

# 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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ECCLESIAL NEWS .....	Houston, Richard
FRATERNAL GATHERINGS.....	Hengoad
EXHORTATION .....	What Time Is It..... 267
EXHORTATION .....	Salesmanship And The Truth ..... 272
STUDY.....	Daniel - The Tree Bound With Iron And Brass 277
As Ye See The Day Approaching .....	283
Thought.....	The Wood Of Life..... 287
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? .....	.288
B.E.N.'S PAGE .....	(Insert)

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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

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

Loving greetings to all,

We have both joyful and sorrowful news to report this month. First, we are saddened to report that Brother Allen Groda fell asleep in Christ on October 26<sup>th</sup>. He was 78 years old. Services were held on Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup> in Conroe, Texas. I am sure Sister Bea Groda (Allen's wife) would appreciate any cards and calls. You can reach her at:

15923 McKay Road, Willis, Texas 77378. Phone # 936-890-8067

On a joyful note, we are happy to announce that after a good confession of their faith, **Dan and Cheryl Lorquet** were baptized in Houston on Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup>. Brother Bob Lorquet (Dan's brother) immersed both. They were offered the right hand of fellowship on Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. They have been attending meetings and studying for a couple of years and we're very glad that they have joined us in the race for life. We are reminded that **"There is joy in the presence of angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."**

The Houston ecclesia has also been blessed by an abundance of visitors over the past few months. Many were passing through on their way to the Hye fraternal gathering. Indeed the Sunday before Hye, we had visitors sufficient enough to appear that we were having a mini gathering that day in Houston.

Visitors the past several months included the following: Bro. Phillip Hughes, Bro. Matthew Hughes, Sis. Elizabeth Hughes, and Bro. Steve and Sis. Elizabeth Male – all from Hengoed, Wales; Bro. Johnny and Sis. Mary Phillips from Canton; Bro. Paul Garvey, Bro. Jonathan Garvey, and Sis. Sharon Osborne from Boston; Bro. John and Sis. Sheila Wolfe, Bro. Rusty and Sis. Susie Stephen, and Sis. Linda Carroll – all from Lampasas; and Sis. Juanita Reiss who is currently in isolation.

Brother Steve Male and Brother Rusty Stephen both exhorted while visiting. We thank the speaking brothers for their words and we appreciate everyone's efforts in making it to Houston.

With love from your Brethren and Sisters in Houston  
266 Bro. Shauywn Smith

RICHARD, Sask. – S.S. 10am; Memorial, 11:20am; Wed. Class 8pm.  
Meetings held at The Richard Ecclesial Hall, Bro. Ed Truelove, 2165  
Douglas Ave., North Battleford, Sask. S9A 3N8, phone (306) 445-3240

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Greetings in the name of our Lord.

We have had many blessings to be thankful for and in which to rejoice since our previous reporting, but not without some sadness as we have found it necessary to withdraw from Bro. Darwin Farkas on account of continued absence from the table of the Lord. We do miss our Brother and fervently hope and pray that he will return to the fold.

We are grateful to all who made the effort to attend the Fraternal Gathering at Richard this past summer. The subject matter was timely and effectively delivered. We rejoiced in the association and companionship of many brethren and sisters who journeyed here from all parts of Canada and the USA as well as from Australia. We thank God and take courage as we press on in the challenge to give glory to our Creator by the choices we make in our lives.

Since the gathering we have received visits from Bro. Norm and Sis. Tina Blacker, also Bro. Mike and Sis. Karen Neely. Bro. Norm assisted us by giving words of exhortation.

Bro. Jon Jackson has recently moved to Calgary where he is in isolation. Bro. Jon will no doubt be grateful to hear from any Brothers or Sisters passing through or near Calgary.

Another very positive highlight of the summer was the baptism of Sis. **Kim Jackson**. It is always a cause for spiritual celebration when another individual of Adam's race makes the very wise choice to change allegiance from the flesh to the saving name of Christ. All the best to you in your new life, Sister Kim!

For the Ecclesia at Richard,  
Bro. Ed Truelove

## What Time Is It?

In the aftermath of terrorism right here in the country in which we live, whose military forces are now preparing war, we automatically think of prophecy spoken so long ago by Jesus himself: *"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be."* Nor can we help but ponder the saying, *"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on*

*the earth.*" It's inevitable that trying times are in our future, but we also must acknowledge that without much trial and tribulation we shall in no wise enter the Kingdom.

So it is imperative that we ask ourselves the question: How much time do I have left? How many hours or minutes, as it were, before the clock strikes 12:00 midnight, day six, of the times of the Gentiles? *"Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* Preachers, evangelists, and doctors of theology alike, will explain this as meaning that time is irrelevant to Him who created all things; and that with God a second of time is as eternity. Does this make sense? Of course it doesn't. It is written, *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."* Let us not extract fact from fiction, thereby conceiving doctrines born of fables. Let us believe what is written in Ecclesiastes 3: *"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."* An example as recorded in the written word of God is found here in Ecclesiastes 3 that there is to be a time of war, and we see this demonstrated in Joel 3:9-11, being a prophecy of the nations preparing for the Armageddon war: *"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."* Also from Ecclesiastes 3, there is to be a time of peace, as we see demonstrated in Isaiah 2:4, *"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."* A time for war: a time for peace, as concerning this dispensation of life as we know it.

From studying the revealed word of God, time is of the utmost importance, and it is the single most valuable commodity that we have. Sadly enough, its immense importance doesn't occupy a lot of consideration from the few that should be concerned with it the most. Time to start, time to stop, sometime, next time, late, early, right time, wrong time, any time, and idle time. We are all affected by time. I find it a little disheartening, concerning myself, when I can be early for work and late for meeting—on time to make money and late for Christ's funeral in the very presence of the angels. What do I have to say for myself? What I have to say is this: It is time for a change. Under the law, the priest had to 268 have a change of garments before he could enter the Most Holy

Place. If we are going to be kings and priests in the kingdom age, we must change our earthly garments, styled the mind of the flesh, to heavenly garments, called the mind of the spirit. The mind of the flesh is easy—we're born with it; the mind of the spirit is learned and comes with a lifetime of continual work, study, and obedience. Have we truly made this change from darkness to light? Just how far will we go for the pearl of great price? If we haven't put the Truth in an obvious, top priority, first place position, then we haven't gone far enough! Isn't it time for a change?

Yes, Brethren, we are to be rid of garments spotted by the flesh and are to don those which reflect the fruits of the spirit. A dirty mirror cannot reflect the intended image properly, nor can garments of the inner man, spotted by the world, properly reflect the characteristics that God expects us as Christadelphians to be clothed with. Putting on the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, as the dominant characteristics which make up our character, is not a 24-hour phenomenon. Rather, it is an undertaking that we can never finish completely. It is an undertaking that we must always work on. It is an undertaking that is to be acceptably accomplished in the time of our probation, and, since none of us are able to know ahead of time how long we will be allowed to continue, we should make the **MOST** of our time, shouldn't we! God gives us adequate time to accomplish this, **IF** we will but heed His word and apply ourselves to the work of the Truth, because what God gives us precisely is **AN APPOINTED TIME**. The question is—What will we do with it? Are we stuck in a humdrum, habitual, repetitive, daily ritual of self-serving complacency? Only you, for yourself, and I, for myself, can answer this question. But if the answer is "yes," then all doubt is removed—It's **time**. **Time for what? Time for a change.** If we have the self-discipline to go ahead and make this change, then we can look forwards with faithful Job to the change he was awaiting in Job 14:14, *"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."* Job longed for the change in his nature, from flesh and blood to that of flesh, bone, and spirit. This is what he looked for, for he said, *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."*

Yes, Brethren, **it is** time for a change. Too set in my ways, you say? Too busy day to day! Too content to let change get in my way! If this is our attitude, then we are dead men walking. We are exhorted to strive for perfection, and yes, it's true that we cannot in this painful and

pitiful, pathetic, mortal existence of wickedness and vanity, achieve, attain to, arrive at, or even get close to perfection, but it is our God-given requirement to get as close as we possibly can. And the fact remains that we are dead, IF we don't try. What is to try? To try is to earnestly contend for the Faith. To try is to strive towards that goal of becoming acceptably obedient to God's word, each and every day, until we don't have any more days left, until we've breathed our last feeble, gasping, dying, breath and our eyes close for the last time, as we enter that long peaceful sleep, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest. To try is to do our best. We must never stop trying to improve, for if we do stop, then we aren't giving our all. And if we aren't giving our all, then our lifelong efforts in the Truth will be without meaning, without reason, and without reward!!

You know it is not too late to change, for we have the encouraging word before us: *"Today is the day of salvation."* If there is anything lurking in the wicked, shadowy, dark, unseen chambers of our evil hearts that we know we need to change, the time has come to make that happen! Do we need to re-evaluate our thoughts, actions, or decisions? Do we need to rethink what is of real importance to us? Are we straying off the straight and narrow path that leads to life everlasting? Telling others that we are a little lax in this or that, or that we are falling short in this category, or that category, is an OK step in the right direction, for to improve ourselves, we must first realize we have a problem. The problem is that when we tell somebody our problem, we feel better about ourselves, and thereby, convince and deceive ourselves that we are improving, when actually we have done no more than to admit to others that we have a problem. This is a danger that can and will end up in our rejection at the judgment seat, and death!! Because a single step in the right direction is exactly that—a single step—it's not walking. We must take another step in the right direction and begin to change our ways, and then another step, then another. First thing you know we're making progress and actually walking towards the Kingdom. Yes, today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow is possibly a day we may not be allowed to see.

The next time someone asks us: What time is it? Let us not only think of the hour and minute of the day, but let us say to ourselves: It's time for a change! It is written that *"No man knoweth the day nor the hour," but that he will come in "an hour when ye think not."* The time is set. It will not be altered. It is up to us to be ready. We realize that we are living in the latter part of the sixth day of a thousand years. From fulfilled prophecies of past world events we know the sun is setting on the last day of Gentile rule 270 in the earth. As the light of the sixth day grows dim, likewise, the

knowledge of the Truth is fading. Christ said that when he would come again, would he find faith on the earth. So in these last hours of dimming light, let us **diligently** consider how we spend our time. As the light is fading and we are enveloped by the shadows of death, let us reflect upon the words of King David: *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."*

We pray that God would bless us enough for us to realize how precious are the moments that make up the remainder of our existence. **Let us not waste them.** We get so caught up in this fast pace living, that before we know it, twenty years has gone by. Our hair is turning gray, or falling out, as the case may be. Have we grown stronger and wiser with time? Or, have we wasted away the decades? If that's the case, let us redirect our courses of habitual, aimless wandering down the highway of double standards, and get on to what Jesus realized at the age of 12 years old, when he said, "I must be about my Father's business." Leisurely playing around with life in pleasure without a care, and being inactive in the ecclesia, won't be a very comfortable position to be found in when the bridegroom comes.

It is written in John 8:34, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."* The meaning in the original text, properly translated, would have rendered the word servant as slave. *"Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin."* A slave will go to any length, against all odds, to please his or her master. A slave will give his all. So the question is: Have we become slaves to the nature we bear? Though we have buried the old man of the flesh at baptism, have we once again become slaves to sin? Christ said, *"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."* He did not say, *"Ye are my friends if ye sometimes do whatsoever I command you."* He did not say, *"Ye are my friends if once-in-awhile ye do whatsoever I command you."* No, he didn't say it like that. In effect, what he said was this: *"Ye are my friends **only** if ye do whatsoever I command you."* Are we friends of Jesus? How much of our time do we give to God? How much time do we devote to the Truth? How much time do we spend pleasing the flesh? Pleasing self? The answer to these last two questions is not hard 271

to figure out. The answer is: Too much time, way too much time pleasing self. At least that's my answer when I ask myself these questions.

The other day I was considering the title of Bro. Rene's book called Be Ye Transformed. What does this mean? To be transformed is to be changed, and to be changed is to say that it's time for a transformation—from a wretched condition of moral poverty to a blessed condition of spiritual richness—from a condition of selfish pity to a condition of selfless care and concern for our Brothers and Sisters. If we want God to transform our nature tomorrow from mortal, dying, flesh and blood to that of undying, immortal spirit, we must be successful today in our personal battle to transform our character from the ugly effects of sin to the beautiful effects of righteousness.

In conclusion, from a lighthouse called the Word of God, there shines an intense light beam of truth, piercing through the fog of Gentile darkness, ignorance and confusion, shining forth a commandment to all Christadelphians in future generations. A commandment given by the slain Lamb of God two thousand years ago, who said: *"This do in remembrance of me."* As we prepare to obey this command, I do want to say, that the message of this exhortation is not for those who are in perfect spiritual health, who are doing their best and giving their all. But the message is a plea to those who are sick and in need of the great physician, those who acknowledge they are falling way short of their own capabilities, those who don't have much time left, and for those who don't feel they have much to show for their time spent walking in the Truth. Certainly, I fall into this category. If you have become a little stirred up or perhaps frustrated that the writer is talking to you, well, this is good! Maybe it's time for a change. To those who willingly make that change, who can break away from being led around by the mind of the flesh, and who can let your light so shine so that all men can see your good works—to those Jesus says, *"Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."*

*Bro. Frank Darter*

## **Salesmanship and the Truth**

Perhaps one of the greatest salesmen training manuals ever written was a very simple book written in 1936 called "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie. There can be no question that these techniques have a lot of merit and work very well, when practiced 272 sincerely. Businessmen, politicians, and church leaders have long

recognized the power of such techniques for the growing of their supporters and have used them quite effectively.

If we were to summarize the techniques of this book, we would say that:

- 1). It teaches that when talking to another person we must ignore or minimize and only indirectly address any area of disagreement at all costs.
- 2). It teaches us to focus on and emphasize any and all areas of agreement.
- 3). It teaches that while doing the above, we must make the person feel as good about themselves as we can, mostly by focusing our attention on them, their ideas, and their goals.

This is the time tested, well proven manner in which a person, organization, or church can appeal to the flesh and be successful in the world. The problem for us in teaching the Truth is that the Truth was never intended to be appealing to the flesh. If we use fleshly pleasing ways to try to teach the Truth, we end up with an ecclesia full of flesh pleasing persons, hardly a people separated and prepared for the return of our Lord.

The precepts of the Truth are so contradictory to the ways of the world that it is necessarily confrontational, and against the very first rules of Mr. Carnegie's book. His first and second rules are 1). The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it. And 2). Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "You're wrong."

It is not possible to explain or teach the Truth without eventually drawing the sharp contrast between the world and the Truth, and explaining on a very clear level, that the ways and beliefs of the world are wrong, which inevitably brings argument and confrontation, No matter how careful or skillful with words we are, to honestly teach the Truth the point must be made that the teachings of the Spirit are completely opposed to human nature and the teachings of the flesh, and this will necessarily bring confrontation with the world.

Our fleshly tendency is to believe that the inevitable confrontation we all experience is due to our poor communication skills in lovingly, and peaceably presenting the Truth. It is not. The cold facts are that the Truth divides us from the world, and confrontation is inevitable, regardless of our individual communication skills. In observing how confrontational his own life had been, Bro. Roberts once wrote of Bro. Thomas:

"Dr. Thomas told me that if I followed such a course, (a course of open obedience to the Truth) his experience on this point would be mine. 273

I did not quite believe him at the time. I imagined in my simplicity, that a good deal of the enmity he had to endure, was the result of his own needless brusqueness in dealing with opposition. But experience has shown me that my notions were the result of--well, in plain language, my ignorance of human nature, as it actually is, in the vast mass of the population in the present state of things upon the earth."

Bro. Roberts observed as regards himself in a work he called "A letter to Mine Enemies" that regardless of how friendly he was, regardless of how positively and pleasantly he presented the Truth, it is still necessarily opposed to the world, and therefore will be condemned by the world. He wrote:

"I saw that I could not prevent the making of enemies without becoming a time server, and a pleaser of men. I therefore made up my mind to accept enmity, and to adopt as the only workable policy, the policy of being on God's side in all matters, whatever the risks or the consequences. I do not mean that I gave up the idea of being friendly--far from it. I have always had the commandment before my eyes that we are to bless, and curse not: to do good to them that hate us: to pray for them that despitefully use and afflict us.

"In this spirit, I have always tried to act, though frequently without the entire success I could have wished. But what I mean to say is, that having once for all made up my mind that I could not prevent the existence of enemies, and that their existence was the inevitable corollary of an endeavor to follow a course of faithfulness to divine principles, their existence ceased to be a trouble to me, in any serious sense..."

As Bro. Roberts discovered, enmity was the inevitable corollary of a life of faithfulness to divine principles. The apostle Paul explained it this way: Rom. 8:7, "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*"

We see this same principle all through the life of the apostle Paul. He wrote:

1 Cor. 11:1, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*"

Well, what was Paul's example in regards to confrontation? Was Paul somehow able to present the Truth in a non confrontational manner? Did he avoid arguments at all costs? Did he show respect for other opinions? Observe this example of Paul's life when dealing with the apostle Peter, who had been influenced by the Judeisers to practice separating from 274 Gentile believers.

Gal. 2:11, *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."*

Now the word withstood there, is "anthistemi," and it really means to set against in an inflexible manner. A principle of the Truth had been compromised. Was Paul willing to try and gently work around the compromise? Clearly not. He confronted him. To use the vernacular of today, he got right in Peter's face. Would he have been more "successful" had he dealt more "kindly" (as the world judges kindly) in the matter? Would he have won more friends, following Mr. Carnegie's techniques? Perhaps, as regards numbers this may have been the case. Perhaps Paul offended the worldly sensibilities of some, with his intolerance, and his disgust for the opinions of the world. But Paul wasn't appealing to those. He was appealing to a specific (albeit small) class of men who despised the world, but loved the things of the Spirit.

Paul said that he was following a greater example, the example of the Christ, our Lord Jesus. Jesus' own recorded life was a life of confrontation with error, and confrontation necessarily brought division. This is actually the inverse of Mr. Carnegie's rules. If lack of confrontation makes one popular and successful in the world, then confrontation will do exactly the opposite. And this is what Jesus told us that a life of following him would do.

Luke 12:51-52, *"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three."*

The principles of the Truth are intended to divide. They are intended to divide those who walk after the spirit from those who walk after the flesh. There can be no compromise, no accommodation with the world or the spirit which generates from it. This is the example of Jesus and Paul which we are to follow. Therefore, we see Jesus addressing his critics:

Matt. 23:13-15, *"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."*

These are cutting words. They are direct. They are unmistakable. There is no compromise in Jesus' voice, no accommodation for the spirit of 275

the world which motivated the people of the world. Just a clear and unmistakable message. Woe unto you, for you do not know or teach the Truth.

And particularly note the subject. The subject is teaching the Truth. The subject is proselyting. Jesus tells them that they do not know the Truth that they should enter into the kingdom of God, and when they find those who are searching, they manage to confuse them and therefore hinder them! Jesus acknowledges their great efforts. Jesus tells them: You will compass sea and land to make one proselyte, one convert. But in spite of this seemingly noble act, Jesus pronounces "woe!" upon them because they didn't teach the Truth. He tells them, you make him (your convert) twofold more the child of the grave than yourselves. And why? Because they wouldn't teach the Truth. And they wouldn't teach the Truth because the Truth and obedience to the Truth divides and gets in the way of making converts!

But some will say that while this is how Jesus addressed the ruling classes, certainly he was more patient and gentle with others. But was he? When Jesus explained to his disciples the need for him to be crucified we read this:

*Matt. 16:22-23, "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."*

Now Mr. Carnegie says that to effectively lead people we must: "1). Begin with praise and honest appreciation. 2). Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly. 4). Ask questions instead of giving direct orders. 5). Let the other person save face. 7) Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to. 8). Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct." In reflecting on Jesus' words to Peter, our question is, is there a more striking contrast between how you lead successfully in the world, and how you lead successfully in the Truth? The world accommodates worldly ideas. The Truth crushes them, repudiates them, and realizes that the battle is so dangerous and so difficult that only those who love righteousness and despise iniquity will survive. The Truth knows that salvation is not about saving self esteem, but rather about destroying it!

Humility and destroying the flesh is the foundation upon which becoming a slave to Christ is built. The flesh with its lusts thereof, including its high opinion of itself, is not in any way to be accommodated. 276 And therefore, after a particularly tumultuous dissertation with the

Jews at a time in which there were three separate divisions of the people following Jesus, as recorded in John 6:66, 7:43, and 10:19, we see Jesus' attitude towards accommodating the world. We read of Jesus' attitude towards compromise with the world right in the middle of a division.

John 6:66-67, *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"*

Jesus doesn't turn to the twelve and tell them, "Quick go after the people and bring them back. Tell them I'm not as strict as they think I am. There is room for compromise here." No! Instead he turns to the twelve to focus attention on what they were going to do. The others have left. They couldn't accept the divine teaching. Now, what about you? *"Will ye also go away?"*

To which Peter answers: John 6:68-69, *"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."*

If we are to follow our divinely provided examples, then, teaching the Truth will be a very different thing than what passes for teaching in the world around us. It does not consist of blurring over and minimizing the contrasts between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit, it does not consist of looking for areas of agreement with the world: Instead it consists of emphasizing the differences between the flesh and the spirit. We are called out to be a separate and different people, and we cannot make this call to others by emphasizing how similar we are to the world!

*Bro. Jim Phillips*

## DANIEL - THE TREE BOUND WITH IRON AND BRASS

*"What God permits and regulates is one thing; and what He appoints is another. He permits thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, to exist; He regulates them, setting over them the basest of men, if such answer His intentions best; prevents them circumventing His purposes; and commands His saints to "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.*

(Elpis Israel p65)

277

We now turn our attention to the prophetic aspect of Daniel chapter 4, after observing in our last article the humbling of the Babylonian potentate. Nebuchadnezzar was made to realise the truth of verse 17, i.e. "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." This is the key verse of the chapter, and which caused Bro. Thomas to reflect that with so little wisdom in the world (and in fact, much foolishness), and so much order, it can only be concluded that Yahweh is in overall control of the affairs of mankind. He is indeed "Most High", a highly significant title, teaching us that despite present appearances, Yahweh is directing events to a pre-determined end.

The title is first brought to our attention in Genesis chapter 14 after the 'battle of the kings', when Abram was met by Melchizedek, King of Salem, and "priest of the *most high God*" (El Elyon). The Hebrew title 'Elyon' means "elevation, lofty, supreme". It is a word associated with dominion. For example,

*"Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: That men may know that thou, whose name alone is YAHWEH, art the most high over all the earth.* (Psalm 83:17-18).

*"Yahweh on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea".* (Psalm 93:4).

The use of the phrase in Genesis 14 shows that Yahweh will use His authority to bring all nations into subjection. The chapter itself is a marvellous type of the events that will ultimate in the overthrow of Gog (typed by the confederacy of Chederlaomer), and the introduction of the great Melchizedek priest (the Lord Jesus Christ). (Events which teach us, incidentally, that war is the introduction to the King of Peace!) The nations believe they are in control, but even their accumulation of weapons has been decreed by Almighty God to be for the day of battle. As Joel says:

*"Proclaith 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 ploughshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong."* (Joel 3:9-10)

Yahweh is therefore the Most High EL, and He gives the kingdom of Men to whomsoever He wills, contrary to the opinion of Nebuchadnezzar who attributed Babylon's glory to his own accomplishments. Bro. Thomas 278 in Eureka wrote:

"The Powers are so many chessmen upon the great Babylonian chessboard, whose policy and movements do not originate from themselves, but "from the Nave;" whence issue the impulses which cause them to utter great voices, and to make moves, which are often disastrous, and even fatal to themselves; but which in no wise disturbs or impedes, but judiciously secures the final success of the incomparable Player in the Nave, who manipulates the game".

Before leaving verse 17, it is interesting to reflect on the phrase "and setteth up over it the basest of men." As we peruse the history of mankind, we are convinced that the "basest" of men have often served the purpose of the Deity. Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini in recent times, provide ample scope for a dissertation on *base*, unscrupulous and cruel men. The wicked are Yahweh's sword in the development of His plan and purpose.

However, it is interesting to note some other translations of the verse in relation to the meaning of "basest". The word comes from the Chaldean *shephal'*, and is rendered by Strong's Concordance as "humble, put down, subdue." It corresponds to the Hebrew *shaphel'* which has been translated as "low" in 1 Samuel 2:7; and "humble" in Proverbs 16:19. A comparison **of other** translations is therefore of interest. For example:

*"the Most High rules over the kingdom of men, he confers it on whom he pleases, and raises the lowest of mankind." (Jerusalem Bible)*

*"the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will, and sets over it the lowliest of men." (Revised Version)*

It is however, the Septuagint that provides the basis for a different angle on the verse:

*".....And will set over it him who is set at nought by men."*

Our minds then contemplate the One whose "lowly" birth was despised by his contemporaries; whose lowly occupation as a carpenter did not draw the admiration of "higher classes" of Israel, and who was ultimately set at nought by the builders who should have known better. However, the One who was treated in this way, will yet reign as the supreme King, the uncontested victor over and inheritor of the nations, the possessor of the uttermost parts of the earth (Psalm 2:8) See also Ezekiel 21:26-27. The alternative translation is thought provoking.

THE TREE SIGN."On a superficial view of the case, it would appear as if there was nothing but the literal in this narrative, and as if the import of the vision terminated with the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar, at the end

We now turn our attention to the symbolic aspects of the chapter, which is so characteristic of the prophecy of Daniel. Bro. Roberts remarked in Christendom Astray,

of seven literal times; but a deeper insight will reveal a splendid political allegory on the face of the literal narrative." (page 361)

In understanding the meaning of this "political allegory", we find that we are considering some of the thoughts that we outlined in earlier articles regarding the two great powers which are the subject of Daniel's prophecies. Those two powers are the Kingdom of Men, and the Kingdom of God. On page 109 of "The Prophecy of Daniel", Bro. Thomas returns to this theme which has been a part of his previous dissertations. He says:

"The idea prominently sustained throughout the book of Daniel is one dominion under divers administrations, styled the kingdom of men, or of Babylon, as opposed to the kingdom of Judah, which is Yahweh's. Both these kingdoms have their times, or periods, during which their reigns are unrivalled. The two kingdoms, however, being essentially hostile and destructive of one another, it so happens that when one reigns prosperously, the other must be in adversity, or extinct. This being the case, it is obvious that the prosperity of the two kingdoms must pertain to different and successive ages, and that the practicing and prospering of the one is at the expense of the other."

The history of Israel clearly shows to us that the throne or "tabernacle of David" is "fallen down" and in ruins (Acts 15:16). In the words of the Psalmist:

*"But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground."* (Psalm 89:38-39)

From the days when Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the kingdom of Judah (Daniel 1:1), Israel has "abided many days without a king" (Hosea 3:4). The diadem and crown were "overturned" (Ezekiel 21:27), and the prophecy of raising up the tabernacle of David, is still a matter of promise, which the saints of the Most High patiently wait for.

On the other hand, the Gentiles have been in the ascendancy. This is symbolised in the prophecy of Daniel chapter 4, as we shall see. First of all, a tree can represent a kingdom. For example:

*"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: 280 but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a*

*tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof"*  
(Matthew 13:31-32)

We cannot fail to make the contrast between the tree of Daniel 4, and the tree, which represents the Kingdom of God in the quotation from Matthew. The tree in Daniel's prophecy represents the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, or Babylon. However, that tree was cut down! How then can the symbolism represent a power, which is supposed to be hostile to the kingdom of Judah, when the power has been "cut down"? The answer is found in the binding of the stump with iron and brass. Bro. Roberts explains:

"When the Babylonian dominion was shorn away, the kingdoms that succeeded it were but a political bandaging of the power of Babylon with the brazen and iron or Greek and Roman elements." (Christendom Astray page 361)

In other words, even though the Medes and Persians overthrew the political kingdom of Babylon, the influence of Babylon has continued. The roots of Babylonian idolatry and false doctrines have remained in the earth until the present time. Her teachings permeate the religious systems of the world, as an examination of their beliefs clearly shows (particularly that of the harlot of Rome).

It is significant that the binding is with iron and brass. We know that these metals symbolise Rome and Greece as Bro. Roberts indicates above. Our attention is therefore being directed to the Roman and Greek elements of the Babylonian system of falsehood, i.e. the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches. These two "bands" have kept mankind chained in the superstitions and errors of ancient Babylon. The false doctrines include the immortality of the soul, a supernatural devil, the Trinity etc. It has been interesting to see these two Churches moving closer in recent years!

The significance of iron and brass is also seen in the mark that Greek and Roman society has left in the world. For example:

**IRON (Rome)** – The Romans were pioneers in roads, bridges, and aqueducts. Rome's influence had a practical bearing upon Europe, and made transport and communication much easier. The Apostle Paul was able to preach the gospel throughout the Roman habitable by navigating the extensive road system, which Rome had developed. Latin, the tongue of the Romans, has coloured the English language and was used in all Europe in the Middle Ages. Justinian's laws are also still felt throughout Europe, indicating the political influence that Rome exercised.

BRASS (Greece) – The influence of Greece is seen in literary and intellectual matters. In the world of letters, poetry, history, philosophy and drama, the formative influence of Greece is pronounced. This is also observed in sculpture and architecture. While the majority of these things are of little interest to us, and in fact, much of it is positively repulsive; the New Testament was written in Greek! What an influence that has had!

The question is, will the influences of Babylon last. We know that it will not! The prophecy of Daniel 4 indicates that the period of influence will come to an end, and introduces us to the subject of chronology, as Bro. Thomas points out:

"The seven times during which Nebuchadnezzar herded with the beasts, were the sign-period significative of a longer period than itself: yet containing within itself the elements of the calculation. "A day for a year" is a rule to which all prophetic times are reducible. In seven times, which are less than seven years, we have 2,520 days, which are prophetically equal to the same number of solar years. The end of these is the terminus of the times of the Babylonian kingdom of men, or of the stump of the Babylonian Tree banded with iron and brass; that is, under its Latino-Greek constitution." (The Prophecy of Daniel page 110)

When did the period of 2520 years begin? Starting dates are not easy to determine. If we take the first year of Nebuchadnezzar as BC603, then 2520 years take us to AD1917. This was the year in which the famous Balfour Declaration was made establishing Palestine....a national home for the Jewish people." This eventually led to the Jewish State in 1948, one of the greatest signs, if not *the* greatest sign in recent history. Israel, back in their ancient homeland, fulfilling the ancient prophecies, and setting the scene for the events recorded in Ezekiel 38. We can tend to forget the significance of this, but it reminds us that the long night of Gentile darkness will not continue. The influence of the Babylonian Tree will pass, and:

".. the stump of its roots will be removed; and the times of the reign of the kingdom of God will begin. These continue without change for a thousand years, at the end of which, perfection being attained, the constitution of the kingdom will be altered to meet the improved condition of the world. Thenceforth, all things will be permanent, and generations will cease to come and go. The unrighteous will have been exterminated; and the earth will be inhabited by immortals only, who will have attained to immortality upon the condition of believing heartily what God has 282 promised and taught in His Word prophetically and apostolically ministered; and of doing what He there requires to be done." (The Prophecy of Daniel page 109)

*Bro. Phillip Hughes*

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

On the morning of September 11, 2001 Americans awoke to what appeared to be a perfectly normal day. Here in the Northeast it was beautiful and clear after the passage of a cool front the evening before. Sister Lois and I live in Northern New Jersey not far from New York City - only about twenty five miles out on a straight line. We went to work, as most did that day; settling into the routine, completely unaware of what was about to happen. Four passenger planes taking off within a fifteen minute period of time from three East coast airports became fuel-laden missiles which caused massive fiery death, serious bodily injury, total destruction, mayhem and fear.

At 7:59a.m., American Airlines Flight 11 (a Boeing 767 with 81 passengers and 11 crew) took off from Boston's Logan International Airport. It was bound for Los Angeles, but was commandeered by hijackers and diverted to New York City. Just 46 minutes later at 8:45a.m., it crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center complex (1 WTC). Just a minute before the above mentioned flight lifted off, United Airlines Flight 175 lifted off from that same airport, also bound for Los Angeles. It, too, was a Boeing 767 with 56 passengers and 9 crew aboard. That plane was commandeered and also diverted by hijackers to New York City. Sixty-eight minutes from takeoff, it slammed into the south tower of the World Trade Center complex (2 WTC).

There was a 21 minute length of time between the two collisions, giving time for many to evacuate the north tower down to street level. At first people thought that the plane had accidentally crashed into the top floors of that tower. However, reality set in when the second plane hit 2 WTC. Then it was certainly known that these two events were connected and obviously acts of terror. The wail of sirens filled the air, as help came from all directions. The streets below were rapidly filled with people exiting the building. Firemen, police, rescue workers and medics poured into the area which would become known as Ground Zero, trying to assist the injured and dying. The scene was awful. Plane wreckage, debris, ash, papers, office furniture, bodies and severed body parts rained down, while smoke and fire poured out of the building's upper floors.

Then the unthinkable and totally unexpected happened. At 9:40a.m., the Pentagon was hit by American Airlines Flight 77, having 58 passengers and 6 crew aboard! That flight had originated at Washington Dulles International, departing at 8:10a.m. and had been bound for Los Angeles like the two flights originating out of Logan. The Boeing 757 was turned around by the hijackers just outside of Cleveland, who flew it into the western side of the Pentagon where high ranking Army personnel had their offices.

At 10:00a.m. the south tower (2 WTC) collapsed just 54 minutes after United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into it. Twenty-nine minutes later the north tower (1 WTC) collapsed. The scene was one of total chaos. All that could, scrambled to try to keep ahead of and stay out of the all-enveloping cloud of smoke, ash, concrete dust, debris and falling steel. Thousands perished in the terrorist blitz. Many fire fighters and police lost their lives that day trying to save others. Estimates of the dead range between four and five thousand. It is believed that many more may have perished who had no records, being undocumented workers. Later that afternoon at 5:25, a third building in the World Trade Center complex collapsed - (7 World Trade tower). The fourth flight to be hijacked that day was United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757, which left Newark Airport at 8:01a.m. for San Francisco. There were 38 passengers and 7 crew aboard. At 10:37a.m., it crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Within hours, all of the nation's airports were closed for the first time in history. All flights except military were grounded. Government buildings were closed and anything else that seemed as though it might be a potential target. New York City (Manhattan) was in a total lockdown mode - bridges, tunnels and public transportation. Never had anything of this magnitude happened in the continental United States. The nearest thing that could be likened to it was the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, moving the U.S. to declare war on that country.

The attacks were very well planned and coordinated. This can be seen in the details mentioned above. Think of the training each of those involved in the hijackings had to undergo to be able to carry out the evil they perpetrated that day. They turned planes into lethal weapons of war - flying bombs. All of the aircraft hijacked were originally destined for the West coast, meaning they were heavily laden with fuel. The men involved were suicide bombers, mentally prepared to die for their misguided beliefs and cause. The attacks were made- on the symbols of financial and military power. The political and economic powers in the heavens of the United States shook, as did those of many countries around the world. Fear

filled the hearts of many, as the nations in the civilized parts of the world realized what they are up against. In fact, they are so afraid of what could happen that they are (many of them) signing into a coalition with the United States and England to fight against terrorism. The world had changed. The very things men have put their trust in were proven to be vulnerable. People don't feel as secure. These two facts bring to mind what is written in Luke 21:26, *"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."*

These times we are living in are leading up to the time of trouble such as has never been since there was a nation. This time of trouble is recorded in Daniel 12:1, *"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*

People are very afraid of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. They are afraid of the potential of failing economies. The economic picture since September 11 is certainly not as bright. The economy is in a downturn - a recession.

The estimated cost of cleaning up the devastation and of rebuilding of the World Trade Center is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$110 billion! The United States has set aside a war chest of \$40 Billion for the war against terrorism. The government has also spent large sums on economic incentives. It has approved a \$15 billion airlines bailout. All of these things are indicators of the fear and anxiety levels of the American public. Surely there are similar fears and concerns in other nations such as those of Europe.

When we consider the millions of Afghan people who have been starving, we should be thankful unto our heavenly Father that we have (almost all of us) much more than is essential to sustain life. The Afghans have been the victims of such cruel abuse and oppression at the hands of the Taliban, we should realize how fortunate we are to live in better conditions. Their country is virtually rubble after two decades of horrible war. Man just hasn't learned very much in the 6,000 years on how to govern himself. He still wages war with his fellow man - his neighbor. We look forward to that day when our Master will make an end of war. He will rule with a rod of iron and the Saints with him. 285

We, as Brethren and Sisters of Christ, realize that our trust and confidence must be in what Yahweh has promised; not in what He has not. He has plainly warned us throughout His Holy Word of Truth to place

our trust in Him and to walk after the Spirit and after the things of the Spirit. Our faith rests on the hope of Israel - the covenants of promise made of Yahweh to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The world has no understanding of the things of the Spirit. They do not know the Gospel, which is the good news or glad tidings of the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. We should be examining ourselves to see that we are standing upon and building upon the one sure foundation. There is no other. What are we building upon that foundation? Could it possibly be wood, hay and stubble? Hopefully, it is the gold, silver and precious stones.

*"But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)*

What we have seen over these past two months and few days is a reminder that time is running short. What time remains must be redeemed. Let us each fill our lamps with the oil of God's Holy Word and keep our lamps (our minds) on those things from above, not on things on the earth. The world (order of things) shall pass away. Our hope and prayer is that we might live in that new order of things wherein shall be righteousness and peace.

*"Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." (Psalms 46:8-11)*

## **THE WOOD OF THE LIFE**

*"To him that overcomes, saith the Spirit, I will give to eat from the wood of life." Apoc. 2:7*

A man's victory over the world is not complete so long as he is engaged in the conflict of life. In this state of existence, then, a man

does not eat from the wood of the life promised; he is therefore, in no sense immortal. The promise of life is, that we shall have it when the victory is won. *"I will give to him to eat,"* points us to the future. We must first appear before the throne by resurrection, to learn whether we are accounted worthy of the life; and then, if the verdict be in our favor, we shall be permitted to eat; otherwise, not.

*"I will give to eat."* Mastication, deglutition, and assimilation, constitute the whole process of eating, which is the conversion of food into blood, which is the life. But the life of the saints in the Millennial Aion is not blood; for *"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; "* for it is corruptible, and the kingdom of God is indestructible, and cannot be left to a succession; hence, *"corruption cannot inherit incorruption."* Their life in that Aion is Holy Spirit.

When this is poured out upon their bodies, posterior to their resurrection, it assimilates to itself, *"in the twinkling of an eye,"* all the particles of their flesh and bones; and they become transformed into incorruptible, deathless, and glorious bodies, according to Paul's testimony, who says,

*"The Lord Jesus Anointed, shall change the nature of the body of our humiliation, that it may become of like form with the body of his glory, by the inworking of what enables him to subdue all things to himself "* Phil. 3 : 21, - that is, of the Spirit.

This inworking, by which the nature of the resurrected body is changed, so as that it becomes a spirit-body, or spirit, is the giving to eat of the wood of life. When the victor has thus eaten he becomes an element of the wood, whose leaf shall never fade, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

## What Does That Mean?

*"If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." (1Cor. 6:4)*

Why did Paul advise to use the "least esteemed" as ecclesial judges?

This verse can be interpreted one of two ways.

Interpretation #1: Paul advises that believers should not contend with one another, for they are brethren. *"Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"* (V.7) If we maintain this spirit, it would mean the end of many quarrels and disputes. We should be of a forgiving temper and recognize most of our disputes are trifles, and may easily be settled-- if we first conquer our own spirits. The brethren of Corinth (not possessing this spirit) went so far as to take matters to outside judges to bolster their cases. It would have been far better to appoint even the most insignificant of their own members as judges than to go outside. If we bear and forbear, then even men of little skill among us may end our quarrels.

Interpretation #2: I will quote Bro. Thomas' discussion of this verse: "But there are diversities among New Men, as there are differences among Old Ones of mere flesh. New men are not all of equal stature, equal age, equal intelligence, equal wisdom, equal faith. Some are babes, others are young and strong men, others, wise fathers, who are not only strong, but sagacious in counsel. Now what doth reason teach you in view of this scripture fact? If you constitute an assembly of New Men with these diversities, and ye have cases and questions, or difficulties; or in Paul's words, 'If ye have judgment of things pertaining to this life, would ye set them to judge who are contemptible in the ecclesia?' (The original word is used in this sense in 2 Cor., x, 10 — 'speech contemptible.') -- *contemptible*, mere babes, who, *as judges*, would be contemptible? It seems that in Corinth they had done this. Instead of appointing wise fathers in Christ, they set the least entitled to consideration in the ecclesia to judge, and the consequence was the greatest disorder and confusion. Therefore Paul wrote saying, 'I speak to your shame, Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one who shall be able to judge between his brethren?' ... Are you all babes, all young men, all fathers? This is not to be supposed. There are diversities among you as in all other congregations; and, as a general rule, the babes are greatly in the majority. These have had knowledge enough to attain to 'the obedience of faith' for remission of sins, and 'a right to the tree of life;' but they have not knowledge and experience combined to qualify them for 'judgments of things pertaining to this life,' according to the letter and spirit of the word. Babes, or 'novices,' being deficient in judicial wisdom, should not be appealed to as judges. Their attention should be concentrated on the truth, and not diverted from it by questions, about which even wise men in Christ are not agreed."

*"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." {men: Gr. perfect, or, of a ripe age} (1 Corinthians 14:20)*