

DayOne

Who
am I?

Why
am I
here?

Jesus

and Life's Four Great Questions

Why is
there
suffering
in the
world?


What
happens
when I
die?

Nigel Scotland



Dedication:

Barry and Mary Kissell dearly loved friends.



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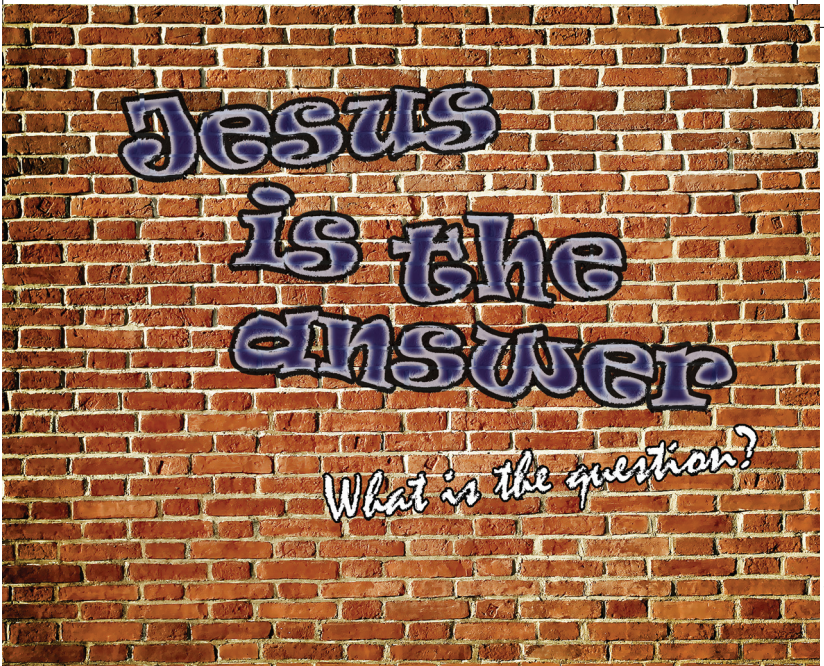
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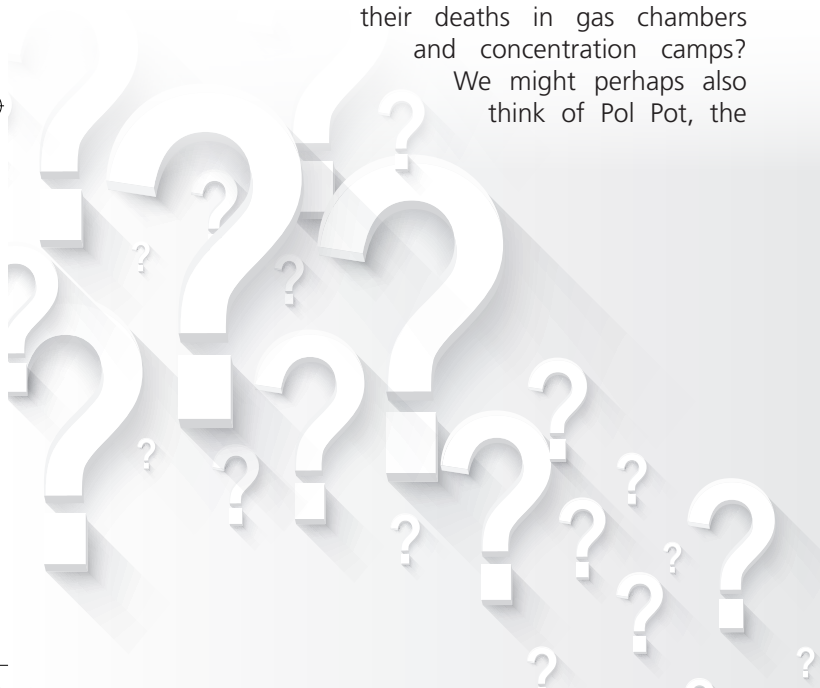


Introduction

Some years ago someone using spray paint plastered the words 'Jesus is the answer' on a wall near the main campus of a University College. A little later another person added a further line below it which read, 'What is the question'? It struck me, as I am sure it did many others who passed by, that first graffiti writer probably had very little awareness of the kinds of questions people are asking or that it takes some in depth study and careful thinking to understand how Jesus might in some way be able to provide answers

to those questions. How for example can Jesus even begin to enable us to discover our real identity and our intended role in the universe? Had the individual who confidently asserted that Jesus is the answer ever seriously pondered how, if he is 'the great God and Saviour' as the New Testament asserts, he could have allowed Joseph Stalin to murder twenty million Russians in his great revolutionary purges of the 1930s? Or what did he think about Adolph Hitler who in 1939 led the world into a war in which 60 million people (over 2.5 per cent of the world's population) died and produced a holocaust in which more than six million Jews met their deaths in gas chambers and concentration camps?

We might perhaps also think of Pol Pot, the



revolutionary Cambodian dictator, who caused 3 million deaths as he forced agrarian socialism on his population of 8 million people. To this could be added the atrocities of Saddam Hussein, Bassar Assad, Al-Qaeda and Isis. How can Jesus possibly answer to the world's suffering when he allows such monstrous evil in his world?

How, we might also wonder, can Jesus, who the Bible says is seated in the heavens, help us on this lowly planet in the hour of our death? Can we really be sure that he will be there for us at this crucial and final milestone of our life's journey and that there will be a life beyond the grave?

There are many questions to which we all want answers but this small booklet simply seeks to put forward in brief the ways in which Jesus understood and sought to answer the four ultimate questions of life which are Who Am I?, Why am I here? Why is there suffering? What happens when I die?





Who am I?



1. Who am I?





I sometimes go to watch my local team, Cheltenham Town, when they are playing a home match. It often happens that one of the opposition forwards will make a particularly wild attempt on the



Cheltenham goal and the ball goes over the stand or well wide of the target. This is the moment the home fans are waiting for and they immediately start to chant in mocking derision, 'Who are yer?', 'Who are yer'?

Although ninety-nine point nine per cent of the fans probably don't realise it, this is actually a serious question that we all do need to ask, though hopefully not in the same discourteous manner of the Cheltenham fans! Perhaps when we meet people at the church door, in the work place, or in a hotel dining room, doctor's surgery or anywhere else, we find ourselves inquiring, 'May I know who you are'? I might answer, 'I am Jo Smith- end of story' but the fact is merely giving one's name doesn't show understanding of the real point of the question. Everyone knows that there's more to who they are than their name!

This is one of life's major issues, 'Just exactly who am I'? Am I just a cluster of chemical compounds held together in a unique way or is there more to me than that? What for instance about that part of us which loves, hurts, grieves, delights, cares, enjoys, feels pain, fears, yearns and gets



angry, in short, that part of us that is connected with our five senses and which the Bible terms 'the heart'? If we are nothing but a complex biochemical mechanism why do we have these strong feelings, why do we have an innate sense of right and wrong and longings for justice and perfection? Why do we have images of goodness? Indeed why do we constantly find ourselves asking why? Why should that have happened? Indeed what is it that causes us to keep raising these issues of morality and behaviour?



Many people come to the issue by trying to find their identity in what they own or in other words their material assets. So in consequence they spend a great deal of time and effort spending money they haven't got, buying things they don't need to impress people they either don't really know or don't particularly like! Such people are more or less saying 'I am what I own'. Furthermore we know only too well money and possessions don't of themselves guarantee happiness or give us a sense of fulfilment. Indeed many of the world's richest individuals are among the most unhappy of people. Then there are many others who think they know who we are by our work or chosen profession. 'May I know what you do?' they ask. So they define us as a doctor, a lawyer, a truck driver, an administrator, a teacher, a clerk or whatever, but is that really who we are or is that simply what we do? In the last analysis surely we are



Hello my name is



human-beings not human doings! We do, in fact, all of us have a conscious awareness of this fact that we are living beings. As the philosopher, René Descartes, once famously put it, 'I think therefore I am'!





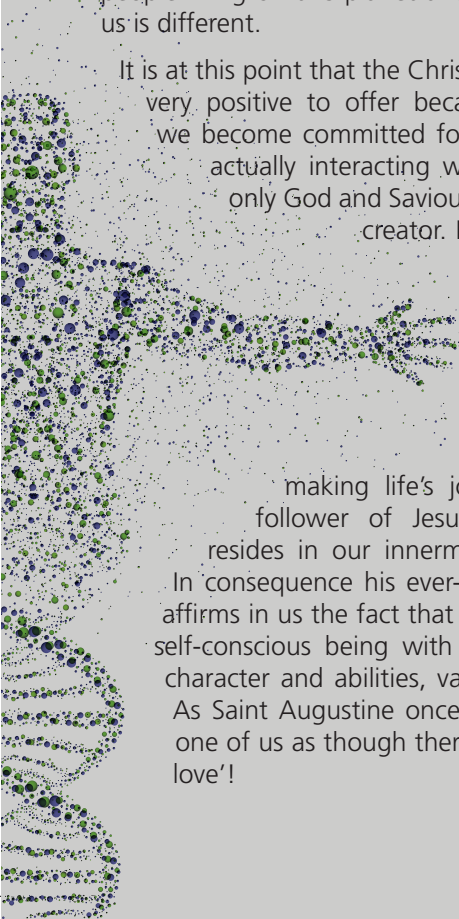
However this fact of itself would not be sufficient to enable us to really know who we are. In order to do that we also need other people to relate to. It is their interaction with us that confirms our own self-awareness, and the consciousness that we have of our own existence. We can only begin to discover ourselves in relation to other people. Our family, friends, work colleagues and neighbours function like a mirror and enable us to see aspects of our character that are positive. Good relationships with other people affirm and help to strengthen what is positive in us and this gives us confidence in ourselves. It also imparts in us feelings of self-worth. By the same inter-communication we may also come to recognise other aspects of who we are which may be dysfunctional or have a negative impact. If we are sensitively aware we are then able to correct and modify such behaviour and improve our character and develop better social relations. Sadly, if those who are closest to us are unkind, hurtful, abusive or unaffirming we may grow up lacking in self-worth or confidence in who we are. Be that as it may, the fact remains that every single one of us on this planet is conscious of the fact that we are a unique individual. We have our own unique bodily form and a unique





face print, hand-print, voice print and iris print. We have a unique DNA code and gifts of personality, skills and abilities that no one else can ever replicate. It is indeed one of the wonders of creation that there are billions of people living on this planet and yet every single one of us is different.

It is at this point that the Christian faith has something very positive to offer because it teaches that, as we become committed followers of Jesus, we are actually interacting with the one who is not only God and Saviour but also our maker and creator. He knows us better than we know ourselves, or for that matter than any one else in this world. Two thousand years of Christian history affirm that once we are making life's journey as a committed follower of Jesus, his Spirit's presence resides in our innermost being and feelings. In consequence his ever-loving nature constantly affirms in us the fact that we are indeed a unique, self-conscious being with individual gifts, talents, character and abilities, valued and loved by God. As Saint Augustine once put it, 'God loves each one of us as though there were only one of us to love'!





Why am I here?



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Life's Great Riddle and No Time to Find its Meaning

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2. Why Am I Here?

George Harrison of the Beatles once said that there are three questions we all have to face and they are, Who am I?, Why am I here? and Where am I going? The second of these was one which concerned Bernard Levin, a man who made no claim to be a Christian and who was one of the great columnists of the twentieth century. He once wrote an article for the Times newspaper entitled, 'Life's Great Riddle and No Time to Find its Meaning'. In it he stated,





To put it bluntly I have to discover why I was born before I die?...I have not managed to answer the question yet, and however many years I have before me they are certainly not as many as there are behind. There is an obvious danger in leaving it too late...why do I have to know why I was born? Because of course, I am unable to believe that it was an accident; and if it wasn't one, it must have meaning.

This is probably not a question most people ask out loud, but it is one which often passes through our minds particularly in moments of crisis when we are confronted with a terminal illness, or there is a death in the family, or someone close to us has a break-down in their marriage. The fact that people do have these "whys" suggests the possibility that they believe there is an answer, or at the very least that we are made in such a way that we need to search for answers.



I was brought up in North London and when I was going to school I often rode on the Piccadilly Underground. I would look at the lines of bowler-hatted gentlemen bobbing up and down behind their newspapers. Even as a teenager, as I looked at them I often thought surely life can't simply be forty years of going backwards and forwards like this, followed by a retirement of five to ten years of gardening and perhaps





playing bowls and bridge. Perhaps then ending up with another five years in sheltered accommodation or an old people's home before finally being carted off to the local cemetery or crematorium.

So what about us?



Do we believe that's all there is to life or are there deeper reasons for our being here? Perhaps as a starting point we can reflect on the fact that all of us have a particular unique and distinctive personality with certain natural attributes, abilities and aptitudes. Some of us are left brain analysers while others may be more spontaneous by nature. Numbers of us are practical organisers and carers while others are theoreticians, academics or technically-minded. Whoever we are, we all have talents and abilities, but all our caring, creative engineering and technical skills won't have much meaning or purpose unless we use them for the benefit of other people. What is the point of being a good doctor unless there are patients to treat? What is the value of being an excellent teacher unless there are pupils to teach? What is the use of being a good farmer if there are no hungry mouths to feed or a bus driver if there is no-one who wants to travel? Clearly life has very little point or meaning unless, as well as caring for ourselves, we are caring and working to provide for the needs of others.

It seems obvious therefore that a major reason for our being on this planet is that we might learn to serve and care for others. If we are going to do that in a loving,



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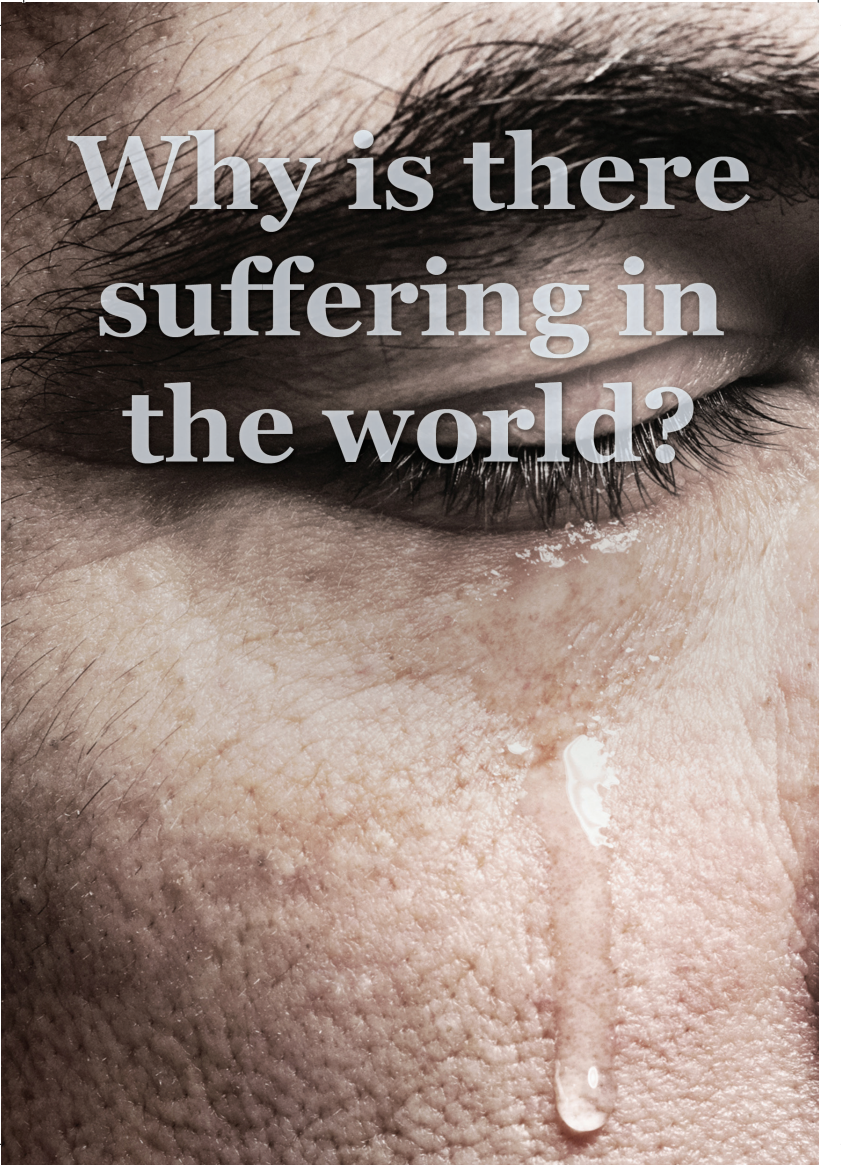
caring and effective manner we need a set of values or guidelines by which to operate. So the question then becomes whose values shall we choose? The majority of the world's population both now, and indeed down through the ages, have asserted that the teachings of Jesus are the best that have yet been offered to the human race. Even those who take another view would probably admit that many of their moral principles derive from distillations of Christian teaching. What could be more straightforward than Jesus' Golden Rule, 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' or the Ten Commandments which have been rightly termed 'Ten Steps to the Good Life'? Indeed the core of Jesus' teaching which is found in his celebrated 'Sermon on the Mount' is simply an expansion and practical application of the Commandments.



Just after Jesus had shared the Last Supper with his disciples He wrapped a towel around his waist and took a bowl of water and washed his disciples' feet. It was a symbolic act to remind us that we are not to be workaholics who simply labour for our own satisfaction or to 'Lord it over' other people. Rather, we are to lovingly serve and care for our family members and all with whom we have dealings – in short our neighbours. So what does all this amount to? Surely simply this; that the purpose of our being here on this planet, is as Jesus taught, 'To love God and our neighbour as ourselves'!

Just after Jesus had shared the Last Supper with his disciples He wrapped a towel around his waist and took a bowl of water and washed his disciples' feet.





**Why is there
suffering in
the world?**



3. Why is there suffering in the world?

The problem of pain and suffering has rightly been called 'the mystery of the universe'. Aldous Huxley called it the 'Riddle of the Universe'. Suffering is a particular problem if we believe there is a good God who oversees the universe. It forces us to ask the question, 'If God is almighty and good why doesn't he ensure his creatures are happy'? The fact that people suffer and are not happy is proof that God, if he exists, is neither good nor almighty'. Sometimes, it should be noted, attempts are made to distinguish between 'natural suffering' that is caused by events beyond human control such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, avalanches, tsunamis and, on the other hand, suffering which results from human decision and actions.

There are no slick easy answers to these kinds of issue. Nevertheless there are certain things which can be said in answer to the problem of human pain and hurt. In the first place, suffering is part of the environment in which we live. If we go too close to a fire our clothes get scorched and our skin may be burned. If we tread on ice we may slip and break a bone. If we eat stale food or drink excessive quantities of alcohol we may very probably experience sickness. In fact a great deal of the world's suffering results from human selfishness, carelessness and error. All human beings have a capacity



to make moral decisions which means they can choose to do what is good and beneficial or decide on a course of action that is hurtful or selfish. Also, as has been acknowledged, much suffering results from human carelessness. We cannot escape from the reality of John Donne's words that 'no man is an island entire of itself' and that our words and actions impact the lives of others. Thus to take one example, the careless siting of Number Seven slurry tip beside the village of Aberfan in South Wales eventually resulted in a terrible avalanche on the 21st October, 1968 which engulfed a local school and took the lives of a 118 children. Careless aircraft maintenance or trains passing red signals result in wreckage, loss of life and injury.

It is also the case that some suffering and sickness can be purposeful. For example, illness caused by over-work could result in a person giving up their career for a period of time but that might in the end save them from a complete break-down. Sometimes a major accident can cause a person to reassess the importance of paying attention to a marital relationship which was in danger of breaking. It is also a fact that human suffering can on occasion produce endearing qualities of character such as sympathy, gentleness and compassion. James Barrie, the author of Peter Pan, once told how his mother had lost the son she loved. He said, 'That is how my mother got her soft eyes and that is why other mothers ran to her when they lost their child'. Suffering can also produce great strength and depth of character; traits which the world saw so vividly in the life of Nelson Mandela who

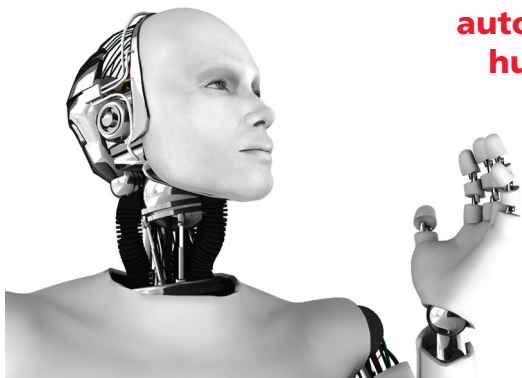




emerged as a wonderfully forgiving and reconciling man following his twenty seven years of imprisonment on Robben Island.

We have also to reckon with the fact that we are not automatons but human beings with the capacity to make choices. With the freedom to choose and make decisions there is always the possibility of suffering as individuals opt for what is selfish or evil rather than what is right and just.

Christianity doesn't have all the answers to the question of suffering but it does offer some helpful ways to understand it. Jesus very clearly identified human selfishness and carelessness as lying at the root of a great deal of the world's pain and hurt. He clearly taught that his own presence and teaching would help men and women to choose the good, in preference to what was unacceptable, and this of itself diminishes the likelihood of selfishness and suffering. Jesus' insistence on the

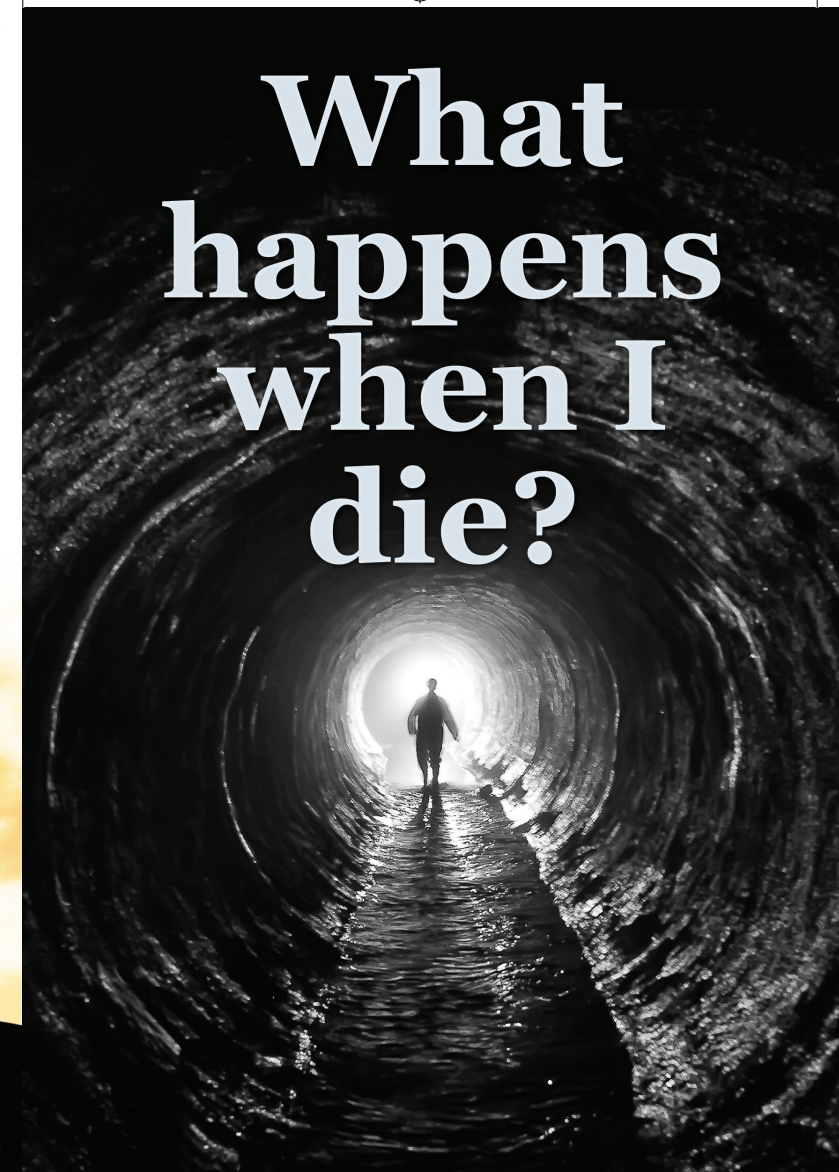


**'We are not
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importance of loving one's neighbour is also a key to avoiding pain and hurt. Then it must also be said that Jesus, the God and Saviour whom Christians worship, didn't stand aloof from a suffering world but came and lived within it as a human being. In his humanity he experienced suffering to the full. His childhood was spent as a refugee in Egypt. As a carpenter he knew what it was to do a hard day's labour and come home tired and weary. In his ministry he suffered the acute loneliness of being misunderstood and rejected. Even those he fed and healed during his ministry deserted him. He was subjected to an illegal trial, brutal unjust beatings and a terrifying and agonising death on a Roman cross. Through it all he acted without violent retaliation and even forgave the soldiers who nailed him to the gibbet. Suffering can on occasion be redemptive. If a person dies defending another from a potential murderer there is a sense in which he or she has redeemed a life. The Christian belief is that since Jesus was the perfect representative of the human race, his suffering and death released the power to redeem the entire human race from the alienation their sin and selfishness deserves.







What happens when I die?



4. What happens when I die?

Death is the one major dilemma every one of us will have to face. It is also the only certain fact of life. As George Bernard Shaw put it, 'Death is the ultimate statistic; one out of one dies'. Many famous and distinguished people have expressed their fear concerning death. Epicurus, the Stoic philosopher, once said: 'The last thing I want to do is die. In regard to death everyone is a fortified city'.





Jean Jacques Rousseau said, 'He who pretends to face death without fear is a liar'. Edward Gibbon, the famous historian who wrote "The History of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", said in his last words, 'All is now lost, finally and irrevocably lost. All is dark and doubtful'. Aldous Huxley once wrote, 'If you are a busy chocolate eating modern, then death is hell'.



So this is the reason why so many people try to hide away from the reality of death. In fact we don't have a 'death service'. Instead we have an undertaker to take us under. When someone dies we don't say, 'Mrs Jones has died' instead we say, 'Mrs Jones has passed on'! Rather than speak of 'the dead' we speak in more gentle tones of 'the departed' or 'the deceased'. Most people take the view that many of our losses are irreparable and that death is one such loss that has to be faced with a stiff upper lip and then put out of our minds.

An end or a beginning?

Aristotle said, 'Death is a dreadful thing for it is the end'. In more recent times the philosopher, Bertrand Russell, echoed his words declaring, 'When I die I rot'. In reality this is how many people think of death. We hear it expressed in sentiments such as, 'What a sad ending for Mr Smith and that he should have to go like that'! That said, even those who take this view of death, find that the recollections of those who died live on in their memories and, indeed, at times in their experience. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, died





on 5th September, 1997 but undoubtedly an awareness of her presence will continue in the lives of many thousands of individuals across the world for generations to come. More than that, increasing numbers of people of no particular faith are of the view that there is some form of life beyond the grave. A group of American medical doctors researched several hundred cases of people who had passed briefly into an experience of death and then been brought back to life, many of them while undergoing hospital surgery. Almost all those who were questioned testified to out of the body experiences of great beauty, tranquillity and peace. Whilst this may not be the reality of the experience of life after death it does add some weight to the Christian belief there is life beyond the grave. To all of this can be added the fact that the centre of human consciousness which senses, feels and knows and is linked to the body, appears to be a distinct entity from the body. It is not unreasonable therefore to suppose that at the point of death this inner



core of a human being continues on to experience further life elsewhere. This is in fact the Christian conviction that at the point of physical death the human spirit leaves the body and passes into a resurrection existence. We catch a glimpse of this as Jesus gave up his spirit in the moment of his death (Matthew 27:50 and Luke 23:46).

A general resurrection

The Christian view is that there is conscious existence beyond the grave and that there is a general resurrection for everyone. This conviction is exemplified in the life of Jesus who died and rose again, not just as a phantom or spirit but as the same recognisable man whom the disciples had known and worked alongside. Not only could they touch the scars of his wounds, they were able to eat with him, walk with him and even engage in fishing with him. Jesus was clear that at this general resurrection everyone will be accountable for their own





lives (see Matthew 25:15-46). Indeed in their consciences many people do resonate with this and feel themselves to be answerable for their actions to something or someone above and beyond themselves. Jesus also made it plain that those who had lived in the way that he had taught and instructed would enjoy a future life of perfection. That said, we need to be wary of making judgements as to the precise nature of this future existence and who precisely will have a share in it. The New Testament is clear that only the Lord has certain knowledge of a person's destiny (2 Timothy 2:19), we don't!

The Christian hope

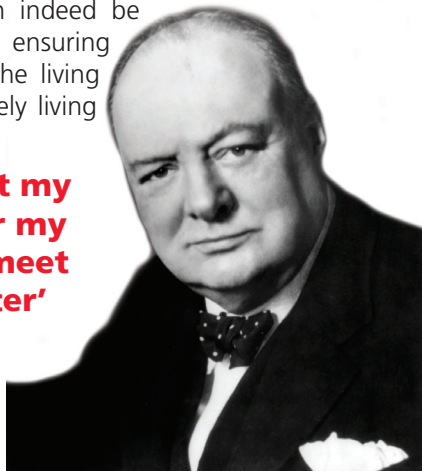
The one great comfort for Christian people is the knowledge that because Jesus in his humanity passed through death and came alive again, he is well able to carry them through when their time comes. A helpful way of looking at it is this. In the Middle Ages many people doubted whether there was a way round the southern tip of Africa and on to India and the land of the spices. Many believed that there was such a route but all attempts to get round the cape failed. In fact it became known as the Cape of Storms because so many

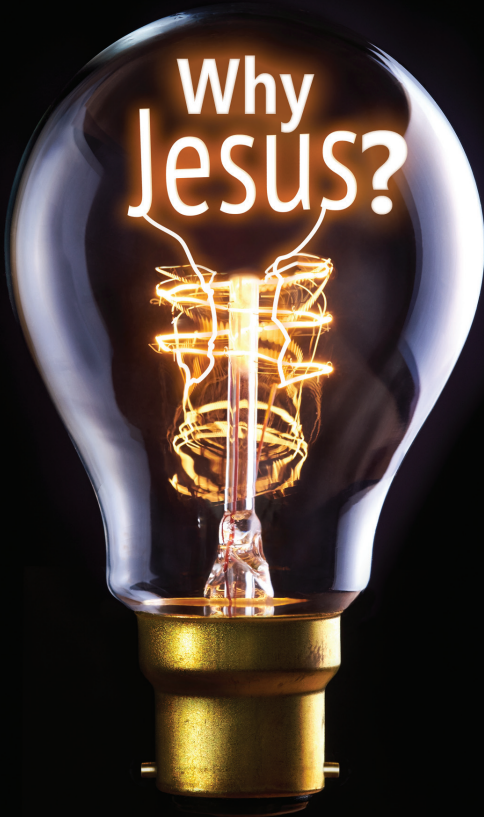


sailors died in shipwrecks there. But finally one brave mariner determined to try again. This man successfully rounded the southern tip of Africa, reached India and came back with spices to prove it. Ever since Vasco da Gama returned in triumph to Lisbon in August 1499, it has been impossible to doubt there is a way round the southern tip of Africa to the Far East. In fact because of da Gama's heroic feat the name Cape of Storms was changed into the Cape of Good Hope.

Ever since Jesus broke through the death barrier and came back alive in proof, it has been impossible to doubt that there is a way through death. In fact Jesus has changed death from being a 'Cape of Storms' in to a 'Cape of Good Hope'. The Christian's comfort in the face of death is not in a teaching but in Jesus himself. In a somewhat light-hearted moment Winston Churchill once retorted: 'I am ready to meet my maker but whether my maker is ready to meet me is another matter'! The message of Christianity is that we can indeed be ready for that moment by ensuring that our faith is in Jesus the living God and that we are actively living for him.

'I am ready to meet my maker but whether my maker is ready to meet me is another matter'

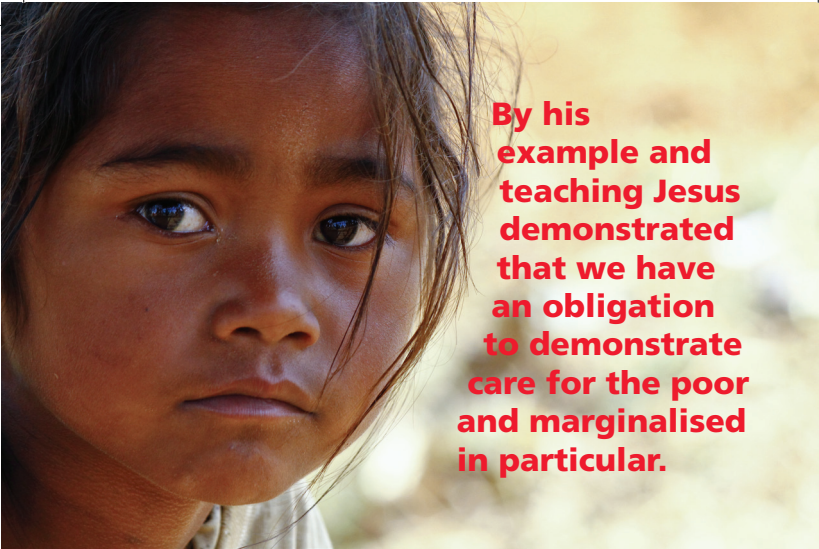




5. Why Jesus?

It is obvious that every person on the face of this planet is wanting to discover the meaning and purpose of this present life, and to find answers to the major questions of our existence which have been briefly considered in the previous pages. For nearly two thousand years it has been the conviction of the majority of the world's inhabitants that Jesus' life, teaching and example have provided the most satisfactory explanations. What follows are some of the reasons why we might perhaps start looking to him in order to understand the purpose and destiny of our lives,





By his example and teaching Jesus demonstrated that we have an obligation to demonstrate care for the poor and marginalised in particular.

The Compassion of Jesus.

More than ninety per cent of the world's population are poor. Indeed millions live in total deprivation well below the poverty line, existing without sufficient clothing or food. By his example and teaching Jesus demonstrated that we have an obligation to demonstrate care for the poor and marginalised in particular.

Jesus spent the greater part of his earthly ministry demonstrating his care for the poor. Luke's Gospel chapter 4 records Jesus' first sermon in the synagogue at Capernaum in which he said that he had come 'to bring good news to the poor'. The gospels also record that the poor people heard Jesus gladly. Abraham Lincoln once said, 'God must love the common people – He made

so many of them'. Jesus demonstrated his compassion for them by feeding their hungry and healing their sick. Jesus' compassion was also evident as he wept at the tomb of his friend, Lazarus (see John chapter 11), as he protected the woman taken in adultery (John chapter 8) and spent time in the company of tax collectors, sinners and outcasts. The Jews and the Samaritans were daggers drawn enemies, but in his famous parable 'the Good Samaritan' Jesus clearly taught the necessity of showing compassion to anyone in need. Jesus showed compassion to all he came into contact with even in fact to those who crucified him.

Jesus transcends race and ethnicity

Jesus is a truly universal figure. Whilst the reality is that Jesus was born a Jew it is significant that Indian Christians feel able to portray him with dark brown skin, very black





hair and Indian Dress. He is worshipped with Indian music and Indian art forms. Yet in China we find that the Chinese think of Jesus as being Chinese. Representations of Jesus in Chinese art show him in Chinese dress and even in some cases sporting a Chinese style pigtail. But in British culture Jesus is often perceived to be white, refined and middle-class. What all this tells us is that Jesus is universal. People in every race and culture, in every age and on every continent in the world are pledging and have pledged their loyalty and worship to Him. It would be true to say that Jesus transcends culture, race and ethnicity.

The Unequalled teaching of Jesus



The teaching of Jesus is unsurpassed. It is a clear and straightforward practical application of the Ten Commandments. These ten absolutes that clearly distinguish between right and wrong contain values and principles which everyone in their heart of hearts knows to be right. The world also acknowledges the vital importance of Jesus' insistence on forgiveness, justice and treating everyone equally and with

respect. No one in the history of this world has bettered Jesus' teaching on marriage and the importance of the family





unit. No better summary of human behaviour can be given than Jesus' Golden Rule' of 'do to others as you would have them do to you'. What more fulfilling goal could there be than 'to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and our neighbour as ourselves'? Even Lord Robert Boothby, a former private secretary to Winston Churchill and a self-confessed atheist, asserted that 'the teachings of Jesus are the best that have yet been offered to mankind'. Perhaps one of the greatest facets of Jesus' teaching is that every single human being is unique, precious and valuable to God and should be treated as such by their fellow human beings. The Oxford scholar and bishop, Stephen Neill, aptly summed up the teaching of Jesus in the following lines, 'The teachings of Jesus were not given in systematic form; but when they are put together and analysed, they are seen to amount to a total understanding of the universe'.



The example of Jesus




All human beings have their obvious character defects and weak spots. They may perhaps for a time appear to be fine role models but when we come into close contact with them we find that they have clay feet and don't stand up quite so straight. Most of the world's icons, as we know only too well from listening to the news or reading the papers, come to illustrate the maxim of Lord Acton that 'power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely'. Even the most saintly and godly rulers are not without their faults. But with Jesus it is not so. His character was and is perfect. We don't find







any accusations in the New Testament, or in the early histories of Josephus and others, condemning Jesus for selfish, immoral or inappropriate behaviour. No one, as far we know, ever accused Jesus of being heartless or unjust or causing unnecessary hurt by his words. Indeed quite the reverse was the case. In Luke's Gospel chapter 4:22 the evangelist recorded that 'All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips'.

Even Jesus' enemies could find no wrong with which to accuse him. When He was brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, he said: 'I can find nothing wrong with this man'. Later, when Jesus was crucified, one of the two thieves who hung beside him said: 'We indeed suffer justly for our sins, but this man has done no wrong'! A little later, one of the soldiers who had been part of the execution squad exclaimed out loud, 'Truly this man was the son of God'. The apostle Peter described Jesus in his first letter as 'the spotless lamb of God' (1 Peter chapter 1 verse 19). It is therefore no



wonder that in writing his first letter the apostle Peter wrote that Christ left us an example that we should follow in his steps. It is for these reasons that the great nineteenth century historian, William Lecky, wrote: 'The character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may truly be said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of the philosophers and than all the exhortations of the moralists'.

Servant leadership



Jesus entered this world as the Lord of the universe. Yet he was never in any way over-bearing or demanding. He came to establish a pattern of servant-hood. He warned his disciples not 'to lord it over others' but instead to serve them realising that 'the greatest among you shall be the servant of all'. In another place Jesus emphatically stated that he had 'not come to be served but to serve and to give my life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). In this Jesus set a new and unique pattern of leadership – servant leadership. His way was and is to lead from behind and to lead by serving others. This was the reason why at the end of the Last Supper Jesus took a towel and undertook the servant's task and washed his disciples' feet. He then said to them, 'If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet'. In other words, we're to follow his exemplary pattern.



Jesus who still lives.

The founders of all world faiths other than Christianity have lived and subsequently died. Indeed their burial places are known and visited as centres of pilgrimage. In short, they are simply figures of history. They are past tense. They are yesterday's people. In marked contrast the Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy refers to Jesus as 'the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever'. Though Jesus suffered and died in order to make forgiveness available to all who would receive it that wasn't the end of the matter. He broke through the death barrier and came alive again on the third day and appeared to his disciples alive on many occasions. In fact the apostle Paul reckoned that there were more than five hundred people who witnessed his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6). In chapter 1 verse 18 of Revelation, the last book of the



Bible, the apostle John on the island of Patmos describes his encounter with the risen Jesus. So awesome was His presence that John 'fell down at his feet as though he was dead' and heard Jesus say: 'I am the living one: I was dead and behold I am alive for ever and ever'.

Jesus is the one who still lives. No wonder the Apostle Paul wrote of Him as 'our great God and Saviour'. Down through the centuries people across the globe have come to share this conviction and sought to be Jesus' committed followers through prayer, worship and consciously living out his teaching. In so doing they have found sufficient answers to life's four great questions and have come to live lives that are worthwhile and full. The final words of this last chapter are therefore to express the hope that you the reader may in time come to do the same!



Jesus

and Life's Four Great Questions

George Harrison of the Beatles once said there are three great questions we all have to face, Who am I?, Why am I here? and Where am I going? This small book sets out, albeit briefly, to examine life's major issues and the answers which Jesus sought to give to them. It will have a particular appeal to anyone who is beginning to search for answers to the meaning of life. It will also be of interest to anyone who is wanting or willing to explore the heart of the Christian faith.



Nigel Scotland has spent the greater part of his life lecturing in church history at what became the University of Gloucestershire. He studied at McGill and Bristol Universities and earned a doctorate in Church History at the University of Aberdeen. He has been involved in Church planting and since 2006 has taught theology students of the Bristol Baptist

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