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THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION

My dear Reader,

THERE'S a lot of alarming things happening today, isn't there? In this issue I've given reports on some of the major things around the world, which should not only alert us, but cause us to pray for those who are suffering, and that ... "Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

I have just heard a radio announcer at the end of a classical music program say, "In a world that seems to have gone completely mad, we are thankful for musicians who help to bring some sanity to our lives."

And I am thankful that in this age of terror we have a Hope - a definite assurance "that keeps the soul, safe and secure from all alarms" - that Assurance is Y'shua, the "Rock of Ages cleft for you and me." Blessed are they who hope (have confident assurance) in Him.

A LITTLE STUDY ON HOPE

Hope of Righteousness (Gal.5:5)

Hope of His Calling (Eph. 1:18)

Hope of the Gospel (Col. 1:23)

Hope of Salvation (1 Thess. 5:8)

Hope of Eternal Life (Titus 3:7)

A Living Hope (1 Pet. 1:3 + v.15),

and 1 Corinthians 13:13

THE SWORD, THE FAMINE AND THE PLAGUE

VLADIMIR Putin described the recent slaughter in Beslan, southern Russia, as an “inhuman crime, unprecedented in cruelty.” With possibly 400 dead, and more than 700 injured, not many of the 1200 hostages escaped unharmed. Even those who did, were traumatized and scarred for life.

The editor of *The Australian* said, “By capturing and then slaughtering innocent children, the terrorists have introduced us to a new depth of infamy.” Prime Minister John Howard condemned the hostage-takers as depraved, obscene and cruel. Targeting children, he said, “represents the ultimate depravity of terrorist activity.”

In recent months “the sword” has continued its grizzly path from Iraq to Israel, from Sudan to Saudi Arabia, Congo to Colombia, from Chechnya and Ossetia to Russia to Indonesia, and from Nigeria to Nepal.

At the same time, the blight of plague and famine continues its relentless onslaught on millions, destroying many more than the sword.

At the present time, Darfur in west Sudan, is suffering these triple disasters. The great prophet Ezekiel writing 2,600 years ago, could well have been prophesying of the traumatized African province today when he wrote:

“Thus says the Sovereign Master, Yahweh, ‘Disaster! An exceptional disaster! Look! It is coming! ... **The sword** is outside, and **the plague** and **the famine** are within. He who is in the field will die by **the sword**; whoever is in the city will be devoured by **famine and plague**; those who escape will be refugees on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning because of his own iniquity. All hands will hang limp and all knees will become *like water*.’” (Ezekiel 7:5, 15-17)

IN THIS month’s *Alert*, I want to focus on some of the words of this great Biblical prophet, Ezekiel. So let me give first this biographical note:

EZEKIEL: One of the great prophets of Israel. His name means “God strengthens.” Born of a priestly family, he spent his early years in Jerusalem, until he was taken with other hostages by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon in 597 BC. In Babylon he prophesied for at least 22 years (592-570 BC). His ministry to the exiles was at the same time as Jeremiah’s ministry to the remaining Jews in Israel; and also during the early years of Daniel’s ministry. (Daniel had been taken as a captive to Babylon 8 years earlier – 605 BC).

Chapters 1 to 24 were written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. His messages are concerning Israel's sin, its judgment, and the assurance of future blessing. In chapters 33 to 48, Ezekiel prophesied of the restoration of Israel, the overthrow of anti-God forces who invade Israel in the end-times; and also of the Millennial kingdom that would be established when the Glory of God (the Messiah) returns.

Ezekiel's prophecies were not his own imaginations. No! All the way through his prophecy, he is doing and saying what the Lord GOD – the Sovereign Heavenly Master, Yahweh, revealed and commanded:

“Then the Word of Yahweh came to me, saying ... ‘I am Yahweh *who* speaks, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it,’ declares the Sovereign Master, Yahweh.” (Ezekiel 12:21, 25)

A WORD FOR OUR TIMES

THERE is no shortage of criticism these days. Some people say, “Ah! Don Stanton – he is always talking about the Great Tribulation as though it is very near. We're tired of all this! He has been ‘prophesying’ like that for years, but see, it has not come! And it may not come for hundreds or thousands of years. So let's not become too anxious about judgment to come!”

Well, my reader, I am not a prophet – just a teacher of Bible prophecy. But in reply, I quote what that powerful prophet Ezekiel said:

“Again the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, listen! The house of Israel is saying, “The vision that he sees is for **many years from now**, and he prophesies of **times far off**.” Therefore say to them, “Thus says the Sovereign Master, Yahweh, ‘None of My words will be delayed any longer. Whatever word I speak will be performed’,” declares Yahweh the Sovereign Master ‘.’” (Ezekiel 12:26-28)

If you ask the people of Darfur what is going on, they will say it is a great tribulation of sword, famine and plague. Indeed it is; and yet, it is not the Great Tribulation that both Daniel and Y'shua the Messiah warned would come in the end-times:

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has never occurred since the beginning of the world until now; and there will be nothing like it again.” (Matthew 24:21)

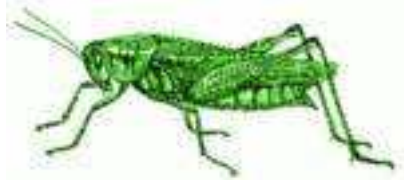
And to be specific the Messiah said,

“There will be **wars**; there will be **terrors**; there will be **famine**; and there will be **plagues** and **pestilences**.” (Luke 21:9-11)

What we see happening today, my reader, is the lead up to the Great Tribulation. And surely there is enough happening today to shake us all into alert mode. And yet there are still the scoffers who say:

“Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers died, everything goes on just as it has since the beginning of creation.” (2 Peter 3:4)

The promise of the Second Coming is in the Word of God - some 300 references to it. And the signs of its imminence are in your newspapers, and on your screens, every day. It is time to **"LOOK UP."**



LOCUSTS PLAGUE IN “BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS”

A RECENT report said: “In an invasion of north and West Africa that may take on **biblical proportions**, the largest swarms of locusts for many years are swarming across the Sahara desert, threatening crops already shrivelled by years of drought, in many of the world’s poorest countries.”

What does it mean, "Biblical proportions"? It is referring, no doubt, to the worst locust plague ever - the plague in Egypt, in about 1445 BC, during the time of Moses:

“The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled *everywhere* within the borders of Egypt; *they were* very severe. There had never been locusts like them, nor there be such *locusts* again, for they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened. They ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left, and there was nothing green left on the trees or on the plants of the field in all the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 10:14-15)

The United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced on July 5 that the first swarms of desert locusts were abandoning their spring breeding areas and heading into Mauritania, Senegal and Mali.

Without immediate attention to the plague, FAO warned, entire fields of maize, cassava and other staple crops for the region will be razed to the ground by the pests’ insatiable appetites.

A single locust will consume its own weight in food every day. A swarm can devour in minutes enough food to feed 2,500 people.

At least one swarm has reached Chad, bordering west Sudan’s Darfur region where fighting between militiamen and rebels has displaced more than one million people and created severe shortages of food, medicine and shelter. Locusts have also had a field day in Algeria, devouring thousands of hectares of newly planted crops in recent weeks.

Morocco has seen swarms engulf more than 100,000 hectares since late last month, while Mauritania’s pest control agency has reported that hoards of locusts have swarmed southwards through the massive north-west African country since early July, preparing to lay their eggs just as the rainy season arrives.

Senegal President Abdoulaye Wade has taken the lead in mounting a regional onslaught against the locust infestations, calling on the world’s most developed countries, the G8, to take up the battle against the pests. Without urgent and sustained attention to the problem, he warned, the locusts could sound a death knell for millions of people in a region already plagued with rampant malnutrition. - Sapa-AFP / Dakar, Senegal / July 04

Y’shua the Messiah warned of plagues in the end-times:

“And there will be ... in various places **plagues**, (*pestilences, infectious diseases, epidemics*), and **famines**.” (Luke 21:11)



LOCUST TERROR IN SENEGAL

SEPT. 2. Children fled in terror as swarms of ravenous locusts invaded Senegal's capital, Dakar, yesterday, devouring every patch of greenery in their path.

Countless insects attacked trees and lawns, enveloping them in a crawling, yellow carpet. Flying locusts hurtled into the windscreens of the city's drivers and enmeshed themselves in the clothes and hair of anyone caught outside.

More than 16 million acres of farmland in some of the world's poorest countries has already been damaged. President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal has likened the crisis to a war between mankind and the locusts.

Aircraft carrying pesticides will be sent to destroy the locusts, flying from operating bases in Senegal and four other West African countries. Meanwhile, people in Senegal are trying to repel the locusts with sticks. Some have set tyres ablaze, sending up clouds of black, acrid smoke to prevent the insects landing. - London Telegraph

THE SWORD AND THE PLAGUE

DARFUR (WEST SUDAN) - TRIPLE HORRORS

EZEKIEL'S prophecy could have been written specific-ally for the people of Darfur, in West Sudan today. The people there - largely Christians - are experiencing the triple horrors of sword, famine and plague.

In an 18-month reign of terror, Arab Janjaweed gun-men on horses and camels, backed by bombers and helicopter gunships, have razed hundreds of black African villages in Darfur, killing tens of thousands and driving more than 1.4 million from their homes.

Last April, when the world marked 10 years since the 1994 slaughter that killed at least 500,000 in Rwanda, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that a new genocide could unfold in West Sudan.

Some 56,000 mud-brick houses with grass roofs have been torched in nearly 400 Darfur villages. The mostly Arab *Janjaweed* also burn down trees, steal food and cattle, and blow up wells and irrigation canals in a scorched-earth policy that human rights groups describe as "ethnic cleansing."

The plight of the region has worsened since June, and UN officials estimate that 50,000 people have been killed. According to refugees, while men are often shot on sight, women are being abducted and raped.

The Coalition for International Justice which conducted a study on Darfur says that in some instances, the Janjaweed would take infants from their mothers' backs. If the child was a boy, it would be killed by crushing or knifing. Female infants would be tossed aside.

The present crisis developed from long-standing tensions between nomadic Arab herders and their farming neighbours. It became violent after two black African rebel groups took up arms in February 2003 over what they consider unfair treatment by the government in faraway Khartoum in their struggle over political influence and resources in Darfur.

Rebel groups and refugees accuse the Sudanese government of arming the *Janjaweed*, a name that means “horsemen” in the local dialect. They point to systematic and coordinated attacks backed by airplanes, helicopter gunships and pickup trucks.

More victims of the raids are dying now from hunger, thirst and disease, than in the killings, UN officials say. They have described the region as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Starving, exhausted and terrorized families trickle across the 370-mile border into Chad.

In one attack, Janjaweed caught three teenage girls, raped them and broke their legs. Unable to travel, the girls stayed behind in the hills while their extended families made the long and dangerous trek to the border. Traveling by night and sleeping during the day, they took nine days to reach safety.

With many more likely to die of hunger and disease in camps in Sudan and neighboring Chad, international pressure is mounting on President Omar el-Bashir’s government to end the carnage.

The government in Khartoum denies any complicity in the militia raids and says the warring sides are clashing over the region’s scarce water and usable land. (Sudan has been plagued by two decades of civil war, and also a major famine in 1998.)

If relief workers can’t reach the estimated 2 million in desperate need, the death toll could surge to 350,000 by the end of the year, according to the US Agency for International Development.

Following visits by Annan and US Secretary of State Colin Powell, el-Bashir promised to send 6,000 soldiers and police to Darfur to disarm the Janjaweed and other armed groups. But rebel leaders accuse the government of merely integrating Janjaweed fighters into local police and defence forces. And the UN says Khartoum has not taken enough measures to halt the atrocities. - Source: AP/Seattle Post Intelligencer / 10 July 04. / KFT / 27 Aug 04

SEPT 10. President George Bush declared that the violence in Darfur amounted to **genocide**, and urged the world to back an expanded African peace-keeping force to halt the bloodshed.

LOCUSTS ‘HEADING FOR SUDAN’

11 Aug, 04. Millions of locusts are probably heading for Darfur, a UN agency said, where violence has already created a humanitarian disaster and two million people are short of food and medicine.

Desert locust swarms usually contain about 50 million insects per square kilometre and can travel up to 150 km (93 miles) a day. They can devastate entire crop fields in minutes. Adult locusts munch their own weight, about two grams, of food a day.

HEPATITIS - E OUTBREAK

HEPATITIS-E is sweeping camps for internally displaced people in the Darfur province of Sudan. The World Health Organization says it has confirmed more than 620 cases of the disease, including 22 dead.

Hepatitis E causes inflammation of the liver. Contaminated water is a major risk factor. Darfur's overcrowded camps for internally displaced people are perfect breeding grounds for the disease. This is the first time Sudan has been hit with this disease.

WHO spokeswoman, Fadela Chaib, says there is no medical cure for this disease. "While most people recover on their own, it is 20% lethal for pregnant women. So, the most important thing to do for prevention, is to have a very good system of water and sanitation and the proper disposal of sanitary waste."

WHO warns that an estimated 10,000 people a month are likely to die from disease without proper care.

Doctors Without Borders, says that it is also alarmed at the outbreak of Hepatitis E in Darfur's camps. It is seeking to tackle the problem by providing safe drinking water and by improving sanitary and hygienic conditions in the camps.

Dr Abiy Tamrat says people in the camps are facing a severe health crisis, which is likely to get worse now that the rainy season has begun. More of the displaced people will be cut off, and relief will be more difficult, as the roads become impassable.

Dr Tamrat says diarrhoea remains the number one problem. But, with the rains, he says epidemics of malaria and cholera can be expected. "People are malnourished and this makes them more susceptible to disease. The main thing right now is to ensure a regular and adequate food access to all the camps," he said.

- Source: Voice of America / Aug 04

NORTH OSSETIA, RUSSIA:

SIEGE OF SCHOOL ENDS IN BLOODBATH

"And *their* bows (*guns*) will mow down the young men. They will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will their eye pity children." (Isaiah 13:18)

ON Sept 1, as children were celebrating the start of the new school year with parents and staff, some 32 masked armed Chechen, Ingush and Arab militants - men and women - wearing bomb belts and brandishing guns, burst into a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, and took about 1200 children, teachers and parents hostage. (North Ossetia borders both Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well as other Russian states, and South Ossetia which is part of independent Georgia.)

The pupils, teachers and parents were herded into the gym without food or water. Trip wires were laid around the school, with the attackers threatening to blow it up if it was stormed by police. 16 civilians were killed in the initial skirmishes.

The demands of the hostage-takers included the release of fighters from Ingushetia prisons; withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, and the independence of that state. Chechen separatists have been fighting for separation from Moscow for the past decade.

Al-Qa'ida's involvement in the attack is apparent, especially as "holy warriors" from the Middle East long have supported fellow-Muslims fighting in Chechnya.

On the third day of the siege, Government commandos were forced to launch an assault on the militants after bombs inside the gym exploded - whether by accident

or plan is not clear. A wall was blown down and the roof collapsed. When a group of children tried to escape the militants opened fire on them. Pandemonium broke out with commandos storming the school and battling militants, and crying children, some naked and covered with blood, trying to flee through the explosions and gunfire. A sobbing young girl who escaped said she saw a suicide bomber blow herself up in the gym amongst the children.

Officially 336 people died – at least half of them children. (But with more than 100 still missing, and many critically injured, the death toll may rise to above 400.) Many bodies of children and adults were pulled from the rubble of the school. 727 were reported as injured.

The Russian security forces said they killed 32 militants and one was captured. Ten government commandos also died in the fighting and 18 were wounded.

ARABS EXPRESS HORROR

Middle East media expressed horror at the bloody siege in Beslan, and many Arab leaders and Muslim clerics denounced the seizure as unjustifiable, and expressed their sympathy. Arab TV stations repeatedly carried footage of terrified young survivors being carried from the scene. And Arab newspapers published pictures of dead and wounded children on their front pages.

There was an unusually forthright Arab self-criticism after the hostage crisis, along with warnings that such actions inflict more damage to the image of Islam than all its enemies could hope. In fact, Abdulrahman al-Rashed, the general manager of a leading Arabic television network, *Al-Arabia*, wrote that “Muslims worldwide are the main perpetrators of terrorism, a humiliating and painful truth that must be acknowledged.”

ETHNIC CONFLICT LIKELY

A dangerous fallout from the Beslan massacre is expected as Ossetians are likely to take revenge on the small Ingush community in the state. In 1992 there were armed battles between the two ethnic peoples which left dozens dead on both side. Now there is fear that “the militants have started a war that will last 50 years.”

MORE THAN A CHILDREN'S NIGHTMARE

By Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor, The Australian

SEPT 9. The worst pictures were those that the terrorists took themselves and which aired on Russian television yesterday. They showed the terrorists gloating over the children in the school in Beslan, in southern Russia.

The terrorists strutted about, pointed to the explosives they had wired in the school gymnasium, humiliated the children, told them where and how to sit, and didn't give them even a drink of water before killing them.

This appalling terrorist outrage in the Russian republic of North Ossetia tells us something new about the extremist Islamic terrorists we confront in the war on terror. It also tells us important things about the strategic vulnerability of Vladimir Putin's Russia.

And it draws our attention back to the field of jihad in the Caucasus and central Asia, and demonstrates once more the jihad movement. The murderous barbarism in Beslan was almost certainly carried out by Chechen terrorists, although it is possible that a number came from neighbouring Ingushetia.

Both Chechnya and Ingushetia are predominately Islamic republics within Russia. Western intelligence is under no doubt that sections of the Chechen separatist movement are actively in league with al-Qa'ida. There is strong evidence that Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev has received funding and tactical assistance from al-Qa'ida.

As this column has pointed out before, al-Qa'ida potentially gives every disgruntled Muslim population in the world a prism through which to interpret their sufferings and a method of response, namely terrorism.

That the grievances were nationalistic does not diminish the growing importance of the Islamist al-Qa'ida ideology among Chechen terrorists.

The one terrorist captured alive from the Beslan massacre has said the purpose was to create a **generalized war in the Caucasus region**.

It is right to be cautious about what the Russian authorities tell us about terrorists and their motivations.

But the Caucasus is an exceptionally volatile and unstable region. North Ossetia, which is predominantly orthodox Christian, sits between Muslim Ingushetia and Muslim Chechnya. It is to the north of South Ossetia, which is formally part of Georgia, an independent state that used to be part of the Soviet Union. South Ossetia has resisted Georgian government rule.

It's easy to see how this latest terrorist outrage could spill into new conflict in the Caucasus. The Ingush could become more militant along Chechen lines. The North Ossetians could take vigilante action against Chechens or the Ingush.

Fighting could escalate in South Ossetia. Traditionally, the rivalries and conflicts of this region have been ethnic rather than religious. But one of the central missions of al-Qa'ida is to theologise the ethnic and regional conflicts or areas such as the Caucasus.

The Chechen tragedy brings discredit on all who have been involved. A couple of years after the collapse of the old Soviet Union, Chechnya declared independence. For some years Moscow tolerated this but Chechnya descended into war lordism, rampant criminality and terrorism. In 1994, then Russian president Boris Yeltsin launched a military operation to take back control of Chechnya. After gruesome brutality on both sides, the Russian army failed and finally withdrew in 1996.

After further Chechen terrorism, especially in neighbouring Dagestan, in 1999, Putin, now president, launched the second Chechen war. The Russian soldiers were no less brutal, but this time militarily they were successful, establishing Moscow's control over Chechnya. This "success" is a central part of Putin's popularity in Russia. However, it is estimated that Russia still has 70,000 troops in Chechnya and suffers ongoing losses.

Putin reacted with anger to Washington's restatement of its traditional position that there needs to be a political solution in Chechnya. Putin can claim he is trying to provide a political track. He did hold a referendum in Chechnya last year and produced a new constitution. Recently there were elections for a new Chechen president, although these were less than free and fair.

However, Putin is now caught in several terrible dilemmas. Not least because of the amount of Russian blood he has spilled to keep Chechnya, he could not possibly now countenance independence. Moreover, it's by no means clear that that is what most Chechens want. What social research has been done suggests Chechens want above all, a return to a normal life.

There are other compelling considerations for Putin. Because of the way the Chechen rebellion has been Islamicised, there is every possibility that an independent Chechnya could become **a fundamentalist Taliban-style state, infiltrating other Muslim areas in the Caucasus and central Asia. Chechen independence would also be seen as a great success for terrorism and an incentive for other republics to seek independence.**

But the Russian public is full of anger and demanding action. These events could very well intensify Putin's already strongly **authoritarian streak** and further diminish the prospect of a democratic Russia emerging.

On the other hand, despite Russian anger at the US call for a political solution in Chechnya, the Beslan massacre will likely draw Moscow and Washington further together in co-operating on the war on terror, on efforts to prevent Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, and on broader co-operation in the Middle East.

But the inability of Moscow to protect itself effectively from Chechen terrorism, combined with the flailing post-Soviet economy, the continuing problems of legitimacy of the Russian state and the increased radicalism and barbarity of al-Qa'ida-influenced Islamist terrorism throughout the world, mean that Beslan is more than just a human tragedy. It is also a gravely disturbing strategic portent (*omen or sign*). – Copyright *The Australian*, 9 Sept 2004. Used by permission.



WORLD COMMEMORATES “END OF SLAVERY”

“You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim **liberty** throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” (Leviticus 25:10)

The UN proclaimed 2004 as International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition; and the UN's cultural organisation, UNESCO, set August 23 as International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

Events were held worldwide in August to mark the abolition of the slave trade and to highlight the fact that **millions still live as slaves**.

The UN is leading the celebrations in Paris, while a new slavery museum opened in the US state of Ohio.

Senegal is holding a commemoration on Goree Island, where captives were held on the way to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade. The island is now a World Heritage site.

A UN official said the full extent of slavery had still to be recognised. The statistics are daunting:

Anti-Slavery International estimates there are about 20 million people in bonded labour; some 180 million children are in some form of child labour, and more than 800,000 people are trafficked per year.

U.S.: An estimated 20,000 people are trafficked into the US annually - many are forced into prostitution.

Dominican Republic: Hundreds of thousands of Haitians are rounded up near the border and made to work on Dominican sugar plantations.

Brazil: Up to 25,000 people are said to be working as slave labourers - mostly clearing forests in the Amazon.

Mauritania: Despite its abolition in 1981, chattel slavery is still strong - up to one million people are held as “inheritable property.”

Sudan: Northern militias take women and children in slave raids in the south.

Albania: Tens of thousands of Albanian women and girls are thought to have been cheated, abducted and forced into prostitution.

UAE: Every year hundreds of boys are trafficked from South Asia to Arab Gulf states to race camels.

Pakistan: Millions of men, women and children are bonded into forced labour in agriculture and industry.

Burma: Forced labour is used on a growing number of infrastructure projects.

Thailand: An estimated 200,000 girls are sex slaves.

The Book of Revelation indicates that the nations will be trading in slaves and human lives in the end-times.

“Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come. And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their merchandise any more; cargoes of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, citron wood ... ivory, of very costly wood, bronze, iron, marble; cinnamon, incense, ointment *and* perfume, frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and **bodies and slaves - human lives.**” (Revelation 18:10-13)

The Anti-Slavery International group - which is working with UNESCO to raise awareness in schools globally of the transatlantic slave trade - has described human trafficking as the fastest growing form of slavery.

Koichiro Matsuura, head of UNESCO, described slavery as an “unprecedented tragedy... concealed for many years and ... yet to be fully recognised.” “Although abolished and penalised in international instruments, slavery is still practised in new forms that today affect millions of men, women and children across the world.”

The UN’s Children’s Fund, UNICEF, said human trafficking is a problem in every African country. The majority of trafficked people are women and girls; children are the biggest victims. They are forced into slavery, recruited as child soldiers or sold into prostitution. – Source BBC / 23 Aug 04

The Messiah, Jesus, quoted the prophet Isaiah’s words, and applied them to His own ministry:

“The Spirit of the Lord *Yahweh* is upon me, because He anointed Me to preach the Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favourable year of *Yahweh*.” (Luke 4:18-19)

Y’shua the Messiah came to set captives free – especially to set sinners free from the burden of their sins.

“You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free ... If then the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:32, 36)

My dear Reader, do **you** need deliverance from your sin, from your enslaving habits, from the guilt of your past life, from the fear of the future, from failure and remorse, and from turmoil and strife?

“The Truth will set you free.”

The Son of God, the Messiah, will set you free.

Y’shua, Jesus, came into this world to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10). You may ask, How can He do that?

Firstly, He removes the heavy penalty of your sins. This He can do because He Himself paid the penalty of your sins when He died on the cross of Calvary.

“God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, **the Messiah died for us.**” (Romans 5:8)

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24)

“My children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father - One who pleads our cause - Y’shua the Messiah, the Righteous One; and He Himself is the propitiation - *the atoning sacrifice* for our sins; and not only for ours, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*” (1 John 2:1-2)

Y’shua the Lamb of God not only died for our sins; He rose from the dead. He rose, a living Saviour, to save us by His resurrection life.

“If you **confess with your mouth** Y’shua as *your* Master and **believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead**, you will be saved; for with the heart man believes, *resulting* in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, *resulting* in salvation. For the Scripture says, **whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.**” (Romans 10:9-11)

Secondly, when God forgives your sins, He touches your mind and conscience so that you know your past has been forgiven. He also cleanses your life, and gives you a new heart, and puts His Spirit within. His Holy Spirit immediately makes you a dwelling place of God, and you become a “new creation.”

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the Messiah, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; see, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Thirdly, the power of God begins to work in you delivering you from your sins, breaking your bad habits, and extricating you from the entanglements of your life. He also gives you peace in the heart and mind as you walk in fellowship with Him. He does **not** promise to give you a “bed of roses” – that is, a life free of trials or

testing. But He does promise to be with you at all times. He promises to hear when you call to Him – He is just a prayer away – a prayer of faith.

For all this to happen what is required on your part is ...

1. Come to the Saviour, Y'shua the Messiah, just as you are – CONFESS that you are a sinner needing God's mercy and salvation; and BELIEVE in the Messiah who died for you - express your faith in Him. And simply TRUST Him to save you (not in the future, but now!)

This means you RECEIVE the Y'shua, Jesus, as your personal Saviour. And the work of God begins immediately in your life. This is the beginning of your salvation and deliverance.

2. As a believer you need to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Master and Saviour Y'shua the Messiah.” (2 Peter 3:18). This means to feed on the Word of God, to develop your prayer fellowship with the Saviour, and to walk in obedience to His revealed will. It means growing in faith. It means to learn the principles for a victorious spiritual life.

My Reader, if you have not yet taken that first step – receiving Y'shua the Messiah as your personal Saviour, why don't you take it now? It is a simple step of faith – it is so simple that even a young child can do that. Just come to the Father, and pray in words like this:

DECISION PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I come to You just as I am – a sinner needing forgiveness and salvation. I am unworthy, and can do nothing for my salvation. But I believe Your Son, the Lord Jesus, Y'shua the Messiah, died on the cross and paid the penalty of all my sins. And I believe that He rose from the dead, and is the living Saviour. As the basis of His sacrifice at Calvary, Father, I ask You to forgive my sins, and to make me Your child.

Lord Jesus I receive You as my personal Saviour. I give my life to You. Master, set me free from my bondage to Satan, to evil habits, to fear and guilt, and from all that is contrary to Your will. Master, make me a new person; teach me Your way, and Your principles, and make me Your faithful disciple and witness. By Your grace and strength, I will follow You all the days of my life.

Thank You Master for Your salvation, Your forgiveness, and deliverance. Thank You Father, for receiving me as Your child. Thank You. Amen.

Signed date

Please sign and keep this prayer with you as a reminder of this great day - it's your spiritual birthday.

If you have made this decision today, my dear reader, will you write to me at one of our addresses inside the front cover, and tell me about it? I will rejoice with you, and pray for your spiritual growth.

Sincerely in the Messiah, *Don Stanton*

