingdom over which He would rule as sovereign King (1 Tim. 1:17). Since nothing existed to serve Him, He created subjects over which to rule. First, He created angels—spirit beings not possessing bodies of flesh and bone (Mt. 22:30; Heb. 1:13–14). But they did possess intellect (2 Sam. 14:20) and the ability to communicate (Gen. 19:1–2).

They also were more powerful than the other type of created beings (2 Pet. 2:11). Although made to dwell in the heavens, they were given access to Earth after its creation (Gen. 19:1; Mt. 24:36).

The second major type of personal subject God created was the human being. Inasmuch as God had created the earth to be part of His domain, He intended to have on it a subject who would administer His rule over everything else on the planet. Just as some kings divide their kingdoms into provinces, place a governor over each province, and

hold each governor responsible to administer the province well on his behalf, so God created man, placed him as governor over the earth, and held him responsible to administer the earth well on behalf of God (Gen. 1:26, 28; Ps. 8:3–9). In other words, God intended Earth's government to be a theocracy.

To govern the earth for God, it was essential that man understand his earthly, physical province. Therefore, God formed for him a physical body from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). It also was necessary that he receive and understand God's directions. Therefore, God created man in His own image (1:26–28) as a personal being with intellect and the ability to communicate.

With the creation of man, God's work of bringing His kingdom into existence was completed. The universal kingdom of God was a reality, and everything in it was very good by God's perfect standard of evaluation (v. 31).

The Rebellion

After creation was completed, one of the highest angels became so proud of his intelligence and powers that he deceived himself into thinking he could overthrow God (Isa. 14:12–14; Ezek. 28:11–17; 1 Tim. 3:6). He hoped to make himself the king of the universe by establishing a kingdom of his own that would war against and destroy God's kingdom. Because of this angel's rebellion, his name was changed to Satan, which means "adversary." He had become the great revolutionary, the enemy of God and of every member of God's kingdom (Mt. 13:25, 28, 39; Lk. 10:18–19).

However, despite his proud plans, Satan will never be more than a creature of God's. In this respect, the biblical philosophy of history differs radically from religious and philosophical systems that picture a struggle between two equal gods, one good and one evil. According to the Bible, there can be no doubt about God the Creator defeating Satan the creature. In fact, God could have crushed Satan's rebellion instantly, but He chose not to do so. His reason will be seen later.

To establish his kingdom, Satan had to obtain subjects over which to rule. As a creature, he lacked ability to create beings. The only way he could obtain subjects was by persuading God's other creatures to join him in his rebellion. If his kingdom were to rule over both heavenly and earthly spheres, he had to persuade both angels and humans.

A sizeable number of angels joined Satan's rebellion.

Then Satan subtly entered man's perfect earthly environment and baited him with the notion that, if he disobeyed God, he would become like God (Gen. 3:1–5) and could rule his own life. So man disobeyed the directive of his divine King and joined the rebellion.

The Consequences

Man's rebellion produced tragic consequences:

First, man died spiritually at the moment of his disobedience (2:16–17). A drastic change occurred in his nature. Man had been created with a favorable disposition toward God, so he fellowshiped with and served God in a proper way. When man rebelled, he lost that disposition and became confirmed in one of enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). Enmity so fully took control of man's entire being that his nature suffered a perversion called total depravity. As a result, man's relationship to God, the Source of life, was broken.

Second, man eventually died physically. When he rebelled, a process of decay began that made his body subject to disease, deformity, and death (Gen. 3:19; 5:5; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Heb. 9:27). He also became subject to death by hazards, accidents, and violence (Gen. 4:8; 9:5–6; Lk. 13:4).

Third, man's ability to dominate the earth was changed. He lost ability to govern some things (Heb. 2:5–8), and the ability he did retain became perverted. As a result, he became doomed to abuse the earth and to exercise his dominion in a manner contrary to what God had intended.

Fourth, tragedy struck his domain. A province of a kingdom often suffers when its governor rebels against the king. In man's domain, soil productivity was reduced greatly (Gen. 3:17), and for the first time the soil produced thorns and thistles (v. 18). Animal nature changed from tame and noncarnivorous (1:30) to wild and carnivorous. All of God's earthly creation became subject to vanity and corruption (Rom. 8:19–22). And it continues to groan and travail in pain today. Through his own sin, man lost his perfect environment.

Fifth, man was transferred from God's kingdom to Satan's. This consequence had a tragic effect on the entire human race. Because the original parents of the race chose to rebel against God, and because humans reproduce after their kind, every person (except Christ) is born with a disposition of enmity toward God. Thus everyone is born spiritually dead and a member of Satan's kingdom (Eph. 2:1). Unless individuals accept God's way of salvation, they continue through life energized by Satan and living according to Satan's ways (v. 2). They are blinded to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4), deceived into believing that error is truth (11:14–15), held in spiritual darkness in Satan's power (Acts 26:17–

Some music for you

1) The Blessing | Aotearoa/New Zealand Churches join together to sing "The Blessing"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZQPifs2kjo>

Another of The Blessing videos, this time from our brothers and sisters across "The Ditch". It's so encouraging to see all these Christians worshipping the Lord in song. While I still enjoy The Irish Blessing and our own The Australian Blessing the most, this version is almost as good as those (yes, I am biased).

2) Review's Isolation Room #18: Vika & Linda Bull sing 'Amazing Grace'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6D1W5YwtbM>

For Review's Isolation Room series by The Australian newspaper, Vika & Linda Bull sing Amazing Grace, performed at Linda's home in Fitzroy, Melbourne on Sunday, April 5 2020. To support the artists, visit their website at vikaandlindabull.com. To connect with the artists, visit facebook.com/vikaandlindabull

Beautiful acapella version of the timeless John Newton hymn from Tongan-Australian sisters, Vika and Linda.

3) "Tis So Sweet" — Acoustic Cover by Michael and Ellen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxZhFAVfQ4k>

Michael and I finally had the chance to sit down and learn another song! I've used singing all my life to battle anxiety and this is one of my go-to hymns. Without warning fear creeps in, I start focusing on my circumstances and feeling anxious. The moment I catch myself doing this I just simply sing the chorus and verse of this song and peace washes over me knowing who has all of this in His hands. It truly is so sweet to trust in Jesus.

Ellen Haygood.

And more beautiful singing on this version of the lovely hymn "Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus". The harmonies of Ellen Haygood and her husband Michael really soar in this rendition which was recorded in their living room. Very tasteful banjo playing too by Ellen!

I hadn't heard this hymn before and I was moved by the simple, sincere faith revealed in the lyrics. How true, we just need to trust in the Lord Jesus. "Oh, for grace to trust Him more!"

"Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus" lyrics by Louisa M. R. Stead, 1882; music by William J. Kirkpatrick

*'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise,
And to know, "Thus saith the Lord!"*

*Refrain:
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er;
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust Him more!*

*Oh, how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood;
And in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!*

*Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.*

*I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And I know that Thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end.*

The Prophet's Prayer

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid;
O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy.

God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.
His brightness was like the light;
He had rays flashing from His hand,
And there His power was hidden.
Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet.

He stood and measured the earth;
He looked and startled the nations.
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills bowed.
His ways are everlasting.
I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers,
Was Your anger against the rivers,
Was Your wrath against the sea,
That You rode on Your horses,
Your chariots of salvation?
Your bow was made quite ready;
Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah

You divided the earth with rivers.
The mountains saw You and trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by.
The deep uttered its voice,
And lifted its hands on high.
The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Your arrows they went,
At the shining of Your glittering spear.

You marched through the land in indignation;
You trampled the nations in anger.
You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For salvation with Your Anointed.
You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah

You thrust through with his own arrows
The head of his villages.
They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.
You walked through the sea with Your horses,
Through the heap of great waters.

When I heard, my body trembled;
My lips quivered at the voice;
Rottenness entered my bones;
And I trembled in myself,
That I might rest in the day of trouble.
When he comes up to the people,
He will invade them with his troops.

A Hymn of Faith

Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labour of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls—
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
The Lord God is my strength;
He will make my feet like deer's feet,
And He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

[Habakkuk Chapter 3]

