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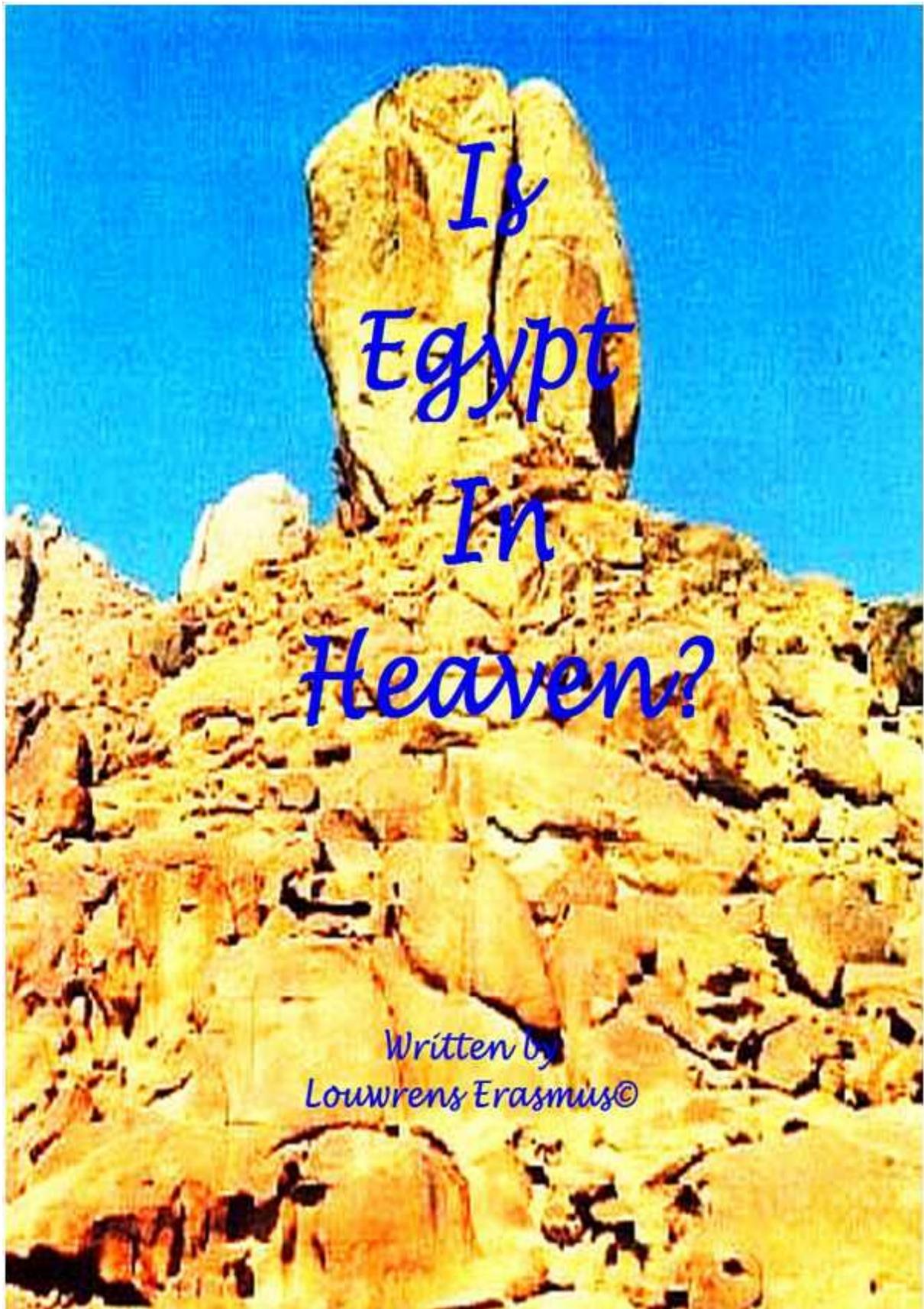


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Introduction by Paul Washington

The author is recalling a near-death experience he encountered. We all have preconceived notions of how our afterlife is going to play out just as this author did. When he finds himself in Egypt he is confused because this does not line up with what he has been taught all his life. He thought he would be in Jerusalem. This reminds me of the scripture in Isaiah 55:8; "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD."

A heavenly companion meets him and teaches him, through the use of scripture, why he is in Egypt. This companion is to escort him to Jerusalem where he has an appointment. Along their journey they meet a few newly departed people who also must be escorted to Jerusalem; first is a Roman Catholic who is in Assyria, and then a little later, a practicing Jew in Edom. They are also in the state of confusion and do not know why they were planted in these places. The heavenly companion also teaches them why they were supplanted in their respective areas. He also explains the areas of Moab and Ammon and why the people there have no roads leading to Jerusalem. The last person they meet is a former pastor who was planted in the area of Tyre and Sidon. As the others, he is confused until the companion explains why.

This book was thought provoking and made me realize that I need to dig deeper into the scriptures. I need to get out of the comfort zone of known stories and parables and learn background and the true meaning why particular scriptures were included in the Bible. The scriptures are not just for story-telling but they have applicable meaning to our everyday life. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for deeper meaning to scripture.

CHAPTER 1 – PRETORIA SOUTH AFRICA

31 August 1995.

“Ouch!! I don't know what is wrong with me today. The only thing I know of is that I am in pain.”

“Where?” asks Hettie, my wife.

“Right here above my hip, but maybe a little more towards my belly button.” I turn around and go to my daughter, Su-hannie’s bedroom to talk to her.

“Morning my cutie. When you went in for the operation to remove your appendix in May earlier this year, where did the pain originate from? I don’t want to be funny, but I think my appendix has only now found out that it could have given me trouble years ago when I was a teenager, and has now decided to give up the ghost.”

“Just here in line with my hip, but a little more towards the belly button. But why do you want to know, dad?”

“I woke up with this extreme pain. I think my appendix has only now decided to give me trouble as it did not give me any trouble when I was a teenager. So it has found out that it could have given up thirty years ago, and is now trying to make up for it.”

The rest of the morning progressed as per usual. Fortunately for me I had to see a client in Pretoria before taking the road to our offices in Johannesburg, so I did not have to spend an additional hour in the traffic. The only thing that I knew was that I was in pain.

Later that morning I phoned Hettie to get an appointment for me at our local doctor. Fortunately the doctor could still see me the same afternoon and I hoped that she would be able to find the origin of the pain.

The doctor confirmed my own diagnoses. Acute appendicitis. As a result I had to go home, pack my bags and go to the hospital to have my appendix removed. Even though the surgeon was fully booked that night, he agreed to remove my little problem before it ruptured.

On arriving at the hospital I was immediately taken to the first floor where all the operating rooms were. That is where I had to wait to see the surgeon quickly, before he could go ahead with the operation.

“Good evening. I take it you are the guy that is in pain. Let me have a quick look and feel before I take you into the operating room. Okay, it definitely sounds and feels and looks like your appendix is about to go, so give me an hour and we will remove it for you.”

“Thanks doctor.” With this he returned to the operating room.

Hettie also decided to go home and ensure that our children are fed and put to bed. She told me that she would phone the hospital later to find out how everything turned out, gave me a kiss, and left.

“What is for dinner tonight?” That was the first question Hettie received on her return. And then without waiting for an answer, the next question was fired off. “What was the diagnosis of the surgeon? When will dad be able to come home again?”

“I will see what I can do quickly for us to eat. Your dad is waiting to be operated on. He has to wait until they get time to remove his appendix.” And with this she continued with her food preparation.

After dinner, she ensured that all the kids were washed, all their home work done, and put them to bed.

“Eugene Marias Hospital, how can we assist you?” It is me again, Hettie. Is my husband back in the ward yet?” This conversation continued till nearly midnight. The answer changed then to “Your husband is out of the operating theatre, and is recovering in the ward. He is still very sore, but that should change by the morning. He is now resting and asleep.”

For me it was not that easy. It was very sore and they eventually gave me something for pain and to sleep.

The next morning early the surgeon walked into my room, and started with his normal barrage of questions. “How is the pain this morning?”

“I am a little tender but assume that it is as a result of the operation. Fortunately the pain I had yesterday has disappeared.”

The doctor looked me straight in the eyes and then continued. “Do you know how lucky you are?” He then told me what happened during the operation the previous night, and that he had both good and bad news for me.

When Hettie came to visit me later that morning, I found it difficult to tell her that not only did they remove my appendix, but they also shortened my small intestine by about a meter.

“Why did they cut of a piece of your intestine?” I could see the shock in her eyes as she asked the question.

“They had to do it as there was a malignant tumour attached to it and was called Carcinoid cancer. And that is not the end of it. I will have to return in six to eight weeks time to have further surgery as they could not remove everything as I was not properly prepared for such a long operation.” According to the doctor they still had to check if the cancer had spread to the lungs and liver, and if they could find any evidence of lymph node infection by the cancer. They would also then remove the rest of the tumour that they could not remove during the appendix operation.

I was really comforted by what the surgeon also told me that morning. He said that they accidentally found the tumour, as it was not visible at first. He also told me that he believed that the LORD showed him the tumour. Apparently they struggled to get hold of the appendix and decided to enlarge the incision and to reel out some of the intestine to make space for him to get hold of the appendix. He started talking to the anaesthetist and he actually reeled out more than necessary, but stopped when he felt something in his hand that was not the intestine. When he looked down he saw the tumour and immediately recognised it as malignant. That was how they found it.

A couple of days later I went home, and thought about this thing that was still growing inside of me, and that would more than likely, eventually kill me. I still wanted to do so many things in life. At age forty four I was not ready to say my goodbyes to all my loved ones, and die.

A couple of weeks later we decided to go away for the weekend and to relax. We took our caravan and went to Kokoriba, a game farm outside Brits that catered for campers. Somehow I ended up with a bout of flu and was on medication for that, but still enjoyed myself swimming,

playing table tennis with the kids, and like normal be on food duty. I decided that for the Saturday evening I would do a lamb neck 'potjie' (casserole dish) as it did not require a major effort. I was feeling a little under the weather and asked Hettie to take over while I went inside the caravan and lie down on the bed. The pain was just getting more intense and the flu was really getting to me.

I could not understand why I was sweating so profusely, and why I was extremely nervous. I ended up taking more medication, but to no avail. Hettie and the kids were really worried and thought that this would be my end. I eventually fell asleep and woke up the Sunday morning feeling a lot better than the previous day.

The doctor sent me for a full MRI on the Monday, but could not find anything that he did not already know. Everyone was puzzled about what happened that Saturday. I only found out years later that I had all the side effects associated with Ephedrine. It is used in cold and flu medication, and that was what I was taking for the flu.

The day eventually arrived when I had to report for the follow up operation at the end of October. During this session they had to remove the part of the tumour they left behind, and look to see if it had spread anywhere. This was a full upper and lower laparotomy to give the surgeons access to everything inside.

During the operation they removed a large number of lymph nodes, and as they could not remove all the cancer, I was told that chemotherapy was required. I did not really like the full diagnosis as I knew there was still some cancer inside of me that could eventually kill me. Hettie and the kids went home that evening and left me to recover from the operation.

The next morning at eight, something very peculiar happened. I heard this wonderful music that I can only say was angelic. I tried to find the origin but was not able to. I looked all over the ward to see if someone was listening to their radio, or that they had a cassette player with them, but nothing. When Hettie arrived later that morning, she said she could not hear the music, and eventually decided to go home as I was not paying attention to anything she was saying.

And then, I died.

CHAPTER 2 EGYPT

“Where am I?” Those were the first words I uttered.

An old man standing next to me calmly answered, “Egypt.”

“No no no, do not try to be funny or make fun of me. I am not in a mood for that. The last thing I remember is that I was in the Eugene Marias hospital in Pretoria, South Africa. Now you are telling me that I am in Egypt. I don’t see any pyramids, so you cannot be serious.”

“My friend, you are in Egypt. You just died in hospital. If you care to look over your shoulder you will see yourself still lying on the bed. But, I can honestly tell you that you just died.”

This old man just got my attention. When I looked over my shoulder I could still see myself lying on the bed. It looks as if I am asleep, and everything is quiet with nobody running around. I started pinching myself, try hitting myself in the face, but I don’t seem to be able to wake myself from this horrible nightmare. The only thing that really worries me is that I can still hear the same music I heard earlier that morning. And I still cannot trace the source of it.

I turn to face my companion, and in sheer desperation I start talking to him. “You are now telling me that I am in Egypt and that I just died. I still see myself lying on the bed, and yet here I am talking to you. It just doesn’t make any sense at all.”

The old man points to a large rock and starts walking towards it, and makes some gesture to me that I should sit down. He looks at me with those soft blue eyes that are so full of sympathy. I feel completely uncomfortable that I spoke to him the way I did, and bow my head in shame. He takes my hand in his hand, leads me to a rock and sits down next to me, and then starts talking.

“Do you believe in the LORD?” he asks.

“Off course I believe in the LORD”. The answer came forth without even thinking about it. “You know, I will never ever have any doubt about that. Let me tell you why. Years ago my son, he was only 6 years old at that time, ended up in hospital after he was hit by a motorcar. He had a broken leg, cracked skull, and his left foot was caught between the road and the one tyre while the car skidded on trying to stop. His left foot was so badly damaged that they thought of amputating it. He was in a coma in a high intensive care hospital. During that time my standard routine was to stop at the hospital before going to the office. That particular morning, I felt that I needed to pray differently to other mornings before going into the hospital to see him. I asked the LORD probably the worst question you can imagine as I could not see my son in this state. I actually asked the LORD either to let him die, or to wake him up for me. As I walked into the ward the sister told me that she just finished putting on his new dressings and that there was no change. Do you know how I cried when I walked in took his hand and he called out “Morning Dad?” And then the time I had cancer the first time and asked the LORD to give me time to see my children grow up in order for me to be a father to them. That was 9 years ago. And now you ask me if I believe in the LORD?”

“Wow. That is a very good reason to believe in Him. But, unfortunately we cannot sit here the whole time we have to go to Jerusalem. I am convinced that you do not want to stay here in Egypt. So let’s get a move on as you have a very important meeting scheduled in Jerusalem.”

And there he said it again. I am in Egypt. Somehow, something is not right. So I shake my head to hear if there is anything loose inside, but everything sounds normal. But when I look over my shoulder I see myself lying on the hospital bed, and if I look around me, it looks rather dry. But I am convinced that I do not see any pyramids. I cannot be in Egypt. Egypt is up there in northern

Africa, and I live in South Africa. I have also never heard of anyone who died who went to Egypt. Somebody must have seen the dead there. Just imagine. All these dead people walking around in Egypt. This sounds more like a horror movie or a fairytale to me.

“Before we continue, can you please explain this Egypt story of yours? I am the type of person that needs to examine all the facts before jumping to conclusions. I do not want to go with you while not knowing what is happening. I keep on thinking that either I am of my rocker, or I am with someone who needs to be in a lunatic asylum.” And with that I sit down on the rock again to show him I am not going anywhere.

“How well do you know the Bible?” asks my companion?

“The complete Bible? I think I know the book of Romans quite well as I studied it with the help of a study tool published by one of the Christian publishers. And, yes, I think I can recall a couple of Psalms, and also a couple of verses from Ecclesiastes, and then the normal stuff like you always hear in church. The things like the birth of Jesus, the history of Adam and King David. And then I still think that I can recall all the names of the books in the Bible. But why do you ask?”

“I want to know if you really know the Bible?” he asks again.

“Probably not as well as I should. But then if I knew everything in the Bible I would become bored at church every Sunday. As it is I struggle to sit at church as I had a back fusion a while ago and the doctors removed my coccyx years ago.” I think that is a very good reason.

“So you cannot tell me what the prophets of the Old Testament were trying to convey to people?”

“No. I have to admit that I have never really studied the prophets. Besides, they were only there to tell Israel what they were doing wrong. And all those things happened years ago.” I think I have given a very good summary of how I see the situation. And I know I am correct.

“If I tell you that Zachariah told you and everybody else for that matter that you will end up in Egypt if you believe the way you do, would you believe me?” The old man seems to have the whole day to make his point, but I think he is only trying to make small talk.

I stand upright again to show my frustration. But then, as I look around me to see if I cannot spot a pyramid anywhere, I see people walking around and sitting down in what I believe to be a sweltering heat. I also see quite a big road in the distance with many people walking on it, in a direction away from this area. This has now got me completely baffled.

“I know you will not continue before making your point. So what did Zachariah say?” I find it really hard to hide my frustration.

“And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

“I am now utterly confused.” The only thing I can think of is why this is the first time that I have heard this passage. Why has nobody ever explained this passage to me, then at least I would have had an argument to use against the old man. All I now know is that he definitely got my attention.

“When I looked around just now, I saw a lot of people. Some were walking on a big road away from all the people that I first saw. What does it mean and why were they leaving?”

“What you saw was all the people in Egypt, here with us. They are happy with their circumstances. Some of them will go up to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles and then return to Egypt again, as this is what they are used to. The people you saw walking on the road, are those people that decided to follow the instruction to go up to Jerusalem. They have realised that they do not want to be in Egypt, and are following the prophet Isaiah’s words: And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

I am now really baffled. I am the type of person that likes to investigate things, use my logic to find out how everything fits together, and that way insure that I understand things. But now I have heard so many things for the first time, and I cannot make head or tail from it. All I know is that this old man has got my head spinning.

“Let us start at the beginning. You are telling me that I am in Egypt as I understand the Bible the same as these people. Now can you please clarify your statement as I do not understand anything you are trying to tell me? And while you explain this, can you also tell me why you can understand me as you do not look like someone who would understand me. You look like a Jewish person to me, and well, I come from South Africa and my native language is Afrikaans.”

“Let me start with your last question. Heaven is heaven. There is not an Afrikaans speaking or English speaking heaven. No, we are all together and we all share the heavenly language.”

Wow. That is good news. My companion just told me I am heaven. I really thought that Egypt was Egypt and heaven was heaven. So he has just told me that I am heaven. That is good news. I will now have to listen very carefully how he explains the rest of the story.

“We are here in Egypt, which is in heaven, because of how you believe. But fortunately for you, I received a message to collect you and take you to Jerusalem with me as you have a very important meeting there. But, as you asked me to please explain, let me do that. I am correct in saying that you were born in Melville, Johannesburg?”

Wow. I must admit that my companion seems to know something about me. “Yes, I was born in Melville and spent most of my childhood years in and around that area.”

“Did you know the LORD when you were born, or did you first have to learn about Him?”

Now that is a silly question. It is impossible to know the LORD when you are born. You do not even know who your family members are. I had to go to Sunday school first and then only could I be confirmed as a confessing member of our congregation. “No, I do not think that it is even possible to know the LORD at that age.”

“When you were confirmed as a confessing member of your church, what did it mean to you?”

“I can remember that quite vividly. It was the first time I could partake in communion, as it was only available to confirmed members of our congregation.”

“Yes, and then?”

“What do you mean? I was a member in good standing throughout my life, and served as a deacon and in later years as an elder of our church. In fact, coming to think about it, I am still an elder of our congregation. Well I was, until I died.”

“So to recap. You were confirmed as a member and served as deacon and elder. Do you think that is where it stops?”

I am getting frustrated again. He knows everything about me but cannot quit asking these questions.

“Yes, I think so. I still attend all the services at our local congregation, especially as the children are so actively involved. I am also involved in our EE3 evangelical action. So, yes, I think I am involved at everything I can get involved in.” I trust that I have now answered all his questions in order for him to answer the rest of my questions.

“When were you baptised?”

“If I remember the facts correctly, I think it was in November 1951. The custom in our group is that babies must be baptised as soon as possible, so that is why I think am more or less correct. Why I remember the date is because of what our minister told me while attending my final year at Sunday school. Before we can get confirmed we have to provide proof that we were baptised, and our minister told me I did not have to provide proof as he held the baptismal service when I was baptised. From our class of twenty people only two of us were baptised in Melville, and can you believe that it happened on the same day also. But why do you ask?”

“And now you ask me why you are in Egypt.” My new friend is now the one that seems to be irritated.

“Wait a moment. I cannot understand why you are asking me all these irrelevant questions. You seem to side step all my questions without giving me a straight answer. You must have received my information from someone, so I am the one that is completely confused.”

The old man stares in front of him, and then asks another question. “When I quoted the passage from Zechariah earlier, did you really listen to what I said?”

“I was so dumb founded that I really cannot remember what you said. So maybe we should return to that quote and start again.” I will really have to pay attention this time.

“And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

“So what you are trying to tell me is that I am with those people he says will be in Egypt.” I think I paid attention this time.

“Yes, and what does the quote end with?”

“That we did not keep the feast of tabernacles?” I am a little hesitant now as I do not want to upset my companion.

“Exactly. But can you tell me anything about this feast?”

“No, I do not believe that I can. All I know is that it was something Israel had to commemorate. I remember years ago that I saw the neighbours across the road from my one brother-in-law placing palm leaves on their balcony. When I asked him what it was for he mentioned that belonged to some or other sect and that they were celebrating the feast of tabernacles. But that is it.”

“So you have no idea why they did it?”

“Nope, not a clue.”

“It was ordered by Moses when he led Israel out of Egypt. This is what he said: And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

“So, this was something that Israel had to keep. I am not a Jew. You actually know that I was born in Melville, Johannesburg. So why is it important?”

My companion is not happy. He now realises that he has a long road ahead of him. If he wants to convince me, he will really have to explain in detail.

“Let us start by giving you a number of biblical truths. In Hebrews chapter 6 we find the basic foundational doctrines mentioned. They are: Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

He then looks at me and continue: “If we look at the way it is described, we have to start with repentance from dead works, believe that Christ paid the complete price for my freedom, then get baptised, filled by the Holy Spirit, and then we can find out what will happen when people die, and learn what happens at the eternal judgment. If we look at the example the LORD gave us, we find Israel in Egypt where they are serving the Pharaoh, they call out to the LORD, they believe and have faith in Him that He can save them, get to leave Egypt and then learn about the LORD at Mount Sinai. That was when the feast of booths, or tabernacles, was instituted.”

“That is what happens in everyone’s life. You are born in Egypt, a life removed from and without the LORD. We have to call out to the LORD for salvation and to break the yoke of the devil. So we have to repent from our works to get saved. We then become part of the covenant when we share Holy Communion and place ourselves under the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. The next step is to get baptised. Both Paul and the history of Israel give us that sequence. Do you now understand why you are in Egypt?”

“This was a huge mouthful.” No wonder he was so upset at me for asking all these questions. I did it all in the wrong sequence. I first got baptised and then became part of the covenant. Where my church found this sequence of events I am not sure of, but it must be specified in one of their other books of confession.

“So you are telling me that I am in Egypt because I never got baptised after becoming part of the covenant, and that all these people I saw wandering around here are in the same boat as me? So I am really in Egypt, but this Egypt is in Heaven? So I will not find any pyramids here?” I am actually relieved now that I know where I am. But I am still very confused.

“Exactly, it seems that you are very quick to understand things. Well, I think we better get moving again.”

Even before he starts walking again, I bombard him with the next question. “But what about Jesus? Didn’t He come to fulfil the Old Testament? So how does He fit into this?”

“Here we go again. Do you believe that He replaced everything in the Old Testament?” the old man asks again.

“I was taught that Israel knew the LORD, but they did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. As a result of that we are now his children. All we have to do is to get baptised as an infant, complete Sunday school, and then you are done. That was what I was told I had to do to become a New Testament Christian.” I think I have explained exactly what I was taught.

“Now why did Jesus have to die?” The old man looks at me to see what my reaction is.

“He had to pay for our sins.”

“And why did he have to pay for our sins?”

This guy has more questions than answers. “That is what the Bible teaches”. I do not think that I have to quote all the verses in the Bible to him that relates to this topic.

“Yes I agree. But, I think you have a problem understanding the covenant, and it seems that I will have to explain this to you also.” The old man returns to sit on his now familiar rock.

“The tabernacle that Moses built existed in order for them to continually present various prescribed sacrifices in. This was done to receive forgiveness for their sins. This is the sacrifice Jesus came to do, to take away the sins of the earth. He died in order for us to be freed from the sacrifices Moses was told to implement. Jesus died and went through the heavenly tabernacle to pay for all our sins and to fulfil all the requirements. So we have to accept that He did everything that was required. We have to become part of the covenant by sharing communion with him. We then become part of His nation and that is why you are in heaven. But because you did not get baptised after becoming part of his covenant people you are still in Egypt. Do you now understand why you are where you are?”

“Sort of.” I do not think that I comprehend everything, but it does make sense to me.

He then continues. “Even in the time of Moses provision was made for those that were not born Jews. The Word declares: And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye do, so he shall do. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you. From this do you now understand what Jesus had to do? He did not come to wipe the Old Testament from the table, no; he fulfilled the requirements of the physical tabernacle.”

“I must admit I am a little bit confused. How do I know that you are correct?”

“Jesus himself said the following: “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

“I must admit that in this short timeframe I have learned more than in years prior to this. I wish I knew this earlier, as I would have paid attention and ended up in a different place than Egypt.” I am really surprised at what I just heard.

“Just remember that we still have to get to Jerusalem. We now have to start our journey on the road you saw earlier.”

“Just one more question. What about the doctrine of predestination? I know that every congregation I attended said that we believe in this doctrine”. I have to get an answer to this question while I am thinking about it, and I know that we were taught about this in Sunday school.

“My dear friend, this is a long story. Maybe once we get to Jerusalem you will have all the facts to make your own decision as we do not have all that time available now.”

And with these words we set out on our journey towards Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 3 ASSYRIA

“Can you tell me what your name is? We have been spending a lot of time together, and I still do not know who you are.”

“It does not matter at the moment. You will find out later.” His answer is straight and to the point, so I dare not ask again.

The old man might be slow when explaining things, but he is actually very friendly. As we find our way through the people to get to the road we have to travel on, many people greet him as if to know him. I even saw some people I knew when I was still alive, Not that we could stop and chat. My companion is on a mission, and that is to get me to Jerusalem. Where Jerusalem is, is still a mystery, and what heaven looks like, is an even bigger mystery.

All of a sudden we are on our own again, with just a road to follow. In the distance I can see another person walking, and he seems to be on a mission to join us.

“Hi, my name is Louwrens.” I greet the stranger as he joins us.

“Hi, I am Alex. Please to meet you. Do you guys have some water that I can drink? I have been on this road what seems like a long time and have not been able to find anything to drink or eat.”

Coming to think of it, I also have not had anything since my arrival here. But I am not thirsty or hungry.

“No, I don’t have anything with me. We have been talking the whole time so I have not even thought of having something to drink or eat.”

Now curiosity gets hold of me again. “Where do you come from? I found out that I was in Egypt. Just think of it, Egypt. But how did you come to your end?” I am so glad that we have company, and that Alex seems to come from a different area.

“I think I died when my truck left the road in Alaska. I cannot understand why it happened as I always ask Jesus to protect me when I am on the road. But, today all I can remember is that we came around a bend and I felt the truck skidding. I can remember seeing how we started tumbling down the cliff, but that is it.”

“Wow. That must have been terrible.” I look around to see if he has any scars, but nothing.

“Do you know where you come from now? I am from Egypt. I heard that from my companion here. It also took him a long time to explain to me why I ended up in Egypt.”

“Yes, the people there told me I am in Assyria. Do you know where that is?” Alex looks like he also did not think that he would end up anywhere else but in Jerusalem.

“I suppose you also thought you would end up in Jerusalem? Do you know why you ended up there?”

“No, I had no idea. I thought heaven was heaven, until someone told me earlier that I am in Assyria. He also showed me this road and told me it will take me to Jerusalem. He quoted some weird scripture like: And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

“That sounds familiar. The old man quoted exactly the same passage to me earlier. But now you have to tell me which church you belonged to.”

Alex answered: “I was in the largest group in the world, the Roman Catholic Church”.

I cannot believe what I just heard. “So you were a Roman Catholic and you ended up in Assyria. How did that happen?” With this I turn towards the old man as I know he will enlighten us on this subject.

Alex also turns to him and says: “I do not know. Maybe he can clear up my questions. But before we start, do you know what happened to Gary, the photographer that was with me when the accident happened?”

The old man looks at Alex with a look that is filled with empathy. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

Alex is visibly shocked. “I always spoke to him about the LORD when we were together in the truck. He always laughed at me when I prayed for protection. This is extremely difficult for me.”

The old man comes to my rescue when he continues: “For every man shall bear his own burden.”

These words are actually comforting, as I now know that every person will be judged as an individual. If I only knew about this Egyptian story earlier I could have done something about it before today. But, time is not standing still and we still have to find answers for Alex, and then get on our merry way to Jerusalem.

The old man walks across the road and sits down on a rock. We join him and await his answers. “Come and sit down so that we can discuss this Assyria story. This could be a long story depending on what you know. Alex, you will have to be patient with me as I am going to first explore what you know, before you will receive the answers.”

“I can vouch for that”, comes my answer quickly. “I first had to learn about the feast of tabernacles before I found out why I was in Egypt.”

“Let us now concentrate on Assyria. Do either one of you know anything about early Assyrian history?”

Alex is quick with an answer. “Yes, I do. It was also known in the Bible as Nineveh and Babylon. It is also where the story about Nimrod and Semiramis originated from. I know about this as I always read in my truck while waiting for goods to be loaded or in bad weather. I love reading about these old legends as you can always use it when talking to other people.”

“Very good answer Alex. I just thought we had to spend a long time on this subject but it seems that you know quite a lot. What do you know about her son in this story?”

There are as many versions as there are writers. Some people say that Nimrod was her husband and other say he was her son. I know the one I enjoyed was that she apparently gave birth to her son two years after Nimrod died, and then told everyone that the gods gave Nimrod back to her as her son. But what does this have to do with me?” Alex looks a little baffled at the moment.

“We are getting there Alex,” the old man continues. “A large number of people believed her and then worshipped her as a goddess.”

“Yes I also heard about that”, confirms Alex.

“So now we find that the Roman Catholic Church have done the same with Maria. You agree that she is seen as a holy person by your church. So they have done to Maria what Assyria had done with Semiramis. That is why the Roman Catholic Church ends up in Assyria.”

“And”, the old man continues, “like the group Louwrens belonged to you also believed in baptising babies. So you are in the same general area as his people. The prophet Isaiah said the following: In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.”

“How is it possible for you to quote all the passages?” I have never seen someone do this in my life before.

“Louwrens, remember I asked you how well you knew your Bible when we were still in Egypt. Well, I ensured that I can quote what I need to quote by studying His word, and the rest is a gift from God. He gives me the passage to quote when needed. But you have to remember that the Holy Spirit can only use what is inside of you. As you are well aware, you do not really know a lot, so it was impossible for the Holy Spirit to enlighten you about this. I am convinced that if you knew more of the Bible, you would have had a better understanding of the working of the LORD.”

“Facts, that is what it is, facts.” I actually cannot believe what I just said. People that we know use these words and I never thought that I would use those words.

“Let’s get a move on. We cannot sit around the whole day. Remember we have to get to Jerusalem, and believe me, the two of you really want to get there.”

With that my companion gets up and starts walking again. I wonder what is waiting for us.

CHAPTER 4 EDOM

As we get over the first hill I ask: "How far is it before we get to Jerusalem?"

"Still quite a while", comes the answer from my companion. "We still have to go past Edom to collect Mike."

After some time where we each think about what has happened to us, I suddenly notice another person that will be joining us from a different road. I assume it is the person my companion was talking about earlier.

"But wait a moment; your face looks familiar to me". I try to remember where I saw this person before, and then the penny dropped. You are Mike, the guy from the orchid club that I attended years ago. What are you doing here? Where do you come from?" I am so surprised to see a familiar face. Now at least we can talk about the old times while walking.

"Louwrens, is that you? It has been years since the last time I saw you. Just tell me this is a dream, as I don't know where I am currently. I woke up this morning with a sort of a severe chest pain. All I can remember is that my wife told me to go and sit down in the lounge while she phoned the ambulance. Next thing I know is that I open my eyes to see all these people around me. When I asked them where I was they told me I was in Edom. Just imagine, Edom."

"It seems to me we all had a surprise today." And to think that Mike is here with me. But, wait a moment, Mike is Jewish. Is it possible that he could end up in heaven? As far as I know only Christians would get to heaven, not Jews. This is going to be an interesting story.

"How did you get on this road?" I ask Mike.

I saw our previous rabbi there. He is the guy that told me I was in Edom. I had some explaining to do to convince him that I wanted to be in Jerusalem. He mentioned something like that is the last place I wanted to be, but in the end showed me this road. So, here I am."

I must admit that I am actually glad to see Mike again. He was such a jovial guy and we always talked about orchids and things. Right now however I don't think he knows what is happening to him.

The old man interrupts our discussion quickly." Do you know what is waiting for you in Jerusalem? Do you know who reigns as King there?"

"No I don't. But I was taught that we as Jews would be there. I want to meet King David, and father Abraham, and all the old fathers of Israel. That is why I want to be there. I don't want to be in Edom. Edom is for the descendants of Esau, and I am a descendant of Jacob. That is why I cannot understand why I ended up in Edom. I want to be in Jerusalem. That is why I want to go there personally as something is wrong somewhere." Mike really seems quite agitated by the fact that he is not in Jerusalem.

"Mike, the Jerusalem that is here, and where our journey will end, is for those that became part of the covenant with Jesus as complete sacrifice for sin. As the apostle John says: And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

“What!! Do you want to tell me that Jesus of the Christians rules in Jerusalem? But we were told that our Messiah has yet to come. That is why I wanted to go to Jerusalem. I want to wait for him there. And now you are telling me that He is already there, and that Jesus of the Christian faith was the Messiah? I don’t believe it. Even if it is the truth, why did I end up in Edom?” Mike really looks upset.

The old man stares right in front of him, and then answers Mike. “You know that Esau and Jacob were brothers, and that Esau gave Jacob, your ancestor, his first born right. You also know that Esau was the father of the nation of Edom. Just as Esau gave away his right of the first born of the flesh to Jacob, so did your ancestors gave their right of the first born to those that accepted that Jesus was the Messiah. The apostle Paul wrote the following: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

“So you are telling me that if I want to join you to go to Jerusalem, that I will have to change and accept that Jesus is the Messiah and disregard my Jewish ancestry. Is that what you want me to do?”

“Mike calm down. I don’t have to explain the covenant to you as you know it as well as I do. The only change is that Christ was the Messiah and fulfilled the requirements of the law. Accept what He did for you and move on. You can then become part of the New Covenant, a covenant that is grounded on better promises. Jesus Christ was the complete sacrifice for sin. His Kingdom is not of the earth but of the heaven.”

“That is a very difficult request. I will have to think about it first. I will have to go and talk to our rabbi to find out what I have to do.” And with that he turns around and starts walking back on the road to Edom. His whole being is utterly disappointed. He is now talking to himself and you can see him fighting to keep control of his emotions. I really hope that one day Mike will make the decision and follow the road to Jerusalem.

“What will happen to Mike if he decides to stay in Edom?” I really wonder what the outcome will be for Mike.

“Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colours from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength?” It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment. "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me. "I trod down the peoples in My anger And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." I shall make mention of the loving kindnesses of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, According to all that the LORD has granted us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has granted them according to His compassion And according to the abundance of His loving kindnesses. For He said, "Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely." So He became their Saviour.”

“That is really so unnecessary. Do you think that it will really happen?” I cannot believe what I just heard. This is so difficult.

"Nobody ever said it is going to be moonshine and roses to be a Christian. And we all know that we serve a righteous God. Ezekiel declared the following: The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself. "But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? "But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die."

"But did the LORD then reject Israel?" I am a little bit confused, so I need to get clarification from my companion. "Does the LORD not have a special place for Israel, and will they not eventually be saved like we get told so often?"

"I know many people believe that there will come a time when the Jews will be saved. But these people also expected an earthly saviour like Israel did in the time of Jesus. That is why it is so difficult for the Jews to get to Jerusalem. They are now afforded the same opportunity as everyone else on earth to become part of the New Covenant. And for the same reason as everyone else for not becoming part of this Covenant, they will be lost. That is why I told Mike about the covenant. They still have to become part of the New Covenant in order to join us in Jerusalem."

Wow. I currently feel extremely guilty. I had all the time in the world to tell Mike about Jesus, but I did not do it. I can now only hope that he will decide one day to find his way to Jerusalem. There is a sombre atmosphere as we start our journey again. It really feels if we have just witnessed the death of a friend.

But, there is still a lot to do before we can get to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 5 AMMON EN MOAB

I look towards my companion and ask: "I am now getting tired from all this walking. You told me we still have to go to Jerusalem, but the only places I have seen is Assyria, Egypt and Edom. Are we ever going to get to Jerusalem?"

"You have to be patient. We are not even in Israel yet. We still have to pass Ammon and Moab, and then only will we get to Israel. In Israel we still have to go past Sidon and Tyre, and then only will we get to Jerusalem. But believe me; you don't want to miss Jerusalem. It will be worth the time and effort that you are putting in now. But, let's get going." And with that my companion starts walking again.

"One thing I can honestly admit today is that I am totally confused. You come up with all these names that I have heard of in the Bible, which I always thought was on the earth, and now you mention these names and tell me I am in heaven. It just does not make sense at all. Was Jesus not supposed to establish a New Jerusalem on earth? Was He not supposed to rule there during the millennial time and at the end hand it over to the Father? I just cannot figure out what my companion is telling me now.

He takes a deep breath and point to a resting place where we can sit down again. "Now where did you hear that Jesus will rule on earth again?" He really looks as though he does not understand my statement.

No I have to teach him. That is a first for me. "The Bible teaches that He will return the same way he ascended into heaven. He has to come to earth to judge the living and the dead." I think that will clear up the confusion.

My companion shakes his head in disbelief. "Did Jesus not say that His Kingdom is in Heaven? He explained it as follows: For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. He always referred to heaven when He spoke about His kingdom. And that is where He currently rules. Why would He go to earth again? He has already fulfilled all the requirements that He had to. Don't you understand that He started His reign the day he completed his calling. He is in Jerusalem. That is what He taught."

"Sorry for asking then. But I was told that if you do not ask questions, you will never get answers." And with that I get up and continue on our journey.

"Which area is that on the horizon towards the right?" By this time my companion knows that I am very nosey.

"That is the land of Moab and Ammon. You will see there is a small stretch of land between the two, but they are basically the same area."

"I do not see a road coming from that area towards us. Do they have a different route to get to Jerusalem?" is my next question.

"No, there is no road between them and Jerusalem. They are stuck in their area for ever, until the final judgement. Moses declared the following: No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD, because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

“Just a moment, every time you quote these passages you add to my confusion. This passage is applicable to the people of those days and definitely not applicable today. If I look across to them I cannot believe that they were such a large nation.”

“Here we go again.” The old man looks a little frustrated. “You should know by now that the people are not put in a specific area for each country of origin. They are in a specific area because of the way they believe. Are you with me on that?”

“Yes, I think so.” I must admit that I get confused every now and then. “But who are these people then?”

My companion sits down again as he knows he has some explaining to do again.

As usual, he starts with a question. “Do you remember why Moses gave Israel that commandment?”

I look at Alex, only to see he is also not going to respond. “No, I don’t. I cannot remember this as I don’t recall ever hearing about this.”

My companion smiles, and then says: “I am convinced you know the story. Maybe if I give you some hints the story will come back to you guys. Do you remember the story of the donkey that spoke to his owner?”

“O yes. Of course I remember it. We were told this story at Sunday school about Balaam when the donkey asked him why he was hitting him. That was when the donkey told Balaam that there were angels with swords drawn in his way, and that was why he stopped. But what does that have to do with Moab and Ammon?”

“That has everything to do with it. Remember that the king of Moab sent for Balaam to curse Israel, but the LORD gave Balaam a word to bless Israel. The people of Moab years later actually did marry into Israel and caused Israel to sin, and that they were actually happy that the nation of Israel was punished by the LORD.”

He then looks at us to see if we are still paying attention, and then continues: “How many groups are there that appoint their own prophet to be their leader, and then enjoy it when real Christians are made to look like fools. You must be aware of some of these groups that would rather listen to their own leaders so called revelations than reading the Bible. They always maintain that their leader got these words directly from the LORD and because of that it can differ from the Bible.”

“O yes, I can think of quite a number of these groups.” I am very quick to respond. “I can even remember that my dad was very cross with me when I showed him a book I received from a woman that was standing on the street corner. He immediately took it away from me and I never saw it again. I only found out years later who they were and what they believed in. I must admit that by that time I was well entrenched in what I believed was right, so I never thought about them again.”

“That is what I was talking about. You then also find that some of these groups actually say that they believe that Jesus is their Saviour, but also states that He is only one of the ways to get to heaven and that Christianity is like any other belief system. They will also accept non Christians into their fold and incorporate many mystical ways into their gatherings.”

“I must admit that I did not think that these people would be in Moab and Ammon.” I look at Alex and he also looks quite surprised.

Alex looks at the old man, and then asks him: “I suppose that the groups we hear of that gets everyone to commit suicide together also fall into this group?”

“Yes, they end up fanatically following their leader. These are the people that you see over there. And that is the reason there is no road towards Jerusalem, as they can never get to Jerusalem. They are kept there for the final battle before Jesus will hand over the Kingdom to the Father.”

With that my companion gets up and starts walking towards a hill in front of us. He looks at us and then starts talking again. “We have to get a move on again, as I want to show you what lies just over that hill.”

CHAPTER 6 SIDON EN TYRE

“Wow. Just look at this countryside.” I am completely ecstatic about what I see. It is peaceful, with vineyards, water and grassland as far as the eye can see.

“Yes, it is a sight to behold. Every time I come over that hill it is the same experience of utter joy that fills me.” You can see that my companion really means what he says. Then, without any further reaction, he turns to the left and points to two cities in front of us. “Those two cities are Sidon and Tyre. It is there where the people are working hard for an income.”

I must admit that it is difficult to describe the change in surroundings. It is still fascinating to me to think that just behind the hill the land was barren and dry, and then it changes to this lush place in front of me.

“Why is there such a huge difference to the landscape, and why such a sudden change?” I look at the old man to see if he is going to answer my question.

“What do you think makes the difference?” The old man is true to his nature by answering with a question again.

“I suppose these people believe differently from the others.” This time it is Alex who gets to answer first.

“Good answer Alex. But what do you think these people believed in that it can make such a huge difference?”

“You just do not stop asking difficult questions. I cannot think of any reason at all, and then there the two areas of Sidon and Tyre are still in front of us. This landscape is so beautiful that I would have thought that it should have been Jerusalem.” I have to again confirm that I am baffled by the old man. Maybe if I knew these answers I could have been in Jerusalem.

My companion walks over to rest on a rock again and waves us closer. He then gets up and walks into the vineyard next to us, and then reappears with a bunch of grapes the size of oranges. This takes me back to an incident years ago when I went to visit Hettie’s sister on a farm in the Langkloof district in South Africa. As we drove past their apricot orchards I thought it was yellow cling peaches, as I did not know that apricots could get to that size. A single apricot could not fit into a standard cup. That was when I heard that those apricots were only destined for the export market.

So my question immediately to the old man was: “What variety grape is that? Is it also specially grown for the export market?”

“Do you remember that Moses sent people into the Promised Land to find out what it was like?” asks the old man.

“Yes,” answers Alex, “and they returned with these huge clusters of grapes.”

“Do you guys remember this passage: Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two men, with some of the pomegranates and the figs?”

“For sure, I remember that from my days in Sunday school. I always wanted to know what it looked like. And now I can see it with my own eyes. Wow.”

“That is correct Louwrens. That is the fruit the LORD promised His people when they get to the Promised Land, a place that flows with milk and honey.”

“So this is the Promised Land if I understand you correctly? But then why are there still different areas.” It is still a closed book to me as I just cannot work out why we still find different areas.

“Not everything is what you think it is. Louwrens, can you remember why you ended up in Egypt?”

“I think so. You told me that I became part of the covenant, but as I never got baptised afterwards, I was stuck in Egypt.” I can remember this part quite well.

“That is correct Louwrens. Now do you think the people that got baptised after becoming part of the covenant are in Egypt?”

That is a good question I believe. I must admit I have not even thought about that as my mind was so occupied with other thoughts.

“I know they cannot be in Egypt. They went through the sea and then ended up in the desert I think.” I must admit I really don’t know what will happen to them.

“After their stay in the desert, where did they go to?” The old man is back to his questions again.

“They were given the option to enter into the Promised Land, which they decided not to do, and then ended up wandering around for 40 years. After that I think they entered into the Promised Land.”

“I am impressed Louwrens. So where do you think they will be?” More questions again from my companion.

“I suppose that they would be in the Promised Land.”

“So where are we then?”

“So you are telling me that if I got baptised after becoming part of the covenant I would have been here, in the Promised Land?” I am extremely surprised that such a small difference would have had such a huge impact on my destination.

“Yes Louwrens, this is where you would have been. But as you have seen for yourself, there are different areas even here.”

“I can see that for myself. I can still see Tyre and Sidon towards the sea, so I have to believe you.” I am still amazed at the changes in our surroundings.

“Let’s hear from Alan what Tyre looks like.”

I was so taken up with my own thoughts that I did not even see this person joining us. I must admit you can see that this person oozes joy and peace.

“Hi, my name is Louwrens.” I am the first to greet the stranger. “And this guy is Alex. We have been together for a fairly long time now. He comes from Assyria and I am from Egypt.” And with that I stretch out my arm to give him a warm South African handshake.

“Glad to meet you Louwrens and Alex. Tell me are you guys on your way to Jerusalem?”

“Yes,” answers Alex. We thought we would be in heaven when we died only to find out that there are so many different places here in heaven. But tell us quickly, how did you end up in Tyre?”

“I am a pastor in a large church in England. I asked my congregation every time when it was my turn to deliver the sermon that they must repent from their ungodly ways. We have a baptismal ceremony every month where we baptise new believers. We will lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. Most of the people can speak in tongues and prophesy. So I think I follow scripture in everything I do. This morning when I knew it was my time to go, I was so looking forward to see Jerusalem. I am so disappointed to find out I was in Tyre. I know everything looks beautiful here, but why did I end up in Tyre? Is heaven not just heaven?”

I must admit, Alan also looks a little disappointed to me. I suppose I also looked like him when I found out that I was in Egypt.

Even I can now answer some of Alan’s questions. “Not everything is what we were told what it would be. Here it is calm and pretty, but believe me where I come from it is dry and empty. But I was told that it is also part of heaven. So you can be very pleased with this. Ask Alex, even where he comes from it looks the same as Egypt, dry and barren.”

Alan looks a little bit confused. “Louwrens, you say that you were in Egypt and Alex was in Assyria. Do you know why you were there?”

Alex steps in with the answer. “Yes we do Alan. You see I was in the Roman Catholic Church, and Louwrens in a Protestant Church. That is why I ended up in Assyria and Louwrens in Egypt.”

“WHAATTT!” Alan is now on the defence. Alex, stay away from me. You are part of the antichrist. I cannot believe that you are here. I have to get away from here.”

I must admit, Alan is beside himself. He then continues. “But I have explained to so many people why the Roman Catholic Church the antichrist is, and now I come face to face with a member in heaven.” He turns toward the old man and asks; “I am in heaven?”

“Yes Alan, you are in heaven. And you do not have to be upset about Alex being here. He is on his way to Jerusalem to learn the truth about Jesus, and what His covenant means for all of us. Can you remember what the prophet Isaiah spoke about the people going to Jerusalem?”

“For sure, it goes something like this: And many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

“That is precisely the scripture I was talking about. I suppose you also want to go to Jerusalem?”

“Yes I want to go to Jerusalem. But I cannot understand why I am ended up in Tyre. That is why I want to go to Jerusalem. Someone must have made a mistake. It is impossible for me not to be in Jerusalem.” Alan really looks upset about ending up in Tyre.

“Just relax a bit Alan”. The old man seems to already know the answer to Alan’s question. “I want to ask you a couple of questions, and then you can decide if there was a mistake or not.”

“Okay, you can ask your questions, but I am convinced that you will see that I am correct,” answers from Alan.

“Let us start at the beginning. What was Sidon and Tyre known for in the Old Testament?”

Alan takes a minute to think, and then answers: "I believe they were known for their business sense. I know that even King Solomon also used wood that he bought from Tyre when he built the first temple."

I must admit I am impressed with Alan. He definitely knows his Bible history. I for one would not have known the answer.

"You answered well Alan. Now tell me how many bookstores does your congregation operate?" My companion looks very relaxed while he awaits Alan's answer.

"Apart from the one at our main complex, we have four more bookstores in all the major malls in our town. To be honest, most of our income comes from these bookstores. Without them we would not have been able to develop our auditorium and the rest of our complex. And of course, that is also a very good source of people coming into contact with our Church and then eventually joining our Church. It also serves as a source of income to pay the salaries at our Church. They are extremely important for our Church as we can sell Bibles, DVD's, CD's and at the same time it serves to attract people to our Church. Once we get them into our Church we can then tell them about Jesus, and so expand the Kingdom."

"Alan, so you are telling me that people have to join your Church and that is by attending the worship services?"

"Yes, and they have to sign our membership form which contains our statement of faith, and all our rules regarding membership. This specifies things like how much people should tithe, and how we interpret scripture. If they do not comply with it they are no longer treated as members."

"Alan you told me earlier that you have baptismal services for new members at your Church. Now you are telling me that they have to accept your statement of faith also. Is there a difference?"

"Yes and no. At the end of the service one of the pastors will ask if anyone would like to accept Jesus as their personal saviour. These people would then come to the platform where the pastor would pray the sinner's prayer, and that is it. They then get all our forms to complete and are then members of our Church." Alan seems to know what he is talking about, so I will only be a bystander while Alan and the old man sorts out Alan's problem.

"What about baptism?" asks the old man?

"Oh, that is easy. The Holy Spirit will work in them to convince them about baptism. We only have to ensure that people end up in heaven, and that we do by leading them in the sinner's prayer."

"So you are convinced that all your members will end up in heaven?"

"Yes. That is why I cannot understand why I ended up in Tyre. If my memory serves me well, I believe I must have led more than twenty thousand people to Jesus in prayer. That is why I expected at least a welcoming committee when I died. That is also why I want to go to Jerusalem, as I believe something is amiss."

I must admit it seems like Alan does not accept the fact that he is where he is. He really looks baffled.

"Don't you know why you are in Tyre?" asks the old man. It seems that he has a different viewpoint about this subject. "What did the prophet Ezekiel say about Tyre? Do you know?"

“No I cannot remember as I did not need to know.”

“The prophet said the following: Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled. Do you remember this scripture? Is that not what you are doing? Your Church declares that as long as people become members of your Church they are saved. So you have turned the gateway to your Church. And your Church trades in everything as long as you profit out of it. You admitted that without those profits it would be impossible for your Church to survive. The apostle Luke told us a different story. He said: And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. Now you are telling me that you have added people, while Luke said that the LORD added people. How do you answer to that question?”

“So you are telling me that Tyre of Ezekiel is not the place in history, but that Tyre is in heaven? So I ended up in Tyre because I traded with the name of the LORD? And also that not all our member would end up in heaven is that what you are telling me?” Alan looks shocked.

“I am glad you understand,” says the old man. “You can now join us as we go to Jerusalem.”

Alan kicks with his right foot in the air in front of him as if he is kicking a ball. He then turns around and joins us.

“I want to ask you another question. You know I am very nosey. We were always told at home that no question is ever a stupid question, as you either know the answer, or you do not. So you can ask questions.” I think I explained myself why I want to ask questions.

“All these people that are in the various groups around us now, who are they? They look so full of life and actually happy that they are here.”

Louwrens, these people are the people of Ephraim. They live here as they all appointed a leader to rule over them. It is now their ruler’s duty to take responsibility for them. Remember in Israel’s history that they also wanted a king to rule over them? These people did the same at church. They appointed someone to rule over them. But, just look ahead. Look at the glory of Jerusalem.”

My companion looks ecstatic. “If you look towards the right you will see the gate of Ephraim. That is where we will enter into Jerusalem. And do you see the light. That is the glory of the LORD that shines over everyone in Jerusalem.”

CHAPTER 7 JERUSALEM

As I look up, I fall on my knees as I am not capable of standing. I just start crying without any reason. It is a sight to behold, one that I will never ever forget. It is something that cannot be described by words. My whole body is filled with a scripture that I never thought was possible to remember:

*And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

After a while the old man walks over to me and assists me in getting to my feet. I did not expect this sight. Even as a child I tried to picture what Jerusalem would look like, but it is not a patch on what I see in front of me. There is no stopping me now. I want to get to Jerusalem, and get

there as soon as possible. I even have enough energy now to run at full speed towards Jerusalem.

My companion takes my hand and helps me to my feet, gives me a hug, and turns towards our destination. "Let us get going. We will receive our instructions as soon as we get to the gate."

"Just look at all the people! Where are they all coming from? Everywhere you look there are people, and roads, all leading towards Jerusalem." I am so worked up and to think I will see what the inside looks like. I just cannot wait to get there. I must admit, Alex and Alan are also filled with joy and cannot wait to get there. One can see the expectation in their eyes.

"Yes", says the old man. "You people have an expression that says all roads lead to Rome, but now you know that all roads lead to Jerusalem."

That is true. As far as the eye can see are people clothed in white, and all of them are on their way to Jerusalem. This is a sight that I will remember forever.

"Who is that person over there?" I see someone looking at us and coming toward us at great speed. He then stops and talks to the old man. They move away from us while this person explains something to the old man, turns around and disappears into the crowd again. I wonder what message he gave to the old man.

The old man points to a rest on the side of the road and calls me over. I wonder what this is all about. I know I have an appointment in Jerusalem, but we are not there yet. So what did this messenger tell the old man?

"Louwrens, tell me a little more about your history. I want to know what happened to you when you relocated to the Natal south coast area."

I look around as the question has caught me a little off guard. "What specific do you want to know, as a lot of things happened? My mom also came down but stayed in the old age home in Winklespruit, and as a family we started living very close to each other. The kids really enjoyed Sunday's as she would come home with us after church, and would then only return after the evening service. Is that what you wanted to know?"

"No, that is not what I was after. You also ended up in hospital there, if I am correct. Tell me about that."

"Yes, I was in hospital. The doctors found a malignant tumour in my bladder and removed it. Fortunately they could remove it completely so there was no need to worry about it afterwards. I did go for checkups for three years after the operation, but was given the green light after that period of time."

"Just after the operation you prayed a prayer. Can you remember what you asked the LORD in that prayer?"

I still well up when I think about it. "Yes, I can. Do you know that my youngest daughter was not even in school then? Do you know how I asked the LORD to spare my life in order for me to see them grow up and take their own place in life?"

"So that is what it is all about." The old man looks at me with real empathy in his eyes. "So that is the story."

I am now completely flabbergasted. He looks at me and I feel that I can burst into tears just looking at him. What is he trying to tell me? Did something happen? I am so looking forward to my meeting in Jerusalem. I hope it is still on.

After a while he starts talking to me again. “Well, at least I now know what the problem is. How old is that daughter now?”

“She is fourteen at the moment. She has really changed now that she is becoming a woman. Just think about it, she is even in high school.”

“Well Louwrens, that is the problem. I have just heard that the LORD is still bound by that promise He made with you and is still answering that prayer today. We will have to separate our ways now as you will be returned to the hospital. In fact, I know your wife is at the hospital already. I know that you have looked forward to your meeting in Jerusalem, but you will go back now. Oh, and by the way, you wanted to know who I am. Well, my name is Moses.

“Moses!!!” The words feel as if it is coming from deep inside of me. Can it be that I spoke to Moses?

“Hey, stop shouting. The other people are asleep. What is wrong with you? Did you see a ghost? Do you want me to call a nurse?”

The voice sounds familiar. Can it be Hettie? I open my eyes, and yes, I am lying in bed with my wife on my side. All the other people are staring at me.

“What did you dream of, or did you see something that made you upset?” Now it is her turn to question me.

“No don’t worry. I just saw a lot of people clothed in white walking along a road towards a bright horizon. It felt like I was at a game farm standing on a lookout where you are high above the ground and you can see over the trees and grasslands. There were three other people with me. All I know was that one of them was Jesus and another one Moses, but the other person I could not identify. I just knew it was them. I will ask Dr. Dawie, our minister if he can shed some light on it.”

If the people only know.....

Ps.

Dr. Dawie told me to forget about this vision as it will drive me insane. I didn’t listen to him.

SUMMARY

Jesus confirms this subject in Matthew 24:31 *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, **from one end of heaven to the other.***

I only got the meaning twenty years later. That was the reason for me writing quite a number of my books, starting with The Covenant of Righteousness, which I also included in the Book of Moses.

These books are available as free downloads from my website at <http://www.shama.org.za>

DONATIONS / DONASIES

We are trying to raise funds to buy a vehicle in order for us to be able to get to the shops 60 km away on our own. We lost our car due to what I would call absolutely bad service from a person at a Volvo dealership who would not let us use our warrantee when I had to get someone to stop a water leak from the air conditioner into the driver side footwell. I was told when I took it in to get fixed that I should have used a MIF accredited dealer of which there apparently was two that I could have used. They were Tiger Wheel and Tyre and SupaQuick. Now I do not know how someone who fits tyres could work as a workshop to temporarily fix my car 120 km from the agent. So I ended up giving the car back to the bank when even after paying out of my own pocket to get the car working after it blew a gasket originally after the temporary fix, the same thing happened while driving it six months later and blowing the top gasket again. So I referred Nedbank to Volvo Eastern Cape and that was the end of the story. But it left me without a car, as I am totally disabled due to NET cancer.

I would also like to say that all my savings for my retirement went down the drain due to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) which is a racially inclusive programme launched by the South African government to redress the inequalities of apartheid by giving black people (African, Coloureds and Indians) South African citizens economic privileges that were taken away from Whites. As I am white I could not continue with my business and when you are dismissed at 49 years old, your savings only last for a few years, especially when it was used it to start my own business and was stopped for a second time when I was told that I could not continue my business on my own and I had to use consultants that my clients wanted which would have bankrupted me within six months.

So now after 23 years after being diagnosed the first time with NET cancer and nearly six years after having had to stop working all together as my condition has deteriorated to a point where I cannot leave home without a wheelchair, we would like to get an older car, before electronics, that we can use to move around.

So our aim is to raise around R45,000 or \$ 3,000 to be able to achieve this. I was hoping by making my books available for free on my website that it would supply us with an income, but now ten years after starting it I have only received 1 donation of R50 (\$3) despite the fact that more than 1000 books are downloaded on a monthly basis. I also designed and made calendars available to our worldwide NET cancer community which has now been downloaded more that 1000 per annum without any donation.

You can either donate on our website which will accept funds in US \$ up to a maximum of around \$ 600, or at our donation page at Payfast which will allow you to donate in ZAR.

The links are: US Dollars: <http://shamaministries.org.za/wp/shop/>

South African Rands: <https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/shamaministries>

WHO ARE WE?

Louwrens and Hettie Erasmus are two people called by the LORD to make a difference in the lives of others. Hettie has been doing counselling for almost as long as she can remember, and has studied both formally and informally. She is still lead and taught by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis in her ministry.

Louwrens, that's me, is the person who wrote all the books and articles you will find on our website and on Amazon, Kindle and Smashwords. Unfortunately for myself, I am suffering from Carcinoid cancer, a slow growing but devious cancer. We are raising funds to fight this Carcinoid cancer I am suffering from in order for me to survive. After 21 years of fighting, our finances are depleted and we have no more resources to fight this cancer on our own any longer and have started a fundraising project to help us in this fight as I am no longer able to do any "real" work. Writing is not a real work to me but a commission from the LORD. You can contribute at any of the following places. The first place is directly at our payment processor who also handles all our transactions from our website, which has been virtually nonexistent. Their page is at

<https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/shamaministries>

If you would like to contribute on our website you can do so directly on our website at <http://shamaministries.org.za/wp/shop/>

Our contact details are:

Website: <http://www.shama.org.za>

Email: louwrens at shama dot org dot za. Replace the words with normal characters as in a normal email address, as we are trying to keep junk mail and spammers to the minimum.

The following books can be downloaded for free from our site:

The Book of Moses. This is a complete guide for any Christian explaining the way of a Christian, and answers most doctrinal questions, questions you have in your everyday walk with the LORD, on the end times and what heaven will look like, as well as questions about Church. Download link [here](#)

Is Egypt in Heaven? The book is based on a time in my life when I received major surgery in my fight against Carcinoid cancer, and had a near death experience. Some sections are based on the truth, and some is fiction to explain what heaven will look like. Download link [here](#)

A Wake Up Call. The book examines the doctrine of election, and then draws on the result to explain the effect on our everyday life. Download link [here](#)

Evidences of a Christian. Do I have to exhibit a different lifestyle as a non Christian, and if so, what should it be like? Download link [here](#)

The Covenant of Righteousness. This book does a detailed study of what the Covenant entails, what Jesus came to fulfil and then describes all the ramifications on all the various doctrines of today. Download link [here](#)

The Revelation of John Revealed. This book takes a completely different approach to how to interpret the book of Revelation. It uses as a basis the exact same lessons that are described in this book using Israel as our example, and then what the affect this has on our views of this book today. This book is absolutely different from anything you have read or heard. We have to remember that all the current viewpoints started somewhere in the Roman Catholic Church and was modified or still viewed as the only view. They leave Israel as example completely out of all interpretations. Download link [here](#)

The Olivet Discourse – A description of the message about what will happen from the time of His death until the time He returns. I also look at how He will separate His sheep from the goats. You can download it from [here](#).

On a trot through Romans – In this book I tried to publish a non partisan view of how to interpret the Letter to Romans. This does not mean that I do not ignore incorrect interpretations, but I spend a lot of time on those part that both John Calvin and then another part that John Darby spent time on and completely missed the boat. I trust that you will also accept it in this light. You can download the book [here](#)

Jews – Church or Nation? In this short booklet I look at the reference to Israel in the Old Testament to find out if they were seen as a congregation of the LORD's people, or as a nation. There are so many antichrist messages found in the Church today, and I believe that this information will shock you as it shocked me when I looked at the subject. This is also possibly the biggest stepping stone used by the antichrist doctrine of the rapture. You can download it [here](#)

Books by other writers that can also be downloaded from this site include a book about the biblical interpretation of dreams and visions. Download link [here](#). I also have an old windows help file that cover dreams and visions, but can only run on PC's still running Windows 7 or older. The link is [here](#). Another book I referred to in some of my writings is The Epistle of Barnabas written by Mark. Download link [here](#). You will also find a book that I have used as part of our Bible School [here](#)

Other article that you will find on my website are as follows:

- Matthew 24 and 25 – The Olivet Discourse and a look at how Jesus described the endtimes
- The Jews and the Book of Acts
- My testimony and why I write
- How do I spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Escape from Christendom
- Evidences of a Christian
- Wedding day sermon
- Charles Finney Letter 3 – conversion
- SETTLERS and the PIONEERS theology
- Who do you preach? The murdered or the murderer? Jesus or John Calvin
- Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats? Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)
- Israelvision or British-Israel World Federation

DVD's Some of the books have also been recorded as DVD's. These DVD sets contain most of the information in the book with the same name, but some points are expanded upon and it also includes a section on my life with Carcinoid cancer and the effect on my daily life. These DVD's are available in HD format and can be requested by sending me an email at louwrens at shama dot org dot za. The cost per set is R400 and is sent via speed couriers post office to post office service.

YouTube All the DVD's that I recorded of some of these books are also available on my YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/LouwErasmus>