

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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The Sign of Jonas
The Theology of Isaac Newton
Correspondence

The Sign of Jonas

When our Lord died, there were several notable occurrences to indicate the significance of his crucifixion. Darkness fell over the land from noon to 3:00, when our Lord expired. The Veil in the Temple was rent from top to bottom, the earth shook, graves were opened, and the moon eclipsed. Those who soberly considered these signs received a sense of the importance of Jesus' death. "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned." (Luke 23:47, 48)

The darkness must have been ominous. From what would ordinarily have been the brightest point of the day, until our Lord expired, "there was a darkness over all the earth." (Luke 23:44) Perhaps one lesson of it was that God no longer recognized the offerings which the Israelites were busy preparing during that afternoon - the Passover lambs and evening sacrifice. As Daniel had prophesied, "In the midst of the 70th week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" to be recognized. (Daniel 9:27).

The veil rent in the temple pictured the rending of our Lord's flesh on the cross. (Hebrews 10:20) The opened graves pointed to the time when "all that are in the graves ... shall come forth" due to Christ's death for them. (John 5:28, 29)

That there was an eclipse of the moon was not recorded in the Gospel accounts. But astronomy calculations show there to have been a lunar eclipse on Friday, April 3, 33 AD, which was the day of Jesus' death. "Shortly after Christ's death at 15:00 (3 pm) Jerusalem time, a partial eclipse of the moon commenced at 16:09 over western New Guinea, reached its peak 17:23 at moonrise in eastern Babylonia, which would have lasted up to 19 minutes past moonrise near Jerusalem (18:18 to 18:37), and its conclusion barely seen at moonrise in Egypt. The maximum eclipsing would have been about 40%." (*Chronology of the Time of Christ*, J. Parkinson. 1974, pg. 17) Because of its timing, we suppose it was conspicuous, unless clouds prevented visibility. We think it was an intended sign of the eclipsing of Israel's favor.

But as all these signs might be attributed to natural causes, the impact of them could pass over the callous heart of the Pharisees. Even the rending of the temple veil may have been thought caused by the earthquake which opened the graves. But our Lord had previously declared that there would be one sign which would be suited to even the "wicked and adulterous generation." The sign of Jonas.

When the elders and chief priests had demanded of our Lord a sign of his authority, it was clear that their motive was evil, not sincere. They had ample "signs" which they chose to ignore. Jesus had just healed a withered hand, and cast out a devil, but their reaction had been to hold a "council against him. how they might destroy him, and to accuse him of casting out devils "by Beelzebub." (Matt. 12:10-14, 22-24) Evidently these things occurred in Galilee. (Matt. 13:1) But the Pharisees near Jerusalem were similarly convicted. They had the direct testimony of healing from one who had been blind from birth (John 9:14.16), and one who could not walk. (John 5:9-13) Later they even had the evidence of Lazarus raised from the dead, Their response? A plot to "put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews ... believed on Jesus." (John 12:10, 11) To such evil hearts were the rebukes of our Lord's last day of public ministry, when he called them "vipers. hypocrites, whited sepulchres." (Matt. 23:1&33)

But the "sign of Jonas" was more radical than anything even they could have thought to ask him. He was to rise from death after 3 days being in the heart of the earth. The Pharisees understood what Jesus meant, for they told Pilate "that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: and desired his tomb to be guarded to avoid his disciples from stealing the body to make the claim appear correct. Pilate replied, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch ' " (Matt. 27:63-66) And the very ones assigned to insure there would be no fraud, observed that "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men' " (Matt. 28:2-4) This was reported to the chief priests and elders, who then bribed the guards with "large money" to change their story and claim the disciples had stolen Jesus' body. (Vs. 11-15)

What a convincing evidence that the sign of Jonas had been fulfilled! The very guards which they had set to insure against fraud testified of the verity of Jesus' words.' How manifest it was made that inveterate hypocrisy lay at the root of the Pharisees' position!

But for those whose hearts could receive it, the sign of Jonas was convincing. And it could be reasoned on more deeply. Paul tells us, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (I Cor. 15:20) We think there is more in this statement than an arbitrary simile, and suppose Paul was referring to the fact that Christ's resurrection was a fulfillment of the firstfruits offering of the Law.

The ordinance is in Leviticus 23:10-12. "When ye come into the land ... and shall reap the harvest ... ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath shall the priest wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first

year for a burnt offering unto the Lord." The "sabbath" referred to was the special sabbath of Nisan 15, "an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein (Vs. 6, 7) Every year, the Passover lamb was slain on the 14th of Nisan, the 7 day feast of Passover began on the 15th of Nisan, and "the morrow after the [15th) sabbath,' Nisan 16, the firstfruits were to be offered. Just so, our Lord died on Nisan 14, and was raised Nisan 16.

We state that the "sabbath" of verse 11 was always Nisan 15. This is commonly agreed by Christian commentators, and by contemporary Jewish authorities. But in our Lord's day some sects, the Sadducees among them, held that the sabbath referred to was the Saturday following Nisan 14. Under this arrangement the firstfruits would not have been offered the 3rd day after the lambs were slain, except in the unusual case when Nisan 14 was a Friday. Note however that the year of our Lord's death was an unusual one, in that Nisan 14 did fall on a Friday, and therefore Nisan 15 was a Saturday. In this way both views of the ordinance would coincide, and all would be able to appreciate that Jesus fulfilled the firstfruits offering.

The burnt offering of a lamb strengthens our assurance of the application of the firstfruits offering to Jesus. A burnt offering signifies the manifestation of God's acceptance of a preceding offering. (*Tabernacle Shadows*, page 73) The preceding offering must in this case refer to the Passover lamb, and at least harmonious with this is that a lamb was used for the burnt offering. (Footnote: In most cases the burnt offering was not of the same kind of animal as the offering which it pertained to. Perhaps in this case it was, to enable us to discern more easily that the firstfruits offering was direct), related to the passover lamb which was two days earlier.) Why was the burnt offering delayed for 2 days, if it pertained to the Passover lamb? Because antitypically it was the resurrection of Jesus on the 3rd day that was the evidence of God's acceptance of His sacrifice. This was illustrated also on the Day of Atonement. The High Priest passing beyond the veil, into the Most holy, was subject to death if all had not been performed properly. His standing, alive, in the Most Holy, was proof that the offering was acceptable. So Jesus' resurrection into the Most Holy was proof of God's acceptance. So, the burnt offering pertaining to the Passover lamb, showing God's acceptance, is properly attached to the type of Jesus' resurrection, the firstfruits offering.

But Paul makes a broader application also. ". . . in Christ shall all be made alive ... every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his presence [parousia]." (I Cor. 15:21, 22) "Christ the firstfruits" here means the church, the body members of the Anointed. They also are raised on the 3rd day from the death of the Passover lamb. In this case, the 3rd thousand-year day.

We recently secured a detailed study of the events of our Lord's last days by a brother on the West Coast. Inquiring, we find that copies can be made available to those interested. fit-cause of the breadth of its scope and extent of detail, it is perhaps not surprising that among its many conclusions there are some we do not share. But we have appreciated it as a helpful resource for detailed study of our Lord's closing experiences. Those who wish a copy may address a request to:

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The Theology of Isaac Newton

Concerning Isaac Newton, we read: "He was as great a writer in [theology] as his generation produced, and though not always in strict accordance with the most conservative Christian orthodoxy, he shone especially as a worthy example of Christian life, and, notwithstanding a most unfaltering inquiry into nature's law, stood fast always in his faith in the Holy Scriptures, which he made as much the subject of study as any field of science.... He was ... induced to prepare for the press his posthumous work, entitled *The Chronology of ancient Kingdoms*, which appeared in 1728.... Sir Isaac's principal theological works are *Observations on the Prophecies of Holy Writ*, viz *Daniel and the Apocalypse*, and his *Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture*... . In this work Sir Isaac considers the two noted texts, I John 5:7, and I Timothy 3:16. The former he attempts to prove spurious, and the latter he considers a false reading.... research has revealed that he speculated much regarding the "Homousios" and must have entertained Arian views ..." (Footnote: McClinlock & Strongs. Vol. VII, "Newton, Isaac," pp. 31-13)

We understand he also published against the immortality of the soul. Below are several technical questions (Footnote: *Sir Isaac Newton Theological Manuscripts*, Ed. H. McLachlan; Liverpool: Univ. Press (1950).) from Newton's pen, reflecting on the historical development of the trinitarian view: three persons of one substance.

Queries regarding the Word Homousios [same substance]

" 1. Whether Christ sent his apostles to preach metaphysics to the unlearned common people, and to their wives and children?

"2. Whether the word [Homousios] ever was in any creed before the Nicene; or any creed was produced by any one bishop at the Council of Nice for authorizing the use of that word?

"3. Whether the introducing the use of that word is not contrary to the Apostles' rule of holding fast the form of sound words?

"4. Whether the use of that word was not pressed upon the Council of Nice against the inclination of the major part of the Council?

"5. Whether it was not pressed upon them by the Emperor Constantine the Great, a catechumen not yet baptized, and no member of the Council?

"6. Whether it was not agreed by the Council that that word should, when applied to the Word of God, signify nothing more than that Christ was the express image of the Father? and whether many of the bishops, in pursuance of that interpretation of the word allowed by the Council, did not in their subscription, by way of caution, add - ?

"7. Whether Hosius (or whoever translated that Creed into Latin) did not impose upon the Western Churches by translating by the words unius substantial, instead of consubstantialis? and whether by that translation the Latin Churches were not drawn into an opinion that the Father and Son had one common substance, called by the Greeks Hypostasis, and whether they did not thereby give occasion to the Eastern Churches to cry out, presently after the Council of Sardica, that the Western Churches were become Sabellian [confusing the Father and the Son]?

"8. Whether the Greeks, in opposition to this notion and language, did not use the language of three Hypostases, and whether in those days the word Hypostasis did not signify a substance?

"9. Whether the Latins did not at that time accuse all those of Arianism who used the language of three Hypostases, and thereby charge Arianism upon the Council of Nice, without knowing the true meaning of the Nicene Creed?

"10. Whether the Latins were not convinced, in the Council of Ariminum that the Council of Nice, by the word, understood nothing more than that the Son was the express image of the Father - the acts of the Council of Nice were not produced for convincing them. And whether, upon producing the acts of that Council for proving this, the Macedonians, and some others, did not accuse the bishops of hypocrisy, who in subscribing these acts, had interpreted them by the word in their subscriptions.

"11. Whether Athanasius, Hilary, and in general the Greeks and Latins, did not, from the time of the reign of Julian the Apostate, acknowledge the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be three substances and continue to do so till the school - men changed the signification of the word Hypostasis, and brought in the notion of the three persons in one single substance?

"12. Whether the opinion of the equality of the three substances was not first set on foot in the reign of Julian the Apostate, by Athanasius, Hilary, etc.?

"13. Whether the worship of the Holy Ghost was not first set on foot presently after the Council of Sardica?

"14. Whether the Council of Sardica was not the first Council which declared for the doctrine of the Consubstantial Trinity? and whether the Council did not affirm that there was but one hypostasis of the Father, Son. and Holy Ghost?"

Newton also wrote twenty questions reflecting badly on the performance of Athanasius. In addition, he wrote extensively on the identity of Antichrist during the Gospel Age, beginning with the prophecies in Daniel about the succession from Babylon to Medo-Persia, to Grecia, to Rome.
-Contributed

Correspondance

War in the Middle East. "We understand that Armageddon and Jacob's Trouble are two separate and distinct events; Jacob's Trouble being the last feature of Armageddon, after Armageddon is mainly over. In Armageddon, the Lord's great army will destroy present powers world-wide. In Jacob's Trouble, Gog and Magog, armies from the north, will come to Israel to take a spoil."

In Reply.- Our thought is different. We understand Armageddon to begin with the Middle East conflict, and that the breaking of the might of nations there will directly lead to the unleashing of severe strife within nations, which will overturn present institutions. Under the correspondent's thought, it would seem that the structure of Christendom would be largely removed before the invasion of Israel. Yet Ezekiel 39:17-20 *cf.* Revelation 19:17-19 implies that the strength of Christendom is broken "upon the mountains of Israel." Joel 3:12, 13 suggests the same. But the subject is too large to treat comprehensively here. We recognize that each perspective - the correspondent's and ours is shared by a number of brethren. - BT

On God's Attributes Jan. 1981, 3B) "We see strong evidence that the face of a lion represents justice. In Bible times. the ox, Ezek. 1:10, was the most used. and best known, source of power - the lion was not. The character of a lion is that of unyielding boldness; picturing justice. In contrast, an ox would be much more docile, yielding. Ironstone china, made in England. had on it

an insignia showing a lion holding a balance-justice. The idea the ox corresponds to the bullock used in the Tabernacle ceremonies, is not valid. The bullock did not represent justice. The blood of the bullock was used to satisfy justice. Also, the bullock was a male. The ox was any cattle used for draft purposes, usually a cow or a steer (altered male). A calf could be either a male or a female. The Scripture (Ezek. 1:10) corroborates this. The face of a man was in front-God is love. The face of a lion was on the right side-justice is the foundation of God's throne. Justice is more prominent than Power. The lion on the right side; the ox on the left."

In reply.- We incline to believe with the previous correspondent (Jan. 1981) that Power is represented by the lion. It is not a matter of which animal could physically pull the greater load (an elephant would be best for that-and even in this regard a "calf" - Rev. 4:7 - would be outdone by a lion), but which is considered to more commonly display power. Archaeologists indicate that from the ages of antiquity the lion has been considered a symbol of power, strength and might. The Scriptures are consistent with this. ". . . Out of the strong came forth sweetness ... what is stronger than a lion?" (Judges 14:14,18) "A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any." (Prov. 30:30) "The Lion of the tribe of Juda ... hath *prevailed*. . ." (Rev. 5:5, italics ours)

The "ox" (Ezekiel 1:10) or "calf" (Revelation 4:7) was the highest expression of animal sacrifice. (Psalms 69:31) It was a *calf* (bullock) which provided satisfaction to justice on the Day of Atonement. The *blood* applied was only representative of the animal itself. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17:10. Similarly our Lord's humanity was that which was sacrificed to secure atonement. ". . . My flesh ... I give for the life of the world." John 6:51. We speak of his blood redeeming us only because it *represents* the human life which he gave.)

Another approach to this matter compares the cherubim in the most holy of the tabernacle with the cherubim on the walls of Ezekiel's temple. The cherubim in the tabernacle were over the ark of the covenant, looking in toward the mercy seat. We have the suggestion that they represented Power and Love, waiting to see justice satisfied, before "they fly to help, to lift up and to bless." (Tabernacle Shadows, pg. 125) Ezekiel's temple, which pictures matters from a Kingdom viewpoint, after satisfaction to justice has been met for mankind, shows cherubim with wings stretched out, as if active in their mission of power and love. Ezekiel 41:18-19 identifies their faces as of a man. and of a young lion. Since all seem agreed that the man's face pictures love. it leaves the lion face to represent power. (Also of interest is the apparent coupling of man and lion in Ezekiel 1: 10)

More indirectly, Rev. 15:7 *cf* Ezek. 10:7,13, L-10 may suggest that the cherub-ox face represents the attribute responsible for the plagues, which we assume to be (retributive) justice.

Hour of Temptation:' (Feb. 1981, IA) "We notice that Bro. Russell very definitely, and repeatedly, applies the "Hour of Temptation" (Rev. 3:10) to the true Church.

The Gospel Accounts. (1) "We've been much enjoying the thoughts presented. . . . Last Sunday ... we severally discussed the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' anointing just prior to His last Passover. Excepting the Luke account, all other Gospels have the event taking place in Bethany, and for His burial, and during the Lord's last week on earth. (2) We seem to perceive the possibility of a family connection between Simon the Leper and Mary, Martha, Lazarus. (3) On the lower

corner of the last page of Beauties are references not immediately clear ... please mention what the citations mean and how found. (4) Might the Centurion in Luke 7:2 have been Cornelius? We are rejoicing in The Memorial season."

In reply.- (1) We think the Luke account (7:36-50) differs because it describes a different occasion than the other gospels. Luke records an anointing by "a woman in the city, which was a sinner," rather than by Mary, Jesus was in a Pharisee's home evidently in Galilee. rather than among his close friends at Bethany; and "it came to pass afterward that [Jesus] went throughout every city and village. preaching" (Luke M:I), instead of dying a few days later. The Pharisee's name was Simon, but we think he is not "Simon the leper" at whose home in Bethany Jesus was anointed by Mary. (See Rep. 2625)

(2) Rep. 2447 is in harmony with your thought, It suggests he may have been the father of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

(3) They are merely a listing of Scriptures referenced in that issue, with page and column (A or B) where they appear.

(4) "it is certainly within the range of possibility that this centurion. ... might have been removed by Roman authority from Capernaum to Caesarea, another fortress, and that he may have been the centurion named Cornelius ... :' (Rep. 2620) But as there is no proof, it remains conjectural. Notice the consideration of this question also in Rep. 2132 and 1922. - BT

We urge that the presentations of this journal be tried thoughtfully by all readers. "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." We do not necessarily endorse every expression of contributed articles appearing herein. Information on the authorship of any article is freely supplied on request. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 9159 Via de Amor. Santee CA 9207L
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