



## THE THEME OF THE BIBLE

LIFE IS OFTEN NOT FAIR!

### TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 06

"I looked out of the windows to see buildings 'pancaking' down...  
Thousands of people poured into the streets, crying, carrying  
bloodied bodies, looking for anyone who could help them."

- Bob Poff, Salvation Army's Director of Disaster Services.

# LIFE IS OFTEN NOT FAIR!

06 – THE THEME OF THE BIBLE.

A wealthy elderly lady, in her Mercedes-Benz, was waiting for a shopper to move out of a parking space. A young man in a bright red sports car darted into the space in front of her. She was furious. "It's not fair. I was waiting for that spot before you!" she shouted! The young man, without stopping as he dashed off to shop, said, ***"That's the way it is, when you're young and quick"***.

As he moved away he heard a loud crash. He turned and to his horror saw the back end of his beautiful new sports car crumpling under the impact of the Mercedes. With an anguished look he demanded, "What did you do that for?" She replied, with relish, ***"That's the way it is, when you're old and rich!"*** A humorous story, but it illustrates that life is often not fair!



**It wasn't fair for the people of Haiti when the earthquake left up to 300,000 dead, 300,000 injured and over a million homeless.** It was the worst earthquake to hit Haiti in more than 200 years.

"Tragedy has a way of visiting those who can bear it least. Haiti is the poorest nation in the western hemisphere," reported Michael Elliott in *Time*.\* "The Haiti earthquake was not just unusually powerful for the region; it was also shallow – a fact that, combined with the soft ground... made its impact even worse. In the city itself, sturdy buildings like the cathedral and the National Palace could not withstand the tremor, which meant that many hastily constructed concrete structures collapsed like houses of cards, killing many."

\*"Michael Elliott, Haiti's Agony." Jan. 14, 2010

In the absence of heavy machinery people were scabbling with their bare hands in the rubble for their loved ones.

Troy Livesay, one of the many missionaries who first brought word from Port-au-Prince, in describing the mood the night after the quake said, *"Church groups are singing ... in prayer. It is a beautiful sound in the middle of a horrible tragedy."*

Elliot concludes, *"You don't have to be a believer to hope that the prayers of those Haitians who have long borne sorrows not of their making are answered."*

To add insult to injury, while Haiti struggles to recover, 9 months later an epidemic of Cholera among the homeless, affected about 150,000 and claimed nearly 3500 lives, according to Fox News.

Life was not fair for the 280,000 who lost their lives as the **Asian Tsunami** swept across the Indian Ocean leaving millions homeless. Nor to those affected by the **Pakistan floods**, that covered an area larger than England and affecting 20 million people.

It was not fair when the **Gulf of Mexico oil spill**, from an explosion in a BP deep water drilling rig, spewed 4.9 million barrels of oil into the gulf, destroying wildlife and affecting the livelihood of millions. And the list goes on...

Life was not fair for 10 men in the **Nazi prison camp of Auschwitz** - a microcosm of what happened under the Nazis.\*

The time was a hot summer's afternoon in July 1941. The occasion - a prisoner had escaped while on a work detail outside the camp. The commandant was furious. If the escapee was not found within 24 hours, 10 men would be selected at random to die as a reprisal.

That night no-one slept much. All were familiar with death, but the thought of this bizarre lottery haunted them. Koscielniak, a commercial artist, said, "The lucky ones were the dead ones." Gajowniczek, another prisoner, hoped to be reunited with his wife and two boys after this nightmare was over.

The next morning the prisoners were marched onto the quadrangle and left to stand all day in the hot sun. Those who fainted were beaten until they got up or were carried away dead. At the end of the day the escaped prisoner wasn't found.

For what seemed like an eternity for those men, the commandant marched up and down the rows of prisoners. Every now and then the crunch of boots on the gravel would stop and the silence would be broken by the single word, "You!" The unlucky ones would be taken immediately to a cell where they would be starved to death. The 10th man was Gajowniczek. As the guards pushed him forward he wept, "My wife and children."

There was a stirring in the ranks of prisoners as an 11th man came forward. A thin apparition of a man. The guards were startled. "You there! What do you want?"

**Father Kolbe** stopped a few paces from the commandant and looked the officer in the eye. "Herr Kommandant, I wish to make a request, please." (That no-one shot him was a miracle.) *"I want to die in the place of the prisoner,"* he said, pointing to the sobbing Gajowniczek. "I have no wife, no family, no children. Besides. I am old and not good for anything. He's in better condition." (Kolbe knew well the Nazi mentality.)

"Who are you?" The officer asked.

"I am a Catholic priest."

The block was stunned. The commandant was uncharacteristically speechless. Some thought he would take them both. After a moment he granted the request. And Father Kolbe was taken off to the death bunker to die in place of Gajowniczek.

In the harshness of that human slaughterhouse, Kolbe had practised the compassion of Jesus, sharing his food, giving up his bunk, praying for his captors. They called him "the saint of Auschwitz." Kolbe outlived the other nine. He died only after being given a lethal injection. It was August 14, 1941. Life is often unfair!

\*Reader's Digest

When God created the world He saw that all that He had made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31, page 4). Because Adam and Eve were not made as robots - they had free will (Genesis 2:17, page 5) - the possibility was there for them to choose to not follow God. Sadly they chose to follow Satan and brought sin and death into our world. We could say that it's not fair that we should suffer as a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin. We weren't to blame for their sin.

While that's true, God also had a plan to rescue us without us having anything to do with it. This plan centres in Jesus as our Substitute, Representative and Credited Righteousness. As our **Substitute**, Jesus took our place and suffered the consequences for sin by dying on the cross, so that God could freely offer us forgiveness. As our **Representative** all that He did is provisionally counted as having happened to the whole human race. As our **Credited Righteousness** - His perfect life of obedience to God's law - is credited to all who accept Him by faith. Jesus took the blame for our sins and their consequences, and He credits us with the benefits of His perfect life. So God can accept us just as if we had never sinned. The whole Bible is about this rescue plan. It is often called “the plan of salvation” or “plan of redemption.”

## The Promise of a Saviour

1. What did God promise that a descendant of Eve (Jesus) would do to the serpent? Genesis 3:15 (page 3 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will \_\_\_\_\_ your head, and you will \_\_\_\_\_ his heel.

The plan of salvation was no afterthought. God was not caught unawares. As soon as there was sin there was a Saviour. Jesus is called the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8, page 873). Because God created angels and human beings with free will, the possibility was always there that someone would abuse this gift. God had this plan in place from the beginning. The apostle Paul, in discussing God's plan to save sinners, says:

*“This GRACE was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:8-10, page 842). (See also Ephesians 1:4, page 827; Titus 1:1-3, page 844.)*

2. Abraham, whose name means “father of a multitude”, was the father of the Jewish nation. When he had no children he was called Abram (“exalted father”). What command and promise was given to Abram? Genesis 12:1-3 (page 8)

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your \_\_\_\_\_, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a \_\_\_\_\_ nation and I will bless you; ... and all peoples on earth will be \_\_\_\_\_ through you.”

God promised that through Abraham, and his descendants, all the world would benefit.

3. Who is the descendant of Abraham who would bring blessing to the entire world? Galatians 3:16; 4:4, 5 (page 824)

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus is the promised descendant of Abraham, who brings benefit to all the world. The most well known text in the Bible is John 3:16 (page 752):

For God so loved the world  
that he gave his one  
and only Son, that whoever believes  
in him shall not perish but have  
eternal life.

Grace is about God giving His Son to save us from the problem of evil.

## Our Substitute

4. For whom did Jesus Christ die? Romans 5:6-8 (page 798)

You see, at just the \_\_\_\_\_, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the \_\_\_\_\_. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still \_\_\_\_\_, Christ died \_\_\_\_\_.

At the appointed time Jesus took the blame for our mistakes and died instead of us. He did this so that we could be forgiven and treated as if we were innocent. As one Christian writer has put it:

*Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed." (The Desire of Ages, page 25)*

5. What is the wages of sin and what is the gift of God? Romans 6:23 (page 799)

For the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin is \_\_\_\_\_, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of God is \_\_\_\_\_ life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Wages are what we earn, or what we deserve. A gift is undeserved. If you have to do anything in order to receive a gift, it ceases to be a gift! Eternal life is a gift of God's grace that we receive when we accept by faith what Jesus has done for us.

## Our Representative

6. There are two representatives, or heads, of the human race. One brought in death and the other life.

Who are they? 1 Corinthians 15:22 (page 815)

For as in \_\_\_\_\_ all die, so in \_\_\_\_\_ all will be made alive.

7. Because Jesus died for us, how many does He represent in His death? 2 Corinthians 5:14 (page 818)

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one [Jesus] died for all, and therefore \_\_\_\_\_ died.

In taking Adam's place Jesus became head of the human race, dying on the cross as its **representative**. Thus, in a sense, when He died for us as our **substitute** the entire race died with Him. As He **represented** all people, so His death stood for the death of all. This means that forgiveness is now available to all who accept this free gift of God's grace.

8. What is Jesus now doing in heaven for us? 1 John 2:1 (page 862)

If anybody does sin, we have one who \_\_\_\_\_ to the Father \_\_\_\_\_ – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Just as a defence lawyer speaks in defence of his or her client, so Jesus speaks on our behalf in the judgment.

## Credited Righteousness - God's Gift

9. What was credited to Abraham and on what basis? Romans 4:1-6 (page 797)

Abraham \_\_\_\_\_ God, and it was credited to him as \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul goes on to say: "The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Romans 4:23, 24).

10. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, of what place do we become citizens? Philippians 3:20 (page 832).

See also Colossians 1:12, 13 ; Ephesians 2:19, 20 (page 828)

But our citizenship is in \_\_\_\_\_. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you're a citizen of a country you have all the rights and protections of a citizen, even when living in another country. The great English preacher Charles Spurgeon told of a man who had been sentenced to death by a Spanish court. Because he was an American citizen and also of English birth, the consuls of both countries decided to intervene. They declared that Spain had no right to take his life, but their protests went unheeded. Finally, they deliberately wrapped the prisoner in their flags - the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack.

Defying the executioner, they issued this warning: "Fire if you dare! But if you do, you will bring the powers of two great nations upon you!" There stood the condemned. But the rifleman would not shoot. Protected by those flags and the governments they represented, the man was invulnerable.

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour and commit our lives to Him, we receive the gift of eternal life and immediately become citizens of heaven, with all the rights of a citizen of heaven.

## The Victory Is Already Won

11. What ultimate effect will the death of Jesus have on Satan? Hebrews 2:14, 15 (page 847)

By his death he might \_\_\_\_\_ him who holds the power of death - that is, the \_\_\_\_\_  
- and \_\_\_\_\_ those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Satan has misrepresented the character of God. Just as you can't have a peaceful plane trip if you don't trust the pilot, so there can never be a sense of peace in the universe while there's a question mark against the name of God. The plan of redemption has a deeper purpose than our rescue alone. It is also to vindicate the character of God before the universe. The act of Christ dying for the salvation of human beings not only makes heaven accessible to us, but it shows to the universe that God is fair in His dealings with the rebellion of Satan.

### "IS THE PRIEST TO DIE FOR NOTHING?"

Back in the prison camp while Father Kolbe the priest was dying, Gajowniczek was at first bewildered by what had happened. He wept and refused to eat and was dying. Koscielniak brought him to his senses. "Take hold of yourself! Is the priest to die for nothing?"

In that moment Gajowniczek made up his mind that he must live.

He would not waste  
Father Kolbe's gift.

Father Kolbe revealed the true spirit of Christ in dying for Gajowniczek. Two thousand years ago Jesus said, "Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13, page 764). As our great high priest Jesus took our place and laid down His life for us, so that we could receive forgiveness and eternal life. He won the victory over the devil, sin and death. How about you? Will you waste Jesus' gift? Is Jesus our Priest to die for nothing? Will you claim His victory for you?

## “I’m in Command Here”

General Wainright tells of his great suffering in the Manchurian concentration camp after the fall of Bataan. Japanese prison keepers made him an object of their mockery day by day. He knew nothing of what was happening in the outside world. He became a skeleton, as it were – a broken, crushed, hopeless, starving man. One day an aeroplane landed in the camp, and a colonel of the Allied forces marched up to General Wainright telling him that Japan had been defeated. Imagine the effect of such news upon the spirit of this dying man. The colonel, having delivered his message, took to the skies once more. The Japanese prison keepers, not knowing what had happened, returned to mock and beat the general as formerly. (I’m not sure how they didn’t know about the Allied plane, but they didn’t.) The General said, **“No, I am in command here. These are my orders...”** The prison keepers, shocked beyond words, understood that the general had been informed of the Allied victory. From that moment General Wainright was king. (F J Huegel, *Forever Triumphant*).

**The theme of the Bible is Jesus and His plan of redemption. It’s about Jesus’ victory over sin and Satan on our behalf.**



**We should no more be defeated Christians than be beggars while children of a multimillionaire. When we claim His victory we receive both the gift of eternal life and citizenship of heaven. Have you claimed that victory?**

Yes.

I would like to continue to learn more about what Jesus has done for me.

How would you describe what it means to be a citizen of heaven?

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