

# THE HERALD

*of Christ's Kingdom*

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## EDITORS' JOURNAL

*If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.-1 Timothy 4:6*

This issue of **THE HERALD** marks the completion of 75 years of printing this journal and of the ministry of the Pastoral Bible Institute. In commemoration of this event we are publishing a double Diamond Anniversary edition.

The Bible Student movement is just over a century old. In that time much has come to pass, both on the world scene and within the movement. Looking back on the history of these one hundred years, we continually praise the Lord for the way he has led us day by day.

This memorial issue is divided into three sections. A special historical section is sandwiched between the pages of News & Views, which itself is folded into the center of **THE HERALD**:

### **Historical Overview**

To avoid repetition we direct you to the Preface of the historical section to gain an overview of the contents of that special insert. The primary purpose there is to place the Bible Student movement on the broad canvas of the Christian church. Only by understanding our origins may we better perceive the religious atmosphere which led to the formation of our group.

### **Doctrinal Overview**

When Charles Taze Russell formed the International Bible Students Association as a vehicle for the promulgation of biblical truths, he did so because none of the organized religions were advocating the beliefs he felt were scriptural. In this issue of **THE HERALD** we look at many of these doctrinal concepts which were unique to the Bible Students.

As an "Echo From the Past" we are republishing an article from the journal, written by one of the former editors, William Siekman, which summarized Bible Student belief on a number of these doctrines. This treatise is entitled *Our Heritage of Knowledge*.

The message then emerging was an optimistic one-life from the dead for all mankind, the unsaved as well as the saved. This hope is delineated in the article-The Good News of Two Salvations.

Such a message of course had an affect on the beliefs on the state of the dead. A recurring theme of this past century has been The Truth About Hell, where the Bible is seen to teach that all men will come back from the grave to . an educational process; that the purpose of God's kingdom is to produce a full return to Edenic perfection. The dissertation on Anastasis-Resurrection discusses this topic. Another theme reviewed was the biblical teaching on the nature of God. The Lord Our God Is One Lord is a review of the Scriptures on this important subject.

As an outgrowth of the second advent movement, which swept the United States throughout the nineteenth century, the topic of the Lord's return was being hotly debated throughout Christendom. The Bible Student position of an invisible presence having already taken place was radically different from that held by mainline Christianity. This subject is reviewed in Behold the Bridegroom, another "Echo from the Past," article by a frequent contributor to earlier editions of THE HERALD, Edwin Allbon of England.

Other matters, in addition to intellectual comprehension of doctrines were also unique to the Bible Students. Especially prominent among these was the organization of the church. "Free Seats, No Collection" became almost a byword amongst them. Simplicity of organization was emphasized. This is discussed in the article, The Simplicity of the Gospel.

## **Motivational**

It was not belief alone, however, which marked the early Bible Student movement. Mindful of the scriptural warning against lukewarmness (Rev. 3:16), the "brethren" of the early days became intensely involved in the spread of their religious beliefs.

Hundreds went door to door as colporteurs; thousands volunteered to serve by distributing tracts; books were printed by the millions as they grew from a tiny handful in an Allegheny storefront to becoming widely known throughout the world.

What drove them to go to such lengths? It was not a superior organization, for that was formed along simple lines; nor a fiery leader, for Charles Taze Russell was known as a gentle and loving soul. Nor was it the fear that drove thousands of Christians to seek the mission field to save earth's billion from hell fire.

Rather, it was the love of God. They had seen a vision in the Bible-a vision of a God of love-a vision that held hope for every man, woman, and child that have ever lived. This was the vision that captured their hearts. It was this vision that caused them to give their very lives in its service. May such a vision capture our hearts as we face the uncertain days that lie ahead!

## Our Heritage Of Knowledge

*The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.—Psalm 16:6*

*Condensed and edited from a December, 1947 article in THE HERALD  
by W. J. Siekman*

"Present Truth"—no human listing can bound the limits of spiritual truth, any more than can the human mind comprehend that Divinity which is its source. Truth, like an exquisite jewel, through its many facets, reflects the light of him who is "Light." We mention some of these "facets," adding brief comments or appropriate scriptures. Thus concerning the truth, and admiring its symmetry and harmony, may we anew realize that God has indeed blessed us with an outpouring of spiritual knowledge. The understanding and appreciation of these beautiful truths is one of the witnesses of the Spirit to our spirits that we are the sons of God.

### **The Three Worlds and the Three Heavens**

To understand St. Peter's words in 2 Peter 3:5-13 is a blessing in itself. How many who have Bibles know that the Apostle is not speaking of literal things but rather of three great dispensations, in each of which the ruling power is pictured as a heaven and the social order as an earth? The first dispensation extended from Adam's creation to the flood; the second extends from the flood until the collapse of the present social order in world-wide figurative conflagration; the third commences with Christ's Millennial reign and continues throughout eternity. Thank God for a true understanding of this difficult portion of his Word! The literal heaven and earth will not be destroyed. God has not formed them in vain (See Eccl. 1:4; Isa. 45:18).

### **The Three Ways**

Two of these ways, both of which are mentioned in Matthew 7:13,14, are familiar to many. The "narrow" way is generally interpreted to mean the path to heaven; and the "broad" way, that to hell and eternal torment. Many Christians recognize only these. But our eyes have been blessed not only with a clearer understanding of these ways (the one as the narrow way of self-sacrifice walked in by the saints to glory, honor, and immortality; and the other as the road upon which all mankind is traveling to Adamic death), but with the additional understanding of a third way, that spoken of in Isaiah 35:8-10, the "highway" of blessing for all humanity in the Millennium. What a wonderful road that will be, and what a glorious time when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Praise the Lord for this "highway of holiness."

## **Permission of Evil**

This is the moot question of all ages, pondered upon and unanswered by philosophers; the burden of the Book of Job. Why the terrible sufferings on this earth? Why does an all-powerful Creator bring beings into existence to spend their lifetime in trouble and sorrow with death inevitable? Why does sin flourish, while virtue struggles to survive? Why is it so easy to go down hill and so difficult to go up? Why is injustice so prevalent? Why the terrible calamities which plague the earth? How satisfying the explanation which still reveals God as a God of Love. (See Volume I, "*Studies in the Scriptures*," Chapter 7.)

## **The Philosophy of the Ransom**

On the basis of Romans 5:12-21, we understand that Adam, a perfect man, lost the right to human life; that Jesus left his prehuman spiritual glory, became a man, and acquired by keeping the Mosaic Law a right to eternal human life. By divine permission he laid his life down in death. (See John 10:17,18.) Since he had been begotten to the spirit nature at his consecration, and since it was not possible that he should be held in death (Acts 2:24), he was rewarded for his obedience by being resurrected to the immortal plane. His right to human life was not forfeited. This life-right, still possessed by Jesus, constitutes the ransom-price, and corresponds exactly to that which Adam lost. What marvelous wisdom is here shown in the divine economy which could judge all humanity in one man and provide the redemption price in another! Yes, that God could be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

## **Times of Restitution**

This is a glorious truth! The very words ring with a melody which strikes a responsive chord in the Christian's heart. There are few of the Lord's people who could not quote from memory Peter's words in Acts 3:19-21. So easy of comprehension, so all-embracing of God's plan in their scope! So explanatory of many difficult passages in the scriptures! And yet few Bible scholars understand their full meaning; yea, to understand is to make one out as amongst those "to whom it is given to know."

## **Two Phases of the Kingdom**

How clear is the fact that there is to be both a spiritual and an earthly phase to God's Kingdom! And yet even the Master's disciples at first could not understand this. Just as their conception of the Kingdom was limited to the idea of a selected Jewish nation under the headship of an earthly visible Messiah, so likewise the understanding of many Christians is limited to that of a select class inheriting the joys of heaven! Israel knows nothing of a spiritual phase, while Christians in general deny an earthly. Isaiah tells us that the law shall go forth from Zion [the spiritual, invisible phase] and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [the earthly, visible phase] (Isa. 2:2, 3). This makes clear that "hard" saying of the Master: "Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11).

## **Adamic Death**

Theologians have interpreted Adam's death in many mysterious ways. The simple truth is that Adam did not die spiritually nor was he transferred to another state of existence, subjected to horrible torments. In the words of scripture, "dying" he died (see margin on Gen. 2:17) within the thousand-year day of the Lord, and thus returned to the dust from whence he sprang. His dying condition, through heredity, was passed on to his posterity; and thus subjected to "frailty," all in Adam die. All sleep in the graves, awaiting the resurrection morn.

## **The Second Death**

This has been as much a mystery as the first death. It has even been interpreted to mean life! Despite all exposition to the contrary, its simple meaning, that of a return to the non-existent condition from which the merit of Christ resurrects but once, is still most satisfactory. "The lawless shall return to hades" (Psa. 9:17, Rotherham). In the Millennial Age, he that will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:23). The fate of the incorrigible is utter destruction from the presence of the Lord. This Second Death is pictured symbolically as a lake of fire and brimstone, strong symbols of annihilation. We urge all to very carefully consider the teaching of Isaiah 26:9-11. The many warnings of God's Word to evil doers is ample evidence that the consequences of ignoring divine "sign-posts" will be tragic. Doing despite to the spirit of grace and treading under foot the Son of God, whether in the Gospel or Millennial Ages, can result only in a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation and sorer punishment.—Heb. 10:26-31.

## **Justification**

The steps of our being "made right" with our God have been much clarified. It is of God's grace, by the blood or merit of Christ and through our faith in appropriation of that merit, and revealed in our works, imperfect as they are. Our steps of approach to God, the philosophy of tentative and vitalized justification, as revealed in the tabernacle types, and additionally, the justification of mankind in the Millennium, by works and yet through faith are clearer now. All this is a wonderful field for thought, well expounded by St. Paul in the first eleven chapters of his Epistle to the Romans.

## **Sanctification**

Brief comments can hardly do justice to this great subject with its two-fold application: first, as regards our part, "sanctify yourselves," and second, as regards God's part, "I will sanctify you." This is the will of God, even your sanctification, or setting apart to God's everlasting service. There must come about that complete transformation of mind, that complete submission to the divine will, and the attainment unto that holiness without which none shall see the Lord. This is the great work which the Lord is accomplishing now in us, that in the ages to come he may do his great works through us. All this is in

accordance with the Master's prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth" (John 17:17).

### **Glorification**

How crude is the ordinary thought of disembodied, winged spirits flying through heaven's courts or walking golden streets strumming harps! From the glorious exaltation to glory, honor, and immortality on the divine plane—the "Marriage such as earth has never known, when Bride and Bridegroom are made one before the Great White Throne," to the indescribable divine fellowship in the limitless ages to come—all breathe forth the truth of the Scripture, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9,10).

### **Joint-Heirship with Christ**

With the heavenly host we join in acclaiming, "Worthy the Lamb that was slain," worthy to be heir of God. But the matchless grace that we, the "base things," the "things despised," the "things which are nought"—that we should be joint-heirs with Christ, to "sit on his throne,"—"how can these things be!" And yet thus it is written. We lay hold on the precious promises in amazed gratitude, and rejoice in being "joint-heirs with Christ"—"heirs according to the promise," "heirs of salvation," and "heirs of promise" (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Titus 3:7; Heb. 1:14; Heb. 6:17).

### **Baptism**

How appropriately does baptism picture that death to self-will and rising to new life which is the experience of God's people. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. 6:4,5). Yea, Master, we would indeed emulate thee in saying, "Not my will, but thine, O Lord, be done," and in being baptized with the baptism that thou wast baptized with.

### **Election and Free Grace**

Both are true, but each applies to a different period. During the Gospel Age a comparatively small class are the recipients of divine favor—as many as the Lord our God shall call; whereas during the Millennial Age all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. It is this key thought which harmonizes such scriptures as Mark 4:11,12 and Revelation 22:17.

## **Abraham's Seed**

God's great oath-bound promises to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18), was the hope of the Jewish nation as the natural seed; and proud was their boast: "Abraham is our father" (John 8:39). But "because of unbelief they were broken off" and "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for" (Rom. 11:7, 20). For it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16). Abraham's seed is to be two-fold—an earthly, "as the sands of the seashore," beginning with restored Israel and embracing all humanity eventually; and a spiritual, "as the stars of heaven," the called-out class of this Gospel Age. "For if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"—Gal. 3:29.

## **The Judgment Day**

The biblical viewpoint of the Judgment Day is much more reasonable than any other teaching on the subject: A thousand-year day of restoration to perfection—a day of opportunity to develop mentally, morally, and physically into perfect manhood. For the ransom was given for all, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return from the graves in the day God hath appointed in which he will judge the world in righteousness—a day when sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Far from it being a day which mankind should dread, the scriptures exhort all to rejoice at its approach.—See Psalm 96.

## **Resurrection**

When St. Paul preached at Athens, and they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked (Acts 17:32). The resurrection of the dead is hardly a necessity to the teaching which declares that after death man is more alive than ever before and goes immediately to his eternal reward or punishment. But since the dead "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Dan. 12:2), the resurrection is a vital teaching. For if the dead rise not then they which are fallen asleep are perished (See 1 Cor. 15:13-19). There shall be a resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and the unjust," "but every man in his own order" (Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:23). Three resurrections are spoken of in the Bible: the "first" for the faithful of the Gospel Age, the "after" for the world in general, and the "better" for the Old Testament saints (1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 15:23; Heb. 11:35-40). Our English word "resurrection" translates the Greek word *anastasis*, which means more than an awakening. It signifies a re-standing or raising up to fullness of perfection. This can be seen from a careful study of John 5:28, 29. All shall hear Christ's voice (be awakened) and come forth unto a resurrection. [See also Volume VI, *Studies in the Scriptures*, pages 702-710.]

## **The Ancient Worthies**

The term ancient worthies refers to the men and women of faith who lived before the Gospel Age and of whom John the Baptist was the last. Not for them was the spiritual inheritance. They shall be "princes" in the earth, during Christ's world-wide Kingdom. (See Psa. 45:16.) But there are hints in the scriptures which tend to the thought that God may reward their faithful service during the Millennium with a change to spirit life at its close. We rejoice for these faithful ones who "without us [the church] shall not be made perfect," but who nevertheless obtained a good report through faith.

## **Spiritism**

Against the belief that communication with the dead is possible, the scriptures warn that all so-called manifestations are the result of deceptions practiced by the fallen angels, the spirits who kept not their first estate.

## **The Soul**

How clear is the Bible teaching that man is a soul, and not that he has a soul. Far from being immortal or undieable, we read, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20). From Genesis we learn that the union of the elements of the earth with the "breath of life" made a "living soul." (See Gen. 2:7). The word "soul" means a sentient being, and is applied in scripture to all forms of animal life. (See Genesis 1:21, where "living creature" is the translation of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which is elsewhere translated "soul.") The teaching that man possesses within himself an immortal, indescribable something has its roots in the first lie of Satan in Eden. Conveyed through the ages in human philosophies, it has blinded the minds of men to the simple truth.

## **The Holy Spirit**

The spirit is the invisible power of God, holy because it emanates from him. This power is manifested in the works of creation and also in its influence on men's minds. We look forward to the time when the holy spirit with which the members of the Body of Christ have been anointed will be poured out upon all flesh during the times of restitution mentioned in an earlier paragraph.

## **The Trinity**

The trinity is a closely related subject. The word itself is not found in the Bible. If ever a doctrine were built on pure imagination, it is this of three gods and yet one God. Many a faithful Christian paid with his life for refusing to believe it. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (Deut. 6:4; 1Cor. 8:6).



## **Immortality and Eternal Life**

Immortality is a condition in which life is inherent—"As the Father hath life in himself" (John 5:26). In this condition, death is an impossibility. Jehovah God alone possessed this quality, but has since bestowed it upon his Son, Jesus, and eventually it will be the reward of the church. It is a state of existence which applies only to the divine nature (See 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Cor. 15:53; 2 Peter 1:4).

Eternal life is a condition of existence wherein life is not inherent, but is sustained by an external source. It is a condition where death is a possibility if the source of life were to be cut off. This is a proper definition of mortality and applies to all created beings, including those on the spirit planes lower than the divine nature. All, though mortal, will be sustained in life eternally, after their obedience to the divine will is proved. This distinction is shown in St. Paul's words regarding our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

## **The New Creation**

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17). For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (Gal. 6:15). Far from being simply an expression meaning spiritual renewal, the term "new creation" unfolds the marvelous work of God: the transformation of an elect class from the human to the highest of all natures, the divine. To those who walk worthy of God, who hath called them unto his Kingdom and glory, there is a special meaning in the Psalmist's words: And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there (1 Thess. 2:12; Psa. 87:5, 6).

## **The Bride of Christ**

The expression "bride of Christ" applies to the one class called during this Gospel Age "to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3.). Of the various figures which refer to these saints, none is more appropriate and beautiful. We rejoice in the privilege of seeing its deep significance (Acts 15:14, 17; Psa. 45:10-15; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9, 2; 22:17).

## **The Creative Week**

On the basis of Israel's Jubilee cycle of fifty years and the Sabbatical cycle of seven years, some beautiful correspondencies can be built. From the beginning of the ordering of the earth (not its creation) to the appearance of Adam there were six great days of 7000 years each, or a period of 42,000 years. On the seventh day, God "rested." This period of time comprises "God's Week." The seventh day, seven thousand years long, is "Man's Week." For six days of 1000 years each, man labors under the burden of sin; and on his seventh day, the Millennium, he will "rest." The close of the Millennium will usher in the

fiftieth thousand year— earth's Jubilee and also God's great eighth day. It was on the eighth day that all the males of Israel were circumcised (Lev. 12:2,3, etc). This pictures the complete cleansing of the flesh that will be accomplished by the restitution—the perfection and completeness that was Adam's when all the perfection was in him—before the creation of Eve from a portion of his body. All the obedient of mankind will reach this condition at the close of the Millennium, before they are presented to God by the Christ class whose work will then be finished.

### **The Tabernacle**

Many are the beautiful lessons the Tabernacle teaches. Its court and chambers, its furniture, its diversity of materials, its ceremonies and sacrifices, its order of priesthood and service—how much is revealed in this "shadow of good things to come."

### **Nature of the Logos**

The Logos was the "beginning of the creation of God," and all things were created by him through God's power. In the fullness of time, in obedience to the divine will, he left his prehuman, spiritual nature and glory and became flesh—actually and fully a partaker of the human nature—in no sense of the word, however, "incarnated," that is, clothed merely with a human form while retaining his spirit nature. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor (See Prov. 8:22-30; Col. 1:16, 17; Gal. 4:4; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 8:9).

### **Natures Distinct**

The true thought is that all natures are separate and distinct— angelic, earthly, etc. The understanding of distinctness clarifies many scriptures. St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:38-41 are very appropriate in this connection.

### **Chronology**

While no one can properly claim to possess total knowledge of chronology in detail, yet the purpose for which it was given, a general indication of times and seasons, has undoubtedly proved a blessing to those with ability to study it. There has been much clarification on this grand subject, and it will probably have more blessings for all in the future. Volume II, *Studies in the Scriptures*, is unsurpassed as a general approach to Bible chronology.

### **The Harvest**

The harvest refers to a period of time at the end of the Gospel Age, in contradiction to the prevalent idea of its proceeding all the way down from the time of our Lord's First Advent until his return. We can recognize the bundling of the tares today and can see the elements in preparation for the final consummation. The "summer" is well-nigh ended and the "winter" of sorrows is just before us.

## **The Day of Vengeance**

The Day of Vengeance is the time of divine vengeance against the evil systems of the present. It occurs just before the full establishment of Christ's Kingdom. The six-thousand year permission of evil will end with a judgment that will reveal God's views of man's systems. It will not be in a spirit of vindictiveness against the race, but in the Day of Vengeance his wrath will come upon the systems which are out of harmony with his will. There is a blessing in it, however, for it is necessary to crush the stony hearts of men to prepare them to receive the hearts of flesh that the Lord will give to the willing and obedient.

## **Hell**

The Hebrew word *sheol* and its exact Greek equivalent, *hades*, biblically mean simply "the hidden state." All go there after death, whether saint or sinner, good or bad, rich or poor, noble or mean. The word itself gives no clue as to the condition of the dead. This is ascertained from other scriptures, which inform us that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave [*sheol*] whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). "The dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9:5.). "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psa. 146:4). It is the creeds of men that instruct the very opposite. The Bible describes the condition of the dead, in view of the fact that they shall all be resurrected, as a "sleep."

## **Restoration of the Jews**

Though they have been terribly oppressed during the past twenty-five centuries, God hath not cast away his people, whom he fore-knew. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead" (Rom. 11:2,26,15). The Bible is replete with promises which yet await their fulfillment when Israel is restored to divine favor. The present gradual restoration of the Jews to their own homeland and the remarkable development of the nation of Israel, constitutes a major proof of the proximity of God's Kingdom.

## **Symbols and Parables**

Many parabolic and symbolic scriptures which are hidden from the eyes of many have now become clear. The "lake of fire," "the wheat and tares," women—clean and unclean, horns, mountains, sun, moon, stars, fire, wind, seas, etc.—what a wealth of truth has been revealed in this our day.

## **The Great Pyramid**

Disregarded by the world and even "wounded in the house of its friends," the great pyramid yet remains a tremendous corroborative testimony to the truth of God's Word. He who has devoted sufficient study to have really grasped its teachings will not scoff at this altar in the midst of the land of Egypt and pillar at the border thereof? (Isa. 19:19). Its purpose is to stop the mouths of the wise during the Millennium, who desire now to know God not by faith but by "tools of measurement." Though their attention has been called to the Pyramid's testimony, and that by men of their own, yet they have chosen to scoff and deride, though the "very stones cry out" of the existence of a Wisdom and Omnipotence they know not. How vain will be counted the wisdom of man in that day when God shall bring all things to light.

## **The Return of Christ**

What a flood of light has been shed on this soul-stirring subject. We can rejoice in the object and manner of our Lord's return. And of the times and seasons we are not in ignorance. As of his First Advent, Scripture foretold events which were spread over a period of thirty odd years, and yet all related to his first coming, so likewise does the Bible speak of events concerning the Second Advent which unquestionably cover a period of time. In the very nature of things, Christ's coming for his saints cannot occur at the same time as his coming with his saints, both of which events are most definitely taught. The light of present truth and the signs of the times both indicate that the first of these events occurred at some time in the past, while the second will be fulfilled in the near future. These are the "days of the Son of Man." Blessed those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh shall find watching (Luke 12:37). Let us all diligently "watch," to merit that "crown of righteousness" which shall be given "unto all them that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

## **The Covenants**

Various covenants are mentioned in the Bible. Three most particularly concern us: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Law Covenant, and the New Covenant. The writer's opinion is best summed up in the words of another: "The whole subject becomes transparent when we see that the Abrahamic Covenant (which needed no mediator because it was God's unconditional promise, and confirmed by his oath) is the full, broad statement of the divine plan, and that as the Law Covenant was added (to illustrate the inability of sinners to help themselves and) to manifest Christ Jesus as the seed of promise, so the New Covenant is added (to the Abrahamic Covenant) also, not to hinder the blessing of every creature but to make that blessing of knowledge and the Millennial Kingdom opportunities more effective, even unto everlasting life—to those approved under it."

Carefully consider Peter's words in Acts 3:25. Note that Peter, speaking to Jews, refers to them (by anticipation, if they will accept Jesus) as the children of the covenant which God made with Abraham. This is strong evidence against the conclusion that the New Covenant is operative in the Gospel Age.

## **Mediator and Advocate**

Moses was the Mediator of the Old Law Covenant, and typed the Christ class, Head and Body, the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant. A Mediator stands between; an Advocate stands alongside of. The church needs no mediator; there cannot be a mediator between a Father and his children.

## **The Sin Offering**

Associated with Christ in the work of restoration will be a class selected during this Gospel Age who walk the same way of self-sacrifice. In the ransom-price the church can have no part; in the ransom-work, the church unquestionably shares with her Lord. The ransom-price was provided at Calvary; the ransom-work will not be finished until the end of the Millennium. The ransom-price is the all-sufficient merit—the human life-right of Jesus—the basis for the entire resultant ransom-work. The philosophy of the ransom-price reveals a two-fold application of its merit; first, by imputation to those who during the Gospel Age make the "covenant by sacrifice"; and, second, by direct application for all mankind in the Millennium. The death of Jesus at Calvary did not free the human race from Adamic condemnation. They are still under the bondage of sin and death. Thus far the merit of Christ has been made available only on behalf of the church, who once were by nature the children of wrath even as others (Eph. 2:3). Their present condition in contrast to that of the rest of mankind is stated by St. John: We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness (1 John 5:19). Nevertheless the Man Christ Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all," and he is the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2). The application of Christ's merit for the world will be effected at the close of the Gospel Age, when the called-out church is all selected.

The types of Leviticus 16 reveal the manner in which the merit of Christ is made available: first, "for himself [his Body members] and for his house" (the household of faith); and, secondly, "for the people" (Lev. 16:11, 15). There are two applications of blood on the mercy seat. Thus is shown, in brief, that the merit of Christ is passed through the church class ere it reaches the world. In no sense of the word does the church add to the ransom-price. As human beings they have no standing with God except under the covering merit of Christ, which alone makes them acceptable sacrifices. The blood of the bullock, and, subsequently the blood of the goat in the hands of the priest, symbolically said, This animal is dead, and here is a proof of it. Inasmuch as we were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), the human rights which would accrue to us in the Millennium are now imputed to us by faith, to the end we may present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1). We thus by faith die to all earthly rights and privileges secured for us by the blood of Christ, to the end we might be partakers with him of the heavenly inheritance. The application of Christ's merit on behalf of his footstep followers precludes its use on behalf of the world until the church is all completed. This is shown in the type by the blood (the evidence of shed human life) of the goat being sprinkled on the mercy seat, signifying the completion of the church's

sacrifice collectively, which return, as it were, of the merit of Christ, makes it thus available "for the people."

We believe Leviticus 16 reveals the work of Jesus in association with his church as we find it explained to us in the New Testament. It is difficult to see why it should be necessary that a bullock (a comparatively large and fat animal) should be required to make a man and his associates ceremonially clean in order that a type might be instituted, utilizing a small, thin animal such as a goat. It seems more reasonable to see pictured in the bullock and the goat, the Master and his church.

This panorama of spiritual truth has touched on many points, but by no means has exhausted them all. Whether we accept all as they have been briefly expounded or whether we accept only the half, we can find mutual agreement and brotherly fellowship in the following verities of God's Word:

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."—1 John 3:14.

"We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—1 John 3:2.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens".—2 Cor. 5:1.

"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."—2Tim. 1:12.

*Blessed Bible, precious Word!  
Boon most sacred from the Lord;  
Glory to His name be given,  
For this choicest gift from heaven.*

## The Lord Our God Is One Lord

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.—Deuteronomy 6:4*

*And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.—Mark 12:29*

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.—Exodus 20:3*

*By Richard Evans*

Monotheism is the belief in and worship of one God. Polytheism, on the other hand, acknowledges a plurality of gods. In the beginning humankind worshiped one God, but as the earth filled, knees bowed to other gods.

"In the history of all the different nations where polytheism has obtained we may trace a period where the idea of one God was more or less prevalent." (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* by John McClintock and James Strong. 1890: Vol. VI, page 511)

With but one exception the early history of humankind reveals a constant yearning and search for new gods. The disaffection of nations with monotheism, however, was seldom total. The various religions and mythologies of the world usually maintained some superior deity among their host of gods.

The exception, the nation of Israel, was by no means immune to this malady. Its people were continually being infected by their neighbors.

"And they served their [neighbor's] idols, which were a snare unto them" (Psa. 106:36).

### **The God of Israel**

Only the valiant efforts of a few faithful ones prevented complete apostasy.

"Go not after other gods to serve them . . ." — Jeremiah 35:15

These men of Israel clearly and conclusively demonstrated the validity of monotheism—the need, the necessity, to worship one God. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me . . . for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God" (Exod. 20:3-5).

In their writings, the Old Testament, they emphatically proclaimed one God, the God by whom all creation exists.

- "Know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him" (Deut. 4:35).
- "The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4).
- "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou has made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein" (Neh. 9:6).
- "Thou art the God, even thou alone . . . thou hast made heaven and earth" (Isa. 37:16).
- "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it . . . I am the LORD; and there is none else" (Isa. 45:18).
- "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me" (Isa. 45:21).
- "But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God . . . He that made the earth by his power" (Jer. 10:10-12).

### **The Spirit of God**

These men of Israel also proclaimed the reality of the spirit of God; but, they never addressed this spirit as a separate personage, as another god. The faithful Jew of old never entertained the thought of God's spirit as another coequal god. As revealed in their writings, the spirit of God was the power, the favor, the influence, emanating from God.

- "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exod. 31:3).
- "And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel" (Jud. 3:10).



- "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created"(Psa. 104:30)
- "And 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 the fear of the LORD" (Isa. 11:2).
- "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa. 44:3).
- "And I will pout my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Ezek. 36:27).
- "And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live" (Ezek. 37:14).
- "I will pour my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28).

Hence, the Old Testament is monotheistic. Jehovah alone is God. The spirit is an extension of God, not a separate, coequal, entity.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Psa. 139:7).

### **The God of Jesus**

From his own words we find Jesus of Nazareth believed as did the faithful Jews that preceded him.

- "I thank thee, O Father Lord of heaven and earth" (Matt. 11:25).
- "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29).
- "That they might know thee, the only true God" (John 17:3).

The title given Jesus, the Son of God (Matt. 16:16; 8:29), conveyed the relationship he enjoyed. At no time did he present himself as coequal with the Father (Phil. 2:6).

- "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).
- "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).
- "I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Jesus continually pointed to his subordinate position to his Father.

- "All things are delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt. 11:27).
- "As my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29).
- "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).
- "So hath he [the Father] given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26).
- "The Father that sent me" (John 8:16, 18; 12:49; 14:24).
- "As my Father hath taught me" (John 8:28).
- "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (John 14:31).
- "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

As the Apostle Paul wrote: "[Jesus] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6 NASB).

Jesus not only used the manner of the Old Testament when speaking of God, but also when speaking of the spirit of God, the holy Spirit.

- "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28).
- "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (Luke 4:18).
- "I send the promise of my Father upon you . . . ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

John the Baptist spoke the same.

- "For God giveth not the spirit by measure" (John 3:34)

The Apostle John, when explaining Jesus' words, wrote: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive" (John 7:39).

Thus we see the God of Jesus was the God of Israel. Jesus did not teach a different God. His understanding of the spirit of God was the same. He was monotheistic. His God was the God of the Jews. "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God" (John 20:17).

## **The God of the Apostles**

The Apostle Peter declared shortly after Pentecost, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his [servant] Jesus" (Acts 3:13).

The apostles also believed as the faithful Jews of old. There was but one God, the God of Abraham, the God of all creation. Jesus of Nazareth, though glorified, was not God. He was the servant of God. As the faithful disciples exclaimed, following the release of Peter and John by the council of priests:

- "Lord [Jehovah], thou art God, which has made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" (Acts 4:24).

The Apostle Paul was just as monotheistic as those who came before.

- "There is none other God but one . . . there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:4-6).
- "One Lord [Jesus], one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all" (Eph. 4:5, 6)

## **The Hellenization of Christendom**

The Roman world in which Jesus and his followers lived was greatly influenced by Greek thought. As the Apostles passed from the scene this influence severely impacted what was becoming known as Christendom (Christ's Kingdom). Both the content and the method of Greek philosophy were introduced and embraced.

This Hellenistic influence quickly brought in ideas from the pagan world. Within three centuries polytheism was established. The first great ecumenical council, that of Nicea in 325 AD, was summoned and presided over, not by church leaders, but by the Roman emperor Constantine. He not only patronized it, but undertook to direct it. Intervening in the theological discussions, he used the authority of the State to compel assent to a concept of multiple gods in one—multiple gods to suit Greek polytheism, one god to suit Biblical teaching.

The Hellenization of Christendom was not limited to polytheism. Among other doctrines, the concept of the immortal soul was also assimilated early. Though adopted by much of Christendom, it is Greek in origin and stands in direct conflict with the Biblical doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

The Greeks, because of their belief in an immortal soul, viewed death as a natural, desirable, progression. It completes the liberation of the soul. It frees the soul from the prison of its body. The Jews and early Christians, on the other hand, saw death as an enemy, something unnatural, abnormal, opposed to God. The only hope for a dying creation was a resurrection, a release from the death condition.

The conflict between these two views was graphically demonstrated in the scorn of the Greeks to Paul's teaching on Mar's Hill (Acts 17:32). Though the belief of the immortal soul conflicted with the Bible, it won the day, just as did polytheism.

### **Consequences of Polytheism**

God condemned polytheism for a very good reason. It brings about confusion. Jesus taught: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other" (Matt. 6:24).

The history of Christendom attests the validity of this axiom. The confusion that has reigned over many centuries vividly sets forth the consequences of disregarding it. In the attempt to serve multiple gods, Christendom loved the Son and hated the Father. It glorified the Son at the expense of the Father. God became a god of vengeance, a god of wrath—a god that required appeasement by the sacrifice of living victims. The Father, the God of love (1 John 4:16), was made into a god like unto Molech (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5).

The confusion does not end with the profaning of God's holy name. Though Christendom glorified Jesus, it rendered unintelligible his sacrifice and death. Many questions were raised and left unanswered.

If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, did all die at Calvary? Who raised Jesus? (Acts 10:40).

If the Son was divine he was immortal, unable to die. Was his death an act, a pretense, a sham, a deception? (Rev. 1:18).

If Jesus was divine, what did Paul mean when he stated: "by one [man] shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19), "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21). "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

## **Preexistence of Jesus**

The preexistence of Jesus is a major factor that influenced the development of polytheism in Christendom. There is no question that it is a clear teaching of Scripture.

- "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh" (John 1:1-14).
- "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man" (John 3:13).
- "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world" (John 3:17).
- "For I came down from heaven" (John 6:38, 51).
- "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62).
- "I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am" John 8:58).
- "The glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

In every one of these texts it is evident that the Son of God existed, had life, before his life on earth as the man Jesus.

The difficulty arises when Christendom declares that that life was divine. There is no scripture that supports such a declaration. To understand the Son's preexistent nature it is necessary to understand the various natures that exist in the heavens and on the earth.]

In the earthly realm the human stands at the top. All other earthly life, animal and plant, being subordinate (Gen. 1:28). In the heavenly realm, the Bible reveals two levels of spiritual life, angelic and divine. The angelic, like human life, is mortal—it requires sustenance.

- "Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou has made heaven, and the heaven of the heavens, with all their host . . . and thou preservest them all" (Neh. 9:6).
- "Praise ye him, all his angels . . . for he commanded, and they were created" (Psa. 148:2-5).

The divine life, the life of God, is immortal—it requires no sustenance.

- "The Father hath life in himself" (John 5:26).

It is manifest that the Son, in his preexistence, did not enjoy divine life. He was a glorious spirit being, the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14). All else of God's creation was created through him (Eph. 3:9; yet, he was mortal. Only by being mortal was he able to do his Father's will (Heb. 10:9). Only by being mortal could he give up his spiritual existence in heaven, become an earthly being (Rom. 8:3), and die as a man.

- "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9).
- "Who, being in the form of God [a glorious spirit being] . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6, 7).

After being "made perfect" (Heb. 2:10; 5:9), after proving his worth (Rev. 5:9), the Father gave to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26)

- "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:4).
- "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).

Jesus was resurrected not as a human, not as an angel, but as a divine being; and so, death hath no more dominion over him (Rom. 6:9). He is no longer mortal!

- "[God] raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1:20, 21).

The Son was made divine. He is a creation of his Father. As the Lamb he was found worthy (Rev. 5:9); thus, he was greatly exalted by God (Acts 5:31).

### **The Only True God**

In his marvelous prayer the night before his death, Jesus declared: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

No greater motivation can be given for knowing the only true God and for knowing Jesus Christ. To the extent that God has revealed himself we are to know him, to believe him. Knowledge of the true God is crucial. Without it polytheism is certain to flourish.

Paul declared of the Jews: "They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2).

Because of this lack of knowledge pagan idolatry was a snare to them. Christendom has likewise been ensnared through lack of knowledge. A lack that has led to a grievous compromise—multiple gods in one. This compromise is no less idolatrous than the polytheism. The only reply that is heard— "it is a mystery."

Because of this lack of knowledge pagan idolatry was a snare to them. Christendom has likewise been ensnared through lack of knowledge. A lack that has led to a grievous compromise—multiple gods in one. This compromise is no less idolatrous than the polytheism that stumbled Israel. The oneness of God, without compromise, is clearly set forth in the Bible. As Jesus affirmed, "The Lord your God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29).

# THE ANCIENTS ON THE TRINITY

**IRENÆUS (130-203)** - God is the Father, the Logos (Word) was the Son of God who spoke and appeared in the Old Testament in the Father's stead.

**EBIONITES (Jewish sect of Christianity)** - Held that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph.

**MARCIONITES (2nd century)** - Taught two supreme beings: one evil, the God of the Old Testament: one good, the Father of Jesus Christ.

**ADOPTIANISTS (mid 2nd century)** - They taught that Christ was the human Son of God; but that there was also a spirit Son of God.

**MODALISTS (mid 2nd century)** - Teaching that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were separate manifestations of the same God.

**TERTULLIAN (close 2nd century)** - Taught that God was one substance with three persons, and that Christ was one person with two natures.

**SABELIUS (3rd century)** - Monotheistic, he taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were not three persons, but one.

**LUCIAN OF ANTIOH (d. 311)** - Like Arius, believed that the Logos was created by, and subordinate to, God. He was a martyr to his beliefs.

**ALEXANDER and ATHANASIUS (circa 315)** - Combined the doctrine of Tertullian with some of Origen's theology, teaching a Trinity of three persons of the same substance.

**PAULICIANS (660)** - They rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and taught that Christ had been created.

**SOCINIUS (b. 1539)** - Believed that Christ is a mortal man who, through miraculous birth, was the only begotten Son of God. Raised immortal, he was invested with a power equal to God.



# Historical Note On The Trinity

*From the Bible Study Monthly, England*

For many years pagans had been familiar with the Trinitarian beliefs of the East, beliefs which found their strongest expression in the complicated theology of Hinduism and Brahmanism. It is in honor of the three chief Brahman deities, Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma, that a very early hymn to the Trinity was composed. Nearly a hundred years before Christ, Kalidasa, one of the greatest of Indian poets, wrote:

“In those three Persons the one God was shown each first in place, each last—not one alone; Of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be First, second, third, among the blessed Three.”

The similarity of those words to the later doctrine of the Trinity as defined in the Athanasian Creed is obvious.

It was in the fourth Century., and nearly five hundred years after Kalidasa wrote his hymn, that the controversy which had been gathering force in the Church came to a head. Upon June 17th, A.D. 325, the Emperor Constantine opened the Council of Nicea, which was to last for two months, and at which three hundred and eighteen Bishops, drawn from all over Christendom, including one or two from Britain, sat to debate whether or not the doctrine of the Trinity should be incorporated into the accepted belief of the Christian Church.

Principal opponents in the controversy were Arius and Athanasius, both of Alexandria in Egypt. Arius was an old man, Athanasius a younger man well versed in philosophy and literature, and his ability and energy led the Council to decide in favor of his demand that the doctrine of the Trinity be declared the teaching of the Church. Only two bishops, Thomas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, supported Arius. The latter, being thus defeated, was excommunicated and banished, and his books ordered to be burnt. Even so, a considerable portion of Christendom refused at first to accept the doctrine. More especially was this the case in Northern Europe and Britain, for although it was nearly three hundred years after this Council that Augustine landed in Kent to convert the English to Latin Christianity, a British Christian Church having little or nothing to do with Rome had existed from very early times. Several centuries elapsed before the Trinity was firmly established as a generally accepted Christian doctrine.

# THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL

*Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.-Job 26:6*

Condensed from a Bible Answers television program

The word "hell" in the King James translation is the Hebrew word sheol. Everyone who has ever lived-the good, the bad, the indifferent-goes into Sheol at death. But sheol is translated three different ways: GRAVE (31 times), HELL (31 times), and PIT (3 times).

Every time a good person died, the King James version says he went into "the grave." If a bad person died, the translators supplied the word "hell." The reader is left with the impression that there are two different places one may go at death-one place for the good and a different place for the bad. In the original Hebrew, the good AND the bad go into the same condition at death: sheol.

## **Jacob Expected To Go to Sheol**

Jacob sent his son Joseph to see his other sons tending the flocks. In jealousy, these ten brothers seized Joseph and sold him into slavery. Then they convinced Jacob that Joseph had been killed by wild animals. Grief-stricken, he moaned: I will go down into Sheol unto my son mourning. Jacob expected to go to Sheol, and thought his beloved son was already there.

## **God's Holy Prophet Job**

Job was suffering so much that he prayed to go to sheol: Oh, that thou wouldest chide me in Sheol... till my change come. Job was not praying to go to be tormented. He was praying that he might die-go to sleep in sheol-be relieved of his pain-at rest-unconscious until the time God would call him back to life in the Kingdom.

## **Sheol Described**

Sheol means the condition of death, unconsciousness, sleep, which everyone experiences-good and evil, Christian, heathen, Jew, Moslem, atheist. All await the resurrection Job anticipated.

Speaking of man's death, Psalm 146:4 says: His breath goeth forth, he returns to his earth, in that very day *HIS THOUGHTS PERISH*.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (New American Standard) leaves sheol untranslated: Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for *THERE IS NO ACTIVITY OR PLANNING OR WISDOM IN SHEOL WHERE YOU ARE GOING*.

Hosea 13:14: I will ransom them from the power *of* the grave; I will redeem them from death . . . O *SHEOL*, I will by thy *DESTRUCTION*. This is a prophecy of how Christ's death will redeem all mankind, resulting in everyone being resurrected from Sheol, the grave. The condition of DEATH will be DESTROYED.

### **Sheol and Hades**

The New Testament books were originally written in Greek. The Greek word hades is an exact equivalent to the Hebrew word sheol-literally, the condition of unconscious death. We know this by comparing Acts 2:31 and Psalm 16:10. Peter applied the Psalm to our Lord Jesus, and said Christ's soul was not left in hell. Most people do not think of Jesus' soul ever being in hell. It is understandable when we realize that the hades of Acts 2:31 and the sheol of Psalm 16:10 both mean the condition of unconscious death. For parts of three days, Jesus was in the condition of unconscious death, but he was not left there: he was resurrected.

### **Hell and Tartaroo**

God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Greek, Tartaroo] and delivered them into chains *of* darkness, to *be* reserved unto judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). Tartaroo appears only once in the Greek Bible. It refers to the imprisonment of the fallen angels in chains of darkness with their liberties restrained.

### **Sleeping in Hades Being Destroyed in Gehenna**

The Greek word Gehenna is a transliteration of the Hebrew word Geh Hin-nom which means "Valley of Hinnom." In Jesus' day this valley was the garbage dump of the city. Refuse from the city, carcasses of animals, and executed criminals were thrown into it to be totally consumed. What the everburning flames failed to consume, the worms ate. When Jesus' audience heard the word Gehenna, they knew it meant "complete destruction."

If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell [Gehenna], into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9:43, 44). The people easily recognized Jesus' lesson and his figures of speech.

The word hades and its equivalent sheol are likened by the Bible to a sleep. Jesus said his friend Lazarus "sleepeth." When the disciples misunderstood, Jesus said plainly that Lazarus was dead. Jesus awakened Lazarus from the sleep of death to show the power of his heavenly Father.

The Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades* represent the sleep of death from which everyone will be awakened in Christ's kingdom.

*Gehenna*, on the other hand, is used as a symbol of complete destruction without the possibility of a resurrection.

### **The Lake of Fire**

*And the devil that deceived them was cast into THE LAKE OF FIRE and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.-Revelation 20:10*

The devil has not yet been cast into the lake of fire; he will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the kingdom. Being cast into the lake of fire refers to Satan's complete destruction. The beast and the false prophet (representing false systems) are also to be completely destroyed. The lake of fire is exactly like *Gehenna*-a .symbol of complete destruction.

### **The Crushing, The Destruction, of Satan**

*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly* (Rom. 16:20). So says the King James translation. The original Greek does not say *bruise*, but "crush." "Crush" means to destroy; in Revelation this destruction is shown by the symbol "lake of fire."

Revelation 20:10 adds that the devil will be *tormented day and night forever and ever*. This is another way of saying he will receive "everlasting punishment"; his everlasting punishment will be everlasting destruction. He will be completely crushed.

### **The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**

In Matthew 25:41, "the King" said, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. Verse 46 elaborates, *These shall go away into everlasting punishment*.

This is a parable. The sheep are not literal, the goats are not literal, and the fire is not literal. The goats represent those who, after being resurrected in God's kingdom, will refuse to obey; so they will die the Second Death from which there is no resurrection. Their everlasting punishment will be everlasting destruction--just like the devil and his angels.

### **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

In Luke 16:19, Jesus talks about a poor man named Lazarus who wanted to eat only the crumbs that fell from a rich man's table. He got nothing. He died and went to Abraham's bosom. Then the rich man died and went to hell (Greek: *hades*-the place or condition of the dead). There he cried to be relieved of his torment. He talked with Abraham and was told no one could change his condition.

What did Lazarus do that entitled him to such a great reward? He was poor. What did the rich man do that deserved such terrible treatment? He was rich. Surely this can not teach that all poor people go to Abraham's bosom when they die and all rich people are tormented everlastingly in hell.

If a literal rich man were in literal *hades*--*the place* of the dead he could not be conscious of anything. No literal rich man went to hell where he held a conversation with Abraham.

We suggest that this is one of many lessons Jesus taught about the change of dispensations he was inaugurating. The rich man pictures the nation of Israel. As a nation, and prior to the coming of Jesus their Messiah, they were considered rich because they alone had received God's promises. The Gentile nations were pictured by the beggar Lazarus because they were in a state of alienation from God.

Both groups died in the sense that their condition changed dramatically. The state of the Gentiles changed when the Gospel was brought to them. Believing Gentiles were carried into Abraham's bosom when they became children of Abraham through faith, thus inheriting God's promises.

The state of Israel changed radically when as a nation they were cast out of God's favor because they rejected Messiah. Since that time they have been "tormented" in the sense that Jews have suffered continuous persecution. Asking for a drop of water is a picture of their appeals for mercy and assistance. This interpretation concurs with the history of the past 2,000 years.

The Bible does not teach the concept of a burning hell, although many Christians have been so taught. Every scripture that is used to convey this error can be well explained in a better way.

## The Good News of Two Salvations

*Christ brought light and immortality to light through the gospel.—2 Timothy 1:10*

*by Larry Davis*

Good News is a very scarce commodity in the world we live in. Everyone desires it, wishes for it, and dreams about it, but rarely are their desires, wishes, and dreams attained in the reality of daily life. Listen to conversations, read a newspaper, or watch your favorite news program. Where is the good news? Where are the families with no illness, the schools with no drop-outs, the cities with no crime or drug users, the countries with no hunger or poverty, the continents with no wars, pollution, or weather problems? Look and listen carefully. Good news is seldom to be found! In our world good news is not only scarce but generally not a saleable product. Disasters, catastrophes, crises, pain, suffering, and death dominate our conversations and news-media because they are experienced by all people and are more profitable to media producers.

In a recent presidential campaign, where promises are readily made and easily broken, where were the promises of good news for all people.? I do not recall any! I would not have believed them had they been offered. Often what is chosen in the political process is the lesser of two evils, just as a cripple would choose a wheel-chair or crutches as being better than the alternative.

### **The Source of the Good News**

Only by turning our attention away from the world and its woes to the Word of God do we find promises that good news can indeed be realized.

The Scriptures reminds us afresh of the fact that Jesus is not merely the Savior of the church; he is also the Savior of the world. Many Bible students have overlooked this great truth, to their confusion. The belief in only one salvation is definitely bad news to the vast majority of mankind. How glad we are that God has provided two distinctly different salvations—one for the church in the Gospel age and the other for the world in the age to follow this age—the period of Messiah's kingdom.

God's word clearly teaches that there are two different salvations. Both contain salvation from sin and from its power and its penalty, the curse—sorrow, pain, crying, sighing, dying. Both are salvation to an everlasting happiness. But there the similarity ends. The church is being saved by a change of nature, while the world is to be saved without a change of nature—by a resurrection to the perfection of the human nature. The Bible assures us that God so loved the world [as well as the Church] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

We notice that the penalty upon the world is not that of an eternal torment, but a penalty of destruction. Christ died that the race might not perish but in due time be recovered from the death penalty through faith in Christ and obedience to him.

### **Few Now Believe**

Only a few can exercise the great faith necessary for a place in the heavenly reward as members of his bride class. In the kingdom, when the knowledge of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep, all will understand; all will hear and be able to believe in God's goodness and in his wonderful arrangement on man's behalf. Those who will then believe, and who will then accept God's favor and its terms of loyalty and obedience to the best of their ability, will be blessed by Messiah's kingdom. The Bible describes this as the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow with it.

### **Good News Proclaimed**

At the birth of Jesus the angels proclaimed good news of great joy for all people (Luke 2:10, 11). A Savior had been provided which would, in God's due time, bring the good news of two salvations to all mankind, both the living and the dead. We understand that the sacrifice of the Son of God will be a blessing also to inhabitants of world not yet populated, who will not have had any personal experience with sin. God seeks such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth. We believe that all these worlds surrounding us are designed to be homes to many intelligent beings yet to be created. We believe that it is God's delight to give joy and blessing to many creatures on various planes of existence.

To emphasize God's part in this transaction, Paul tells us we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe (1 Tim. 4:10). God will save all men, but will not specially save any except those who come unto him through Christ. God's arbitrary salvation of all men is not such as will conflict with their freedom of will or their liberty of choice, to give them life against their wills: I have set before you, this day, life and death; choose life that ye may live (Deut. 30:19).

### **Two Salvations Contrasted**

Simeon contrasted these two salvations, saying: Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, . . . a light to lighten the nations, and the glory of thy people, [Spiritual] Israel (Luke 2:30-32). This is in harmony with the declaration of the apostle of the fact that Jesus Christ, the Mediator, gave himself a ransom for all to be testified to all in due time. This is that which shall come to all men regardless of faith or will on their part. This good news of a Savior shall be to all people, but the special salvation from sin and death will come only to his people (Matt. 1:21)—those who believe into him—for we read that the wrath of God continues to abide on the unbeliever (John 3:36).

We see, then, that the general salvation, which will come to every individual, consists of light from the true light and an opportunity to choose life; and as the great majority of the race is in the tomb, it will be necessary to bring them forth from the grave in order to testify to them the good news of a Savior. The special salvation believers now enjoy in hope (Rom. 8:24) and the reality of which will be revealed in the Millennial age also to those who believe in that day is a full release from the thralldom of sin and the corruption of death into the glorious liberty of children of God. Attainment of all these blessings will depend upon hearty compliance with the laws of Christ's kingdom. The rapidity of the attainment to perfection will indicate the degree of love for the King and for his law of love.

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### **LIFE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH . . .**

**PROMISED TO ABRAHAM:** I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the *heaven*, and as the *sand which is upon the sea shore*. - Genesis 22:17

**TAUGHT BY JESUS:** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done *in earth*, as it is *in heaven*. - Matthew 6:10

**MENTIONED BY PAUL:** That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in on all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. - Ephesians 1:10

**PREDICTED BY THE APOSTLE JOHN:** And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. - Revelation 21:1

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### **Life and Immortality**

In our theme text the inspired apostle declares of our Lord Jesus that he abolished death [broke its hold on man] and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10). This shows two things: (1) that life in perfection, lasting life, is separate and distinct from immortality, indestructibility; and, (2) it shows that neither of these great blessings had been disclosed or made accessible previous to the gospel—the great salvation which began to be preached by our Lord (Heb. 2:3).

And what did our Lord's gospel bring to "light" respecting these two great blessings of life and immortality? First, it shows that by divine grace our Lord purchased the whole world of Adam's posterity and thus secured for every member of the race an opportunity to return from death to life. In other words, it declares coming times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:21). Restitution in its highest and ultimate sense will be the bringing of the



restored one out of the various degrees of death up to life as Adam enjoyed it before his disobedience. Second, the "light" of Christ's gospel shows a special provision in the divine plan for a special calling, testing, and preparing of a small number of his creatures. This invitation is to conform themselves to the Father's will and so to prove their loyal obedience to him that he might make of them "new creatures." These become the express image of his person and partakers of the divine nature (Heb. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:4). An important part of this nature is immortality. This our Lord Jesus brought to light in his gospel of God's grace.

These new creatures, begotten of the holy spirit, are given a work to do. They are not only to have a work in the future as kings and priests; they are to be ambassadors for God in the present time. They are to be his representatives amongst men. They are to seek to tell the message of God's love to those who do not understand it. They are to tell of the way of return to God to those who have lost their way and desire reconciliation.

Having these exceeding great and precious promises of good news for all fully established in our minds and hearts, having the comfort and peace these promises provide, let us go forth each day with renewed zeal to share this wonderful hope with all who have an ear to hear. Let us go forth in full assurance of faith that the "desire of all nations" will soon be realized and good news for all people will soon be a daily reality.

## **ANASTASIS - RESURRECTION**

". . . a standing up again, i.e. (lit.) a resurrection from death . . . raised to life again, resurrection, rise from the dead, that should rise, rising again."—Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

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What is resurrection? Many Christian people speak of the resurrection of Lazarus, the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain, the resurrection of Jairus' daughter. The Scriptures promise a resurrection of the dead to take place during Christ's kingdom, and we might think of this in the same terms. This mistake has greatly clouded thought upon this important subject. It isn't true that Lazarus and the others mentioned were resurrected! They were awakened, reanimated. There is wide difference between a mere awakening and a full, complete resurrection out of death. To awaken signifies to start again the vital life signs—resuscitation. This is all that was done for Lazarus or for the son of the widow of Nain, or for Jairus' daughter. They were still under the sentence of death, and only experienced an extension of the present dying conditions.

The word, "resurrection," as found in the English New Testament, is derived from the Greek word, anastasis, in every case except Matthew 27:53. The word anastasis occurs 43 times in the New Testament, and means to stand again, or to raise up again. It is never used to mean merely the raising of a corpse to a standing position out of a tomb. It doesn't mean the mere revivifying or starting up the machinery of life. It means something far more important. It is used as the antithesis, or opposite of death—the recovery out of death. A careful examination of the 43 texts of Scripture in which this word anastasis occurs will find them all in absolute agreement with the definition: a re-standing, a recovery from death, an entrance or re-entrance into perfect life.

### **What Constitutes Life**

To get a proper view of the meaning of anastasis, we must understand the Creator's view of what constitutes life. We must also discern what constitutes dying and death. Then we can grasp the thought of resurrection, the rising up again out of death into the full perfection of life from which all in Adam fell.

Only two men ever possessed full life: Adam, before his transgression, before he brought upon himself the curse or sentence of death; and the man Christ Jesus. At the moment of disobedience, Adam's life was forfeited, and the dying process began. Adam sank lower and lower into death, until finally he was completely dead, as he was judicially dead from the moment of his sentence. "Dying thou shalt die." (Genesis 2:17 —margin) Adam's posterity has never had life. (Romans 3:10) The spark which flickers for a few years is not recognized by God as being life in the full sense, in view of the fact that the death sentence rests upon all ("As in Adam all die . . .") Those presently born into the world are born merely to a dying condition. From the standpoint of justice, all are dead. (Romans

3:24; Matthew 8:22) God recognizes only those who come into Christ as having life, those who accept Him as their Savior. ("... so in Christ shall all be made alive." — 1 Corinthians 15:22)

Let us keep in mind what constitutes life and what constitutes dying. Remember from what a glorious height and perfection of life man fell into his present condition of degradation and death. Then, and only then, can we appreciate the meaning of the word anastasis as a standing again, a raising up again to the condition before The Fall occurred—the condition of perfection in which Father Adam stood. It is to this condition of perfection that God proposes to bring all of mankind. (1 Timothy 2:4) The requirement is that when brought to a knowledge of the Truth, they accept divine favor, and demonstrate their loyalty by obedience to the spirit of the divine law.

### **Raising to Life Again**

Anastasis is raising to life again. This is where the beauty of God's plan comes to life.

Anastasis is Isaiah 35:5, 6: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Anastasis is Job 33:24, 25: "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness."

Anastasis is Malachi 4:2: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings . . . ."

Anastasis is Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

While "all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth," the New Creation, the Little Flock, the Church of Christ, or those in Christ, shall rise first.

# Behold the Bridegroom

*Go ye out to meet him.—Matthew 25:6.*

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We are living in tremendous days—days such as never have been since the creation of man upon this earth. These are days when men's hearts are failing them for fear as they consider the great advances which have been made in scientific knowledge. Man's knowledge has outpaced his moral development, and because he has not learned to control himself, and selfishness reigns supreme in the hearts of the vast majority, there is a fear of what is coming upon the world. The forces of destruction daily grow more powerful and terrible in the earth, and "might" is the god which men and nations are worshipping in the sure knowledge, however, that this god of "might" will at last prove to be a boomerang which will encompass the complete destruction of our civilization.

And yet it is our privilege to be living in this darkest hour of the world's history. A comparatively few out of all earth's millions have their eyes fixed upon the Word of God. Their trust and confidence is in its Author, and as they look out upon world events, they see the fulfillment of things recorded centuries ago—they see that all that is happening in the world today are the recorded steps of the Almighty God toward a consummation which will far surpass the Utopian dreams of men of every age and clime.

## **What Does The Lord's Return Mean To You?**

No real Bible student, no sincere lover of God, can fail to be intensely interested in the epoch-making events of today. The signposts of God's Word has been pointing toward this very time in which we are now living, and if our hearts have been praying that age-old prayer: "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Then there will be an eagerness and watchfulness on our part which is in striking contrast to the comfortable complacency of so many professing Christians.

O brethren, what does the Lord's return mean to you? Can we think about it, can we talk about it, and not experience the emotions of those two travelers to Emmaus? Do not our hearts burn within us? If not, there is something wrong, and our interest in the subject is nothing more than academic. This event is the greatest happening of all time, and if we have fully appreciated its tremendous import, there will be a zeal, a warmth, a liveliness of spirit which can be likened only to those early days of Church history after the Pentecostal outpouring.

## **They Knew Not**

There have been other crises in the history of the world, the first of which was the Flood, in which all but eight persons were destroyed. This brought about the passing away of a "world." Men look back upon this now and realize how stupendous was the event, yet of those who were immediately affected, our Lord said: "In the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away" (Matt. 24:38,39). They knew not. It always has been so—the great majority of living people never seem able to appreciate the real significance of the events which are transpiring during their own lifetime, although they are able to look back on past events and see how the course of the world has been affected by the very happenings which were not understood at the time. It always has been so, and is so even today.

Consider the tremendous event of our Lord's First Advent—an event which has had its effect upon every part of the civilized world, and beyond. That was the greatest crisis-period up to that time, and as we look back from this far distant time, we know that not only has it affected world history, but that every individual of the human family is vitally concerned in the First Advent of our Lord. Yet how did those who were then living view this great event? The coming of Jesus attracted very little attention from the world at large; just the faintest of ripples upon the waters of mankind—hardly noticed at all. And in the land of his birth, of those who should have known and understood its implications, almost all were either indifferent, or poured scorn upon his claims, and this in spite of the fact that all Israel was in expectation of the Messiah. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." There he was, for thirty-three and a half years in their midst—the One of whom all the Prophets had spoken—the One who was to change the world; yet they knew him not—they knew not the time of their visitation.—Luke 19:44.

## **So Shall Also The Presence Of The Son Of Man Be**

And now, the greatest crisis of all time is upon the earth. Many see the troubles which are upon mankind; many realize that this is "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"—that does not need a very keen vision—and their hearts fail them for fear. There are others more highly favored—the professed people of God—who discern in these events a fulfillment of many prophecies in God's Word which speak of the final overthrow of Satan's empire preparatory to the establishment of God's Kingdom of righteousness and peace. Fewer still see further than this—the indications of our Lord's promised return and of the Church's near deliverance and glorification. These see their calling to be associated with the great Messiah in the work of uplifting mankind in a ministry of reconciliation, bringing them gradually to perfection and harmony with God, their Creator.

But there is something else happening to which we do well to give heed. Hidden away in this great vortex of events in the earth there is something transpiring which even many enlightened Christians dismiss from their minds with a shrug as of comparatively small importance, as worthy only of a passing reference, as just an incident in the great

panorama of world history. Yet what is now transpiring before our eyes are the first beginnings of the next important stage in the outworking of the Divine Plan of the Ages. Surely the hearts of those who have been so highly favored by God with a clearer understanding of his purposes should thrill to see that we are now passing out of one important stage of this wondrous Plan into a **NEW ERA** which is vital and essential **BEFORE** the world of mankind can receive those blessings of life, health, and peace determined by God from the foundation of the world.

### **A New Development In God's Plan**

There seems to be a parallel between the end of the Jewish Age and the closing days of this Gospel Dispensation. Both are periods of transition during which there is a gradual merging into a new development in God's dealings with mankind, and the great majority of those, during both periods, to whom have been "committed the oracles of God" have found it difficult to grasp the changing situation or to discern clearly all the implications of the times in which they live.

At the close of the Jewish Age the eyes of God's people were fixed intently upon an earthly kingdom, and most of them were blind to the new development which concerned the spiritual aspect of God's Kingdom. Even after the resurrection of our Lord, this earthly kingdom so filled the minds of the disciples that they asked of him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6.). But the last words of the risen Lord just prior to his ascension indicated that their future work would not be confined to Israel, but would extend beyond Jerusalem, and all Judea, into Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. It was very hard for Peter and the other Apostles to grasp the changing situation. And now, at the end of this Gospel Age, during the days in which we are privileged to live, the eyes of God's people are intently fixed upon the spiritual phase of the Kingdom, to such an extent that many do not clearly appreciate or eagerly grasp the fact that the earthly phase of that Kingdom is about to be inaugurated, and manifested to all the world. May we never forget that ours is a spiritual calling, and that our goal is to be associated with Christ in the spirit realm of the Kingdom; but also, let us not minimize the truly great beginnings of a new development in the outworking of God's great Plan.

### **A Spiritual And An Earthly Seed**

It is well to recall the clear teaching of Scripture that there is much yet to be done before any blessing can come to the nations of the earth. There is a seed to be developed and prepared, and that seed is not only to be as the stars of heaven, but also as the sand which is upon the seashore (Gen. 22:17); in other words, there is an earthly seed to be prepared as well as a spiritual, and until then the Gentile nations must remain unblest. There so often seems to be a tendency to overlook that important fact. All Israel must first be saved—that is the clear teaching of Peter, the Apostle to "the circumcision," and of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. One can not too often be reminded of the summary of Peter's words recorded in Acts 15:14-17. Verse 14 reads: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. There we have recorded

God's selection of the Church from among the Gentiles—a work which has occupied the whole period of this Gospel Age, and is now rapidly drawing to its close.

It is the same work to which Paul refers in his Epistle to the Romans, chapter 11, verses 17 and 24. There the Apostle speaks of the "natural branches" which were broken off from the root because of unbelief, while the Gentile believers, represented by the "wild olive tree" were grafted in. Paul, however, does not suggest that "the natural branches" have no further part in God's purposes for mankind. No, he says that this cutting away of "the natural branches" was only for a limited period—until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. "For I would not, brethren, writes the Apostle, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery [or secret], lest ye be wise in your own conceit; that blindness [or hardness] in part is happened to Israel, until the filling up of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:25,26.). It was partly in order to guard the Gentile believer against a spirit of pride and superiority that Paul wrote the eleventh chapter of Romans. Boast not against the branches, he writes. "Be not high-minded, but fear."—(Verses 18-20).

These words of the Apostle Paul are in full accord with the sequence of events as recorded by Peter in Acts 15: "After this [that is, after the calling out of the Gentiles] I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up" (Ver. 16). Then it is, and not till then, that "the residue of men will seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my Name is called, saith the Lord"—(Ver. 17).

### **Signs Of The Coming Kingdom**

If therefore we believe that the fullness of the Gentiles is about complete, and are convinced concerning the signs of our Lord's return, we should be eagerly looking around us and scanning the pages of God's Word in order to see this new development of God's Plan which must synchronize with the closing days of the Church on earth. If it is God's Plan, we cannot, we dare not be indifferent to what is taking place in the earth today. Our eyes should be frequently and eagerly turning to the land of prophecy, the land of Israel. As we do this, there will be an urgent incentive to greater diligence and faithfulness in our Christian walk.

Our Lord himself indicated to his followers some of the signs they should be looking for at the time of his return, preparatory to the establishment of his Kingdom: "And he spake to them a parable; behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Then he adds those words which should mean so much to us: "Verily I say unto you, This generation [the generation that sees these things come to pass] shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." (Luke 21:29-32).

Why did Jesus use the illustration of the fig tree? The interpretation is provided in the 24th chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy, where the Prophet records that the Lord showed

him "two baskets of figs." This was after Nebuchadnezzar had carried away the Jews into Babylon. In verses 8-10 one basket which contained "evil figs" is used to represent the overthrow and captivity of the Jews at the commencement of "the times of the Gentiles," and their subsequent experiences throughout the whole period of Gentile dominion. The "good figs" are used in verses 5-7 to represent their final regathering in their own land, and their conversion: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

Just as the complete fulfillment of verses 8-10 extended beyond the Babylonian captivity, so also this prophecy of the good figs was not fulfilled at the end of the seventy years captivity. It is not until the Lord's return that the fig tree would show signs of God's returning favor. This prophecy of Jeremiah is one which cannot be spiritualized without doing despite to our reasoning faculties. The people who because of their idolatry and waywardness were to be dispersed—a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse—are the same people whom God has pledged to re-establish in the land of Israel.

Perhaps some will ask: "What about the other trees of which Jesus spoke in this parable of Luke 21? Why single out the fig tree?" The fig tree has a special significance because Jesus singled it out, but as a further "sign" of the Lord's *parousia* he informs us in parabolic language that the fig-tree nation would be shooting forth its leaves at a time when other nations also would give evidence of life in their struggles for independence and national sovereignty.

### **A Further Significant Sign**

Was there ever a time as this when peoples who for centuries have been subject to the great powers of earth, have endeavored to throw off the yoke of servitude, and to claim their rights as sovereign and independent nations? The once great British Empire, which for many, many years derived her wealth from the toil and labor and resources of subject peoples, has been forced to bow to this demand for independence and sovereignty by those who were once described as "the backward races"; and the process continues. India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Africa—indeed "all the trees" are "shooting forth." The once great French Empire is disintegrating under the same influence, to which the troubles in Indo-China bear witness; and so also with all the other colonial empires of the world—and all this at the time when the "fig tree" is putting forth her leaves. Linked with all this is the failing hearts of men as with fear and dread they look after those things which are coming on the earth.

It is at such a time as this that the Lord's disciples should be looking up, and lifting their heads as they see the nearness of their deliverance. Oh, how circumspect we would be if in our hearts there was a conviction that the last days of our pilgrimage had been reached!



If we could but count the days to the time of our change, how eagerly we would throw aside many of the trivialities which claim our time and attention. The petty grievances, the arguing about non-essentials and things that do not profit, would give place to that warmth of love and zeal which characterized the earliest days of the Christian Church. Alas, instead of that we see the vast majority living their lives as though all things continue as they were from the beginning. What if it were tomorrow? Would we find it necessary to hurriedly reshape our affairs, to alter our plans, to scrutinize more closely our motives, and to break down the barriers which have separated us from fellow-brethren in Christ? Do we ardently long for "his appearing"? May we here pause and answer honestly the question—"How great is my desire to 'meet the Lord' and to see him face to face?"

*As pants the hart for water brooks,  
So pants my soul for Thee:  
O, when shall I behold Thy face,  
When wilt Thou call for me*

How easy to sing these words, but are we ready if the call should come? How blest we are if we can really say "Yes"; if from the heart we can utter those words: Even so, come Lord Jesus. That is what the Lord's return is all about! If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:3). Do those words of Jesus stir your heart? Would the return of a loved one from afar stir you more? If so, you are not ready for him—and the time of our deliverance is at hand! "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away," said Jesus. (Luke 21:33). How essential, brethren, that we should not only be able to clearly discern the signs which indicate the Lord's return (there are many who are able to do this); if it means anything to us we must also recognize its implications, for they have a direct bearing upon our lives and daily walk. It was Peter who wrote in 2 Peter 3:11: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved—today we can say, Seeing then that all these things are being dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness"—RSV.

### **Watch Therefore**

Our Lord indicates that it would be at this very time when there would be the greatest tendency to become occupied with lesser things, and the need for watchfulness would be more urgent than ever before. "Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare" (Luke 21:34, RSV). There must be a sense of urgency and eager, joyful anticipation—a daily living in the imminence of his appearing. The cares of this life are linked with those more manifest indications of worldliness—"dissipation and drunkenness," and how they tend to crowd in upon every one of the Lord's people to deaden the awareness of the near approach of "his appearing."

Our Father has designed that all the devoted followers of the Lord throughout the Age, from the earliest days, should live in the keen expectation of the Lord's return and of their deliverance and gathering together to him. How can we who have been so

enlightened concerning the *parousia* of the Lord do otherwise? Jesus did say, "This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" and we must accept his word! Almost eighty years have passed since 1874 A.D.; almost forty years since 1914! "Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him."

### **The One Certain Sign**

Shall we consider one of the prophecies in the Old Testament which are vitally connected with the "fig-tree" nation, for this sign of the "fig tree" is one of the near "appearing" of the Lord. There have been many wars during this Gospel Age; there have been many times of trouble, each increasing in severity and encompassing more and more of the nations of the earth; never has there been a budding "fig-tree" sign until these latter years, and Jesus informs us that this the one certain sign that he is at the doors and his appearing is at hand! That surely infers that the Church's course on earth is almost run!

It should be noted that Jesus did not say that we were to look for a fig tree full grown and mature. The first signs of life were to be the indications that our deliverance is near at hand. Matthew's record says: From the fig tree learn its lesson: "As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates" (Matt. 24:32,33—RSV). It is the "watcher" who will see the first faint beginnings of a revived Israel.

### **The Valley Of Dry Bones**

There are many things to transpire before Israel is a nation fully reconciled to God and enjoying the destiny which he has marked out for it. This is graphically portrayed in Ezekiel's vision of the "dry bones" recorded in chapter 37. In the first fourteen verses we read: "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, Son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your

graves and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

### **Can These Bones Live?**

Note the sequence of events: "a noise," "a shaking" or earthquake, and then bone being joined to bone. Then sinews and flesh upon the bones, and all covered with skin. Thus far, in his vision Ezekiel sees a complete organism or entity, without life! And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; yet there was no breath in them (Ver. 8). In verse 11 it is recorded: "These bones are the whole house of Israel." What, then, should we expect to see? What are we seeing today?

It was during the forty years prior to 1914 that the longings of scattered Jewry, the *diaspora*, to be united as one nation in the land of their fathers, began to find expression in the aims and aspirations of the Zionist movement. But the "bones" were so dry and withered, there seemed little hope that the ideals of a few Jewish zealots would ever be realized. Can these bones live? would seem to express how humanly impossible it was. For nearly 2,000 years that people had been dispersed among all the nations, and while retaining their separate identity, they had grown up and lived their lives in environments and circumstances which varied as widely as the nations among whom they were scattered. How wise and wonderful is our God! This people, designed by God to be his channel of blessing to all the families of the earth, must needs gain their experience by contact with every race and kindred of mankind, ranging from the most "backward races" to the highly civilized. Yet surely the sentiments of many were echoed in the words of verse 11: "Dried are our bones, and lost is our hope; we are quite cut off" (Leeser). But in 1914 there was a "shaking" or earthquake!

One rendering of verse 7 is: "There was a noise, and behold a commotion, and the bones came together, bone to its bone." In 1917, during this "commotion," when Palestine was freed from Turkish oppression, there began a great regathering of Jews which has never ceased to this day. The earthquake has not yet subsided; the noise and commotion continue, but in it all, the words of the Prophet Ezekiel are being fulfilled. Bone joins to bone, as Jews from seventy-four nations of the earth have gathered together until the Jewish population of Israel has swelled from 56,000 in 1914 to nearly two million today!

Yet that was not all the Prophet saw in vision. There was a further development—the skeleton took shape. "And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above" (Ver. 8). This is the point of time to which we have reached today! Turning our eyes from the prophecy to the land of Israel, we see not a skeleton, but a nation, for in May, 1948, the bones took shape and form, and for the first time since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, 2500 years ago, Israel is a sovereign and independent nation.

### **But There Was No Breath In Them**

"But," some may say, "only a few of all those hundreds of thousands of returned Jews have faith in the Holy Scriptures, and fewer still have accepted Jesus as the Messiah. They are there in unbelief. Furthermore, the Ancient Worthies and those who will be 'princes in all the earth' have not been resurrected to their position as the leaders of restored Israel." How true that is; how in accord with the words of the prophecy: "But there was no breath in them" (Ver. 8). Spiritually, Israel is not yet alive! Yet how interesting to note a faint stirring in the hearts of many individuals in Israel. The President of Israel—Isaac Ben-Zvi—is reported to be "a man of the Book" and when formally taking office he carried with him his family Bible. In the course of his inaugural speech to the Knessett he spoke these words: "We are witnessing today the wondrous process of the joining of the tribes of Israel, bone to bone and flesh to flesh, the merging of them into one nation. . . . I pray that the Rock and Redeemer of Israel may prosper our ways, and that in our days Judah may be saved and Israel dwell securely." Shall not all the Lord's people respond with an Amen!

### **I Will Make A New Covenant After Those Days**

What then is the next step in Israel's revival? The prophecy indicates that it is the loosing of the "four winds," which is to bring life to the nation. Then it is that God's spirit will be poured out upon the nation, and he will make with them a New Covenant, putting his law "in their inward parts, and writing it in their hearts." The giving of life to the nation is the next stage in her development. This is where we are so vitally concerned because "they without us shall not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40). In other words, the Church must first be glorified; her deliverance must be accomplished; her course on earth completed! Israel waits for the appearance, the manifestation of her Messiah, and "when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Have we lost that sense of urgency which was such a marked feature of the Bible Student movement during the years prior to 1914? Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed (Rom. 13:11, RSV), yet the attitude of expectancy and eager anticipation seems largely to have declined. Surely the knowledge we have received concerning our Lord's *parousia* should keep us alert and increasingly watchful! It is not sufficient to be able to produce all the reasons why we believe the Lord is present. Does that satisfy the deepest longings of the heart? "I shall be satisfied"—when?—"when I awake in thy likeness." That surely must be the sentiment of every true lover of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what we should be looking for now; it should be the prompting motive of our lives—the one thing with which we are concerned.

## **Behold the Bridegroom!**

How many of the Lord's people have rejoiced in that proclamation, and alas, how many have quarreled about it also. How many have again and again reiterated their conviction that we are now living in the days of our Lord's *parousia*, and have joined in the proclamation—"Behold the Bridegroom!" But what has it done for us? What is it doing in us? Can we remain unmoved as we meditate upon it? Does it stir our hearts? Has it brought home to us the fact that his appearing cannot be long delayed? Has it made the things of earth lose their attraction, and caused us to redouble our efforts to put on more of the graces of the spirit and those qualities of heart and mind which the Lord will expect and delight to see in us when he appeareth?

"**BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!**" is only part of the proclamation—there is something to be done—"GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM!" That is just as essential as the recognition that the time of our Lord's return has come. All the signs indicate that very soon now the door will be shut, and the last member of the Bride will have made herself ready.

*We haste, because that door once shut  
Will never ope again.*

## The Simplicity Of The Gospel

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

—2 Corinthians 11:3

*By Carl Hagensick*

Although the meaning of the word translated simplicity can be challenged, there is no question that the organization of the early church was a model of simplicity.

The harmony and activity of the core of the early church—the 3,000 who accepted the message on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) is beautifully expressed in verse 42 of the same chapter: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

In this short text are set forth four functions which their assemblages served: (1) doctrine; (2) fellowship; (3) breaking of bread; and (4) prayers.

### Doctrine

The teachings of Jesus, while not contradictory to the laws of Moses, were at a sufficient tangent from orthodox Jewry as to bring upon the early church the charge of heresy. "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets."—Acts 24:14

New doctrinal concepts included not only the removal of circumcision as a rite and the rejection of the Law Covenant as a vehicle to obtain life, but touched personal life styles as well—the meats they would eat, their fellowship with gentiles and even the concept of personal sacrifice.

The clash of Christianity with Judaism produced many conflicts. The controversies between Paul and Apollos concerning baptism of the spirit, and between Paul and Peter (and others from James) concerning the full acceptance of the gentiles serve as worthy examples.

Despite the heat of such theological battles—Paul withstanding Peter to the face—there remained a great respect between them. Paul and Peter mutually commend each other to the church despite their differences (2 Peter 3:15, 16). Paul recommends that the church at Corinth entertain Apollos (1 Cor. 16:12). John's condemnation of Diotrephes for not permitting other brethren to come serves as a negative example (3 John 9, 10).

Dialog and discussion on the debatable issues of the day were the methods used in the early church concerning matters of doctrinal difference. The endeavor was to have each

individual fully persuaded in his own mind (Rom. 14:5). The assurance was that in matters of difference God would reveal the correct thoughts to the sincere Christian (Phil. 3:15).

### **Fellowship**

The Greek word here translated "fellowship," *koinonia*, is far broader than merely the sharing of a conversation. The word denotes a partnership of action as well as words. Such partnership is based on meaningful communication.

Regular gatherings of the saints were promoted in the primitive church as a means of fostering this interchange of thought, and for the purpose also of permitting cooperative service in the Lord's work.

Representatives sent by one congregation were regularly accepted by other congregations. This is evidenced by the missionary journeys of Paul and the ready hearing given to Apollos of Alexandria in the churches of Greece and Asia Minor.

A common feature of gatherings in the church at that time was sharing a common meal. This may have been particularly true on Sundays, in memory of Jesus sharing bread with the disciples in Emmaus. These meals, however, served a deeper need, that is a relaxed period of time to exchange Christian experiences and thoughts.

The Apostle Paul included these gatherings in his admonition to the Jewish Christians to "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. 10:25).

### **Breaking of Bread**

While including these common meals, the meaning of this phrase is probably deeper, including two additional activities. One was the regular visitation of Christians with each other to share their newfound faith. This appears to be the thought in verse 46 of Acts 2, where the Christians were said to be breaking bread from house to house.

A still deeper meaning may be implied by this term to the Jewish mind familiar with the word of Isaiah 58:7: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?":

An active concern for the poor and needy in their midst was an integral part of the primitive church. Brethren laid aside portions of money and supplies for those less fortunate financially. Examples of this can be seen in the collections for the brethren in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4) and the support of Paul by the brethren in Thessalonica.

"But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—1 John 3:17

## Prayer

The concern for the needs of another were not limited to financial means but, more importantly, centered on an active prayer life. The burdens of these prayers was not merely personal needs, but frequently cultivated an intense interest in the spiritual lives of one another.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James 5:16

The prayer meeting that was being held when Peter was in prison served as a good example of this concern for each other. Evidently they were not praying for his release from prison, but for his being strengthened to endure whatever his experience would hold. This appears to be the reason for their peculiar reaction when he appeared at the gate to the young maiden, Rhoda.

"And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel" [messenger, Strong's Concordance].—Acts 12:15

## Leadership

The early church was congregational in church government, with each assembly being free and independent of each other. The missionary outreach of one would establish new congregations in nearby areas, but seek soon to bring them to a level where they could conduct their own affairs independently.

An important part of this work of outreach was the selection of local leadership. The Apostle Paul addresses this matter in his pastoral letter to Titus. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). Notice the same concept in Acts 14:23: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

The method of ordination in the early church is implied by the word translated "ordained" in Acts 14:23. The Greek word *cheirotoneo* literally means "to stretch forth the hand." This definition by itself is inconclusive for one may stretch forth his hands in many ways: (1) palm down to endorse or put a blessing on; (2) with pointed finger to select or name one; (3) to meet another hand as in a handshake or gesture of acceptance; or (4) stretched upright as in the casting of a vote.

Strong's Concordance suggests that it is "to be a hand-reacher or voter." This method of church government, with ultimate authority resting in the congregation, is endorsed by the noted historian J. L. Mosheim in his *Ecclesiastical History*, page 21: "The people were, undoubtedly, the first in authority; for the apostles showed, by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly; and such a method of proceeding was both prudent and necessary in those



critical times. It was therefore, the assembly of the people, which chose rulers and teachers, or received them by a free and authoritative consent, when recommended by others. The same people rejected or confirmed, by their suffrages, the laws that were proposed by their leaders to the assembly; excommunicated profligate and unworthy members of the church; restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges; passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and dissension that arose in their community; examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons; and, in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with sovereign power."

### **Finances**

In the very beginning of the Christian church a communal society was formed. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."—Acts 2:44, 45

This soon did not prove feasible, but the spirit of the concept was continued by an active concern of each Christian for the financial needs of fellow Christians. These collections, however, were to be quietly provided with no drives to raise funds (see 1 Cor. 16:1-4). There is no record of funds being collected for church buildings, expenses of the Lord's work or the support of the missionaries (though Paul accepted funds when voluntarily proffered.)

Simplicity appears to have been the guideline in all they attempted to do. With meager means and under conditions of severe persecution, they nevertheless continued to grow—on at least two occasions adding 3,000 and 4,000 members respectively.

It is this pattern of a simple organization, ruled from the bottom and not by an hierarchy from the top, that became a hallmark of the Bible Student movement when it was organized in the last quarter of the 19th century.

## *News & Views*

**Editor**  
**Len Griehs**  
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### **LETTERS**

Nominations for the 1994/1995 Board of Directors for the Pastoral Bible Institute are being solicited. Any current members of the P.B.I. are eligible for nomination. The names of prospective candidates should be submitted to the nominating committee, attention of W. T. Jones, Route 640, Box 154, Hudgins, VA 23076. The current terms of Directors expires on June 4, 1994.

*A New Subscriber writes*

Thank you for your very prompt response as to the Herald. I have to say that it has a very modern format. I was informed of the change in the magazine and its good articles by -. I can see that it has everything that he said. In the past Br. Shallieu had close contact with Brs. Paul Thompson, John Reed, the Mitchells and others. It would be nice if articles could be submitted like unto the *Beauties of the Truth*. Even a repetition of some past articles would be good. I like the new format, the center articles on current events. All have certainly turned the magazine into a good thing that does not seem to have organizational lines, freedom to speak and speak out which oftentimes is a lack in conventions and other writings. You can draw from the talent of other brethren out there much like the original *Zion's Watch Tower*. It makes for a healthy condition and I like it. I shall look forward to future copies. I also like the color and picture designs.

*-Charles Thornton, Southfield, Michigan*

## **BIBLE STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

*Excerpts from the Report of the Jerusalem Convention and Israel Tour, April 18- May 6, 1993. Submitted by Paul Mali, New London, Connecticut, who was the organizer of the convention and tour.*

The Jerusalem Convention reached out to any and all brethren who wanted to go to Jerusalem. There was no screening, no preferential treatment, nor any age disqualification. A total of 307 brethren from nine countries attended. The convention was translated into four languages: English, French, Polish and German. Meeting the brethren from various parts of the world was an experience in itself as a preview to a future heavenly meeting. Newness, strangeness and non-familiarity was diminished because the desire to reach out was not just a convention goal but also an individual desire.

The focus on Israel strengthened and edified the brethren to see, feel, and experience the times in ancient Israel as well as Israel today, now that God is favoring Israel.

Visiting historic sights was a sobering and sanctifying experience. Walking in the traditional paths of the prophets, seeing where the miracles were enacted, and witnessing the events as background to biblical beliefs really made the Bible come to life. Over sixty sites in Israel and Egypt were visited and each given a professional explanation. Six buses transported the brethren.

Most were visiting Israel for the first time. Each returned as a source of information and insight in their local ecclesias for Bible studies and group discussions.

Three Bible Students from Israel attended the convention. Two were known, but another was introduced for the first time. Herman Betzner, 93 years old, was recently discovered to have been living for the past 37 years in northern Israel. He has been a Bible Student for 70 years, first in Germany. His twin brother was jailed by the Nazis. Their refusal to give up their beliefs brought torture and persecution. As a result, Br. Betzner immigrated to Israel and now runs a kibbutz.

Five special outside visitor presentations enriched our perspective of the Jews, the immigrants and the mysteries of the Temple. Three brethren took the special opportunity to be immersed in the same river (Jordan) as Jesus.

Permission to use the amphitheater of Hebrew University (for one evening service) was granted only by the Lord's overruling providence. In the past, the only programs that have been allowed to be presented in that spot were special events involving heads of state, the doctoral graduation ceremony, and festivals celebrating the statehood of Israel. The evening was completed with a dinner for all as special guests of the University.

Forty-eight participated in the extended tour to Egypt. Those brethren wanted to visit the sites and collect as much of the culture as they could to appreciate the names, the geography, and conditions as background for scriptural understanding.

## **AROUND THE WORLD**

*This issue of News & Views focuses on three events: Israel's concession to the PLO, the World Parliament of Religions gathering in Chicago, Illinois, and the Pope's visit to Denver, Colorado.*

### ***Israel***

*EDITOR'S COMMENT: On November 2, 1917, the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, issued a declaration in London stating that His Majesty's Government was ready to support the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The Zionist movement took that one paragraph promise and from it, step by step, erected the state of Israel. Nearly 76 years later, on August 30, 1993, the Israeli Government approved an agreement sanctioning the creation of an autonomous Palestinian homeland in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. Certainly the events of the past few months in Israel have grabbed the attention of just about the whole world. Bible students have followed the events in Israel since the "Balfour declaration" and are now assessing the biblical significance of the peace moves between Israel and the PLO, Israel and Jordan and Israel and Syria. Because of the constant change in events, news is outdated quickly. Therefore, for the next few issues, articles quoted will not be on the events themselves, but on the subtle changes occurring that may help link them to prophecy. In this first series, we include a calendar of events so that all may see God's timetable is not necessarily our own-it took over 1500 years for the events to unfold which led up to the Israel-Arab peace. (Which may not even yet be peace!)*

*We welcome readers' comments ore interpreting these events.*

## ***Milestones on the Road to Peace***

**November 1977:** Egyptian President Anwar elSadat travels to Jerusalem to offer peace in exchange for land lost to Israel in the 1967 war.

**September 1978:** Menachem Begin and Sadat sign the Camp David accords which guide peacemaking efforts.

**March 1979:** Israel and Egypt sign a peace treaty in which Israel agrees to withdraw from the Sinai peninsula.

**July 1982:** Egypt breaks off talks concerning the west bank after Israel invades Lebanon.

**September 1982:** President Ronald Reagan proposes a Middle East peace initiative, which will result in a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank.

**April 1987:** Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Jordan's King Hussein reach a secret agreement on a framework for an international peace conference but it is opposed by the Likud party in Israel.

**March 1988:** Secretary of State George Shultz proposes to Yitzhak Shamir a permanent settlement of the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza strip.

**November 1988:** The Palestine National Council issues a Declaration of Independence for the State of Palestine, accepting for the first time the 1947 plan to create Jewish and Arab states in Israel.

**May 1989:** The Israeli government approves an initiative allowing for elections in the territories for representatives to negotiate self-rule.

**December 1989:** Secretary of State James Baker tries to arrange an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue but disagreements result in the breakup of the Israeli coalition government.

**October 1991:** The peace conference opens in Madrid under the sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

After that conference, direct bilateral talks begin among Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and representatives of the Palestinians.

*(New York Times, 9/5/93)*

"In my age, I would like to see the end of the bloodshed and to be part of the dream of generations of Jews for a thousand years-to see the return of a strong Jewish state here in the land of Israel, living in peace, focusing on domestic issues rather than on wars of diplomacy," said Yitzhak Rabin in an interview.

Opposition leaders in Israel think Rabin has already decided to return all of the (Golan) Heights to Syria over a period of years. As for the occupied West Bank, Likud leaders believe that Rabin is prepared to see a new country emerge there in five years. On some key points, Rabin won't yield. "Jerusalem," he says, "will remain united and under Israeli sovereignty as its capital forever."

***(Institutional Investor, July 1993)***

From a Zionist perspective, it may be that in the future, people will regard 1993 as the end of our 100 years of solitude in the land of Israel. This may be the end of the prologue for Zionism and now, perhaps, it's time to begin the Israeli story proper: to consolidate Israel as a safe, stable, legitimate home for the Jewish people and its Arab citizens, a focus of creative energies and a source of blessing for Israeli's neighbors.

***(Amos Oz, founder of Israel's Peace Now movement; originally appearing in Hebrew in the newspaper Yedioth Aharonot.)***

It does not take a prophetic gift to predict what will happen next (in Israel). There may be a season of what appears to be peace, but plotters and conspirators will be working to achieve their religious and political goal of eradicating the "Zionist infidels" and reclaiming the land for Allah. It (the peace agreement) will allow Arafat to achieve, piece by piece, what he could not get all at once in five wars and numerous terrorist acts. This agreement will inevitably lead to another war. Which Arafat is to be believed-the one who says he will do all he can to control the terrorist groups, or the one who says, "the Palestinian state is at hand the Palestinian flag will soon fly over Jerusalem?"

***(The Los Angeles Times Syndicate, 9/93)***

If the transition to Palestinian self-government is to succeed, the economy of the occupied territories will have to remain umbilically tied to Israel for at least the next few years, even if it means keeping neighboring Jordan on the sidelines, Israeli and Palestinian economists say. People in the Gaza Strip and West Bank will have to see their daily lives improve right away. There is no alternative but to maintain and even strengthen economic links between the territories and Israel. "Linkage in a state of mutual dependency is practically inevitable," said Prof. Hisham Awartani, an economics professor at An Najah University in the West Bank city of Nablus.

*(New York Times, 9/18/93)*

## ***World Parliament of Religions***

EDITORS' COMMENT: *During the last week of August, in Chicago, the 100-year meeting took place of the Parliament of the World's Religions. The purpose of the meeting was to determine how religious groups can help bridge their differences and to develop a global ethic which would set minimal standards to which all faiths and individuals can be held accountable.*

The gathering of 7,700 participants from about 250 different traditions, ranging from American Baptists to Zoroastrians, dramatically illustrated changes in the interfaith movement since the only other such parliament, held in Chicago in 1893. Among the traditions left out of the first parliament were American Indian religions, Tibetan Buddhists and Sikhs. The diversity of this year's gathering produced its share of tension. The Orthodox Christian Host Committee withdrew in protest of the inclusion of Wiccans, or witches. Roman Catholic Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, a participant, said, "All we can do is to say, Let's take the first step toward understanding. We still have a long way to go."

*(Associated Press, 9/14/93)*

Representatives of more than 125 of the world's religions signed "The Declaration of A Global Ethic," a nine page document that attempts to define a common set of values for people of all nations, races and faiths. The document does not mention the word "God." The writers intended not to exclude any religions that do not recognize one supreme being.

*(Washington Post, 9/3/93)*

It has taken 15 years of praying, arguing, organizing and singing together to build the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, known as IFC, now recognized as one of the most dynamic and diverse interreligious coalitions in the United States. This group was identified at the World Parliament as the ideal interfaith organization. Last year, the Hindus, Bahais and Unitarians all expressed an interest in joining. The IFC board decided to give priority to the Hindus as a historic Eastern faith, with a large representation in Washington.

*(Washington Post 8/31/93)*

## ***The Pope's Visit***

EDITOR'S COMMENT: *Many, many articles were received about the Pope's visit to Denver. The comments selected here were chosen because they may have significance to those who believe the scriptures identify a resurgence in the political role of the Papacy in world events. The first item is included because of its significance to Bible students.*

When the Nazi army overran Poland in World War II they sought out not only Jews, but Poles as well, particularly those active in the Roman Catholic resistance. A young seminarian, Karol Wojtyla, worked in a stone quarry near Nowy Targ with a Polish bible student, Br. Pokuta. The Bible Student brother gave the seminarian shelter in his home, hiding him from the enemy. He also told his fellow worker about his faith and presented him with the six-volume set of Studies in the Scriptures. A close friendship developed, even after the war when the seminarian went on to become an archbishop and eventually, Pope John Paul II.

*(Submitted by Carl Hagensick)*

A group of Seventh-day Adventists from Montana put up 21 billboards in the Denver area attacking the Pope as the anti-Christ. The billboards included an offer for the book, The Great Controversy, a pivotal book in Seventh-day Adventist teachings. "We wish to point out the Protestant point of view concerning the infallibility of any man or woman who wishes to act in place of God," said a spokesperson.

*(Rocky Mountain News, 7/29/93)*

It is the promise of salvation that Christ has made to us that is present in the person of the Pope. This is the steward of the House of God. He holds the keys.

*(Archbishop James Francis Stafford)*



As human beings, we are created body and soul. The two cannot be disjointed. What we seek is resurrection of the body and life everlasting. So the Pope reminds young people that they have access to eternal life, access to Christ. And Christ comes to them first of all through baptism, through this cleansing, through his gift of mercy and reconciliation. The Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and the Virgin Mary as tongues of fire. On that day the church was born.

*(Rev. Edward L. Buelt, Roman Catholic Priest in Denver)*

### **BOOK REVIEW**

*ARMAGEDDON Appointment With Destiny, by Grant R. Jeffrey*

It seems that every week brings a new book on eschatology. With such rapid changes in the Middle East, no doubt even more will be written. However, this book is not just another rehash of Ezekiel 38 and 39 prophecies dealing, with Russia descending on Israel and the subsequent "rapture" of the church. While those prophecies are included, a significant part of the book focuses on prophecies fulfilled in Israel.

The book is divided into five sections, with two of them focusing on the prophecies mentioned above. The other three are: Israel's Precise Prophetic Time Table; The Search for the Ark and Rebuilding the Temple; and Israel's Amazing Biblical Anniversaries. This last section is the one I found fascinating, and well worth studying.

Jeffrey identifies the important feast and anniversary days of ancient Israel. He then proceeds to identify similar events that occur on those same days throughout modern history. The conclusion one reaches is that God's timetable may be even more precise than to the year: it may be to the day. Space permits only one example—from the Fasts of Mourning.

The ninth day of AV; the Jewish calendar's fifth month, was the day Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians (Jeremiah 52:5-14). This became a national day of mourning, commemorated every year. Jeffrey identifies six subsequent events that took place on this same day, the ninth of Av, each showing a loss of national polity: (1) the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.; (2) the plowing of Jerusalem with salt one year later, wiping it out entirely; (3) the destruction of Simon Bar Cochba's army (the last Jewish rebels) in 135 C.E.; (4) the expulsion of all Jews from England beginning on July 18, 1290; (5) the expulsion of all Jews from Spain beginning on August 2, 1492; (6) Russia's mobilization for war on August 1, 1914, and the subsequent attacks against the Russian Jews, driving most from the land (remember Fiddler on The Roof?). Was all this just coincidence? The odds that eight events (one event before the destruction of the first temple was the false report of the spies in Numbers 14 that doomed the Exodus generation to wilderness death) would occur by chance on the same day are 1 in 863 Zillion! The book is published in paperback by Bantam books.