

IMPORTANT BIBLE TEACHING

- And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins (skin), and clothed them (Gen. 3:20-21).
- Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (Psa. 1:5)
- Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5).
- Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the [marked or memorial] graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).
- The priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:1-2).
- Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [in whom] all have sinned (Rom. 5:12).
- For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. 6:5).
- There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-2).
- And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins...But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:17,20-22).
- For you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world...Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Eph. 2:1,12,19).
- And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22).
- Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20).
- In the hope of eternal life, which God cannot lie, promised before the world began...That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7).
- The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readers, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Rev. 1:1-3).



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THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense of The Holy Scriptures



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The Holy Scriptures*

“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.”

I Peter 2:5

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

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PRAYER

THE subject of prayer is one to be considered by and for those, only, who are heard when they pray. The manner and matter of our approach to the Father is taught us by the Lord Jesus himself in the preface and words of, *“In this manner pray ye: Our father, who art in heaven,”* for God is not the God of any who are outside the covenant of promise, which is equal to saying, *“God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, him he heareth”* - and him only. It is exactly in this sense that David says, in Psalm 32:1,2, *“Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.”* The man then, who prays to be heard and answered, must have put on the sin-covering name of the Lord Jesus, in order to be free from sin, to be of the “blessed,” to be heard when he prays; he must be of the “blessed” before his prayer is, or can be, accepted - the blessedness resulting in his being made from an alien into a member of the household of faith, a Son of God, and an heir to the kingdom, and so, competent in every sense to address Yahweh as “Father.” Upon this Paul is clear, when he says in Romans, 8:14-16, *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: for we have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear, but the spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit*

itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”

The absolute necessity for a man to be sincere and thorough, to apprehend his true relationship to the Father of Mercies, before he presents his petition, is an ever present necessity also. Upon this head, the teaching, as well as scripturally informed common-sense, admits of no reservations.

The conditions, also, are clear, and not to be mistaken; they are these, Psalms 66:18: *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”* If a man comes to the Father’s feet with a faltering tongue, he comes with a false tongue; he is double-tongued. *“Will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him?”*, says Job. He will not, for *“he that cometh unto God must not only believe that He is the God, but that he is also a rewarder of all who diligently seek him:”* there is reward for none other, and all reservations are *“naked and open before him, with whom we have to do.”* It is the highest capacity for folly that supposes, as many do, that they can throw dust into the eyes of the Father of Lights. The utmost faithfulness is requisite from us when we approach the footstool of the Divine Mercy; we have nothing to bring but a humble and contrite heart, that trembles at his word, and the abundant sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. Upright and truthful, with just knowledge of the blessings vouchsafed to us in the Gospel of the Kingdom; with the like knowledge of our own weakness and imperfections, and with the knowledge, also, of what blessings the prayer of the sincere man will bring to him; with searchings of heart, and siftings of conscience, and with daily sitting in judgment on our shortcomings. In this mind we must approach our Father, or, otherwise, we shall come short of his requirements, and be of them of whom Solomon speaks, in Proverbs 28:9, *“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”*

To the faithful comes consolation; to them Solomon says, Proverbs 15:29, *“He heareth the prayer of the righteous.”* David also testifies, Psalm 145: 18,19, *“The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him - to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry, and save them.”* The Apostle thus counsels such, Hebrews 10:22, *“Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed in pure water,”* and by the aid of these means be the people who only, for all people, have access to the throne of grace, and thus take hold upon our right in the spirit of the admonition contained in Hebrews 4:16, *“Let us therefore, come boldly to the throne of favor, that we may obtain mercy and find favor in time of need.”*

“With what matter should we pray?”, say some: this is a large question, but it is

PRAYER

set at rest for us by the Lord Jesus himself, who has instructed all, as well Gentile as Jew, who should become his brethren until the time of his return. Length of prayer is not requisite after sectarian example; men befog themselves at times before an audience by a long, unpointed array of various matters - past, present and to come - praying a lecture instead of offering petitions - telling the Father much that he already knows, and, therefore, does not require to know from them; and sometimes much of what they tell him is in phrases very partially informed by the spirit of truth. Meaning and completeness are the requisites for the man who, for the time being is the mouthpiece and interpreter of the aspirations of an ecclesia, or who utters the hope and prayer for the blessing of, and for, those who have been listening to an exposition of the truth. Addresses, too, made ostensibly to God, but really to the audience, are mere vain show. Men resent being prayed at; it is weariness to the flesh, vexations to the spirit, and altogether profitless to have such experiences; and a sense of refreshing relief falls upon the tired listener when the last word of the last sentence is finished. "Pray for" is the command, not "pray at," and the true sentiments and aspirations are found for us, the Scriptures being our prayer book and the Lord's Prayer our model prayer.

What does an analysis of the Lord's Prayer teach us? **"OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN."** Here is the recognition of his paternity, the confession of our sonship and dependence, and the knowledge of his pervading presence, who, though he is in the heavens, is not far from anyone of us. *"For in him we live and move, and do exist,"* and *"His eyes are upon the righteous, his ears are open unto his prayers."* *"Hallowed be thy name."* Well may we pray for this name to be hallowed; the holy and the high - the name men refuse to acknowledge, and accordingly reject. The name which we adore, as says the sweet singer ((Ps. 73:4): - *"Sing unto God, sing praises to his name; extol him that rideth upon the heavens by His name, JAH, and rejoice before him."* *"Our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the Lord of Hosts is his name."* - (Isaiah 47:4).

The next sentence in the prayer reads for us, **"THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."** The greatness of this petition needs no pointing out to any intelligent believer; it is the "good news" which has made of us ambitious men indeed, with the wisdom that is from above.

"DAY BY DAY GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD," leads us onward, not only to our daily necessities, but to the daily need of the bread of life - the daily manna which falls from heaven for us fresh from the hands of the Lord Jesus, that bread of life sent down from heaven.

"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT

TRESPASS AGAINST US, AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.” There must be no canker in our faith, no loose holding of the spirit of the truth: what we ask for we must also concede, however we may deem ourselves to be injured men. Our forgiveness is conditional throughout, and in the strife of tongues we are brought face to face with our consciences, where no strife or doubt can come between us and our God. *“There must needs be offenses.”* How can this spirit of forgiveness be cultivated without offenses? They are sent as tests of character and conduct, of worthiness and of good works. What is our vocation? To be rulers in the future age, and to manifest beforehand the possession of the needful attributes for ruling men in the fear of the Lord by putting on “bowels of mercy;” by fitness through the production in us of every good word and work. The example of our elder brother **must** be our practice. Luke 23:34, *“Father forgive them.”* A man forgives those who sin against him, when in his secret chamber he prays for them in the spirit of our Master. Let an aggrieved man try this until he can accomplish this, it will heal many a wound, and soothe a multitude of sorrows.

The praying publican was the man who went down to his house justified, who first knew, and knowing it, felt himself to be the sinner he calls himself. *“God be merciful to me, a sinner,”* in its seven short words reveals to us the naked sincerity of his inmost heart. The believer is the only man who can pray thus, and being “justified,” i.e., made just, as was the publican, he is careful not to sin again.

How to pray, and the objects for prayer, are furnished us largely from the Word of God. These prayers are all comprehensive as to matter and perfect as to manner. Some illustrations may be furnished in a further paper upon this subject.

Written by an individual of the initials “J.H.”, The Christadelphian, Dec., 1881

Question

If prayer is answered now, why is it that we do not receive certain things asked for?

Answer

Either because we “ask amiss,” or ask for a thing it is not God’s pleasure to give us.

Questions Answered by the Editor, Thomas Williams, Christadelphian Advocate,
October, 1893

THE PARABLE OF THE STRAIT GATE

Matthew 7:13-14



WHILE Jesus was among the “*great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan*” (Matt. 4:25), he ascended one of the local hills to draw his disciples after him (Matt. 5:1). Following the giving of the beatitudes and the Lord’s prayer, the Master continued with a series of short parables among which is the Parable of the strait gate recorded in Matthew 7:13-14:

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

For so few words, the principles of truth taught within this parable carry us across the Scriptural record from Genesis to Revelation concerning that “way” which is acceptable before Yahweh in contrast to that “way” which is not. The disciples would soon be ushered into a life of extreme pressure following the Lord’s crucifixion and ascension to the Father; a cup that they boasted they could drink of but were not yet prepared. They would have set before them, as do we, set choices to make which are designed to shape one’s character. The parable was designed to

bring into memory the choices we make which in turn define the “way” we are on: strait and narrow, or wide and broad. In order that we know the difference, the Bible has been constructed in such a manner as to define both ways clearly, through both positive and negative reinforcement.

The Bible is sometimes referred to as the “Good Book,” mostly by those who don’t know about its contents. That it is good, in the sense of proclaiming Yahweh’s goodness to man, is without question, but those who herald this title about most likely take little heed to its negative clauses. They may boast about the idea that “God is love” and how “Jesus saves” and so forth, but little do they know that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures is also a *“consuming fire”* (Heb. 12:29). *“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”* (2 Thes. 1:8-9). Ideas such as this, which are Divine without question, are deemed “too harsh,” “hateful” and “unloving” by modern critics, the apologists for the broad way.

Christadelphians are not immune from such worldly sentiment, and we must, therefore, ever be wary of any approach to the Bible that may harmonize with those who “know not God”. Let us take heed to Yahweh’s instruction which carefully lays out the good and the bad side-by-side for us to consider. We dare not get into the mode of thinking that only “smooth things” are to be spoken or written among ourselves for fear that we might scare people off by presenting the Truth in all its parts. That the Bible itself is constructed in such a manner – setting forth both the positive and the negative - we hope to briefly demonstrate, and that this unvarnished presentation of the Truth is that which differentiates between the narrow and broad ways before us.

The Edenic Law

The very beginning and the tenets of the Edenic Law are a good place to start. The Edenic law was set out in both positive and negative parts in Genesis 2:16-17: *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”*

Here were two paths with opposite results laid before our first parents. It may be wondered, why would a beneficent Creator place the potential for disaster within reach of the pinnacle of His creative work, man? The answer lies in the fact that man, who was created from the dust of the ground and formed into a “very good” state, had yet to develop any character based upon the choices set before him. The formation of character is a work of time (as we know from Biblical evidence and

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personal experience), and Adam and Eve's character was similarly expected to develop through a series of choices that could stem from the obedience of faith or from the deceitfulness of sin. The results of their choices would place them in a particular "way," one leading to life, the other, to death.

The results of transgression in the case were immediately recognized: Once having partaken of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve knew that they were naked and attempted to cover their shame through a faulty system of human contrivance. When questioned by the Elohim about their condition (no longer "very good"), they were immediately reminded of the "way" in which they had been aptly warned against. *"And [the Elohim] said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"* (Gen. 3:11).

The Elohim could have completely passed over this discomforting moment of inquisition regarding the law they had clearly placed before Adam and Eve and gone on with the declaration of the promised seed and the provision of a sin covering through the divinely appointed means of blood shedding, but, instead, the negative clause was laid directly at their feet: *"I commanded thee that **thou shouldest not eat.**"* For what purpose would the Elohim bring these facts to light, except it be for "positive reinforcement" concerning the "way" which they should have chosen in opposition to their error. In a sense, the Elohim *"withstood them to their face"* as Paul would to Peter four millennia hence; they confronted Adam and Eve in the error of their ways to the intent that a change of mind might be affected for their own good. In His wisdom, this is how Yahweh reaches out – the open hand – to save man from his folly.

Following their expulsion from the Garden, while receiving the benefit of Yahweh's grace and mercy, there was still a "way" which was to be followed and a "way" to be avoided if they (and we) were to have any hope of escaping the results of the condemnation that had been brought upon them and their posterity.

"So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).

We note that the sword *"turned every way,"* a representation of the Word of God in all its aspects which we term *"the sword of the spirit,"* which has both positive and negative connotations. The Apostle Paul touches upon the Word's action upon ourselves through the exercise of self-examination in Hebrews 4:11-13:

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and

sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

As with Adam and Eve, there can be no covering of our own nakedness, or sin, by any means that is not Divinely appointed. All things must be done decently and in order and by Divine prescription according to the way which leads to the tree of life. Neither can there be any worship, praise, service, or sacrifice that is acceptable before Yahweh except it be in accordance with His “way,” His Word, His Truth. This requires a separation or setting apart from those things – whether in thought, word (teaching) or deed which may defile the Truth from those things which are deemed perfect, pure and delightful to our heavenly Father. This simple pattern, whereby both the good and the evil are illuminated and clearly recognized, may be witnessed throughout the balance of Scripture, written of course by the same author, Yahweh.

Abraham

In James 2:23, Abraham is called the friend of God, and so we would be interested in the record concerning the way in which he walked. The context of Abraham and Lot gives us a perspective on how Abraham stood apart from the rest.

Genesis 18:17-22: “And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.”

We learn from this account that the Elohim knew in advance, based upon his character, that Abraham would “*command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD*” and that “*Abraham stood yet before the LORD.*” This was in stark contrast to the way which Lot had chosen, a way which had become so corrupt and obnoxious to Deity that He saw fit to destroy the place entirely. It was quite an effort to extricate Lot from the situation preliminary to Sodom’s overthrow, which is a lesson on how difficult it may be to turn our brethren

back to the strait gate when they have wandered so far afield. The longer that time goes on, the more difficult the challenge. In the case of Lot, were it not for Divine intervention, we have no doubt that Lot and all his family would have perished, but Yahweh demonstrated great mercy and “*remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow*” (Gen. 19:29). It is our hope and desire that Yahweh will extend this same great mercy upon us in our time of need or trial when we seek for Him in repentance.

The Law of Moses

Let us now consider the Law of Moses, for there is no more precise code of laws given to man whereby the narrow and the broad ways are clearly illuminated. Paul says, “*I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*” (Rom. 7:7). This was a direct quote from the ten commandments, and it is given as a negative clause, i.e. “*Thou shalt not*”. How would we categorize the remaining nine commandments? For this exercise we have bolded those commandments which are given in the negative tense in Exodus 20:1-20: “*And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage....*”

- I. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.** *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:*
- II. **Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them,** *nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*
- III. **Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain;** *for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*
- IV. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*
- V. *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*
- VI. **Thou shalt not kill.**

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.”

From the above quote we see that eight out of ten commandments are given in the negative tense and nine out of ten contain negative clauses, and this is for an important reason: *“for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.”* This theme resonates throughout the prophets and the Gospel writings where the phrase “thou shalt not” appears 240 times – this is to keep the people of God on track by constantly reminding them of the deceitfulness of sin which occurred from the very beginning which, if unheeded, leads to destruction.

Psalms and Proverbs

One of the reasons why the Bible is constructed in such a manner as to illuminate both the positive and the negative is to elevate the fact that in contrast to the ways in which Yahweh delights for us to walk in (Psa. 119:1-6), Yahweh hates every false way (Psa. 119:104, 128, 163) and that these ways of man can be grouped in such a manner as to make no mistake for the hearer to know what the Creator has intended. Simply put, *“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov. 16:25). Consider the words of Solomon in Proverbs 6:9-23 which are designed to awaken the wayward man out of his stupor and to shake us out of our wits, if necessary, should we step out of the right way and into the wrong way.

“How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his

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fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy. These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

It may be asked, why were not those things which Yahweh takes delight in listed instead of this list of things which He hates? Wouldn't that have been much more pleasing to the hearers? The answer is simple. While the things which Yahweh takes delight in are innumerable [consider all the trees in the garden of which Adam and Eve were permitted to partake of], we can never delight Him so much as to simply avoid the pitfalls of the diablos, which are comparatively few in number [just as there was only one tree in the garden of which they were not to eat. Thus the "reproofs of instruction" regarding the comparatively much smaller list of things we should avoid "are the way of life." How merciful Yahweh is to us!

The Prophets

We will now briefly turn our attention to the prophets. The Hebrew Bible is unique from all other books in that its own prophets are the most critical of the people who scribed its inspired pages. Indeed, if today's standards were applied, these inspired writers of the past would be labelled as genocidal anti-Semites. Yet, if we but sample a few of their scathing writings we can see the pattern of a loving Father pleading for His disobedient and wayward children to return to the way of the tree of life.

Perhaps it goes without saying that the inspired prophets do not mince words, which is a characteristic of Yahweh and a characteristic of the unvarnished Truth. When man becomes wise in his own conceits and travels out of the way of truth and life, Yahweh's approach is simple: "Thou art the man!" Consider Isaiah's clear warning to his brethren who, despite his pleas to the contrary, were bent on following their own way, a wrong way.

Isaiah 28:15-18 *"Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our*

refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: 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: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.”

Isaiah does not appear to be very polite to his fellow Israelite, and, with the exception of a few righteous kings and a small remnant of faithful individuals, they would not heed his word. He tells them plainly, “*you have made a covenant with death.*” Such is the covenant that man makes when he strays out of the light and leans upon his own understanding. Jeremiah after him had a similar experience with his fellow countrymen:

Jeremiah 8:3-7 “And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts. Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.”

This was their path because they refused to turn away from false worship. They made offerings and burned incense to the queen of heaven, rather than to Yahweh (Jer. 44:17). Their priests, with their backs to the temple, worshiped the sun, the moon, and the constellations after a fashion of the Babylonians (Jer. 8:2; Ezek. 8:16). They imbibed in the immoral rites of Asherah and passed their unwanted children through the fire of Molech (Jer. 32:35). While these things sound unconscionable, they do have their modern counterparts in the worship of the world.

- Colossians 3:5-10 *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, **which is idolatry:** For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time,*

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when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:”

- Ephesians 4:17-32 *“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”*

Now, while the Apostolic writings do have their positives concerning our hope for the Kingdom to come, without question, they are still well seasoned with stern warning and exhortation against the “broad way” as we can see from the above passages. We know that the balance of Paul’s writings in particular also emphasize a need for separation from the leavening influence of sin – doctrinally and morally.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Again, there is no mistaking the way of life through the strait gate versus the evil and broad way to destruction.

To summarize our thoughts on the parable of the strait gate, the wisdom of God is in the words of the prophets and apostolic writers in their revelation of the Truth

in all aspects, and this is why the authors of the *Unamended Christadelphian Statement of Faith* also believed that it was necessary to include matters of concern in negative clauses following a positive affirmation of faith. Specifically, there are listed thirty-five “doctrines to be rejected” in the BUSF. These were included because it became necessary to point out specific beliefs that were not consistent with the Truth as a whole. For example, “*that man can be saved by morality and sincerity without the Gospel.*” There were then, as there are now, those who, while believing all the positive clauses, were also insisting on certain crotchets or bringing in heresies that could not be accepted.

Since that time other matters of concern that reach to the very foundations of our understanding of the Truth have arisen, and some ecclesias, gatherings and Bible Schools have likewise found it necessary to elucidate these areas of concern. For example, this writer’s home ecclesia has identified and listed an additional fifteen doctrines to be rejected in our ecclesial fellowship statement due to false beliefs within the Christadelphian Community which we recognize to be incompatible with the Truth.* It is the opinion of this writer that if these matters are not carefully documented and agreed among us in some form or another, that we will not have bound up the fellowship wound with the salve of Truth, but will have left the wound wide open for future infection by those of the next generation who did not experience the battles for truth that were fought throughout the past decade. Simply put, we are leaky vessels and cannot depend on memory. We cannot transfer our memory to the next generation by “*here say.*” We cannot hang our hat on “*well, everybody knows,*” nor can we be resolved that, “*well, that is all behind us now, let’s not dwell on it*” because such is not a vigilant approach to the Truth in keeping the way of the Strait Gate.

These false beliefs that were introduced into the community nearly a decade and a half ago have not gone away and, in fact, have become more widely accepted as the “new normal,” while new modes of wrong thinking are ever before us. Vigilance demands a change of course for those who want to move forward with an identity apart from the greater “Unamended Christadelphian Community,” so-called, because we are not a part of it, nor do we desire to be. The false doctrines to be rejected that we have referenced have been assimilated into the greater UA community in belief or fellowship. These teachings constitute the rudiments of the

* These addition “Doctrines to be Rejected” may be viewed at www.truthgleaner.org. Click on “*Old Paths Unamended Christadelphian statement of faith*” at the bottom of the page. See PART II, Section B.

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world and belong to the “broad way” which leads to destruction. Let us avoid it, and improve those who would take us down its silky-smooth path.

We must also remember that vigilance is one of the characteristics that the Spirit, in Paul’s letter to Timothy, deems necessary for anyone who teaches in the household (I Tim. 3:2). To be vigilant is the antithesis of a drowsy, live-and-let-live approach to the Truth which is apt to let the leaven back into the House and watch it grow unabated while the Truth becomes more and more unrecognizable by those claiming to be its stewards. This is not the narrow way, but clearly the broad.

Finally, our Lord stated plainly to his disciples *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6), and *“I am the door of the sheep”* (John 10:7). His way, which is the way of his Father, Yahweh, is the only way that matters in our pursuit of eternal life. There will be distractions and there will be adversaries in the way that we seek. There will be trials, tribulation and anguish at times, so much so that we might even lose sight of that way for a time, and this is very, very dangerous. Brethren, we are not invincible. We are corruptible creatures of the dust and without our Shepherd at our side, without our listening for his voice, not our own, and without our fellow brethren to encourage and strengthen us at every opportunity, we are likely to get lost on that strait and narrow way to the tree of life for which there is only one opportunity to reach. May we each take hold of these great truths that we have before us, yes, but we must also heed the warnings, as those who enter in through the strait gate will not only be hearers of the Word, but doers of it as well.

Philippians 1:27-30 *“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”*

Al Bryan



"BLASPHEMY" AND "NAMES OF BLASPHEMY"



The following article was written by Brother John Thomas and was published in the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, April, 1857, Volume VII, No. 4, pages 73-82. The reprinted section below is about half of the original article. The second section was named "The Blasphemy of the Churches". We may reprint the second section in a later Sanctuary Keeper magazine. In the original article, Brother Thomas printed the Memorial name of God as "Jehovah". In later writings, he started using the Memorial name of "Yahweh". In the article below, we changed the Memorial name from the original printing from Jehovah to Yahweh. For over 160 years, Christadelphians have consistently taught and believed in the promises made to Abraham. In these latter days of Gentile times, we see that Brother Thomas' comments from over 160 years ago are still as scripturally correct today as they were when he wrote them. - B. Henderson

BLASPHEMY SCRIPTURALLY DEFINED

"I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given to us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have spoken great things against me, and have multiplied your words against me; I have heard them" (Ezek. 35:12-13).

In the above passage of Ezekiel's prophecy the word "blasphemies" in the original text is "neahtzoth", reproaches, contumelies[†] or, in the words of the prophet, "great things spoken with the mouth against" an object. In the Greek, "neahtzoth" is expressed by the noun "blasphemiai", which the English or Anglo-Saxon reader will readily perceive is the anglicized word "blasphemies" in its Greek dress. It is derived from the verb "blasphemeo", which is itself derived from the

[†] From Webster Online Dictionary - harsh language or treatment arising from haughtiness and contempt— BH

BLASPHEMY

phrase “blaptein ten phemen”, to injure the reputation or fame of any object; which, if undeservedly done, is to calumniate, rail against, revile, reproach it, etc.

In scripture the objects of blasphemy are various, such as “God, His name, His tabernacle, them that dwell in the heaven”, the Jews, the mountains of Israel, the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of God, the word of God, the sanctified of the Father, the king of Israel. The following passages will sufficiently establish this. In Rev. 13:5-6 it is said that a mouth was given to the Gentile Beast, or System of Powers, “speaking great things and blasphemies. And he opened his mouth (papal) in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name and His tabernacle and those dwelling in the heaven”; that is, to the injury of the reputation of all these in the estimation of society.

“The Jews” are blasphemed by pretenders to that honourable community who cannot establish their claim to citizenship in the commonwealth of Israel. Thus in Rev. 2:9, the king of the Jews says, *“I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan”*: and in chapter 3:9, he styles them liars. The text at the head of this article shows that the mountains of Israel may be blasphemed, and that in blaspheming them Yahweh is Himself blasphemed.

Mark testifies to the Holy Spirit being an object of blasphemy in his day, in 3:29,30; and Paul exhorts or commands that Christians, who are servants and wives, be respectful and obedient to their masters and husbands, that the name, doctrine and word of God be not blasphemed (1 Tim. 6: 1; Titus 2:5).

To blaspheme is, therefore, in a scriptural sense, to bring divine things into disrepute; so that whatever words or doings tend to, or really do accomplish this, are blasphemies.

The punishment of blasphemy, by divine law, is death. *“He that blasphemeth the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death, as well the stranger as he that is born in the land”* (Lev. 24:16).

For men to say they are Jews, while yet they are not, is blasphemy, because it is a lie, whether they intend to lie or not. The intention does not alter the fact. Lying is the hypostasis or substance of blasphemy; for no good thing can be injured by the truth. When Gentiles, who are neither Jews outwardly nor inwardly, pretend to be Jews, they calumniate that society of which the King of Jews is the chief; and in so doing they calumniate or blaspheme him; the change of object from the less to the greater only enhances its iniquity. Verbal and practical lying are both mortal sins; but their iniquity is aggravated when the lie is against God, His name, and His doctrine or word. Practical lying is profession contradicted by practice. Thus, *“If we say we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the*

truth". *"If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar"* (1 John 1:6; 4:20), and, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"*. (John 14:15) for *"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you"* (John 15:14). Thus, the truth of men's professions is made to turn upon the conformity of their actions to the words of God. When those actions are a denial of His doctrine or word they make God a liar, so far as their influence extends. If their words and actions agree, and both give the lie to God or His word, which is the same thing, though less hypocritical, they are not less impious; and the impiety is itself blasphemy.

No greater offence can be committed against God than not to believe what He has promised. The reason of this, is because he, "HAS MAGNIFIED HIS WORD ABOVE ALL HIS NAME"; (Ps. 138:2) and not to believe that word is to treat Him as a liar, which is blasphemy; and *"he that blasphemeth the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death"*, (Lev. 24:16) whether Gentile or Jew; this is the reason why it is decreed that *"he who believeth not (the gospel) shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:16). When we do not believe we walk in darkness and walking in darkness, or unbelief, we do not the truth; for in relation to the truth no man can walk in the light of what he does not see, or do that in which he does not believe.

There is another form of lying or blasphemy against God which is brought out in the text from Ezekiel. It is this; If men in their ignorance or impiety affirm a thing, which in its logical or practical bearing contravenes the promises of Yahweh, they blaspheme, or speak evil of the subjects of those promises; and in so doing speak words against, or blasphemies against the promiser.

If the reader peruse Ezekiel 35 in the light of God's covenanted promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and their seed, he cannot, we think, fail readily to perceive the truth of our statement. In that writing, Mount Seir, the seat of Edom's dominion, is addressed as a Power having perpetual hatred against the descendants of Jacob; rejoicing in their calamities, and in actual occupation of their country, commonly styled THE HOLY LAND. While thus possessed of Palestine as the fruit of conquest, Seir is represented as saying of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, *"These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it though Yahweh were there"*. (Ezek. 35:10) Upon this the prophet forewarns them that Idumea shall be recompensed according to its hatred of Israel, who shall be delivered after Idumea is destroyed; *"I will make myself known among Israel when I have judged thee, O Mount Seir, saith Yahweh; and thou shalt know that I am Yahweh, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume; thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me; I have heard them"* (Ezek.35:11-13).

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The reader will observe that Yahweh regards blasphemies, or false statements, concerning the destiny of the mountains of Israel, as great words or boastings against Himself. The Idumean Seir declares that those mountains, even though Yahweh were there, would never belong to Israel, but to Edom; for it says, *"they are mine, and we will possess it though the I -- Shall -- Be were there"* (Ezek. 35:10). But why is this declaration a blasphemy against the Holy Land? And why, if a blasphemy against that land, is it a boast and multiplication of words against Yahweh? Because it states falsely the destiny of Palestine. At present the two nations of Israel and Judah, and their special divisions of the Holy Land, are in the hands of Esau, Edom, or Idumea, synonyms of the power that in the latter days inherits the hatred of Isaac's eldest son against Jacob; *"for"*, says Adonai Yahweh (the Old Testament title rendered Lord Jesus in the New), *"when the whole earth rejoices I will make thee desolate. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the House of Israel because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee; thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it"* (Ezek. 35:14-15).

Idumea, then, represents a power to be made desolate when the whole earth rejoices with God's people, Israel, as Moses has predicted. Idumea now triumphs over Israel and their land, and blasphemes them both; the Idumeans decree that Judah's and Israel's two territories shall for ever constitute integral parts of the Ottoman Empire (that is, in 1857), and, consequently, that the two nations or twelve tribes of Jacob shall never constitute one independent kingdom and nation in the land; this is pronouncing a sore evil against Israel and their native mountains; but being a lie against their destiny it is a blasphemy against them all.

But why are these blasphemies against the Jews and their inheritance, boastings or calumnies against Yahweh? Because, if it should so happen that Idumea, in this controversy concerning Zion, were to establish its power in the Holy Land, to the final exclusion and suppression of the kingdom and throne of David there, it would make the promises of Yahweh, which He has sworn by His own life and holiness to fulfill, of none effect. It is impossible that such a result should come to pass; but to attempt to establish it, or to declare such a result, or to believe the declaration, is equivalent to denying and rejecting the contrary, and in effect declaring that Yahweh is a deceiver and a liar.

Now let us see what Yahweh has said -- whether He has given the inheritance to Esau or to Jacob. Read the next chapter of Ezekiel; this portion of his prophecy contains a testimony of God in direct opposition to the blasphemies of the Idumean nations, concerning Israel and their mountains; the prophecy is addressed to these -- a prophecy of good things. *"Because, saith Adonai Yahweh, the enemy* (a term which stands for the Desolater who triumphs while the land enjoys its Sabbaths)

hath said against you, Aha! even the ancient high places are ours in possession" -- thus they boast at this day -- "therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith Adonai Yahweh, Because they have made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession to the residue of the nations, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people; therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the words of Adonai Yahweh: Thus saith Adonai Yahweh to the mountains and to the hills, to the lowlands and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and a derision to the residue of the nations that are round about: therefore thus saith Adonai Yahweh: Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the nations (that "residue" to be stamped with the feet of the fourth beast -- Dan. 7: 19), and against all Idumea which have appointed my land for their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the lowlands and to the valleys, Thus saith Adonai Yahweh, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the nations; therefore thus saith Adonai Yahweh; I have lifted up my hand (that is, I have sworn), surely the nations that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel, for they are at hand to come. For behold, I am for you, and will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown; and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded; and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit; and I will settle you after your old estates, and do better for you than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I (Adonai) am the I-SHALL- BE. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them; thus saith Adonai Yahweh, Because they say unto thee, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; therefore thou shalt devour men no more, nor cause thy nations to fall any more; neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the nations any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith Adonai Yahweh" (Ezek. 36:1,2-15).

Here is a time indicated which has manifestly not come; for the Jews and their country are still subject to all these things, which at a "set time" (Psa. 102:13) of their history shall be no more.

There is another testimony in Ezekiel which convicts "the talkers" (Ezek. 36:3) of the Gentiles of blasphemy against the two nations and their two territories which

they claim for themselves, and of calumny against God. In chap. 37:21-28, Adonai Yahweh saith, *"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whither they be gone, and I will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be to them for Elohim. And David my servant (David II) shall be king over them, and they all (the twelve tribes) shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children during the age (ad-olam); and my servant David shall be prince over them for the age (le-alam); moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them and multiply them, and I will set my temple in the midst of them for the age (le-olam). My dwelling place also shall be with them: yea, I will be to them for Elohim, and they shall be to me for a people. And the Gentiles shall know that I, Yahweh, do sanctify Israel, when my temple shall be in the midst of them for the age (le-olam)."*

From these testimonies, then, we learn that the following things are decreed:

1. That "the two countries", or territories of the Holy Land formerly occupied by the "two nations" of the Jews, that is, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes and the kingdom of Judah, are to be exalted to a better condition than when possessed by the Israelites in the beginning;
2. That the Gentile Power in possession of Adonai Yahweh's land is to be finally dispossessed when He makes himself known among Israel's tribes;
3. That "all the house of Israel, even all of it" are to take possession of the land, and to be settled upon its mountains, and hills, and lowlands, and valleys, and desolate wastes, and forsaken cities, after the old estates of their realm, in peace, plenty, security, and great perpetual prosperity;
4. That the nations and kingdoms of Israel and Judah shall be one united nation and kingdom upon the mountains of Israel; so that *"Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim"* any more: but as a bird of prey, *"they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west (the western powers); they shall spoil them in the east together; they shall*

lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa. 11 :13,14);

5. That when finally resettled in Adonai Yahweh's land (his, by covenant made with Abraham and his seed, "who is the Christ", (Gal. 3: 16) says Paul), the whole twelve tribes will be under one supreme head or king;
6. That they will then be a purified and sanctified people - "*they shall defile themselves no more with any of their transgressions*"; (Ezek. 37:23) this implies that all their past national offences will have been blotted out;
7. That their Shepherd-King will be a David, and immortal; and reign over them during the age of their national glory, however long its continuance may be predetermined by Yahweh (ad-olam);
8. That all these benefits will be guaranteed to the nation by the "covenant of the age"; styled also the "covenant of peace" (berith shalom, berith olam); the Constitution of the Kingdom, in the phraseology of the Gentiles; (Ezek. 37:26)
9. That during the age, and for the purposes thereof, a Temple will be placed in the midst of the nation. Ezekiel described it, chapters 40-42. The mystery of the temple is set forth by Paul, Peter and John;
10. That Adonai Yahweh, Israel's Shepherd-King, will dwell with them, and be to them for Elohim, or Gods – for all the saints or future kings and priests of Israel and the nations are constitutionally or federally "in him"; HE is for Gods.

Now, these ten items, deduced from the foregoing testimonies, are the intelligible and obvious purpose of Yahweh, with respect to Canaan and its heirs national. No language could have been devised to make His intentions plainer or more easy to be understood. He has not said that these things may come to pass if fortuitous circumstances favour their development; but He has declared that He will create the situation that shall necessitate the results; and that He will accomplish, them, not for the sake of the generation of Israel existing at, the crisis but for their fathers' sake, on whose account they are beloved, and for the honour of His own character. *"I have pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel have profaned among the nations whither they went; therefore say unto the house of Israel: Thus saith Adonai Yahweh; I do not for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the nations whither ye went. And I will sanctify My GREAT NAME which was profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the Yahweh, saith Adonai Yahweh, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will*

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take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (Ezek. 36:21- 24).

How easy to be understood, how devoid of mystification! Is it not astonishing that any man professing to believe and study the scriptures should affirm that God has utterly and forever cast off the Jews; that there will be no restoration of them to Palestine; and that God has no more use for them than for the gypsies! To affirm this is to speak blasphemies, or lies, against the mountains and people of Israel; and in so doing to speak great things against God with the mouth, and to multiply words against Him. This is the wickedness of all the children of Esau. Nationally they seize upon Jacob's inheritance, slay his seed with the sword, and proclaim the independence and integrity of a dominion that incorporates the land of Adonai Yahweh and His people in its domains. *"These two nations and these two territories",* say they, *"shall be mine, and we will possess it though Yahweh were there",* (Ezek. 35:10) *"they are laid desolate, they are given to us to consume".* (Ezek. 35: 12) Individually, they endorse the truth of this; they preach it from their "sacred desks"; they publish it in their creeds; ignoring Israel and Israel's land in all the plenitude and folly of their traditions. But the issue is briefly and simply this: If the doctrine of Esau's progeny be true, then the promises of Yahweh, covenanted with an oath, and confirmed by the blood of Adonai Yahweh, are a deceit and a bald imposition on the credulity of the Jewish nation and their friends. **TO AFFIRM THE DOCTRINE OF ESAU IS TO GIVE THE LIE TO GOD.**

But with the apostles, we say, *"Let God be true, but every man a liar; as is written, That thou mightest overcome when thou art judged".* [Rom. 3:4] The sentence of God stands firm though over thirty-eight hundred years have elapsed since it was uttered -- *"The elder shall serve the younger"* (Gen. 25:23). Edom shall be subject to Jacob; therefore Edom shall not always triumph in the land. He that doctrinally reverses this decree belongs to the family of Esau, sets himself against the promises of God, and becomes the enemy of Jacob. Can the reader possibly have any difficulty in discerning this principle? We blaspheme God when we affirm the contrary of what He decrees. It is an oblique method of telling Him that He has not decreed the truth. It is taking sides against him in "THE CONTROVERSY OF ZION" (Isa. 34:8), a controversy to be decided in favor of them that believe truth.

This great controversy is that in reality defines the seeds -- the seed of the woman, and the seed of her enemy. The seed of the woman are all on the side of Zion. They believe all "the glorious things" that Yahweh hath spoken concerning her. They love Jerusalem, and rejoice in all the good Yahweh hath sworn to do unto her; while they repudiate with indignation all traditions which reduce the promises to a nullity. This is right in every view; for to make void the future glory of Zion is to

rob the faithful of their inheritance for "*Salvation*", saith Adonai Yahweh, "*is of the Jews*", [John 4:22] and when men are robbed of their rights, they do not feel very charitable towards the thieves.

All systems of religion, or forms of faith, are blasphemies or "abominations", which uphold dogmas subversive of the promises of Yahweh. Piety of disposition in the worshippers, or moral precepts commingled in their ethics, will not transform blasphemies or indignities into things worthy of God. His doctrine and word are blasphemed when they are brought into disrepute, and contempt is generated in men's minds respecting the things they set forth. This is characteristic of the thing called "orthodoxy" among the Gentiles; which assigns all the curses of God to the Jews, and all His blessings to their enemies. But all Gentilisms that do this, whether orthodox or heterodox, are blasphemies against God, His name, His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. They constitute the darkness of this world, and they who walk in them "walk in darkness", [1 John 1:6] and neither believe nor do the truth. Such, persons are very apt to "say they have fellowship with God", [1 John 1:6] because they appear to one another to be righteous in talking piety, and making long prayers; and because, under the influence of human applause, they "feel good", profess to be "at peace with God", and are on excellent terms with themselves. But it is easy to show that their peace with God and their conscience is all on one side.

John Thomas

DEFINITIONS

"Normalcy Bias" - *The natural inclination to underestimate and deny coming cataclysm or change based upon the delusion that things will continue as they always have been.*

Comment: As believers shortly before the return of Christ, do we suffer from "normalcy bias"? If not in the forefront of our minds, then by our continued actions that do not reflect the reality that things are about to change - certain change due to the fleeting nature of life itself or the continued unfolding of prophetic facts?

AN EXERCISE IN REASONING

1. As a person learns the Truth in gradual steps he increases in knowledge of the Scriptures.
2. Based on the theory that enlightenment brings resurrectional responsibility , then ALL potential believers are resurrectionally responsible BEFORE they come to the waters of baptism.
3. When a person voluntarily decides to accept the invitation to be baptized (although it is more of threat than an invitation with this theory), he is therefore baptized to avert the penalty of the second death, since he is already assured of a resurrection.
4. You are puzzled by the verse in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." You inquire about a person's Adamic condemnation, is it not cancelled or atoned for at baptism? The answer, if given in the affirmative, would negate the theory of resurrection having already attached to this person, so the only answer remaining is "No, the relationship has not changed; one does not get out of Adam until he is immortalized."
5. Well, if baptism does not release one from Adamic condemnation, what does it do for you? With this theory, it remits only personal sins committed by the sinner, nothing else.
6. Then, with this theory, one is in Adam and in Christ at the same time? That's the way it comes out.
7. But what about infants who die before committing any sins, is there a law that holds them in the grave? Oh, sure, that is not Adamic condemnation, it is the law of mortality.
8. Well, if the law of mortality holds the infant in the grave, and the baptized person is forgiven his personal sins only, how is it that the baptized person is not also held by the grave? You will have to figure that out on your own.

The Sanctuary-Keeper, January, 1986, p. 120

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The City of Consolation

WE ask our readers to open their Bible and read Luke 2:21-32. In this reading, we learn of a just and devout elderly man in Jerusalem who was very familiar with the promises of the Saviour that can be found in the Word of God. He took the young babe Jesus in his arms and proclaimed that he had seen the salvation from Him who would bring glory to Israel and enlightenment to the Gentiles. In verse 25, we are told that he was waiting for the consolation of Israel. This consolation of Israel is the phrase that we wish to review.

The Hebrew word for “consolation” is *paraklēsis*. This word is translated as consolation – 14 times; exhortation – 8 times; comfort – 6 times and entreaty – 1 time. Strong’s definition is “imploration (beseeching); hortation (aiming to exhort); solace”. It is the aspect of comfort, solace and consolation that we wish to focus upon. It is similar in meaning, although different in purpose, to the word that is translated as Comforter in John 14:16.



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Simeon was waiting for the fulfillment of all aspects of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. His expectation of the Messiah at that time in history was the focal point of his life. After seeing and understanding that this young baby would grow up to be that prophet and teacher of salvation, he was ready for God to take his breath away. He saw that this babe would be the one in whom atonement would be accomplished. He saw in vision that this individual would be the one in whom Yahweh would make all nations blessed in the Abrahamic promises. In the passage in Luke, we see that Simeon was quoting from Isaiah 42:6-7. In the words of that prophet, we see the great comfort that Yahweh has offered in His mercy to those who choose to join into His righteousness. Christ literally healed the blind and brought prisoners out of the prison of the grave during His ministry. The antitype provided even more comfort than that which was offered by God through Christ. The spiritual blindness of the Jews would be healed in regard to the need of a suffering Saviour; a necessary requirement prior to the full manifestation of the Lion out of the tribe of Judah. The consolation provided through Christ's atoning work accomplished at His death cured the curse of the Adamic condemnation and cleansed the sin nature of those who were and would be truly in covenant with Him and His Father. His death confirmed the covenants of old. What joy this aged man must have felt when He recognized God's son.

Prior to one being consoled or comforted, there must be a previous state of anguish, grief and affliction. This was and still is the state of natural Israel; but it is also the state of spiritual Israel as long as we are shackled with the restraints of mortal flesh. The covenanted hope was and is the cure for the natural separation between God and man. There is still that old man of the flesh that we cannot completely overcome. Romans 7:24 – *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* The relief of these conditions is what Simeon was waiting for and should be what we also wait for.

There are many aspects of the comfort, healing and consolation of natural and spiritual Israel that are taught in God's Holy Word. We would like to look at a very important component of this beautiful and wonderful doctrine of God.

After overcoming the temptations as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, we are told in verses 12-16, that Jesus left the city of Nazareth, departed into the region of Galilee and came and dwelt in the city of Capernaum. The meaning of “Capernaum” is “the village of comfort”. It was definitely not by accident that Christ chose this city for His headquarters. What more appropriate place than “the village of comfort” could be chosen, for He would bring consolation to Israel.

This move was in fulfillment of the words of Isaiah 9:1-2. *“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted*

the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” These verses give us a beautiful picture of imparted knowledge, wisdom and understanding as well as the wonders of the atonement, redemption and salvation process.

In Matthew 9:1, we are told that he crossed the sea (of Galilee) and entered into his own city. This was very probably the city of Capernaum. These verses teach us that Christ left his native city of Nazareth and moved to the city of Capernaum, where he established His headquarters. We are taught in Luke 4:14-15, that after the 40 days of His temptations that He came into the region of Galilee, where Capernaum is located, and taught in their synagogues. Luke 4:16, states that he then returned to Nazareth. Christ understood that the people of Nazareth would ask Him to perform the same miracles in their city that He had performed in Capernaum. He told them – *“that no prophet is accepted in his own country”*. His mission was to teach the gospel of the atonement and the coming kingdom. These doctrines would be confirmed by the miracles that He, the Son of God, would perform. He knew that this could not be done in His native city for even His family would turn against Him. Therefore, He had to find another geographic location that would be the central point from which His teachings would be disbursed throughout Israel. The place that He chose was the city of Capernaum, the city of consolation. We need to remember that Capernaum was a microcosm for the entire nation. Whatever sermons were taught, doctrines discussed and miracles performed in this city would be applicable on a larger scale to the entire nation.

It is interesting that in the transfer of home cities, we see a situation similar to the example of Abraham. Christ and Abraham were both called out of their native cities and brought into a place where God’s Plan and Purpose would be manifested; Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Israel and Christ from Nazareth to Capernaum. The prophetic import of Genesis 12:1-3 is revisited in this transference of the dwelling places of Christ.

Why Capernaum? What was so special about this city? Let us look at the geographic location of this chosen city. It is situated on the north western shore of the Sea of Galilee. This portion of land was included in the land allotted to the tribe of Naphtali. It is interesting to note the blessing that Jacob gave to Naphtali in Genesis 49:21. According to the KJV, Jacob states that Naphtali was *“like a hind let loose and he giveth goodly words”*. The meaning of the name Naphtali is wrestling. We learn in our readings of the gospel account that this was the area in which Jesus did much of His wrestling with the unbelief of His countrymen. The phrase *“like a*

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hind let loose” is interpreted in two different ways depending on how the Hebrew word for “hind” is translated. One interpretation references the swiftness of the hind, a female deer, and the second one translates this word as a tree trunk. The latter refers to the strength and protection afforded by a spreading tree. Both of these meanings are appropriate as applied to the home city of the swift and powerful spreading of the Gospel message at the time of the first Advent of Christ. The last portion of Genesis 49:21 brings home a very important principle. It was in the region of this tribal allotment that *“goodly words shall go forth”*. This was historically brought about at the first Advent through the words and works of Christ during His life in and around the region of Capernaum. These actions were just a forerunner of the tremendous blessings that would eventually come upon Israel as Isaiah continues to elaborate in Isaiah 9:1-2:

“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

Isaiah states that a great light would be seen in that area of Naphtali. In Luke 2:32, the aged man, Simeon, rejoices that this light had been sent by God. So, the transfer of Christ’s home city from Nazareth to Capernaum was a fulfillment of prophecies of days gone by.

If we look at a map of Capernaum in the days of Jesus, we see another very important feature of this city. There was a major Roman road running west from Damascus through Capernaum which ultimately connected with the main coastal road by the sea that would take the traveler down into Egypt. This area was probably well traveled and would present an opportunity for believers to take the Gospel message to their far away villages. There was also a significant amount of commercial activity passing through Capernaum on the route between the Mediterranean coast and Damascus. Some commentators have estimated the population at this time in history to be no greater than 1500 people. There must have been a very prominent Jewish presence in the city as we know that the Scriptures indicate that Christ taught many times in the Jewish synagogue.

Most commentators indicate that this small village was established in the second century before Christ. Of course, this town, sitting as it did on the shores of a large body of water, would have been known for its commercial fishing. Commentators have also suggested that this area would have been a fertile area known for its agriculture. We find that Jesus uses both of these commercial activities as the basis

for many of the parables that He taught in this area. Josephus makes this comment about this city: *“Alongside Lake Gennesaret is a stretch of country with the same name, wonderful in its characteristics and in its beauty. [...] for apart from the temperate atmosphere it is watered by a spring with great fertilizing power, known locally as Capernaum.”* Jesus also spoke of the antitypical life giving springs of the Gospel message.

Another interesting aspect of this seaside city was that it was located between the governed territories of Herod Antipas and Phillip. As we learn from Mark 6:24-25, they were brothers, each governing one fourth of the Roman province. Sitting on the border between the lands of these governors, it was necessary to be provided with a customs house and a military guard. We read in Matthew 9:9 that Matthew was called from his place of sitting at the receipt of customs. The taxes would probably have been levied on the movement of goods through the area and the local fishing industry. We also read in Matthew 8:5-13 of the healing of the centurion’s servant. This centurion would have been a professional commander of the Roman army stationed in that area.

Let us take a look at the scriptural importance of the teachings and miracles performed in or near this City of Consolation.

• **Calling and selection of Disciples:**

- Specifically called Peter, Andrew, James, John -. Mark 1:16-20
- Called Matthew – Matthew 9:9
- Goes up into a mountain, and calls and ordains twelve disciples in Galilee (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-19).

• **Multiple healings:**

- Heals a demoniac at Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37).
- Heals Peter’s mother-in-law at Capernaum (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41).
- Heals many sicknesses and demoniacs in Capernaum (Mark 1:32)
- Heals a leper in Galilee (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16).
- Heals a paralytic at Capernaum (Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26).
- Heals a man having a withered hand at Capernaum (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11).
- Heals the servant of the centurion near Capernaum (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).

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- Withdraws from Capernaum to the Sea of Galilee, where he heals many (Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12).
- Raises to life the daughter of Jairus, and heals the woman who has the issue of blood at Capernaum (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56).
- Heals two blind men, and casts out a demon who causes muteness at Capernaum (Matthew 9:27-34).
- **Major doctrinal teachings originating from area:**
 - Defines the law of the Sabbath on the occasion of his disciples plucking the ears of grain at Capernaum (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5).
 - Delivers the "Sermon on the Mount" in Galilee (Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:20-49).
 - Eats with tax collectors and sinners, and discourses on fasting at Capernaum (Matthew 9:10-17; Mark 2:15-22; Luke 5:29-39).
 - Cautions his disciples against the leaven of hypocrisy at the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 16:4-12; Mark 8:13-21)
 - Instructed Peter to get tribute money from the mouth of a fish (Matthew 17:24-27)
 - Discourse on the Bread of life (John 6:24-59)
- **Other important activities in this area:**
 - Anointed by a sinful woman at Capernaum (Luke 7:36-50),
 - Walks on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:22-36; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21).
 - Disciples forsake him at Capernaum (John 6:66-71)

This little sea town and the surrounding areas witnessed more miracles and were the recipients of more religious discourses than any other geographic area in the life of the ministry of Jesus. Notice Jesus' reference to all of His miraculous works in His indictment of Capernaum in Matthew 11:23 – *“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day”*.

Surely, this place along with the nation as a whole should have been teeming with disciples who were willing to follow the teachings of this mighty Man of God. Early in His ministry, Christ told the Israelites at Jerusalem that the proof that He was sent from the Father could be found in the works that His Father gave Him to do. In John 5:36, we read – *“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the*

works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me". These works and words performed and spoken in and around Capernaum were to impress upon Israel the grace of God and His Mercy and Truth as would be seen in His Son. Immanuel was finally amongst them. The majority failed to consider or recognize this outpouring of God's love. He was the Word made flesh. The Faithful and True witness of God's Plan and Purpose. He spoke with much more authority than any of the scribes and Pharisees. He was the true light that brought vision to the blurred eyesight of the wayward Jew and the ignorant Gentile. Many of the spiritually blinded individuals of that day rejected Him and had nothing to do with Him, so God, as His Plan and purpose required, quenched that life giving light, leaving Israel to dwell in centuries of darkness until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled and Israel will finally be able to join in the blessings of the consolation of Israel.

Comparison with the nation of Israel

We would now like to look at the comparisons between the city of Capernaum and the nation of Israel. We ask our readers to read Mark 1:21-28. Notice the phrases – "*What have we to do with thee*" and "*Art thou come to destroy us?*" We find similar comments made to Christ by the leaders of Israel in many passages. For example, in Mark 3:6 – "*And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him*". This passage along with every one that references the Pharisees shows their hatred of Him and their continual refusal to have anything to do with Him. Matthew 21:15 reads: "*And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased*". Verses 45-46 of the same chapter state: "*And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet*". They knew that His parables were being directed at them. This is why they sought to destroy Him. They were afraid that their prestige and wealth would be ignored as the fame of Christ rose and spread throughout the land. The Jewish leaders feared Christ because of His miraculous works and because of His condemnations upon them. The common people mistakenly wanted Christ to destroy those who were oppressing the everyday Jews.

Let us now read Matthew 11:23-24: "*And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee*". These verses present the prophecy of the downfall of

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Capernaum. These comments of Jesus were similar to that pronounced against the nation as a whole. The city, like the entire nation, would be destroyed and brought to ruins. Capernaum, because it had ignored the righteousness of Christ, who was the complete manifestation of His Father, would be brought down to eternal death. Notice the comparisons to the Israeli leaders in Matthew 23. After a pronouncement of eight woes on these evil and wicked leaders, He makes this indictment against that generation. Matthew 23:33-38:



The Siege of Jerusalem

“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”. We know that the events of 70 AD were the fulfillment of the destruction of Jerusalem, the downfall of the Mosaic system and the dispersion of the Jews.

All of these events brings us back to the initial phrase that we chose for this exhortation; “The consolation of Israel”. The time is nigh approaching when God’s comfort and consolation will be manifested throughout the world. The set time to favor Zion is not too distant in the future. We can almost visualize that Day through the continual out-workings of God’s dealings with the nations of the world. Are we like the aged man Simeon, holding Christ in our arms, faithfully waiting for that great and mighty day to appear? He came from outside the confines of the

Temple into the Temple and he was blessed by God to see the Lord's Christ. Spiritual Israel has also come out of the confines of the world and has come into the Temple of God, the ecclesia in this age. Does this new life in Christ bring us peace and comfort and consolation and solace in our lives? Those in Christ have left Nazareth, the despised village – representing the old man Adam and are dwelling in Capernaum – the city of consolation. We rejoice that God is now our place of refuge, a very present help in time of trouble. In our wars with our flesh, we find the comfort that God has provided through His Son as our mediator, as our example and as our soon coming King and spiritual husband. As we complete our daily self-examinations, we should remember the blessings that we enjoy. With every thought, every word, every action, every prayer, every period of study and for every time that we manifest agape love as well as for every time that we don't; there should be remembrance of that great light that God sent into the border of Naphtali in order that His great and goodly works might be manifested to those who associate themselves through covenant with God and His Son. Let us always hope and pray for that final consolation of both natural and spiritual Israel.

B. Henderson

The Resurrection

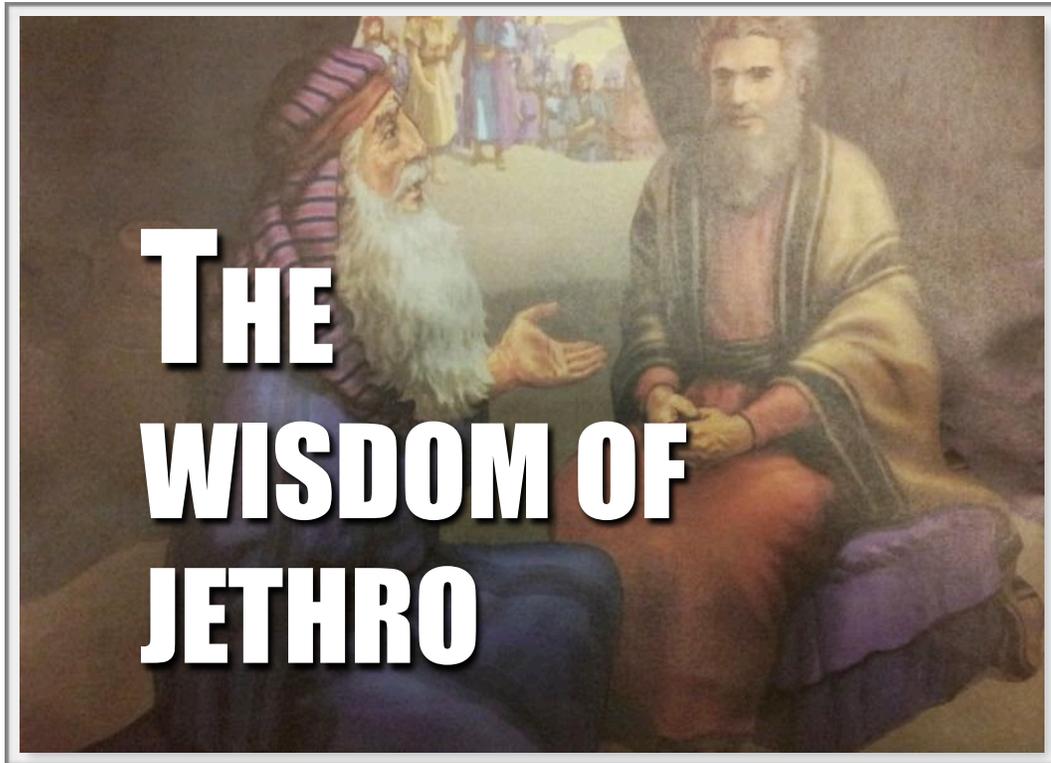
O mourn not for saints that are dead;
They but sleep in Jesus their Lord;
They'll wake when their glorified Head
Shall call by His powerful Word.

Though sleeping in dust of the earth,
They've been cover'd by Cov'nant blood;
Creation anew, or new birth,
Has saved them from death's fatal flood.

From Adam they passed into Christ,
Put off the old man with his deeds,
Died in Him who once sacrificed
His life to their death-stricken needs.

Rejoice, for the day is at hand,
When the dead in Christ shall arise,
To possess, if faithful, God's land,
With unending life as their prize.

John James Andrew



IN our last article you might remember that we looked at the full conversion of Jethro, the hospitable priest of Midian, as recorded in Exodus 18:1-3, 7-12. Here was a man who had long been a worshipper of El like his forefather Abraham. His interactions with Moses show us a man of great character, kindness and hospitality. Nonetheless, much like Apollos in the first century, he did not have perfect knowledge of the Truth until the events of Exodus 18 immediately following the Exodus from Egypt.

Indeed, Exodus 18 is an eye-opening chapter as it records Jethro's response to the news of Israel's salvation. Probably in great awe of the God of Israel, Jethro rejoiced for the goodness of Yahweh upon Israel in delivering them from the wicked Egyptians. He professed his belief in Yahweh above all the gods of the heathen, offered sacrifice as a token of Yahweh's redemptive work, and finally was welcomed into fellowship by Moses, Aaron and the elders through the breaking of bread. It truly is an amazing passage that is both a testament to Jethro's faith and an example to us of the proper pattern of repentance, atonement and fellowship.

We would like to pick up here with a consideration of The Wisdom of Jethro as seen through the Biblical narrative both in the short and long-term. Let's start by looking at Exodus 18:13-26:

“And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.”

In this set of verses we see that Jethro, only having been with Moses for a day or so, quickly and keenly recognized a problem within the camp. The key issue was that all of the people brought all of their problems, whether small or great, to Moses for his judgment in the matter. From morning to evening, Moses heard case after case after case. Some might have been minor such as a neighborly dispute over an ox on the loose, while others may have been major such as when a man suspected his wife of adultery. In any case, this constant bombardment – which Jethro recognized on his very first day with his son-in-law – was one that was unsustainable by Moses as leader of the people.

Before looking into Jethro's advice to Moses, we would like to zero in on one

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critical point in verse 23: *“If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace”*. Here we see that Jethro qualified his advice by saying that Moses should proceed only if God made his advice into a command. Since Moses subsequently followed this advice, we should have no doubt that Yahweh approved of the Wisdom of Jethro and thus here is a Divine Standard from which we can learn. This is not just a record of an opinion of an elderly statesman of the Bible, but instead is a divinely approved pattern of organization by which all things could be done decently and in order. We too should follow this command in our own ecclesial business: *“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all ecclesias of the saints... Let all things be done decently and in order”* (1 Corinthians 14:33,40).

Returning to Exodus, we see that Jethro first suggested that the people be taught Divine Law. Little did Jethro know at the time, but shortly thereafter the children of Israel would receive the Law of God through Moses as recorded in Exodus 19 when Moses went up into the mount. And what was the purpose of this Law? *“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Galatians 3:22-24). We see here that the Law was a schoolmaster to bring the people to Christ. A schoolmaster then is one that teaches, that separates right from wrong, good from evil, righteousness from sin. This is exactly what the Law of Moses did as described in Romans 3:19-20 where we read that *“by the Law is the knowledge of sin.”*

Having a Law in Moses' day was thus the first step towards ecclesial organization. To use a term that we read in Galatians 3, a schoolmaster was exactly what was needed to sort out the confusion in the camp. The Israelites had been long subjected to Egyptian Law and it is evident that many had lost the whole Truth of Yahweh their God. They needed a schoolmaster, a teacher, to show them the way to salvation. And while the Law could not bring salvation in and of itself, what was the character of this Law, or how could it be described? Romans 7:12 says it was *“holy, and just, and good”*.

What about our time? Certainly the Law of Moses has been fulfilled in Christ Jesus and the carnal ordinances have been swept away long ago in A.D. 70. Nonetheless, the wisdom of Jethro shows that for any ecclesia to function appropriately, it must be ruled by law. So what Law do we follow? The Law of Christ

(see Galatians 6:2). Yes, ecclesias of today fall under the Law of Christ, a self-sacrificing law that is detailed throughout the New Testament Scriptures and best summarized by Jesus himself in Matthew 22:35-40: *“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*

We see here that in Jesus’ summary estimation, the entirety of this higher law is based out of the love of Yahweh first and the love of one’s neighbor or brethren second. Details are given in his Sermon on the Mount and many other Scriptures which are a subject for another day. Of course all of our beliefs under the Law of Christ are well summed up for us in the Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith including the Doctrines to be Rejected and the Commandments of Christ. Just as the Law of Moses served as a document detailing acceptable beliefs and worship, binding together God’s children, so too does our Statement of Faith serve a similar purpose in our day. If we as an ecclesia do not have a law to bind us, we like Israel will all go our own way.

Returning to the advice of Jethro in Exodus, let’s read Exodus 18:21-22: *“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.”* In these verses we see that Jethro recommends a division of labor to be coupled with the Divine Law. Moses was unable to bare every single case, small and great, from dawn until dusk. No mortal man could possibly endure such constant need without breaking down. Therefore, Jethro recommends a division of rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. They would be judges for the people with the harder judgments being passed up the line and, as needed, even to Moses at the top.

Some might be quick to say that this was an early example of ecclesial democracy, but we do not believe such an argument holds water. These rulers *were appointed, not elected* for the purpose. These rulers also were not being given an equal say or “vote”, but rather were divided into different roles, with ranks of increasing weight responsibility up the chain of judgment with Moses (guided by

Yahweh) having the ultimate authority at the top. Lastly, these rulers were simply enforcers of the Law of Yahweh through Moses. They had no say in the Law itself or the ability to amend it in any way, small or great. They were to stick to God's law as the supreme authority in all things. No, this was not a democracy, but rather a Divine organization such that the practical daily matters could be dealt with decently and in order. We believe that this system, recommended by the wisdom of Jethro and divinely endorsed, became a pattern that is seen again and again throughout Biblical history including David's Kingdom and the first century ecclesia; and yes, it even has applicability for our ecclesias of these latter days. These things were written for our learning, for our examples, and we would be foolish to relegate them to an interesting blip in the historical record of Israel.

Qualities of leadership

As we look deeper into this passage, it is important to note that the positions of rulership that Jethro recommended were not given to all men. Instead, there were certain qualifications that had to be met: *"Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens"* (Exodus 18:21). In this verse we see that the elders of Israel were to be God-fearing, able men of the Truth, hating covetousness. The job was not for everyone and there had to be a high standard of character for these positions.

The New Testament, of course, confirms and expands the list of characteristics required for ecclesial leadership as evidenced in I Timothy 3:1-13: *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the ecclesia of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon*

well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Centuries after the death of Jethro, we see in these verses the inspired instruction of the Apostle Paul regarding ecclesial leadership in his day as well as in our own. You might say that these verses are even more critical today in the absence of inspired Apostles or leaders with Holy Spirit gifts. Indeed, this passage, as well as a similar one in Titus 1, are our inspired guides for the ecclesia in 2018 and we would be fools to ignore them. So let’s break this passage down a bit more. In these verses we see the Apostle Paul define two groups of brethren within the ecclesia; the bishops and the deacons. We personally do not care for the Catholicized translation but will use these terms for the time being.

So, first things first, the word “*bishop*” in the Greek can be translated “*inspection*” or “*superintendance*” and it is translated as “*overseers*” in Acts 20:28. Indeed, ecclesial elders fulfill these roles – they are the ecclesial superintendants (or secretaries and serving brethren), inspectors of the flock, and overseers of all ecclesial matters. This is a high and lofty calling with great responsibility and is a duty not to be taken lightly. Therefore, Paul gives a long list of characteristics which should be used to define who is an elder and who is not. Age certainly has something to do with it as we will see shortly, but not all older brethren fit the mold of a true elder who should be in the role of an ecclesial overseer by Paul’s inspired definition.

To learn more about the Scriptural role of a bishop, elder or overseer (for all three terms are interchangeable), let’s take a look at I Peter 5:1-5: “*The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”*

In the previous verses we see that it is the responsibility of the ecclesial elders to guide the flock with a ready mind. They must watch for trouble from the outside, define and defeat any wolves in sheep’s clothing that sneak into the flock, and be examples to all around them as to how to live a Godly life in Christ. While it is easy for young brothers to think that they know a thing or two, and seek ecclesial leadership, this is not the Biblical way. It is best that they wait their turn and

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patiently learn from their elders around them. Their time will come and hopefully when it does, they will be well prepared by the examples of their overseers.

Is 1 Peter 5 the only New Testament reference to elders and the connected division of labors? Not at all. 1 Timothy 5:17 says, “*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine*”. Here we see that well-ruling elders are worthy of double honour. This is certainly a statement that has been lost upon many young people of the world and we fear that it has also not carried much weight for young Christadelphian brethren at times. Skipping down a few verses, 1 Timothy 5:19 gives us further instruction: “*Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses*”. In essence, this verse shows that elders should be given the benefit of the doubt unless two or three witnesses have a common accusation against the individual. In the Greek, the word “*accusation*” means “*a complaint, that is, a criminal charge*”. Thus, if such a serious matter (whether doctrinal or moral) is to be charged against an elder, the proof must be certain with plenty of witnesses. A complaint or a disdain for an elder is not something to be taken lightly. In fact, 1 Timothy 5:1 gives us more guidance along these lines: “*Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father: and the younger men as brethren*”. Let us consider these words and put them into use, especially for those of us who are younger brothers and sisters. Our elders are not to be rebuked (Greek: “*to chastise*”), but rather intreated or called near for discussion. It is more likely that we are in the wrong rather than they and we should value their insight even through the most difficult of situations. The elders meanwhile should always treat the younger men as beloved brethren, bringing them up and encouraging them along in Yahweh’s Heritage, and preparing them for their eventual time to assume the elder role.

At this point we would also like to point out that being older does not automatically make one an elder in the Scriptural sense of the Word. Yes, age is a part of it, but that isn’t all. Proverbs 16:31 says the following: “*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*” The ESV translates the first phrase of this verse as, “*Gray hair is a crown of glory*” while Young’s translates it as “*a crown of beauty are grey hairs*”. In any case, age certainly has something to do with the definition of an elder; no doubt about it. However, the verse continues to state that this crown of eldership is for those who are found in the way of righteousness. This is equivalent to Paul’s discussions of elders who rule well. Most of us know plenty of older men, but Scriptural elders are those older men who walk in Truth as defined in 1 Peter 5, 1 Timothy 3 and other passages.

Service to the ecclesia

So what about the young men? Younger brethren certainly still have roles to play as they learn from their elders, but they should not trick themselves into taking on the position of an elder too early. It is clearly unscriptural. Nor should the elders be lazy in refusing their responsibilities by passing them on to the young. Instead, the younger brethren should be content with their position, which could lead them to service as a “*deacon*” as they mature in the Truth.

What is a “deacon” as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:8-13? This word in the Greek literally means “to run on errands, an attendant, a waiter (at table or in other menial duties)”. Thus the deacons are servants or ministers (in the sense of someone who ministers to others, not in the popular Christianized version of the word) in the ecclesia, an excellent role for young brethren to work in, learn in and grow in as they prepare eventually for the much harder job and the greater responsibility of ecclesial eldership. May the young remember the words of the Master in Matthew 20:26 – “*whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (or deacon – the same Greek word)*”. Indeed, being a minister or deacon is a privileged position and one that should not be despised by younger brethren. What did Paul tell Timothy regarding his service in the Truth? “*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*” (1 Timothy 4:12-16).

Accordingly, the role of a minister should not be looked upon by the younger brethren, the elders, or anyone else as a position to be despised. Just as brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, masters and servants all have different roles, all are still “one in Christ Jesus”. So too do the ecclesial overseers and ministering servants have different roles which should be readily accepted and relished. This goes all the way back to Exodus where Jethro’s recommendation was clearly a division of labor according to abilities and personal responsibility. A ruler over thousands had far greater responsibility than a ruler over tens, yet all parts of the ecclesial system were important and not to be despised. Remember what Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 12:14-23: “*For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the*

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body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”

Indeed, we would all be wise to put Paul’s inspired words to heart. All of us have a role to play in the modern day ecclesia without which the one body cannot function. We should not despise the position of others nor be discontent with our own. The key is to follow Yahweh’s guidance as we strive to find our appropriate niche for the building up of the ecclesia for Yahweh’s honor. However, if we find ourselves challenging His authority – like sisters who want to speak, young brothers who want to be in overseer positions, and elders who refuse their Divine obligations – we are in effect destroying the One Body that we profess to love. Let us take heed lest we fall.

Let’s now look at an actual example of such a division of labor from the first century ecclesia, a pattern from which the modern ecclesia can certainly learn and make application. Please look at Acts 6:1-8: *“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.”*

In the verses before us, we see that there was strife in the Jerusalem ecclesia between the Hebrews and the Grecians. The former were Hebrew-speaking Jews and the latter were Hellenized or Greek-speaking Jews. The Diaglott translates “Grecians” as “Hellenists”. In any case, the Grecians were complaining that their widows were being neglected in the ecclesia, perhaps regarding the pool of money (termed the Jerusalem Poor Fund by some) that started being collected in Acts 4 for their use.

To further understand these verses and how they relate to the topic at hand, we need to dig into the Greek language a little. You may remember from 1 Timothy 3 that the English word deacon (or, as we prefer, minister or servant) was from the Greek *diakonos* (G1249). The meaning of *diakonos* was “to run on errands, an attendant, a waiter (at table or in other menial duties)”. This was the title of the younger brethren or others so assigned. Now focusing in on Acts 6:1, the word “ministrations” is the Greek *diakonia* (G1248), which means “attendance as a servant, aid, official service, especially of the Christian teacher, or technically of the diaconate, ministration, office, relief”, etc. So the *diakonia* is the work of the *diakonos*. Finally, the apostles use the word “serve” in Acts 6:2 and this also is closely related. “Serve” comes from the Greek *diakoneo* (G1247) and means “to be an attendant, that is wait upon, serve, to act as a deacon, to use the office of a deacon”.

In any case, the fact of the matter is that this passage shows that the apostles found themselves in quite a similar predicament to that of Moses centuries before in Exodus 18. The twelve, now with Matthias as the replacement for Judas, were the elders of the ecclesia along with James the half-brother of Jesus. They had been given a special commission by Jesus in Mark 16:15 and so gave their full attention to the preaching of the Word of God. In their dutiful attention to this work they were not able to keep up with the practical matters of ministering service within the ecclesia – important though it was. Using the Greek words, there was a need for brethren to be appointed as ministering servants (*diakonos*) to serve (*diakoneo*) in the daily ministrations (*diakonia*). Thus, as Acts 6:3 tells us, seven brethren were sought who were “of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom” to fulfill this work and thus we see the commission of Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas given as the seven primary *diakonos* of the age. Meanwhile the apostles in verse 4 would give themselves to prayer and their own form of ministry (or *diakonia*) of the Word. In so doing they established, once again, a divine system of the division of labor based upon qualifications of character

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that can be traced back to Jethro.

With these things in mind, we must come full circle back to Moses and Jethro and ask the question, what did Moses actually do? “*So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves*” (Exodus 18:23-26). So did Moses listen to the advice of Jethro? Yes indeed. It is evident from these verses that Yahweh approved of Jethro’s suggestion (see verse 23) and Moses continued to successfully put it into action. Able men were chosen as heads of the people and rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Little did he know, but in instituting this division of labor, Moses started a pattern that would be of great use to the ecclesia from his time and onward, even to this very day.

Let us take note of these things with intense self-examination of ourselves and our ecclesias. Are we following the Divine division of labor or have we allowed Democracy (rule by the people and for the people according to man’s rules) to influence the body of Christ? Do the elders oversee the flock or are they trying to “retire”? Are the young brothers and sisters trying to take over? Are the elders honored or are they despised? Do the younger brethren dedicate themselves to ministering service with joy as the *diakonos* of the day? Or do they complain and try to be elders before their time? Do all, elders and *diakonos* servants, examine themselves to follow the divine standard of character as revealed in 1 Timothy 3? We can only answer for ourselves and our own ecclesias, but we must not fool ourselves into thinking that there are no such issues in Christadelphia today.

Soon will come the day when Jesus will judge the quick and the dead. He will be looking for those who have accepted their God-given roles and fulfilled them to the best of their abilities. For those who have ignored or despised the way of Yahweh, it will be too late. Yet even then there will be a division of labor; one that will last for a thousand years. As Luke 19 tells us; to some will be given ten cities, to others five and to others none. Where will we be in that day? Will we be with Moses, Jethro, Paul, Peter, Timothy and others as they receive their inheritance? Or will we be cast out for our lack of adherence to the way they valued and institutionalized? May we heed the wisdom of Jethro. The choice is ours and we make the answer now.

David Bryan

NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE



Statistics of the Bible			
	Old Testament	New Testament	Entire Bible
Number of books	39	27	66
Number of chapters	929	260	1,189
Number of verses	23,214	7,959	31,173
Number of words	592,439	181,253	773,692
Middle book	Proverbs	II Thessalonians	Micah & Nahum
Middle chapter	Job 29	Romans 13 & 14	Psalm 117
Middle verse	II Chronicles 20:17	Acts 17:17	Psalm 118:8
Shortest book	Obadiah	III John	III John
Shortest verse	I Chronicles 1:1	John 11:35	John 11:35

Number	Application
1	Just as number 1 is the foundation of all mathematics, so Yahweh is the beginning of all. Number 1 therefore in scripture pertains to God.
2	Separation, witness or opposites
3	Divine perfection. The complete number, the first perfect number.
4	Creative work, the number of organization, sometimes referred to as the word number

NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

Number	Application
5	Grace, free gift of God, the number of mercy
6	Flesh or pertaining to that which will be destroyed
7	The second perfect number. Spiritual perfection. The covenant number. The number of God's seal.
8	Resurrection, a new beginning. The number of immortality
9	Finality. The number of judgment.
10	The third perfect number. The number of ordinal perfection
11	Disorganization. The number of incompleteness.
12	The further perfect number. The number of governmental perfection.
13	The number of sin. The number of rebellion.
14	Double of seven. The number of double spiritual benefits.
15	3x5, the number of describing the ultimate of grace and mercy.
17	Seventeen is not a multiple of any number. It has no factors. It is a combination of 10 (ordinal perfection) and 7 (spiritual perfection). It is therefore indicative of perfection of spiritual order (Rom. 8:35-39)
19	Combination of 10+9. Denotes divine order connected with judgment.
20	The number of expectancy. It is one short of the ultimate of spiritual perfection.
21	The ultimate of spiritual perfection, 3x7.
22	The double of 11. Carries the meaning of 11 (disorganization/incompleteness is intensified form).
24	The double of 12 (governmental perfection) and speaks of the new or spiritual Jerusalem

Number	Application
25	Carries the essence of the square of 5 (mercy or grace).
27	The cube of 3x3x3. The ultimate of completeness.
28	The product of 7 (spiritual perfection) x4 (number of creation).
29	The sum of 20 (expectancy) plus 9 (judgment)
30	Perfection of divine order. 3x10 (Luke 3:23)
37	The Word of God
40	Number of probation, trial, and chastisement.
70	Perfect spiritual order, 7x10
153	Gematria of "The sons of God"

Submitted by Joel Thomas

PRACTICAL POINTS

"O house of Israel, are not my ways equal?"

Ezek. 18:29

Of EQUAL length and breadth and height
 The holy city foursquare lies;
 A common glory each one's right
 Conferred by God upon the wise.
 No Gentile lust for power was theirs
 As they the gospel highway trod;
 In honor SHARING joys and cares,
 True brethren of the Son of God.
 This lesson learn: Let heaven's light
 Make plain the way to gain the prize;
 Of EQUAL length and breadth and height
 The holy city foursquare lies.

The Christadelphian Advocate, August 1894

TWO IMPORTANT LAWS



THESE laws are described by the Apostle Paul in the 3rd verse of the 8th chapter of Romans - *“The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death”*. Taking these in the reverse order, the first one to be considered is “the law of sin and death.”

The suggestion that this is the Mosaic Law is untenable; for the event which made the Apostle “free” was his baptism into Christ Jesus (Acts 22:16), which was some years after the Mosaic Law had been abolished. He, and all other Jews, were freed from the obligations of that law when the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain at the Crucifixion, although none of them were redeemed from its curse until they entered the name of Christ (Gal. 3:13).

“The Law of Sin and Death” is of wider scope than the Law given through Moses. It is none other than the law under which the first sin was committed, so fully dealt with in Rom. 5:12-21. It is written in Gen. 2:16, that the *“Lord commanded the man,”* an expression equivalent to saying that God gave him a law. The subject-matter of the command is familiar to our readers. It did not promise life, because the life which Adam possessed was not yet marred or lost. The only course, therefore, was to define the penalty in the event of disobedience; namely, to deprive him of the life which he then enjoyed. In effect the command said, ‘If thou sinnest, thou shalt die.’ It was therefore a “law of Sin and Death,” but a law which had no power over the man to whom it was given unless, and until, he disobeyed it. We all know how he acted, and that, as a consequence, the law came into force. As Adam was the Federal Head of the whole human race, he brought them, with himself, under its power, as stated by Paul in Rom. 5:17 - “By one man’s offence death reigned by one.”

Objection is raised to the command in Eden being described as “the law of sin and death,” on the ground that the Apostle in Rom. 7:23 says, *“I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members:”* and these “members” he describes in the

next verse as “this body of death.”

The objection is without force. Before there would be a “law of sin and death” in human nature, that law must exist outside of human nature; and this could only be as a verbal or written decree from the Creator. If the first human pair had not violated that law it would never have existed in any other than a spoken or written form; but, as soon as the law had been broken by them, they became an embodiment of it, and, on the principle that like produces like, that law has run through all their descendants constituting them “servants of sin.”

It is obvious that when the Apostle Paul says he had been “*made free from the law of sin and death*,” he did not mean that any literal change had taken place in regard to his nature. That freedom which he described had reference to “the law of sin and death” as a decree; and from this he affirms that he had been “made free” by the “law of the Spirit of Life.”

Objection is also raised to the command in Eden being considered as “the law of sin and death,” on the ground that the death specified in that command was not inflicted on the day the sin was committed, as is deemed necessary by the terms of the command. This objection overlooks the introduction of an element of which there had been no previous intimation.

The difference between the two first sinners, as regards their state of mind, appears to have afforded a basis for the exhibition of mercy: - “*Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*” (1st Timothy 2:14). The man sinned with his eyes open, but his wife was beguiled. Being, however, “one flesh,” they were both permitted to partake of their Creator’s mercy, embodied in the declaration that a descendant or “seed” of the woman should “bruise” or destroy the seed of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15).

The second law, like the first, was initiated in Eden. It is embodied in the prediction just quoted concerning the seed of the woman - a prediction which recognizes the existence and operation of “the law of sin and death”; for it declares that the promised seed of the woman should be bruised by the seed of the serpent. Inasmuch as the promise was evidently designed to repair the evil effects of disobedience in Eden, it necessarily follows that the bruising of the seed of the woman must precede the destruction of the seed of the serpent.

The promise, in effect, declared that “the law of sin and death” could not be deprived of its power without the infliction of death by slaying; and, as death comes only by sin (Rom. 5:12), it virtually affirmed that the bruising of the seed of the woman would be necessitated by the sin which had just been committed.

The world of human beings then consisted of but two people, and this

TWO IMPORTANT LAWS

arrangement of things was the subject of Divine mercy and love, so that on the basis of John 3:16 it may be said, that God so loved the Edenic world that He promised to provide a seed, that those who came under the operation of “the law of the Spirit of Life” should not perish but have everlasting life.

A practical illustration was immediately given of the way in which this was to be carried out. The two human sinners were clothed with animals skins - a procedure which involved the slaying of animals - and from that time henceforth blood-shedding, in some way or other, was an essential condition for the covering or remission of sins.

By being clothed with these skins, Adam and Eve were identified with the death of the slain animals. On the basis of what is subsequently embodied in the Mosaic Law, their sin was figuratively transferred to the sacrificed animals. They were shown by that slaying, the death which they had incurred. At the same time their body of sin was covered or clothed with a garment of God’s provision symbolising righteousness. They died in the typical sacrifice even as believers, when baptized into Christ, now die in Him. They were thus transferred from a state of Alienation to one of Reconciliation. In other words, they were, by a shadow ceremony, “made free from the law of sin and death” and came under “the law of the spirit of life.”

From this time henceforth these two Laws ran parallel with each other, “the law of sin and death,” claiming every one born of woman, and “the law of the spirit of life,” recognising such only of them as had complied with the Divine conditions in its various forms by blood-shedding. The dividing line between these two laws is very concisely expressed in a verse which, although used in respect to the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law is, nevertheless, the centre of saving “*knowledge and of the Truth*” (Rom. 2:20), namely, “*without shedding of blood there is no remission*” (Heb. 9:22). Applying this expression to the two laws under consideration it says, in effect, that “the law of the spirit of life” can have no place until the claim of “the law of sin and death” has been met. That claim was first expressed by the word “bruise” in reference to the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). In this way God showed from the beginning that although merciful to sinners, He could not, in faithfulness to His own decree, bestow that mercy without a recognition of, and submission to, the penalty for sin.

From the time that the seed of the woman was promised until the death on the cross, “the law of the spirit of life” operated on the basis already described; but when Christ was immortalised that law was embodied in Him. Henceforth it became “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Like “the law of sin and death,” it was first a spoken or written law. Now it has assumed a corporeal aspect. When Paul

declared that he had been “made free” by this law he recognised that he had come under it in the form of a Divine enactment, but he and the other Apostles looked forward to the time when they, like their Head, would become corporeal embodiments thereof. Thus, “the Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. 3:20,21). “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2).

J.J. Andrew

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An Interesting Observation

We recently heard a local radio commentator make an interesting and very true observation - ***that the human race is unique among all species in that it is constantly going to great lengths to work against its own best interests.*** We perceive this statement to be far more true than what the commentator intended, as he was applying it in a political and social sense. But, when we consider the great lengths that man has gone to throughout the ages in order to oppose the simple and eternally beneficial truths of God’s very existence as well as a knowledge of His Plan of Salvation through His Son - the fundamental truth of such a statement becomes more self evident. The failure of Adam and Eve in the Garden, the obstinancy of Cain in offering the appropriate shed blood sacrifice, the rebellious spirit of Nimrod, Israelite idolatry, the rise of the Apostasy, promotion of Evolutionary theory, the exhausting pursuit of materialism, etc. - so much effort continually expended by man for the certainty of his own destruction. - A.T.

CHRIST AND THE SAINTS



WE came across an interesting article out of the September, 1986 Sanctuary-Keeper in which bro. Jim Stanton gave an overview (with added observations) of two Phases of the Gogian Invasion and Destruction as illustrated by a chart provided by sis. Faith Gini.

Considering the remarkable developments we are seeing in the world, especially in regard to specific areas which the Spirit Word demands our careful attention (e.g. Russia, Europe, The Papacy, Britain and especially Israel and the Middle East); it is imperative that we keep in the forefront of our minds (and affections) the reality of events long prophesied that are soon to become reality. It is a factual narrative; an account already written through the writings of the prophets, which simply awaits its fulfillment. We can watch with a degree of speculation as to the workings of the Elohim with present geo-political circumstances and developments as they prepare the nations for The Great Day of Yahweh. But, the Word is most clear, emphatic and remarkably specific when it comes to that Day when God reveals His mighty hand through the return of His Son to this earth.

We do not provide the drawings as absolute or exhaustive, but like bro. Stanton, view the diagrams as a good general overview. All we would add, with a brief point, is that we personally perceive that the initial thrust of the Gogian invader will remain along the western coastline of Israel (with a highly concentrated Jewish population) on its first push to neutralize Egypt (Daniel 11:40-43). But, “*tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble* (Heb. *bahal - disturb, alarm, terrify*) him”, causing him to direct his full and brutal attention in that direction (with Jerusalem in the crosshairs) “with great fury to destroy, **and utterly to make away** (Heb. *charam - exterminate*) many.”

Events are about to unfold that will be very real, and both soberingly cataclysmic as well as joyously extraordinary in their impact. The only question for us is, will we be a part of that Christ multitude? (The following page begins bro. Stanton’s commentary). - A.T.

IN last month's issue we published a letter (p. 290) from Sister Faith Gini which we entitled "Prophetic Observations." She had enclosed a drawing showing the two phases of the latter day invasion of the northern invader. The first, if I perceive her observations correctly, involved the invasion from the north in which Russia is successful in establishing a foothold in the Middle East at the expense of much loss of life to the Israelis. The second is the response by Christ and the immortalized saints to this invasion in which Russia is defeated and the Kingdom of God is established with glory and honor.

Due to limited space we were unable to reproduce her drawing depicting the two phases. It is shown on the following two pages in the exact detail she perceives. We are pleased that she has shown the interest in the latter day prophecies that should be at the forefront of our minds. Our hope is centered in the events of this final confrontation. Most students agree that the saints will be called away to the judgment scene in Sinai before the Russian invasion.

To better appreciate the expectations of the writer, time should be taken to review the references given in support of each development. I have personally agreed with the general outline of events as shown in the diagram. The possibility of the use of chemical gas by the Russians is novel, but it has some merit....

It seems to me that not very much attention is given to the so-called second exodus, a literal passage out of Egypt through the Red Sea. Most students seem to designate a going forth from Sinai directly through the regions of Teman and Paran north of Sinai with an encounter where "the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (Isa. 34:6). I believe there is some credibility in the immortal host first going into Egypt before heading for Bozrah via Teman and Paran.

In Isaiah 19:1 it is written, "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols (vanities) of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." Concerning this prophecy, Dr. Thomas writes in Eureka, volume IIA, page 179-180, "In this invasion of Egypt, then in the hands of Gog, the king of the north, who hath power over its gold, and silver, and precious things (Dan. 11:43) the troops of Sinai would have to march round the head of the gulf of Suez, or to pass over the sea, or through it. The last alternative seems to be the course to be adopted at some epoch of the enterprise; which will probably be on return from the conquest of Egypt, in the march to Zion. 'I will bring again from the depths of the sea,' saith the Spirit in Psalm 68:22. And these words were written in Jerusalem, implying that they were coming Zion-wards.

PHASE ONE – Invasion of the Northern Armies

Russian forces devastate the north/central of Israel as far as Jerusalem and the boundaries of Judea.

Nearly 2/3 of the population is destroyed (chemical gas?). Today nearly 80% of the population is located on the coastal strip.

Joel 2:3
Habakkuk 3:16
Isaiah 33:9
Isaiah 17:14
Ezekiel 38:10
Daniel 11:44

Russian naval attack
Daniel 11:40
Ezekiel 38 & 39
Joel 2

Egypt neutralized by invasion of Russian/Libyan/Ethiopian forces.
Daniel 11:42

Syrian attack;
Russian support
Micah 5:5-6

Jordan neutral
Daniel 11:41

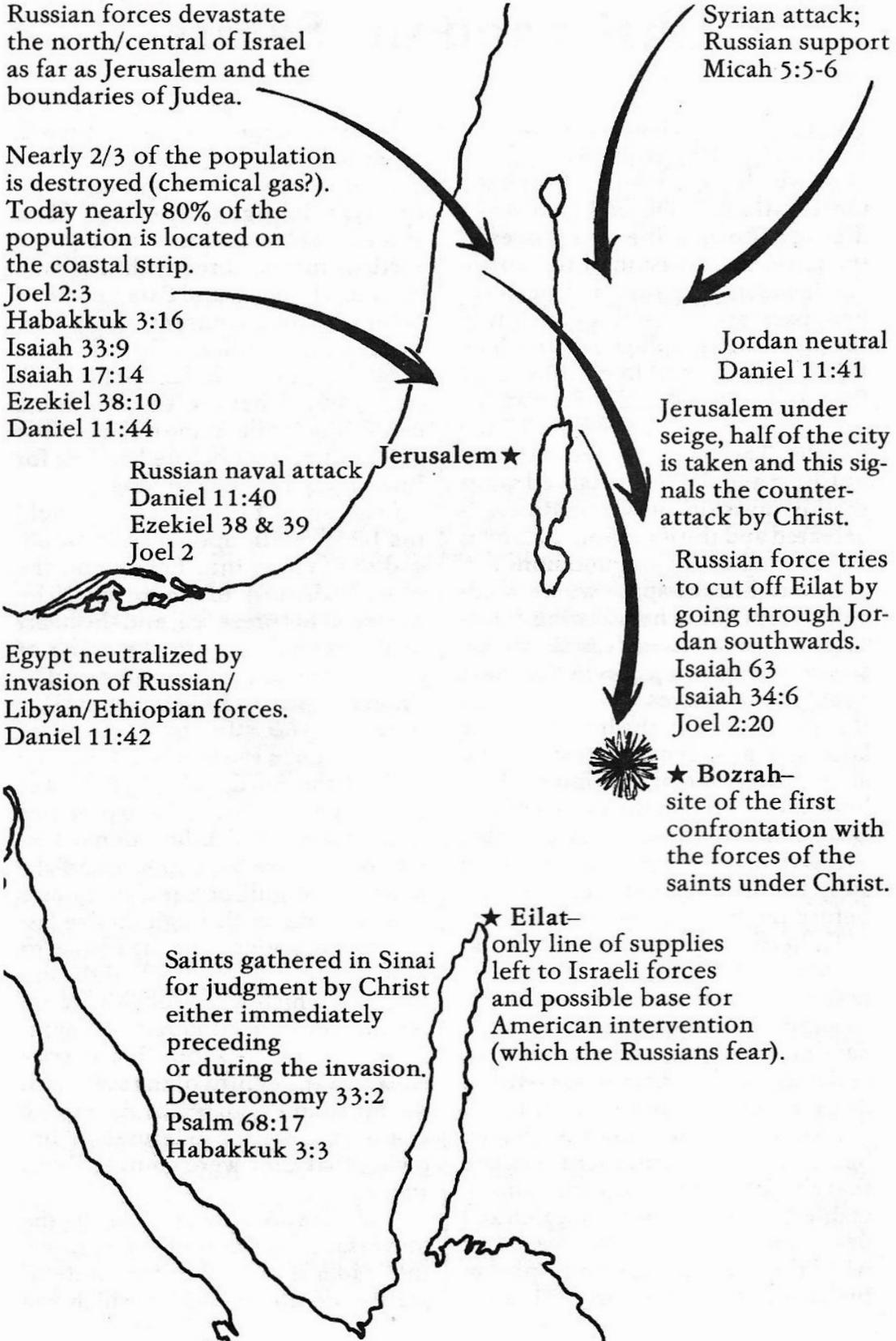
Jerusalem under seige, half of the city is taken and this signals the counter-attack by Christ.

Russian force tries to cut off Eilat by going through Jordan southwards.
Isaiah 63
Isaiah 34:6
Joel 2:20

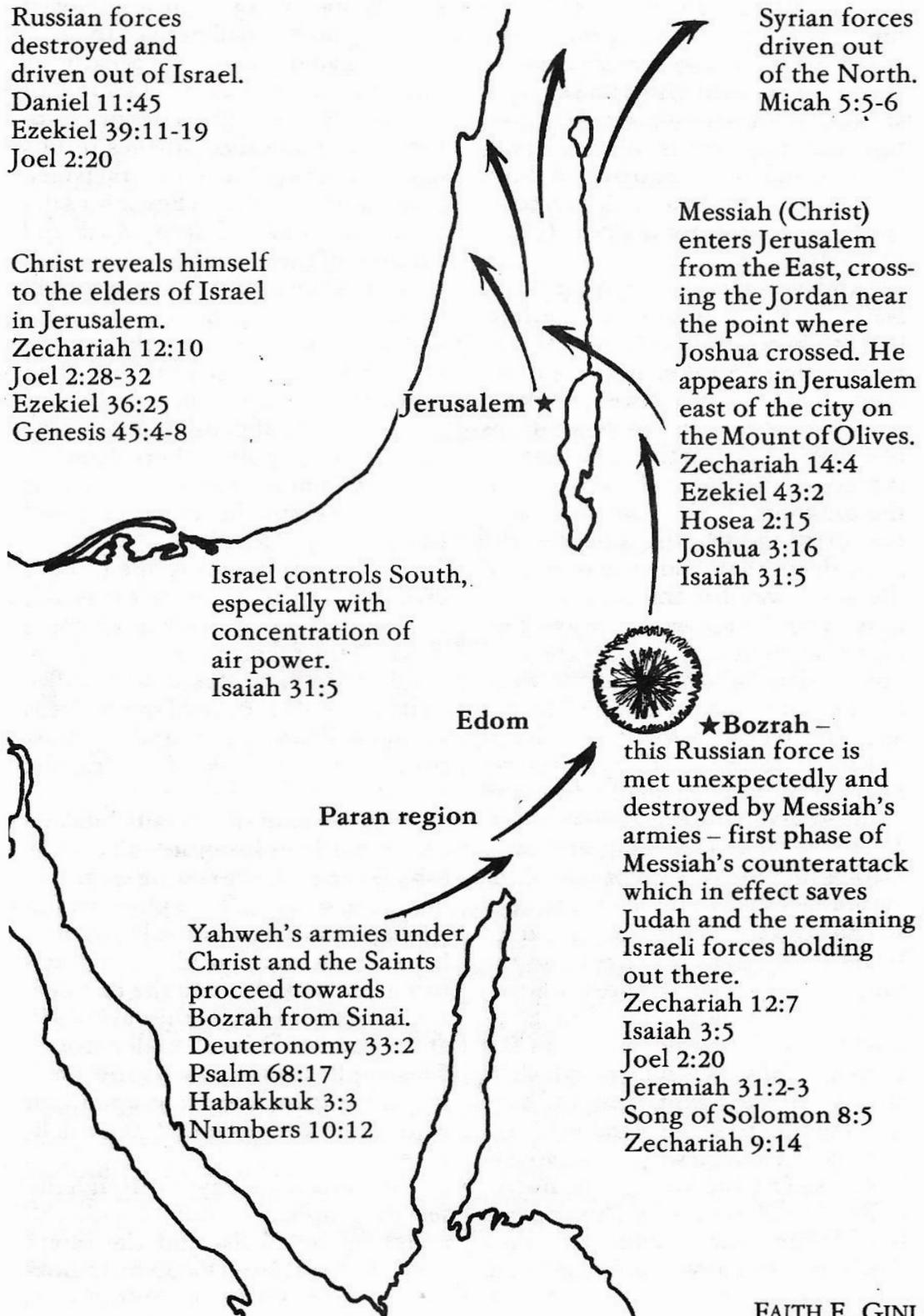
★ Bozrah—
site of the first confrontation with the forces of the saints under Christ.

Saints gathered in Sinai for judgment by Christ either immediately preceding or during the invasion.
Deuteronomy 33:2
Psalm 68:17
Habakkuk 3:3

★ Eilat—
only line of supplies left to Israeli forces and possible base for American intervention (which the Russians fear).



PHASE TWO – The Destruction of hostile forces by Christ and the Saints, the liberation of Judah, Jerusalem and the rest of Israel (in that order)



FAITH E. GINI

“In Psalm 66, after announcing the universal subjection of the nations, the reader is invited to the contemplation of the means by which the conquest is effected: ‘Come and see the doings of Elohim, terrible of deed towards the sons of men. *He turned the sea to dry land*; they passed through *the river on foot*; there did we rejoice in him.’ And Isaiah says, ‘*Yahweh shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea*; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over *the river* [Euphrates] and shall smite it into seven streams, and cause to go over in shoes ... *like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt* (chap. II:15-16).

“And yet again in chapter 51:9, Isaiah, by the inspiration of the Spirit, saith in relation to Israel’s future redemption, ‘Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Yahweh; awake *as in the ancient days*, in the generations of old. Art thou not the same that dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to passover?’ These were the awakenings of ancient days; and by the prophet’s petition, which was the word of the Spirit, the dividing of the sea and the river in a future exodus is indirectly foretold. ‘*Therefore* the redeemed of Yahweh shall *return*, and come with singing *unto Zion* [not from Egypt to Sinai as of old]; and everlasting joy [*simchath olahm*, joy of the future age] shall be upon their head’.”

The basis for this rescue of natural Israel from Egypt by Christ and the saints is the Russian oppression. Dr. Thomas goes on to say, “The testimony seems to indicate that at the time of Yahweh’s riding upon the swift cloud into Egypt, there will have collected there a considerable Jewish population, which will be grievously oppressed by the king of the north, or Russo-Assyrian Gog. This appears from Isaiah 19:20, which says, ‘they shall cry unto Yahweh because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, even a great one, and he shall deliver them.’ This saviour is Yahweh *Elohim Tz’vaoth*, He who shall be the mighty ones of hosts, the Rainbowed Angel, ‘and he shall deliver them’.”

The reader can profit greatly by reference to this beautiful section of *Eureka*. Russia’s initial thrust into the land of unwallied villages results in a great loss of life to natural Israel. Some will likely flee to Egypt for safety, as will some to Edom, Moab and Ammon, if the account in Daniel 11:41-43 has this application. Israel will be in such straits, both as a nation and psychologically, that they will be of a mind to accept the Saviour. Such is not their disposition today. They are dwelling confidently, and if events develop to a point where Israel is engaged in more war with the Arabs and is successful, her confidence will increase. [We will just add here that as of the end of 2018 we have actually seen a remarkable increase

of cooperation between Israel and several countries of the Arabian Peninsula as well as Egypt over the mutual threat of Iran. This we scripturally expect from Ezek. 38:13. Though, we continue to see the “Palestinian” issue as well as Hezbollah and Hamas as a continued pricking briar for Israel. - A.T.]

The pattern seems to me to have credence. If the Arabs defeat Israel, then Russia has no reason to come down. If the reverse occurs, either in whole or in part, Russia will realize that all her utilization of the Arabs as a pawn will have failed, and she must proceed to the task of seizing the territory.

With Israel in dire straits, pushed out of her land into Jordanian areas as well as Egypt, the setting is ripe for her being saved. What a glorious and majestic prospect for the Holy Ones from Sinai to come to her aid and bring her back through the Red Sea, recalling the saving in the days of old at the hand of Yahweh under Moses. This implies a true conversion, a national baptism, a looking upon him whom they once pierced, their deliverer.

The route from Egypt through the sea geographically fits in with the marching by Christ and the saints through Teman and Paran on to Bozrah, and thence to Jerusalem. It is consistent with the prophecy of Judah being used as a battle-axe to have them associated with the Host from Sinai in the securing of the land and the expulsion of the enemy. In this way the world will be made aware that God is working through His chosen people, the Jews. Certainly, immortals do not need the help of mortals to conquer, but it may be God’s way of calling attention to His further plans in the coming Kingdom about to be established in Jerusalem.

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak righteousness, mighty to save” (Isa. 63:1). There is to be a battle at Bozrah in which we foresee the Russians being signally defeated and the victors proceeding on to Jerusalem to set up the throne of the new age under the rulership of the son of David as prophesied to Mary in Luke 1:32-33.

May these anticipations stir our hearts to consecrated devotion to our role of watchmen for Zion’s glad morning.

Jim Stanton



THINGS NEW AND OLD FROM THE TREASURES OF THE SPIRIT



F. R. Shuttleworth

REFERENCE TABLET No. 27 - November, 1872

LIGHT

On Things Social, Political, and Religious

What is commonly called "Christianity" is easily distinguished from the truth apostolically delivered to the saints, by the heathenish number of its gods, Besides its Trinity, it has a god the devil, and a god the soul, and a god the world; and the Mother Church adds at least another, a god the Pope, whom it styles "God upon Earth." To us (who believe) says Paul, there is but one God, the Father.

The twin delusions, which have been the most prolific source of revenue to the clergy in all ages, are the conceit of an immortal soul and a deathless devil.

The only rightful owner of the soil is Jesus Christ, and the only rightful heirs are his faithful brethren.

The many social, secular, religious, and political schemes projected from the brains of men, for the conversion and reformation of the world, are all, in their turn, unsuccessful, and must ever prove the most complete and utter failures, because -

1st - They are based upon the non-recognition of God, as they all, without exception, ignore His revealed purpose on earth.

2nd - They have their origin in human wisdom, and their end in human glory.

3rd - The means employed are all but powerless to grapple with the hydra-headed evils of society.

4th - The endeavours of the would-be Saviours, representing these reforms, are premature; the right time for the world-wide change is yet future.

5th - The glorious and (when the time arrives) triumphantly successful work of changing the face of the world, has long ago been deputed by the Deity to Christ and his brethren. The living machinery (embodiments of eternal power, wisdom, righteousness, and truth) by which it will be duly and splendidly accomplished, is now being prepared as a clean vessel for the Master's use.

The non-recognition of God (in a scriptural sense) by the religious leaders of the people is manifest -

1st - By their utter ignorance of His revealed purpose on earth.

2nd - By their pursuits of a course which, if successful, would most completely frustrate the designs of the Almighty, and

3rd - By their blind and self-interested adhesion to the lucre-producing systems in which they live and move, and have their evasion of discussion, and studious exclusion of any solution of the difficulty which involves their removal from place and power, which the necessities of salvation and the recognition of God, as revealed, most certainly require.

The salvation of a soul, as Catholically, Protestantly, and Dissentingly interpreted, reveals the quintessence of selfishness and idolatry, by turning men's minds in upon themselves, to consider the fiction of an immortal soul; instead of out, upon God, to contemplate his true goodness in Christ.

The foundation-stone of the present political and ecclesiastical edifice is man, and the superstructure thereof is big with the glory of man: whereas the foundation stone of that constitution of things, which is to bring blessing and brotherhood to all nations, will be God, while every stone of the living building will be inscribed with "Glory to God in the highest."

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

IN MEMORY

We were greatly saddened to hear of the sudden death of bro. Ronnie Sanders. Bro. Ronnie had long been a ready and able promoter and defender of the One Faith as well as a good friend/supporter of this magazine. We know that he struggled for many years in both body and mind but that his commitment to the preservation of the Truth did not falter. We are reminded that death is in fact a great enemy and nothing that is to be “celebrated”, which has become the fashion of those in the world with their “celebrations of life” in order to sugarcoat the cold reality of death. But, we are reminded that though bro. Ronnie and all others of the Christ Body who have fallen asleep have not been saved **FROM** death, that due to their relationship to the Everlasting Covenant through Christ they will in fact be saved **OUT OF** death - just as “*the God of peace*” “*brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*”

DANGEROUS CONFUSION ON THE TERM “ELOHIM”

It was recently brought to our attention that a recent issue of the Logos Magazine out of Australia reported on a letter by bro. Jonathan Farrar to the Testimony Magazine in England in a January, 2017 issue. We looked up the issue on-line and found that in his letter (written in response to an article on the subject) he claimed that Bro. Thomas incorrectly taught that *Elohim* represents “mighty ones.” In other words, bro. Farrar rejects the idea that *Elohim* represents a plurality and contends that *Elohim* simply represents God’s majesty. Therefore, he rejects the vital principle of God Manifestaion as seen through the term. (This is not the first time we have heard such an idea.)

We found the original letter to be an academic exercise in confusion (as did those corresponding with Logos), relying on selected academics to support his view. The claim is made that the grammatical rules do not allow for the title to be understood in a plural sense. Bro. Farrar does not seem to take into account the doctrinal and contextual applications necessary to come to the understanding that Bro. Thomas was able to see and rightfully and beautifully promote in regard to the plurality of the word. (Bro. Thomas addresses the term “*elohim*” and its plurality in *Phanerosis*, p. 51-53.)

We haven’t the space in this issue to consider this more, but we see that the attempts at the deconstruction of long held truths continues by those with a Gnostic approach to Bible exposition. We have no interest in tracking the contents of the Amended and liberal slanted Testimony Magazine, but we do appreciate the efforts of the Logos in addressing it, and for this concerning matter (as promoted by an Unamended brother) having been brought to our attention. - S.K.