



(The Sword: painting by Rebekah Laue, [www.stretcherbearers.com](http://www.stretcherbearers.com))

## IT'S PAINFUL WHEN DOCTRINES TUMBLE

*Annus horibilis*: There was a time when Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain used these words in a Christmas or New Year's message. That was the year the marriage break-up between Prince Charles and Lady Diana made headlines in the world media.

### Our own painful year

For my wife, Martie, and me the year 2007 was also an *annus horibilis* for various reasons. One of these was a growing realisation that we had for most of our lives believed several erroneous doctrines of men as if it were biblical truth. None of this came from the teaching of someone we heard on a television broadcast, or from the reading of books. It came from serious Bible study of our own – as if for the first time in our life.

Apart from relinquishing our ordination as pastors in the Charismatic-Pentecostal Christian network we belonged to, we withdrew from institutional Church life altogether. Although we missed the fellowship, this separation gave us the opportunity to take a deep breath and to study the Word of God again for ourselves, without the influence of others' views. It also gave me (Gerrie) the opportunity to complete my research and thesis for a doctorate.

Martie had over some time been studying and re-studying the book of Daniel and other apocalyptic books (those containing the so-called end-time prophecies), comparing them with recorded history. She repeatedly remarked that most of these had been fulfilled. A study of the Jewish historian Josephus' work confirmed her views. We started to dig deep into **word studies**, as well as **works of theologians of centuries past**.

- A search for the correct historical, cultural, literary and geographical context became a crucial foundation in our search for the truth.

## The Rapture

One of the first doctrines to tumble was the **Rapture**. Having come into the Pentecostal-Charismatic fold after 44 years in the Reformed church family, it took a considerable time for me to buy into this doctrine in the first place. Now I could no longer resist the biblical and historical evidence confronting me. Almost overnight, I had to conclude it was unbiblical all along. (You can read our understanding [here](#)).



## Trichotomy

In our studies in Christian counselling in the late nineties, we were taught the **trichotomist position** - that man is a spirit, has a soul and lives in a body. As I studied the Scriptures for my doctoral thesis, I realised that it was an artificial doctrine, carried into our knowledge base and popularised by modern Christian books, such as those on spiritual warfare and emotional healing. Intended as a two page summary of the trichotomist position in the introduction, it grew to an almost 50 page independent chapter at the time.

Two verses in the Bible (1 Thess 5:23 and Heb 4:12) had clearly been elevated out of their context into a doctrine of men. While trichotomy provided easy answers to some difficult questions such as the possible demonisation of Christians, it created problems in explaining other parts of Scripture. (Eventually this realisation developed into a book entitled *The Lamp Of The Lord*).

- It was scary to realise how many ministries are actually rooted and grounded in this doctrine – it is their whole foundation.

## Born again

Next to fall was the '**born again**' cliché. I never knew so many different doctrines on the born again concept existed. These vary from being born again instantaneously when you pray the sinner's prayer, through doctrines of processes and even one of being born again only at the alleged resurrection with Christ's so-called second or final coming.

- To whet your appetite: please check for yourself how many times Jesus spoke of being born again, and, most importantly, who He spoke to!

The 'born again' brigades teach that man's spirit died when Adam sinned. There is simply no Biblical support for such a belief. Just try to tell someone in the occult that his spirit is not alive if he has not been born again. He will laugh at you.

## Legalistic doctrines

Also falling by the wayside were **legalistic doctrines**. A thorough study of just Paul's Epistle to the Galatians showed how we had been deceived by all the impressive holy feast teachings that television carried into our homes over the previous years.

- People have been inundated with emotional Israel and Jerusalem hype that are not biblical. The biblical truth of the power of God was replaced by all kinds of formulas dressed up in impressive appeals to relieve you of your money for purposes that built on doctrines of men.

We need to search the Scriptures again and realise that we are New Testament sons and daughters who can come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16). We are no longer slaves under the Law who have to appease God with slaughtered lambs for the privilege to approach Him. Hebrews 9:12 and 10:12 teach us that Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever.

## Bible versions

**Bible versions** came under the magnifying glass. We have always maintained that the best Bible version is an open one, and we still do so. Nonetheless we realised that translation flaws and inserted interpretations of translators inevitably lead to biased or wrong teaching. Study Bibles add their own editing variations. Consequently we focused more than ever before to use a wide variety of Bible versions, complemented by various dictionaries, lexicons, interlinear versions, etc., in an effort **not to read above and beyond what was originally written**.

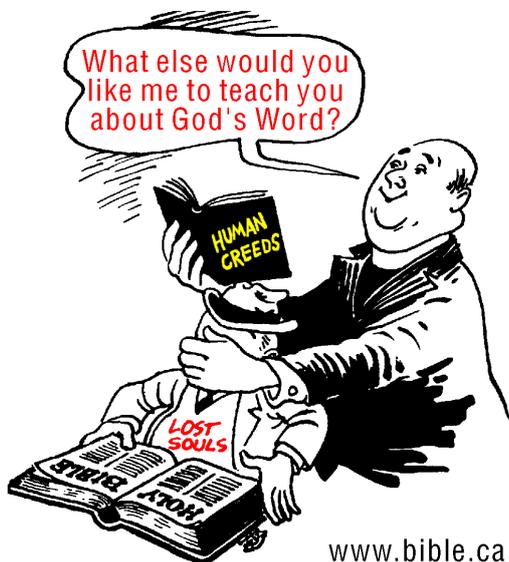
Martie uses the New King James Version as her basis text, whereas I start out with the Holman Christian Standard Bible and the 1933 version of the Bible in Afrikaans, our mother tongue.

## Family and friends

One of the results of the realisation that we had been influenced by questionable doctrines was that we had to show our children and friends who trusted our integrity why we were discarding so much of our old doctrine. Were we really seeing the truth in the Scriptures, or have we been caught up in a cultist movement? The Christian world loves its labels and we inevitably did not escape (the preterist label is one, for example).

## Our answer is simple:

We have no time for 'twisted truth'. We need the unadulterated and unpoluted truth. It is the truth that sets one free, not a counterfeit. Sadly, we have lost long time friends in the process.



Paul wrote to young Timothy that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God, the believer in Jesus Christ, may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16).

How many ministries, we wonder, would be willing to even consider, let alone acknowledge doctrinal error if it endangered their bread and butter? We do not say this in arrogance, but only wish to illustrate the power of financial bondages that the institutional systems impose along the way on many who start out with a sincere passion in their heart. In the end biblical truth takes second place after 'financial truth'.

It is painful indeed, when long held doctrines tumble down. For some it is outright unbearable.

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Left Behind photo: Gerrie Malan.