

# THE HERALD

## *of Christ's Kingdom*

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### EDITORS' JOURNAL

*Never man spake like this man. John 7.46*

Once again the time approaches to commemorate the death of our Lord and Savior. This year the Memorial celebration will fall on the evening of Friday, March 25.

Each year this season holds the most sacred of associations for all sincere Christians. As other great leaders are celebrated with the memory of their birth, Jesus is remembered for his death. It was his death, that supreme sacrifice, after all, which speaks of life from the dead for all of mankind.

Think of the memories left behind by Jesus in just three and a half short years. Imagine yourself in the place of one of his disciples going through depression and uncertainty following his death. Consider the deep disappointment revealed in their confession to the stranger on the road to Emmaus, *we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel* (Luke 24:21).

Then contemplate their joy, confused joy to be sure, as he began to again appear in their midst. They knew not how to expect him-appearing in a closed and locked room or waiting for them by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They knew not how he would look-as a gardener or a stranger along the road or with holes in his hands and side, as to Thomas. They knew not when he would come-sometimes frequently in a few days, other times with long gaps between. But this they did know: he was alive; death had not held its prey.

#### **Type and Antitype**

Walk with him that last lonely walk from the upper room to Gethsemane's garden. Think of the majestic temple, seen last just before the descent into the valley of the Kidron. Remember that anguished prayer from the depths of the valley as he views the temple towering above, aglow in the full of the moon. *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*

All the weight of the year by year temple sacrifices for more than fifteen centuries rested on his shoulders. No wonder he sought encouragement. Reflect on his full resignation: *Nevertheless not as I wilt, but as thou wilt.*

Image upon image, how those **final** scenes of that eventful life etch themselves indelibly on our brain. At one and the same time they weigh us down with a sense of his agony and lift us up to the thrill, of his redemptive love.

## **In This Issue**

This issue of THE HERALD will be devoted to just a few of the memories of Jesus-who he was, what he taught, and how he influenced those closest to him.

Our opening article, "The Final Week," highlights those scenes at the close of the life of Jesus that are so poignant to the senses, ending with the triumphant words on the cross, *It is finished*.

"Portraits of Jesus" shows the many facets of his life. We see the youth before the temple priests, the willing servant at his baptism, the master teacher, the great physician, the suffering Savior, and finally, the resurrected and then the returned Lord.

In "The Master Teacher," the author probes the methods and subject matter of his teachings. *No man spake like this man*. A master of the short story, he used parables to simultaneously hide and reveal great truths.

Four evangelists paint four different pictures of the Messiah. In "Portrait of a Perfect Man," the author focuses on the Gospel of Luke, while our *Echo from the Past* by Alonzo Jarmon highlights "The Priesthood of Jesus."

The "Question Box" and two short features also touch on the life of the Nazarene. In contrast with the death of Jesus, "Barabbas" talks of the one who was freed when Pilate sought the release of Christ, and "A Tale of Two Gardens" contrasts the garden of Eden with the one in Gethsemane.

The verse-by-verse Bible study, somewhat technical in nature, treats the pedigree of the Nazarene as given in the opening chapter of the New Testament, Matthew 1.

A more personal view of the season is given in the article "What the Memorial Means to Me." For each of us this season is a very subjective one, a time to again appreciate what Jesus has done for us in a personal manner and to recommit ourselves to following in his footsteps. May each of us find new meaning to our lives as we celebrate the Memorial of our Lord's death.

## **A New Series**

Concluding this issue is the first of a four-part series on "The Word of God." These articles are taken from an audio-visual program presented at the 1992 International Convention of Bible Students in Poitiers, France. Part I deals with the Word of God in Creation, while future articles in the series will discuss that Word as it is revealed in Jesus Christ, as it relates today through the voice of prophecy, and finally, as it affects our individual Christian lives.

## THE FINAL WEEK

*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Anointed, the son of the living God. " Then he ordered his students to tell nobody that he himself was the Anointed. After that Jesus began to show his students how he had to go off to Jerusalem, and have many things done to him by the elders and chief priests and canon-lawyers, and be killed, and rise up the third day. Matthew 16:16, 20, 21 (Unvarnished New Testament)*

By Leonard Griehs

*Nisan 9, 33 C.E.  
Saturday, March 28 sundown  
to Sunday, March 29 sundown.*

"What do you say? He'll never show up for the festival will he?"

While the people talked amongst themselves in the temple courtyards, the high priests and Pharisees instructed that anyone seeing Jesus should let them know.

Jesus and his disciples had come to Bethany around noon on this Sunday, the sixth day before the Passover, to enjoy fellowship with Simon the Leper, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Martha was serving a great supper when Mary came in with sweet smelling perfume and began to rub it on Jesus' feet.

"Why wasn't that perfume sold for three hundred drachmas and given to the poor?" said Judas Iscariot.

Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why are you giving her grief? She did a fine thing for me. You always have the poor around, and whenever you want you can do them good, but me you do not always have. What she could do, she did, She started in advance to perfume my body for burial. I assure you, wherever the good word is proclaimed in all the world, what she did will also be told in memory of her."

Meanwhile a great crowd of Jews gathered outside the home when they found out Jesus was there. They were hoping to see both Jesus and Lazarus, whom many of them had heard Jesus raised from the dead. But Jesus and his disciples spent the night inside. They would not venture to Jerusalem until the next morning, when Jesus would show that he was in complete control of his circumstances. He would not be caught in any religious intrigue. He would force the issues.

He would become the willing sacrifice for the sins of the world.

*Nisan 10*  
*Sunday, March 29 sundown*  
*to Monday, March 30 sundown*

It was Monday morning. As he came up to Bethphage near the Mount of Olives, Jesus looked at the walls of the city. He turned to two of his disciples.

"Go into the village ahead of you, and right away you'll come upon a donkey tied up and her foal with her. Untie them and bring them to me. And if anyone says anything to you, you'll say 'the master needs these,' and they'll send them right back with you."

When the two returned with the donkey, Jesus mounted it and began to ride down toward Jerusalem. The people were excited to see that he did come for the feast. They began to throw branches in front of him while a crowd formed to follow him into the city.

"Hooray! [Literally, Save us!] Bless him who comes in the name of the Lord. Bless the coming kingdom of our father David! Hooray to the highest heavens!" The people's shouts were growing louder and louder until the Pharisees came out to Jesus.

"Teacher, restrain these students of yours."

Jesus replied, "I tell you, if they fell silent, the rocks would scream out."

As he neared the city, Jesus paused for a moment and began to cry. He looked at the people gathering in the city. "If you only knew on this day which way leads to peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes; because they will come upon you and press in on you from every side, and hurl you and your children to the ground, and leave no stone upon another amongst you all, because you didn't know when then the time of your inspection was." The crowd came on him as Jesus entered the temple. Blind and lame people came to him and were cured. Children shouted, "Hooray for the son of David." Suddenly the priests and lawyers appeared.

"Do you hear what these people are saying?"

"Yes. Didn't you ever read where it says, I will round out my praise in the mouths of babies and toddlers?"

Outside in the courtyard some gentiles came to Jesus' disciples inquiring to see him. As Andrew and Philip told Jesus, he looked up to the heavens and spoke.

"The time has come for the son of humanity to be glorified. Truly, truly I tell you, if the grain of wheat never falls to the ground and dies, it remains the only one. But if it dies it produces a great crop. The one who loves his life, loses it; the one who doesn't care about his life in this world will keep it safe for life everlasting. If someone serves me, let them follow me, and wherever I am, my servant will also be. If anyone serves me they will be

honored by my Father. Now my soul is in consternation, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But that is what I came to this hour for. Father glorify your own name."

"I glorified it before and I will glorify it again."

The crowd became aroused as they heard what they thought was thunder, but someone said "A holy messenger has spoken to him."

But Jesus looked around at them and said, "That voice wasn't for me, it was for you. Now it is judgment time for this world, now the ruler of this world will be thrown out the door. And I, if I am raised high above the earth, will draw all people toward me."

Someone in the crowd came forward. "We heard in the Law that the Anointed remains forever. So how can you say that the son of humanity must be raised on high? Who is this son of humanity?"

"For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk around while you have light, so the darkness doesn't overtake you; the person walking in darkness doesn't know where he's going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become sons and daughters of the light."

Jesus went outside the gates until everyone had left the temple for the day. Then he came back and looked around inside and stood for a moment. His eyes glanced at everything around him—he thought about what would be coming the next few days—then he gathered his disciples and returned to Bethany to spend Monday night.

*Nisan 11  
Monday, March 30 sundown  
to Tuesday, March 31 sundown*

As they came from Bethany that Tuesday morning, the disciples watched Jesus approach a fig tree. When he saw there was no fruit, he said, "Never again shall anyone eat your fruit."

Jesus walked into the city through the sheep gate and up the steps into the temple court. His eyes fell on the men selling pigeons for the sacrifices and on those changing foreign coins for profit to those waiting to put money in the temple treasury. He upended the tables of the money changers and turned over the chairs of the pigeon sellers. He blocked the entry of those bringing goods into the temple.

"Doesn't it say, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations?' You have made it a den of robbers," he told the people.

The priests and lawyers, angered by all this, looked for a way to get rid of Jesus; but they were afraid to seize him because the crowd liked what he was saying.

When he finished teaching it was late, and Jesus took his disciples to spend Tuesday night once again in Bethany.

*Nisan 12  
Tuesday, March 31 sundown  
to Wednesday, April 1 sundown*

It was early Wednesday morning. Peter led the way into Jerusalem. He came upon the fig tree that Jesus had cursed, "Master, look, the fig tree you cursed has withered away."

"Have faith in God," Jesus told him. He pointed toward Mount Olive. "I assure you that whoever says to this mountain, get up and throw yourself in the sea, and doesn't waver in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will come true for him. Therefore I tell you, everything you pray for and ask for and believe that you'll get it will come true for you. And when you stand praying, forgive anything you may have against anyone so that your Father in the skies may also forgive your transgressions."

Jesus walked into the temple and found the high priests waiting there for him, to challenge his right to teach the people.

"What authority do you have to do this?" they asked. "Who gave you any such authority?"

Jesus would not be intimidated. "I also want to ask you something, and if you tell me that I'll also tell you what authority I have to do this: where did the washing of John come from? From heaven or from the world?"

The priests huddled around each other. "If we say from heaven, he'll say to us, then why didn't you believe in him? But if we say from the world, we have the crowd to be afraid of, since they all consider John a prophet." They turned back to Jesus. "We don't know."

Jesus turned away. "I won't tell you what authority I have to do this either." He continued teaching the people.

A few minutes later another group of priests appeared. "Teacher, we know you talk and teach straightforwardly and are no respecter of persons, but rather teach God's way based on truth: Is it all right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Jesus knew they were trying to trap him. "Show me a denarius," he said, and someone handed him a coin. "Whose picture and inscription does it have on it?" "Caesar's," the men replied. "Well, then, give Caesar's things to Caesar and God's things to God."

Suddenly the Sadducees stepped up. "Teacher, Moses prescribed for us that if someone's brother dies who had a wife, but was childless, let the brother take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. So once there were seven brothers and the first took a wife and

died childless. And the second, and the third, and in this manner finally all seven died without leaving children; last of all the wife died. So in the resurrection, whose wife will that woman be? After all, all seven had her for a wife."

Jesus responded to them quickly, "The sons and daughters of the present here and now take wives and husbands, but those who prove worthy to receive that other life and be resurrected from the dead take no wives and no husbands, because they can't die any more, being sons and daughters of the resurrection. That the dead rise again was mentioned even by Moses before the burning bush, when he -talks about the Lord, God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. There is no God of the dead, only of the living: to him, everyone is alive."

One of the lawyers who heard Jesus' reply came forward, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus looked at him kindly. He knew that this was the first sincere questioner who had come forward. "The first is 'Listen, Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord, and you are to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your thoughts and all your strength. The second is this: You are to love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.'" Jesus looked him in the eyes and saw his agreement. "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

Seeing no more came forward to challenge his authority, Jesus turned to his interrogators and said, "How can the canon-lawyers say that the Anointed is the son of David? David himself said in the holy spirit, 'Said a Lord to my Lord, sit at my right while I put your enemies underneath your feet.' David himself calls him Lord, so how is he his son?" No one answered.

Jesus walked over and sat down in the temple across from the collection box. He watched the rich throw in a few coins and then a widow carefully placed two pennies in the slot. He turned to his disciples, "I assure you that this widow put in more than all the other people who put something in the box, because all the others threw in what they had left over, while she threw in the last of all she had to live on."

Jesus got up to leave. Before he reached the gate he took a last look at the priests. He motioned toward them as he spoke to the crowd: "Where Moses sat, the Pharisees and canon-lawyers now sit. So do and keep what they say to you, but don't go by what they do, because they say things and then don't do them."

As they walked down the steps and out the gate towards the Mount of Olives, Jesus paused for a moment. "You see all these great buildings? There isn't one stone upon another here that won't be destroyed." Peter, James, John, and Andrew followed Jesus up to the mountain. "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to end at once?"

Jesus proceeded to tell them of wars, earthquakes, and signs of his return, but they didn't understand. Finally, Jesus ended his discourse and said to them, "You know in two days it will be Passover, and the son of humanity will be handed over to be crucified."

Meanwhile, Judas had remained in the temple and was meeting with the priests about how to hand Jesus over to them. After getting a promise of thirty pieces of silver, Judas gave his word that he would find away for them to take Jesus when there was no crowd around to protect him.

*Nisan 13*  
*Wednesday, April 1 sundown*  
*to Thursday, April 2 sundown*

"Where do you want us to go to get ready for you to eat the seder Passover supper]" the disciples inquired of Jesus as they neared Jerusalem, Thursday morning.

"Go into town and you'll be met by a fellow carrying a water jug. You're going to follow him and wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'our teacher says, where is my banquet hall where I can eat the seder with my students?' And he himself will show you a big upstairs room spread out and ready, where you can make preparations for yourselves."

When the sky began to dim, Jesus departed for Jerusalem with the rest of his disciples. Jesus knew the time for his last meal was approaching.

*Nisan 14*  
*Thursday, April 2 sundown*  
*to Friday, April 3 sundown*

Jesus sat down at the table. "I wanted with all my heart to eat the seder with you before my suffering begins, because I'm telling you, I'll never eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Jesus spoke to them of brotherhood and service. Judas was getting restless. Jesus looked at him. "Do what you're doing and be quick about it," he said. Judas picked up a piece of bread and made his way to the door. Despite their protests, Jesus washed their feet and sat back down. After sharing bread and wine with them and asking them to remember him by doing this, Jesus took his disciples out to Mount Olive.

"All of you will let me down tonight-just like the scripture says, 'I will strike at the shepherd, and the sheep in his herd will scatter.' But after rising up I will go on ahead of you into Galilee."

Peter protested, "Even if everyone lets you down, I will never let you down." Jesus gazed into Peter's eyes. "I promise you, in the night ahead, from now till cockcrow, you will say you don't know me three times." Again Peter protested, "Even if I had to die with you, I would never say I didn't know you." All echoed Peter's response.

Jesus led them across the side of the mountain to Gethsemane. "Sit here till I've finished praying," he told them. Twice Jesus came back to find them sleeping and rebuked them. Finally, he heard a commotion in the garden. "Up now!" he said. "Come on! Here he



comes, my betrayer!" The disciples could not believe it! There was Judas with a group of soldiers. He stepped up to Jesus.

"Good evening, master," he said as he kissed Jesus. "Judas, are you going to betray the son of humanity with a kiss?" Jesus - stepped around to confront the group behind Judas. "Who are you looking for?" he asked. "Jesus of Nazareth." "Here I am." The men drew back so quickly that some tripped and, fell. Jesus asked them again; "Who are you looking for?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "I told you, here I am, so if you're looking for me, let these people go." The group came slowly forward.

Peter jumped in front of Jesus. He drew his sword and cut off the ear of the fellow about to grab Jesus. Jesus stopped him. "Let's stop short of that." He picked up the ear and healed the man. "Put your sword back where it belongs," he told Peter, "those who fight swords with swords are lost. You think I can't call on my Father and have him supply me even now with more than twelve legions of his messengers? But how will scriptures be fulfilled that say this must happen?" Jesus turned back to the mob surrounding him.

"As if in pursuit of a robber you came out to get me with swords and clubs? I used to sit in the daytime in the temple when I was teaching and you didn't take me then. This has happened to fulfill all the prophets' writings." As the mob descended on Jesus, the disciples turned and fled. They tried to grab a young boy who was in the garden with them, but he got away.

The mob took Jesus to the house of Annas. Peter followed at a distance behind and lingered outside as the priest questioned Jesus. A maid at the door spotted him. "You aren't one of that fellow's students too, are you?" Peter replied quickly, "No, I'm not."

Inside Jesus responded to the inquiries of the former high priest. "I have publicly spoken to the world. I constantly taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews gather, and I said nothing in secret. What are you asking me? Ask the ones who heard me what I said to them. See these people? They know what I said."

One of the servants slapped Jesus, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus showed no fear. "If I said something bad, testify about the evil. If I spoke well, why are you beating me up?"

Eager now to punish Jesus, they rustled him about and took him to the house of Caiaphas. There the priests tried to find some who would talk against Jesus, but no two could give the same testimony. Jesus refused to answer the false accusations. Caiaphas was frustrated and finally decided he had had enough. He would take matters into his own hands.

Caiaphas moved face to face with Jesus. "Are you the Anointed, the Son of the most blessed?" he asked Jesus. Jesus' eyes did not move from Caiaphas' eyes. "Yes I am, and you will see the son of humanity sitting on the right hand of power and trailing the clouds of the sky." "What do we need witnesses for any more?" shouted Caiaphas as he turned to

the others. "You heard that blasphemy! How does it look to you?" They all judged that he should be killed.

They began spitting on Jesus, and covering his face while they punched him and said, "Prophesy! Who just hit you?" They hit him again and again.

Peter stood outside in the courtyard, warm now from the fire. "You were with the Nazarene too-you know: Jesus," those around him said. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about." Peter ran the other way. The girl at the door saw him again.

"This guy is one of them." she said. Others said "Of course you're one of them. After all, you are a Galilean."

"Fellow, I don't know what you're talking about," Peter shouted. Suddenly; he heard a rooster crow. Peter looked inside the house and saw Jesus, bound and bleeding from the beating, turn and look at him. Peter ran away and wept more bitterly than he had wept in his whole life. Caiaphas ordered his men to put Jesus in the cellar for the night.

Early Friday morning, they took Jesus to Pilate's mansion. Meanwhile Judas went back to the elders at the temple. "I was wrong to betray innocent blood," he protested. "What's that to us? That's your problem." They were happy now. Judas threw down the silver at their feet, turned and ran outside. Later they found him hanging from a tree outside the temple.

"What charge are you bringing against this person?" asked Pilate. "If he wasn't doing something wrong, we wouldn't have handed him over to you," they protested. Pilate hated dealing with these Jews. "Take him yourself and try him by your own law." "We're not allowed to kill anybody. We caught him undermining our society and keeping people from paying taxes to Caesar and saying he had been anointed as the king."

Pilate summoned Jesus in front of him. "You're the king of the Jews?" he asked. Jesus looked at him. "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" "Do I look like a Jew?" Pilate was annoyed. "Your people and your high priests handed you over to me. What did you do?" "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom ;,-as of this world, my servants would fight to the death for me not to be handed over to the Jews; but in fact, my kingdom isn't here."

Pilate kept up the inquiry. "So you are a king?" "You say I am a king. What I was born for and what I came into the world for was to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth responds to my voice." "What is truth?" asked Pilate, without expecting a reply. He went back out to the Jews. "I don't see any charge against him."

The priests protested "He's inciting the populace, teaching all through Judea, starting with Galilee and ending here."

Pilate saw his opportunity to get rid of this once and for all. He sent Jesus, a Galilean, to Herod, the governor of that region, who happened to be in Jerusalem during the festival. Herod was excited. He had heard about Jesus but had never seen him. Jesus refused to talk. As Herod listened to the accusations he grew disappointed that Jesus wouldn't do or say anything. Finally Herod ended it. He put Jesus in a robe and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate smiled at Herod's joke. But Pilate was done dealing with the Jews' stupidity.

"You brought me this person on the grounds that he was undermining society and you see how I examined him in front of you and found no charge against the fellow of the kind you accused him. Nor could Herod. That's why he sent him back to us. He just hasn't done anything worthy of death. So we'll whip him to teach him a lesson and let him go."

The crowd would have none of it. "Keep him and release Barabbas," they shouted. "Crucify him, crucify him."

Pilate couldn't understand it. "But what did he do wrong? I couldn't find any capital charge against him. So I'll whip him soundly and let him go." But the Jews still protested for Pilate to order Jesus' execution.

Pilate's wife sent word to him. "Have nothing to do with that innocent man," she said. "I dreamt last night that I suffered horribly because of him." Finally, Pilate tried one last gesture. He washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood, see to it yourselves."

The crowd cried in unison, "Let his blood be on us and our children."

Pilate's soldiers dressed Jesus in a crown of thorns and cloak of purple. They spit on him and hit him over the head with a cane. Pilate led Jesus out on the arch that stood above the city.

"See, I'm bringing him out here to let you know that I see no charge whatever against him. Here's the fellow." "Crucify, crucify," the crowd shouted. Pilate was at the end of his wits. "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I don't see any charge against him." "We have our law and by that law he deserves to die because he made himself out to be the son of God." Pilate's face showed a blush of sudden fear. He knew stories of Roman gods visiting the earth to test human compassion. He took Jesus back inside.

"Where are you from?" he asked. Jesus did not answer. "You won't talk to me? Don't you know I have the power to let you go and also the power to crucify you?" Finally Jesus spoke. "You would have no power at all over me if it wasn't given you from above. So that the one who handed me over to you has the greater fault."

That was it. Pilate told the Jews he had made a judgment to let Jesus go. "If you let him go, you're no friend of Caesar's. Anyone who makes himself out to be a king is speaking against Caesar."

Pilate was shattered. He could not let Caesar think he was disloyal. After all, this man was just another Jew. He gave orders for the execution. The crowd cheered.

As Jesus was led through the streets, they grabbed a man named Simon to carry his cross. Women wept as they watched Jesus pass by. He turned to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't cry for me, cry for yourselves and your children, because watch, there will come days when they will say, 'Lucky for those who were sterile, for the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will start saying to the mountains, 'fall upon us' and to the hills, 'cover us up' and if they do that when the wood is still green, what will they do by the time it dries?"

They reached Golgotha outside the city, nailed Jesus to the cross, and hung him between two criminals. The crowds passed by on their way into the city and mocked Jesus as he hung there. One of the criminals hanging with him joined in the jeering, "Aren't you the Anointed? Save yourself and us." The other interrupted, "Do you have no fear of God, just because your sentence is the same? We're rightly getting what's coming to us for what we did, but he did nothing unlawful." He turned his eyes toward Jesus. "Jesus, remember me when you get to your kingdom."

Jesus looked at him. "I promise you today you will be with me in Paradise."

Jesus looked down at his mother standing by John. "Madam, here is your son." He looked at John. "Here is your mother."

As the afternoon wore on, the light began to dim. By three o'clock it was dark all over the land. Jesus looked up and cried out, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*"

Those around wondered why he was calling Elijah. Finally, Jesus cried out again, "It is finished. Father, I put my spirit in your hands." As Jesus dropped his head, the Jews all over Israel killed their lamb for the Passover feast which would start at sundown.

All quotes are from the *The Unvarnished New Testament*, translated by Andy Gans. The order of scriptures is designated by comparative studies of the four gospels, and citations are available on request.

## QUESTION BOX

*No one has ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man.-John 3:13 ASV*

*When had Jesus ascended into heaven before he spoke these words at the first advent?*

The words translated "ascended" and "descended" are the Greek *ana-baino* and *kata-baino*; meaning to spring up; and to come down.

Jesus spoke these words early in his ministry, three years before his ascension. Therefore, he could hardly be referring to his own ascension. The point seems to be that of all men, Jesus alone had previously been in heaven. Therefore he is most likely referring to his heavenly origin and not to a previous ascension. "Jehovah formed me as the beginning of his way, the first of his works of old" (Prov. 8:22 ASV Margin).

NOTE: The addition, "who is in heaven," are not found in any of the best Greek manuscripts of John, nor in the Coptic versions. They were evidently not penned by the apostle. Dr. Aland, in restoring the text of the apostolic New Testament, considers the deletion of these words virtually certain.

*By James Parkinson*

# PORTRAITS OF JESUS

*Behold the man.-John 19:5*

By Carl Hagensick

It is axiomatic in great literature to describe the characters in minute detail. Why? Because the author wants the reader to know intimately the people of whom he is writing. Knowing how they look makes the character more believable. Yet the Bible, the greatest of all the great books, in describing its central character, Jesus of Nazareth, omits all such descriptions. We do not know what Jesus looked like! How tall was he? What was the color of his hair? Or his eyes? Why are these details missing? They are missing because they are unimportant.

*Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. - 2 Corinthians 5:16*

The Bible is not concerned with introducing us to what Jesus looked like but to what he was-the inner man. His apostles, who knew him intimately, knew him not so much as the man but as their Messiah, their Redeemer, their Savior.

John the Baptist, while in prison, on one occasion sent his followers to query Jesus whether he was indeed the one promised or whether they were to look for another. Jesus' answer focused on the important things -not on his appearance but on his works.

*Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Matthew 11:4, 5*

The focus was on his activities, what he was doing. These were the important things. When it comes to his work and his ministry the Bible is a veritable portrait gallery. Let us walk through it together.

## **The Early Years**

In a few short chapters both Matthew and Luke deal with his birthlowly, to a poor couple from Nazareth, in a manger bed. While all men were in expectation of him (Luke 3:15), only a handful noticed the event of his birth-a few shepherds (Luke 2), a few wise men from the East (Matt. 2) and, fearfully, King Herod.

During the next thirty years we see him but once, at the age of twelve, confounding the rabbis in the temple. One small clue of his real identity and mission comes from this small incident. His response to his parents' anxieties, *Wist ye not that I must be about my*

*Father's business?* revealed a higher parentage than the human. It showed his early recognition of the true facts of his birth, that he was indeed the Son of God, born through a special act of the holy Spirit upon his mother, Mary.

### **Sonship Verified**

Next we find him at the age of thirty, coming to his cousin John to be baptized. He answers the Baptist's protestations with the simple statement, *thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness* (Matt. 3:15). Upon rising from the water we see the Spirit settling, like a dove upon him, and hear a voice from heaven verifying his heavenly parentage: *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased* (Luke 3:22).

From Jordan's banks we follow his lonely trek into the wilderness mountains where he meditates and fasts for forty days. Having committed himself to his mission on earth, he meditates on the works that lay in front of him and the law that lay behind him. He had come to fulfill every detail of that law (Matt. 5:17).

As to his work, it was to die for all mankind, to be a martyr in the fullest sense of that word (John 18:37). As he thought of that work, the Adversary was at his side suggesting three shortcuts to accomplish his ends without the necessity of dying. Having experienced hunger as a result of his forty-day fast, he could turn stones into bread and solve the breadlines of the world (Matt. 4:3, 4). Or, he could win the support of the populace through some miraculous act (Matt. 4:5-7). Or, he could cooperate with the powers that be and negotiate his kingdom with the *god of this world* (Matt. 4:8-10). Jesus resisted all three of these temptations with a quotation from his Father's word, *It is written*, and the devil flees from him (Matt. 4:11).

### **The Master Teacher**

His classroom was the open fields, the seashore, the market place, the open road. His pupils were chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith. While some were prominent, as Nicodemus, most were sinners, as Mary Magdalene. His methods were simple short stories, parables he called them. Rich in simile and metaphor, these parables concealed the truth from many while revealing it plainly to others. His illustrations were simple, taken from everyday life—a shepherd losing one sheep, a prodigal son squandering his inheritance, a traveler beset by thieves and helped by a good Samaritan.

His subject matter was always the same -- **his kingdom**. This was the one all-absorbing theme of his life. This is why he came to die.

### **The Great Physician**

It was this same kingdom which he illustrated in countless miracles. These were the mark of his Messiahship. It was with these that he answered the queries of John's troubled disciples—the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf

hear, the dead are raised up, and finally, as though it were the climactic miracle; the poor have the gospel preached unto them.

Of all his mighty miracles, the most spectacular was the raising of the dead. Consider Lazarus. Dead for three days, his decaying body already stinking, raised back to life. Yet Lazarus lived for only a few short years more and then he died again. This time there was no one to raise him to life.

Great as were all the works of the Great Physician, he said that his disciples would do still greater works.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; **and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.** John 14:12*

These miracles are the miracles of God's kingdom. Then his church will be with him in glory. Then they will share in the work of that kingdom. Note the miracles of that time:

*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. Isaiah 35:5, 6*

These are the *greater works*. These are the same kinds of works Jesus performed, but on a larger scale. He healed hundreds; these works will heal millions. His miracles extended life a few years; these will extend life forever. Today some dabble in divine healing. But, at best, these healings are temporary. The healed soon die again. God's kingdom will bring the true divine healing, a healing that will be complete and last forever. But these healings are dependent upon one thing, and that we see in our next portrait of Jesus.

## **The Ransom**

*On a hill far away Stood an old rugged cross, The emblem of suffering and shame, And on that old cross The dearest and best For a world of lost sinners was shirt.*

It is a tragic picture to contemplate. A perfect man, so unjustly convicted, dying in the prime of life. But his greatest defeat was his greatest triumph. That was why he came. That was why he left the heavenly courts to become a man in the first place.

To fully appreciate the scope of that one redemptive act we need to take a closer look. His death was scripturally styled a *ransom*. Today we think of a ransom as a price for the release of a hostage, which is paid to a kidnapper. The scriptural word "ransom," however, has a deeper significance. Literally it means *a price to correspond*.

Correspond to what? Notice the testimony of 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22: *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*



Adam for Jesus, a perfect life for a perfect life; how beautifully they balance the scales of justice.

Now let us revisit a scene we saw earlier, when Jesus was meditating in the wilderness. He was meditating on the law of God, the law given to Israel through Moses at Sinai.

That law was perfect. Therefore imperfect man could not keep it. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 7:10: *The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.* No one could keep that law. But Jesus did. By keeping a perfect law perfectly he demonstrated that he was a perfect man, therefore a corresponding price for the only other perfect man in history, Adam. Like an index finger, the law pointed out the one person who could pay the ransom price.

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. - Galatians 3:24*

Beyond this, we note that Adam and Eve had no children until they left the garden of Eden. All of their offspring inherited imperfect life. Jesus also had the potential for a perfect human race in his loins (Isa. 53:10). Thus he corresponded not only to Adam but to the entire human race which came from Adam.

No wonder then we sing with rejoicing:

*In the cross of Christ I glory  
Towering oer the wrecks of time.*

And again:

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to that old rugged cross  
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

### **The Risen Savior**

Happily the Bible does not end with a portrait of a crucified Savior. Now we see him as a risen Savior. We see him in different shapes and forms.

To Mary, he appears as a gardener. To a small group of followers, he materializes in a closed room, and again a few days later, when Thomas is present, he again appears, this time with wounds in his feet, hands, and side.

On the road to Emmaus we see two disciples walking along, suddenly joined by a third person, discussing the events of the past three days. He answers their queries by quoting from the prophets as to the purpose of the suffering and death of the Messiah.

These appearances, some eleven of them, were for many reasons. They assured his followers that he was raised from the dead. They prepared his followers to deal with a spiritual Christ. His various bodies showed that he was no longer flesh and blood but could assume bodies appropriate to each occasion.

Forty days pass and we see him one last time, with his disciples on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Suddenly he ascends from their very midst, into the clouds of the sky, going out of sight for the last time. Yet the little group lingers, waiting for one last glimpse. Two angels appear and give them a message of hope:

*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner [not "like form"] as ye have seen him go into heaven. - Acts 1:11*

So they waited. Days passed by. Months, years, even whole lives went on in seemingly endless succession. The Bible itself was completed, with New Testament joining Old. It ended with that same expectation: *Even so, come, Lord Jesus* (Rev. 22:20).

Yet he did not come. Would he ever come? Yes! Now we see another portrait:

### **The Returned Lord**

Do we indeed see him? Of course not! He is invisible. He himself said, *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me, no more, but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*-John 14:19

On the other hand, the same disciple says *every eye shall see him* (Rev. 1:7). Can both be true? Only if we recognize two concepts to the word *see*. Even a blind man might use the expression after understanding something for the first time, "I see!" There is a mental vision just as surely as there is a physical vision. To the physical eye Jesus' return will be invisible, but to those watchful for signs of that event his presence will be obvious.

Jesus gave a number of signs to indicate his return, many of which are found in Matthew 24 and Daniel 12: an unprecedented time of trouble, a rapid increase of knowledge, a transportation explosion, the reawakening of Israel. These are signs we see all around us. Eventually they will become so plain that *every eye shall see him*.

### **Why Does Jesus Return?**

He returns to complete the work begun at his first advent. Then he taught of a kingdom, now he establishes it. Then he illustrated that kingdom with numerous healings, now he makes the healing of the entire race permanent. Then all will know him for they will see the same signs as those told the followers of the Baptist in days of old-the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9*

*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. --Jeremiah 31:34*

With such a portrait before us, let us join the Hallelujah chorus as all men sing his praises-the praises of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

## TWO GARDENS

*Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while go and pray yonder.-Matthew 26:36*

Submitted by George Eldridge

When we read that our Lord entered the garden outside Jerusalem called Gethsemane, we are immediately reminded of another garden, the Garden of Eden.

The contrasts between the two are indeed striking!

Eden was delightful and perfect; Gethsemane was dark and foreboding.

In Eden Adam and Even spoke with the enemy, Satan; in Gethsemane Jesus sought his Father in prayer.

It was in Eden that Adam sinned; it was in Gethsemane that Jesus agonized over the suffering for that sin.

Eden was the scene of Adam's fall; our Lord stood forth when they came for him in Gethsemane.

The conflict of Eden took place in the daytime; Gethsemane's conflict occurred at night.

In Eden Adam fell before Satan; in Gethsemane the soldiers fell before Christ. The race that was to come from Adam was lost in Eden; in Gethsemane Christ lost none of them which God had given him.

Adam took the proffered fruit from Eve in Eden; it was in Gethsemane where Christ received the cup from the Father's hand.

Adam hid himself from God in Eden; in Gethsemane Christ boldly showed himself.

It was in Eden where God sought Adam; it was in Gethsemane where Christ sought God.

God drove Adam out from Eden; the soldiers led Christ forth from Gethsemane. The sword was drawn to block Adam from life in Eden; in Gethsemane the sword was sheathed to open the way to life in Christ. These contrasts, so wonderfully shown in scripture, are a picture of the first and the last Adam. They show failure and triumph, We were dead in Adam; we are now alive in Christ.

## BARABBAS

*"Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" Matthew 27:17*

By Carl Hagensick

The contrast between the two men in Pilate's court could not be more marked. The humble Galilean with no justifiable charge against him and the arrogant Barabbas, found guilty of both sedition and murder. Jesus, a preacher whose radical message was growing in popularity, compared to a robber who had participated in rebellion against Rome.

*Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. Mark 15:6-13*

The choice should have been clear, but the populace, stirred up by their jealous priests and rulers, were not disposed to reason. *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* screamed the crowd, *release Barabbas unto us.*

Pilate's hands were tied. His ploy to release the man he deemed innocent failed. Wearily, he gave up and released Barabbas to the crowd and sent Jesus to Calvary's hill to be crucified.

There were four, that sad day in 33 AD who bore the title of thief. Each of their stories is different. Together they tell a story of deserved death and redemption from the power of the grave.

BARABBAS---Set free, though guilty, while Jesus, guiltless, dies on the tree.

THE PENITENT-Though guilty as charged, Jesus promises "thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

THE IMPENITENT-Remorseless to the end, he railed "if thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (Luke 23:39).

THE BELOVED-Innocent and dying for our sins, Jesus vows to return as "a thief in the night."

Jesus, in his parable of the sheepfold, described Israel of old, seeking to enter into his kingdom blessings by another way, as "thieves and robbers" (John10:1, 8).

# THE CHOSEN PEOPLE IN EXPECTATION

*And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.-Luke 3:15*

By Dariusz Grudzien

In the streets of Jerusalem, that year historians call Anno Domini 29, different groups of Jewish leaders were immersed in heavy debate over many political and religious issues. Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees disputed over the best way to restore glory to Israel.

## **The Leaders of Israel**

Herodians wanted to use any political means possible-to ask the Idumean King Herod for his help, or even to go to the Roman emperor.

Sadducees (named after the high priest Sadoc, whom their ancestors esteemed highly) were rich, focusing upon the materialistic welfare of the country. They rejected oral tradition related to holy scripture; they did not believe in a resurrection nor in spirit beings.

The Pharisees were the prominent religious leaders. They considered themselves to be the spiritual mentors of the nation, leading the people toward the promised deliverance. They were mindful of the public interest, trying to make the Law livable, stressing individual responsibility toward the Law and their traditional interpretation of it. They claimed to continue the leadership role of elders begun in Moses' time. Their mark of loyalty toward God was tithing.

## **Intensely Waiting**

The intense discussion going on in A.D. 29 concerned John the Baptist. On the Sabbath day, people entered into the temple. Throughout the country, people attended synagogues to discuss the scrolls of the Old Testament. The atmosphere of waiting and expectation could be felt and seen everywhere.

For what were they waiting so anxiously? Messiah-the people were in expectation, *and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not (Luke 3:15).*

## **Why the Hope?**

Thirty years earlier, during the time of Caesar Augustus, the prophet Simeon knew he would not die before seeing the Messiah. The prophetess Anna spoke to the people looking for redemption: She *began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.* (Luke 2:38)

The Scriptures tell us that the people of Israel, during the time of Caesar Augustus and Tiberius, knew more about the Messiah than many in Christianity do today.

## **What Did They Know?**

New Testament scriptures stress what facts the Jews knew concerning the Messiah: the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem; he would be a king from the lineage of David; he would deliver his people from bondage and restore the nation of Israel; he would be a mighty prophet who would call for repentance, reveal the truth, and perform many miracles; and he and his kingdom would last forever.

## **His Birthplace**

When the wise men from the East inquired of the birthplace of Messiah at King Herod's palace., the chief priests and scribes answered, In *Bethlehem of Judea.*' for thus it is written by the prophet. (Matt. 2:4, 5)

Those who were wondering if Jesus was the Messiah remarked,

This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? *Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* *John 7:41, 42*

## **The Son of David**

In Matthew 22:42, it is confirmed that the Jews knew that Messiah would come from the lineage of David: What *think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* They say unto him, *The Son of David.*

## **Messiah's Knowledge**

The Samaritan woman at the well with unto him, *I know that Messiah cometh: when he is come, he will tell us all things'* (John 4:25). The Messiah would reveal all truth. The Jews knew that Messiah would be a mighty prophet. This is why they believed John the Baptist to be the Messiah, as we read in Luke 3:15 and John 1:21: *They asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias?" "Art thou that prophet."*



## **The Power of Christ**

In John 7:31, we read about those admiring the miracles performed by Jesus: Have any of the people *believed* on him, *and said*, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles *than* these *which this* man hath done?" They knew that Messiah would perform many miracles.

What gave the Jews this idea and expectation of Messiah? Was it that the miracles performed by Elijah and Elisha, Israel's most acclaimed prophets, constituted the proof of their divine origin? Then if the Messiah was divinely inspired he too would perform many miracles.

## **Messiah the Prophet**

Also, the people of Israel expected the Messiah to preach repentance: They *asked [John]*, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet. (John 1:25).

## **Christ the King**

Remember the leaders of the Jewish nation accusing Jesus before Pilate:

*The multitude arose, and led him unto Pilate. And began to accuse him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nations, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. Luke 23:1, 2*

King Herod and his cohorts were troubled by the thought that the Messiah would be a king: *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him (Matt, 2:2).*

## **Restoration of Israel**

Even the disciples expected that Jesus as Messiah would restore the kingdom to Israel:

*But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Luke 24:21*

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? Acts 1:6*

## **An Everlasting King - An Everlasting Kingdom**

When the day of crucifixion was approaching, and Jesus was predicting his own death, people were astonished and confused. They asked him,

*We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sagest thou, 'The Son of man must be lifted up'? who is this Son of man? John 12:34*

The people anticipated that Messiah was to abide forever, and bring an everlasting deliverance. When Jesus was dying on the cross, they questioned his validity and authority, mocking him and saying,

*If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. . . . And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, 'If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. =Luke 23:37, 39*

How could Jesus be Messiah, the deliverer, if he did not have the power to deliver anyone?

The list of events the Jews expected the Messiah to fulfill is impressive.

### **Studying God's Word**

How were they able to come to this level of understanding?

It was through the fruitage of their tradition of studying the scriptures. This tradition started in the time of Moses, when Israel entered into their Covenant with God and when all the commandments were recorded (Ex. 24:7).

Later, important events of their history were recorded and also the words of God's spokesmen, the prophets. The kings were obliged to read the Law in order to respect God through it. The prophets were frequently admonishing people to seek answers for their problems from the words of holy scriptures.

*When they shall say unto you, 'Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter.' should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:19, 20*

The nation forgot this admonition from Isaiah several times. However, the deeper their trouble became, the quicker they were willing to turn back to God, to cherish his words and the promises given to their ancestors. We see this through the history of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel.

The atmosphere of expectation, so characteristic during the time of our Lord, fits perfectly with the pattern of Jewish history: rejection (slavery) renewed interest in the Word of God -- leading to an expectation of deliverance.

Our Lord himself benefited from this cherished tradition of studying the scriptures: The boy Jesus accompanied his parents when visiting the temple and was able to learn and discuss his heavenly Father's plan.

The beginning of his ministry was marked by an event which took place in Nazareth:

*He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias.*

*And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord' And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, 'This day is this scripture fuelled in your ears - Luke 4:16-22*

### **Plenty of Knowledge Something Missing**

What went wrong? How could those who knew so much about the Messiah deny and crucify him?

What kind of people did believe Jesus was the Messiah?

*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?' They said, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.' He with unto them, 'But whom say ye that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Sort of the living God.' Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is ire heaven.'-Matthew 16:13-17*

### **Faith**

Faith is a gift given to us by our heavenly Father. We should not be ashamed of using faith to prove the things to come.

The nation of Israel knew so much about the Messiah; yet, only the very few with faith were able to recognize and believe on him.

### **Parallels of History**

Rejection-slavery-renewed interest in the Word of God-leading to an expectation of deliverance. We can map this cycle into the gospel age. In the history of the gospel age, renewed interest in the Word of God fits into the period of Reformation. Following the Reformation was the time of expectation for the second presence of the Lord.

Look around. Here we are, surrounded by people in distress, sometimes hopeless, and at least subconsciously waiting for deliverance. We sense an expectation, and only the Kingdom will fulfill that expectation.

### **Expectation of Christ's Return**

Since the time of Reformation, renewed interest in holy scripture and the increase of knowledge has resulted in the gathering of many precious truths about Messiah and his Second Advent.

As in our Lord's day, a similar group exists, waiting to usher in a golden age-politicians who are trying to improve the situation of the country and the economy by using any influential means possible and religious leaders who look to build an earthly organization. Other teachers emphasize strong moral and ethical values, want peace for the welfare of the common people.

### **The Believer Today**

The believer is identified by his humble and trustful attitude, exercising faith in God's promises. We are blessed with much knowledge from scripture, but this understanding is useless unless we have developed a strong faith to open our eyes of understanding.

As in the First Advent, our Master says of his Second Advent, *Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

## PORTRAIT OF A PERFECT MAN

*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.-  
1 Corinthians 15:47*

An average Caucasian American might describe a perfect man as being rich, six feet tall, weighing 160 pounds, with dark hair and blue eyes.

If this man were totally self-centered, manifesting no interest in anyone else, he would not really be perfect.

### **Luke's Portrait**

The four gospel writers describe Jesus from different perspectives. Matthew describes him as King of Israel, and tells of wise men and expensive gifts, but not shepherds. Mark sees Jesus as the perfect servant of God, who acts quickly, saying little. John describes Jesus as the Son of God. His is a theological account, not a biological one, largely consisting of Jesus' words.

Luke presents Jesus as a perfect man. His comprehensive account includes a prologue, Jesus' boyhood, and the ascension. He traces his genealogy back to Adam, the first perfect man. Luke does NOT tell us of Jesus' appearance. Money? This perfect man and his family had none.

At the circumcision of Jesus, Mary offers a pair of turtledoves (Luke 2:24). She is too poor to bring a lamb (Lev. 12:8).

Luke's Portrait of Jesus emphasizes his relationships with others, including his heavenly Father. We study this portrait to see how we can conform to his image. It was Paul who wrote: *Whom he did foreknow [and that includes you and met he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29.)*

### **Relationships with Others**

Luke portrays Jesus as sympathetic to the poor, the despised, children, women, even the hated Samaritans. He occasionally associates with the rich, the powerful, and those of high social status, but -he finds few that interest him. We have an insight into his reasoning:

*One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him. When a sinful townswoman learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.  
Luke 7:36-38*

When Simon, his host, criticizes Jesus in his heart for permitting this to happen, Jesus gives a parable: *Two men owed money to a moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back so he canceled the debts of both. Which of them will love him more? Simon replied, The one who had the bigger debt canceled. You have judged correctly, . . . Therefore I tell you that her many sins have been forgiven for she loved much. But he loves little who has been forgiven little (vs. -41-47).*

Two thousand years ago women were almost non-persons. They were rarely educated, and had virtually no rights. Prostitutes were loathed sinners (although their patrons were not condemned). Leaders associated with men. In contrast, Jesus is as comfortable with women as with men:

*Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. Luke 10: 38, 39*

He is also comfortable with publicans:

*When Levi made him a feast, at which publicans were present, scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, "Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"-Luke 5:29, 30*

From McClintock and Strong [Vol. VIII, p. 769] : "The publicans were hated as the instruments by which the subjection of tyre Jews to the Roman emperor was perpetuated . . . publicans were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, and willing tools of the oppressor .... Scribes and the people hated them." Jesus did not!

Even worse to the Jewish eyes were the Samaritans. McClintock and Strong [Vol. TX, p. 286] : "The Samaritan was publicly cursed in their synagogues; could not be adduced as a witness in the Jewish courts; could not be admitted to any sort of proseytism; and was thus, so far as the Jew could affect his position, excluded from hope of eternal life."

Jesus refuses to accept the prejudices of those around him. He praises Samaritans. In Luke 10:33, he gives that loving parable of the good Samaritan. In Luke 17:16, only the Samaritan leper returns to give thanks.

Copying those around us is easy. That is not the way a perfect man behaves. Jesus considers all human beings as valuable, worth his time and attention. He willingly spends time with women, children, tax collectors, prostitutes, and even non-Jews (Samaritans).

How do you and I live today? Do we indulge prejudice? Do we think our time is best spent with others like ourselves? Do we follow our Master's example and witness to the poor, to children, women, and even those who are openly sinful or might be considered unacceptable to the convenience of society? God has predestinated that we should be conformed to the image of his Son.

## Relationship to God

We might think a perfect man would have no need for support, that he would have inexhaustible energy and could tap his own source of inner strength at any time. But that's NOT Luke's portrait of Jesus: From Jordan to the cross, Luke shows Jesus in prayer on many occasions, several of which were not mentioned by any one else: At his immersion *Jesus being baptized, and praying* (Luke 3:21). The baptism of Jesus is described by others, but the fact that he is praying is mentioned only by Luke. At the start of his walk as a New Creature, he prays to his heavenly Father: *And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed* (Luke 5:15, 16).

Time passes. Jesus has great success. He knows that the credit belongs to his Father, and so he continues in prayer: *He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God* (Luke 6:12, 13).

Selecting the twelve is a big decision. He does not presume to make that decision without guidance from his Father. After an entire night in prayer, he takes action.

When Jesus took Peter, John, and James into the mountain to pray, *as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance . . . altered and his raiment became white and glistering* (Luke 9:29). Matthew and Mark both mention the transfiguration scene, but neither says anything about his praying.

Luke 11:1 says that *as he was praying . . . one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray*. His disciples were aware of his constant communication with his Father. They asked to be taught how to pray.

At the close of his earthly ministry, Jesus again comes to the Father in prayer. He draws his strength not from within himself, but from his Father.

*He was withdrawn from [his disciples] about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but throe, be done-Luke 22: 41, 42*

## Wealth

Luke believes there is no better test of a man than to note his use of money. We observed the poverty of Mary and Joseph. Jesus himself, who was once rich beyond imagining, became poor (2 Cor. 8:9). Luke is the only one who records a parable that contrasts false riches with true:

*The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be*

*merry.' God said to him, You fool. This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores things up for himself but is not rich toward God. Luke 12:16-21 (NIV)*

A few verses later Jesus speaks to his followers, building on this lesson:

*Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Luke 12:32-34 (NIV)*

Where is your treasure? It is where your heart is. It could be your business, your investments, your career, your home, or any place where *moth destroys and thieves come near*. To the degree that we are interested in treasure on earth, to that degree we will have no treasure in heaven.

The good Samaritan unhesitatingly gives of his time and his money to help another person, one he does not know and who is not of his nationality. In Luke's recounting of the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we see the insensitivity of a rich man who will not do anything to help someone in great need who has been "laid at his gate" (Luke 16:20).

Those with much of this world's goods have a problem. No matter what any of us sacrifice it can not compare to what Jesus sacrificed when he gave up what he had in heaven and came to earth to die for us. Our sacrifice must be "in humility esteeming others as excelling yourselves; not each one regarding his own interests, but each one also those of others" (Phil. 2:3-8 Diaglott).

### **God's Love for All**

The lasting image of Luke's portrait of a perfect man is God's love for all. The purpose of Jesus' ministry was summarized in Luke 19:10 : *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Throughout Luke's account he emphasizes those events that prove God's love is not limited. *Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name AMONG ALL NATIONS* (Luke 24:47 Author's emphasis).

Why does Luke emphasize these points? Because he is a gentile, an outsider despised by the Jews. He is a convert to Christianity, who accompanies Paul in bringing the gospel to other gentiles.

Like Luke, you and I are here because someone has been faithful to the commission to preach the name of Jesus among all nations. Since we are to be conformed to the image of our Master, let us:



1. Not draw arbitrary distinctions based on age, sex, wealth, or social standing. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith (James 2:5).*

2. Come to the Father when he grants us success in his service, when he grants success to others, when we must make important decisions, and when we must endure some special trial.

3. Use our money soberly. The rich young ruler thought he had been reasonably successful following the commandments. But it was too hard to *sell all that he had and distribute it to the poor.*

*Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!' . . . Peter said to him, 'We have left all we had to follow you!' Jesus said, 'No one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.'-Luke 18:24, 28*

# OUR MASTER TEACHER

*Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God.-John 3:2*

By Tim Thomassen

Before celebrating his last Passover feast, Jesus said to his disciples, *You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord' and rightly so, for that is what I am* (John 13:13 NIV). The King James translation uses the word "Master" instead of "Teacher," and thus translates it this way, *Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am*. The Greek word used here for "Teacher" and "Master" also means "instructor." It may refer to a doctor, master, or teacher. Therefore either title, "Master" or "Teacher" would be appropriate. I like the idea of combining the two, so that Jesus may be thought of as our "Master Teacher."

On another occasion Jesus issued this invitation: *Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls* (Matt. 11:29). Jesus was indeed meek and lowly in heart. This was exhibited dramatically on numerous occasions. And as such, he had his heavenly Father's approval and assistance, because this trait is what God desires in all of his children. *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (1 Peter 5:5).

In order for us to be taught we, too, must be of this attitude and disposition. *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way* (Psa. 25:9). We must humbly look to Jesus as our teacher and sincerely desire to receive his schooling. It is essential that we be familiar with our Master's life and teachings, therefore, and conduct ourselves in accordance with these.

Our Lord Jesus was a masterful teacher- "The Teacher," in fact. This was the title given to Jesus both by his friends and his enemies. He was addressed as "Teacher" by a man who himself was a "teacher of the law" (Matt 8:19). This man knew whereof he spoke. The incident happened soon after Jesus' greatest teaching, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

## **Teaching with Authority**

Matthew noted that when Jesus had finished his message his hearers "were amazed at his teaching" because it was delivered with such authority (Matt. 7:28, 29). The teachers of the law quoted other rabbis to support their own teaching. Jesus' speech was sanctioned from above. He needed no other authority.

Jesus knew the truth by supreme trust in God and personal experience with its power upon his own heart. Our Lord understood the scriptures completely. Indeed, he knew what he was talking about. He spoke positively without hesitation or reservation.

Although many people called him Teacher, Jesus himself used the title cautiously. One such occasion was when he instructed the disciples to tell the owner of the upper room that "The Teacher" needed it (Matt. 26:18). The owner obviously knew who "The Teacher" was.

### **Manner of Teaching**

Our Master Teacher's manner of teaching was very effective (John 7:45, 46). He conveyed messages of great importance with simplicity, brevity, and clarity. His illustrations included things well known to his listeners (Matt. 13:34, 35). He spoke of builders, farmers, housewives, fishermen (Matt. 7:24-47; 13:3-9, 33 [cf. Luke 15:8], 45, 46, 47, 48; slaves and masters (Luke 16:1-9), and others.

Common things such as bread, water, salt, wineskins, old garments, were used as symbols of matters of great significance (John 6:31-35, 51; 4:13, 14; Matt. 5:13; Luke 5:36-39). His logic, often delivered through analogies and parables, put matters in proper perspective (Matt. 16:1-3; Luke 11:11-22; 14:1-6). He directed his message not just at men's minds, but primarily to their hearts, using thought-provoking questions to cause them to think, arrive at their own conclusions, search their hearts, and make decisions (Matt. 16:5-16; 17:24-27; 26:52-54; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 10:25-37; John 18:11).

### **Teaching Men to Think**

Jesus was a great teacher who coached his learners to use higher-order thinking skills. He was not content with the mere regurgitation of facts. He wanted them to analyze and synthesize information. But most of all, he wanted them to apply what they had learned.

Proverbs 23:12 gave this direction: *Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.* Yet Jesus rebuked some teachers of the law because they honored him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him. He stated that they worshipped him in vain and that their teachings were but rules taught by men (Matt. 15:8, 9).

Jesus frequently challenged his listeners, making them examine their heart and motives. He called in question their beliefs and actions. He asked them to do things they had not previously considered. At times he left them puzzled, speechless, and reluctant to ask any more questions (Matt. 22:46).

### **Difficult Instructions**

Jesus instructed his listeners to do things that probably were very foreign to their thinking. It was as if they operated on different wave lengths.

One example is found in Matt. 5:38-42 [NIV.] It reads: *You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one*

*mile, go with him two miles, and Ø not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

These must have been strange and startling words to swallow for those who had been tutored under the Law. Yet it was characteristic of Jesus, of whom it was written, *No one ever spoke the way this man does* (John 7:46 NIV).

It was not in Jesus' lesson plan to convert the multitudes. Had this been the case, he would have instructed them in ways which would have been easy for them to comprehend. Rather, his purpose was to appeal to the hearts of those who hungered after truth and righteousness (Matt. 5:3, 6; 13:10-15).

### **Nutritious Kernels In Hard Shells**

His style was more that of one who tossed out kernels of truth encased in hard shells. He encouraged them to crack the outer covering in order to obtain the meat of the nut. Those who searched diligently would be able to do this with the Lord's assistance. His assurance was: *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened* (Matt. 7:7, 8 NN).

However, the less interested would not make the effort; or, they failed to see because . . . *the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God* (2 Cor. 4:4 NIV).

### **A Sensitive Teacher**

Jesus was sensitive to the limited understanding of his audience, even of his disciples (Mark. 4:33). He used his judgment in how much information to give them (John 16:4, 12).

### **A Demanding Teacher**

On the other hand, Jesus demanded much from everyone who had been given much. And from the one who had been entrusted with much, much was asked. This principle was enunciated in Luke 12:48 NIV.

A good teacher will know when to push and when to let up. Not all students have the same ability to learn at the same pace. Training wheels may be appropriate for some while landing gears are in order for others.

Our Master Teacher never diluted God's message so as to gain popularity or favor. His speech was straightforward, even blunt at times (Matt. 5:37; Luke 11:37-52; John 7:19; 8:46, 47). He was a staunch defender of truth and would not compromise it.

## His Students

If Jesus is the Teacher, it follows that we are to be his students. Jesus made that association himself in Matthew 10:24, 25. The word "student" in these verses is the same word often translated "disciple."

What Jesus told Philip, he says to us, "Follow me" (John 1:43). This signifies to be in the same way, to accompany him, as a disciple. Let us, therefore, more carefully study our Master Teacher so that we may better walk in his path.

A disciple is primarily a student, a learner. For us, as Jesus' disciples, the goal of our learning is to become like him. The objective of the Apostle Paul, for example, was total Christlikeness, as indicated in Galatians 2:20, 21.

Indeed, brethren, Christ is our Master Teacher. He instructs us by

example as well as by doctrine. To that end he came into this world and dwelt among us that he might be a copy of all those graces and fruits which he desires his followers to develop. And it is **a copy without one false stroke?** This is why it is so important to attend to his word, to imitate his examples, and thus be thoroughly conformed to his image.

# THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS

(( (Echoes from the Past ) ) )

*"They shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."-Revelation 20:6*

By Alonzo Jarmon

The work of the Day of Atonement lays the foundation for the restitution hopes of that reign. Our Lord Jesus is the chief priest and the members of his body will be the underpriests. In another picture, Jesus is the head and we are the body of the world's high priest.

Aaron was the high priest for all Israel (which antitypically represents the world of mankind). Jesus is the High Priest of our profession, our order. (Heb. 3:1) Jesus with the Church is the world's High Priest.

## **A Priest, but Not of Levi**

The Jews found it difficult to understand how Jesus could be associated with the priesthood. The LORD had confined the priestly office to Aaron's family; Aaron was of the tribe of Levi. Neither Jesus nor his apostles belonged to the tribe of Levi. How could they have anything to do with the priestly office?

The Apostle Paul accepted the fact, and wrote, under the influence of the holy Spirit, . . . *We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God* (Heb. 4:14-16).

The Apostle Paul taught that the Tabernacle arrangement with its high priests applied antitypically to our Lord, even though he was not of the tribe of Levi. (Note particularly Heb. 5:1-10.)

## **To the Jew First**

The Jewish people had a covenant relationship with Jehovah, the original Law Covenant. They should have been the recipients of its promise (Exod. 19:5). The Lord said: *Obey my voice* (the Law arrangement). *If you obey my voice and keep my covenants, . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.*

Moses spoke God's words to Israel. What did they say? *All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.*

What actually happened? Israel did not keep their part of the arrangement. They were blinded (Rom. 11:7). They were cast off.

Paul and Barnabas told the Jews:

*It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life . . . we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46, 47).*

### **Salvation Unto The Ends of the Earth**

*For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, 'I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.'*

The early Christians were made up of gentiles and Jews. To all of them, the Apostle Peter said: *But ye are a . . . royal priesthood* (I Peter 2:9,10).

This was the same arrangement offered to the priestly nation. When the Jewish branches were broken off, the gentile branches were grafted in to fill up the necessary opening. These scriptures (Romans, Acts and Peter) indicate that the royal priesthood is being drawn from all the families of the earth.

### **A Sympathetic and Powerful High Priest**

Returning to the apostle's statements in Hebrews: Paul shows us that the antitypical priest, Jesus, had offered up himself as the antitypical bullock for the sin-atonement; and after so doing he had ascended up on high, there appearing in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24), the church, that we might run in the race for the prize of being his underpriests.

Because we can by faith recognize Jesus as our high priest in heaven, knowing that he has sympathy for our imperfections, we can come to him with courage when overtaken by a fault.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (I John 2:1). He knows our experiences, and he is in heaven that we may obtain grace and mercy to help in every time of need. But all these blessed assurances will not apply to our lives unless we can realize that Jesus is our high priest and that he is in heaven.

He is at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3), in a position to administer all power and blessings to us as our need may require: . . . *thou wert killed, and didst redeem [us] to GOD, with thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation; and thou didst make them to our God a Royalty and a priesthood* (Rev. 5:9,10-Diaglott).

The kings and priests are being taken from every kindred and nation for the purpose of being a sympathetic high priest to all.

## **Priests Represent Their People**

The Jewish priests were taken from among their fellows and were set apart to represent their people before God (Heb. 5:1), offering sacrifices for their sins, just as the priests described in Revelation-able to sympathize with the people because they were subject to the same weaknesses, and needing forgiveness.

## **Called of God**

No priest was allowed to take this office for himself. God must call him. Although Aaron was only a type of Christ, he had to be called (Heb. 5:4).

It is thus with the antitypical priests on the higher plane: Christ, the spiritual high priest, and his royal priesthood (spiritual) must be called of God.

Jesus said, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him* (John 6:44). Christ glorified not himself to make himself a high priest (Heb. 5:5). God honored him in this way, saying to him: *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. And, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek* (Psalm 2:7). He did not assume this honor himself, even though he is the second highest being in the universe.

## **The Glorified Priest Is Not a Man**

Christ is not a priest after the order of Aaron, the Jewish priest; he would have been in the wrong line for that. He is a glorified priest after the order of Melchizedec, king and priest (Heb, 5:6)-not a sacrificing priest, but a reigning priest.

Christ in glory is not a man, not an earthly being, not a sacrificing being, as he was before. He is a glorified king and priest, able and willing to succor us in all our trials and difficulties. Therefore, let us go to him boldly to seek his help that is available to us in every time of need.

After he shall have accepted all his underpriests, and changed them to his own glorious likeness in the first resurrection beyond the veil, he will become the king and priest in glory to the world, and will reign to bless and uplift those who are willing in their enlightened state.

## **The Days of His Flesh Are Past**

The Apostle shows us the connection between the glorified king and priest beyond the veil and the suffering Jesus in the flesh. The apostle writes, *no, in the days of his flesh . . .* (Heb. 5:7). The days of his flesh were past, ended, when Paul wrote those words. They will not be any more. Peter explains, *He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened* (made alive) *in the spirit* (in his resurrection) (I Peter 3:18). He is no more a suffering



Jesus, but a glorified being in heaven. *In the days of his flesh, he offered up his prayers with strong cryings and tears.* This gives us confidence that he sympathizes with us.

### **All Depended on Him**

He offered up his prayers and supplications with strong cryings unto him that was able to save him out of death (not save him from death, but save him out of death by raising him up again). He was heard in that he did.

According to Luke 22:44, Jesus' agony in Gethsemane caused great drops of sweat like blood.

The Master himself had such bitter experiences that (although now in the glory and power of the heavens) he will surely sympathize with all of his true followers even though he may allow them to have Gethsemane experiences.

### **Suffering as a Son**

Jesus' suffering came to him not because he was a sinner but because he was a son. The heavenly Father was testing his loyalty even unto the death of the cross. Only by such a test could he be deemed worthy of the high exaltation of the divine nature.

The things which he suffered were not only to constitute a sacrifice for human sin and to make possible a restitution through the Messianic Kingdom, but these trials were necessary for the Master himself, *He was made perfect through suffering* (Heb. 2:10). Jesus was never imperfect in the sense of being sinful. He was undefiled as the Logos and when he was born of Mary. He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners. His sufferings did not make him sinless. The perfecting was of another kind.

Our Lord had entered a covenant of sacrifice to prove himself loyal to the heavenly Father's will even unto death. He had the promise of perfection on a higher plane, the promise of the divine nature-if he proved to be faithful to the covenant of sacrifice.

At Jordan, baptized by John, Jesus was begotten of the holy Spirit and his new nature began to grow. But the new nature needed development and perfecting. It was for this purpose that the trials were permitted to come to him. He was made perfect as a new creature of the divine order by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8).

### **A Matter of Life and Death**

After the Master entered into the covenant of sacrifice, it was a matter of life or death, even though he was the Son of God. Any failure on his part would cost him everything. All was at stake. His tears were not because of timidity in respect to the impending crucifixion.

Anything that man might do did not cause his anxiety, nor was it caused by doubt of the divine power or faithfulness. The Master's fear was of permanent death, caused by any unfaithfulness on his part. He would have lost all, including the power to redeem Adam's posterity.

The apostle says , He *was heard in that he feared* (Heb. 5:7). From that moment, the Master was serene. He could have proved himself innocent. But he said not a word.

He was calm through the stress of the trial and all during that following day. The heavenly Father assured him that so far he had proved himself faithful to his covenant.

### **The Author of Eternal Salvation**

Because of his victory and exaltation, Jesus is now the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him (Heb. 5:9), the first salvation being for the church.

These will be saved to the same glory which he has obtained. That station can be reached only by the road he traveled. His invitation to us is to take up our cross faithfully unto death.

It is impossible for any of us to overcome in the same absolute sense that Jesus did. He was perfect in the flesh; his followers are imperfect through the fall.

What is required is our heart loyalty, our willingness to do the Father's will and to sacrifice our own. For us the great Priest appropriates his merit, imputing it as a covering for all our unintentional blemishes. By and by, in the glorious first resurrection, we will be raised like him and see him as he is, be his helpers in the great work of restoring mankind to perfection on the earth.

"Thus the earth will be absolutely cleansed. Then every creature in heaven and earth will exclaim 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever!' (Rev. 5:13). Then there shall be no more sickness, or dying. The former things of sin and death will have passed away (Rev. 21:4). *Photo-drama of Creation, p. 96*

# WHAT THE MEMORIAL MEANS TO ME

*This do in remembrance of me.-1 Corinthians 11:24*

A Memorial meditation by Joseph Knapp

The Memorial means considerably more to me than it meant in the early years immediately following my consecration. In those days participation in the Memorial meant mostly a feeling of not feeling ready, not feeling properly prepared. Other brethren seemed so perfectly attuned to the moment and perfectly involved and uplifted by all that transpired at that special evening ceremony. I, on the other hand, while reading the accounts of the last week of Jesus' life, was trying to concentrate on receiving an adequate impression from this to be brought to a proper attitude of repentance. Appreciating the emotion of the events through which Jesus passed, I could partake of the Memorial symbols with proper humility, reverence, and conviction. Even with this high ideal in mind, I was distracted by noises around me and by the overwhelming feeling that other brethren were in a more elevated and appreciatively respectful spirit than I.

Above all else, I felt at fault for having to work so hard to get to a proper appreciation of the event. It seemed that I should have been able to stay in the proper frame of mind all year round and not have to exert so much effort to attain that attitude again each year. It seemed that all of this would be easier to do if only we celebrated the Memorial more often as many Christian denominations do. Yet the scriptures seemed clear that once in a year was adequate.

This inner struggle brought me to consider whether I was looking correctly at what the Memorial meant and if I was really participating properly in it. Over time the Lord has brought me to a more correct understanding of the Memorial; this has brought a continuing appreciation of it and a more natural and proper participation in it.

## **Two Reasons For the Memorial**

The Lord showed me the key in 1 Corinthians 11:24 and 25; Jesus, referring to their participation in both symbols of the Memorial, tells his disciples, *This do in remembrance of me*. And in verse 26 Paul clarifies for us that . . . *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come*.

These are really two separate statements, or reasons, for participation in the Memorial. The first, remembering Jesus, is a personal remembrance for my benefit. This surely should be daily, not just once a year. The second, showing forth his death, must be outward to others-the world and the brethren. Yet if showing forth the Lord's death is

meant to be to the world, how can that be accomplished closeted in this hidden ceremony when only brethren are around? The answers to these questions bring out the deeper primary meaning of the Memorial-both remembering him and showing forth his death.

If Jesus had meant only eating of the symbol he might have said, "Take, eat of this bread once a year to remember how I broke my body for you." Similarly, he might have said with the cup, "Take, drink of this cup once a year to remember how I (will) shed my blood for a new testament (and for the remission of sins)" (Matt. 26:28).

In the same vein, if Paul's comment in verse 26 meant that I show the Lord's death only once a year, when I partake of the symbols, I might assent and say, "Yes, I will accept that if you say so." But I am not sure what impact it was meant to have beyond my agreement, since the brethren would have the same understanding and no one outside of the room could be aware of what I was doing. This left me very uninspired. There must be a deeper meaning to these words.

It was clear that Jesus primarily meant that every time I eat of his body and every time I drink of his cup I am to remember him. And this eating of his body and drinking of his blood is to be a continuous act on my part, a constant obedience to the full commitment made in being baptized, into being dead with him.

### **A Continuous Commitment**

The primary meaning of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:26 is not as often as I partake of the symbols, but every time I eat of Jesus' body and drink of his blood I do show forth his death. This, again, is a continuous commitment. Paul confirms this in 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, where the communion is clearly continuous and not just once a year.

Paraphrased, in their primary meaning, Jesus' words might read, "This bread represents my body broken for you, and for the remission of sin. Take and eat of it as your commitment to follow in my footsteps, offering your body also to be broken in filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ (Col. 1:24). Every time your body is broken, remember how I first broke mine for you, and be strong." "This cup represents my blood to be shed for you, poured out fully in death for the forgiveness of sins, and for a testament of a new covenant to be made for the world. Take and drink of it as your commitment to follow me even unto death. Every time someone reminds you that the way you take will lead to certain death, remember how I first shed my blood for you and be strong."

What encouragement, comfort, and strength was in the Lord's words when so understood. What compassion for the trials to be faced; and what strength against temptations to draw back from full commitment, to avoid breaking the body in his service and name, to avoid any appearance of being so crazy as to direct oneself toward death. In every moment in my walk with the Lord, and especially in extreme times, it is good to be able to be comforted in trial and strengthened on the way by remembering the Lord's words, how he precedes me in every trial I will ever face and assures me that he will never leave me nor

forsake me. At the same time Jesus asked me to deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow him. He also explained that if I were ashamed of him and his words he would also be ashamed of me when he comes in his glory (Mark 9:38). While I did not want to admit it, every temptation to not serve in his name and to pull back from the discomfort of shame or flame was because I would appear too abnormal to those around me. I would appear to be a bit crazy to them. As much as I wanted to serve Jesus, I did not want to appear crazy. At times I felt that I had rationalized that the more normal I appeared the more accepted would be my message to those in the world around me.

## **Obedience Is the Message**

The clear and continuous message from Jesus is to obey. *Obedience is greater than (my idea of) sacrifice, and greater than controlling a city.* It is the sweetest offering I can make to the Lord; an offering made by fire, a sacrifice of a sweet savor to God. It is the acceptableness of the burnt offering: offered voluntarily, put on the fire and never pulled off no matter how hot the flame; faithful to its covenant; continuous in its service; committed from the first, through all the burning, to the complete consumption of self with the sole desire to be effective in the Lord's service, and found pleasing to him. The burnt offering is not acceptable just by definition but by what it is: voluntary; fully committed; never slacked; completely consumed; and joyfully, in the Lord's service, for his pleasure and glory!

I see then that in this request of the Lord relative to the Memorial, he is asking for my daily participation in the eating of his body, and the drinking of his blood., and that I will be more comforted and strengthened in this if I will think on him continuously. For me, this is the primary meaning of our Lord's words, and I readily see that this is a grand purpose. What a wonderful Lord I have! What a wonderful God, whose wisdom and love laid out this opportunity for me and gave me more strength than I deserve; and yet every bit as much as I need to be found faithful in my participation in the real Memorial, and in overcoming all the temptations to withdraw even a little bit from the commitment I have made to be fully consumed in this covenant. Truly, my God is an awesome God! Looking now at Paul's words I see that his primary meaning would also refer to my daily participation in the eating of the Lord's body and the drinking of his blood. In this sense it is easy to see how I show the Lord's death in this participation. The broken body represents the dying of our Lord, and the shed blood represents his death. Dying and death! Dying until death! In dying, I die! Not involuntarily, due to sin, as Adam, but voluntarily, due to obedience and love, as Jesus. By what other possible means could I better represent the Lord's death to all the world around me, including my brethren, than by living a life in which they can recognize that I am dying daily for his name and fully committed to death in his service. In this I see that being faithful to show the Lord's death requires that I cannot be ashamed of him or his word.

Paul brings this clearly to my attention in Rom. 1:16, 17; 4:5, 8, 9; 10:9-11. In these he connects not being ashamed of the Gospel of Christ or of Jesus or of anything to salvation, to faith, to love, showing that none of these is possible unless I am not ashamed; and therefore I must joyfully and gladly commit myself daily to participation in

the body and blood of Jesus. This is the higher meaning in Paul's words. In this I can again praise God for his grace in bringing this appreciation to me and for permitting me the opportunity to participate in this wonderful offering. May he ever bring more understanding so I may more completely praise him, and may he ever keep me in remembrance of the blessings of appreciation he has already given me.

### **Dying Daily With Christ**

If in any way I have a problem remembering this, I review the scriptures relative to my commitment (Rom. 6:3-8; 1 Cor. 15:29-31). In this sense I am to be remembering my participation in the meaning of the Memorial every day. I should be looking at what I permit to enter my life to see that it is a part of this dying daily, and not part of resuscitating the old man and making him more comfortable and honored. Watching daily to see that I continue to die, remembering Jesus daily for strength, living so as not to be ashamed to be a light to all men, and looking forward daily to my death is keeping the Memorial daily. Remembering Christ daily and showing his death to all around me daily is also to keep the Memorial.

If this is my path, then at the once-a-year Memorial service I am already in awareness of the Memorial since I have been living it all year. I can review my past year of dying to see how well it conformed to what I committed, and to the example of the Lord. I can also look at how the Lord has brought me thus far along the way; and I can thank and praise him for his marvelous grace and bountiful blessings and for his great love for me. And I can count him faithful to finish that which he has begun in me, looking forward to another year under his sure direction, asking for more grace to strengthen me to be more faithful to his leading alone, and to not detour to my own understanding, or other temptations, nor to be found slack in immediate obedience to him, knowing that his leading of me in the dark is more accurate than I could do for myself in the brightest light. In all of this I recognize his majesty and power and grace; and reaffirm my faith in his leading, in his workmanship, and in his love for me to keep me faithful even unto death.

Now when I am in that closeted assembly and look to see how my participation in the symbols of the Memorial on that one evening a year are also to bring me to remember Christ, and to shew his death, I find that the task is much easier, having first appreciated the primary meanings. Just being at this ceremony causes me to specially remember Christ, not only in how he has led me but also in a specific review of the last week of his life, and especially in the Memorial type.

### **Receiving the Symbols From Christ**

When the symbols are passed I take them as if I were personally at the original ceremony with Jesus. I can imagine receiving the symbols from him, and the impact that being there would have upon me. I feel closer to him and more firm in the strength of my commitment to follow on in his footsteps to the final commitment he met in setting the type. Thus, in participating in the symbols I do remember Christ.

I also show forth his death, even in the closed assembly. I show it first to my brethren, representing to them by my participation that I have continued in my commitment through the past year and that I commit myself to continuing on during the upcoming year. I also show it to myself in that I make this public statement specifically to the point of this commitment. This serves to strengthen my commitment. Thus, in participating in the symbols do I show Christ's death.

At the same time I am privileged to be aware of the brethren around me and of how their participation in this ceremony shows me that Christ's dying and death is being lived in them. This is also an encouragement to me.

These are the lessons, more importantly, the appreciations, to which the Lord has brought me and by which I am strengthened to continue in my covenant with the Lord. There is no greater joy than to serve him, no greater anticipation than to be in his presence; and all of this is another grace and blessing he provides in this ceremony and in my covenant opportunity. How could I not continue? Beside him, what else and who else is there?

### **The Memorial Is Moment by Moment**

I now see that participation in the Memorial itself is a once-a-year participation in the symbols used by Jesus as a reconfirmation of my ongoing commitment to, and involvement in, what the symbols represent. While my baptismal immersion showed to the brethren that I had made a commitment and that I expected to fulfill it, the Memorial ceremony reconfirms to them, to myself, and to God and Christ that I have been actively involved in this commitment and that I am going to continue firm in it.

This perspective of the Memorial has helped me to be aware and appreciate the privilege that I have in participating in the Memorial every day, all year round, and in participating in the Memorial ceremony once a year. These help me to remain humble about what the Lord has accomplished in me and to be strengthened in the spirit to go forward with greater zeal to what lies ahead. I cease not to praise God for the riches of the blessing he has given me in being able to participate in the Memorial and in being enlightened to appreciate the participation.

# The Generation of Jesus Christ

*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.—  
Matthew 1:1*

*A verse-by-verse Bible study in Matthew 1*

The same book, the New Testament, which contains a warning against studying "endless genealogies" (1 Tim. 1:4), itself opens with a lengthy genealogy—"the generation of Jesus Christ."

Another even more lengthy genealogy of Jesus is found in Luke 3:23-38. The two lists of forebears differs in two respects. While the Matthew accounts traces Jesus' pedigree to Abraham, the Luke record goes even farther, all the way back to God through Adam.

The second difference is that Matthew is tracing the legal ancestry through the male line, Joseph's, "the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus;" while Luke follows Jesus' biological roots through his mother Mary.

It has been contested by some that Luke 3:23 makes that genealogy also that of Joseph. "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." However the total difference with that in given in Matthew would either make this an impossibility or one of them a lie. The Greek word *nomizo* translated "as was supposed," while having that general meaning, literally gives the thought of according to law (See Strongs #3543); or the son-in-law of Heli, the father of Mary, Joseph's wife.

## Genealogical Problems

Verses 1 through 16 list the genealogy of Jesus. This is important to the theme of Matthew's gospel which was primarily written to prove to the Jewish people that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, "the son of David."

A detailed examination of this ancestral listing turns up two problems however. The first of these is in verse eight where Joram (Jehoram) is listed as the father of Ozias (Uzziah.) Three generations are omitted in this listing (Ahaziah, 2 Chron. 22:2); Jehoash, 2 Chron. 24:1; and Amaziah, 2 Chron. 25:1).

Rather than an oversight, the recap of the number of generations in verse 17, suggests that Matthew made this omission purposefully. The answer to this riddle appears to be found in Exodus 20:4, 5: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."



The wife of Jehoram was Athaliah, the daughter of Israel's wicked king Ahab (presumably through Jezebel), introduced idolatry as the palace religion of Judah. To maintain her control she murdered all of her grandsons except Joash, who had been hidden by the priests.

Matthew therefore follows the law given in Exodus 20:4, 5 and omits the following three generations of kings.

The second problem is the omission of Jehoiakim between Josiah (Josiah) and Jechonias (Jehoiachin.) This appears to be an oversight, since the number of listed generations between David and the captivity is only thirteen, while the recap in verse 17 indicates there should be fourteen.

### **Long Generations**

Another claim against the Matthew genealogy is the length of generations between Naasson and David in verses five and six. These four generations span a period of some 490 years (the period of the Judges plus the forty years of Saul's reign), an average of 122 years per generation, while the previous five generations (from Judah to Naasson) covers about 400 years, or 80 years per generation.

It is for this reason that many commentators suggest that there must have been omitted generations during this period. In defense of the listing as given by Matthew it should be noted that there is independent reason to consider these generations as longer than the normal for that time period.

Joshua 6:25 notes that Rahab lived to an exceptional age by noting, as a matter of interest, "she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day." Boaz was already well established when he married the widowed Ruth, mother of Obed. And of David himself we learn that he was sufficiently junior to his siblings as to use his sister Zeruihah's sons Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, as chief advisors (see 1 Chron. 2:16; 2 Sam. 2:18).

### **Five Women**

One additional oddity in this listing of Jesus' lineage is the inclusion of five women—Tamar, Rachab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary. Paradoxically, each of the five could be considered a blot in the pedigree of Jesus.

The story of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah who visited her in the role of an harlot, does little to enhance her reputation, although her motivation to force Judah to fulfil his obligations under Levirate law (Deut. 25:5-10), was indeed honorable. Nevertheless her son was, technically, illegitimate.

Once again the genealogy of Jesus is used to illustrate a principle of Old Testament law. One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the congregation of the LORD; "even to the tenth

generation none of his descendants shall enter the congregation of the LORD" (Deut. 23:2 NKJ).

Counting forward from Thamar's sons Phares and Esrom, the tenth generation reaches to King David. This explains why, when Israel clamored to Samuel for a king, God did not choose one from the line of Judah, the prophesied royal line (Gen. 49:10)

Two of the other women, Rahab and Ruth, while both women of faith, were Gentiles by birth—Rahab being a Canaanite and Ruth a Moabite. Thus is illustrated the validity of the Jewish law of the proselyte, and the universality of the lineage of Jesus.

The Bathsheba story relates to a serious moral lapse in the life of David. Yet, of all his wives, she becomes the favorite and the mother of both Solomon and Nathan, the two sons of David who become ancestors of Jesus. Her besmirched reputation however almost prefigures that of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who became with child through the Holy Spirit before consummating her marriage with Joseph, her espoused.

### **Fourteen Generations**

***"So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations" (v. 17).***

If the ancestral listing had been more literally accurate, the reoccurrence of the number fourteen might seem to be an interesting curiosity. It becomes even more so when taking the manufactured appearance of the number, taking into account the missing generations.

Why was fourteen so important? It is of interest at this point, to delve into the Jewish mind. Numbers were not written in the customary format of our day, but were composed of the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet—aleph equalling one, beth being two, and so on.

It is in this vein that numbers are used in the book of Revelation, where the number of the beast is given as six hundred sixty six. An archaeological stele has been found with an engraving, similar to that left by two lovers today, of an heart inscribed with the words "he whose number is 32 loves her whose number is 25." These were decoded by adding the value of the consonants in the proper names of the individuals involved.

Following this light of reasoning, it appears to be no coincidence that the proper name David is composed of three consonants—two daleths or "d", with a vau or "v" inserted between them. Daleth was the fourth Hebrew letter, having a numeric of four, and vau the sixth, with a value of six. The name David therefore had a numeric value of 6+4+6 for a total of 14, the number of generations which Matthew finds between each of the major time markers in the genealogical history of Jesus.

Jesus was the "Son of David" (14), from Abraham to David; and again the "Son of David" (14) from David to the captivity; and once again the "Son of David" (14) from the captivity to the birth of Jesus.

### **The Birth of Christ**

***"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (vs. 18-20).***

While Luke's gospel records the annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary, Matthew gives us the other half of the story—the announcement of Mary's pregnancy to Joseph. At the time of the event recorded here Joseph and Mary were espoused or engaged, but not yet married.

The Jewish engagement customs were quite different than those of today's western world. Concerning these we read the following from Nelson's Bible Dictionary:

"The selection of the bride was followed by the betrothal, not to be entirely equated with the modern concept of engagement. A betrothal was undertaken by a friend or agent representing the bridegroom and by the parents representing the bride. It was confirmed by oaths and was accompanied with presents to the bride and often to the bride's parents.

The betrothal was celebrated by a feast. In some instances, it was customary for the bridegroom to place a ring, a token of love and fidelity, on the bride's finger. In Hebrew custom, betrothal was actually part of the marriage process. A change of intention by one of the partners after he or she was betrothed was a serious matter, subject in some instances to penalty by fine.

The most important instance of betrothal in the Bible is the one between Joseph and Mary att. 1:18-19. A Jewish betrothal could be dissolved only by the man's giving the woman a certificate of divorce. A betrothal usually lasted for one year. During that year the couple were known as husband and wife, although they did not have the right to be united sexually.

Betrothal was much more closely linked with marriage than our modern engagement. But the actual marriage took place only when the bridegroom took the bride to his home and the marriage was consummated in the sexual union."

Joseph's nobility was shown by his desire to give Mary the required bill of divorcement inferred by his "putting her away privily." This would permit her remarriage and draw the least public commotion to the incidence of her unusual pregnancy.

The assurance of the angel of Mary's fidelity to him despite the obvious appearances of her being with child were sufficient for him to cancel these plans. This was another demonstration of his love for Mary and the nobility of his own character for, despite the assurance of the angel, the morals of Mary would be publicly questioned and her reputation (and his also, by association) tarnished.

### **Naming the Child**

***"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (vs. 21-23).***

At first reading these verses contain a contradiction—his name was to be called Jesus because the Old Testament predicted his name would be Emmanuel (Isa. 7:14).

The name Emmanuel is interpreted by Matthew as meaning "God with us." In contrast, the name Jesus is usually interpreted as meaning "Savior". This interpretation, however, is only partially correct. Jesus is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew Joshua, a name frequently given as a namesake for the famous Hebrew leader who led Israel into the promised land at the end of the Exodus from Egypt.

As we examine the Old Testament records we find that Joshua was a name given to one of the twelve spies who searched out the promised land. We read in Numbers 13:16, "These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua."

It was the name Oshea (or Hosea) which meant "Savior." By adding the prefix Je to the name and making it Jehoshua (or Joshua) Moses was changing the meaning to "Jehovah saves", an exact parallel to the meaning of Emmanuel, "God with us."

### **Joseph's Obedience**

***"Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (vs. 24, 25).***

Our chapter closes with Joseph showing his nobility and obedience to the vision which he had seen. He not only drops his own plans of giving Mary an honorable bill of divorcement and chooses to share the consequences of a stained reputation with his wife, but also opts to remain celibate in the marriage until after the child is born.

While men rightly praise the purity and character of Mary, it is only fitting that we also remember the nobility and strength of character exemplified by the little known Joseph.

## The Word of God—In Creation

*"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isaiah 55:11*

*Richard Kindig*

Imagine the universe, as it flashes into being. Outbursts of energy assault the blackness. Raging storms of light . . . they press the limits of infinity, and yet are obviously held in check by some unseen control.

Who among men can comprehend the power? Man, indeed, has finally learned how to destroy our fragile little world. But all the bombs that the human race has made, would only light one star for one millionth of a millionth of a second. A force of superior power is warming the earth with light.

If our soil is rich, it is because that power has worked for ages past. If our cities bustle with traffic, it is just another form of the energy that came to earth as sunlight, eons and eons ago.

While the stars can still be seen, observe them—see the meaning of infinite power. And then focus a microscope, to learn the meaning of infinite wisdom. Molecules of matter—particles tinier than dust—yet organized as energy systems. They, too, obey unseen control. They can bond together, firm and rigid, or associate freely, in a fluid. They can bend, stretch, and shrink. They can form into purest crystals, flawlessly guided by an inner plan. They can transmit the light of the stars . . . bend it into color. And, most amazing of all, these structures of inner space, can see the light from outer space . . . in that amazing organization of inanimate matter that we call "Life."

### **Consider the Eye**

Consider the eye. The only transparent part of a living organism—yet occurring in every one of the higher life forms. Living structures that can clearly transmit light like purest glass; adjustable lenses that can focus it; millions of nerved sensors that detect the difference between brightness and color; and a brain that can collect these impulses, discern patterns in them, gather information from them, react to them, remember them.

In five different classes of creatures sight occurs: mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and insects. In every case, a miracle of engineering, perfectly designed to meet the needs of that creature. To the great scientist, Isaac Newton, the eye was irrefutable proof that there is a God in heaven.

Except where man has destroyed the natural balance, we find that order prevails . . . we observe order within the workings of the tiniest cells; specialized activities, harmoniously carried out; communication with itself, and with the outside world. Order and symmetry, abundant variety and superfluity, give evidence not only of practical response to an environment, but also of the work of a master designer. Strength and delicacy—power and mobility—speed and grace—simplicity and ostentation—camouflage and grand display.

When we reflect on the variety and interdependency of life on earth, we see not merely a "food chain," but a symphony of freedom, where every creation has its place, and the most important roles are played by the most insignificant participants.

### **The Creative Word**

What is the force that unleashed the raw, rebellious power of the universe, and yet imposed an order that controls even the stars? What is the power that transformed mud into granite, coal into diamonds, and ashes into life? The Word of God!

"By the Word of God the heavens were made." "God spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." By a word from the Almighty the mighty seas were gathered. By a word from the Almighty the mountains arose. By a command from God the flowers produced seed. The birds carried it away, the islands gave it ground.

By a word from God a stony earth became the mother of a thousand forms, a million varieties of life. By the word of God, mankind was made in God's image. A voice that can whisper, and shout, and sing; a hand that can draw, and write, and build; a mind that can wonder, and search, and choose.

By the word of God, ordinary men were tapped by the finger of God. Men who walked with God, grew to become poets, or philosopher-kings, or, simply, saints.

By the word of God, freedom is the law, disobedience is a thing that is permitted, and the judgments of God are difficult to trace. By the word of God, the path of righteousness, when it can be found at all, is not always met with pleasant rewards.

By the word of God, life for most people is a maze of shadows, where the darkest shades are felt in deeply personal ways. But by the word of God, the tragedies of this life will not be wasted. And the wisdom each man gains will not be lost forever. Even with its pain, life is always a blessing . . . and death, though sometimes a relief, is always the enemy.

### **Creation Not in Vain**

When man first exploded an atomic bomb, its inventor repeated the ancient Sanskrit boast: "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." But God boasts of His creations. The universe he brought to pass through the power of His spoken word. And in His written Word, he tells us that He is not the God of the dead, but of the Living. He

identifies himself as the one who created the earth. He assures us that He did not create the earth in vain. He formed it to be inhabited. He asks us, not to worship him in fear of destruction, but in thankfulness for creation. Because He, and He alone, has the power to create a galaxy, or a flower, simply by sending forth His word. If we have questions, let us ask them. If we feel the pain of the human race, let us turn to God for answers. There is enough evidence of a God in heaven to justify our search: the stars can prove to us God's power. The miracle of life can teach us His wisdom. And the Word of God alone can show us His justice and His love.

### **Defining Our Terms**

Before we proceed, let us define our terms. The Words of God are His spoken commands, uttered in the heavens. Rarely has the literal voice of God been heard among men.

The phrase, "Word of God" sometimes refers to the actual written message of the Bible, the inscriptions themselves. This is the case in some places in the New Testament where the Greek word *rhema* is used, such as 1 Peter 1:25.

### **The Word—A Principle**

But most of the time when the Bible uses the expression "Word of God" it is "Logos"—the spirit that moved in the holy men of God as they wrote the Bible. It is the sacred truth they brought to us—not merely the words, but also the significance behind them.

In this sense, the written Word of God is a living principle, an extension of God himself, that operates in the minds and hearts of those who approach God in sincerity and truth.

This is the force that Paul describes when he says that the "Word of God is alive, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Word of God, as a principle, transforms us by the renewing of our minds. It shows us our sin and unworthiness of life apart from Christ. It shows us that fellowship with God is not achieved through self-examination, but by God's examination of us. "In Thy Light, we see light." In the language of David in Psalms 139:23, God searches us. When His probing uncovers a need, we respond by looking at God's Word, and like a mirror it shows us precisely what we need to do. We don't look at ourselves, we look at the mirror—God's word. It corrects us, instructs us in righteousness.

### **The Word Personified**

The Word of God is also a person: our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the plan, expression, intention, of God Himself. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, so that we can behold the glory of God. To Moses, God showed his back side. In Jesus, we are able to see God's face.

And finally, the Word of God is personified in the Church of God. It is spoken of as "the epistle of Christ." The apostles wrote words, but Christ writes his message to the world in the hearts and lives of his followers.

## **Voltaire**

The great French humanist philosopher Voltaire inaugurated *The Age of Reason*. The modern world can thank Voltaire that we are free to express religious views without fear of being burned at the stake. But Voltaire also vigorously attacked the Bible, laughing at the idea that it could be the Word of God. "Crush the infamy" was his cry.

While God allowed Voltaire to prevail against false religions, Voltaire's attempts to destroy the Word of God met with utter failure. "The wrath of man will praise him. The remainder of wrath he will restrain." Within a few short years of Voltaire's death, Bible societies sprang up all over Europe and America. Some years later it was learned that the very room where these Bibles came to be stored had been the site where Voltaire issued his most famous tract attacking the Bible. The Word of God is always triumphant.



## NEWS & VIEWS

### + ANNUAL MEETING +

The Pastoral Bible Institute annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday, June 4, 1994 at 10:00 a.m. in Gulfport, Louisiana. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, 1600 E. Beach. The local brethren have invited all those attending the meeting to worship with them on Sunday, June 5. That meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn as well.

Rooms at the Holiday Inn will be \$55 per room for one person, with a \$10 charge for each extra person; a maximum of four people per room. Children under 18 are free. Local brethren will provide the noon and evening meal on Saturday and lunch on Sunday.

The Holiday Inn provides shuttle service to and from the Gulfport airport, which is about 5 miles away. You may also fly to New Orleans airport, which is about a one-and- one-half hour drive. No shuttle service is available from this airport.

If you want to attend, please make your reservation through the Institute secretary, James Caudle, 2905 E. Sunset Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226, phone (206) 671-8661. Reservations can be made as soon as you know you want to attend and no later than May 1. If you write for reservations, please specify the number of rooms you want, the number of people, and any children under age 18.

### + Readers Speak Out +

*Re: Anniversary Issue*

I just received the Diamond Anniversary issue and read it straight through non-stop. Thank you for this much needed information. These articles helped us put a few more necessary things into perspective in regard to the history of various believers down through the centuries who attempted to continue in the paths of love, truth, and faith to God and his Son.

We were associated with the Witnesses for over 25 years, serving where the need was great in various parts of four states. We have been disassociated now for about 10 years and have kept in contact with Ray Franz and a number of others who are now also disassociated and involved in a work of helping a great number of others who left or were disfellowshipped, but who became lost spiritually after their leaving. So you can imagine what it meant to us to learn of the connections and knowledge your writers have with the Russellites or Witnesses over the years.

We have a considerable amount of interest and concern with much that is connected with these matters and I am in preparation of a book which will attempt to cover most of what is involved in an individual's acquiring of a belief system of this nature. It is our hope that the book will be a great source of pertinent, vital information, and more, a source of encouragement for the many who are now struggling with this entire matter of religions, beliefs, and proper relationship to our Father and his Son.

We would appreciate it very much if you would direct us to any of your Christian fellowship and associates who would be willing to let us contact them, preferably by phone, so that we can learn more of who are involved in any of the aspects of our Master's ministry.

*(Quintin Mushik, Springfield, Tennessee)*

*Editor's note: Anyone in the Springfield area who would be able to contact Mr. Mushik should call Len Griehs at (215) 953-9935 to obtain an address and phone number.*

I want to make a comment about the anniversary issue of the Herald. It's really well done, with lots of good information. I did, however, spot three inaccuracies that I thought I'd point out to you.

1. On History, page ten, in the inset box, the author states, Luther permitted infant baptism, Calvin did not. Well, Calvin actually encouraged infant baptism. I know of no historical record that indicates Calvin's disapproval. I called the local Calvinist seminary and received assurance that Calvin was a great advocate of infant baptism.

2. On History, page 15, the first paragraph in the first column ends, "Only Christians would be saved." This is speaking of the Seventh-day Adventist view of salvation. As a former SDA, I can assure you that this is not true. In the book *Desire of Ages*, Ellen White makes it clear that there will be many in heaven who never heard the name of Christ. She says that some will come up to Him, point to the nails in His hands, and ask, How did you get those? They are those who had never heard the gospel story, but were considered safe to save by the God who knows the heart and the intentions.

3. Finally, a minor point. In all but one place in the document, the name Seventh-day Adventist is spelled "Seventh Day Adventist." It really should be hyphenated, lower-case "d" in day, to be correct.

I hope you decide to print the History section as a separate booklet. It would be a great tool.

*(Jeffrey Needle, Chula Vista, Cal.)*

*Re Israel and the Middle East, Jan/Feb 1994*

Would suggest some corrections on the Psalm 83 identifications. I am unaware that any significant parts of modern Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates or Bahrain were ever subjected by the old Roman Empire. But I think likely all of the Psalm 83 tribes had been. Will suggest different identifications of several.

Tyre, like the coast lands of the Tyrrhenian Sea and Carthage, was founded as a colony of Tiras, or Thrace (Gen 10:2, Acts 16:11), a Caucasian people. Today the site of both old Tyre and the peninsula of new Tyre are both in Pact. southern Lebanon.

Ammon was north of Moab and Edom when Israel was coming into the promised land (Deut. 2:1-23). The Ammonites were descended from Abraham's nephew Lot (Gen. 19:36-38). The capital of modern Jordan still retains the name Amman.

Edom was the nation descended from Esau (Gen. 36:31-43). Israel encountered them in the mountains of Seir southeast of the Dead Sea, in modern southern Jordan.

Amalek was descended from Esau (Gen. 36:12). They were in the Sinai peninsula when they ambushed Israel after the Exodus from Egypt (Ex. 17:8-16).

The Ishmaelites were descended from Abraham but did not share in the inheritance given to Isaac. They were nomadic merchantmen (Gen. 16:11-12, 37:25) and would appear to correspond to the modern Bedouins.

The Philistines were descended from Ham, through Mizraim (Egypt, Gen. 10:6-14). They spread from Egypt northeastward through the coastal plain and were a source of trouble for many centuries (Ex. 13:17, Jg. 13:1, I Sam. 14, 2 Kings 18:8). Those who now populate the Gaza strip in Israel are probably mostly Philistine descendants.

As a side note, Ez. 38 omits any reference to Arabic peoples in the Eastern bloc, headed by the Magog tribes (Mongols, Moguls, Samoyeds, Kazakhs or Cossacks, Uzbeis, Yakut, Eskimos, etc.). However, Sheba and Dedan, who are to head the Western *bloc* (Ezek. 38:13), are descended from Abraham as well as from Cush (Gen 25:1-3, 10:6-7)

*(James Parkinson, Los Angeles)*

## + AROUND THE WORLD +

### *Israel*

The United Nations endorsement of peace talks between Israel and the PLO is a clear break with past 20 years of anti-Israeli debate in the Middle East. The resolution adopted in December was much different than those issued in 1967 and 1973 which demanded Israel's withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. One U.S. official called the resolution the culmination of a quiet revolution at the United Nations.

*(Washington Post, 12/15/93)*

Britain has agreed to help the PLO set up an intelligence network to counter violent opposition to the Israeli-PLO

*(Jerusalem Post, 11/93)*

Binyamin Netanyahu. charged that the Israeli government has agreed to the establishment of a bridgehead in Gaza and Jericho which the PLO will use to destroy Israel. Netanyahu, leader of the Likud party, stressed that the PLO's aim is to destroy Israel and that Arafat regards control of Jericho and Gaza as the first step.

*(Jerusalem Post, 11/93)*

The same day that Arafat made a speech on the lawn of the White House, he made an address to the Palestinian people on Jordan TV. He never mentioned Israel once, never mentioned peace once, never mentioned co-existence once. He said, We are coming back to Palestine. Our flags will wave over Jerusalem, the Churches and mosques of Jerusalem ... the most important thing was . . . since we cannot defeat Israel in war we do this in stages. We take any and every territory that we can of Palestine, and establish a sovereignty there, and we use it as a springboard to take more. When the time comes we can get the Arab nations to join us for a final blow against Israel.

*(David Bar-Illan, Executive Editor of the Jerusalem Post)*

The Roman Catholic Church will demand that Israel stop barring Palestinians from parts of Jerusalem and its holy sites. Michel Sabbah, representative of the church said the recognition of Israel was not the Vatican's final say on the issue of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is still to be discussed he said. The Vatican has not recognized Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem.

*(Associated Press, 12/31/93)*

### *Italy*

Jews in Italy are worried about the politics emerging in Rome and Naples. More candidates from the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement have emerged. The organization was formed by Fascist sympathizers after WWII and has yet to repudiate its roots in the Mussolini era. In Naples, the granddaughter of the former dictator is challenging a former Communist for rulership. Gianfranco Fini, the party leader running in Rome, has angered Italian Jews by saying that the Mussolini-era racial laws that made Jews second-class citizens were an error of realpolitik that led to horror rather than denouncing them in moral or criminal terms.

*(New York Times, 12/5/93)*

## *Zaire*

Since mid-October, conditions in sub-Saharan Africa's second most populous country have taken a dramatic turn for the worse. For the third time in two years, the Mobutu Government has introduced a new currency in an effort to solve its chronic liquidity crisis. It has tried to withdraw its old bank notes from circulation. The tactic has seemed to backfire, as the new currency has plunged against the dollar on the black market and has sent prices soaring higher. The ensuing chaos threatens to plunge the nation into its gravest crisis since its independence from Belgium in 1960. Things have gone from the ridiculous to the truly absurd, said Atondoko Ngefa, president of Association for the Defense of Human Rights. A Western economist there said: Frankly, I haven't the faintest idea of how most people get by. It defies all logic. But eventually, it will all come tumbling down. It must.

*(New York Times, 1/6/94)*

## *Christendom*

Civilization has been through periods of political and religious upheaval before, yet modern communications and modern weapons make the current situation more bewildering. In both Western Europe and North America, the age of unbelief has sharply challenged and eroded traditional religious, moral and ethical codes, and both economic and social change have put tremendous pressure on traditional family structures. In the formerly communist world, social and political standards have been completely discredited. Traditional structures seem to be losing ground everywhere. Religious leaders in Britain expressed alarm that less than two percent of the population bothers with the Church of England on Sundays. Alexander Schuller, a German sociologist, says that traditional explanations cannot account for rising crime rates everywhere in the world. I believe like all theoreticians, theologians and students of human behavior, that we carry evil within us and can commit evil. Differentiation between good and evil is a uniquely human trait, but good seems worn out. There's no reward in it anymore.

*(New York Times, 12/26/93)*

A new poll of baby boomers, those people born between 1946 and 1962, show that 58 percent are actively involved in organized religion. Thirty-three percent have always been actively involved; 25 percent dropped out and returned. Forty-two percent remain dropouts or were never involved. Of that group, nine percent are seekers interested in spirituality but choose mysticism, New Age or other spiritual movements. (*A Generation of Seekers*, by Wade Clark Roof)

Recent albums and videos by acts as diverse as U2, Peter Gabriel, Matthew Sweet, Rickie Lee Jones, Concrete Blonde and Snoop Doggy Dogg express a spiritual yearning that harks back to gospel roots and a generational groping for more eternal values. Christ is a very powerful image to grow up with. Here's this guy nailed to a cross hanging on your wall. How can you not be affected by that? says Michael McDermott of his new album, Gethsemane. Peter Gabriel says of his focus on religious themes, I don't expect the millennium to witness the death of God, but perhaps it will see the death of many of the edifices and humbug that surround religion.

(*New York Times*, 1/2/94)

The Supreme Court has agreed to re-examine its landmark 1971 ruling on how far government may go to accommodate religious practices without violating the constitutional doctrine of church-state separation. In the case accepted for review, New York courts ruled that the creation of the Kiryas Joel Village School District was an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion. New York legislators created the district in 1989 to resolve a dispute over how to educate disabled children in the Orange

County village. Almost all village residents are members of the Satmar Hasidic sect of Jews, a devoutly religious group that maintains an insular community where religious ritual and distinctive dress are observed, Yiddish is often spoken instead of English and girls and boys are educated separately.

(*Associated Press*, 12/93)

### *Archaeology*

Archaeologists have discovered a fragment of a stone monument with inscriptions bearing the first known reference outside the Bible to the dynasty of King David. The piece had 13 lines of Aramaic text referring to the House of David. A reference in the stone may refer to the battle described in I Kings 15:20. The king referred to in the monument may have been Asa, a descendant of David.

(*New York Times*, 12/93)

Thirty archaeologists and more than 300 workers and volunteers have begun Operation Scroll. They are looking for additional Dead Sea Scrolls. The original scrolls were found in the Qumran area in 1947 and additional scrolls were uncovered up to 1955. So far no additional scrolls have been found, but the searchers did unearth a complete 5,000 year-old skeleton enclosed in a sack on a straw mat. Yasmine Zahron, director of the Institute of Islamic Archaeology said the Israeli operation shows bad faith toward the September 13 agreement for peace with the PLO.

The territory of Qumran is close to that which will become part of the Palestinian self-rule area.

*(Washington Post, 12/4/93)*

## **Book Review**

***The Formation Of Hell. Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds***, by Alan E. Bernstein, Cornell University Press. 392 pages, \$32.50.

This book is the first of what is proposed to be a multi-volume work on the history of hell, beginning with the Bible and ending with Dante's work, *The Inferno*. This first book examines the development of the concept in the Bible, and the reader would do well to have their Bible at hand. His discussion of Sheol, Hades and Gehenna will be most interesting for Bible students.

The Sheol of the Jews was a vast collective sepulcher whose name literally meant the grave. During the writing of the law and Deuteronomy, evil was punished on earth during the lifetime of the person who committed wrong, not after death.

It was Gehenna that first took on the meaning of some punishment after death. At first Gehenna was just Ge-Hinnom, a ravine near Jerusalem where false gods were worshipped and children were sacrificed to Molech. Bernstein says, Ge-Hinnom was associated with burning, shame and wickedness. Bernstein shows that it was only after the evangelist of the New Testament described such metaphorical language as weeping and gnashing of teeth and the description of Lazarus and the rich man that theologians began assigning the concept of suffering to Sheol and Hades.

## **Future Probation**

*A Quote . . .*

"We are to be priests and kings. There are vast spaces in the universe that may have to be evangelised or ruled or influenced for righteousness. It may be that important spheres of ministry are needing those to fill them who have learned the secret of victory over materialism on the one hand, and over the power of Satan on the other . . . . Therefore earth may be the school, the training ground, the testing place for the servants and soldiers of the hereafter. This thought need not be in conflict with the ideals of rest and worship which we are wont to associate with the future life. Eternity will give opportunities for all. But, if it became him of whom and through whom are all things to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through the suffering of temptation, it stands to reason that his comrades and soldiers must pass through the same, that they may become more than conquerors, and having overcome, may sit with him on his throne, as he overcame and is set down with the Father on his throne."

*This quote from the late Dr F. B. Mayer is just one of several in the new booklet "Future Probation" published by Bible Fellowship Union in England. You can order your copy free of charge from the Pastoral Bible Institute, 2905 E. Sunset Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226*