

THE MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

“A Letter from Rio, Brazil sails to Coffin Bay, South AUSTRALIA - 15,000 Kilometers in a Bottle! ”

The above words headed an item in a local newspaper in South Australia on January 11, 1996.

The circumstances were as follows: Mrs. R. was holidaying with her husband and family at Coffin Bay in South Australia, a site of many a death by shipwreck. She found a bottle partially buried in a sand dune. She was amazed that the bottle had actually traveled so far - more than 15,000 kilometers, from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, South America. She said, “It arrived in very good condition, with the letter enclosed in a plastic pocket inside the bottle.” The Portuguese writing on the letter aroused her curiosity, and so she had it translated. The undated letter was written by a man called Jose Freitas, and stated,

“No one will be denied the opportunity to be forgiven and saved by God. Observing that the world is covered by more water than earth, I have resolved to launch into the sea this testimony of my own personal salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone can deliver us from eternal damnation. If you personally accept Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world, you will not destroy this message nor let this paper enter the water.”

Note firstly that this message was found near a scene of death.

On reading the above news item, at once the following words from the Bible came to my mind –

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

Furthermore, it is not by chance that such a message came from such a distance and should safely reach its destination, to then speak of vital and eternal issues to readers, such as you and me. Surely the whole episode of Jose Freitas’ exercise and actions, contains an illustration of what God in love and mercy has done for the forgiveness of our sins, without which a person will surely be shut out of God’s presence forever in the place prepared for Satan and his angels, hell!

First, we note Jose’s desire that someone be saved from “the wages of sin. ” He then made a decision to send a message to help a needy soul. His message traveled that vast distance. It reached its destination in a scene of death (Coffin Bay). There the finder needed determination to translate, accept or reject the message. These five facts give us a picture of God’s way of Salvation.

Notice: GOD'S desire as in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, "God our Saviour; Who will have (desireth) all men to be saved. "

GOD'S decision as in Galatians 4:4: "God sent forth His Son"

The distance that our Lord, the Sent One, traveled, as in 1 Timothy 1:15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. "

The destination reached, John 3:16. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "

The determination necessary by the reader, to accept or reject God's gracious invitation concerning His Son,

John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Dear friend, let this message from God brought to you through the example of Jose Freitas, reach you just where you are if you are still without the personal Saviour God has provided.

As sinners we are all in the "Bay of Death," facing the coming judgment of a Holy God. There is deliverance through the sacrifice of His Son at the cross of His death, for, He is the One Who bore sins penalty for all who will believe on Him.

Jesus Christ died for the ungodly!

Hear His gracious words to you and to me in

John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. "

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." Proverbs 22:25

Written: H.T. Kimber, South AUSTRALIA Missionary to India

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P.O. Box 95413, T.S.T., Kowloon, Hong Kong, SAR of China.

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