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Refuge for the Loneliness of Life—Job Loss



Part 9 (050731PM)

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Christ is our refuge. He is the place we go when life gets tough. When we feel unclean—flee to Him. When we feel to weary to go on—flee to Him. And again this evening—when we feel the river of loneliness flooding the banks of our lives—flee to Him!

David faced the loss of his job and with it his security and comfort. Everything changes when you lose your job. It is like going from breathing to holding your breath. Everyone else has places to go and things to do—and you have nothing to do and if you went you wouldn't want to spend any money.

Our world is increasingly noting the mental and emotional troubles that come hand in hand with losing your job. Recently the headlines of Germany's largest newspaper read, "Germany's new 'great depression'". Here is the article:

Record numbers of Germans are suffering from depression and other mental illnesses, a new report says. According to the research, by a German health insurance firm, cases of depression among Berliners have risen by 70% since 1997. Up to 70% of Germans also say they are prepared to seek professional help for psychological problems. Mental health experts blamed the rise on Germany's faltering economy, which has seen unemployment rise to over 5m. German insurance firm DAK surveyed 2.6m employed Germans in an effort to discover the impact depression is having on modern working patterns.

Vicious circle. Workers in Germany's capital, regarded as one of Europe's most vibrant modern cities, emerged as an unhappy bunch more likely to miss work through depression than for any other reason. "In times of economic insecurity, young people in particular tend to develop psychological problems in response to professional and private obstacles," said DAK's Chief Executive Herbert Rebscher.

Nevertheless, most respondents said they would rather be depressed with a job than unemployed and happy. "How will someone ever get better," Burghard Klopp, a depression expert at Berlin's Charité hospital, told German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, "when they know their boss is just waiting to fire them?"[1]

So, not much has changed in 3,000 years has it?

Loneliness—if you ever feel it, know that He felt it. If you ever suffer feeling friendless—know that He is the friend who will stick closer than a brother. If you ever feel forsaken—remember He said that He would never leave you or forsake you. If you feel alone—trust the One who said I am with you always, to the end!

Though loneliness has many forms—it has but one purpose. Loneliness is when God takes something or someone out of my life—so He can be closest to me. This means that loneliness is a tool in God's hand, an opportunity for a right response by us His children.

Christ is Portrayed as Our Lifelong Refuge from Loneliness

So how do we prepare for the next time we feel the pangs of loneliness swirling around us?

There is one person more than any other who shows us the hope we can find in Christ for our loneliness. More than any other person mentioned in God's Word this person's life is laid down for us to see from every angle. His name was David, his discoveries about the Lord in the midst of piercing loneliness are recorded as testimonies in the book of Psalms.

Part: 10	A Refuge for the Unexpected Changes of Life
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12 Big Events David Faced

Here are the dozen big events David faced, that we often casually read as just facts about someone long ago and far away:

1. David suffers the intense loneliness of youth. David was overlooked, ignored and even disliked by his family in First Samuel 16-18. He is left out of family gatherings, unrecognized for great achievements and basically left alone much of the time to do his "job" with the family's flock of sheep. David writes—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are disappointed. David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy writing *Psalms 19 and 23, as well as Psalms 8-9*. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods and the hill sides of Judea. Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God.

2. David suffers intense loneliness of life as he faces family conflict and danger. David writes *Psalms 11, 59, and 64*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we face conflict and danger.

3. David suffers intense loneliness as he loses his job, and is separated from his family. David writes *Psalms 52*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are away from our work, home, and family.

4. David suffers intense loneliness as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. David wrote *Psalms 56 and 70*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a new situation that is very foreign situation.

5. David suffers intense loneliness as he lives and works with a tough crowd. David wrote more Psalms in this period than at any other time in his life. These *cave Psalms are 4, 13, 34, 40, 57, 141-142*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are far from home and feel exiled.

6. David suffers the intense loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life. David takes time to write *Psalms 17 and 63*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are insecure. This was a time of no sure place to live, no reliable source of income and provision.

7. David suffers the intense loneliness when betrayed by friends. David writes *Psalms 7, 31, 35-36, and 54* as he records his heart on how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are betrayed by those we trusted as friends.

8. David suffers the intense loneliness when wronged in a business deal. David writes *Psalms 53*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger of bitterness over being hurt in a business deal.

9. David suffers the intense loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances. David writes *Psalms 16, 38 and 39*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we suffer the loss of family, or friends, or finances—or even all three at once.

10. David suffers the intense loneliness of temptation and failure. David writes *Psalms 32*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are tempted and fail.

11. David suffers the intense loneliness of chastisement and restoration. David writes *Psalms 51*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are chastened by the Lord and restored.

12. Finally We Find David's Testimony Of God's Closeness During His Old Age or His Waning Years. David suffers the intense loneliness of old age. David writes *Psalms 71 and 116*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are old, weak, and leave behind our health, comfort, friends, family, and security.

Now, lets go to the third of these twelve areas that God's Word addresses—one at a time, and see the situation, feel David's loneliness and then see the solution God showed him and then recorded for our use in this wonderful book—the Bible!

1. David suffers intense loneliness as he loses his job. In First [Samuel 21:1-9](#) as he flees to Ahimelech the priest, David writes *Psalms 52*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are out of work.

David lost his job. David has fled from his home because of the dangers facing him. But in fleeing he also leaves behind his job. David had been continuously employed since his earliest youth.

David had always had a job. That is often who this hits the hardest—those who have never felt the sting of loss. David never had time to think about unemployment, he had tended the sheep, worked as a courier for his dad during the war by taking provisions to his brothers in the army. Then after defeating Goliath he had been hired by the government (King Saul) and worked in the various departments: entertainment (he played his harp), military (he was sent out to raid and kill the enemy Philistines), and finally as a member of the cabinet (he sat at Saul's table as his son-in-law and advised him on security and military issues and led a squad of warriors for the king).

David was up to his neck in work when this happened. David lived by the king, worked for the king, was married to the king's daughter, ate with the king, served the king with music, and found all of his financial and family security in that job. But everything changed and David loses that job by a clear notice from his employer. Saul throws a spear at him and tries to kill David. That is the "pink slip" of 3,000 years ago. It was more direct and blunt back then.

This was a big surprise to everyone but God. So recently unemployed for the first time David faces life, looks at his situation and finds the pain that always surrounds such a sudden and unexpected change in everything he had relied upon. Everything but what was most important.

David reverts to his default system. When the unexpected comes we usually respond by reflex. What was David's habit of life, what he did without thinking very long? David had trusted the Lord from his youth, and though his job ended—his relationship with the Good Shepherd hadn't changed a bit. That is exactly how Psalm 52 begins. Turn there with me.

v. 1 God is good no matter what!

v. 2-4 People will always hurt us.

v. 5-7 Take God as your strength in times like this.

v. 8-9 Wait for God, cling to Him, grow through the alone time!

Psalm 52:9 I will praise You forever, Because You have done it; And in the presence of Your saints **I will wait** (hupomeno) on Your name, for it is good.

Remember that word we studied- **hupomeno**. It means to cling, holding on tight or holding on for dear life. This is the word that God gives us is describing **WAITING HOPE**—it is the rendering of the Hebrew word **QAVAH (6960): HOPE THAT RENEWS EXHAUSTED STRENGTH**. To better grasp this word, turn with me to the most well known verse in the Bible using this special word which is **Isaiah 40:29-31**.

Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait [hupomeno LXX; Strongs #5278 endure] on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

This Hebrew verb means to 'twist and or stretch'. In the Old Testament world it was used of making rope by twisting and stretch many weak strands into a strong rope. Then this concept of rope making became a metaphor for waiting and receiving strength during weak times to endure stretching, twisting, and painful times in life.

Those who trust God enough to take His help as He weaves His Word into our weaknesses—so that His waiting hope will make us strong. That is why He even allows all these problems, struggles, trials, and unexpected reversals into our lives. To twist and stretch us into waiting hope!

2. David suffers intense loneliness as moves to a new location not by choice, and under duress. In First **Samuel 21:11** *as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath*, David wrote **Psalms 56 and 70**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a foreign situation.

God loves to be needed, sought, and asked to help. Think of all the times in life you go to places with a struggle in your heart; that is exactly what David felt.

When you go to camp and it is not one you are comfortable with, or those first hours and days in college, or the military, or when you enter a new career, or move to new area and maybe it is not as secure as you like, or its being left in the hospital or a rest home...there are many times in life we face a lonely struggle.

And what was the way David prepared for a new location with anticipated struggles? In Psalm 56 we find no less than nine resolves for facing a "distant land" a lonely new place of struggle. Here they are:

Psalm 56:3-11 Whenever I am afraid, **I will trust in You**. 4 In God (**I will praise His word**), In God **I have put my trust; I will not fear**. What can flesh do to me? 5 All day they twist my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 6 They gather together, They hide, they mark my steps, When they lie in wait for my life. 7 Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger cast down the peoples, O God! 8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book? 9 When I cry out to You, Then my enemies will turn back; This **I know**, because **God is for me**. 10 In God (**I will praise His word**), In the Lord (**I will praise His word**), 11 In God **I have put my trust; I will not be afraid**. What can man do to me?

Psalm 70:1-5 Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord! 2 Let them be ashamed and confounded Who seek my life; Let them be turned back and confused Who desire my hurt. 3 Let them be turned back because of their shame, Who say, "Aha, aha!" 4 **Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!"** 5 But I am poor and needy; Make haste to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay.

David turned, trusted, and triumphed—that is his pattern. Whether it was the family conflicts and dangers that left him all alone, or this job loss—he always turned to God, trusts in His promises, and is led in triumph. That kind of echoes a New Testament verse we all know doesn't it?

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

Are you a fragrance at the unemployment office for Christ or not for Christ? Can people tell you are turning to God or to despair? Can your wife see you are trusting God or panicking? Does God see you being led in triumph or sinking in pity?

Remember we can't change most of our circumstances—but we can change our

attitude in them!

3. David suffers intense loneliness as he lives and works with a tough crowd. In First [Samuel 22:1](#) as he fled from Gath and the Philistines, David wrote [Psalm 34](#). In First [Samuel 22:1-2](#) as he moved into a cave at Adullam with an incredibly difficult group of men, David wrote more Psalms than at any other time in his life. These *cave Psalms are 4, 13, 40, 57, 141-142*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are far from home and feel exiled.

I wonder have you ever felt prehistoric? And I know if you've watched television very much you've seen the conditions of what cave men look like. For them life reduced to grunts and groans. And life is an endless pursuit of nothingness at times. I like the way Edna St. Vincent Mallay put it a few years ago she said: "life must go on . . . I just can't remember why".

That's what I'm talking about--- a cave man sort of existence. A life when a vicious swirl of getting up, going to work out of the home or in the home if you're a mom--- dropping into bed exhausted at the end of the day only to find out that the entire month has gone by and falling further behind instead of ahead. That's the kind of life that I'm talking about and it's not foreign to most of us. We know what it's like; we know what it's like when it's hard.

LIKE DAVID WE NEED TO GLORIFY GOD IN EVERY SITUATION. Compare [1 Sam. 21:13-15](#) with the record in [Psalm 34](#): v. 13 So he changed his behavior before them, feigned madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? 15 "Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this [fellow] to play the madman in my presence? Shall this [fellow] come into my house?" (NKJV)

[Psalm 34:1-22](#) A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise [shall] continually [be] in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD: The humble shall hear [of it] and be glad. [Psalm 34:3](#) Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. [HE GIVES GLORY TO GOD]

1. [Psalm 34:4](#) I sought the LORD, ***[even in tough times he always sought for God]*** and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed.

2. [Psalm 34:6](#) This poor man cried out, ***[During tough times he had a proper view of himself; he was poor in spirit as Christ would later say.]*** and the LORD heard [him,] And saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

3. [Psalm 34:8](#) Oh, taste and see that the LORD [is] good; ***[he had a personal experience of God]*** Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!

4. [Psalm 34:9](#) Oh, fear the LORD, ***[During tough times he practiced the presence of God, acknowledging Him is to fear him. it changed his behavior. If we believe right we will behave right!]*** you His saints! [There is] no want to those who fear Him. 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good [thing.] 11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 Who [is] the man [who] desires life, And loves [many] days, that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

5. [Psalm 34:15](#) The eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, ***[During tough times he knew he was in touch with God]*** And His ears [are open] to their cry. 16 The face of the LORD [is] against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 [The righteous] cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD [is] near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. 19 Many [are] the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. 20 He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. 22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, ***And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. [During tough times the cross is the ultimate refuge]*** (NKJV)

[Psalm 57:4](#) My soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men Who are set on fire, Whose teeth are spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword.

Some practical steps to overcome loneliness are these:

- **Live with mysteries.** We can't always know why God is allowing circumstances—but we do know we can trust Him to do all things well. Jesus said to His disciples in [John 13:7](#), "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."
- **Accept your situation.** What is unchangeable must be accepted and lived through by God's grace. As Paul said, we must echo, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" ([Phil. 4:13](#))
- **Use lonely times to grow.** One of the greatest truths we can discover is that lonely times usually accomplish great discoveries about God. David is at the depth of loneliness. He has been on the run for years and now he is hiding in a desolate cave in a crowd of malcontents, feeling very much alone. He has two choices. Stay in the cave of loneliness, descend into self-pity and sin or look up and use the time alone to grow.

Guess what he does? [Psalm 142:5-7](#) is the answer. Why don't you take a moment and mark these for someone else who may need them someday. Or even for you if you ever feel the twinge of loneliness in your life. Look now and find:

- When alone I learn that You alone are my true ***REFUGE***. [Psalm 142:5a](#): ***loneliness means its time to flee to your Refuge***. I will believe Your promise and turn to You as my Refuge right now.
- When alone I learn that You alone are my true ***PORTION***. [Psalm 142:5b](#): ***loneliness***

means its time to feed on your Portion. I will believe Your promise to be all I need in this hard time.

- When alone I learn that You alone are my true **LISTENER**. **Psalm 142:6** "Give heed my cry": **loneliness means its time to speak to your Master.** I will believe Your promise and pour out all my troubles to You who care for me.
- When alone I learn that You alone are my true **DELIVERER** "bring" **Psalm 142:7a**: **loneliness means its time to trust in your Redeemer.** I will believe Your promise and let You rescue me now.
- When alone I learn that You alone are my true **OBJECT OF WORSHIP** **Psalm 142:7b**: **loneliness means its time to adore your Lord.** I will believe Your promise and worship You even when I don't feel like it.
- When alone I learn that You alone are my true **PROVIDER** "surround" **Psalm 142:7c**: **loneliness means its time to rest in His Sufficient Provision.** I will believe Your promise and let You surround me now with everything I need.

So again we ask ourselves—is Christ my refuge? Is that a personal chosen reality or just a fact I've heard? God will rock your boat just to see what you will do. Loneliness is a tool to glorify God, to turn and trust and triumph, and to make some great discoveries about God.

- Are you feeling the loneliness of youth? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of life facing family conflict and danger? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of job loss, and family separation? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of moving to a new location that is very foreign to you? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of living and working with a tough crowd? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of betrayal by friends? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of being wronged in a business deal? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of temptation and failure? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of chastisement and restoration? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of old age? *Jesus says I am always with you!*

4. David suffers the intense loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life. In First [Samuel 22:5](#) and [23:14-16](#) **as he was hiding from Saul in the Wilderness of Hareth**, David takes time to write **Psalms 17 and 63**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are insecure. This was a time of no sure place to live, no reliable source of income and provision.

5. David suffers the intense loneliness when betrayed by friends. In First [Samuel 23:10-13](#) **as he escapes from Saul at Keilah and goes into hiding in the mountains of Ziph**, David writes **Psalms 31 and 54**. In First [Samuel 24:1-16](#) **after he spares the life of his mortal enemy King Saul**, David records his heart in **Psalm 7**. In First [Samuel 23:29](#) **as he hides in the cave at En-gedi**, David writes **Psalms 35-36**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are betrayed.

6. David suffers the intense loneliness when wronged in business. In First Samuel 25 in the Wilderness of Paran **as he faces the danger of his anger toward Nabal "the fool" and as God delivers him**, David writes **Psalm 53**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger of bitterness.

7. David suffers the intense loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances. Finally in First Samuel 27 **as he is grieved and endangered over the raid on his family and city of Ziklag**, David writes **Psalms 16, 38 and 39**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in threat of loss.

8. David suffers the intense loneliness of temptation and failure. **From the depths of conviction after his fall into sin with Bathsheba in II Samuel 11**, David writes **Psalm 32**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are tempted and fail.

9. David suffers the intense loneliness of chastisement and restoration. **From the pain of chastisement that leads to repentance and restoration in II Samuel 12**, David sings of his faithful God in **Psalm 51**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in chastisement and restoration.

Finally We Find David's Testimony Of God's Closeness During His Old Age or His Waning Years

10. David suffers the intense loneliness of old age. **And finally, at the end of his magnificent life**, David extolls his Master and King in **Psalm 18**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in our last days before death. Especially note his life long praise to God in [Psalm 18:46](#) The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

Psalm 71 Christ our Refuge in the Loneliness of Weakness and Sickness before Death

Psalm 116 the Christ our Refuge in the Loneliness of Death

- **We are not lonely at death if we always remember He hears us.** [Psalm 116:1](#) I love the Lord, because He has heard My voice and my supplications.
- **We are not lonely at death if we pour out our fears and needs.** [Psalm 116:2](#) Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.
- **We are not lonely at death if we always remember that troubles and sorrows are neither wrong nor avoidable.** [Psalm 116:3](#) The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow.

Every great saint since the Garden of Eden (except two) have died in pain of one form or another. Jesus died most painfully. It is not wrong or sinful to have troubles and sorrows—it is normal and also a part of God’s plan.

- **We are not lonely at death if we seek the Lord’s aid when life hurts.** Psalm 116:4 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I implore You, deliver my soul!"
- **We are not lonely at death if we praise Him for His mercy and goodness that have followed us all through our life.** Psalm 116:5-7 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. 6 The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
- **We are not lonely at death if we make it a habit to walk with God each day we live.** Psalm 116:8-10 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. 9 I will walk before the Lord In the land of the living. 10 I believed, therefore I spoke, "I am greatly afflicted." The same One who walks through life with us keeps walking and takes us through the Valley of Death’s shadows. And shadows of death are all we get—not death. Jesus said who ever lives and believes in Him will never die.
- **We are not lonely at death if we drink from the cup of salvation.** Psalm 116:12-13 What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me? 13 I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord. Believers never die!
- **We are not lonely at death if we seek to obey Him during life.** Psalm 116:14 I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice, follow Him—and He gives them endless life, even when their body dies!
- **We are not lonely at death if we serve Him in life.** Psalm 116:15-16 Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints. 16 O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. Serving God is what saints are going to be doing forever!
- **We are not lonely at death if we thank Him through life.** Psalm 116:17-19 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the Lord. 18 I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people, 19 In the courts of the Lord’s house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

Some practical steps to overcome loneliness are these:

1. **Deal with sin.** Be sure that there is no unconfessed or unforsaken sin left in your life to give the Devil a place in your life. (Eph. 4:27)
2. **Share your burdens.** Clearly tell the Lord all your fears, all your struggles, all your pains—remember that He knows our frame that we are dust. (Psalm 103)
3. **Abandon all self-pity.** Constant self-sorrow is a one way ticket to loneliness. Self-pity denies we have a responsibility to deal with our emotions and thus frustrates any cure. As Jesus said, coming after Him means we deny our self (Luke 9:23)
3. _____

[1] BBC News Monday, 18 April, 2005

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