

# The Berean Ecclesial News

*A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Upholding the Truth since 1923.*

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God Willing, The Berean Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

## **Ecclesial News**

AUSTIN, Texas – Memorial Meeting 11:00am in home. Bro. Jim Phillips, 16601 FM 1325 #1911, Austin, TX. 78728; phone (512) 218-0920

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Loving Greetings to all in Christ.

We had the pleasure of having Bro. Ronnie Wolfe, Bro. Ross Wolfe and Sis. Brenda Britton fellowship with us around the table of the Lord in December, at which time we all went to a Restaurant and celebrated Bro. Matthew's 20th birthday. We continue to have Sunday Memorial meeting in our home at 11:00 A.M. each Sunday. We have enjoyed the company of Sis. Brenda Britton since that time for supper and Bible Readings and again when she brought Bro. Ross Wolfe for an overnight visit. We look forward to welcoming any visitors. On Thursday evenings at 8:00 PM we have a First Principle class with Sis. Naomi, Bro. Matthew, Jaymie and Nathan. Again, all are welcome to attend.

Our Bro. Matthew and I take turns exhorting each Sunday, but we welcome any visiting speaker. We are sometimes away on weekends so it would be advisable to phone to be sure we will be here: 512-218-0920. We were encouraged and uplifted by the fellowship and association with the brethren and sisters at the Lampasas June Gathering, we were thankful to our Heavenly Father for the opportunity to attend. The Sunday of the Gathering was a somber occasion as we attended the funeral of Bro. Raymond Connolly. He will be greatly missed.

We regret that we cannot attend the Richard Gathering this year but we trust all who will be able to attend will have an uplifting time. It is our prayer that the Lord will be with all the Brotherhood and strengthen each of us in these last evil days before the return of Christ at which time we will all give an account for how we have spent the time that God has given us. Let us strive to be among the few who will be found faithful, as we strive to work together in love for one another as we are commanded.

Love to all,  
Bro. Jim Phillips

## **Ecclesial Correspondence**

Loving greetings everyone,

We have just enjoyed a beneficial weekend of spiritual food and fellowship at the Lampasas Fraternal Gathering, held June 8 through 10. I thought it would be encouraging to others to hear about it.

Friday night began with a sandwich supper and visiting. The children 146 enjoyed their new expanded playground, and the adults enjoyed visiting

in our freshly painted and decorated dining room. Then, Bro. Bob Wolfe spoke to us on the historical events of Israel in the last 50 years, showing that they are still God's special people and they continue to prove Biblical prophecies as true. Each of the smaller children were delighted to receive their own handmade bag that Sis. Dorothy Summerville had sewn and filled with colors, coloring books, writing tablets, and other small toys. Saturday's events started with an exhortation by Bro. Bob Bent on Fellowship. He reminded us of the benefits and duties of fellowship with one another and how important it is to attend ecclesial functions such as these. Lunch followed, more visiting, and then Bro. Carwyn Smith spoke on the book of Hezekiah. He outlined the book and the life of the prophet. The children ages 5-12 attended a youth class on the faith of David as he fought Goliath and afterward blew bubbles outside. That afternoon at the funeral home, many gathered for visitation with the family of Bro. Raymond Connolly, who passed away Thursday evening. His funeral was held Sunday afternoon with Bro. Charles Banta speaking. One of the highlights of his service was the story of Bro. Jerry having the joy of baptizing his father at age 74. Even though he will be greatly missed, his accepting of the Truth gives everyone great comfort. Bro. Wayne Jr. Wolfe has been working on a great picnic spot at one of his tanks, so we enjoyed swimming, visiting and a fish fry that afternoon/evening. Next, Bro. Jim Phillips spoke on the return of Christ and prophecy concerning Israel. He showed how the Koran, the Muslim holy book, and the Bible are directly opposed to each other, and that the reason for the continuous battles being fought over the Holy Land is because each people think they have a divine destiny to the land. We finished the evening with some refreshing ice cream.

Sunday School began our Sunday morning, as the adults studied Elpis Israel. This was followed by a memorial exhortation by Bro. Gary Smith. He reminded us that the Father takes care of us, his children, and loves us. We should not be ashamed to remind each other that "God loves you!" Our lunch included some of the family of Bro. Raymond, who were in town for the funeral.

Visiting brethren were: Bro. Bob & Sis. Sharon Wolfe from Oklahoma, Bro. Jack Carroll, Bro. Harry and Sis. Cindy Cassidy and Sis. Sharon Johnatty from Houston, Bro. Jim, Sis. Kay, Sis. Naomi, and Bro. Matthew Phillips from Austin, Bro. Carwyn & Sis. Anne Prado from Belton/Temple, Bro. Bob Bent from Dallas, Bro. Gary and Sis Brenda from Blackwell, Bro. Carl & Sis. Robyn from Lipan, and Sis. Linnie Hennig from Elgin. We're sorry if we have forgotten to mention everyone visiting. We were grateful that even through their grief, Bro. Jerry & Sis. Kitty and especially Sis. Maxine were able to attend the gathering and gain from its benefits. Truly it was a refreshing weekend, a moment to break from the world and concentrate on the Truth. Thanks to everyone for all the work done to add to its success. Love,  
Bro. Curtis & Sis. Cindy Hurst

# FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

## **RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING** .....

..... **June 29 – July 2, 2001**  
Bro. Ed Truelove, 2165 Douglas Ave., N.Battleford, Sask, Canada S9A 3N8, 306-445-3240

## **HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING** .....

..... **July 23 - 29, 2001**  
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

### **Hye Lecture Subjects**

#### **Theme: The Lord's Prayer**

- Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done In Earth, As It Is In Heaven
- Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread: Man is Mortal
- Forgive Us Our Debts as We Forgive Our Debtors - What Must I Do To Receive Forgiveness?
- Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil - The Devil
- For Thine Is The Kingdom, And The Power, And The Glory For Ever - Prophecy Proves God Is In Control

**Study Classes** - II Timothy 1-4, Titus 1-3, Ekodus 34-38

## **HOLLADAY FRATERNAL GATHERING** .....

..... **October 6 - 7, 2001**  
Bro. Warren Rankin, 699 White Tail Rd, Holladay, TN 38341, 901-584-3925

## What Manner of Persons Ought We To Be

Adversity, trials and tribulations. These words cannot truly describe the conditions that the Apostles Peter, Paul and John were experiencing. The conditions during the time of the last days of Judah's Commonwealth are parallel and foreshadow the conditions that we all may see as the last days of Man's Commonwealth looms ominously on the horizon.

The Ecclesias and Apostles had either been put to death or scattered throughout the Roman Empire. We can see hints here and there of this in the various epistles and from other historian's writings. The adversarial relationship between the Jews and the Romans had been boiling for many years and was finally about to erupt in to a situation from which there was no turning back.

There has been much speculation and tradition amongst the historians about what happened to Peter – the Apostle to the Jews. Bro. Thomas made mention in Eureka, *"The Jews had chased the surviving Apostles out of Judea, by which they escaped the terrible calamities that were about to fall upon Jerusalem, where they generally resided—Acts 8:1. John and Paul were no more to be found in Judea; and Peter writes from Babylon 1 Pet. 5:13; but died before the siege."* Bro. Thomas then mentions that some have thought 148 that Peter was actually referring to Rome when he said Babylon. But

Bro. Thomas goes on to say, *"What they (the Scriptures) testify we believe; but whereon they are silent, we have no faith. Peter may refer to Rome in using Babylon; but there is no evidence that he certainly does. If by Babylon, he do indeed mean Rome, it favors the supposition that the Apocalypse was written before his decease."*

In any event, it shows the urgency that the Apostles, and Peter specifically, were under when writing to the faithful at this time. Peter knew that this message was to be his last and that it was the strength of his words that would carry them through the difficult years ahead.

Peter writes concerning his second epistle, *"This second epistle beloved I now write unto you in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."* From this verse we observe that it was Peter's endeavor to stir up, through these 2 epistles, the mind of the brethren and sisters by way of remembrance. Peter used the word remembrance several times in this second epistle. He states, *"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance."* Again he said, *"I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."* And again, *"I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance ."*

The thought behind the first use of the word remembrance is a die, a stamp, a scar, a shape, a resemblance, a type, a figure – something that makes an impression. When we observe what he had been speaking about, about developing ourselves from step to step, until we rise unto the stature of the full man in Christ, we can see that he has set before the believers what is required of them. Those characteristics add, as he says, unto your faith, virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience Godliness, and to Godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity or love. These are to be impressed upon us so that the marks will show clearly. The apostle Paul said that, *"He bore in his body the mark of the Lord Jesus."* The scars, the resemblance, the impression, the figure of the Lord Jesus. This is necessary if we are to stand with Christ in the time of the end as the multitudinous son of man.

When we appear before the judgment seat, there must be these marks of resemblance - that tie with the family relationship of Christ, for him to invite us into his eternal family and association. As Christ was the manifestation of God, therefore, we are called to be the sons and daughters of God and must put on these Divine characteristics.

When we study this period we see the adversity that all the Apostles were under. Peter is apparently near his death at the time he wrote this second epistle. That appears to be obvious from the beginning of this second epistle, *"Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as the Lord 149*

Jesus has showed me." He had been advised that such was the case. Jesus had shown him that he must suffer a similar death to Christ.

The lessons, that he was drawing to their attention, the believers already knew. They were all ready well acquainted with the things of which he states. Now, toward his death, he wished to give them a final exhortation to remain firm and steadfast against the coming wickedness of ungodly men. Those who would be drawn away from the Truth.

The next use of the word remembrance carries the idea of gently bringing back to mind. Gently persuading and refreshing of the memory. *"I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."* In remembering the early life of Peter we think of him being impetuous - full of zeal without full understanding. We recall the words of Christ, after his resurrection, to Peter when he told him to, *"Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep."* That was what he was called to do – gently to feed them. While he remained in this tabernacle, he would feed, gently, leading the sheep under the care of God.

A slightly different aspect of the word remembrance is brought out a bit later. It carries the idea of a monumental stone, a marker, or a tombstone. When we see that Peter is now speaking of his death at the end of his ministry, how fitting then that this word should be used in this instance.

He was, anticipating death. And it was his desire that the lessons should be well impressed upon his hearers and should be a monument of his service to the ecclesias. Not as a personal achievement of Peter's service, but as Paul says, *"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh."* But it was the hidden man of the spirit.

This final message was carried to us by the Spirit through the preservation of the Scriptures and its preservation was the memorial marker. That was to be the inscription on the tombstone. If we think of Peter after the flesh, our minds go to his reflection of the master. Full of zeal, *as we have said*, but not fully developed. The cutting off of the ear of the servant of the High Priest, to which Christ said, *"Put thy sword into thy sheath. They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."* That was Peter after the flesh. And later we find it necessary for Paul to correct Peter in the matter of the keeping of the law. Those instances were not to be marked on the tombstone. This higher mark was to be his message of life – of hope that we should bear in mind what he stated, *"By us, the Apostles and of the prophets."*

The record that Peter leaves in his epistles is an exhortation for all of us to look unto, that we may apply our minds unto those things which have been on record for generations. Now he states that the things which he has taught them and which he was now refreshing their minds about, were not cunningly 150 devised fables. But they were things which he had expressly received

from the Lord. He had actually witnessed the things that he was speaking about. "for we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* On the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James and John heard those momentous words. They saw and witnessed the glory of Jesus in his kingdom. The Word is a light and a lamp and a witness for us to apply ourselves. It also teaches us that there is no broken theme in the scriptures — that is the common theme or thread running from cover to cover that Christ and the apostles gave witness.

*"Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man."* It wasn't a human fabrication. It wasn't cunningly devised fables as Peter says. *"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* And so this record — this marker of Peter's is a record that is preserved by the Holy Spirit. Peter said, *"Having the assurance of the things of the kingdom, beware, for there shall be false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you."*

There were false prophets in Israel in the past who would draw them away, from the Truth as Paul also said to the Ephesians that their own elders should rise. There would be those who would draw away disciples after them and who would draw them away from the Truth. "And many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of Truth shall be evil spoken of."

Now, to impress his hearers with the thought of the danger of the drawing away, he calls their attention to two, outstanding, historical events. He warns them to be watchful. *"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"* This is the case of Noah and seven others that were saved, when the earth was destroyed by water and also the case of Lot and his two daughters being saved out of the multitude of the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrha. Then, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"

God is in complete control. Regardless of the judgments he is to bring, it is clearly shown that he is able to deliver the righteous, the few righteous, in the day of trouble and adversity. So he warns us not to be disturbed by 151

these things which overthrow and trouble the brotherhood. This was coming about quickly at this time, as Paul had also said should come about.

They were not to be disturbed to the point of losing faith in God, but as Peter warned them again of the dangers of worldly associations, telling them, and us, to keep separate. He says that they were as natural brute beasts. They shall utterly perish in their own corruption. And he likens them to Balaam the son of Beor who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

He states that all such are wells without water, clouds that are carried with the tempest. Not like the Word of God. There is no water in them. Coming unto them, there is no refreshing. They promised liberty, but they themselves are the servants of corruption. They are bound by their lusts – their wickedness. For he said, *"of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."* He is held a servant to his lusts. In these last days of the Gentile times we too can see the lusts that surround us and bombard us daily from newspapers, computers, billboards and the like. There are many enticements to the weak of mind. It is up to us to help each other in strengthening the body.

Peter now brings out an important point - that knowledge brings responsibility. *"For if after they have escaped the pollution's of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."* And he said that it was better for them if they had not known the Truth, than having once known the way of righteousness, to turn from the Holy commandment which was delivered unto them. A grave responsibility placed upon each one of us that know the Word of God. How important that we remember these things. It were better not to have known than to turn our backs on the Truth and God.

The principle of keeping ourselves clean from the world is brought about when he speaks of the dog and the sow. These are two unclean animals. They are the ones who know not, or keep not the laws of God. They manifest their unclean characteristics. How important it is that we, who have been washed through the waters of baptism, we remain clean and pure. We remember the lessons from 1 Corinthians 6, telling us that we are the temple of the Living God and that we must keep the temple clean. If found worthy for honor and glory in the temple of the future age, we shall wear white robes – clean white.

And thus the apostle has prepared us for the third chapter, the chapter under consideration for this address. He points out the dangers of not conforming to the world and constantly reminding ourselves what manner of persons we ought to be. *"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the 152 apostles of the Lord and Saviour."* All linked together under one



thought. Peter now undertakes to show that God's purpose is sure and firm regardless of how it may appear at any particular moment or generation.

Peter reminded them that there would be a generation who would arise saying, *"Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."* The people, in the time of Ezekiel, also stated that God did not see them. We remember similar conditions when Moses went up into the Mount and Israel quickly turned to a god that they could see.

Peter alludes to the conditions in the days of Noah. Noah preached for 120 years but the people ignored the preaching and laughed at his building. Noah preached that God would bring judgment upon them. And we know that God did bring the judgment upon them, as Peter so clearly sets out. But he shows that God's time cycle is not on a human basis. *"One day is as a thousand years with the Lord, and a thousand years as one day."* He points out that God is not slack concerning his promise. That He is not ignoring what is going on. But the extension of time, that we see, is mercifully provided for our salvation. *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

In our early Sunday School we first learned that God was everywhere present and we often sing, that God's eye commands, with piercing view, our rising and our resting hours. We come back to asking ourselves the question, *"what manner of persons should we be?"* Our walk in the Truth should be more in keeping with our profession of faith, for we should be constantly on the alert to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

We talk of the glory to be manifested in the Kingdom of God, and sometimes speak with confidence as though we were certain that we would be there, forgetting at times that there are objects connected with our calling that must be accomplished during the period of our probation.

Our calling is a high and lofty one, and there are many features associated with it, if we hope to be in the Kingdom. These features must be observed and form a definite part of our lives to such an extent that our method of living would characterize us as being entirely different from those who surround us.

Our calling comprehends the act of witnessing for the Truth. Therefore, said Jesus, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glory your Father which is in heaven."*

These gracious words of Jesus were intended to make an impression or mark of remembrance upon our minds – an impression that would result in ACTION. Our calling is far higher than a mere knowledge of the Truth – far greater than attendance at our meetings. The Truth is intended to have 153

a sobering influence upon us by forming and shaping us both morally and spiritually, that we might be "*conformed to the image of God's Son.*"

This can only be done by following in his footsteps, for if we do not walk with him now, we certainly will never walk with him in the age to come.

The focal point of our calling is holiness, without which, said Paul, "no man shall see the Lord." Holiness is a comprehensive term. Its basic meaning is to set apart or consecrate. James expresses this separateness as "*keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.*" What is the world? John says, "*All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*" John 2:16

Holiness, then, is a state of cleanness, and a state of cleanness is accomplished by obedience to the commands of God and His Son, Jesus. There is no other standard. These commandments are easy to be understood. They must be kept in remembrance. And we must act upon them. Jesus said, "*The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*" John 4:23

What does it mean to "worship" God? The best answer to this question we have found is in the writings of bro. Roberts, "*It is the deferential and reverential concentration of the mind upon God, intelligently, consciously, lovingly, adoringly, trustingly and prayerfully, with a deep sense of the things revealed concerning Him and us in the Truth.*"

Let each of us stop and think seriously, and ask ourselves, how do we measure up to that well-defined standard?

Another distinctive feature comprehended in the Truth is expressed by Paul (1Cor. 4:2), "*Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.*"

Now a steward is one to whom a thing is committed, and in our case there has been placed in our trust the first principles of the Truth. Now Paul says of this class of people, it is required of them that they be found faithful. Are we faithful stewards to that which has been committed to us through our belief and obedience of the Gospel?

It was a solemn obligation that we took upon ourselves at baptism, that "*by love we would serve one another*" and "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." That was the establishment of our first love, and we are reminded by the apostle in Hebrews 3:14, "*For we are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*"

The beginning of our confidence was a day of unspeakable joy, and we 154 determined that we would do everything possible "to make our calling

and election sure." We left off our former way of living, and went forth to walk in newness of life. The Truth became sacred to us, and our hearts burned within us when we listened to exhortations and lectures, and we were always ready to "praise the Lord and call upon His Name."

We were always ready to help in the work of the ecclesia, so we attended the meetings regularly for three reasons. That we might please God; that we might encourage our serving Brethren; and for our own benefit, that our knowledge and understanding of the way to the tree of life would be increased.

The exhortations became the rule of action of our lives, and we listened attentively so that we could extract from them such thoughts as would help us on the way to the Kingdom. We fully realized our faults, weaknesses and shortcomings, and our entire dependence upon the mercy of God, and we made it the controlling conviction of our lives. Therefore we determined to, *"Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth."* Ephesians 4:24

This is the new life to which we are called by the Gospel, and that is how we responded to it through our first love.

Now is the time to look over our record, and see how we stand with regard to the beginning of our confidence, and ask ourselves frankly if that defines our present position. What we have presented is not in any manner a fantasy. It is real and based upon a solid foundation, and represents in part that life of holiness to which we are called by the Gospel.

Being a Christadelphian is not just being a member of an ecclesia. It goes much deeper than that — it is a way of life related to the Truth in all its elements. Here are a few examples,

*"Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you."* Matt. 5:44

*"Recompense to no man evil for evil: overcome evil with good."* Romans 12:17

*"Pray for them that despitefully use you and afflict you."* Matt. 5:44

*"Put away anger, wrath, bitterness, and all evil speaking"* Ephesians 4:31

*"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* Ephesians 4:32

Our call to holiness is twofold. First, we are separated from the world because of our belief and obedience of the Gospel, but this is useless without personal holiness, and that is where we are in danger of failure. The above commandments are examples of personal holiness that must be observed. Paul emphasizes this in Titus 2:14, and calls attention that the central work 155

of Christ was to, "Give himself for us, redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself (make holy unto himself) a peculiar people (his own possession) ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS."

In the Law He gave to Israel, God gave a clear illustration of the meaning of holiness. As we reflect upon it, we see the attributes that are pleasing to him in the sons of men. These are a deep sense of worship, mercifulness of disposition, justice of action, purity of thought, cleanliness of body, and separateness from the world.

These are all comprehended in the term "obedience," because they are commanded.

We are not a social organization in which each one can do as he pleases.

We must fully and constantly realize that we are members of the Body of Christ – the Ecclesia of the Living God. He has called us with a high and holy calling to become His sons and daughters!

*And when Jesus appears in his Kingdom and glory, they that will be with him will be the called, and chosen, and faithful. Let us keep in mind, by way of remembrance, Peter's final exhortation, for them to remain firm against the coming wickedness of ungodly men - those who would be drawn away from the Truth. We must hold fast to our faith until Jesus returns, with these words uppermost in our minds, "What manner of persons ought we to be."*

*Bro. Fred J. Higham*

## **Jerusalem In Conflict**

Almost daily, we see Jerusalem in great conflict. It is a modern day conflict that challenges the Bible testimony as to who is God, and is He still working out His plan in the earth?

The conflict, of course, is between the Palestinians and the Israeli's, but far deeper in this is the conflict between the religious claims of the Moslems and the religious claims of the Jews. The equivalent of the Moslem Bible is a book they call the Koran. And the following verses from the Koran will show the conflict between the Bible and the Koran which has created this fervor in the Middle East. In the second chapter of the Koran, called "The Cow", we find the following verses written about Abraham, (who of course, was the father of the Jews,) and his descendants which of course are the Jews themselves).

2.122: O children of Israel, call to mind My favor which I bestowed on 156 you and that I made you excel the nations.

2.123: And be on your guard against a day when no soul shall avail another in the least neither shall any compensation be accepted from it, nor shall intercession profit it, nor shall they be helped.

2.124: And when his Lord tried **Ibrahim** with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. **Ibrahim** said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.

We see here, that the Koran has Abraham being tried, and then receiving a promise, (not altogether unlike the Bible) but then Abraham inquires about his offspring. To this inquiry, Abraham is told by God, "My covenant does not include the unjust."

But when we look at the Scriptural account, we find something altogether different. In the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis we read of Bible's account thus:

Genesis 13:14-15, *"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."*

The Koran testifies that there are no promises made to Abraham's offspring, except for destruction, (as we shall see momentarily) while the Bible teaches that the promise is not only made to him, but to his seed, his offspring, to receive the land "forever."

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul makes the following point about the promises made to Abraham, but denied by the Koran. Paul wrote:

Galatians 3:16, *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

So direct and to the point, Paul shows that the promises were not only made to Abraham but also to his offspring, his seed, which was Christ, a direct descendant of Abraham. Paul goes on, explaining how we become a part of this seed:

Galatians 3:27-29, *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

So the very root of the Bible attacks the very root of the Moslem's Koran, and vice versa. Can there be any question about why this problem cannot be resolved by men? Modern day Christians see little value in this discussion, beyond the tremendous loss of life, but to the Jews and Arabs, it is a question as to who is God. Modern Christians look for kingdoms in the skies, and so world politics have little to do with religion. To some degree they agree 157

with the Arabs that Abraham has already inherited his promise. The Koran, for instance continues.

The Koran continues:

2.125: And when We made the House a pilgrimage for men and a (place of) security, and: Appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of **Ibrahim**. And We enjoined **Ibrahim** and Ismail saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves.

2.126: And when **Ibrahim** said: My Lord, make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the last day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the fire; and it is an evil destination.

2.127: And when **Ibrahim** and Ismail raised the foundations of the House: Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing:

Here again we see the conflict of the modern Middle East in these words. The Koran said: "Appoint for yourself a place of prayer on the standing place of Abraham." This standing place of Abraham, all believe, is the Mount of Zion where the Moslem Dome of the Rock stands today. The Arabs (like modern Christians) believe this was Abraham's inheritance on earth, but now he has gone on to a kingdom in the sky. But the Bible testifies something very different. The promises, as we saw told Abraham to look northward, southward, eastward and westward. All the LAND that thou seest will I give unto thee and to thy seed as an inheritance for ever. God didn't tell Abraham to look up. He didn't warn him about looking down. The promise was the land.

And the Bible is very clear that Abraham did not have cities, or lands during his lifetime. Paul records of the Faithful Abraham in Hebrews 11:

Hebrews 11:8-10, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Abraham wasn't looking for any worldly city. He looked for a city established by God. One for himself and his seed to live in forever, not for the period of years that he lived his mortal life. And Paul concludes his argument about Abraham and his Promise with these words:

Hebrews 11:13-16 *"These all died in faith, not having received the 158 promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them,*

*and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."*

The Bible could not be clearer. Abraham died without receiving that promise. But he saw them afar off, he embraced them, but confessed that he was only a pilgrim on this earth until the day that God would establish God's city for Abraham and his seed to live in. And when, does Paul say that will happen. Concluding the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews, Paul wrote:

*Hebrews 11:39-40, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."*

We will all, Abraham and the faithful of old, receive the promise together. As was shown from this platform last night, the re-gathering of Israel into a nation is among the last events necessary to be accomplished before Christ's return to the earth. But when Israel was gathered, she was to engender such conflict and strife that the world would eventually erupt into a war over her.

The profit Joel wrote of this re-gathering of Israel from her captivity:

*Joel 3:1-2, "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."*

All nations will be caught up in this conflict, this strife. There is to be, at the time of the end, a conflict over Israel so great so as to involve all the nations of the earth in a great war over it. And ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, isn't that what we see today in Jerusalem. A conflict so deep and bitter that it cannot be resolved, even through endless years of negotiations. It has not been able to be resolved by war. A conflict that, frankly, neither side wants to see resolved short to complete annihilation of their respective enemy. A conflict that God prophesies thus:

*Joel 3:9-17, "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is 159*

*full, the fountains overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."*

And can we not see how the religious claims and conflicts between the Arabs and Jews are bringing this course of events, just exactly as God prophesied that it would? Claims entirely opposite and so divergent that they cannot allow themselves to live in peace.

Going back to the section we last looked at from the Koran notice that the foundations of this city which Abraham was already said to have inherited, was laid in Abraham and in Ishmael, who was a principle father of the Arab people. But the Bible testifies a different course for Ishmael. We read of this when Abraham is promised that he will have the true seed through Sarah, his wife, not from Hagar his handmaid and Ishmael's mother. Abraham did not understand that it was possible for Sarah to have a child at her advanced age so he asked of God as recorded in Gen. 17:

*Genesis 17:18-21, "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."*

And the New Testament testifies of the same thing concerning Abraham's two sons, Isaac son of Sarah, and Ishmael son of Hagar:

*Galatians 4:22-30, "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, 160 are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh*



persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

So the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New Testament, both the Jews and the Christians testify that Ishmael was not to be heir with the promised seed or offspring, (again in direct contrast to the Koran,) but is in fact the son of the bondwoman. The Jews, descendants of Isaac are the children of promise, the Arabs, descendants of Ishmael, the children of bondage. This sets up an envy between the brothers that no peace table can overcome.

Now, as we have seen, it is God's intent at the time of the end to bring all nations to Jerusalem for the great battle of nations, often styled the battle of Armageddon. And we can see that a part of the conflict that God has created to bring this about, hinges on the Temple Mount itself.

In fact, the current "Holy War," as the Moslems call it, was greatly fueled when now president Arid Sharon went to the "Wailing Wall", the last vestige of the Jewish Temple that once stood on the temple mount, last September to pray. This excited the Moslems into a war that at current count, has seen 484 Palestinians, and 107 Jews lose their lives.

But against this backdrop of war, are the people of the region looking for a peaceful solution? The answer is no. Neither side wants it. And neither side wants it because both of them look at control of the Temple Mount as a sign of approval from their God. As we have seen in the 126<sup>th</sup> verse of the second chapter of the Koran, The Koran prophesied that God said "whoever disbelieves," (the things taught in the Koran) I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the fire; and it is an evil destination." This is the prophesy the Arabs believe is testified of the Jews. They will have enjoyment for awhile, and then they will be chastised with fire and an evil destination.

The Arabs believe the Jews are currently in this period of time, called "a short while" in which they are permitted prosperity, and they are most anxious to bring about the chastisement of fire for Israel.

The Iranian backed militant group called "Hamas" has had success in South Lebanon recently, in getting Israel to back out of Lebanon under Prime Minister Barak, and this has further encouraged the Arabs. They believe that Israel has become soft, and that her prosperity has made the Jews unwilling to fight. And they are encouraged that this "short while" is near its end.

The Jews, on the other hand, look at the Moslem mosque on the Temple Mount, and they too believe that if they are only righteous enough, God will cause the third temple to be built on that Shrine. The following is from 161

a Jewish group dedicated to rebuilding the temple on the spot where the Moslem Mosque now stands.

"G-d is watching us from His destroyed temple and hill which is now again a prisoner in the hands of the pagan Arab foreigners and calls on us to rebuild His house. He wants to dwell once again in His rebuilt house amongst His people and all His creation and He can no longer wait for this. To all who say that the time for this has not yet arrived, He answers what He said through His prophet, Haggai: *"Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say that the time has not yet come, the time that the LORD's house should be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, ... Thus says the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the LORD. You looked for much, and, behold, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, and everyone of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heaven above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands."* (Haggai 1:2,3,7-11)

"G-d will never accept the current shameful situation on the Temple Mount. As long as this situation persists and the temple is not rebuilt, there will never be peace in Israel and all over the world. Troubles, wars and suffering will continue to be in Israel and all over the world. G-d wants to dwell among His people and creation and to reflect His love and blessings on them. He is ready but we are not ready. Only the rebuilding of the temple will open a new era of peace among nations and establish the Kingdom of G-d and His wonderful principles all over Israel and the world."

Both sides believe that the Temple Mount is theirs by Divine Right. Both look at the occupation of the other as a punishment on themselves for disobedience, and both believe that if they are just more dedicated Moslems or Jews, God will reward them accordingly and drive the other off. Against this backdrop, can there be any wonder that the Oslo Peace Accords of 1992 which were hailed as having brought peace to the Middle East, have now so completely and entirely failed?

And both sides are correct that God will never accept the current shameful situation on the Temple Mount. It is God's intent to rebuild His temple, and restore peace to the world, though the current combatants are simply a means to His divine end. Zechariah told us:

Zechariah 6:12-13 *"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he*

*shall* grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Jesus will rebuild the temple, but not till the current disrupters are brought low before his army.

Such is the testimony of the Koran in direct contrast to the testimony of the Bible. So that what we see in the Middle east today is a conflict that cannot be healed with words and treaties. This is not about land and power. To the combatants, it is a direct question about which religion is true, Islam, or Judaism. In reality, it is God, using both as pawns to bring the world together for the war called in Scripture, "The Great Day of God Almighty."

The war we see in the Middle east today is a testimony of God that He is God. It is a stark warning to the world that in fact, God is still working out His plan of salvation in the earth.

The frustration that the world feels towards this can be seen in many places, but we were particularly struck by this news report from an American journalist working for MSNBC who was brought home this past week because of the fighting. These are his conclusions:

"Here in North America, I grow tired of hearing people say "it will never end" when they look at what's happening in the Middle East. It sounds like a thoughtless cliché, spouted by people who think the inhabitants of the region actually enjoy the violence.

"It will end, because it has to, because most people are rational and want to live in peace. But the violence and anger of the last eight months have guaranteed that the bloodshed will not end easily or to either side's satisfaction. This cycle of violence will intensify, anger and mistrust will grow, and on any given day or week, many people will die. The conflict will escalate to a point where some international body might be compelled to intervene and pull both sides apart, like a referee at a boxing match. And they will be forced to comply with an unhappy peace agreement that the extremists will be unable to influence because it will have been imposed upon them and policed by an international force that is not hampered by the emotion or heated passion of the local inhabitants. It's a way out, but it may never happen"--Hanson R. Hosein

Yes, as this author notes, the conflict will end. Yes, all the powers of the world will have to become involved, as a referee, only in this case, each referee looking out for his own interests, not the interests of the combatants. It will end when the great northern power, Russia descends to settle the middle eastern question on her own behalf. Then we read:

Ezekiel 38:18-23 , *"And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD."*

*Bro. Jim Phillips*

## **As Ye See The Day Approaching**

Beloved Brethren and Sisters, we each have been given the highest, holiest, most prestigious and honorable invitation mortal beings could possibly receive! It didn't come from any worldly dignitary, either royal or political, but from The Highest Himself - The Almighty! Yahweh - The Eternal First Cause - the one and only true Deity who is the most holy and who lives eternally without beginning or end, has condescended in mercy and in love to invite us to *come out and be separate from the uncleanness that is in the world through lust and to believe and obey the glorious Gospel of truth as it is in Jesus His son*. We each have accepted that invitation. Having received, heard, believed and obeyed (these first commands), we were baptized into Yahweh's anointed, who is *"the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6). "We realized then (and hopefully will unto the end - either our death or until Christ's return) the *inestimable value* of that calling. Indeed, we each have laid hold on the real and true opportunity of a lifetime! In actuality, there is absolutely nothing that can be compared unto it, though in scripture, Jesus spoke the parables of *The Treasure Hid In a Field* and *The Pearl of Great Price* to show what is necessary to apprehend the truth as it is in him. (See Matthew 13:44-45)

Upon our immersion into Christ, we put on Christ. We were, as • it were, invested with him as with a garment and are, therefore, *in* him. Being in him, we are his. In being his, we are *"Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* and citizens *"of the Commonwealth of Israel"*, being no longer *"strangers from the covenants of promise."* Instead of being *"aliens"* and 164 *"without God"* [*a-thios = no thios or atheist*] in the world, we are now

*heirs and citizens and are in the Father and in his son!* (See Galatians 3:26-29 and Ephesians 2:12) Upon rising out of the waters of baptism, our past sins were forgiven and we entered into covenant relationship with the Eternal Father! Yahweh has forgiven us for Christ's sake who died that the new and living way might be opened. That way could never have been opened, had he not through perfect love, faith and obedience to Yahweh, his father, overcome the law of sin and death in his members. For he *"was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15) He ever did those things which pleased the Father, esteeming His word more necessary than his daily bread. Remember the temptation in the wilderness just after his baptism? *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* (Matthew 4:4) He thus, lovingly and faithfully fulfilled the law, removing it out of the way.

*It is essential for us each, Brethren and Sisters, to abide in the Father and in the son, having entered into covenant relationship with the Eternal.* This is the most important thing we have ever done. We dare not turn back or away from Him who has called us into His marvelous light. The consequences of doing so are awful and dreadful, exceedingly. Consider the following clear statements from God's Word.

*"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."* (2 Peter 2:20-22)

*"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* (Hebrews 10:28-31)

It is our wisdom, therefore, to abide in the Father and in the son. This is vital for (Spiritual) life, just as breathing is necessary to sustain natural life. If we don't, we are dead while we live. Remember the answer the children of Israel gave Moses to return to Yahweh's Eloah on Mount Sinai? *"All that the LORD hath spoken we will do."* (Exodus 19:8) We must also remember Paul's words to the Galatians: *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* (Galatians 6:7)

If we walk after the Spirit from moment to moment, we will be catering less and less to the fleshly mind, unbridled impulses and deceitful lusts. To do this, we must ever seek to know and to do the will of God to the best of our ability. This requires prayerful, daily, attentive reading and study of God's Holy word of truth. We should give ourselves wholly to these things as much as we can. In writing this, I think of Paul's words to young Timothy: *"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them..."* (1 Timothy 4:13-15)

We will only be able to stay close to the Father if we diligently seek Him, remembering that *"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Hebrews 11:6) *"...Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (Romans 10:17)

The more time and attention we give to God's Word, which He has magnified above all His name, (Psalms 138:2) the deeper and stronger we will be grounded and rooted in it. Trees and plants (the righteous are likened in scripture to trees and to plants) that have deep and strong root systems are much better able to survive drought, windstorm and flood. The first Psalm gives us a beautiful illustration of this and we do well to receive its lesson.

*"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."*

There are two scriptures that often come to mind which are like anchors to me, as they doubtless are to each of us. The first is: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."* (Isaiah 26:3) And the second is: *"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."* (Psalms 119:165)

These things, also, are some of the parts of the formula for success if we truly apply them in our daily lives in our walk and conduct. *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* (Proverbs 3:5-6) — *"Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established."* (Proverbs 16:3) — *"...Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt. 6:33) — *166 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof"* (Proverbs 18:21) — *"If the iron be blunt, and he*

*do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct." (Eccl. 10:10) — "...To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17) — "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12) — "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." (Proverbs 3:27) — "...bless, and curse not." (Romans 12:14) — "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Colossians 3:12-15) — "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1Thess. 5:17-18) — "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)*

*Of course, Brethren and Sisters, we each know that - "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim 3:16-17)*

*As we see the day approaching, let us hold "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) May we do these things in faith that works by love to the glory of Yahweh, in and through His anointed, our Lord and savior.*

*Bro. David VanPelt*

## **BE READY**

**"BE READY! WATCH!"** This does not mean that we are to secrete ourselves, as in a cloister, or dismiss the practical affairs of life from a due attention.

## What Does That Mean?

*"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not."*

*Jeremiah 45: 5*

I once read a commentary on this chapter, that it was Baruch's desire to become governor of the land (instead of Gedaliah). He knew that shortly his prophecy of the king being destroyed and carried to Babylon would come to pass, allowing him to obtain this "great" position. Is there any evidence of Baruch having this ambition? If not, what other "great things" could he be seeking?

Baruch was a young man willing to serve God and His prophet Jeremiah, but when he finds himself being hunted by the king's men for predicting the overthrow of the kingdom and death of the king, he cries out: *"Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest."* (verse 3)

His feelings were, "After the grief of writing and reading the prophecies of my country's ruin, I have the sorrow of being treated as a criminal for doing it and am being hunted as an animal."

This short chapter is a direct answer to Baruch's prayer of concern for his life. God says that His nation and temple will suffer defeat, and does he (Baruch) expect to get away without any hardship? "Great things" that we seek may be quite small in and of themselves, but when we set them up in our hearts and pursue them, they become "great things" to us. The "great things" that Baruch was seeking may have simply been the request to live in peace and quiet. God could have been telling him to be content with the circumstances he found himself in. Although Baruch was in great straits; to seek another position or a lessening of his responsibilities could be "seeking great things for himself".

Paul says, *" My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons."* (Hebrews 12:5-7) God has never promised us a trouble-free journey. Paul learned to be content in whatever condition he found himself. Let us not seek great things for ourselves, but like Jeremiah, Baruch, Paul and Christ, offer our life in service to God regardless of the hardships it may bring upon us. It is our position in life to "hold up the hands that hang down" and "strengthen the things which remaineth" no matter how difficult the prospects may appear to us at the present time. Remember, we have here no continuing city but seek one to come. If we endure to the end, we will find it has been worth the trouble.



