

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.

VOL. 4, NO. 8

AUGUST, 2001

Please send Ecclesial communications to:
Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich 48035 U.S.A.
Fax: (810) 790-8519 [e-mail: fredhigham@ameritech.net](mailto:fredhigham@ameritech.net)

ECCLESIAL NEWS	Lampasas, Houston	
FRATERNAL GATHERINGS	Hye, Holladay	
EXHORTATION	Wait Upon The Lord	173
EXHORTATION	Zechariah 11	178
STUDY	Daniel - The Ferocity Of The Kingdom Of Men	185
THOUGHT	He Is Coming With The Clouds	190
Thoughts Gleaned By The Way		191
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?		192
B.E.N.'S PAGE.....	(Insert)	

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.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

LAMPASAS, Texas, S.S. & Study Class, 9:50 A.M.; Memorial 11:00 A.M.; Seasons of Comfort Class 1:15 P.M., Lecture- 4th Sunday; Bible Class Wednesday 7:30 P.M.; Fraternal Gathering, 2nd Weekend in June.—Bro. Rusty Stephen, 1301 N. Hwy. 281 Box 16A, Lampasas, TX 76550; phone (512) 556-6771.

Greetings in the Master's Name;

Once again it is my honor to update the brotherhood on the workings of the Lampasas Berean Ecclesia. We have just concluded our 34th Annual June Fraternal Gathering, which was a big success.

A special thanks to the visiting Brethren who did the speaking duties, which include, Bro. Bob Wolfe who started the weekend with the Friday night Lecture on the historical events of Israel in the last 50 years. Bro. Bob Bent gave the Saturday 11:00am Exhortation on Fellowship. Bro. Carwyn Smith spoke to us that afternoon on Hezekiah and Bro. Jim Phillips gave the Saturday night Lecture on the return of Christ and prophecy concerning Israel. Bro. Gary Smith gave the Sunday morning Exhortation on 'God Loves You'.

On a sadder note, our Bro. Raymond Connolly fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday night June 7, 2001. He had been ill for the better part of 20 years, he sleeps in the hope of the Resurrection to life eternal. Our prayers are with his family, Sis. Maxine, Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kitty.

Bro. Raymond was an inspiration to this writer, to never give up hope on those in the world. He always wished he could do more with the Ecclesia but alas his health prevented him. This writer and all who lived around him will sorely miss him.

We have been blessed with many visiting Brothers and Sisters including, Sis. Anne Prado, Sis. Lennie Hennig, Bro. Harry and Sis. Cindy Cassidy, Bro. Jack Carroll, Sis. Becky Snyder, Sis. Sharon Johnatty, Bro. Bob and Sis. Sharon Wolfe, Bro. Bob Bent, Bro. Gary and Sis. Brenda Smith, Bro. Carwyn Smith, Bro. Jim and Sis. Kay Phillips, Bro. Matthew Phillips, Sis. Naomi Phillips, Bro. Arid Hopper, Sis. Juanita Reiss, Bro. Mark and Sis. Carol Dylla, some of which helped us with the word of Exhortation. We look forward to next month, and hoping, God Willing, to see many of you at the Hye Fraternal Gathering.

Love in the Bonds of the Truth,

Bro. Rusty Stephen
Recording brother

HOUSTON, Texas - Sunday School 10am (Law of Moses); Memorial 11am; Study Class 1pm (Phanerosis). Wednesday 7:30pm (Exposition of Revelation). Meeting Hall at 8008 Junius St, Houston, TX 77012.

Greetings to all,

Recently Houston was subjected to what has been called the worst floods seen here in recorded history. After a few inquiries from around the brotherhood as to our ecclesia's well being in the aftermath, we sent out a short email via the Encouraging Words list to let those on email know how we were. The Lord spared all in our ecclesia from any damage or harm whatsoever, including our meeting hall. It's good to consider and reflect upon certain events, for in them we see how the hand of God can work, and work swiftly and decisively if His purpose calls for it. To give you all an idea of what it was like here I'll recount briefly what I personally witnessed.

We had experienced heavy rains and some flooding a couple of days prior, as much as 15 inches around town, so the ground was already saturated. Then on Friday afternoon, June 8th, it started again. I stayed up late that night and listened to the news coverage as rain fell all over town at the rate of 2-4 inches per hour, and it continued for 15 hours. Twenty thousand people fled to shelters, and the devastation across the city was incredible.

I've copied and inserted here an excerpt from an email that I sent to my father at 3am that night. It gives just a glimpse into the devastation and panic that swept over our city in less than 24 hours, much of it in the middle of the night. The letter follows:

"Only a quick note - it's 3am Friday night (Saturday morning) and Houston is under the worst flooding I've seen in my 32 years here. I've gotten 14 inches in the past 12 hours and some places around the city have gotten 15-28 inches...that's on top of the 5-15 inches that fell two days ago...and it's expected to continue thru tomorrow. The difference with this rainfall is that literally the entire area has been hammered...150 square miles...buried.

Interstate Highway 10 has water so high in some places that 18-wheel trucks are either floating or totally submerged. People have been calling 911 emergency for hours and can't get through, all bayous are basically over their banks. Scores of people have 5-6 feet of water inside their homes, people calling the TV stations are weeping on the phone because they are stranded and can't get to feeble neighbors that are stranded and can't get thru to 911 emergency, some shelters set up for aid are also flooding, vehicles are underwater all over town, they showed one gas station with (I counted) 75-100 cars crammed into its parking lot trying to

escape but many of those have water over their headlights, the entire 171

medical center is blocked from any emergency or other vehicle getting in or out [this is the main medical area in our city - almost 60,000 medical professionals work there in probably 8 or more hospitals, two medical schools, etc], most hospitals in the medical center are flooded with Herman Hospital having 15-20 feet of water in it's lobby, most of these hospitals have lost all power, downtown is flooded, Channel 13 news (ABC news here) asked for help from anyone with a high water vehicle with some special pump to come to their aid or they would lose ability to even broadcast, most of the news station's trucks are stranded all over town unable to move, people calling into news stations saying "I've lived here 25 years and never had water in my home and I have 5 feet in my house right now" (this person had a one story home and was standing chest high in water in his living room and his cars were completely submerged in his driveway) he had nowhere to go, one 60 year old heart patient stayed all night on top of a piece of furniture...etc etc...and the rain continues heavy...

Truly incredible! The devastation across the city will be remarkable tomorrow when the sun rises...assuming it lets up and we don't get rain for another 24 hours - it's predicted that we could get another 10 inches. (end of excerpt)

We see how quickly the Lord can change "peace and safety." May we remain ever near Him and abide under the shadow of His wings.

Other notes include our Sunday School group having an outing, with both adults and young attending. The place was a small amusement park that offers go-karts, bumper boats, putt-putt golf, batting cages and so forth. They enjoyed a few hours of running around having fun and then enjoyed eating pizza. After pizza, they started round 2 and continued until closing, (or until Mom and Dad said "time to go")! There were tales of splendid athleticism, and some debate ensued as to who enjoyed the day more, the kids or the parents.

Since our last correspondence we have had the pleasure of a number of visitors including Bro. Rusty and Sis. Susie Stephen, Bro. Pat and Sis. Marie Cassidy, Bro. Jerry and Sis. Kitty Connolly, all from Lampasas; and Bro. Paul Garvey from Boston. Bro. Jerry and Bro. Paul also offered words of exhortation while visiting. We appreciate all of the visitors for their efforts to meet with us.

With love to all from your Brethren and Sisters in Houston,
Bro. Shauywn Smith

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

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, Exodus 34-38

HOLLADAY FRATERNAL GATHERING..... October 6 - 7, 2001

Bro. Warren Rankin, 699 White Tail Rd, Holladay, TN 38341, 901-584-3925

Wait Upon the Lord

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

Let us wait upon Yahweh, for it is only such that receive the characteristics spoken of here. Let us read this section from Isaiah chapter 40, beginning in verse 28 through 31.

"Hast thou not known? halt thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The question is asked " Hast thou not known?"

We are the Brethren of Christ. We have been called out of the darkness into His glorious light. We have symbolically died to that old man of sin and made the public commitment to walk in the newness of life; And to do all that the Lord saith; (The question *"Hast thou not known?"*)

Yes Brethren, we have known; and we do know; but let us know sufficiently so as to wait upon the Lord. The word 'wait' as used here is taken from the Hebrew word `Qavah' and according to Strong's, a prime root meaning, (Quote) " to bind together (perhaps by twisting", that is the word wait.) Gesenius adds to this in addition to the binding and twisting "to be strong, robust, for the notion of binding fast, to await perhaps from enduring" (end of quote) But those that wait upon the Lord, they bind: themselves fast to Him and to the Hope therein, so that by twisting, they become one with Him and they hold fast to this and robustly and enduringly await His salvation. This gives the sense of the meaning of the word.

In Psalms 25; it uses the same word (wait) in verses 2 & 3, *"O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed:.."*

Here we see David binding himself fast to God and trusting in God and robustly holding fast to his hope in God in the face of his enemies.

Here David also says he trusts in God and then he says, *"he waits on God."*

The word *"trust"* as used here is from the Hebrew, which means; (quote from Strong's) "to flee for protection, have hope, make refuge." So that David here was literally saying that he would flee to God for protection and then bind himself to God trusting in him and awaiting salvation.

We may ask ourselves why God requires of His servants this understanding and this attitude? God requires us to come to understanding through experience that it is out of Him that all things have and will proceed; out of Him has proceeded the earth upon which we stand; And the sun which provides the energy for life; out of Him has come all life and in Him we live and move and have our being.

In the beginning Adam and Eve refused to acknowledge God in the way required. Genesis 3:6 says, *"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."* They did not bind themselves unto God and enduringly and robustly wait upon Him, rather they reached out with their own hand, using their own fleshly wisdom for goodness, pleasantness and wisdom; they completely left God out of the picture.

They did not yet understand that Yahweh name even God saying *"I will be who I will be,"* and they and we must come to realize that our

only hope of life and true goodness, true pleasantness and true wisdom which they sought after is to bind ourselves to God. It is God who will be all in all, It is God manifestation that will ultimately occur on this very earth, it is His glory that shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; man has nothing to do with it, at all; except insomuch as he binds himself to God, and to the hope that we have in God through Christ.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of the flesh and blood, (He, Christ) also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death that is the devil, (or adversary).

This principle of disobedience and fleshly initiative outside the scope of God, that came into the world through Adam and Eve was to be destroyed by Christ; and we too; have within us, that same principle residing in our flesh, that wants to reach out on its own and obtain it's own desires outside the scope of God's requirements.

Let us consider Saul as an example; In 1st Samuel 13:8-9 we have, (quote) *"And he (Saul) tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him."* (That is from Saul) *And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.* Then we see Samuel coming and ask him, saying in verses 11-12, *And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.* Saul would have known the commandments of God on this; Exodus 28:1 says, *"And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons".*

"It appertaineth not unto thee O Saul," (Samuel could have said). Here was Saul's reasoning. He said in effect, I knew that I shouldn't offer the burnt offering since I wasn't a priest; however, what was I to do? Here I am, the anointed king of God over Israel and God's people were scattered from me and the Philistines were ready to come down and massacre us all and since you hadn't come in the agreed upon time; what was I to do?

Here we have Saul reasoning this thing out in his own mind and then proceeding upon a course that to him seemed the lesser of two evils; should I allow these (God's children) to be killed by the Philistines 175

without offering peace and burnt offerings to God or should I do it myself, even though I am not a priest? And he through fleshly reasoning chose the course that seemed best to him, even though it was not against what God commanded; he did not (Quote) " Wait upon the Lord"; he did not bind himself first to God and become one with Him and robustly hold fast to God, awaiting his salvation. What was Samuel's response to this fleshly reasoning? In 1st Samuel 13:13-14, *"And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee. "*

One of the definitions of a hero is someone who does what everyone else does only he does it a little longer.

Saul had the potential of being a hero by awaiting God's salvation; we must, Brothers and Sisters, however ourselves appreciate Saul's position; his death, the death of his army and the subjugation of the entire nation was at stake. It would be easy to listen to the flesh at a time like this and say of the two choices, (this is the best one), and of those two choices perhaps that was the best; however, there was a third choice, which was not only the best, but the only one acceptable to God and that was the one that David finally arrived at and the one that we quoted earlier, *"O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed... "*

We need (Brothers and Sisters) in the times of utmost difficulty and danger to trust in God and to wait on him. We say that we have faith in God; but for this faith to be of any value it must be tried in the fire of difficulties, it must hold up in times similar to those faced by Saul, because faith if it hath not works is dead. If in the midst of this fiery trial we allow fleshly reasoning to subvert the will of God, as did Saul, our faith is dead.

The problems Saul faced were greater than most would ever encounter in their lifetime; and still faithfulness was required of Saul, (it was required) and his kingdom and his life were finally taken away from him because he fell in this instance: We must remember his life was at stake, the life of his armies and the subjugation of this entire nation; if we fall of a lesser matter will our fate be any different than his?

As Christadelphians we recognize who the devil is. It is that serpent thinking that dwells in each one of us and its that same serpent thinking of 176 which the organization of the world is built, so that whether they are

societies, religions or governments, they are all built upon this same serpent thinking.

We may ask ourselves, why does God permit us, (His servants) to suffer these ungodly forces? But these sufferings force us to bind ourselves to God; so that our allegiance is with God and we begin to see things differently, from His perspective and so we become more Godly in our thinking; by suffering because we are His, we learn to identify with Him to better understand His position and to become Godly.

This is one of the lessons; there is another: If we wait on God, (that is if we bind ourselves to God, no matter what), we demonstrate through trial, that our allegiance is in God, and as with Saul our lives and the lives of those we love and the subjection of the nation may come or it may not come, it may be forfeited but still we are God's; we have bound ourselves to him unwaveringly and come life or come death, we hold fast. We must not allow any fleshly reasoning, no matter how palatable, to cause us to release our hold and our trust in God.

We, Brethren are bought with a price, we are no longer our own, our life is now in God's hands, and what He allows to happen to us, we must accept; yea we must lovingly accept knowing that in truth all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose, and knowing this we can cast off the burden that all the world must carry; the burden of solving their own problems themselves, having no help; and if they do not solve it themselves they recognize that they face abject total helplessness; and as we look into the world around us we see men and women who are utterly destroyed by the violence of sin; they being unable to solve their own problems are broken morally and spiritually and so are sunk in themselves to immoralities, cynicism, violence and Godlessness. But we, Brethren, know that we will not be tempted beyond that which we are able to bear. We have that hope of God, which they do not have. If we hold fast to God, we can never fall, for we have accepted our Master's invitation saying, *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."*

Let us then not fight against circumstances that God has imposed for in so doing we fight against God. Let us accept the circumstances and do His will.

We, being bought with a price; even the precious blood of Jesus are now servants. Romans 6:22 says, *"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."* The word servant as used here means literally (quote from Strong's), "a slave" and that in turn comes from another 177

word meaning "bind in bonds", and this of course means that all of our actions are completely at the discretion of our Master or all that happens to us is at the discretion of our Master. We are also referred to as stewards. We must realize that everything that we have been given has been given to us by God for His use and we must learn to hold loosely those things that we have for they are not ours but they are Gods. We must ask ourselves, how can I use what is under my control best in the service of God. To do otherwise is to say with the Jews of Christ's day, it is "corban" and so bring upon ourselves Christ's condemnation.

We have seen that when difficulty comes we must flee to God and trust in Him and await His salvation; and in waiting we bind ourselves fast to Him so that (by twisting) we become one with Him and robustly hold fast to Him and await His salvation. We must learn to say:

"Father if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Let us, beloved Brethren and Sisters, never be afraid to wait upon the Lord and to allow His will to be done. *"For they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."*

Bro. Rusty Stephen

Zechariah 11

The thoughts for the exhortation this morning are taken from Zechariah 11 from our daily readings. And we have done so because we would be hard pressed to find a chapter in the Old Testament more focused on that which we have come here this morning to do, to remember the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This chapter is a stunning reminder to us, that the things prophesied by God will occur, exactly as He has spoken them. And in this reminder, we have a warning. It's a warning often expounded from this platform, that God is not slack concerning His promises, but is long suffering, not willing that any should perish.

But Brothers and Sisters, this chapter exhibits to us the reality that the long suffering of God is not eternal. It does have an end. There comes a point when the wickedness of man is more than He can stand and then God will fulfill his promises. The promise to destroy all the nations on the face of this earth and set up a new Kingdom, under the reign of Jesus of 178 Nazareth of whom the world at first rejected.

Jerusalem was the city which bound Judah and Israel together. It was the band or the binder between the two kingdoms. It was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD so that the Jews would be scattered across of the face of the earth as punishment for their wickedness. As long as Jerusalem was in tact, the Jews held hope of rebuilding their nation. When it was finally destroyed, the Jews themselves found themselves scattered across the face of the earth.

Such was the condition of the Jews from 70 AD until 1948. Their scattering was so complete that it led many students of the Bible to read this verse in Zechariah 11:14 as a permanent situation. That the binding between Judah and Israel would never again be restored. But we know that this was not to be the case. The prophet Ezekiel wrote:

Ezekiel 37:16-22, "Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and 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."

The breaking of Jerusalem was not to last forever. It was to be a very real punishment until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, as Jesus himself prophesied. But then the Stick of Judah was to be rejoined to the stick of Joseph; and Israel will have one King. This is a time yet future.

But in the present, we can see the force of the prophet Zechariah's words, that Jerusalem is the band between Judah and Israel. In 1947 Prime Minister Churchill had drawn up boundaries which were impossible for Israel to defend. David Ben Gurion, the first president of Israel recognized that because of the way the first map was drawn, he had to make certain decisions on how to defend the nation when the Arabs attacked. 183

He also knew that the attack would come almost immediately after the British withdrew from Israel. His decision? Save Jerusalem, let all the rest of Israel, including Tel Aviv the pre-determined capital, fall. And what did the Arabs know? Conquer Jerusalem. Forget about the rest of Israel, for the Jews will not fight after Jerusalem falls. And so the 1948 war went. The Arabs surrounded Jerusalem, at one point forcing the Jews to hand carry supplies into the city on old goat paths, known only to those Jews who inhabited the area. But eventually, the war was won, and Jerusalem was saved. Such is the power of that city to Israel. And such is the folly of the peace treaty in the Middle East today, which Yassar Arafat says calls for the Palestinian flag to fly over Jerusalem.

Israel will not ever voluntarily yield Jerusalem. But they will yield her. When the antitype of this prophesy which we have been examining this morning occurs, when Russia moves against Jerusalem, the city shall again go into captivity, only this time to the Russians. But it will be for the same reasons.

Zechariah 11:15-17, "And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."

They go into captivity, because they are foolish shepherds. They are idol shepherds. They are more concerned with themselves and their personal wealth, than with feeding the flock of God. And so they will again be cut off, only this time, for the last time.

For the Beautiful Stave will again appear to them, and this time they will not seek to destroy him. They will not be willing to pay the thirty pieces of silver for his destruction but rather the reverse. Zechariah prophesies a completely different ending when the Russians come, than when the Romans came. In the next chapter, chapter 12 we read of this conclusion:

Zechariah 12:9-10, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom 184 they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for

his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. "

And such will be the conclusion of the matter. Brothers and Sisters, much pain and suffering has gone on to bring about this glorious conclusion. Much warning and exhortation was given to us by God through His prophets that we might be prepared against that day. But it is our choice. We can pick up the tools of the wise shepherd, and care one for another against that day. We can work together to be prepared. We can work alone if that is what the situation requires. But we can work. Or we can pick up the tools of the foolish shepherd. We can take care of ourselves ignoring what else is going on around us; caring more for our current comfort and wealth, than for the promises made through beauty and through bands.

But the end is preordained. Jesus shall reign from Jerusalem before his saints gloriously. And it is our choice as to whether or not we wish to be counted in that righteous multitude in Jerusalem.

Bro. Jim Phillips

DANIEL - THE FEROCITY OF THE KINGDOM OF MEN

"But the nations are to become molten brass, as well as Israel. Their brass, therefore, is also to be gathered into the furnace, that it may be melted and refined under the intense fire of divine wrath. Israel, commanded by the Son of Man, is a torch of fire in the wilderness, which not only purges them, but serves to consume its peoples. The wilderness thus converted into a smelting furnace, is that which John saw when he was carried away in spirit into the wilderness, where he saw "the Great Harlot sitting upon many waters; " which are interpreted to signify "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues " — (Rev.17: 1,15). The countries of Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Greece, Egypt, and, in short, all the Mediterranean and Euphratean countries, being the territories of the Four Beasts of Daniel, constitute the furnace in which the Nebuchadnezzar gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and clay, are made to glow with fervent heat of sevenfold intensity; and in which the four men of God — the Cherubim — walk to and fro without hurt, "the fire having no power upon their bodies," as symbolised by Nebuchadnezzar 's furnace._ " (Eureka vol. 1 p180)

Our last article concluded with the sterling declaration of faith, which was given by Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Although we have not been called upon to endure under such a severe trial, it does provide us with an example to follow in our own personal "fiery trials" which we are required to go through. As quoted in the introduction of the last article, taken from *Elpis Israel*, probation is an indispensable ordeal. There is no getting away from it. Life in the Truth is going to be a trial of the faith we profess to have. One of the dictionary definitions of ordeal is "an experience that tests character or endurance."

That is more or less what we understand by trial in the Scriptures. It tests what we are made of. It reveals whether we are really in the Truth, because of our deep love for it and Yahweh, or because we are just enjoying the social side of things. If our love and faith is strong, then it will endure the fiery trail "to which every man is subjected in the providence of God"(JT). This is necessary to purge out the dross which is in each one of us. To remove from our characters those fleshly aspects which are abominable to Yahweh. Let us realize that fully. Yahweh does not subject his children to severe trials because he likes to see them wince. He brings about and regulates trials to prove his servants - and also to improve them! We are very imperfect creatures and the trials that Yahweh brings upon us are designed to develop our characters after the divine image, which was seen in perfection in the Messiah. The quotation by Bro. Thomas said that such trial was necessary before an individual could become fit for the Master's use. Is there any other way? The answer is "no." Even the Lord himself "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." Hebrews 5:8

We may declare then, or believe we have faith, but how can we prove it? We have quoted the words of Bro. Thomas in a previous article on the subject of faith based on James chapter 2. His words are worth repeating here with the "fiery trail" in mind:

"An untried faith is a dead faith, being alone. Faith without trial finds no scope for demonstration, or evidence of its existence. Thus, it is written, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, 'thou hast faith, and I have works:' show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. (*Elpis Israel* p7 4-7 5)

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah literally demonstrated the words of Peter:-

"...ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of 186 your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,

though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.. " 1 Peter 1:6-7,

Such faith only increased the anger of Nebuchadnezzar!

"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated." (verse 19)

He then commands *"the most mighty men that were in his army"* to bind the three men, *"and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace."* (verse 20)

Why the most mighty (margin - mighty of strength)? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were giants of faith, but there is no indication that they possessed any physical strength that would need soldiers to keep in check. Mother question comes to mind. Why would Nebuchadnezzar want to increase the temperature of the fire to such an extent, that even his own men were slain when they were casting them into the flames? Despots of this sort often delight in drawing out the suffering of their victims. To execute them instantly would give no cruel satisfaction. Nebuchadnezzar may not have manifested such a malignant spirit of course.

The answer to these questions may be found if we again consider his polytheistic outlook and beliefs. As stated previously, he no doubt believed in Yahweh the god (small capital as far as he was concerned) of Israel. But he had his gods too! Were not they more powerful than Yahweh? - Or were they? This could be a contest! Whose god really was the most powerful? Nebuchadnezzar had better make sure of the outcome. First of all, these captives must be secured. Secondly, the fire must devour!

On the second point, when Nebuchadnezzar renamed the captives as recorded in chapter one, it was to exalt the gods of Babylon. One of those gods was celebrated in the name of Abed-nego. The name means "Servant of the Shining Fire." That "shining fire" god was going to have some (earthly) assistance to ensure its mission of devouring these rebels was successful! Heat the furnace – *"seven times hotter than it was ever seen heated"* (Emphasised Bible). The gods of Babylon were going to be victorious! This was going to be a contest.

Of course, there was no contest really. The great Creator can suspend the operation of His laws as easily as He put them in place. The laws of combustion were to be no exception. The bush that attracted the gaze 187

of Moses was enwrapped in flames, but "was not consumed"; and the flames that burned fiercely around Daniel's companions failed to destroy them.

As Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace expecting to see the end of his three rebellious subjects, he observes a fourth person in the flames! Verse 25 tells us that he saw four men "loose" in the midst of the fire, and "they have no hurt"! Verse 23 informed us that the men "fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace." Obviously, the flames had consumed the ropes, or whatever had been used to bind them, but they were safe. They had gained the victory over the flames — or rather, their faith had. When they came out from the furnace, there was not "a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them". Such is the power of the God of Israel. No wonder the princes and governors etc. "kept gazing upon them" (Companion Bible). It was amazing. This was an evident token of the power of One far, far greater than the (supposed) deities of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar now learned that Yahweh was not only *all wise* (see the declaration of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:47), but He was also *all powerful*.

"By the fiery furnace "wonder" (Nebuchadnezzar) was taught, that God would deliver His servants that trust in Him with a salvation which would make them invulnerable to human power, and fit to possess the kingdom "which shall not be left to other people." (Exposition of Daniel page 9)

"We can only enter the kingdom through the fire" (1 Corinthians 3:13) quoted Bro. Thomas, "but if a man be courageous, and *"hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"*, he will emerge from it unscorched: and be presented holy, unblameable and unrebukeable before the king" (Elpis Israel page 75). "The power of victory is our firm and hearty belief of the Truth" (Eureka 1 page 322). Let us bear these lessons in mind in our trials.

To return to the "four men", verse 25 tells us that the fourth was *"like the Son of God."* This is rendered in the Revised Version,

"...and the aspect of the fourth, is like a son of the gods."

This was one of the angelic host *"that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word"* (Psalm 103:20). It also reminds us of Psalm 34:7,

"The angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, 188 and delivereth them."

The subject of angels is an extremely interesting one, and the presence of one here bringing the number of persons in the flames to four, reminds us of the cherubim, as indicated in the quotation at the start of this article. The cherubim had four faces; there were four carpenters in Zechariah chapter 2; and four Living ones in Apocalypse 4 verse 6. These symbols represent the saints in belligerent manifestation as they will go forth in the future to execute the fiery judgments of Yahweh (Isaiah 30:27 2 Thes.1: 7-8). The chapter we have been considering, is a type of the future judgments that will be executed upon the nations, while Israel receives deliverance in the time of the extremity – *"the time of Jacob's trouble"* (Jer.30:7)

Bro. Thomas expounds this point in the Exposition of Daniel (page 9). Referring to the "impiety and blasphemy of the Kingdom of Men", he draws attention to :

- Its hostility to the people of the House of David, or the Jews, whether such by nature, or by walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham, or by adoption;
- Of the furnace of affliction through which they would have to pass in rejecting the superstitions of the kingdom of Men, and in adhering to the Truth of God;
- Of their meeting with the Deliverer in their extremity;
- Of the destruction of their tormentors;
- Of their final deliverance;
- And of the ascription at last of blessing and honour, and glory, and power to the God of Israel by the assembled nations, when God's people shall be promoted to the direction of human affairs, and the Kingdom of men shall be no more.

It is possible to expand and elaborate upon these items to a greater extent. For example:

- The image in Daniel 3:1 reminds us of the "image" in the Apocalypse chapter 13:14. It is there recorded in verse 15 *"...he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."*
- Those who are "heating" up the furnace with their preparations for war will themselves be engulfed by the fiery judgments of Yahweh. (see Isa.66:15 Joel 3:9-13)

- The amazement of the princes etc. in Daniel 3:27 will find its parallel in the nations of the world who will stand in awe at the terrific judgments that will be witnessed in that day. (Consider Psalm 2:9-12)

The whole incident, coupled with the burning bush of Exodus chapter 3, also reminds us of the astounding miracle of Israel's preservation, despite the bitter persecution it has experienced:

"Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." (Psalm 66:12)

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isaiah 43:2)

How marvellous are the types and shadows revealed in so many incidents of the Scriptures. The events are soon to be elaborated in the Return of the Son of Man. Let us hold fast so that we may become part of the Cherubim of glory.

"It is "the day burning like a furnace", which shall consume the proud, and all that do wickedly with their Anti-Christian Gentilism, by which the peoples are deceived; but which shall have no power for evil against the people represented by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and the one with them like the Son of God; they shall come forth unharmed, unsinged, unchanged, and inodorous of the fire. For these are the Bride, the Daughter of Zion, to whom the Spirit saith, "Arise, and thresh, for I will make thine Horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples; and I will consecrate their spoil to Yahweh, and their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth" (Mic.4:13)...Thus while Israel is passing through the furnace, under the conduct of the Saints, and are themselves being purged from dross, they are also made use of by their commanders, as a torch of fire among the sheaves, or a lion among flocks of goats (Mic.5 :8 Zech.12:6) to destroy the power and kingdoms of the world. (Eur.vol.1 p180-181)

He Is Coming With The Clouds

In the system of nature whence the symbol before us is taken, clouds are opaque congeries of aqueous particles, exhaled from the waters of the earth into the air by the electricity of the expanse. This being their nature and origin, they furnish a beautiful and expressive symbol; representative of those who are present with the Lord in his apocalypse. In the revelation given to John, the inhabitants of the earth, in their various subdivisions, are styled "*many waters,*" as, "*the waters which thou sawest, upon which the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and languages.*" - Revelation 17:15

From these waters have been exhaled by "*the Spirit, which is the truth,*" from generations of the past, particles which, when viewed in mass, constitute, as Paul terms the, "*a great cloud of witnesses.*" But this cloud is only seen as a matter of testimony. The subjects of it are in the earth; and perceived only as particles to be exhaled, or drawn out, by the power of those beams, soon to irradiate from the Sun of Righteousness. When He shall "arise with healing in his rays," they will come forth from the womb of the dawn as dew. Every resurrected saint will be a dew-drop, sparkling in the starlike glory of a divine refraction. The appearance of dew from the womb of the dawn, as representative of the resurrection of the saints, is the most beautiful of scripture similitudes.

Before the sun rises, all nature is concealed in the womb of the night; and although the herbage is wet with dew, yet it is invisible by reason of the darkness. The dew is, as it were, in Hades, waiting for the birth to be given it by the rising of the sun. As soon as the eastern portals of the sky begin to open to the light, which is the life of the dew, its drops begin to sparkle with the prismatic glory of its refraction. The apocalypse, or appearing of the dew, is its birth from the womb of the dawn; and, however clear the air may be at *its* birth, oftentimes the heat of the sun's rays exhales it from the herbage, and it becomes invisible until it reappears at the atmospheric dew point in the form of clouds. If the reader understand this he will be enabled to discern the relations of the saints to Jesus, as the Dew and Clouds of the Millennial Dawn to the Sun of the New Heavens, prepared "*as a Bridegroom emerging from his canopy, and rejoicing as a Conqueror for the running of a course.*" - Psalm 19:5

What Does That Mean?

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Matthew 19:21

This verse sounds like Jesus is teaching that salvation can be achieved solely by divesting oneself of all possessions. How can this be explained?

Salvation is not predicated on how much we give to the poor, and this is not what Jesus was teaching the young man in this verse. Jesus is answering his specific question, *"Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"* (v.16) Clearly this young man had faulty understanding in thinking that he could earn eternal life by "doing" anything. Jesus knew his heart, and understood that he had a bigger problem that needed to be resolved before there could be any discussion of earning eternal life. This young man had "great possessions", which occupied the primary position in his life. Until (and unless) he could be persuaded to "seek first the kingdom of God" and make this his primary love and devotion, anything and everything else would be useless. Jesus goes right to the young man's heart and tells him to "sell all that he had and give to the poor." Jesus knew that this was his prime obstacle and that this action was necessary in this particular case. *"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."* (v.22) Although he wanted salvation, it appears that he did not want it enough to give up this primary love.

In other cases, having possessions may not be a problem, and Paul tells us concerning these people: *"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* He is here addressing a different kind of problem: people willing to give of their earthly goods, but who lacked love.

The bottom line to all this is, "let a man examine himself." Each of us needs to look deeply into our own hearts and minds, and deal with the problem(s) we find. There is no "quick fix" that will work for everyone. We each struggle with different issues.

Ye who the world have courted,
And suffered from its spite;
Ye who with sin have sported,
And felt its serpent bite;
Come learn, your follies quitting;
That this world's gain is loss;
To Christ's light yoke submitting,
Come and take up the cross.

