



## Today's Quick Word Exodus 22:6

*By Bruce Christian*

**EXODUS 22:6** If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing corn or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.

Australians are very conscious at the moment of the devastating damage and loss that can be caused by fire. We can identify very readily with the Apostle James' comment: "Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark" when he is warning about the damage that can be caused by careless and thoughtless use of the tongue (James 3:5). One of the main concerns of God's Law in Exodus 22 is the responsible care we should have for the

personal welfare and property of others. Jesus himself summed all this up in his well known 'Golden Rule': "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). In the light of all this, I have to ask myself, "Am I giving thought to my responsibility for the protection of other people's personal welfare and property every time I am driving my car (especially if I'm feeling tired or my mobile phone rings!), or when I cough, or leave something lying around that could be a trip hazard, or countless other common causes of potential 'accidents'? Do we take all our responsibilities for one another seriously enough?"

## Today's Quick Word Exodus 28:2-3

*By Bruce Christian*

**EXODUS 28:2-3** Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honour. Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so that he may serve me as priest.

Throughout the OT, the function of the priest was to bring the people to God (by making sacrifices for their sin and pleading their cause at his throne of grace - the 'mercy seat'). The function of the prophet was to bring God to the people through his Word, and the function of the king was to represent God among the people. Over time, all these functions failed because of Man's sinful heart - which is why God sent among us his Perfect Prophet/Priest/King. As the Perfect Priest, Jesus offered his own blood as the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10, 12, 14). One glaring aspect of the failure of the Aaronic priesthood was their seeing the elaborate garments they wore as a symbol of their personal status, importance and honour, instead of as a symbol of the glory, dignity, honour and holiness of the God into whose presence they were coming on behalf of the people. Like many of the OT symbols, they shifted from being God-centred to being man-centred! We see this in Jesus' condemnation of the priests of his day: "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the

tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the market-places and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'" (Matthew 23:5-7). Sadly, we all have the same sinful human hearts, and therefore need to take special care not to fall into the same trap. Jesus has taken over the priestly function, and if there is any sense in which ANY of us is a priest then we ALL are (1 Peter 2:9). The Reformers referred to this as 'the priesthood of all believers'. Our task is to point people away from ourselves and to JESUS ONLY as the True High Priest: "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." (Hebrews 4:14). (Early in my own ministry, I found that this important task was made much easier by NOT wearing any special 'clerical' apparel. And in the same way, I saw it as important to make sure God's Written Word, and not my exposition of it, was the focus of the prophetic function - cf Acts 17:11: "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." ). May God help us all to have the same attitude as John the Baptist when he said of Jesus: "He must become greater; I must become less." (John 3:30)

## Today's Quick Word John 8:12

*By Bruce Christian*

**JOHN 8:12** When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

I find this particular 'I AM' statement of Jesus quite fascinating. It obviously made a big impact on the disciple/Apostle John. In the prologue of his Gospel he wrote: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." (1:4). Towards the beginning of his first Epistle he wrote: "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:5-7). Sin has caused us all to be born into a world of 'darkness', and we continue to walk in that darkness until we 'see the light', as the Pharisee, Saul, did on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5). His conversion experience gives added significance to his testimony to the Church in Corinth: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6). But the fascination for me is the things that scientists have found about the nature of light. Einstein found that the speed of light,

although in reality having a finite value (300,000 kilometres/second), has the mathematical properties of 'infinity' in his equations of Relativity! For the last 100 years, scientists have been arguing whether the behaviour of light is best described by 'wave' theory or 'quantum' theory - two theories that are mutually exclusive and yet are, somehow, simultaneously true of light! Whenever sceptics challenge me to explain how, logically, Jesus could be both God and Man, all I have to do is ask them to explain how light is both waves and quanta of energy travelling at both a finite and an infinite speed. I never cease to be amazed at how many phenomena God, the Creator, has graciously built into his physical Creation to help us grapple with theological issues that challenge us! I love how the Apostle Paul concluded his classic discussion on the tension between 'God's Sovereignty' and 'Man's Responsibility' in Romans 9-11 with the words: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen." (Romans 11:33-36). And I, too, join in with a loud 'AMEN'.