

Greater Than WHAT?

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cycles of good/bad social morality, etc. But from what Jesus and others say in the Bible, you had better get your seat belt on...tight! Sorry to say, people still get killed in Bentleys... with a seat belt on. I say that to illustrate that even the best earthly precautions are inadequate if we refuse to seek God with all of our heart, and humble ourselves to Him. The Bible gives no indication that Cain humbled himself nor confessed to God nor repented. All he replied to God's questioning was "Am I my brother's keeper?" Jesus' story, "The Good Samaritan," answers Cain's question.

Cain demonstrates the heavy load man carries, whether he feels it, or not. Ezekiel shows that sin grows outwardly like spiritual dry rot. Isaiah 1:6 shows that same growth within a person. Jeremiah the prophet asks (8:22) if there is any life-giving, curing oil or any doctors in the area. Implying that there were, he then asks why the people are not healed! These questions apply to spiritual sickness...the worst, and which is fatal beyond the grave. The answer is that there IS a cure, and that there IS a "Doctor." but the people just don't go for the thorough treatment. From time to time, people get sick of empty living and sick of sin...but usually not sick enough to seek the full, available cure.

There IS a cure...a cure that is "greater than" any other, simply because God only promised One Cure! When the Hebrews, under Moses, were bitten by poisonous snakes, all they had to do was LOOK to the cure God commanded (Num. 21: 8,9). Jesus applied that historical incident as

illustrating Himself (John 3:14-17). Sadly, Jesus said to a crowd what He would likely say to the crowds today: "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:40). Be the "willing" exception!

A tremendous city-wide turning to God occurred in the ancient London called Nineveh through the God-sent preaching of Jonah, the prophet. A "pagan" queen heard of "the wisdom of Solomon" and travelled the many hot and treacherous miles to see for herself. But referring to Himself, Jesus said "a greater than Jonah is here!" and "a greater than Solomon is here!" (Matt. 12:41, 42). Such earnest seeking and finding as seen in the people of Nineveh and that queen... both of whom were "outsiders"... strips away any flimsy excuse we might be trusting in, but at the same time both provide encouragement to anyone and everyone!

Jesus was asked in challenge of His CV (so to speak): "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" (John 4:12) and again, "Are you greater than our father Abraham?" (John 8:53). Jesus was not being compared to junk, but to Israel's greatest...to the "cream of the crop"—to the very foundation of their existence as a people and nation.

The New Testament book of Hebrews is called "the book of better things." Jesus is there contrasted to Moses the Lawgiver, Aaron the high priest and angels. These were the cream; the best in Israel's history, but Jesus is "greater than"... "better than" them all! Heb. 1: 1-3 stands as the highest mountain peak... the superlative of personages of anyone—man or angel. READ BELOW what it says, and see that Jesus is unequalled.

Cain had a "greater than" burden. God gave us a "greater than" Burden-BEARER!

"God has spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You'?" And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son'? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' " (Heb 1:1-6 edited for space, so read it for yourself in the Bible)

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"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

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Greater Than WHAT?



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"Greater than" or "better than" implies a comparison of two or more things. There is also the negative approach of "worse than!" Sometimes, either positive or negative can be used, where "worse than" means "greater than." Such was the case of the world's first murderer, Cain, the son of Adam and Eve. Cain had killed his brother, Abel, and heard God's swift judgment. Cain replied. "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen.4:13). Bible margins have "My iniquity is greater than it may be forgiven." His "iniquity," or crime/sin was Cain's heavy burden; NOT the "punishment" God issued out.

Seven chapters later, we hear God exposing man's sin which had grown to monstrous proportions. At Babel's

Tower, God says that due to man's evil imaginations and plans, man will stop at nothing—in a direction away from, in revolt against and not submissive to God, the Creator.

Moving quickly ahead in time, God gives a shocking, literal peek at how sin takes over, infecting everything. This is true regarding what man IS, as well as what man does, for what man IS bears greatly

on what man does. God gives His prophet, Ezekiel, a horrid "inside peek" at man's sin (Ezek. 8). God shows him one thing, then another and another, and says, "if that is not enough, look what they do here... and here... and here!" If you ask "Where is all this determined sinfulness taking mankind?" the answer is: "Look around at the rapidly-evolving 'New World Order,' " being brought in—Trojan horse style—under the noses of a sin-drunk, sleeping, mesmerized society. Man today is unnecessarily "biting the [self-destruct] bullet," just as foolishly as Eve bit the forbidden fruit.

Yes, I know there have been horrific times in the past. Yes, I have heard people tell about historical up/down

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GOD'S ONLY STANDARD: This world is "lost at sea" for lack of (or rejection of) God's unmoveable point of reference... a rock-solid Standard so desperately and pre-eminently needed for our recovery. Psalm 1:1,2 says "O the happiness of that one who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." Note the progression: walk, stand, sit. Society's erosion went from passing by sinfulness, to having the attention arrested by it, then becoming right at home sitting in it. The people seem to get worse; becoming mockers. We must "DELIGHT" in God's Standard!

**YUCK!
and
YES!!**

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People focus on the exterior, trying to change what they *appear to be!* This trendy-trap is epidemic among ALL races, colour and religion; even among those that *appear to be* “strict.”

The obsession with appearance and self-magnification is a heart problem, but **that is just where the Master Beautician goes to work!** The Bible says that God “takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation” (Ps. 149:4). When a person comes whole-heartedly to God, *HE* looks and says to them “You’re a diamond in the rough, but a diamond sure enough!”

In the Metro earlier this month, one article’s bold title stated “Six in ten of us have faced mental issues.” This is tragic. Right next to that bold title was the picture of a “glamour model” in a bizarre outfit. The Metro article title fit the model better than the outfit she wore.

The model’s weird outfit pales in comparison to other symptoms of “our sick society.” It is impossible to list all the “things” leading mankind to eternity in hell. If a drunk staggered on the curb near rushing traffic, we would pull him away from danger rather than add to his imbalance by pushing him toward death. The fashion industry, however, gives the extra shove to hell with increasing and bold advertising everywhere. Society, with its faulty moral equilibrium and faulty moral compass, seems to love it, just like a drunk likes booze. **At the end of the day, ALL sin intoxicates. Satan pours. People drink.**

Many “role models” and those “in the lime-light” have abused their lives—body and mind, inside and out, yet crowds copy the emptiness. Cosmetic surgery clinics admit they cannot give “beauty,” yet the British fashion sector is valued at **£46 billion**. The bodies and lives of many end up as “Yuck,” while industries throw “victims” on the pile like bodies in a concentration camp, and carry on making profitable merchandise of people...of souls! (see Rev. 18:9-13). People trafficking will be broken one day... completely, but the entire human race is on the slave block as I write this.

God Almighty, the Creator, made “man” (male and female) beautifully and perfectly. **Sin is Satan’s “beauty parlour.”** He makes people believe he can improve their “looks.” He paints life and living with fool’s gold and glitter.

Many won’t come to God for His complete beauty treatment. They say in their hearts, like the prophesy of Jesus’ terrible Passion: **“There is no beauty that we should desire Him...He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him...Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows...He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed...All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin...And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand... He shall see the labour of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities”** (Isa. 53:2-11).

Our Creator-God, who brought life and beauty out of chaos, brought life out of the death of the cross. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the **JOY** that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the **SHAME**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb.12:2). Through the victory of the Cross (Col. 2: 13-15, see opposite bottom page), Jesus turned **YUCK!** into **YES!!** Through the Christ of the Cross and the Empty Grave, God’s promises to us are a great big **YES!!** (2 Cor. 1:20).

“Lift Up A Standard!”

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The above title forms part of the **Biblical “motto” found on the front of every issue of this paper.** The word, **Standard**, has many definitions. Our uses will be restricted to 1) a flag or banner, and 2) a criteria for measuring.

The words “**lift**” and “**standard**” are together (in a single Bible verse) only in Isaiah, which has been called “The Gospel in the Old Testament.” It is found in 49:22; 59:19 and our “motto,” 62:10.

God openly exposed and denounced the sins of Israel, yet called in the heart-cry of love that they return to proper “rest” in Him...but they said they would not! (see Isa. 28:12; Jer.6:16). This is exactly where Britain is. What is true of Israel *then* is true of Britain *today*. Those of other nations need not feel self-righteous, for the plague of sin has infected all the nations. Yet God Almighty reaches out to all nations in these three passages from Isaiah, and elsewhere in the Bible.

There *IS* a way in which the nation of Israel is special to God, but this is not to be distorted. God will not tolerate sin in Israel, either. Sin, wherever it is found and wherever it is not confessed and forsaken, will bring God’s judgment of eternal hell. Yet, sin is destroying people and nations, even now!

“From the east to the west,” Isaiah 59:19 says, God is calling in love. In 49:22, God says “Behold, I will lift My hand to the nations, and set up My **standard** for the peoples.” There, God in love is inviting all people by His raised hand, and calling them to come **under His banner-flag.** We are all in a war against sin and Satan, and under **God’s Standard ONLY** are we safe.

Our “motto” verse (Isa. 62:10) also

contains the call to clear all obstructions from the way of all people. This is why Jesus turned over the tables of the money-changers, saying “My Father’s house is called a house of prayer for all people, but you have made it a den of thieves!” God’s call to remove obstacles does *not* mean that we may do as we please, hold on to our sin, and yet He will accept us. **God’s holy Standard** requires us to forsake *ALL* sin.

Isa. 59:19 says “When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a **standard** against him.” Our chief enemy, Satan, is seen coming like a flood in Rev. 12:15. Heb. 9:14 says that “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself [on the Cross] without spot to God, cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” God’s Holy Spirit raised **God’s Standard** (Jesus Christ) *TO* the Cross and *FROM* the grave (Rom.8:11). The Spirit raised **The Standard** against the enemy, thereby providing victory and liberty for those of every nation on earth!

Yes, God raised His hand as **The Standard** when Jesus gave His hand to the nails of the cross. Satan, the enemy, may send forth his “flood,” but Jesus Christ was a good swimmer! As Isaiah said earlier “And he shall spread his hands in the midst of them, as he that swims spreads his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands” (25:11). Jesus Christ, **God’s Standard and ours**, spread His hands on the Cross and invites the entire world, saying, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32). **THAT Standard** is sufficient to rescue our world and save this fragmented nation. The Christ of the Cross was also sufficient to “bring down the pride” of Satan—“And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2: 14, 15). **What a Standard!**

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.