

# Back to Bible Basics

Issue 22

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE INVITATION?

*Brett Rutherford*

I have noticed of late that it has become the practice in many congregations to end sermons without offering the invitation. I must say that I am puzzled by the reasons for this disturbing trend. Perhaps these brethren believe that giving the invitation at the end of the lesson is simply an American practice, and that is why they don't want to do it. I have also observed that there is some anti-American sentiment within the Lord's church in Australia. I cannot understand the reasons for this attitude. Many of the traditional observations of the American church have been dismissed for various reasons. Of course, there is nothing wrong with changing practices that fall under the realm of opinion. For example, it is not wrong to change the order of our worship as long as we are still observing the five acts of Scriptural worship in a Scriptural manner. However, I can assure you that the offering of the invitation with every sermon is a Biblical tradition that ought to be observed.

Perhaps brethren are failing to give the invitation because it has become stale and mundane. Certainly, the invitation should be offered with great enthusiasm. I do not agree with preachers who relay the plan of salvation in an uninterested, flippant manner. The Lord's invitation is the greatest offer of all time. We ought to deliver it to other men with the joy, and the enthusiasm it deserves.

Perhaps many brethren are failing to let people know what to do to inherit eternal life because they are inward thinking. They really do not want anyone to become a part of their "exclusive" membership. Adding new members to our congregation can sometimes be an uncomfortable process, but the deliverance of the gospel is often going to put us in uncomfortable positions. However, that does not mean that we avoid doing what God has given us to do (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:1-4).

Perhaps we often fail to recognize that every sermon of the apostles, and early disciples included an exhortation to obey the gospel. For example, when Peter delivered that first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost he urged his audience to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). He pleaded with them to do what they could do to secure the saving grace of God (Acts 2:39, 40). What if Peter had not offered the invitation? What if he simply convicted them of their sin, but did not tell them what to do to overcome their sin? Would three thousand precious souls have been baptized on that occasion if Peter had failed to extend the invitation to his audience? I think not! Consider the message of other evangelists in the book of Acts and think upon the possible consequences of them not instructing their audience what to do in order to be saved (Acts 8:12-13; 8:35-38; 10: 44-48; 22:12-16 etc.).

Dear brethren I plead with you to take every opportunity to remind men of the precious offer of our Lord for their eternal comfort and salvation. When the lesson is delivered on Sunday it is certainly not the only opportunity to tell others of the gospel plan of salvation, but it is one opportunity that should not be passed up. There is always a possibility that some soul maybe saved by your earnest urgings for them obey the gospel. Remember the invitation to obey the gospel is not an American offer - it is the Lord's plea (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:16-17).

Another reason to include the gospel plan of salvation in every lesson is also to remind your members of the important steps that one must take to be added to the body of the saved. We

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is a publication of the  
Mersey Bluff church of Christ  
232 William Street, Devonport, TAS 7310

Email:

Brett: [brett@merseybluffcofc.com.au](mailto:brett@merseybluffcofc.com.au)

Ian: [ianandmabel@iinet.net.au](mailto:ianandmabel@iinet.net.au)

All past issues can be downloaded at:  
[www.merseybluffcofc.com.au](http://www.merseybluffcofc.com.au)

cannot assume that all of our members still understand the necessity of repenting (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), confessing Christ before men (Romans 10:8-10; Acts 8:37), being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21), and remaining faithful until death (Revelation 2:10). Important, soul saving principles like these are quickly forgotten if they are not taught often. If you are delivering a lesson in the future bless your audience by extending the invitation. Let us not let this Godly practice fade from our memories and practice. 📖

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## THERE ARE NO PROMISES LEFT TO ISRAEL

*Ian McPherson*

Many in the religious world are looking to the restoration of national Israel in a future millennium reign of Christ on earth. They claim that promises given to Abraham have not yet been fulfilled. However, there are no promises left for national Israel.

**The land promise has been fulfilled (Genesis 26:3, 15:18).** This was fulfilled when Israel conquered Canaan. *“And the LORD gave unto Israel **all the land** which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. **There failed not ought** of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; **all came to pass**”* Joshua 21:43-45. The reason why Israel lost the land was because the promises were conditional, and they did not live up to them (Deuteronomy 30:17).

**The nation promise has been fulfilled (Genesis 12:2).** This was fulfilled on Mt Sinai after Israel received the Law of Moses and became a nation. Moses said of them: *“For **what nation** is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? (Deuteronomy 4:7).* When Israel was at its zenith, the fame of David and Solomon became so great that all nations feared them (1 Kings 4:31,

1 Chronicles 14:17). Solomon ruled over all the land promised to Abraham (1 Kings 4:21).

**The “seed” promise has been fulfilled.** Paul made it clear that Christ fulfilled this promise at his first coming. He said to the church of Galatia: *“To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; **but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).*** The fleshly seed line of Christ is traced right back to Adam (Luke 3:38). It was nurtured in the loins of Abraham (Genesis 12:3), Judah (Genesis 49:10) and David (2 Samuel 7:12-16). After Jesus was born to the virgin Mary the genealogical records stopped (Matthew 1:1-25, Acts 8:33). The blessing that would be received through the seed of Abraham was **not for national Israel**, but for **all nations** who would undergo the new birth and become children of God through faith when they are baptized into Christ and became members of the church (Galatians 3:26-29).

**The kingdom promise has been fulfilled (2 Samuel 7:12-16).** This prophesy promises that a fleshly descendent of David would establish a kingdom. It was clearly fulfilled when Christ established his church. **The church and kingdom are clearly the same.** Both were prepared before the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34, Ephesians 3:10-11). Both began when Christ sat down at the right hand on God (Psalm 110:1, Acts 2:29-36, 47, Hebrews 1:2, Ephesians 1:19-23), both were established after His death and in the life of the apostles (Mark 1:15, Matthew 16; 18), both began when the Holy Spirit came with power on the day of Pentecost (Mark 9:1, Acts 1:8), Christ’s rule of both, extends from after His resurrection till He comes again (Acts 3:21, Ephesians 5:27, 1 Corinthians 15:21-26), and both are entered by the New Birth (John 3: 3-5, 1 Peter 1:23).

**All God’s promises to Israel have been fulfilled.** God never promised to save the all the fleshly Nation of Israel, but only the faithful remnant, (Romans 9:5-8, 11:1-5). This He did by abolishing the Law of Moses, and joining all faithful Jews and gentiles together in the **one body.** (Ephesians 2:11-16) There are no promises left to National Israel. God has cast them out for ever (Galatians 4:21-33), and promised that there will never be an earthly king reign again in Israel on the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:29-30, Hosea 13:11).

