

Final Thoughts

*"That the man of God may be perfect,
thoroughly furnished unto all good works"*

...not partially furnished, in a half-and-half, mild, smattering way, but thoroughly furnished, wealthily furnished, heartily furnished – even to the point of having the word of Christ dwelling in us richly, with that intensity of appreciation expressed in the words, **"my soul breaketh for the longing it hath at all times unto thy testimonies."** And furnished unto all good works – not one or two; not like those who perform one set of duties and neglect others: who attend lectures but absent themselves from the breaking of bread; who like to argue about first principles but disrelish exhortation to holiness and prayer; who get up public meetings but forget the ministration of the saints; who like discussion but have no taste for worship; who are interested in the signs of the times, but dull on the law of Christ; who take an interest in the stranger, but forget love to the brethren; who zealously invoke the law and the testimony, but neglect the daily reading of the Scripture; who teach doctrine, but pass over mercy and the love of God; who are diligent in business but do not serve the Lord; who cherish theory, but fail in practice; who are alive to correctness of belief, but dead to holiness of life; who contend for the faith, but neglect the works without which faith is dead; who promise liberty to others, while they themselves are servants of corruption.

On the other hand, the man of God, furnished unto all good works, will not be found in opposite extremes. He will not exalt "charity" over the gospel; he will not preach "love" where the word of God is corrupted; he will not advocate peace where there is not purity; he will not hold up almsgiving as the way of salvation; he will not inculcate union and friendship with the world on the plea of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

For everything there is a time and a place; and the study of the word will teach us the when and the where. There is a right division of the word of truth and a handling of the word of God deceitfully. The man of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, will discern instinctively the one and the other, and be enabled to give its right place to every part of the word of the testimony.

Robert Roberts, *The Christadelphian*, June, 1878, pp. 258,259

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THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

*A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense
of The Holy Scriptures*



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THE
SANCTUARY – KEEPER

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“Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar”

Num. 18:5

“Ye are...an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”

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“Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name”- Rev. 3:8

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OUR DAILY REMINDERS

THERE are many things in this world that may turn our attention and focus away from our precious heritage and all of the wonderful blessings that we receive from the hands of our Heavenly Father. We all suffer the pangs of mortality. We are all impacted by the decline in the morality of the world and the decline in the strength of the brotherhood in defending the Truth against the false doctrines of this age.

Regardless of all that may be going on in our lives, we should always remember that we are still a very special people, called out of the darkness of the Gentile world and allowed by the mercy of Yahweh to grasp onto the Hope of Israel. We, as covenanted believers, are assured of a resurrection and a fair and just judgment of our works and faith that we manifest during the days of our probation. We are the sons and daughters of Yahweh, part of the family of God. What a wonderful privilege that we enjoy amongst all people of the world!

What can we do to remain focused on these special privileges as we go about our daily life? One simple thing that we can do is to use the daily activities in our life to help us remember our responsibilities of our high and holy calling and to remember all of the wonderful acts of love that have been showered upon us from the Creator of the Universe. There are certain things that we do every day that may cause us to stop and consider how beautiful the Truth is and how blessed we are. Let's look at a few of these daily reminders.

AS WE ARISE FROM OUR NIGHTLY SLEEP, WE MAY THINK OF THESE THINGS AND THESE SCRIPTURES:

- **Baptism** – Romans 6:4 – *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.”*
- **Resurrection** – 1st Corinthians 15:51-53 – *“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. “*
- **Daily Blessings to enjoy** – Psalms 118:24 – *“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”*
- **One day closer to the return of the King of Kings** - Romans 13:11 – *“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying”.*

AS WE TAKE OUR DAILY SHOWER:

- **Psalms 19:12** – *“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults”.*
- **Psalms 51:2** – *“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin”.*
- **Psalms 119:9** – *“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word”.*

WHEN WE BRUSH OUR TEETH AND CLEANSE OUR MOUTH:

- **Matthew 15:16-20** - *“And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil*

thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man”.

AS WE COMB OUR HAIR:

- **The vow of the Nazarite** – Numbers 6:1-8 – *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD.”*

WHEN WE CHOOSE OUR CLOTHES FOR THE DAY, MAY WE THINK OF THESE THINGS:

- **Garments of salvation** – Galatians 3:27 – *“For as many of you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* Romans 13:14 *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof”.*
- **Robes of righteousness** - Isaiah 61:10 – *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”*

AS WE LOOK INTO OUR MIRROR WHEN AS WE WALK OUT OF OUR BEDROOM:

- **Look into the perfect law of Liberty** – James 1:22-25- *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth*

therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

- **Look into Abraham** – Isaiah 51:2 – *"Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him"*.

AS WE TRAVEL TO WORK, SELECTING THE BEST WAY/PATH THAT WE NEED TO TAKE TO PERFORM OUR DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Jesus is the way** – John 14:6 – *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*
- **Seek the old paths** – Jeremiah 6: 16 – *"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."*
- **Psalms 16:11** – *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"*.

AS WE PARTAKE OF OUR DAILY BREAD:

- **Matthew 4:4** – *"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*
- **John 6:35** – *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

WHEN WE TEACH THE TRUTH TO OUR CHILDREN, THESE VERSES WILL ALWAYS BE IN OUR THOUGHTS:

- **Proverbs 22:6** – *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*
- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** – *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates"*.

WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT WHEN WE DO OUR DAILY/WEEKLY SHOPPING FOR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS:

- **Proverbs 23:23** – *“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”*
- **Isaiah 55:1** – *“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”*
- **1st Peter 1:18-19** – *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”*

AS WE READ THE DAILY NEWS OR WATCH THE DAILY NEWSCAST:

- **Matthew 25:13** – *“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”*
- **1st Peter 4:7** – *“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”*

*WHEN WE DO THE MENIAL TASKS IN OUR LIVES – HOUSEWORK,
YARD WORK, ETC. – LET US REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE FAR
GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD THAT
WE CANNOT FORGET:*

- **1st Corinthians 15:58** – *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

These are just a few things that we do on a daily basis. Do we get so focused on performing the task at hand that we forget about our special blessings from our Heavenly Father? This writer shamefully admits that he does at times. There are other things that we do and other verses that may come to our mind, but the important thing to remember is the words of our Master in Matthew 6:33 – *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* May we all be thankful and appreciative of God’s mercy, loving kindness and bountiful blessings of this age and the age to come.

B. Henderson

Richness of faith must go beyond mere persuasion; there must be – not only belief that God will perform what He has promised, in raising the dead, and bringing the kingdom of the world into subjection to His Son, but there must be a doing of those things that have been commanded for those who do believe. “Faith without works is dead, being alone.” A man who says he believes, but lives in disobedience – either as regards things forbidden or things commanded – is of the class whom Paul condemns as those “who profess that they know God, but in works deny Him.”

THE WAY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

Reading: 2nd Kings 3:1-24

IN 2nd Kings 3 we find an unusual account of an unlikely alliance that developed between 3 kings, we have pools of water that appear like blood and a great battle, and the story is ended with a barbaric human sacrifice at the end of the chapter. The outcome of these events is determined by Elisha, the man of God. But the main focus of the narrative is one of the kings in particular.

The chapter begins with an introduction of the kings. Jehoram was the second son of Ahab to become king in Israel. Ahaziah was the first son who only ruled for 2 years when he carelessly fell off the roof and died. Jehoram is described here as cleaving to the sins of Jereboam the son of Nebat ***“which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.”*** The next king, recorded in vs 4, is Mesha, king of Moab who was a sheepmaster. Mesha means *deliverance*. Moab had been in servitude to Israel since the days of Omri, the grandfather of Jehoram. We read that Mesha, ***“rendered unto the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool.”*** The accuracy of the Divine record is confirmed in an archeological find in 1868 and is known as the Moabite stone. The inscription on this stone records the rebellion of Mesha against the children of Israel.



The Moabite Stone

Moab, we know, is related to Israel through Lot and the immoral behavior of his first born daughter. Israel was at first forbidden to invade them or destroy them as the Jews came to the Promised Land. ***“... Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession...”*** (Deut. 2:9). But they eventually set out to undermine and destroy Israel as Deut. 23 records, ***“they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they***

hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.”

The final advice of Balaam to Balak resulted in the daughters of Moab seducing the men of Israel, persuading them to commit fornication and idolatry. And for that 24,000 of Israel were destroyed before Phineas stayed the plague. As a result Israel was given two explicit commands:

1. A Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of Yahweh; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of Yahweh forever (Deut. 23:3).
2. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever. (Deut. 23:6)

So we find that there was to be continual enmity between these nations.

The third King we are introduced to is Jehoshaphat King of Judah, one of its finest rulers. Jehoram approaches Jehoshaphat and asks him to go into battle with him against Moab. The forth protagonist we meet is the King of Edom. (vs 9) Edom was at this time a vassal state to Judah.



A Moabite warrior

The leader of this confederacy is Jehoram, King of Israel. In vs 6 and 7 we find that it is Jehoram’s suggestion that they should go into battle. In verse 8, Jehoram defines the way they should go. In vs 9 it is Jehoram that leads the march. In vs 10 Jehoram is the first one to speak and in vs 12 Jehoram is the first one to move. So this battle is instigated at the will of Jehoram, the wicked king of Israel. But who, in God’s eyes, is important in this story? We are given a hint in how these kings are actually described. They are introduced by their various names:

- Jehoram, King of Israel
- Mesha, King of Moab
- Jehoshaphat, King of Judah
- The King of Edom

We read in vs 9 that the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom. But as we read through the events we find their description after this fashion:

Vs. 10-12: *And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants*

answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

And we go on and on throughout the chapter.

There is a particular feature that stands out here – only Jehoshaphat is named. Apart from the introduction of these kings at the beginning of this chapter only Jehoshaphat is named throughout. This tells us something about God and how he works with his servants. The focus is on those who faithfully serve him. They won't be perfect, and Jehoshaphat makes some tragic mistakes. But nevertheless, Yahweh's eyes are on His children. So the focus of this narrative comes on Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat was a faithful man. 2 Chronicles 17:3-6 records the following concerning this man:

“And Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; But sought to Yahweh the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel. Therefore Yahweh established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart was lifted up in the ways of Yahweh: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.”

He was a very faithful man and a great king in Judah. With that, in 2nd Chronicles 18 we find that Jehoshaphat had one major flaw: *“Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.”*

Jehoshaphat's weakness

This was the blemish that stained the remarkable record of Jehoshaphat. This was his error of judgment, which all but wiped out his lineage from the Divine record. How typical of human nature, despite his faithfulness and great success in spiritual reform there was this one recurrent weakness which persisted in his later years and literally destroyed his family. His one great flaw was his desire to be on good terms with his brethren to the North. He made affinity with Ahab. He made the house of Ahab his friend.

Now, at this time, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was a vibrant and wealthy nation. As Jehoshaphat would come for a visit there was probably much flattering pomp and veneration of the people as he came to Samaria. This is where the weakness of the flesh begins to plague the mind. It must have been very pleasing to be held in such high regard by his royal neighbors to the North. We wonder what would he have thought of Jezebel, he probably saw her as not a Godly woman but she was certainly very clever and obviously

a strong influence on his friend Ahab. Now this was a mistake that Jehoshaphat makes over and over again. Every time he entered into some endeavor with Ahab it ends in disaster. Several times, before this incident with Jehoram, Jehoshaphat got himself into trouble and in one case just barely escapes with his life. And he was severely rebuked by the prophets for it. But he makes the same mistake again. We take a life lesson from this in examining our own lives and the weakness that tend to overcome us and constantly vex our lives. How well do we do in comparison to Jehoshaphat? Let's look at a couple of examples with Jehoshaphat.

In 2 Chron. 18 he joins forces with Ahab against Syria, the battle was a disaster, Ahab is killed and Jehoshaphat flees for his life and when he returns to Jerusalem he is met by the prophet Jehu and told: ***“Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate Yahweh? therefore is wrath upon thee from before Yahweh. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.”*** (2 Chron. 19:2)

Later, Jehoshaphat joins in a maritime endeavor with King Ahaziah, Ahab's first son as we read in chapter 20, ***“And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly.”***(2 Chron. 20:35) Consequently we read, ***“Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.”*** (2 Chron. 20:37)

So Jehoshaphat loses his investment. He must have learned his lesson for a while for we read in 1 Kings 22:49, ***“Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.”*** Tragically though, Jehoshaphat forgot the lesson and commits a most tragic mistake. He took Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, to marry his son Jehoram (there are two Jehoram(s), one the king of Israel and one the King of Judah). Athaliah almost ended the lineage of David. Her epithet in Scripture is described as “that wicked woman”. She appears to be the mirror image of her mother Jezebel. The Reign of Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, is described as, ***“Jehoram walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab [Athaliah] was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of Yahweh”***

The first thing Jehoram did after Jehoshaphat died was to murder all his brothers. He was smitten with an incurable disease and died and his son took the throne for about a year and died. After his death, Athaliah murdered all her grandchildren, save one, so that she could secure the throne for herself. The entire house of Jehoshaphat, save one child, was wiped out.

So as we look at the event in 2 Kings 3, we find Jehoram exploiting Jehoshaphat's weak spot. We read in verse 7 of 2 Kings chapter 3, ***“And he***

went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.”

These are the exact same words that Jehoshaphat expressed to Ahab in that ill-fated battle of 1 Kings 22:4. He didn't stop to think, he didn't seek guidance from Yahweh he just jumps right into it with *“I am as thou art...”* How easy it is to get snared when we don't consider the consequences of our action. So Jehoshaphat says to Jezebel's son *‘we are one’*. If there is any lesson we can find in this description, it is the folly of forming close friendships with idolaters. Here we have a faithful man who joined affinity with Ahab's house. Think of Paul's words in 2 Cor 6:15, 16, *“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel (someone who doesn't share the faith) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”*

When we look at Jehoshaphat's words here we are reminded of a similar expression made by a Moabitess which is kind of ironic considering who the conflict is within this account. It is Ruth the Moabitess. Ruth 1:16, *“for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:”*

We note there is a bit of a difference with the last part of their statements. We wonder what Jehoshaphat understood about the commands about multiplying horses. When he says *‘my people as thy people’* what is he actually doing? He was putting the people of Judah at the disposal of the king of Israel. Perhaps we find another lesson here in the folly of leaders. Not only did he betray his responsibility to himself but he betrayed his people placing them under the hand of Jezebel's son.

Before we condemn Jehoshaphat, we should remember that this was an enticing opportunity because of an earlier event in Jehoshaphat's reign. Moab made a confederacy with Ammon and Edom to attack and destroy Judah as recorded in 2nd Chronicles 20. Moab came close to succeeding if it were not for Jehoshaphat earnestly seeking Yahweh's help. So this was an opportunity to strike back and defeat the Moabites. This had truly shaken Jehoshaphat and he would from then on see Moab as a very real threat. So Jehoram's request seemed like a good opportunity to strike back since the confederacy was on Jehoshaphat's side this time.

The way of man

So, we read in 2nd Kings 3:8 that Jehoshaphat asks *‘Which way shall we go up?’* to which Jehoram replies *‘The way through the wilderness of Edom’*. Now, it's quite striking to consider the path selected by the king of Israel. Here they are heading out into a bare or uninhabited land described as the wilderness of Edom. Edom means red or ruddy, it shares a common root as the

word Adam or man. So this way in the wilderness of Edom was symbolic of the way of man. It doesn't sound like a very good choice for the sons of God to take. The word 'way' here is *derek* in the Hebrew. The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament tell us it means: "to tread, trample"; hence, it refers first to a path worn by constant walking. More numerous are the metaphorical uses of *derek*. It often refers to the actions and behavior of men, who either follow the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked (Ps 1:6) **"For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish"**. So whose way were they following here? Jehoram, the wicked king of Israel.

Vs 9 tells us that **"and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey:"** The word 'compass' here means: "to go around, to surround; to turn around, to turn back, to change. It indicates a curving motion or an encircling motion of something, but it is used figuratively as well: to turn, to change direction"

So here was a company that marched through the wilderness of man, lead by this wicked king, right to the end or 7 days and there was no water. What a contrast with the way we, as well as Jehoshaphat, should be seeking. What does the Word tell us: Psa. 5:8 – **"Lead me, O Yahweh, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face"**.

Isa. 40:3 – **"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Yahweh, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"**.

And in Jer. 31:9 - (Yahweh speaking) – **"They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn"**.

This was a journey that Jehoshaphat should not have embarked on especially when being led by the king of Israel. And here we have another life lesson. If we start our journey in the Truth, influenced by friends who are not godly, feeling the strength of our own arms is sufficient, not asking Yahweh for direction, following the lead of ungodly people through the wilderness of man in a circuitous route we will end up in a dry and thirsty land where there



is no water. Prov. 14:12 - 12 *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”*.

The situation becomes catastrophic. They are in a valley or Wadi which is a river bed and in this case a very dry river bed. They had run out of water and that is just part of the problem. Moab knew this confederacy was coming and they were at the border setting themselves in battle array ready to attack the very next morning - A very desperate time. How would we react in such a situation? We find a sharp contrast in the reaction of the kings. It is in times of great pressure that the true heart is manifested. The first to speak is the king of Israel in vs 10, *“And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!”*

Who to seek in time of crisis?

As a reflection of Jehoram’s character the blame goes elsewhere, it goes on God, “How could God do this to us”. If we look at his remark closely we see that he believes God did it on purpose. True he was under a lot of pressure but we also know that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. This should give us pause to reflect on what we say under pressure. What we say can be very revealing. We see this same characteristic manifested in Scripture particularly when going through a wilderness. It becomes very easy for us, in the trials we face, to become bitter and blame God especially when we don’t even understand. Unfortunately that never provides an answer or relief. What does happen is we cut ourselves off from the one true source of comfort and help. So perhaps this account can provide some direction for us in times of great stress and trials. Then is not the time for blame nor is it the time to ask why? *“Why has Yahweh brought these kings to this awful state?”* What it really is, is a time for us to ask for God’s help. We see this manifested in the genuine spirit of Jehoshaphat. We read his thoughts in vs 11 *“but, is there not here a prophet of Yahweh, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel’s servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.”*

So here we have the example of one who in a time of crisis turns to seek help from God. He didn’t want to assign blame, he just wanted help. So Jehoshaphat is seeking for a person who can help him approach God. So what he valued in this time of crisis was someone who could help him in his relationship with God. When they say *“Elisha is here”*, Jehoshaphat is greatly relieved and says in vs. 12, *“The word of Yahweh is with him.”*

We sometimes may find it difficult to approach Yahweh in times of crisis especially if it’s the result of our own behavior. And it is in such times that we need help from faithful friends, from brothers and sisters, those we can lean upon, to who can guide us and to encourage us to turn back to God, but above all we need help from he who is the great antitype of Elisha even Yahshua

“Yah is salvation”. The one who now bears our pleas to the Father in heaven. This is where we need to go for help.

We have a typical play on the names here. We are introduced to Elisha the son of Shaphat, the son of *‘the judge’*. And we have the man Jeho-shaphat *“Yahweh is the Judge”*. So we have a man in whose heart Yahweh is the judge coming to *“Ail is Salvation”* the son of the Judge. It’s also ironic that Elisha is described as a man who poured water and here we find these kings are without water.

So rather humbly these 3 kings walk down to see Elisha with the king of Israel leading the way. What do you think was going through Jehoram’s mind? “I don’t know how this man is going to help us but let’s go and see him”.

And when they get to Elisha, his response is very much with fire and indignation for which his mentor, Elijah, was known, ***“And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother.”***

This was something that really aggravates Elisha for he knew the hypocrisy of this king and it upsets him greatly and with that statement we find that it exposes, once again, the true heart of Jehoram for he says, ***“Nay: for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.”*** God has done this to destroy us, it’s all His fault. Well, Elisha replies, ***“As Yahweh of hosts liveth (interesting use of the militant name of God here), before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.”***

A solution provided by Yahweh

This again shows us how Yahweh responds to the trials of his children. Elisha is saying if it wasn’t for the fact that Jehoshaphat was here I wouldn’t even see you, Jehoram. Elisha is very agitated and asks for a minstrel. We can take the lesson from this, that a state of agitation is not conducive to praying to God. It is very important that we approach Yahweh in the right frame of mind, very carefully and humbly. With that Elisha petitions Yahweh and gives the kings their answer starting in vs 16, ***“And he said, Thus saith Yahweh, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith Yahweh, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.”***

They had a work to do. Yahweh would provide the water but the kings had to make a receptacle to hold the water. Yahweh provides the solution but requires that we work to that end otherwise it would just be a handout. ***“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”***(Phil. 2:13)

The kings are told that they would not see the wind (*ruach*, often used for the Spirit), you won't see the rain often used to typify blessings from heaven, Isa 55:10,11, "***For as the rain cometh down ... So shall my word be...***" You're not going to see the wind or the rain but water will be provided. Yahweh will give the miracle. But even more we read in vs 18, "***And this is but a light thing in the sight of Yahweh: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.***"

Yahweh would not only relieve their immediate problem but there was even a greater purpose in His mind. Yahweh was going to give the enemy into their hand. But there again there was work for them to do to that end, "***And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.***"

So we continue in vs 20. "***And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.***" The meat offering or meal offering was always presented with the burnt offering. But emphasis here is that the miracle occurs at the time of the meal offering. Why the emphasis on the meal offering? It was a symbol of the work of their hands. It was the fruits of a man's labor as we saw in verse 16. They had to put effort in so that they might see the results.

The water comes by the way of Edom. Rain must have fallen somewhere up in the hills and ran down to the wadi and filled the ditches they dug with water so that they could refresh themselves and prepare for the battle. Also in that morning as the sun came up the Moabites look across this valley and they saw the redness reflected in the water and thought it was pools of blood. They thought the confederacy had fallen apart and rushed upon the encampment to take the spoil, but what they found was a ready force that would quickly rout them.

Now there is quite a dramatic lesson typified in this story. These people had been saved by water. This water came by the way of Edom or Adam. So even though it came by the way of man, the people could not see or understand how it was provided. They didn't see the rain or the wind, the *ruach* a symbol of the Spirit power of Yahweh. But regardless of that same path that they had followed, Yahweh was able to provide salvation with the water. And when the sun rose that morning, what did the adversary see? They saw a site as red as blood.

So what we have here is, through God's power in the way of Adam, He provides salvation through His *ruach* or Spirit, unseen; through water and the blood. These are all elements that blend together in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The spirit, the water and the blood. The power of God born of water, and the shed blood of our Lord.

Examine 1 John chapter 5 and as you read John's words reflect on this account in 2nd Kings Chapter 3 for this is a story that is reflected in each and every one of our lives.

1st John 5 starting in vs 4, ***“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”*** And vs 7 correctly reads: ***“For there are three that bear record the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”***

Conclusion

This is the story of our life. We are on a journey and in a battle against the flesh. Sometimes we wander off of the straight path and end up on a winding path and find ourselves in a wilderness – In a very dry and thirsty land. But if we come to our senses and turn to Yahweh and ask and seek his help and if our heart is like Jehoshaphat's whom Yahweh regarded, we will be able to enquire of Him through His servant whose name means *God is Salvation*. Yahweh can provide the means of life and deliver us in the battle. But only through faith can we overcome the world as John writes. We don't physically see the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof that Elisha saw when Elijah was taken (the manifestation of His Spirit through his messengers); we don't physically see them, but the results of their work is manifested among men. When we seek His help, the Father is there and is able to save. We can thank Yahweh that Elisha travels with us in this journey, we have his words here (in the Bible) to encourage us when necessary. As we engage in the battle of life, we have the confidence that the greater Elisha is there with us to call upon Yahweh for His help. ***“this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”***.

Lou Locklear

“Additions to the ecclesias are not nearly so numerous here as on the other side of the Atlantic, and we have reasons to believe that that fact is due, to some extent, to the exercise of greater care in seeing that the first principles are understood and appreciated by applicants for immersion, and by seriously impressing upon their minds the solemnity of taking on the name of Christ. It is our duty – there is no use persuading ourselves otherwise – to try to be sure those we introduce into the body have the Truth in their hearts as well as their heads. If this is neglected we soon may become a large sect, but its character would be a desperate one. Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

Thomas Williams, The Christadelphian Advocate, Dec., 1893

“ETERNAL LIFE”

ORTHODOXY OR CHRISTADELPHIAN ERROR, IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?



WE found the following quotation regarding eternal life (the English translation of *Aionios Zoe*) extremely interesting.

"John 17:3 says, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' 1 John 5:20-21, '...we are in him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' 'Eternal life begins here. It begins in the believer as soon as he or she is born again. At the time we are born again from above, we receive into us that same life which we will have throughout eternity. Eternal life doesn't change. It remains life. Though we come to deeper depths and higher heights, eternal life remains the same river of water of life, flowing from the same source, Jesus!' 'Have you been brought out of your grave yet? Raised from spiritual death to spiritual life?'"

From where was such a quote gleaned you might ask. It is nearly impossible to tell if this is something a harlot daughter or a Christadelphian wrote regarding the meaning of these verses because of the winds of doctrine swaying in The Body today. The quotation above was taken from a pamphlet left by an evangelical church at a local convenience store. The title is *"In Him (Jesus) is life Eternal Life"*, under which they quote 1st John 5:20. The whole point of this pamphlet is to convince a person to believe on Jesus in order to possess eternal life in this life. This doctrine (possession of eternal/aionios life after covenant) is therefore not unique to the Christadelphian body, for it has always been a part of the harlot system of worship and has been argued against since the time Bro. John Thomas left the Campbellites. But we can see from this quote, compared to what some Christadelphians believe today, that there is a dangerous trend which has developed among the Christ Body of returning to the beliefs which we once denounced. But what saith the Scriptures?

- Heb 4:1 – *“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”*
- Gal 1:6-9 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed
- Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Andrew Kuiper

“FACING THE FACTS”

Some of the letters bidding us God speed in our visit to England expressed hope for a reunion of the separated bodies of Christadelphians in the British Isles. We feel sure the expressed hope was not for a union without unity, and the career of the ADVOCATE has, we think, shown that it will not lend itself to the promotion of union at the expense of truth concerning the fundamental principles of the Gospel.

“There you are,” we imagine we hear some saying, “you think you must be right and the others wrong.” Well, if we think so conceitedly and not from sincere conviction, based upon clear evidence, it is a pity, and, the editor has lived sixty-six years without learning the lesson contained in the words, “Know thyself.” But if, on the other hand, we have given good reasons, are still giving them, and are prepared to continue to give them, how can we honestly do otherwise than believe that we are right and our opponents are wrong? For that matter, the whole Christadelphian body claims that, in respect to the revealed plan of salvation, they are right and all other sects are wrong; and if they did not believe it they would be false, and if they did not declare it they would be cowardly and unfaithful.

As a body, we say honestly and dutifully to the religious sects of the world, “You are wrong, and we have proved it, and can prove it, by the Word of God.” It is more important that we be faithful and true, than that we try to escape being called conceited; and, indeed, the man never lived who had the courage of his conviction, and yet escaped being called conceited. He who would fight faithfully for a cause he believes to be true must not be over sensitive in respect to indignities heaped upon him, for his personal feelings and what his opponents, not to say his enemies, say about him are not of much concern when he has a good cause to support and an account to render of his part in maintaining such a cause.

Christadelphianism started in the first century in union, and unity, and perhaps the union lasted longer than the unity; but three hundred years after there was neither, and Laodecianism was cast away from God as nauseating. This was in the times of Spirit manifestations and, partly, of inspired apostles. Would history, reason and example have good cause to believe and hope that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would prove to be better than those of the first, second and third?

Thomas Williams. *The Christadelphian Advocate*, October, 1913, pp. 292,292

“HIS HANDS SHALL ALSO FINISH IT”

Lessons from Haggai



IN this final installment reviewing Haggai’s message, we will look into two beautiful parallel prophecies given to Zerubbabel, the faithful governor of Judah, as found in Haggai 2 and Zechariah 4. These prophecies should excite us as to the future day that we all long for, especially as we see prophetic events coming to pass before our eyes. Russia is on the move, Israel is becoming increasingly isolated, and the whole world is in turmoil. What should we be focusing on? Let us look into these prophecies to find out:

“And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts (Haggai 2:20-23).

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and

thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth (Zechariah 4:6-10).

Before digging into the prophecies before us, we would like to quickly summarize the life of Zerubbabel. We feel that this is a study in and of itself, encompassing at the very least the books of Haggai and Ezra, but we will just do a quick review. So who was Zerubbabel? Our first Scriptural mention of Zerubbabel is in 1st Chronicles 3:17-19, where he is listed as the descendant of Jeconiah, more commonly known as King Jehoiachin. Born in Babylon, Zerubbabel grew up in a day of the captivity where Yahweh had saved a remnant from total destruction in the land. It was a day of sin and distractions, a day where many of the Jews just blended into society. However, there was a remnant of true believers and as Zerubbabel the Prince grew up, he may have learned directly or indirectly from spiritual leaders such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. They would know of the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning 70 years captivity. They would also know of Isaiah's prophecy of Chapter 44:28 that GOD would raise up a man named Cyrus that would decree the building of the Temple once again. And, at long last, it happened! A day that many had longed for, no doubt, had come to pass!

Cyrus' decree, recorded in Ezra Chapter 1:1-4, was the gift from GOD that the faithful longed for and in the first four chapters of the book of Ezra we read of the remnant's return to the land of Judah under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua the High Priest. What's amazing is that the remnant put their hands to the plow as soon as they got back to the land. They set up the altar, reinstated Yahweh's laws, and laid the foundation of His Temple.

Unfortunately, the work would not always continue so smoothly. Opposition came from the Jew's enemies. They first tried to infiltrate and sabotage the work, but were stopped in their tracks by Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Nonetheless, the enemies eventually received support from a new usurper of the Persian throne named King Smerdis who in turn sent a decree for the work to be stopped. And it did. Instead of trusting in GOD and continuing onward, the Jews left GOD's work and began to concentrate on their own houses, their own lives, forgetting the God who bought them. How quickly our resolve can change in the face of persecution! In response, we know from previous studies of Haggai 1:6-11 and Haggai 2:16-17 that GOD cursed the people with famine, blasting, mildew and hail. Their work came to naught as they were truly working for bags with holes.

It is a testament to Yahweh's mercy, however, that He did not give up on His people. Instead, in Ezra 5:1 we find that He stirred up Haggai and Zechariah and through these prophets Yahweh pleaded with His people to consider their ways, the theme of Haggai chapter 1. Amazingly, and more so

than perhaps any time in history, the people repented. From the book of Haggai we actually know it took a short three and a half weeks for the people to get back in line and, with a rejuvenated Zerubbabel and Jeshua as their leaders, they finished the work and gave glory to GOD. Three and a half weeks! If we gain nothing else from our studies of Haggai, this point should stick into our brains.

With this background, let us now dig deeper into the meat of our subject – the prophecies given to Zerubbabel – by turning to Haggai 2:20-22, already quoted. In the verses before us, Zerubbabel is reminded that the work that he'd been doing was not the end of Yahweh's plan. While he had worked hard to set up the Temple and to reinstitute Yahweh's beautiful law, this was not the end of GOD's plan. Instead, Yahweh reminded the man of faith that he would "*shake the heavens and the earth*", "*overthrow the throne of Kingdoms*", and "*overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them*". This topic had already once been put forth for Zerubbabel's faithful consideration in Haggai 2:6-7, which say, "*For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*"

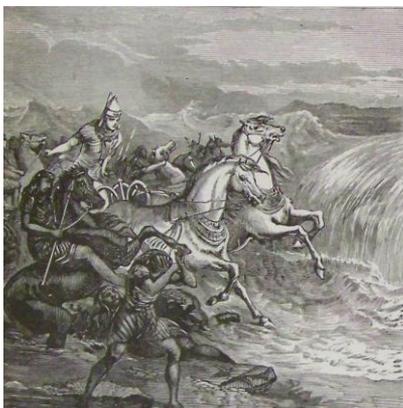
When Yahweh speaks of anything twice, it is to emphasize the surety of His Word to mankind. Thus in both verse 6 and verse 21, we see that Yahweh says that He will "*shake the heavens and the earth*". This phrase relates to a complete change in world powers. We know that in the Bible these geographical features of heaven and earth represent the spiritual heavens that will be overturned, the people of this earth that will be humbled, and the sea of nations that will fall. (See Isaiah 34:4; 51:6.)

Back in Haggai 2:21, Yahweh continues to promise the overthrow of the throne of Kingdoms and the destruction of their strength. No doubt this would have been very comforting to Zerubbabel, as he knew how many enemies the Jews had around them. Though the vision was for a day far in the future to him, he would still gain faith in the end-time picture, just as we can. Zerubbabel was not a blank slate, however, as he would have been a student of GOD's plan, including the most recent prophecies given by Daniel. (See Daniel 2:28,44 [note "*latter days*"]; Revelation 16:16-18.)

In addition to forecasting a turn of world events, Yahweh also gave Zerubbabel symbols that would hearken him back to historical events. For example, Yahweh said in Haggai 2:22 that we would "*overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them*". We can have little doubt that Zerubbabel would have immediately hearkened back to the days of the Exodus, where Pharaoh and the army of Egypt were drowned in the Red Sea. In the future, events will follow the same course: (Micah 5:5-6,9-10). In addition to directly destroying His enemies, Yahweh also promised that He would cause such confusion that the enemies would destroy themselves, "*every one by the sword of his*

brother”. This reminds us of the time of Gideon (Judges 7:19-22). This will likewise play into the latter days. (Ezekiel 38:18-23, Zechariah 14:13).

Going back to Haggai, can we not see how these verses were a comfort to Zerubbabel? As a man of faith he had struggled with the sufferings of the Jews, their maltreatment by the world, and probably most especially their own failures. But Yahweh gave him a wonderful vision of the day when this world will be turned upside down, but for the better. Our GOD, however, did not stop there for in Haggai 2:23 he placed a special blessing on Zerubbabel himself: *“In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.”* What a comforting message this would have been for the faithful Brother. In one simple verse, Yahweh affirmed His approval of Zerubbabel as His chosen servant and in that day – i.e. the latter days – Zerubbabel himself would serve a beautiful purpose. In a nutshell, you could say that Zerubbabel was told that he would see the Kingdom of GOD and granted a place therein. Certainly there is more to these verses as we will discuss, but let us now forget this very personal, literal message for the faithful man himself.



The greater than Zerubbabel

Before looking more into this verse, we need to establish a key principle when studying Zerubbabel. While the verses that we have been reading certainly apply to Zerubbabel himself, they also apply to a man even greater than he. Turn to Zechariah 3:8, where in the King James Version this verse says that Jeshua and his fellows, who included Zerubbabel, are *“men wondered at”*. Many of you may see in your margin or notes, however, that this could also be translated *“men of wonder”* or, perhaps more appropriately, *“men of sign”*. As mentioned before, this is a key principle for the study of Zerubbabel, because the prophecies we read of him all are but signs of a greater-than-Zerubbabel, Jesus the Messiah.

Back in Haggai 2:23, Zerubbabel is given several titles that strengthens his role as a type of Christ. First of all, Yahweh calls Zerubbabel *“my servant”*. While all of us are GOD’s servants by baptism, this phrase is especially tied to one man whom Zerubbabel represents: Jesus. Let us turn to Isaiah 42:1 – *“Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold; Mine elect, in Whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles”* (also, Isaiah 49:6-7).

Back in Haggai 2:23, the type is expanded. Skipping to the end of the verse, we read Yahweh's divine message: *"I have chosen thee"*. These words no doubt would have brought great joy to Zerubbabel, as he has been comforted that though he would die, he will be back to finish his work in GOD's Kingdom. Ultimately, though, the concept of one chosen points again especially to Jesus (Matthew 12:18).

Finally, Zerubbabel was called Yahweh's signet. A signet refers to a signet ring, or the kingly stamp of approval, and in the Hebrew the word means *"to seal up, close up, make an end, mark"*. As Yahweh's signet, Zerubbabel was thus marked for a special purpose in Yahweh's plan in that day when the Kingdoms of this world are destroyed. What an amazing gift to Zerubbabel for his labours – a short glimpse into the day that he longed for, and an assurance that he would be there.

But what else can we learn from this verse – lessons of our Lord? John 6:27 reads, *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."*



Here we read that Yahweh sealed His Son and as such he is the one that we are to follow, laboring for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life. As Yahweh's signet, Jesus through his faithful appointed sacrifice, sealed the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants with his precious sanctifying blood. This was the confirmation of the covenant

propheesied by Daniel in the Prophecy of 70 Weeks. It was also later mentioned by Paul in Romans 15:8 – *"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the father."*

Zechariah

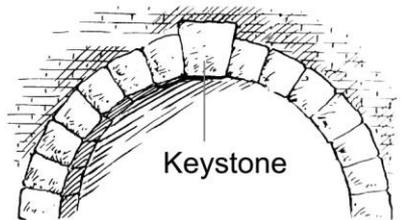
We would now like to turn over to Zechariah to explore the second passage with which we started this article in Zechariah 4:6-10. Zechariah we know was another prophet working simultaneously alongside Haggai. Believed to be the younger of the two, Zechariah's visions focus more on prophecy, while Haggai's focused more on walk with prophecy mixed in. In any case, Zechariah too brought forth an encouraging message for Zerubbabel the Prince. We remember that Haggai had talked about the latter days, and now Zerubbabel too gives some complementary prophecy.

In Zech. 4:6 we read that by Yahweh's spirit, and not by the might or power of man, He will accomplish a great work in the Earth involving a

mountain that would become a plain. What is this work to be? Verse 7 of Zechariah 4 continues to ask the question, “*Who art thou, O great mountain?*” We ask, too, who was this mountain that Zechariah saw in vision? We know that mountains represent Kingdoms in Scripture. In ancient times, a mountain was specifically used though as a description of Babylon (Jeremiah 51:24-26).

So what about the latter days, who is the great mountain? As we have established Christ as the antitype, who will become a plain before him? What Kingdom? We believe the answer is the amalgamated Kingdom of Man as shown in Daniel 2:31-35,44-45. As we have mentioned before, this is a vision of the latter days, which hearkens us to another suite of passages in the Bible. We are referring to the detailed account of the Gogian invasion as referenced in Ezekiel 38, to get the full impact of this mountain and who it truly is: (Ezekiel 38:2-3,8-12,16-18). Interestingly, this great political mountain will come to its end on a literal mountain: (Ezekiel 38:21; Daniel 11:45). We see in these passages a story of the mountain Kingdom of Men being defeated by Yahweh our Amazing GOD. Of course, we know that this literal defeat of the Kingdom of Men will in turn lead to the Kingdom of God growing as a mountain and filling the whole earth – the day we long for.

When we think about Nebuchadnezzar’s Image standing up, who was the ultimate victor? We know that this was the Stone power. Going back to Zechariah, it is interesting then that in Chapter 4:7, the Spirit says that the latter day Zerubbabel, or Jesus, will bring forth the headstone. What exactly does this mean, and why the shift in the prophecy? If we look up the word “*headstone*” we will soon find that it is an architectural term referring to the central building block at the top of an arch or vault (also known as a keystone). The headstone is found at the top of the arch and without it, the whole thing would fall. With regards to Jesus, of course, this word is extremely meaningful. While Jesus will indeed build the literal Temple of the Kingdom Age, more importantly he is the headstone of the spiritual building that Yahweh desires – the New Jerusalem of the perfected ecclesia (Matthew 21:42, Ephesians 1:20-23, Colossians 1:18-19).



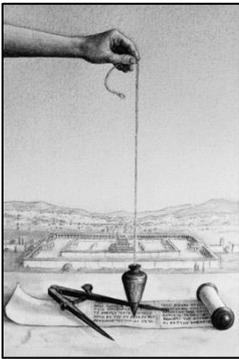
Before moving on, there is one point in Zechariah 4:7 that should not be overlooked. As Zechariah 4:7 says that the great mountain would become a plain before Zerubbabel, this means that he must be resurrected to witness that great day. Once again, what an amazing gift this prophecy must have been to Zerubbabel. He could humbly rejoice as Yahweh’s chosen one. He knew that he would die, but also that he would be resurrected and see this day of great joy with his amazing Lord and Savior.

Moving forward in Zechariah 4, verse 9 states, *“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house”*. Historically this is true as can be found in Ezra 5:16. Zechariah then continued with *“his hands shall also finish it”*. We remember that at the time of this prophecy, Zerubbabel along with the Jewish people had not finished the work and had been told by Haggai to consider their ways. At the time of this prophecy, then, the work was not yet finished. The people had a lot of work to do, and with adversaries all around. Nonetheless, Zechariah encourages Zerubbabel that he would finish the house. Zerubbabel thus could press onward and we see the results in Ezra 6:14-15.

While this prophecy has certainly been at least fulfilled in one way, as we see in Ezra, the context of the verse leads us to believe there is something more. We remember that Zerubbabel is a man of sign typifying our Lord, whom we’ve already looked at as the headstone of the building. Following with the architectural type, then, we now see that Christ has also laid the foundation of the Temple that he heads. In particular, he is the cornerstone. **Isaiah 28:16** - *“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation...”* (also, 1st Corinthians 3:9-11; Ephesians 2:19-21).

Placing the types together, we now see that Jesus is called both the headstone and the foundation, or cornerstone. He has laid the foundation and as the ecclesia’s head will continue to build until the building is perfected. He started the work and he will finish. This is consistent with many symbols of Scripture, shown most especially in Revelation 22:13 where Christ is called *“the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”*.

Going back to Zechariah 4, the third and final architectural term from this set of verses is found in verse 10. Here we read of the plummet found in



Zerubbabel’s (or Christ’s) hand. For those of us that may not have a clear idea of what a plummet is, a plummet is simply a weight with a pointed tip on the bottom that is suspended from a string. Since the string is forced straight down by gravity, the plumb line can be used as a vertical reference so that all is built vertically without deviation from it.

The terms plummet and plumb line fall right in line with the work of our Lord. As a Carpenter and Master Builder, Jesus will make sure that all are in line for Yahweh’s spiritual Temple. While it is certainly a great blessing that we all, if baptized and faithful, may have a place in that great Temple, it also should humble us. We need to fall in with the LORD’s plumb line standard. We must follow his example of character, work and self-sacrifice in order to be allowed a place in GOD’s Temple. Ultimately each Brother and Sister will have to measure up to Jesus as an aspect of personal judgment (Isaiah 28:17, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, Zerubbabel was a man who rose up and built, a man who considered his ways and worked for Yahweh his God. In return, Yahweh blessed him richly. While Zerubbabel was blessed to both lay the foundation of the LORD's house and also finish the great work, he was also guided by the Prophets to see a better day before him. Though he, like so many saints, is now in dust, Yahweh will mercifully raise him in preparation for a better day. Zerubbabel will be there. He as an immortalized saint will see the great mountain of man's dominion become a plain. He will work on and see the Temple shown to Ezekiel. He will see the New Jerusalem. He will see his Lord and Master, our beloved Messiah Jesus Christ. What an amazing gift Yahweh's love has prepared for them that love Him!

As we think of these untold joys of the Kingdom Age, Brethren, we must hold on. Today is so full of evil in the world and in the ecclesia, it is easy to be depressed and fall apart. Nonetheless, we are almost there. The great mountain is coming together and soon our Lord will return. He will compare us to the plumb line to see if we will be part of that stone power that strikes the Image and fills the whole earth. Let us be ready. Zechariah 4:10 gives us a warning when it says, "*For who hath despised the day of small things?*" Instead of despising these days of small things, let us try our best to get through them while realizing their importance. Zerubbabel had to endure trial, and so do we. But if we value these days as our training ground and work with GOD to be molded in line with our Lord's plummet, he has promised a great reward. For as 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 say, "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*".

It is imperative in these latter days that we follow Paul's instruction and look to the things that are not seen and that fade not away. Our trials in the day of small things will prepare us to be among the blessed number of the redeemed. Can you imagine the reaction of those who are chosen? In Zechariah Chapter 4 we do get a small taste of it. In verse 7, for instance, we see the phrase "*Grace, grace unto it*". Also, in verse 10 we see that "*they shall rejoice*". In combination, this joy and grace are an outpouring from the redeemed. Just as there was a day of great joy when the Temple of Zerubbabel's day was finished in Ezra Chapter 6, as Yahweh had blessed them through so many trials, so too will there be unspeakable joy when the ecclesia is perfected and Yahweh is glorified through His Temple on the Earth.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

It is our hope and prayer that we all may be there with Zerubbabel, Haggai, Zechariah and a great cloud of witnesses to sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

David Bryan

GOD MANIFESTATION

THE YAHWEH ELOHIM OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC & JACOB



THE last installment left off with the observation that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their connection to the Memorial Name of Deity – that together, these three men form a prophecy of Yahweh’s intention to be manifested.

These three men are going to be a parable of the whole purpose of God to manifest Himself. These names were chosen to represent the memorial of His proposed manifestation in flesh, and to identify his selection of the family through whom such mighty ones of the future would be established or revealed.

Abraham revealed as a father

Genesis 17:3-5: *“And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy*

name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”

Question: What does Abram mean? Not “Abraham”, just “Abram”.

Answer: Exalted father, the high father or lofty father

Question: What does “Abraham” mean?

Answer: The father of a great multitude

Therefore, how is Abraham presented in the Scriptures to us? As a father. Abraham, the father. As we go through the scriptures you will find that the Bible presents Abraham as a father. Let’s look up a few more references to emphasize this point.

- **Gen. 22:7** - “*And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*”
- **Luke 16:24** – “*And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*”
- **John 8:53** – “*Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*”
- **John 8:54** – “*Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:*
- **John 8:55** - “*Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.*”
- **John 8:56** – “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*”
- **Rom. 4:1** – “*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*”

Now look at verse 11 of the same chapter of Romans. (**11-12, 16-18**)

“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations;) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.”

Do you think it was made clear that Abraham was the father? Yes, it was made very clear. Here is the reason. Abraham is presented in the scriptures as being specifically the father of the promises from whom the primary blessing would flow. And so Yahweh led Abraham through the emotional experience of fatherhood. Abraham, from start to end, is referenced as the father, the great father of the nation and the purpose of God was to reveal himself firstly as a father. I am the God of Abraham represents the first stage of God manifestation. God’s intention to be revealed as it were in himself.

Isaac represented as the promised son

Here is the account of Isaac entering into the picture.

- **Genesis 21:1-7**, “*And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.”*
- **Genesis 22:1,2**, “*And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”*

Isaac is not presented as a father in the book of Genesis but a son. But, was Isaac a father? Of course he was, and so was Jacob. But the focus of how Isaac is referenced in Scriptures is that he was the promised son.

In Genesis 24, Eliazar goes on a mission to find a bride for Isaac and he says: **Genesis 24:36**, “*And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.”*

Question: How old was Isaac at that stage?

Answer: Probably about 37.

Not a boy or a teenager by any means. But yet, Isaac is still referenced as a son. The focus is on Isaac being the son.

We would like to make the point that both the Old Testament and New Testament are consistent with this idea. **James 2:21**, “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”*

Who's the father? Abraham. Who is the promised son? Isaac. He is presented in the record as a son, even though Isaac himself was of course a father. As far as the Scriptures are concerned, he is seen as the son in whom the promises would begin. Yahweh led Isaac to be a faithful and obedient son manifesting his father's qualities. And that is going to be the focus of the most notable passages about Isaac – his sonship.

God was in essence saying, I intend to be revealed Myself as a father and then first and foremost, I am going to be revealed in just one son, My Son - The Promised Son; The Miracle Son. And that Promised Son would be prefigured by Isaac. I am the God (Elohim) of Isaac.

Jacob represented as the multitude

If Abraham represents a father and Isaac a son, then what must Jacob represent?

Jacob = Multitude

These three men were chosen to have God's name surnamed upon them. Not because they were necessarily more faithful than David, Jesse, Aaron, Eleazar, and Phineas – but because their very lives became a parable of the purpose of God.

Genesis 28:1-4, *“And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.”*

“Multitude” in verse 3 comes is from the Hebrew word *qahal*. Why that's important is because that word is going to be used for the entire Old Testament account of the congregation of Israel. All the “congregation” of Israel was the *qahal* (pronounced *kaw-hawl*).

Where do you suppose *qahal* comes from? It doesn't necessarily come from Abraham or Isaac, but instead from Jacob. Jacob is going to bring forth the multitude of the congregation of Israel. *Yahweh blessed thee that thou mayest be a multitude of people.*

Genesis 35:9, *“And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins”*

What is interesting about this passage is that the word “company” in verse 11 is *qahal*, the multitude in Hebrew – *“be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins”*

Another reference we see at the end of Jacob's life. **Gen. 48:2**, *“And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.”*

In verse 4, a multitude of people (*qahal*), Jacob never forgot that promise, even unto his dying day, from him would come the multitude of the promised seed.

Acts 7:8, 14-15, “*And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers*”

And Jacob begat the Twelve Patriarchs, not just one son but the twelve patriarchs. The beginning of the whole *qahal* of Israel springs forth out of Jacob. He was the beginning of the multitudinous seed. Yahweh would finally be proclaimed through a multitude.

Jacob is presented in the Scriptures as being especially the channel through whom the family would be multiplied into a multitude – A family of God. Yahweh led Jacob through the trials and the difficulties of many children as God manifestation was seen in the multitude of his offspring.

Conclusion

None of this came by mistake or accident. God chose these three men to put his own name upon them because they were a parable of his own purpose.

- **Yahweh manifested in himself as father.**
- **Yahweh declared in a son.**
- **Yahweh proclaimed through a multitude**

And that is the beginning of God manifestation, in these three men.

To reference Brother Thomas once more, we pulled this quote from Phanerosis, which actually comes from the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, April 1858. It reads:

“Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost! God manifestation not human salvation was the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of a multitude is incidental to the manifestation but was not the end proposed. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthrone Himself upon the earth, and in so doing, to develop a divine family from among men, every one of whom shall be Spirit, because born of the Spirit, and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood.”

God Manifestation, not human salvation.

Joel Thomas

“history is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind” – Edward Gibbon

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT



Jan. 2

My Dear Mother:

Among the good resolutions made yesterday I decided to record my religious experiences and send them to you, knowing that you have always been interested in my spiritual welfare. Although I have been away from home a long time, I can safely say that your early teachings and prayers have thus far availed to keep me in the narrow way, and I feel encouraged to hope by God's grace I shall at last meet you in heaven.

I must first tell you something about our pastor, Mr. Wilson. I wish you could hear one of his sermons. He does not pay much attention to doctrines, but confines himself to subjects which concern our everyday life, and discourages everything which tends to sectarianism; and yet he is a very strong Methodist, and upholds our church as the best form of modern Christianity.

One thing has troubled me very much of late, and that is the question, Why are God's people so divided? The Bible teaches that Christians should be of one mind, think the same things, etc.; and Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one, even as he and the Father were one.

I asked our pastor about this and he says the reason for the divided stated of the church is that men are so constituted that they cannot see alike and have different ways of looking at any subject. Each is sure that he is right, and his opponent wrong, and each one interprets the Bible in harmony with his own ideas. However, the matter does not trouble him much, because he thinks that it makes but little difference what we believe as long as we are sincere. On the contrary, he says that doctrinal differences tend to create a healthy rivalry in Christ's service. He illustrates his meaning by the different branches of military service; infantry, cavalry, artillery, etc., and shows that each sect, by working for Christ in its own peculiar way can accomplish more than if all were united in one body.

Of course I have a great respect for our pastor, but I must confess that I do not feel quite satisfied with his explanation, in view of the passages quoted above.

I must tell you about our holiness meeting in my next.

Jan. 9

Dear Mother:

I promised to tell you about our holiness meeting. It came about in this way: During our revival, last fall, we had the Troy Praying Band to lead the services at our church. These men were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake so powerfully that hundreds of precious souls were converted and joined the church. Among other things they have special prominence to the doctrine of holiness, or, as some term it, "perfect love." I had never heard much about this peculiar doctrine of Methodism before, but now I felt a great desire for the blessing of full salvation from all sin.

To this end I talked with Mr. Kennedy, one of our class-leaders who professes entire sanctification, and told him of my desire. He was much pleased, and told me of his own wonderful experience. Mr. Kennedy says that the first step toward sanctification is entire consecration of our whole being upon God's altar; giving ourselves away to God without reserve or limit. This was done by Mr. Kennedy after much inward struggle, and then came the baptism of the Holy Ghost, cleansing and purging away every stain of sin, and filling him with a satisfying sense of perfect purity.

Of course this narrative only stimulated my desires for the same experience, and finally with the approval of our pastor, we started a holiness meeting on Sunday afternoons. We had three at our first meeting, but the number is increasing every week, and we have some glorious meetings. I do not yet profess to have attained the great blessing, but am earnestly seeking, and ask your prayers that I may find it. My dear wife is also seeking the same blessing. I will tell you about our Bible class in my next.

Jan. 18

My Dear Mother:

Our Bible class was organized only a short time ago, and consists of twelve young men with Mr. Steele as leader. Our object is a close study of the International Bible Lessons. Mr. Steele is a good man, and knows a great deal about the Bible.

We have some very interesting discussions, and sometimes our leader has to check our ardor, especially as he finds that we are liable to drift away from our established belief under the stimulus of free discussion.

Last Sunday the subject before the class was "Christ before Pilate." Just before the discussion began I noticed a man sitting at the rear of the room, with a large and well-worn Bible in his hand. According to our usual custom I went back and invited him into our class. He was evidently an Englishman, and I was somewhat impressed by his appearance and manner.

He accepted my invitation willingly, but took no part in our discussion until the question was put directly to him. We were discussing Christ's answer to Pilate, "Thou sayest that I am a king," and the opinion was general, of course, that Jesus meant that he was a spiritual king and reigned in the hearts of his people. But when the question was put to Mr. Evans (for that is the stranger's

name), he surprised us all by declaring his belief that Jesus was heir to a literal throne which he would some day claim as his own.

He was at once interrupted by several of our members who strenuously opposed such teachings.

I confess that I felt some pity to see the man trying to explain his position against so much opposition, and finally I appealed to the class to give the stranger a chance to explain his reasons for such a strange belief, especially as he claimed that the Bible alone was his authority. Quiet having been restored, Mr. Evans proceed to expound his position. Beginning at Genesis, and referring to passages in every part of the Bible, he proceeded to prove the following: That God promised Abraham and his seed (which is Christ) all the land of Canaan for an everlasting inheritance. Also that He promised David that his seed (which is Christ) should sit upon his (David's) throne forever. This implies, according to Mr. Evans, that the children of Israel are to be restored to their own land. Abraham must be raised from the dead, and Christ must return from heaven to re-establish the kingdom of Israel, which (so Mr. Evans thinks) is the kingdom of God. Therefore when Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou sayest that I am a king," he meant it in a literal sense, only the time for him to assume his kingly authority had not year arrived.

To tell the truth I was much impressed by Mr. Evans' words which were given with such earnestness that none of us could doubt the man's sincerity although we could not think for a moment of accepting his doctrines which were so totally at variance with what we had always believed.

After the meeting, as we were passing out, Mr. Evans took my hand and asked if I would permit him to see me at my home and talk on Bible subjects. Of course, under the circumstances, I could not do otherwise than make an appointment with him, so my next letter will probably give an account of our interview.

Jan. 22

My Dear Mother:

Mr. Evans came to my house last evening, and we had two hours conversation on the subject under discussion at our Bible class last Sunday.

My mind is completely upset. To tell the truth I never had anything take such a hold upon my mind. I feel sure it must be a temptation from the devil. I can see plainly enough that if the doctrines taught by the man are true, the whole fabric of popular Christianity falls to the ground. It cannot, must not be true. But still as that man sat there calmly, and read passage after passage from various parts of the Bible and reasoned upon them, his words seemed to bear the impress of Divine truth.

Texts which had always before seemed obscure to me became radiant with light, and I got a glimpse of an entirely new (to me) system of Biblical interpretation. I would not, however, let Mr. Evans see how much I had been impressed, and when he arose to go I declined to accept the loan of a book called "Christendom Astray," which he wished me to read, and told him I had

no time to investigate every strange doctrine that came around. He looked quite sad as he went away and merely asked me to prove all things by the Divine standard, the Word of God. After his departure I fell on my knees and prayed for light. I do not wish to believe those doctrines, and yet, if they are true how can I help myself? May God help me to know the truth and not to be led astray. I think I will take counsel of some of the leading brethren of the church, and see if I cannot satisfy my mind as to these things. I shall write to you regularly and let you know the outcome of my inquires. Pray for me, my dear mother, that I may keep the faith that was once delivered unto the saints, and meet you in heaven.

Jan. 30

My Dear Mother:

I feel very much calmer than at my last writing. I have had a good talk with our pastor and he has partially set my mind at rest. I say "partially," for I cannot say that I feel entirely satisfied with his explanation. Still, I reason that he is a very well-educated man, and it does not seem possible that he can be very far astray. He knows all about Mr. Evans and his belief. He belongs to a very small sect called Christadelphians (what a name!). They are scattered all over the English speaking world, yet have no large congregations except in Birmingham, England, and in one or two other places. He says that they believe in infant damnation (horrible thought!) and in a limited resurrection. They deny the doctrine of the Trinity and disbelieve in the work of the Holy Spirit. They have no ordained ministers, and think that no one can be saved unless he becomes one of their number. Mr. Wilson advised me to have nothing more to do with Mr. Evans. He commended my desire to know all that the Bible teaches, but advised me to depend more upon commentaries and the regularly authorized teachers of the church, and then I would not be so likely to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. It is a relief to feel that I am in the right way after all, and I will try to dismiss those disturbing thoughts from my mind and seek more earnestly than ever for the great blessing of Perfect Love. Never in this world can I believe that so many good people are wrong and cannot be saved, and especially you, my own dear mother. My mother's religion is good enough for me. My wife took a violent dislike to Mr. Evans the evening he was here, and says he must be an emissary of the evil one. Yet he seemed very earnest. However, this is enough for this time.

Authored by a Bro. W.H. Clough, of Lowell, MA, for *The Christadelphian Advocate*, starting with the July, 1900 issue.

To be continued



THE “BLOOD MOONS” PHENOMENON

Prophetic Signpost or Evangelical Superstition?



As a foundation principle of our hope, as expressed in our Unamended Statement of Faith, it is declared - **Article 19**, *That God will set up a kingdom in the earth, which will overthrow all others, and change them into “the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.”* And **Article 20**, *That for this purpose God will send Jesus Christ personally to the earth at the close of the times of the Gentiles.*

Throughout the centuries, true believers have lived in constant expectation of the angelic message – *“this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).”* For the truly faithful, it is to be our extreme desire to see the return of our Master from the right hand of the Father (2nd Tim. 4:8). And, the Scriptures are very clear that though Christ’s return will come *“as a thief in the night”* to the world at large, it is emphatically stated of the believers, *“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief”* (1st Thess. 5:4). Why? *“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”* 2nd Peter 1:19 gives us the source of this light – *“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts...”* Therefore, the prophetic record is abundant and sufficient with the illumination that we need to discern the times we are in, to perceive the unfolding of prophetic events before they happen and to rightly look for the return of The Master.

But, the ultimate question before us in this article is where does the prophetic record direct us to look for the signs of the unfolding of God’s Plan? And, what do we mean by such a question? Several months ago I had a

student in one of my classes warn me of the coming “Blood Moon apocalypse” that is “talked about in the Bible” in reference to the cycle of rare lunar eclipses. A few years before we had come across an on-line article by an evangelical writer that had outlined the coming “Blood Moon” cycle in 2014/15 and we had heard a little bit of the “pastor” John Hagee give his own interpretation of the prophetic implications in relation to Israel and the “End Times” of the natural occurrence of these lunar eclipses; as well as coming across various articles and books from other evangelicals as well as from Christadelphian writers.

What are the “Blood Moons”, and why do some view them as significant?

To summarize what the “Blood Moon” cycle is – it is a rare series of four total lunar eclipses (a tetrad) that occur over a two-year period. There are no partial lunar eclipses in between and each is separated from the other by six lunar months (six full moons). They get their nickname based upon the reddish color of the moon that is the result when the earth comes between the moon and the sun. As of the fall of 2014 we have already passed through two eclipses (April – during Passover & October – during Sukkot) with the third expected on April 4, 2015 to also correspond with Passover, and the final eclipse to transpire on September 28, 2015 during Sukkot.

The “Blood Moon” tetrad has only landed on Passover and Sukkot during back-to-back years eight times in 2,000 years. It is pointed out by some that the appearance of the “Blood Moons”, when it has corresponded with the Jewish holy days, has also corresponded with major events in Jewish history, such as:

- **1493/1494 tetrad** – *In 1492 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issued an edict of expulsion kicking the Jews out of Spain. Though, The Spanish Inquisition to rid the region of the Jews and Muslims actually began in 1478.*
- **1949/1950 tetrad** - *The State of Israel was established in 1948*
- **1967/1968 tetrad** – *A time period that included the Six Day War (June, 1967).*

It has been contended that the association with the current 2014/2015 lunar eclipse cycle with the Jewish Holy Days, like the previous three just mentioned, that such is an “omen” of events to come as they involve Israel. In an interview earlier this year John Hagee stated – *“I think the thing that people will take away from this is that it means, based on past history, that something is about to change in the Middle East concerning Israel that will affect the nations of the world and everyone on planet Earth” ... “No one knows for sure what it will be, but based on the pattern of the past it will involve Israel.*

It will begin with tears and end in triumph and change the course of history forever.”

But we here point out that there was not such a cycle during 1898 or 1917/18, which were certainly two major and impactful events in Jewish history. Some have tried to implicate the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD with the lunar cycle, as there were combinations of partial lunar and solar eclipses that landed on various Holy Days starting in the fall of 69 AD and which ran through the fall of 70 AD and would have been seen in various parts of the world. But such were not related to the “Blood Moon” tetrad. And, if the “Blood Moons” were to be signs of impending events for the Jewish people, such cycles did not begin until after major Jewish historical events were either under way – such as the Spanish Inquisition of the late 1400’s, or had already transpired – such as in the case of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

So to extend the question that we have already asked, where are we to look for the signs of the unfolding of God’s Plan? Are we directed by the Scriptures to look up at the celestial bodies or to cosmic phenomena to indicate to us coming prophetic events? Before we answer that question more fully, we do wish to address the problems that exist with attempting to tie the “Blood Moon” tetrad with omens – whether good or bad – to the fortunes of Israel or to the “End Times”.

Is the “Blood Moons” Prophecy based in Scripture?

We must admit that when we first came across this information that we were intrigued by it. On the surface there are some very interesting elements and unique astronomical coincidences that give the “Blood Moons” interpretation a sense of plausibility. But, is there a Scriptural basis? Plausibility does not necessarily equal Scriptural Truth.

Proponents of the “Blood Moons” prophecy believe that God has traditionally communicated signals to man through celestial means. References such as Joel 2:30,31; Luke 21:25,26; Acts 2:19,20 and Revelation 6:12 have been cited to support such a claim. Though celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, stars, falling stars and even clouds (the heavenly elements in general) are frequently referenced in Scriptures (along with more earthly elements such as trees, grass, mountains and bodies of water); it must be understood by Believers that such heavenly signs are symbolic signs of ecclesiastical and political/governmental bodies here on earth – both in regard to evil powers (civil and ecclesiastical) and the Righteous power of Christ and the saints in the future. It is such a mistake of not understanding the nature of the symbolic language of the Scriptures that it makes it all but impossible for false religion to properly interpret key elements of the Prophetic Word – especially in regard to the symbolic nature of the Apocalyptic message. The prophetic word is therefore reduced to abhorrent, and superstitious imagery.

A cornerstone passage used in reference to the perceived “Blood Moons” significance is found in **Joel 2:30, 31** which reads – *“And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.”*

Is this passage in Joel teaching us to expect the sun to be literally darkened and the moon to be turned into blood somehow as a sign of impending judgment? The physical elements mentioned should be taken no more literally than the Four Beasts of Daniel 7, the Dragon of Revelation 12 and many other physical elements used throughout the Scriptures that are merely symbols of something of greater import to the outworking of God’s Plan. Such symbols are employed by the Spirit Word due to their unique characteristics that help us to “rightly divide” their intended object. The moon merely reflects the light of the sun, so therefore, ecclesiastical power or influence can only be asserted as those in political/military power give it to them.

Context is always key, and as it involves Joel 2 – we are here informed of the invasion and destructive force upon Israel of the “northern army” (The Gogian invasion). The darkness of the sun will be the extinguishing of the military threat of Gog, and the moon turned to blood will be the eventual end of the Roman ecclesiastical influence, which has also stood in opposition to Zion. (*Rev. 6:12 provides similar language but is in reference to the judgments upon Pagan Rome through the instrumentality of Constantine during the 6th Apocalyptic Seal.*)

To view the passage in any other way, in the attempt to apply it to the “Blood Moons” theory, is to make a serious misapplication of prophetic teaching. And, to try to apply this passage to a literal cosmic event is to “prove too much”, as brethren were once fond of saying in regard to those who misapplied various Scriptures. If we are to suppose that Joel 2 is directing us to look for a literal event in the moon as a harbinger of events on the earth, then what about the sun? But we do not see emphasis placed upon any signs in the sun within the theory.

Luke 21:25-28 informs us – *“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring...the powers of heaven shall be shaken...then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”* Now, to the literal fact that Christ will come again, and that great distress among the nations will exist previous to and accompanying the Return of Christ we cannot doubt – but do we also take the “signs” used here as literal? No – no more than we believe that the heaven here mentioned as being shaken is the Heaven of Yahweh’s personal abode. Again, symbolic language is being used of the signs that will be seen (and are currently being

seen) in the Political Ariel or heavens (along with the seas of humanity) leading up to and concurrent with the Return of Christ.

Early Christadelphian views

Early Brethren did not put stock in natural cosmic events as signs of Prophetic interest or import. And, as a matter of fact, they viewed the religious fervor stirred by such as a matter of a mistaken view of how we are to observe and note the Signs of the Times.

First from bro. Thomas Williams:

"While there may be convulsions in the literal heavens and earth attending the coming crisis among nations, which will transform the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, it is not in the literal sun, moon and stars that we look for the signs portending the end of the present order of things."

After laying out the prophesied signs that would indicate the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans, bro. Williams continues: ***"These were realities, not in the clouds, the sun and the moon, but realities on the earth among nations. And the careful watcher would finally see that these signs would really culminate in the exact fulfillment of the dreadful words of the prophet, in the downfall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans, and the captivity and scattering of her children to the four winds."***

"It is in this way that we must watch the signs of our times. We have now a broader world of nations to look out over, and in proportion to the magnitude of the coming revolution so is the number of unmistakable signs portending the near approach of the greatest event the world has ever witnessed." The World's Redemption, Chapter 11, pp. 174,175

The signs of the times that Bible students are to look for are not found in the natural phenomenon in God's heavens and earth but in the political order of things – as often Scripturally represented by such signs. When Joseph dreamed a dream that the *"sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me"* (Gen. 37:9) – was he and his brethren to look to the natural heavens as an omen for such a prophecy? When responding to the dream, though Jacob questioned the nature of the, dream he clearly discerned what it represented – *"What is this dream that hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"*

As bro. Williams indicated – the signs of the times given to us in the Scriptures are "unmistakable". We know that the misfortunes and fortunes of Israel has stood as a continual witness (more so now than ever) as to the signs in the political heavens we look for. The Prophets and the Apocalyptic signs also indicate to us to look to the nations and territories addressed by Nebuchadnezzar's dream Image and the Four Beast territories of Daniel 7 including the Roman habitable as considered in Daniel 7 and 8 (in regard to

the western [Rome] and eastern [Constantinople] halves), and carried forward to the Apocalypse in the mischievous actions of the Dragon (Russia), Beast (Western Europe) and False Prophet (The Papacy). It is to such that we look for signs from the political heavens of the sun, moon and stars.

Now from bro. John Thomas in unmistakable terms:

*HE "whom Jehovah hath made both Lord and Anointed," or Christ, when executing the work of preaching "the gospel of the kingdom to the poor," **upbraided the clergy of his day for their stupidity in not being able to discern "THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES."** They desired him that he would show them a sign from the heaven; upon which he exclaimed, "**Oh! ye hypocrites, ye know how to discern the face of the heaven, but the signs of the times ye are not able!**" Like the pagans, they sought an omen in the sky—an eclipse, a shooting star, a darkening, or something of the sort. They demanded this upon the principle that Jehovah's signs were in the constellations of the physical universe. True, it is written that God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide between the day and between the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years." Every astronomer, and navigator, agriculturist, and business man, knows practically the meaning of this. The use of them for these purposes of life, however, never suggests to them any thing connected with the things of the Kingdom of God, and of the name of Jesus Christ. **They who are instructed in these things, would as soon look for their signs (and they have their signs) in a coal pit, where darkness may be felt, as expect to find them in the firmament, or atmosphere, that surrounds our globe. The signs of the Son of man are not there ; and as Jesus told the clerical hypocrites of his day, they who look for them in that direction are " a wicked and adulterous generation," of whose doctrinal leaven men should diligently beware.** The heathen, and all whose principles are heathenish, look for signs in the sky as indications of the coming of the Son of man, of an approaching conflagration of the earth, and of a destruction of the world of nations! "Christian Philosophers" (!) are deeply embued with this folly; so that a comet of unusual length and brilliancy of tail will set them all agog for a collision, a shivering of the earth to fragments, and a fiery combustion of the rubbish! And if the seducing spirits or demoniacs, as Paul appropriately styles teachers of this class, who profess and are generally accounted to be the wise, have such notions, what marvel that the people who have blindly surrendered themselves to their direction, should abandon themselves to the same foolishness. Children are imbeciles, where men are fools; and they are fools, says Jesus, "who believe not ALL that the prophets have spoken ;" for they have uttered the words of God.*

Bro. Thomas continues in the same article, in even more explicit terms:

Now, concerning signs in the sky, Jehovah hath commanded his people not to trouble themselves about them. In Jerem. x. 2, "Thus saith Jehovah, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of the heavens ; for the heathen are dismayed at them ; for the customs of the people are vain." An eclipse was enough to postpone an expedition, and to throw an army of veteran idolaters into a panic. We would commend the words of the prophet to the heathen of Yankdeedom, who pretend to see in the alleged darkening of the New England sky in 1780 the sign of the coming of the Son of man to Mount Olivet on the east of Jerusalem in 1843, '44, and all the several times they have appointed since. When the children of Antichrist go stargazing for the signs of God, it is proof positive to all enlightened in the Scriptures, that they are ignorant of the principles of the oracles of truth. No one "taught of God," looks for His signs among the Pleiades, Orion, Arcturus, and his bands. It is not in the signs and constellations of the universe; but in the sun, moon, and stars of the heavens politic, that He has placed His signs.

Excerpt from "The Political Aerial, and the Signs; thereof",
Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, 1860, pp. 241,242

Other considerations

The fact that some of the "Blood Moon" dates fall on certain Holy Days should not be all that surprising in that the Jewish calendar and its Holy Days are based upon the very cycles of the moon itself. In the 20th century there were 39 lunar eclipses that coincided with Passover and Sukkot.

Another matter that must be considered, is from what vantage point on the face of the earth can these eclipses be observed? It would seem that if the "Blood Moons" provide some kind of omen in regard to Israel that such a sign would be seen from Israel coinciding with the respective Holy Days. But, the last two eclipses have not been visible from Israel and neither will the 3rd, which coincides with Passover 2015. And only the beginning stage of the final eclipse in the fall of 2015 will be visible from Jerusalem.

Connected to this, one evangelical writer has attempted to claim that the two solar eclipses in 2015 could possibly be a fulfillment of the darkening of the sun as mentioned in Joel 2 due to the fact that the first solar eclipse lands on the first day of the Jewish ceremonial year (March 20, 2015). Like the lunar eclipses, this is not uncommon in that solar eclipses fall in line with the new moon, as do the Jewish ceremonial new years. 19 of the 228 solar eclipses in the 20th century coincided with the beginning of the Hebrew ceremonial year. The first solar eclipse of 2015 is a total eclipse but its path of observation is parts of the North Atlantic and Arctic Ocean. If conditions are right, it may be seen by maybe 50,000 some people. The second solar eclipse will be partial (September 13,2015), though it does fall during Rosh Hashanah.

We will also wish to note that the darkening of the sun and the turning to

blood of the moon (as indicated in Joel 2 and Revelation 6) signify an impending doom. If the “Blood Moons” are in fact signs of Israel’s fortunes, we can hardly view the events of 1948 or 1967 as ominous but very joyous to Israel. The darkening of the sun and bloodying of the moon are certainly signs of destruction and not of good for whatever or whoever they represent.

Also, when expressing our doubts on this matter via e-mail a few months ago, a brother who also doubted the veracity of the “Blood Moons” did question us in regard to the place of heavenly objects in foretelling certain events. He brought out the Wise men of the east that came to Jerusalem to seek out *“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).”* As there is no reference in the prophets previously to make us look for this star, we would certainly have to delegate the matter to a miraculous event. After their interview with Herod, the star reappeared to them and led them directly to Christ. Clearly, something much more than a cosmic event was enacted here. As far as the timing, if the Wise men were familiar with the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel (which they apparently were), they would have been in expectation of “Messiah the Prince” (Dan. 9:25), and a miraculous sighting of a strange object in the sky would have corresponded with their expectation. (This is just our thought on the matter, and others may have a better explanation.)

Conclusion

World financial collapse, trouble in Israel and the Middle East, aggression on the part of the Russian Bear and expanded influence by the Apostasy over the hearts and mind of a spiritually corrupt world – all these things certainly are coming – but we do not need “Blood Moons” or any other signs in the natural creation to warn us of such facts, to remind us of the nearness of Christ’s Return. The Evangelicals are grasping at straws, and fudging and exaggerating facts regarding this lunar eclipse cycle itself. (We also know that certain Christadelphian writers are also promoting these very same theories.) Such are only looking in the wrong direction and are only compounding their wresting of the Prophetic Word. The Evangelicals look for a “Rapture” and a coming “Anti-Christ”, we look for the Resurrection of the Household and Restoration of the Israelitish Kingdom on earth under Christ’s rule, following “a time of trouble” for Israel and the world never experienced to such a degree before (Dan. 12:1). We ourselves hope to be exalted into the Political Aerial when, *“they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever”* (Dan. 12:3). Such expectation is something that Believers have long been able to anticipate, and that current Believers can see is rapidly approaching without the help of lunar and solar eclipses, or comets streaking through the sky. Let us not be distracted by superstition, but keep our eyes squarely upon the unmistakable light that is the Prophetic Word.

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

DELAY OF THE 3rd QUARTER S.K.

As has been the case for the last couple of years, our work schedule makes it difficult to get the 3rd Quarter mailed out by the ideal time of September/October. We dislike the long delay between the 2nd and 3rd Quarters, but always find sufficient time to be lacking during the fall months. We do, Lord willing, expect to have the 4th Quarter sent out by the end of December.

RECENT ECCLESIAL STATEMENTS OF POSITION

Over the past few weeks we have received (as many did) the following ecclesial announcements. We provide these announcements for the consideration of those who are not aware that these were sent out.

“SPRINGFIELD, VA EXCLUSIVELY UNAMENDED CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIA” ANNOUNCEMENT

With sorrowing hearts, we, the undersigned, find it necessary to withdraw from the Arlington Ecclesia effective immediately.

The doctrinal and fellowship issues facing the Unamended Community have been extremely distressing to the three of us for many years.

We wholeheartedly agree with and support the recent statements and communications from the Arkansas Bible School, The Clinton (AR) Exclusively Unamended Ecclesia, and the Del Rio (TX) Unamended Christadelphian Ecclesia; the latter of which we incorporate here in: “As members of the Body of Christ, we believe that we are called to the fellowship of Jesus Christ and God, his Father (I Cor. 1:9, I John 1:3) as symbolized in the partaking of the bread and wine in memory of God lovingly giving His only Begotten Son as the sacrifice for sin. This partaking of the emblems symbolizes our fellowship (sharing in common or communion) in the doctrines and walks of our Lord (I Cor. 10:16, I John 1:6-7). It is our belief that in order to have true fellowship at the Lord’s table those partaking of the bread and wine must (within mortal limitations) share in common both the doctrines and walks taught by God, Jesus Christ, and the writers of the Holy Scriptures. If we knowingly partake of the bread and wine with anyone not sharing these doctrines, and walks we bid them Godspeed and become partakers of their evil deeds (II John 10-11), therefore our fellowship with Christ and God would cease.” Specifically it would be a violation of our consciences before God to fellowship with any Brother or Sister who is in any way involved with or knowingly and willingly fellowships the Amended/Central, UAO8, the NASU, The Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation, Operation Onesimus, the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith or any other organization affiliated with such.

It is in no way our intention to sow discord within our already divided

Brotherhood, but rather to eliminate uncertainty on the part of anyone in the Christ body as to the basis upon which we three meet. On doctrinal, first principle matters, it is not possible to agree to disagree and continue in fellowship.

Based on the foregoing, the basis of fellowship for the three of us is exclusively the principles of Scripture as defined in the Birmingham Unamended Christadelphian Statement of faith, including the epitomized Commandments of Christ and Doctrines to be Rejected, outlined therein.

We will hereafter be known as the Springfield, Virginia Exclusively Unamended Christadelphian Ecclesia and welcome the members of the Body of Christ agreeing in principle and practice with above to partake at our Memorial Service.

For further information please contact Sister Deborah DeLaney Sheeres at (703) 323-1429.

"I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27: 13.14) Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.

*Yours in the Hope of Christ,
Sister Lisa DeLaney Adler
Sister Deborah DeLaney Sheeres
Sister Rachel Sheeres Gelb*

"GREATER HAMILTON EXCLUSIVELY UNAMENDED ECCLESIA"

We would like to announce that formation of the Greater Hamilton Exclusively Unamended Ecclesia. We meet exclusively on the principles of Truth outlined in the Original 1877 Birmingham Statement of Faith, including the Doctrines to be Rejected and The Commandments of Christ. We welcome all to the Table of the Lord who do likewise and are in good standing at their home ecclesia.

We are in the process of arranging a meeting location but in the interim we will be meeting at the homes of our members.

Please contact either Don Lockard or John Manson for more details.

Bro. & Sis. Don & Jane Lockard (905.945.8582)

Bro. & Sis. John, Sandra Manson (519.622.2561)

Bro. David Manson

Sis. Sheila Megson

Sis. Judy Taggart

Please pass along this announcement to those that hold to the same fellowship practices.

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP FOR THE DEL RIO, TX UNAMENDED CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIA

The Del Rio Unamended Christadelphian Ecclesia, as members of the Body of Christ, believe that we are called to the fellowship of Jesus Christ and God, his Father (I Cor. 1:9, I John 1:3) as symbolized in the partaking of the bread and wine in memory of God lovingly giving His only Begotten Son as the sacrifice for sin.

This partaking of the emblems symbolizes our fellowship (sharing in common or communion) in the doctrines and walks of our Lord (I Cor. 10:16, I John 1:6-7). It is our belief that in order to have true fellowship at the Lord's table those partaking of the bread and wine must (within mortal limitations) share in common both the doctrines and walks taught by God, Jesus Christ, and the writers of the Holy Scriptures. If we knowingly partake of the bread and wine with anyone not sharing these doctrines, and walks we bid them Godspeed and become partakers of their evil deeds (II John 10-11), therefore our fellowship with Christ and God would cease.

The Del Rio Christadelphian Ecclesia breaks bread exclusively on the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith including the Doctrines to Be Rejected and the Commandments of Christ.

Due to the unrest in the Brotherhood resulting from divorce and remarriage involving those in the Body of Christ, we have felt the need to add the following items to our basis of fellowship. It is our belief that marriage as instituted by God is permanent (Gen. 2:23-24, Matt. 19:4-5) and that God hateth putting away or divorce (Mal. 2:16). We believe that the only end to any marriage is death (Rom. 7:2-3). Divorce is a sin as it involves taking a Brother or Sister to law, which we are forbidden to do (I Cor. 6:1-8), and any remarriage while the former mate still lives puts anyone in the position of continuing adultery (Luke 16:18). Based upon the above, any Brother or Sister obtaining a divorce or remarrying after such a divorce should be the subject of withdrawal and in no wise be fellowshipped in the ecclesia.

In addition, any Brother or Sister who fits into the following categories are in error and should be asked not to partake of the Memorial Service:

- I) Those Brothers and Sisters who teach or advise that obtaining a divorce or remarrying after a divorce is permissible for any reason for any member of the Body of Christ.*
- II) Those Brothers or Sisters who knowingly and willingly support those who have obtained a divorce or remarried after a divorce while in Christ or teach or advise the acceptability thereof (this support being in the form of fellowship or the bidding of Godspeed in their chosen way).*
- III) Any Brother or Sister who is in any way involved with or knowingly and willingly fellowships the UA08, the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation, the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith, or any other organization affiliated with such.*
- IV) Any Brothers or Sisters who believe, teach, or support those who believe or teach any of the following false doctrines (again, that support being in the form of fellowship or bidding them Godspeed in their endeavors):*
 - A) That the Kingdom of God is presently here on Earth*
 - B) That Christ is King now, either rather than or as well as our High Priest and Mediator.*
 - C) That we inherit eternal life at baptism rather than after receiving God's grace at the Judgment Seat of Christ.*

The members of the Body of Christ agreeing in principle and practice with the above statement are welcome to partake at our Memorial Service. Anyone partaking with us, not holding to the above, takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

It is our prayer that this basis of fellowship is acceptable to God and retains us in His fellowship.

THE WORLD SCENE

The past few months have proved to be most momentous in regard to the “*signs of the times*”. We haven’t the space in this quarter to give a thorough synopsis of significant developments in the “Political Aerial”, but we trust that our Brethren are watching world events closely, with great interest. We briefly make note of a few items.

RUSSIA continues to grow more aggressive as it quietly builds up armaments on the Ukrainian border, despite a declared ceasefire; and has even been moving tanks, trucks and howitzer canons into the self-declared Ukrainian rebel group’s “People’s Republic of Donetsk”. In a tense encounter between Putin and the Canadian Prime minister Stephen Harper at the recent G20 Summit in Brisbane, Australia; Mr. Harper bluntly stated – *“I guess I’ll shake your hand but I have only one thing to say to you: you need to get out of Ukraine.”* (Harper’s strong message to Putin has made him somewhat of a hero at the G20 Summit, considering the weakness and decline being portrayed by the U.S.) With major animosity directed at Putin, he left the summit early claiming that he had to catch up on his sleep.



As the Western powers push for more stringent economic penalties against Russia for its continued aggression, Russia continues to show itself even more belligerent. It has expanded its world-wide naval and air patrols to a degree not seen since the fall of the Soviet Union – even pushing beyond previous limits. This has led to regular and tense encounters with U.S. and NATO patrols and causing numerous scrambling incidents of U.S. fighter jets to intercept Russian fighter jets and bombers that have come precariously close to American and Canadian air space; as well as repeated incidents in relation to Ukrainian air space. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also announced that long-range Russian bombers would expand air patrols to include “the western Atlantic and eastern Pacific, as well as the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico.” Russia has never before flown bomber patrols over the Gulf of Mexico, including during the Cold War.

Russia is facing extreme economic hardships due to economic sanctions and growing hostility with the West. But instead of deterring the building of the

Image Empire (Dan. 2), we see Russia more belligerent and more determined than ever. Within the last few years we read an article from the Stratfor geopolitical analysis group that observed that bad economic circumstances have not historically paralyzed the Russians the way that it has other countries. Due to its culture and authoritarian mindset, bad times tend to make the country even more dangerous, more aggressive and its people more willing to mobilize for the cause of mother-Russia.

Whether Putin is the long awaited “autocrat” that will set the prophesied Image Empire on its feet, or if he is setting things up for one to follow – his intentions of making Russia a force in the world is beyond doubt. He has proven himself clever, patient and quite adept at yanking the chains of Western leaders. He is self-absorbed with the portrayal of a macho, god-like figure and certainly views himself as a man of destiny – a part he plays very well.



THE MIDDLE EAST continues to stew in turmoil, with the rise of the ISIS group, and Syria and Iraq in complete disintegration. We were recently sent a news article from a sister that made some observations regarding the condition of things in the Middle East – *“Indeed, one of the more intriguing paradoxes in the region today is that the three non-Arab states – Israel, Turkey, and Iran – despite all their difficulties, remain the most*

consequential states in the region. They are all politically stable; all have tremendous economic potential, and all have the ability to project their military power beyond their border.” The sister’s own observation of this stated – *“The reason for the stability of these three particular powers is due to the roles they play in the final scene. With the exception of Egypt, and possibly Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf States and possibly Jordan, the rest are being wiped off the blackboard...”* The news article went on to state – *“And the United States is more depended on Israel, too. As the Arab world melts down, Israel’s leverage only increases. Tensions at the top between Netanyahu and Obama notwithstanding, America’s capacity to pressure its close ally decreases as the region becomes more unsettled. Not only are the United States and Israel together in the same trench against ISIS, but Israel and Egypt are now closer than ever, making it unlikely that Cairo would press Washington to hammer Israel on the Palestinian issue.”* As several brethren have observed, it is quite significant that even though the current U.S. Administration is probably the most anti-Israel Administration in the country’s history, God continues to manipulate circumstances that force the U.S. (quite begrudgingly) into Israel’s corner.

The Ayatollah Khamenei recently came out with a “9 point plan” to destroy Israel. The Iranians have been calling for the destruction of Israel for decades, and we also know that Iran (Persia) will play a role as part of the Gogian

Confederacy; so there are some interesting points in the plan that would no doubt seem somewhat appealing to an international community (especially Europe) that is becoming more and more belligerent towards Israel and quite openly biased for the Palestinian cause. He stated that the “*proper way of eliminating Israel*” is through a “*public and organized referendum*” for all of the “*original people of Palestine including Muslims, Christians, and Jews wherever they are...*” However, “*the Jewish immigrants who have been persuaded into emigration to Palestine do not have the right to take part.*” He goes on to explain that the resulting government would then decide whether or not the “*non-Palestinian immigrants*” would be allowed to stay or would have to return to their home countries. He called on the international community to overcome the “*usurper Zionist’s*” objections to his “*fair and logical plan.*” Until the referendum, he maintains that Israel should be confronted with “*resolute and armed resistance.*”

On another front, the “Palestinian” government is bypassing negotiations with Israel and calling on the 15 member UN Security council to set a deadline for the removal of the IDF from the West Bank and the Gaza strip by November 2016. It is meeting with a great deal of opposition, so the Palestinians have threatened to take the vote to the 193 member General Assembly where there are no vetoes on resolutions, but any decisions are also not legally binding.

POPE FRANCIS has the Catholic world in quite the turmoil as he finds his liberal views (e.g. – homosexuality, gay marriage, co-habitation before marriage, divorce & remarriage, social justice, etc.) at complete odds with the conservative elements of the Catholic Church. A document that was put forward by the Vatican at this past October’s Synod pushed for an inclusive approach to homosexuals by stating – “*Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer the Christian community...*” and encouraged their clergy to find “*a fraternal space*” for gay people within the Catholic Church. Conservative elements were able to squelch official adoption of the document but it clearly revealed a

push by Francis and his supporters to push a liberalized agenda more inclusive of and pleasing to a corrupt culture. Francis continues to be successful in either removing or demoting more conservative/traditional Cardinals and high ranking Vatican official that stand in his way. The Catholic/Harlot system continues to do what it does best – change with times and circumstances to survive, thrive and remain a relevant and powerful influence in the world; apostatizing truth and embracing all forms of evil under a cloak of righteousness. “***Surely I come quickly***”. ***Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.***

