

# Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages  
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## Under His Wings

*"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." - Psalms 91:4*

The familiar words of this divine promise present before the mental vision of many of us the mighty wings of a great eagle or the protective fold of the mother hen for her young. Either vision is comforting. Both portray to us the loving care of a concerned heavenly Father. But is this the imagery of this particular Psalm?

According to Jewish tradition, this Psalm, like the one that precedes it, is a Psalm of Moses. In fact, some translations run the two psalms together as one. The indications are, then, that this Psalm is associated with the wilderness wanderings of Israel. In the 90th Psalm the authorship of Moses gives special weight to such verses as 3, 7, 10, 12 and 15. Similarly, in the 91st Psalm, verses 1, 2, 7, 9, 10 and 13 take on added meaning with this background.

The opening of this Psalm suggests that it was written in celebration of the construction of the Tabernacle. "The secret place of the Most High" appears to be a reference to the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. This interpretation is suggested on page 43 of Volume 4 of *Studies in the Scriptures* and is supported by a reference on Reprint page 3331, section 5. In other references (R4925, 5815, 5989, 1913), Pastor Russell applies this to the Holy. If the Most Holy is the correct interpretation, it is probably in the sense of the hopes of the Christian, as in **Hebrews 6:19**, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

The expression in verse one, abiding "under the shadow of the Almighty;" seems peculiarly appropriate to the Most Holy where Jehovah's presence was manifest through the Shekinah glory.

The expressions "refuge and fortress" in verse two, though applicable to God's protection in general, seem particularly apt in reference to the security they felt in the Tabernacle with its assurance that God was with them and had taken up his dwelling in their midst.

With this contextual background, we come to the verse under consideration. The context of the Tabernacle picture is suggestive that the "wings" and "feathers" referenced are not bird wings but angel wings. In the Most Holy of the Tabernacle rested the ark of the covenant. Its mercy seat was topped with two carved cherubim or angels. Their faces were cast downward toward the mercy seat, their wings in repose, almost touching each other. Many feel that these two wings represent God's love and power waiting for the sprinkling of the atonement blood on the mercy seat.

In the later Temple construction these angels are overtopped by two large carved cherubim, with outstretched wings as though to fly, looking outward towards the Holy. These apparently indicate that the Temple picture applies after the blood is sprinkled and these angels of love and power are ready to accomplish their redemptive work. The small shadow of the Tabernacle cherubim give way to the far larger shadow of the Temple picture.

With these thoughts in mind, we read on in **Psalms 91:11,12**, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone:' Once again it is the imagery of angels, not of birds, that is referenced.

Other Scriptures attest to this relationship of covering wings and the house of the Lord.

**Psalms 61:4** - "I will abide in thy *tabernacle* for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy *wings*. Selah."

**Psalms 63:2, 7** - "To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the *sanctuary*... Because thou hast been my help, therefore *in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice*."

**Psalms 36:7, 8** - "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust *under the shadow of thy wings* They shall be abundantly satisfied with the *fatness of thy house*; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."

**2 Chronicles 5:7, 8** - "And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into *the most holy place* even *under the wings* of the cherubims: For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above."

**Hebrews 9:5** - "And over it *the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat*; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

The same forcefulness of "angels' wings" can be seen to a lesser extent if the term "the secret place of the Most High" refers to the Holy. Here, too, the priest was overshadowed with angels' wings. Angels formed the main decorative aspect of the Holy. At the very least, they were found on the second veil (**Exodus 26:31**) and overhead on the linen covering. (**Exodus 26:1**) It is also possible that they were seen on the door leading into the Holy (though that is not evident in **Exodus 26:36**). If the suggestion of Anton Frey on page 109 of his Notes on the Tabernacle is correct, these angelic images may have also been evident on the side walls of the Holy. There he suggests that it "is... plausible... that the `boards' were light, strong frames shaped somewhat like the accompanying figure, sufficiently rigid to sustain the weight of the curtains and give the necessary firmness to the walls and yet so open as to allow the rich embroidery of the inner curtains to be visible from the inside, which would be impossible on the ordinary theory that *qeresh* means a solid `board' or pillar. This imagery was also picked up in both the Temple of Solomon (**1 Kings 6:29**) and that of the vision of Ezekiel 41:18."



*The Ark of the Covenant and Wings of the Cherubim*

Another related term is "the wings of the wind:" This is found in **2 Samuel 22:10,11**, which is quoted in its entirety in **Psalms 18:9,10**: "He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." Pastor Russell treats

David in the Samuel context as a picture of the church and imagery as that of the deliverance of the truth through a time of trouble (R153).

Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, notes the following: "This seems to be the image intended to be conveyed in the place before us. `He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; he flew on the wings of the wind; *i.e.*, the cherub supported and led on the tempest, in which the Almighty rode as in his chariot. This is agreeable to the office elsewhere ascribed to the cherubim. Thus they supported the mercy-seat, which was peculiarly the throne of God under the Jewish economy:"

A similar expression (referring to the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai) which associates the angels as God's chariots is found in **Psalms 104:3,4**: "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind. Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire."

In these passages the cherubim form a chariot, as it were, swiftly transporting the Lord to his appointed tasks. It is this image we see examined in considerable detail in **Ezekiel 1**. We quote selected verses for brevity.

"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man... And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward... Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels... And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings. And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it" (verses 4, 5, 8, 9, 20, 24-26).

This image of God's angels as a chariot is also found in **Psalms 68:17**, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." This was well illustrated when the Syrian army invaded the ten-tribe city of Dothan in the days of Elisha the prophet. The relevant verse is **2 Kings 6:17**, "And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

The wording here perhaps gives a clue to another use of the imagery of chariots in the Bible. When Elijah and Elisha walked together beyond Jordan, they were separated by a chariot of fire. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven". (**2 Kings 2:11**) These chariots, we suggest, represent the angelic protection at the time of the final glorification of the church.

In summary, we have seen that though the thought of the wings of birds is often used in the Bible to show divine protection for the church (as in **Exodus 19:4, Psalms 68:13, Matthew 23:37**), this does not appear to be the analogy in **Psalms 91**. There, as in many other places, we have a more specific application of wings to the comfort and assistance of the angelic hosts. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?". (**Hebrews 1:14**)

- Carl Hagensick

## **Anointing, Seal and Witness of the Spirit**

Unknown to the world, the Lord has been carrying on a grand and glorious work. The mighty power of God that raised Jesus from the dead is working in the hearts of those to whom God has given the Spirit of sonship. This mighty power is working in the hearts of those whom the world esteems not, for they are the weak and insignificant as compared to the world's dignitaries. Despite their insignificance in worldly circles, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men". (**1 Corinthians 1:25**) This text implies that the Lord's people are the weakest and least wise of his representatives, but they are still wiser and stronger than the forces pitted against them. How is this possible? Because of God's Spirit that works in them.

When we understand that God's holy Spirit is his holy influence or power which is invisible, operating in the hearts and lives of his people, it makes for a simpler understanding of so important a subject. It relieves us of the difficulty of endeavoring to associate a personality with the work of anointing and sealing of God's holy Spirit. It prevents any from expecting a whisper from the Spirit as a witness, or a nudge, as an evidence of sonship. This subject must be understood in terms of operation and effect and must be divorced from personality, sentimentality and emotionalism.

### **ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT**

In the typical services of the tabernacle inaugurated under Moses, the first use is made of the term anointing. The High Priest was anointed with holy anointing oil when inaugurated into office (which occurred only once in each high priest's lifetime). Later on the Kings of Israel were anointed when accepted of the Lord to occupy this stately office. From this it may be seen that the holy Spirit, compared to the holy anointing oil, is used to inaugurate the consecrated into the office which they shall occupy if faithful - kings and priests of the Millennial Age. Such an anointing is suggestive of the dignity of office awaiting these, and also that service and ministry is the purpose of this office.

There is a distinction between anointing and sealing which may be readily seen when viewed carefully. If the Lord did not intend to establish faithful Christians in the office of kings and priests in the age to come, it would not be necessary that they be anointed. This is not true with respect to the seal and begetting of the holy Spirit. Irrespective of their future work and office, the mere fact that they are called to the high calling involves the necessity that they ultimately be born on the spirit plane with the divine nature and so they must first be begotten with the holy Spirit to that nature, and they must receive the seal of assurance of the Spirit to qualify for the spirit birth on the divine plane. The seal of assurance is very important to establish faith.

### **INSTANT OR GRADUAL?**

Is the anointing instantaneous or is it a gradual process? In Jesus' case, the account tells us, "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him". (**Mark 1:10**) John records concerning Jesus, "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him". (**John 3:34**) In that it is the holy Spirit that anoints us, it must follow that Jesus' anointing was instantaneous, for "straightway" as he rose out of the water the Spirit descended upon him, and that without measure. From that point forward there could be no question as to what position and work was to be his.



*Jesus received the spirit without measure*

While the Lord's followers do not receive the holy Spirit in such a marked and manifest manner, still they do receive it, and its effect upon their lives is just as potent. It may not be possible for them to point to the hour or day or month when they were anointed with the Spirit, but still it may be a matter of knowledge and fact to them that at some time from consecration they have been anointed.

The Apostle John declares, "And you have an anointing from the holy one, and you all know it". (**1 John 2:20**, Diaglott) "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you... the same anointing teacheth you of all things". (**1 John 2:27**) Those anointed may "know it" by reason that they have felt drawn to Christ and to the Heavenly Father; they have responded to this drawing and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer, acknowledging their own unworthiness and sinfulness and trust in the blood of Christ to atone for their sins; they further consecrate their entire lives to God and take up their cross and follow their Master. When they have done this, they have done all required to receive the anointing of the Spirit, and may know they are now sons of God. Beyond this there is the witness of the Spirit to add to their assurance that they have been accepted of the Father.

The expression "anointing of the Spirit" is slightly different from the expression "begetting of the Spirit." The thought of "begetting" is that of a work complete upon occurrence, while the thought of "anointing" suggests an immediate beginning accompanied with a gradual work of progression. We are under the process of anointing from the time we enter the Lord's family, and receive a place in the glorious company of Royal Priests. We know that some fail to get their full anointing. Some of those who have been properly received, and begotten of the holy Spirit, will fail to be fully anointed, and therefore will fail to be of the Royal Priesthood class. They will be of the Great Company class instead. Thus the expression "anointing of the spirit" must include the mollifying and mellowing development which comes as we grow in grace and in knowledge, and not merely the time when we were anointed at the outset of our Christian experience.

### **INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY?**

The question may present itself, are we anointed individually? The answer is no. In the type the high priest, Aaron, was anointed with the holy anointing oil upon inauguration into office. The underpriests did not receive this anointing, so that would preclude them having an individual anointing.

**Psalms 133:2** says "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." The word for "skirt;" literally translated, is "mouth" - the opening at the neck of the robe. The oil poured on the head reached the mouth of the garment

and hence the body shared in the anointing. The oil did not necessarily deluge the whole body, but the oil did reach the body, and the lesson is complete, for we are a part of the "body of Christ."

## THE ANOINTING OIL

The mixture comprising the anointing oil was defined by God. "Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet cinnamon... 250 shekels, and of sweet calamus 250 shekels, and of cassia 500 shekels... and of oil olive an hin [about 5 quarts]". (**Exodus 30:23,24**)

The particular spices do not seem significant in themselves, but by associating other scriptures we may see their significance. Of Bezaleel, the chief workman of the tabernacle, we read "I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship". (**Exodus 31:4**) The antitype of Bezaleel is Christ. Of the antitypical anointing of Christ, **Isaiah 11:2** says "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." The only difference in the two verses is in respect to the terms "counsel and might" and "workmanship;" but both embody the same idea, *Le* deputyship and ability to accomplish the same.

<b>Exodus 30:23</b>	<b>Exodus 31:3</b>	<b>Isaiah 11:2</b>
<b>Anointing Oil</b>	<b>Bezaleel</b>	<b>Christ</b>
Filled with the Spirit of God		spirit of God rests upon him
Myrrh	Wisdom	Wisdom
Cinnamon	Understanding	Understanding
Calamus	Knowledge	Knowledge
Cassia	Workmanship	Counsel, Might

(At 1/2 ounce per shekel, there were close to 47 pounds of spices. If all of it was mixed with five quarts of olive oil it would be a paste; apparently only the essence of the spices was mixed with the oil.)

In the chart above calamus is parallel to knowledge, and cinnamon to understanding, and of each spice there was a like quantity, 250 shekels. We would expect in our anointing to find knowledge and understanding equal. Those coming under the antitypical anointing receive understanding of the knowledge that gradually unfolds to them.

The weight of myrrh is equivalent to the total of cinnamon and calamus (500 shekels), just as wisdom is proportionate to understanding and knowledge. Cassia, workmanship in the sense of deputyship or counsel or ability, was also 500 shekels, as workmanship is proportionate to wisdom, which is "pure... peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy". (**James 3:17**)

As we come in under such an anointing of the Spirit, with all its wonderful qualities, we are most blessed. The fragrance of the typical anointing oil must have been sweet smelling and lingering. So those receiving the antitypical anointing have its fragrance diffused into their lives, and their sacrifice in turn becomes a sweet-smelling savor to God. As the mollifying and mellowing effect of this anointing progresses, the sweeter and richer becomes the fragrance of such lives. "To one we are a savor of death unto death" - funeral flowers - "and to the other a savor of life unto life" - marriage flowers. (**2 Corinthians 2:16**) The same sweet

aroma to one class speaks of death, and they withdraw from it; but to the Christian it speaks of the marriage to come.

## **THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT**

The basic meaning goes back to the ancient custom of using a signet to seal or notarize a letter, article or record. Sometimes this was to insure against intrusion, but more often to establish legality and authenticity. In **Esther 8:8** we read, "Seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

The seal is used to illustrate three truths: (1) authenticity, (2) impression of Christ's character, (3) finality.

### **Authenticity.**

"After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of the promise". (**Ephesians 1:13**) As the word is used here it means a mark of attestation that guarantees us a future inheritance if we are faithful. It is the holy Spirit which constitutes this mark of attestation, and therefore it may be said of all those who have received the Spirit that they are sons of God and heirs of a glorious future with their Lord, on condition we finish the race triumphantly.

### **Impression of the Seal.**

Ancient methods of sealing documents help us catch the force of this illustration. A stamp or die was engraved with some special design, and impressed into heated wax on the document until the wax solidified. The seal compares to Christ's character likeness which is being impressed into the heart of each member. The heat is produced by the fiery trials, and the character likeness of our Lord is daily being impressed into the heart of each disciple. The impression is not complete until the fourth quarter mark of perfect love is reached - love even for our enemies. Even then, there must follow the hardening or crystallization of this impression in the heart, until finally the impression is permanent, to endure for eternity. Then the holy Spirit will have accomplished its work. Thus the seal of the Spirit is an advanced witness of our acceptance with God, and when accomplished it is the cream of Christian experience. None who have not reached the mark of perfect love have really enjoyed the richest experience in the Christian life. Clearly, such an impression in our hearts cannot be made instantaneously.

### **Finality of the Seal.**

In Revelation four angels are seen in vision holding back the four winds of heaven while another angel, "having the seal of the living god," cries "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads". (**Revelation 7:1-3**) This seal in the forehead has been properly understood to imply the recipients are given an intellectual appreciation of the plan of God, with its many beautiful phases, as a mark of attestation of their sonship and favor.

The sealing here, in **Revelation 7**, also seems to have a finality associated with it, for John records "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel". (**Revelation 7:4**) In that there are only a specified number so sealed it must be that this constitutes those marked as belonging to the "very elect"; those who are "called, and chosen, and faithful". (**Revelation 17:14, Matthew 24:24**)

This work is accomplished before the loosing of the "four winds" climaxes the time of trouble with its greatest fury. Then conditions will no longer be favorable for new ones to enter the race for the heavenly

prize. The faithful will all have been selected by that time, "accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass". (**Luke 21:36**)

## **THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT**

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God". (**Romans 8:16**) This doctrine is important to God's people because on it depends to a considerable extent their possession of peace and assurance of faith. If they lack this testimony of the Spirit, doubts and fears will assail them, and they will find themselves among those who sing the well-known hymn: "'Tis a point I long to know Oft it causes anxious thought: Do I love the Lord or no? Am I his or am I not?"

Misconceptions about the witness of the Spirit have led to confusion and despair for some. They imagine the feelings and emotions of joy possessed in the beginning, when they first knew the Lord, were evidences of their sonship, and when the "woes" of life overtake them and the first impulses of joy fade into sorrow and disappointment, they become assailed with doubt. Alas! they cry, "Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I found the Lord?"

Any who allow their feelings to affect their course in life, even from a worldly standpoint, can never gain stability enough to live a life of accomplishments. One must persevere in what he has committed himself, irrespective of feelings.

Can we imagine a Christian, with the great warfare before him, with the lofty heights to attain, and the path of self-sacrifice and death before him, allowing feelings to dampen his zeal or weaken his conviction? No, there must be a more firm foundation than this. The Christian must be guided by knowledge from the Word of God. All who recognize they have been drawn to the Lord, and who have faith in the atoning merit of Christ, and who have consecrated their all to God, may have the witness of the Word of God that they are accepted as sons, as probationary members of the Church. The anointing and seal of the Spirit which they have received is a witness to them of their sonship. There are many other scriptural factors which augment this witness. Every evidence of our Heavenly Father's discipline is a testimony that we are his sons. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth". (**Hebrews 12:6,7**) "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten". (**Revelation 3:19**) Every experience, if properly received, has a little note attached - if you look for it you will find it - "with love, from the Father:"

If we find purgings being made in ourselves, it is another evidence we are sons of God. The Master said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches... every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit". (**John 15:5,2**) We are subjected to experiences to cut off all tendencies to "woodmaking," that is, all inclinations toward earthly attachments.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (**Galatians 5:23,24**). As we find these graces increase and mature in our hearts, we may know that the Spirit is strongly testifying that we are sons of God. Ripeness and maturity in these fruits will make us meet for the promised inheritance. The completion of these graces should be sought as early in the Christian life as possible. There should be no procrastination, and no time or effort spared from so grand a work. This life is too short, and eternity too long, to be otherwise minded.

Another vital witness is when we are rejected or persecuted by fellowmen for preaching the message of truth. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice... for great is your reward in heaven". (**Matthew 5:10-12**)

Those in whom the Word dwells richly must find expression of it by telling the glad tidings to others. Whether men hear or forbear, they shall still feel impelled to preach and make known the Divine Plan far and wide. Every sorrow and pain that results from a close following of the Master becomes a witness of sonship, and an incentive to greater faithfulness.



If we find an increasing desire for spiritual wisdom, and a deeper knowledge of the truth, we know that the Spirit is confirming not only our sonship, but our growth also. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth". (**Colossians 3:1,2**)

There are many other witnesses of the Spirit, but the greatest may be summed up in the word love. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment... perfect love casteth out fear". (**1 John 4:17,18**) If our love has been perfected, allowing only the sweet influence of love to guide and control in life's affairs, we have one of the grandest testimony which can be had.

When once we divorce our relationship with the Lord from ephemeral emotions and place it on a surer foundation of understanding and knowledge, we are better prepared for a more effectual walk in the narrow way that leads to life. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised". (**Hebrews 10:23**) "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day". (**2 Timothy 1:12**)

- Eugene Burns

## "Every Eye Shall See Him..."

The above promise is by Jesus in **Revelation 1:7**. But Christian people hold divergent opinions about the manner of its intended fulfillment. Are we to understand from it that Jesus will be revealed to the literal sight of people in the earth, or that he will be "seen" in a figurative sense by mental perception?

### STRONG'S DEFINITION

The Greek word represented by "see" in **Revelation 1:7** is listed in Strong's Concordance as 3700, *optimai, I* which (for its grammatical use in this passage) is spelled *opsetai*. Strong defines it as "to gaze (*i.e.* with wide open eyes, as at something remarkable...);" and proceeds to distinguish its shade of meaning from other words listed as 991, 1492, 2300, 2334 and 4648. Since this definition does not explicitly include a figurative sense, one might suppose it required Jesus would be seen with literal sight. However, that would be an incorrect conclusion for two reasons.

(1) Before Strong's definition, he says it is used as an "alternate of 3708," *horao 2,3* which he defines as "properly to *stare* at ... (by implication) to *discern* (physically or **mentally**)..." (bold emphasis supplied). This augments the definition of *optimai* to include a figurative sense.

(2) For the five other words which Strong's mentions, explaining their subtle contrast with *optimai*, he specifically includes a figurative sense in his definitions, yet he never stipulates this feature as a matter of contrast with *optimai*. Here is the remainder of Strong's comments on *optimai*, followed by his definitions of the other five words:

"... thus differing from 991, which denotes simply *voluntary* observation; and from 1492, which expresses merely mechanical, passive or casual vision; while 2300, and still more emphatically its intensive 2334, signifies an earnest but more continued *inspection*; and 4648 a watching *from a distance*"

991, *blepo* - "to look at (literally or figuratively)" 1492, *eido* - "properly to see (literally or figuratively)"

2300, *theaomai* - "to look closely at... to perceive (literally or figuratively)..."

2334, *theoreo*, - "to be a spectator of, *i.e.* discern (literally or figuratively)..."

4648, *skopeo* - "to take aim at (spy), i.e. (fig.) regard"

Clearly Strong is correct in allowing a figurative sense to each of these, as shown by the following texts, which all require it.

991 - **Luke 8:10; Ro 7:23; 2Co 7:8; Heb 2:9, 10:25**

1492 - **Acts 15:6, 28:26; 1Co 13:2**

**2300 - John 4:35**

2334 - **John 4:19, 12:19; Ac 17:22, 27:10; Heb 7:4**

3708 - **Acts 8:23; Jas 2:24**

4648 - **Luke 11:35; Ro 16:17; 2Co 4:18; Ga 6:1; Php 2:4, 3:17**

### THE FIGURATIVE USE OF "OPTOMAI"

The figurative sense of *optomai* is explicitly affirmed in Vine's Expository Dictionary. "*Optomai*, to see (from ops, the eye; compare English optical, etc.)... (b) subjectively, with reference to an inward impression or a spiritual experience" (page 65, "appear;" item 6). This is particularly appropriate for *optomai* in **Revelation 1:7**. Its figurative sense is also used in the following texts. (The first two are specially close parallels to **Revelation 1:7** )

\* **John 1:51** - "Hereafter ye shall see (*opsesthe*) heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man:" Surely Jesus did not intend that Nathaniel would literally see actual angels moving up and down between heaven and earth.

\* **Mark 14:61,62** - "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see (*opsesthe*) the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven:' Jesus would not have meant that the hostile and unbelieving high priest to whom he spoke would literally see the glorified Jesus in heaven, exercising power and authority.

\* **Luke 3:6** - "And all flesh shall see (*opsetczi*) the salvation of God." Salvation is something that is felt, experienced, and thus discerned mentally. **Isaiah 40:3-5** is the source of this expression: "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see (*opsetai* in the Septuagint) it together..:"

\* **John 3:36** - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see (*opsetdi*) life; but the wrath of God abideth on him:' In the present time this life is discerned mentally, not visibly. It is the portion believers share now by faith, in contrast to the wrath of God which continues upon unbelievers.

\* **Acts 18:15** - "But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look (*opsesthe*) ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters:" Here it is used of a mental occupation, not of literal seeing.

\* **Matthew 27:4,24** - "What is that to us? See (*Copse*) thou to that." "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see (*opsesthe*) ye to it." The word "see" (like look, above) throws responsibility on others. Literal seeing is not implied.

## 1 Timothy 6:14-16

As in Bible study on all topics, each passage using "see" or "look" should be interpreted in harmony not only with its immediate context, but also in a way that does not conflict with other inspired testimony. **1 Timothy 6:14-16** bears on the intended meaning of **Revelation 1:7**. Whether it should be "his times" (about the manifestation of "our Lord Jesus Christ") or "its times" (see Marshall Interlinear, the times of "the appearing"), that which will be shown and identified is the same:

"The blessed and only Potentate, the King of the [ones] reigning and Lord of the [ones] ruling<sup>4</sup> the only [one] having immortality, inhabiting light unapproachable, whom no one of men saw nor can see;" is Jesus Christ our Lord. All the other kings reigning and lords ruling are human fleshly potentates or fictional dieties of human imagination, and thus all lacking eternal life. The Father is here excepted (otherwise the comparison implies that Jesus lacks immortality). Jesus is he of whom the Apostle affirms "no one of men ... can see." To interpret "... every eye shall see him" (**Revelation 1:7**) to mean literal sight would be in direct conflict with **1 Timothy 6:14-16**.

- Gilbert Rice



*Jacob's Dream.(Genesis 28:12, John 1:51)*

*"Ye shall see... the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" clearly means sight in a figurative sense.*

1 Also listed in Strong under 3700 is *optanomai*. It appears only in **Acts 1:3**, where the spelling *optanomenos* serves its grammatical function. Strong's says it is a "prol. form of the prim. (mid.);" which means a prolonged form of the primary verb, in middle voice. Young's Concordance lists this single appearance on page 855, item 6. Vine's considers its under the verb *optano* (page 65, "appear;" item 7), and *optano* is the only Greek word defined in New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon under 3700. The first of two 3700 heads in Englishman's Greek Concordance has under it only **Acts 1:3**. Englishman's Greek Concordance lists 57 words under its second 3700 entry, the same number of listings that appear in Strong's Concordance, once **Revelation 19:10** is properly credited as from 3708 (in that verse lexicons show its Greek *hora* is from *horao*).

2 An underscored "o" denotes the Greek letter omega (rather than omicron) throughout this article.

3 Vine's Expository Dictionary (page 65, "appear;" item 6) says "*Optomai* is to be found in dictionaries under the word *horao*, to see; it supplies some forms that are lacking in that verb:" Moulton's 5th Edition, "Concordance to the Greek Testament;" T & T Clark, Scotland, lists all *optomai* words under N3708, *horao*. This is done also in the following lexicons: New Thayer's, Liddell and Scott, and Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich. Their definitions under *horao* agree with Strong's definition.

4 "Kings" and "lords" used in **1 Timothy 6:14-16** are words numbered differently, with different meanings, than those plurals used in **Revelation 17:14** and 19:16.

## **Stephen Suraci Passes From Us**

Brother Stephen Suraci peacefully ended his service this side the veil at his home on Saturday, April 10, about 8 am. He is survived by his dear wife Sister Jackie, two children, and two grandchildren. Bro. Stephen, who was baptized August 31, 1941, at the New York Labor Day Convention, served as a much loved elder in the New Haven Class for many years, and as an editor of "Beauties of the Truth" since 1994. His lovely spirit, kindly manners, sweet Christian counsel, and earnest pursuit of the Truth, will be sorely missed by his many friends... till reunited in the glories above.