

U-TURN AHEAD #3

Introduction: God does not make U-Turns

- God had a plan at the beginning.
 - He has a plan now.
 - He has a plan for the future.
- Declaration made against the devil that out of the woman's seed will come one who will crush his head (Genesis 3)
- Jesus introduced the Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:17)
- Humanity is defaced, but not destroyed.
 - Our heart is made new and is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator (Colossians 3:10)
- Are we a cosmic chess piece or a computer app?

ILLUSTRATION: Jeremy Clarkson's Range rover Story¹

Range Rovers are expensive in England. In 2022, more than 5,000 people in UK woke up to find their Range Rover had been nicked and shipped off to Albania. This sent the insurance companies into a tizzy, and now getting cover is both expensive and tricky....

New Range Rovers are extremely difficult to steal. Millions have been spent on making it impregnable. Despite that, the insurance companies demanded that, before they'd provide cover, I would have to spend thousands on a tracking device....

When the car was delivered, I had to sit down with two men from the dealership to install an app on my phone. I entered my email address and chose a password. You know where this is going, and you're right. The password was judged and came up wanting. So I chose the name of a Polish town, added some random punctuation marks, explained that I wasn't a robot and then got a message that they would email me the login details.

¹ CLARKSON Jeremy, The Weekend Australian Magazine February 3-4 2024 (P46-47)

The email didn't arrive, so I went back to the beginning, only to find I couldn't remember which town, or where I'd put those punctuation marks... so one of the dealership men had to use his laptop, hooked up to my Wi-Fi, and asked for my password. No, I couldn't remember that either...

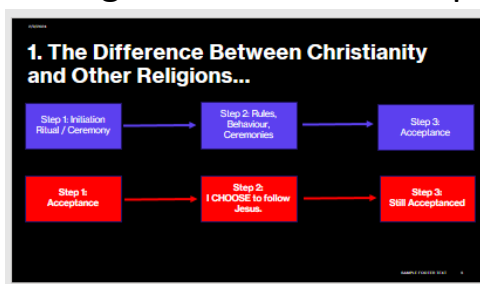
Finally, [a couple of weeks later] the app was installed, but it didn't work as the car had fallen asleep...apparently while it is awake, it is constantly alert, scanning itself for defects and movement – and this means the battery goes flat. So, it is programmed to fall asleep if you don't use it for a couple of weeks...

Did the app I'd spent so long installing wake it up? NO! I had to download ANOTHER app....

- When Jesus talks about “good stored in our heart”, is this just like a computer app?
 - What if I miss something, lose something, forget something?

1. Differences Between Christianity and Other Religions

- What is a religion?
 - Starts with a ritual; ceremony.
 - Followed by laws, rules to behaviour & regular ceremonies throughout life to be accepted at the end.



- Christianity:
 - Starts with acceptance at the beginning.
 - I chose to follow Jesus.
 - Not in the hope of being accepted – I am ALREADY accepted.
 - Protected.

Matthew 13:44-45 *Heaven's kingdom realm can be illustrated like this: A person discovered that there was hidden treasure in a field. Upon finding it, he hid it again. Because of uncovering such treasure, he was overjoyed and sold all that he possessed to buy the entire field just so he could have the treasure.*

Heaven's kingdom realm is also like a jewel merchant in search of rare pearls. When he discovered one very precious and exquisite pearl, he immediately gave up all he had in exchange for it.

- Who is the treasure or pearl?
 - Man / merchant is Jesus (v24, 37)
 - YOU are God's treasure.
- You do NOT need a password to connect to God/Jesus.

2. The Plan

Romans 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

- ALL things
 - God works for good of those who love Him.

Romans 8:29 *for those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

- God foreknew...
- Predestined – to be like Jesus
 - God's plan for you and me

Romans 8:30 *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

- Predestined speaks to purpose
- Called speaks of relationship
- Justified speaks of position.

3. Are we Ready?

- Parable of ten – Matthew 25:1-13

(A) Ready if Delayed.

2 Peter 3:3-4 *First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."*

- Don't feed on things that rob you of your hope.

(B) Spend Time Getting Ready.

2 Peter 3:14-15a *So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation...*

(C) Ready to be Welcomed.

- Saddest words Jesus spoke in this passage: "I don't know you"
(Matt 25:12)

Revelation 19:6-9 *Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Almighty reigns!*

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "these are the true words of God."