

The Berean Ecclesial News

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

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

BOSTON, Mass. – S.S. 9:30 am; Memorial, 10:45 am; Mid-week Study Class, Wed. 7:30 pm. Meetings held at 310 Washington St., Dedham, MA 02026. Bro. Paul Garvey, 11 Maureen Way, Plymouth, MA 02340 508224-6840

My dearly beloved Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Love and greetings in the one hope we share. We, in this corner of the Master's vineyard, have had great reason for joy in recent weeks. We have had a few visitors since our last ecclesial correspondence: Bro. David and Sis. Lois Van Pelt from Wanaque, Bro. Rusty and Sis. Susie Stephen from Lampasas, Bro. John and Sis. Mary Phillips from Canton, Sis. Shiloh Brown from Lampasas, Sis. Jessie Prentice and Sis. Norma Rankin from Worcester, and Sis. Cheryl Sargent from Colorado as well. We thank Brethren Van Pelt and Stephen for their uplifting words of exhortation.

It is with great joy that we announce another member of Adam's race has realized that knowledge brings responsibility, and acting on this responsibility **Andrew Garvey**, after a good confession of his beliefs, entered into covenant relationship with our Heavenly Father by being immersed into the saving name of His beloved son Jesus Christ. This most joyous event took place at our annual ecclesial picnic on August 17th and the right hand of fellowship was extended the following day at our Memorial meeting. As a parent this is truly one of the most joyous occasions in our lives. My only sadness is that his mother was not able to witness the act of obedience displayed by her son, which was her only desire in this life.

A wise old Brother, who shall remain nameless, told me after I had suffered two close deaths in just about a years time, "Fear not Brother, you'll see them both soon." Our new Brother has now attached himself, by reason of his obedient actions, to this same hope which was issued by one who does not make mistakes. Let us pray and help our new Brother and all our Brethren to arrive at the judgment seat of Christ as recipients of His mercy and participants in that long awaited joy.

With much love in the one hope,
Bro. Paul Garvey

CANTON, Ohio – Sunday School 10am, Memorial 11 am; Mid-week class 7pm Tuesday, Mayfield Senior Center 3825 – 13th St. SW, Canton Ohio, Bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway SW, Massillon, OH 44646; phone (330) 837-1956

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

After our previous letter full of sorrow at the loss of so many in our small corner of the vineyard, it is delightful to be able to send in some joyful news. On Sunday, August 11, 2002, **Michael Phillips** put on the All-Saving Name. It is our profound desire that he may be found on the Great Day among those who have been allowed entrance into the great and glorious kingdom which we seek. His baptism was attended by many from far and near. Bro. Don Miller gave the baptismal talk, after which we retired to the hall for the memorial service.

Bro. Jim Sommerville gave us the word of exhortation, which included thoughts on the meaningful milestone which had just transpired. The author was fortunate in that he was able to give Bro. Michael the right hand of fellowship.

On August 24 & 25 we held our annual Sunday school picnic and many again made the journey to visit. We had a delightful time with many lively spiritual discussions. We thank all who could take the time to attend.

Our visitors have been Bro. Fred and Sis. Ruth Higham, Bro. Tim and Sis. Kay Stinchcomb, Bro. Jim and Sis. Kathy Sommerville, Bro. David and Sis. Kelly Sommerville, Bro. Antonio LaBarbera, Bro. Jim Rankin, Bro. Jeremy Osborne, and Sis. Sharon Osborne. We thank Bro. Jim Rankin, Bro. Tim Stinchcomb and Bro. Jim Sommerville for their comforting and uplifting words of exhortation.

Bro. Beryl Snyder, Recording Brother

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

BOSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING Oct 19 - 21, 2002
Bro. Jim Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd., Northboro, MA 01532, 508-393-2874
For directions to the gathering see: BereanEcclesialNews.com

TOLERANCE

Our words of exhortation this morning are from the 14th chapter of Romans.

Although Paul's initial reason for writing this chapter had a great deal to do with "meats" and observances practiced under the law, it still delivers to us a very important message concerning circumstances and situations that we may have struggled with at one time or another during our ecclesial life. Because Paul tells us in 2nd Timothy 3:16 *"All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* 255

So what he is telling us is that every scripture we read has some application to us for our PROFIT in one of these four areas. But sometimes these lessons are not as obvious to us in some instances, as they are in others. And that is why we are urged to *"Study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

I believe that this chapter is trying to convey to us a lesson on "Instruction in Righteousness." I know that I myself have a great deal of difficulty dealing with my fleshly nature every day of my probation. My pride, arrogance, and the overwhelming need to be right are just a few of the obstacles I struggle with every day.

So what I would like to do is examine those verses and try to determine what the Apostle Paul is really saying to us concerning our association with our brothers and sisters.

1 *"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not unto doubtful disputations."* Doubtful disputations means "matters that are disputable", which the rest of the chapter will bear out. And just what are "disputable matters" you ask? Well, Paul tells us in this chapter some eat meat and others don't; some observe certain days and some do not; so we can see that a "disputable matter" is when it involves choices which God has not clearly spoken about in His word. For we all know that lying, stealing and adultery are not "disputable matters" for these are clearly spoken against by God's word. But when it involves matters of personal preferences and choices, we are told to receive the weaker brother with whom we may view a "disputable matter" differently.

2 *"For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs."* So here, Paul gets into an example — one brother believes he can eat anything; another is not so sure, so he will eat herbs. Now what some may find surprising is that it is the weak faith that has the problems with the freedom that the stronger faith enjoys. So we can see here that faith is used in the sense of assurance and confidence, for he knows that a person's diet has no spiritual significance one way or the other and that is why Paul says at the end of this chapter - "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin"

3. *"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him."* Don't despise the weaker (not eat) brother and don't judge the stronger brother for eating, for God has received him (the weaker Brother), so if God has received both the weaker and the stronger brother, should not they be able to receive each other also? You see, the problem with judging is that it 256 distorts relationships and causes unnecessary harm. Paul is

conveying to us that we do all have allowable conscientious differences and that passing judgment upon these, means making a determination based upon our own convictions and prejudices.

4 *"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand"* Paul really puts his foot down here. Just who do you think you are judging someone else!!! Christ told us to "Judge not, that we be not judged". We are not in a position to see the inner motives of each other. Paul tells us that God's jurisdiction over all who are His, is not to be infringed upon by either the weak or strong;--- for He is our judge.

5-6 *"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."* These verses were probably originally written in reference to the Sabbath or perhaps all the special days of the law. But the lesson to us is obvious, and the point is quite clear and unmistakable – no matter if you esteem one day above another or not; -- whether you eat or don't eat; -- whether you give this percent of your income or that of your income to God – no matter in what way we perform these tasks, we should give the thanks and glory to God. Even though we may disagree with regard to how we approach these issues, -- we must respect the opinion of others because the motive of both the weak and strong is to honor God with thanksgiving.

7-9 *"For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."* The basic lesson of these verses, is that brothers and sisters must live their lives in the full view of Christ (whose name we put on). We live our lives as His servants to Him, and therefore our relationship to Him should impact our relationship to our brothers and sisters. We must interact with each other in a manner pleasing to Christ by not judging the strong, or demeaning the weak.

10-12 *"But why dost thou judge thy brother?"* – Paul addresses this question to the weak in faith; "or why dost thou set at naught thy brother?" – this question is obviously addressed to the strong in faith. And he goes on to infer that these trivial differences, are just that – Trivial. For we must all (the strong and the weak) stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For as he said in verse 4 – It's to our Master we either stand or fall.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We must ALL live our probation with the judgment in view, for on that day all the meaningless differences between brethren will fade away. As he tells us in Philippians "That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow...Do all things without murmuring and disputing that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God."

13 Paul puts in plain words – *"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."* Now we must remember he is still talking about these "disputable matters" that I or you may not see the same way. He is not talking about commandments or doctrinal issues, for these are clear, and we are to "judge righteous judgment." Bro. Growcott in "Search Me, O God" tells us:

*"We are all weak, we are all erring, we shall all continually fail of perfection – but we MUST all work together in compassion and understanding to build the unity and communion of the Body of Christ. We must be very careful that we judge and decide on FACTS, and we must be sure our 'facts' ARE facts. The evil tendency of all flesh (our own included) is to misunderstand and to thoughtlessly misrepresent, to think and expect and say, the worst of others on any occasion of stress or annoyance or disagreement. We must have enough sense and maturity to recognize this fleshly tendency in ourselves and others, so that our conclusions and statements about others are godly and not fleshly. Truly, we must not close our eyes to reality. But we must be very careful, especially in bad situations, to be sure we do not make them worse by fleshly or family partiality for or against, by jumping to conclusions, by alarm and exaggeration, and above all, by the dreadful presumptuousness of playing God in judging motives. Truly, many mistakes are made in trying to deal with problems, but if the motive is right and godly, and the goal is the Truth's welfare, then we must have compassion with the human errors of implementation. Our sympathy must be, not with ties of blood, but with those who are struggling to uphold the principles of the Truth and the standards of the ecclesia, even if we feel they **err in their methods**" - demonstrating difference of approach.*

Then Paul continues in this verse, -- *"But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."* Now this is where Paul makes it hard on me. Let's say as an example I occasionally enjoy a little wine before retiring at night, after all it was Paul who suggested to Timothy to "drink a little wine for his stomach's sake." But a brother is to visit tonight who I know is conscientiously opposed to 258 it. What am I to do? I should not partake – even though I may

consider it okay or even beneficial. But if it may cause my brother to stumble or be offended — it is forbidden. Even though Paul in verse 14 says, *"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth (supposes or reasons) any thing to be unclean, to him it IS unclean."* So my freedom which I may esteem to be okay must stop if it causes offence.

So he tells us in verse 15 — *"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat (or wine, or whatever it may be) now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."* That word destroy means to cause ruin or downfall. So if a misuse of my freedom which I believe to be okay for me is going to "tear down" God's work in a fellow brother then I must ask myself, will my exercise of this freedom cause harm to the faith of a brother or sister? We must do a better job of communicating to one another; of being compassionate toward one another and being considerate of their feelings.

As he tells us in verse 19 *"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another."* Christ said "blessed are the peacemakers" — we are commanded to be peacemakers and not just peacekeepers. Paul is admonishing us to upbuild and edify — not bicker and quarrel. He told the Corinthians in the 20th chapter — *"For I fear, lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would...lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strife's, backbitings, whisperings, swellings and tumults."* We need rather to adhere to what Paul tells us in Galatians 5:22, 23. *"But the fruit of the spirit is love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance: against such there is no law."*

Paul goes on in the 20th verse *"For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense"* which is a repeat of what he said in verse 14 — whether you do or don't eat meat has nothing to do with God's word for all things are pure. But, he says it is evil for that man to eat it with offense. Why? Because he is not partaking with the full assurance of faith that it is okay in his own estimation, and "whatever is not of faith is sin" he tells in verse 23. So, in verse 21 he says "it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

So the best thing one who is strong in faith can do is to assist one who is weak in faith to become strong. But we will never accomplish that goal if we parade our liberty in the face of the weak and possibly offend him.

Verse 22 says: *"Host thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemmeth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."* 259

Faith in this instance means that you have a firm conviction before God that "the thing which you alloweth" you believe to be right. Paul infers here that it is okay to have a conscientious conviction about something but it is inappropriate to force these types of convictions upon others. As a matter of fact he says we do not have the prerogative to do so, but we "Must have it to ourselves" before God.

Verse 23 says, *"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."* I believe Paul means that a person is condemned in his own conscience for doing that which it will not allow. For if he does not eat in faith believing that it is acceptable before God, he eats in sin – because *"whatsoever is not of faith is sin."*

I suppose if there is a lesson I would like for you to get from this exhortation it is "toleration" for those who may not see every minute detail or may differ from us in our approach to the Truth. As I quoted from Bro. Growcott earlier, he says – *Truly, many mistakes are made in trying to deal with problems, but if the motive is right and godly, and the goal is the Truth's welfare, then we must have compassion with the human errors of implementation. Our sympathy must be, not with ties of blood, but with those who are struggling to uphold the principles of the Truth and the standards of the ecclesia, even if we feel they err in their methods."* In other words, our methods may vary but our goals and objectives are the same – upholding the principles of the Truth.

Judgment and criticism of one another is built into our nature and is hard to control in the best of circumstances. Therefore Bro. Growcott exhorts us in "SEARCH ME, O GOD":

"DO not judge. Rather, try to understand, and make an effort to help. Most people need your patience more than your criticism. Leave the judging to God, unless absolutely necessary in faithfulness to the Truth. He has guaranteed He will take care of all the judging that is necessary, at the proper time. If someone annoys or offends us, the trouble is most likely in our own pride and vanity or small-mindedness or touchiness. Thin skin is a miserable disease. If we were large-minded enough, or less self-centered, we would feel sympathy and compassion, rather than offence."

That is exactly the reason Paul tells us in tomorrow's chapter "That we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let everyone of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. As the children's song is taught – True JOY is Jesus first, yourself last and others in between.

Christ is our supreme example; if he pleased not himself, then neither should we. But rather have concern for others. Brother and sisters we assemble each first day of the week to memorialize the sacrifice of our Lord and Master through the partaking of this bread and wine. We do this in the mode of self-examination, for we are told if we judge ourselves (not others) we shall not be judged. Bro. Growcott makes a few comments concerning the topic of "LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF":

"Pray fervently for the blessing of being able to stand back and view yourself objectively and dispassionately: to see all your ugliness and weaknesses, failures and limitations. They are you, and they call for action, like typhoid fever would call for action. These are you now, but they need not be you eternally: they DARE not be you permanently. They must be faced and dealt with before it is too late. This is our principal and over-riding responsibility and task in this life. It is a full time, full effort task. The faculty of self-examination is a marvelous gift of God – the key to life – but it is so tremendously unused and unappreciated. Very few realize the urgency and magnitude of the task of self-transformation. Most critical evaluation is directed outward to others. How universal is the tendency to criticize others! How rare the tendency to critically and consistently and EFFECTUALLY criticize ourselves! What rationalizations! What lame and transparent excuses! What unworthy self-justification! God give us the self-discernment and self-honesty!"

So let us be ever thoughtful, considerate and compassionate to each other as we attempt to be about our Father's business. As the Apostle Paul exhorts in Ephesians *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

And so we will leave you with the words of Solomon in the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes (as I so often do) *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil."*

Bro. Jerry Connolly

Brotherly Love

Good morning brothers and Sisters, It is truly a joy to meet around the table of the lord with brothers and sisters of like, precious faith. Brothers and sisters this morning I would like you to look around this meeting hall. Who do you see? Well, we See our fellow brothers and sisters, Sunday school scholars and perhaps a visitor or two. Now as we look around at our fellow brothers and sisters, do we see those that we are acquainted with? Those that we love ? Both? Or do a few catch your eye that you don't 261

even know? Maybe we do not realize just how dangerous this is. John tells us in 1 John 3:14 " *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*" Notice John does not say " He that loveth not his brethren that are in his own natural family abideth in death" or " He that loveth not his brethren that share the same worldly interests abideth in death" ..but.. "BRETHREN." Yes, ALL those sitting around us that I asked you to look at earlier. So, brethren and sisters, are there some that you see here that you are going to break bread with in a few minutes that you do not know, perhaps do not even LIKE??? How do we love those that we don't know or don't even like to be around? Now let me ask you another question, do you love God? "Of Course" every one who was asked this would answer "Yes, I love God that is why I am here." BUT in 1 John 4:20 we read "*If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother which he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*" Do we REALLY love our brethren? Do we love our brethren as Christ and the Apostles loved theirs, so much that they would lay down their lives for them? John 15:13 "*Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*" Now, recently at the Hye gathering many of us from this Ecclesia took in Brethren from abroad who came early or stayed a while after the Hye gathering. When they left were we glad that we had been able to assist those of like precious faith and did we rejoice that we had been able to spend even more time with Brothers and Sisters we do not get to see but once a year? OR did we afterwards complain about how much of a burden they were to us? A BURDEN !?! . How much of a burden were we to our Lord and Savior that he had to die a most violent death for us? We read in Isaiah **52:14** ... "*His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:*" a burden. One should think on these things before he professes to love his brethren.

Now, if these things we have talked about this morning have made you consider that perhaps you aren't walking as straight as you thought and it made you "examine" yourself, you might say: "This is good, after all, what does Jesus say to the believers?" 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 "*But let a man EXAMINE himself and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*" HE THAT EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY, EATETH AND DRINKETH DAMNATION TO HIMSELF. Perhaps we do not REALLY examine ourselves and if we do, do we do it often enough? Maybe we do not realize the full significance of what we are doing every first day of the week. Brothers and Sisters, during the Memorial meeting we might as well be sitting at the table in that large upper room with Jesus and the disciples. THAT is how solemn of an occasion our Memorial meeting is. How many of us here would whisper something to someone sitting beside us while Christ was breaking the bread? Or, how many would let a child continue crying as he "took the cup." These are all things to think well on as we examine ourselves every Sunday morning as we partake of the emblems. As was stated earlier, we are commanded to love all the brethren. Let us not forget to include in this group our elder brother Jesus Christ in Matthew 25: 40 we read " *And the King shall answer and say unto 262 them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the*

least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Brothers and Sisters if we love the brethren this shows forth our love for our Lord and Savior. But if we carry malice towards or hate one of our brethren, we do the same to our Master. So, to be saved, we must love all our brothers and sisters, but to be rejected we must despise only one. This principle carries over into many aspects of our salvation. The principle is that we must give 100 percent or we might as well be doing nothing. Yes, God requires 100 percent of our effort, not half, not three-fourths, but all. Moses informs the children of Israel of the blessings of seeking God with all of their heart in Deuteronomy 4:29-31 *"But, if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation and all these things come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."* Jesus tells us of the first and great commandment in Matthew 22:27: we read, *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"*

In Mat 18:20 we read, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* Do we sometimes forget that when we are in the company of those of like precious faith, or when it seems like we might be alone with a brother or sister that we are close to, that Jesus sits in the midst of us. Before we say anything, we would do well to ask ourselves if we would say it to our Master's face. We must take care not to be like those that Paul spoke of in 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. *"For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed"* Does this sound sadly familiar Brothers and Sisters? Envyings, wraths, strife's, backbitings, WHISPERINGS! Do they sound familiar or common place? Paul was warning that he was soon coming to visit the Corinthians and he hoped that he would not find them in this state. It will not be Paul who will soon be coming to see the state of our ecclesia. No, not Paul, but one much greater, and after his coming there will be no time for change. The time to change is NOW!. We have so short a time before Jesus returns, we are truly in the time of the end. Will he, Brothers and Sisters, find us in the state of the Corinthians? For our own sakes we should hope not. We can not be lax concerning our salvation. WE are the ones who have to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do his pleasure. If we continue in the same rut of day to day Laodacianism, we will be set on the left side of our Master's throne, and hear the words, *"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* Paul asks, *"shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid, how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"* No, let us love our Brothers and Sisters and put on the breastplate of righteousness that we may be protected from the sin in this world that every day tries to ensnare us.

We read in John 15:9-10, *"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love."* Jesus tells us that if we love him we must keep his commandments. Our day of judgment is soon approaching and we have two choices. We can choose obedience and be accepted or we can choose to continue in sin and be cast out. As we examine ourselves before we partake of the emblems this morning, let us imagine being at the judgment seat, after our Lord pronounces which side of his throne we are to be on, will we joyously stand with King David, Apostle Paul and Abraham, or will we shamefully go to the side of Judas Iscariot? If, this morning we know all too well that if Judgment is tomorrow we will be watching the accepted from the other side of the throne, then there is no better time to change than the present. Brothers and Sisters, let us walk in righteousness so that on that soon coming day of judgment we may hear those blessed words of our Lord and Master, *"Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"*

Bro. Dylan Foley

James 1

James is the New Testament name for Jacob, which means supplanter. There are at least three men in the New Testament given this name: James the son of Zebedee, James the son of Alphaeus, and James the Lord's half-brother, who is thought to be the author of this epistle.

The epistle is thought to be one of the earliest books of the New Testament. It is written to the twelve tribes, which were scattered abroad and in particular to those Jews who believed in Christ.

The general theme is related to FAITH, and Chapter One is about how faith can help us overcome trials and how it can govern our actions toward others. Paul is addressing people who have knowledge about Christ and the plan of salvation.

Knowledge is the first step. He wants them to start applying that knowledge to gain wisdom and faith. Throughout the book, he contrasts how people with and without faith in God act. And it makes sense. People, who have faith in God, will act a certain way—a way different than those who have faith in themselves.

This is a very practical chapter—and one that we should often think of, particularly when we have found ourselves in a trying time.

The chapter begins with an exhortation to rejoice when we are under trial. The NIV translation of verse 2 says, *"Consider it pure joy, my 264 brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know*

that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."

When we are in a trying time, it is hard to step back and look at the big picture. But if we do, we will see that the present trial is there for a purpose—to build up our character .

James finishes the thought in verse 3-4, *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."* We should look to the end, understanding that we are being molded, and refined by God. *"Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."*

Paul wrote to the Romans: *"We glory in tribulation: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."* (Romans 5:3-4)

And Peter said: *"Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. "* (1 Peter 1:6-7)

It's so easy to look at a trial or hardship and become discouraged. Instead, we must view it as an opportunity to please God, to see the trial for what it is—a process of refinement. Often, we don't recognize a trial until it is too late, and we often regret our action—our response has been recorded. We must always be watching, keeping the Word in front of us, watching ourselves, as in the mirror, monitoring our responses, our thoughts, our actions. And when we see or feel that we are running into trouble, let us ask of God for the wisdom and faith to get us through. *"Ask, and it shall be given you."* (Matthew 7:7)

Faith worketh patience, or as some translations say, endurance. We know that *"faith is the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1) The world thrives around material things that can be seen. These material things appeal to our senses and to our lusts and eventually to our pride of life. Man's approach is to increase in these material things, and by doing so has no desire to spend time on spiritual things like patience, perseverance, or faith.

Bro. Rene once wrote that "the opposite of faith is worry, which arises because of doubt." If we loose faith during these trying times, we will begin to doubt and we'll lose sight of where we need to be heading, and we'll lose the joyfulness described in verse 2.

James isn't minimizing the hardship of these trials. We read in 1 Peter 1:6, *"Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."* And in Hebrews, *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with 265*

sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ...Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12: 6, 7, 11)

I would like to finish this thought by quoting from a Brother Rene's article entitled Grow in Grace:

"We can easily learn by observation that happiness, contentment, peace of mind and rejoicing do not stand in any direct proportion to outward circumstances—the greatest sufferer can be the happiest—THE GREATEST SUFFERER CAN BE THE HAPPIEST—the most fortunate can be the most miserable.

On what then, does joy depend? Purely on the inner state of the mind. Now although this is true even in the natural, we are not concerned with any joy except the true, sound, unchanging spiritual joy that is based on the Faith, Hope and Love which come from a wholehearted embracing of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

There the intense inward joy exists, not only in spite of outward sorrow, but actually because of it. It is recorded of the early disciples when they were beaten by the Jewish authorities, '*Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.*' (Acts 5:4) Not just patiently bearing it, but rejoicing!"

And therefore James exhorts, "*Count it ALL JOY when ye fall into manifold trials.*"

Verse 5 – "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.*" Wisdom is understanding what to do with the knowledge that you have. We may know all the answers, but may not know how to apply it. Knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord.

Our faith must be solid, and centered on God. We must be set in the ways of God, and not set in our own ways, or as verse 8 says, "*double minded*" We can't be asking for fleshly reasons, but instead, to help in our walk towards the kingdom. We are instructed to be single-minded with one purpose and one goal. "*No man can serve two masters.*"

Verses 9-11 speak of the rich and poor, which are perhaps two of the most common reasons man becomes double-minded. The Bible often warns the rich man, reminding us that the cares of this world can easily overtake our thoughts. Pride makes us think we are more than what we are in this life. With this attitude we strive and desire for even more material things, which shall all pass away, as it says in verse 11. But if our thoughts are on God and trying to please him, then the cares of this world won't 266 entice us as much. Then when we are tempted, we will be more

likely to see the temptation for what it is, and with our continued correct responses we can count it for joy that we are getting closer to that crown of life that the Lord has promised.

Paul said, *"poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."*

James says in verse 13, *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* So what does this mean? And how does this fit in with other verses such as in the Lord's prayer, *"Lead us not into temptation."*

From a 1893 Christadelphian:

"There is no conflict between the Lord's prayer—"Lead us not into temptation"—and the statement of James 1: 13—"Neither tempteth He any man." There's a difference between the idea of God tempting man, and a man being left or led into circumstances where temptations would operate powerfully.

God influences no man for evil by acting on him in the way suggested by the man of James' supposition. A man's being drawn into evil is an affair of his response, as James says in verse 14.

God might leave a man in circumstances where temptation would be strong, and might guide him out of such circumstance. Here is where the petition of the Lord's Prayer comes in, without interfering with James' absolute statement. The case is illustrated by the prayer of Agur (Prov. 30:8-9): *"Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal and take the Name of my God in vain."* Feb, 1893

Verses 14 - 15 give us the source of sin. John wrote *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* (1 John 2:16)

Verse 17 - *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."* We are told in 1 John 1:5 that *"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."* God is referred to as light several times throughout scripture: *" Dwelling in light which no man can approach unto."* (1 Timothy 6:16)

By nature we are in darkness, until we learn the true light of the scriptures. We are to use this knowledge to conform ourselves to the image of His son, and thus walk in His light. In Matthew, we are instructed to let our light thus shine before men, and then in 1John 1:7 *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

Bro Growcott said,

"Light is the great theme of throughout the Scriptures. The very first thing God said was, *"Let there be light."* And in the last chapter of the Bible, we are told of the redeemed, *"God giveth them light."*

Another interesting quotation from Bro Roberts:

"God is light in character as well as in nature. *Light* in this use stands for truth, wisdom, righteousness. It completes the picture of the glory of God when we have to think of Him not only as a being of physical brightness and power, but of one whose character corresponds with the physical light and purity of His nature." Bro. Robert Roberts

Verse 17 ends with the comment that there is no variableness in God. This is in contrast to what man tends to do. *"God is not a man, that He should lie."* (Numbers 23:19), and *"I am the Lord, I change not."* (Malachi 3:6)

Verse 19 – *"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."* The word of God should develop within us a patient character that is slow to anger. Proverbs says, *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."* (Proverbs 16:32). And Paul said in Ephesians, *"Be ye angry; and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."* (Ephesians 4:26)

James emphasizes in verse 22 that the pattern is not only to accept the doctrine of the Truth, but to live it. We are not to just hear it, but do it! Rom 2:13 says, *"For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."*

We should always be examining ourselves, constantly keeping in mind who we are and what purpose we are here for. If we look at ourselves only before Sunday meeting, we are missing so much. Our goal is to read the Bible and use the pattern set before us to conform ourselves to that image. It is for our self-examination so that we can compare ourselves to the perfect example and see our weaknesses and faults, and thereby know what it is that we need to be continually working on. We must never be satisfied, for when we are, we will look away from the mirror, we'll put down the Bible, we'll forget about the word, and we'll forget who we are and who we should be.

So our challenge is to live each day continually thinking about the things of God. But it is easy to get complacent and satisfied with who we are, and our mind can easily trick us into thinking we are better than we really are. *"The heart is deceitful above all things."* (Jeremiah 17:9)

It is important to recognize that being a *"doer of the work,"* as in verse 25, doesn't necessarily mean a physical laborer. Our *work* must include keeping our mind on the things of God, controlling our tongue, increasing our patience—*"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent; "* (John 6:29), and *"Fruitful in every good work... unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."* (Colossians 1:10,11)

As we look at ourselves in the mirror, we really need to concentrate on how God sees us. How are we doing? Our speech is a marker for what we think. When we talk to others, what are we saying? Verse 26 – *"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."*

The following passages emphasize just how important our speech is:

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." (Matthew 12:37)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Proverbs 18:21)

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34)

"What man is he that desireth life? ... Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." (Psalm 34:12-13)

"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him." (Prov 29:20)

"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things." (Prov 15:28)

In order to control the tongue, we must control the mind, which can only be done by constantly feeding the word that is engrafted within us.

We are to be preparing ourselves to be an acceptable Bride for Christ—unspotted from the world—one that is constantly aware of our performance and monitoring our progress—watering the engrafted word, allowing it to spring up inside us and making us a more attractive and a more pleasing bride.

Our trials, then, are for our instruction and profit – *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."*

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Bro. Lee Smith

Be Ye The Light Of The World

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

A high commission indeed! Similar to the salt, but a different aspect. The salt is the preserving influence, the inner striving and prayer, the life of godliness and purity. The light is the manifestation, the guidance, the enlightenment, the beacon pointing the way in the darkness of human night.

Let your light shine that men may glorify God. Our lives and testimonies must be a manifestation to lost and groping mankind of the reality and desirability and beauty of holiness.

G. V. Growcott

DANIEL — THE FOURTH BEAST (Cont.)

"Afterwards, Daniel saw a fourth beast arise up out of the sea. He describes it as dreadful and terrible, and diverse from all the three beasts that preceded it. It had on its head ten horns, answering to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; but what struck him as most remarkable in connection with the head of the fourth beast was this, that while he was looking at the ten horns, another little horn arose among them. His attention was directed to that little horn particularly, because, unlike all the other horns, there were in it eyes like the eyes of man and a mouth speaking great things. He observed that when this little horn rose, three of the original fell. His attention was particularly arrested by this little (eleventh) horn, and when he wanted to know the interpretation of the vision as a whole, you find him enquiring particularly as to the meaning of the little horn that had eyes and mouth, in which I may say, we of the latter days are particularly interested, for we read that the little horn prevailed until the Ancient of Days came, and that event has not yet occurred." [*The*

Book Unsealed page 10]

Our last article concluded with a quotation from the book 'Apocalypse and History' where Bro. Barker briefly described the origins and growth of the Roman power. From the shores of the Mediterranean, Rome advanced northwards and southwards until they ruled all the land west of the line of the Rhine, the Danube and the Euphrates. During the period of the republic, the form of government underwent several changes (seven in all, see Revelation 12:3, and Revelation 13:1). The last was the appointment of what is described by Bro Barker as "a dictator for life." This was Imperial Rome, and Julius Caesar (who was a Roman general), was accepted as an Emperor, thus marking the end of the republic.

The power of Rome had increased considerably by this time. For example, in B.C.168 Macedonia was embraced within Rome's iron grip. In B.C.133, Pergamum was bequeathed to Rome by its king. In B.C.65 Syria was occupied by Rome, and Egypt fell to her power in B.C.30.

The extent of the empire was from Palestine and Egypt, to Gaul and Britain. It brought all the territory of the three previous empires under its control, except the eastern portion of Persia, of which we hope to have more to say shortly.

This was the "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" fourth beast. **The ten horns.** The introduction of the ten horns introduces us to another phase of the Roman Empire. There is, of course, an obvious connection with the ten toes of the metallic Image described in Daniel chapter 2. The legs of the Image were all of iron, symbolising the power of Rome, whereas the feet were an alloy. They were part of clay and part of *iron*. From the feet of iron and clay, we learnt that the Roman Empire was to continue until the advent of the Stone Power (i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ), who was to smite the image upon its feet, and subsequently grind it to powder. We also learnt that the continuation of this fourth Empire was to be in a weakened condition, as depicted by the mixture of clay with the iron. This represents the political arrangements in Europe as we observe them today. To put it another way, Europe is a prolongation of Rome's existence in another form. The European nations are in a divided condition. As Bro. Roberts expressed it, "a rickety, disjointed system of nations, which hardly holds together for weakness", despite the repeated attempts to adhere them together.

These features are also represented in the seventh chapter, where in addition, Daniel observes an eleventh horn emerging, as recorded in verse

8: "*I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn*"

We will come to consider the historical significance of this "little horn" in

due course, but we note from verses 21 and 22 that it continues until the coming of the Ancient of days:

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

This shows that the evidence for the continuance of the fourth Empire is proved from chapter two and chapter seven.

But to return to the ten horns, Daniel is provided with an explanation as to what they represented. In verse 24 he is told *"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise."* Who are these kings, and where did they arise?

In considering the answer to these questions, we are introduced to the decline of Imperial Rome. Rome, the dominant and powerful Empire that had held sway for centuries, was not always to retain such an unchallenged position. After obtaining mastery of the civilised world, her fortunes began to decline. She had become accustomed to luxury, with its attendant vices and corruption. As history clearly testifies, no stronger power usurped her authority. However, a greater and more insidious force was undermining her strength. The corruption and decadence that filled her streets and buildings slowly ate away the power of Imperial Rome. Rome actually deteriorated from within!

It is also interesting to read the historical details of the Apocalyptic seals as comprehensively expounded in Eureka. The unrelenting cruelty and oppression of the pagan Romans were judicially visited by the calamities of the seals as outlined in chapter 6 of the Apocalypse. The arrow-less Bowman marched on until the Stephan of victory crowned him with the overthrow of the pagan power.

The consequence was, that Rome became a prey to nations smaller than herself, but who were exceedingly fierce. The warlike tribes of Northern Europe and Asia invaded the proud empire, defeating the Roman armies, spreading terror among its inhabitants, and decimating the provinces. Notably among these were the Goths, the Vandals and the Huns. Ultimately, the armies of Odoacer (a Goth) captured Rome itself in A.D.476, bringing the Empire in the West to an end. Rome had been weakened by the barbarian hordes that poured over the borders of the Empire. These developed into the "ten horns" or "kingdoms" of western Europe.

Bro. Thomas lists the ten horns as the Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, Burgundians, Gepidae, Lombards, Franks, Suevi, Alans, and the Bavarians.

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kingdoms did not substitute a new order of society in place of that established by Rome. Nor did they unite together as one government. They continued the order established by the Seven Hills. Bro. Roberts remarks:

"The clay intermingled itself with the iron, and was, ultimately moulded into shape by the stronger element. This is the time at which we are to look for the ten horns; for the ten horns in the beast vision represent the same aspect of the fourth kingdom, as the clay and iron ten-toed feet of the image vision. It is reasonable to assume that as soon as the Roman beast ceased to be controlled by its own head it passed into the ten-horned state of government; that is, as soon as imperial Rome fell, as soon as the central government of the empire was destroyed, the empire passed into the dismembered state represented by the ten horns." (Christendom Astray p369)

Bro. Roberts also made an important point when we consider the ten toes/horns powers of today:

"Some of these kingdoms at length fell, and new ones sprang up; but, whatever was their subsequent number, they still retain the name of the ten kings from their first numberThe vision predicts the uprising of ten kingdoms in the territory of the Roman empire. We would, therefore, argue *a priori*, that there must have been that number in the States that made their appearance when the unity of the empire was dissolved. Whatever the obscurity of history might indicate to the contrary.....The ten horns appeared about the fifth and sixth centuries, but were afterwards reduced and multiplied in number by the revolutions of war. It is evident, however, that they reappear at the time that the fourth-beast system as a whole is destroyed by divine judgement." (ibid p370-371)

Bro. Roberts directs attention to Apocalypse 17:12 where it is stated :

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."

The verse shows that the horn kingdoms will rise to power at the time of the end, and challenge the supremacy of the Ancient of Days, as the subsequent verses show:

"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them" (Rev. 17 ; 13-14)

As Bro. Thomas expresses it:

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"I know of no place where it is written that the Horns and Toes were to have an uninterrupted existence of 1260 years; but I do find that "the Ten Horns receive power as kings one hour with the beast". – that is, thirty years; so that we need not be careful to identify them until then."

The Little Horn. Having considered the ten horns, we now turn our attention to the Little Horn that was so different from the other ten, and which (according to the reading of verse 8 of Daniel chapter 7) must have come historically after the emergence of the ten horn powers of Europe. Are we to look back at history for a specific power answerable to this horn? The answer is yes, and history affords ample evidence to identify the power as that of the Papacy. This ecclesiastical system exercised great influence and power in European affairs.

Now the words of Daniel 7 in relation to this "religious" power are by no means complimentary. Verse 21 indicates that the Horn "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." In verse 25 it spoke "*great words against the Most High.*" Are we sure that the Papacy is correctly identified? Is the frail old man who has won the affection of millions all over the world really the head of a system so described?

History unequivocally confirms that the Roman Catholic power is the Little Horn of this fourth Beast. However, before we speak of this power in detail, it will perhaps assist our consideration of this part of the chapter if we survey briefly some of the important dates in the progress and development of the Roman Empire. This will be particularly useful as a summary of our previous comments on the Roman Empire, and as we observe that Empire passing from that of an Imperial pagan power to an Ecclesiastical power. Some other references have also been included to provide "background" information.

The following dates and events have been culled from "The Apocalypse and History," "Eureka" and "Help to the memory of History".

BC261 All Italy subdued by Rome.

BC 146 Rome conquers Carthage.

BC 147 Rome becomes master in Greece.

BC 133 Rome conquers Asia Minor.

BC79 Julius Caesar becomes a dictator at Rome.

BC65 Judea becomes a Roman province.

BC55 Julius Caesar invades Britain.

AD1 Jesus born at Bethlehem.

AD64 The first Roman persecution of the Christians (under Nero).

AD70 Jerusalem destroyed.

AD96 The apocalypse communicated to John in Patmos.

(AD107 to AD324 Declension from the original apostolic state from "*the poor in this world, rich in faith*" to the Laodicean apostasy characterised by the state of being spiritually "*wretched, miserable, poor, blind and 274 naked*" see Eureka v61.1 pp419 et seq.)

AD 117 Death of the Emperor Trajan, under whom the (pagan) Roman Empire attained its greatest territorial extent.

AD305 The Emperor Diocletian abdicated the purple, and the Roman world became subject to four Emperors (Constantine, Maxentius, Licinius, and Maximin) each ruling over a fourth of the empire.

AD312 Constantine was a friend of the "Christians" (Christians as opposed to the true brethren of Christ), and proclaimed toleration in his part of the empire (Britain, Gaul and Spain). He was threatened by his imperial (pagan) colleagues. Maxentius (who ruled over Italy and Africa) made war against Constantine. At the battle of Milvian Bridge, near Rome, Maxentius was totally defeated, and Constantine become master of Rome.

(The Roman Senate declared Constantine to be the first of the three Augusti.)

(Maximin – who ruled over Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt – had been the secret ally of Maxentius. He invaded the dominion of Licinius (who ruled over Illyricum), but received a decisive overthrow. He fled, and three or four months after died.)

(The Roman world was now divided between Constantine, who was master in the west, and Licinius, who was master in the east.)

AD313 Constantine made a solemn declaration by the Edict of Milan, which restored peace to the Catholic Church. Constantine and Licinius (but not with the hearty concurrence of the latter) proclaimed to the world that they had granted a free and absolute power to the Catholics, and to all others, of following the religion which each individual thinks proper to prefer. (see Eureka vol. 3 p. 81)

(And she brought forth a man child (after 280 gestation day/years from AD33) – Apoc.12:5)

AD323 After a prolonged period of friction, Constantine made war on Licinius, and defeats him at the Battle of Adrianople. (*"the* (pagan) *Dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not"* – Apoc.12:7-9). Licinius is later executed at Thessalonica. Constantine becomes the sole master of the Roman world.

AD324 Constantine abolishes Paganism, adopts Christianity as the religion of the empire; the beginning of the alliance of the Church and the State. "With no conviction multitudes became Christians in name and profession, though not in heart" (Apocalypse and History p.43).

Signs and Events

In this series of articles, which we hope, God Willing, to further develop in the coming months, we will focus our efforts in two distinct areas, under the above heading.

If there are significant developments in world events which we deem to be genuine "Signs of the Times" then we will use this space to include relevant facts and information to show how the return of Christ is at hand, "even at the door."

We are commanded to, *"Watch therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch (Mark 13 v 3 7) .*

We also propose to use this space each Month, if our Master remains away, to include interesting matter on the subject of 'Events in connection with the return of Christ'.

SIGNS. During the month of August, three topics have dominated our News Headlines. 1. The potential for US and British troops to strike against Iraq in a bid to topple Saddam Hussein; 2. The on-going strife between Israeli and Palestinian leaders; 3. Floods causing chaos throughout Europe.

IRAQ INVASION. U.N negotiations with Iraq break down on weapons inspectors. This coincides with U.S. leaked plans on the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime. Thousands of targets are listed. The invasion would be spear-headed by thousands of U.S. marines and other troops invading from Kuwait with massive air cover from bombers and combat aircraft. Special forces would pin point targets on the ground including depots and laboratories where are stored Saddam's arsenal of chemical and biological warfare weapons (source: The Times, UK, 2002).

In the next issue, we intend to comment on the significant developments in this part of the world. We recollect from the last conflict in the early nineties that when Iraq pointed its missile launchers in the direction of the land of Israel, there was evidence which suggested that Europe was to take the side of Iraq, specifically against the US and the UK. It will be interesting to watch how the situation will develop as the US pledges to launch an attack similar to the one it has recently launched against the Al Qaida terrorist network.

ISRAELI, PALESTINIAN CONFLICT. *"And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates..." (Ezekiel 38 v 11)* The events which we have seen take 276 place in the middle east in the past few years especially, show that

this area of world conflict is not in the condition which it must be in just prior to Armageddon. The high security walls currently being erected, at a cost of 80 million pounds, is the antithesis of 'dwelling without walls.' However, we know that the Supreme Creator of heaven and earth is not slack concerning His promises and that there will be a time, which will be manifested shortly, when the area will be in a state of relative peace. Will this peace develop right in front of the brotherhood's eyes? Or will it develop during the 10 years of judgement upon the household at Sinai? Let us not be complacent... we know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man will be revealed. Our lot now is to 'watch' and prepare ourselves for His coming; He shall come with 'healing in His beams' to save Israel from utter destruction, and to establish God's Divine Kingdom upon the very face of the earth. No Israeli leader has managed to bring lasting peace and security to the Holy Land, for *"O Yahweh, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* (Jeremiah 10:23) Israel will shortly be humbled, disciplined and refined, and they will call upon their Messiah to deliver them. Christ will become their King and He will rule them in righteousness and equity. (Isaiah 11 v 4)

FLOODS IN EUROPE. Widespread flooding in many areas of Europe have caused damage not seen in hundreds of years. Over a hundred thousand citizens have been evacuated from their homes to seek refuge from the storms. If only they knew what was coming upon them, when the judgements of God will be poured out in His fury, especially in this Godless region. These are events which are causing the nation's hearts to fail them for fear. When the topography of many land masses will change as a result of massive earthquakes (God's own instruments for destruction and judgement), causing tidal waves from the East, then the nations will learn of Yahweh's righteousness. Flooding as widespread as this can help cause our minds to reflect that the whole universe is in the Hands of Almighty God and that He alone rules in the Kingdom's of men!

MANKIND DEMANDS TOO MUCH OF EARTH (SOURCE: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences). "Mankind's demand for natural resources and land is at least a fifth more than the planet can comfortably supply, according to an international team of ecologists.

The first systematic attempt to calculate how human demands on the environment are matched by its capacity to cope has found that we use about 120 per cent of what the Earth can provide sustainably every year.

This means that land and resources are being used up faster than they can be regenerated, pointing towards an environmental disaster if the trend is not reversed, scientists say.

group Redefining Progress in Oakland, California, demands on the environment were calculated from six key indicators. The team also included Norman Myers, of Oxford University, UK.

The researchers added up the total area used around the world for growing crops, for pasture, timber forests, housing and other human infrastructure, for fisheries, and soaking up greenhouse gases in natural "carbon sinks", such as rainforests.

They then calculated the natural biological productivity in each of the fields, working out how many of the resources could be exploited without causing irreparable damage.

According to the analysis, human demand for resources in 1961 stood at about 70 per cent of the Earth's sustainable capacity. By the 1970's, it had risen to match the global supply, and in 1999 exceeded it by 20 per cent." (The Times, UK, 2002)

Through man's greed and lack of direction, he is unable to provide for the future. Bro. Ed Truelove, Richard, Canada, made mention of these statistics in a Bible Lecture a few years ago. He showed to us that man, left to his own impulses, does not have a future. Should we be concerned at these events? Will we go without food before the time of the end? We should have no concern in any of the statistics which show that the world will experience a "time of trouble such as never was." Our vision must be of the future when there shall be "glory to God in the highest, and *on earth peace*, good will toward men." We don't know exactly what will occur in the world prior to the time of the end, but we are commanded to "take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. One thing we can be sure of is that in the Kingdom of God, there will be plenty for all inhabitants of the earth. Isaiah 35 tells us: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." (verse 1) Also, Psalm 72 v 16: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains: the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

The world indeed is heading toward that time of Jacob's trouble, and we look on and wonder whether things are still to get worse? Perhaps things haven't got quite as bad as they were in the days of Noah, not quite as Godless as they were in the days of Lot! Perhaps they have. We are living in the very last hour of the night, that hour which directly precedes the dawn break which will usher in our "redeemer and saviour." Today is indeed a time to consider, to reflect, to change, a time to try that much harder.

The Deep Things of God: Prophetic Exhortation

In the book of Revelation we are informed that those brethren who separate from the Beast-system described therein shall live and reign with Christ during the Millennial Aion. John records: "*And I saw thrones, (and they sat on them, and judgment was given them,) and the persons of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and because of the word of God, -- even those who did not worship the Beast, nor his image, and did not receive the mark on their forehead, and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with the Anointed One the thousand years*" (Revelation 20:4).

A wonderful day *is* promised to the faithful in Christ Jesus. However, the antithesis is also clear. Those who do not maintain separation from this System shall not be among the symbolic 144,000 who reign with the King during the Age to Come. This is, therefore, an issue related to eternal salvation.

In order for one to effectively separate from a system, he or she must first correctly identify it. The book of Daniel provides the first clue. Among other things, the prophet forecasts a fourth world empire symbolized by legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron and clay (ch. 2). History reveals this power to have been Rome. He describes it further as brass and iron bands around an Assyro-Babylonian stump (ch. 4), and ultimately depicts it as an unnamed terrible Fourth Beast (ch. 7). This vital information provides the historical framework in which to set the prophecies of the Apocalypse; for it presents to the reader a general prophetic timetable of relevant Gentile activity commencing from the Greco-Roman period.

Against this backdrop, the Apostle John enters the scene. He receives the Revelation during this selfsame Roman period and writes of key political and religious events: "*The thing which thou hast seen, and the thing which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*" Therein does the Spirit reveal much greater details concerning Daniel's prophecy—especially with respect to the Fourth Beast -- elaborating a continuous series of events reaching even unto the Eighth Day when sin and death are no more (Revelation 1:1; 2:19; 13:1-8; cf. 21:1).

The Apocalyptic Beast-system is, therefore, Roman in nature. It has to be. No other Biblically defined Beast is extant during John's day for him to prognosticate about (cf. Rev. 17: 3, 10). And it still exists today.

Geopolitically, it is to be found in a fragmented state upon the territorial power centers of the old Greco-Roman domain across Continental Europe. One day soon these remnants of Rome will come together to oppose the Multitudinous Christ, and they will suffer the everlasting defeat foreordained by the Deity. The official State religion of the Roman Empire was Roman Catholicism. In fact, it can be said that Rome gave birth to this great system of iniquity.

The Revelation places particular emphasis upon this ecclesiastical aspect of the Beast. The saints are to utterly eschew it. Accordingly, as Christ's brethren we must make every effort to correctly identify Rome in all manifestations and not fall under her influence in either doctrine or practice. Furthermore, may we not make the fatal mistake which some have made in declaring that the Apocalyptic Beast is not a Roman-based entity; for our separation will be seriously compromised if, in the process, we adopt as our belief any version of Catholicism's primary prophetic heresies— Preterism and Futurism—both of which take Papal Rome out of the prophetic equation.

What Does That Mean?

"For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God" (1 Chron. 5:22)

How could a good God--a God of peace--condone warfare and give instructions as to how war should be fought...and be *acclaimed* by His people in the following words, *"The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name"?*

Many of today's peace movements and "make love not war" ideas that sprang out of the culture of the Sixties are incorporated in the humanistic fabric of today's religion. But truthfully, there is just no way that anyone can reconcile the "God of the Bible" with these ideas!

There can be no question that God is indeed a God of love and peace--but is it really a manifestation of goodness to furnish no opposition to evil? Can we say, for example, that a truly good surgeon should do nothing to cut away cancerous tissue from his patient and simply allow him to go on suffering until finally he dies? Can we praise a police force that stands idly by and offers no resistance to the armed robber, the rapist, the arsonist, or any other criminal who preys on society? How could God be called "good" if, as "King of Israel", He did not deliver His people and fight their battles against the surrounding brutal and godless nations?

The Bible provides us with the divine attitude toward war and killing: The taking of life is a divine prerogative alone. This is clearly shown when Cain was condemned and banished by God for murdering his brother Abel (Gen. 4:8-12), while God himself had already passed a sentence of death upon Adam and Eve for their disobedience to His law (Gen 2:17, 3:19). As another example, God destroyed almost the entire population of the earth by a flood because of their wickedness (Gen.7:21-22), and then immediately commanded the eight survivors of Noah's family not to take human life (Gen.9:6).

Are God's actions contradictory? No. It is clear from these and many other instances in the Bible that God inflicts death as a punishment upon those who, by disobedience and unrighteousness, become worthy of His judgments. The Apostle says, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [suppress] the truth in [by] unrighteousness"* (Rom. 1:18). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (2 Peter 3:9; Ezek. 18:23 & 32) but will not abdicate His righteousness. If His will is not upheld, He will eventually act to eradicate the source of disobedience.

We may conclude, therefore, that God alone has the right to take life--and that **He does** so (or commands it to be done) only to uphold His righteousness. We, as Christadelphians, should not be motivated by "pacifist" or merely humanitarian considerations, but rather by a singular desire to be governed by God's commands. In the kingdom age, some commandments of Christ will be contrary to the ideas of the pacifists and humanitarians, but we must stand with our Lord against the popular view.

God will vindicate His great name, and will abolish war ONLY when all wickedness and evil is destroyed. We must obey His commands, whether to fight in the face of evil or to abstain from fighting. The divine will is the only factor of importance in any issue.

