

The Berean Christadelphian 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

RICHARD, Sask.- S.S. 10 A.M.; Memorial, 11:20 AM; Wed Class 8 P.M.
Meetings held at the Richard Ecclesial Hall. Bro Sid Jones, RR#1,
Richard, Sask., S0M 2P0, 306-246-4468, sc.jones@sk.sympatico.ca

Our Dear Brethren and Sisters,
Greetings in the one hope we share in Christ Jesus,

It has been some time since we have sent in news from this ecclesia. These are surely active times in this world. There has never been a time where there were more signs that the time of our probation is drawing to a close. This, of course, is the matter of many a prayer: that the return of our Lord should be soon. But are we ready? How insidiously the world creeps into our midst, and threatens to overtake our thoughts and actions! We are witness to the rapid decline of all that stood for decency, morality, responsibility, and honour. It is the duty of each of us to be on the constant lookout for drift in our attitudes and morals, in our commitment to serving God, and rejecting self-service. We need to stand together in our endeavour to keep the world at bay.

We have had an eventful year here at Richard. In February, we recorded the return of Bro. Jon Jackson to our ecclesia, after some time spent in Calgary with the Ecclesia there. In March, we held a study weekend here, the subject was a comparison of David and Saul. The effort was supported by the presence of Bre. Joey Marple, and Darren Truelove, of the Calgary Ecclesia, and Bro. Lynn Osborne of the Denver Ecclesia, who brought us the word of exhortation that weekend. We had an educational and enjoyable time. Later in March, we were joined for a Sunday by Sis. Grace Punter, who lives at some distance from us. We are always glad to see her and meet around the table of the Lord.

In April, and again in October, we were visited by Sis. June Jones of the Edmonton Ecclesia. We had visits on a few occasions from Bre. Darren and Joey, and were exhorted on Sunday mornings by Bro. Darren a couple of times. In June we had our 2003 Richard Gathering, and enjoyed the efforts of several Bre. to bring to mind various aspects of God's word, and works. We would also like to express our thanks to all who attended, and helped to make our Gathering a time of encouragement and upbuilding. The Sunday following, we had the pleasure of the company of Bro. Matthew Hughes, of the Hengoed Ecclesia. Sis. Grace Punter visited us again in July, as well. On September 27-28, we had another study weekend. The study brought attention to a few things which have been left rather quiet throughout the fellowship for many years. It was good to have an opportunity to bring them to mind, and strengthen one

another in the walk of the truth. With us those days, were Bre. Darren Truelove, Joey Marple, Bro. Norm and Sis. Tina Blacker, and family, Bro. Steve and Sis. Gwen Armstrong and family, Sis. June Jones, Bro. Ben Darter, and Sis. Jennifer Luard, all of the Edmonton Ecclesia. Anyone wishing to get tapes is invited to contact Sis Annetta Jones. Anyone wishing to get videos or CDs can contact Bro. Ed Truelove.

Oct. 5th was a beautiful fall day, lots of sun, warmth, and cheer, as we witnessed the baptism of our new sister **Elizabeth (Liz) Knight**. We wish her all the best, and the grace of God, as she begins the journey towards life everlasting.

Our collective love and greetings to all of those of like precious faith, on behalf of the Ecclesia at Richard,

Bro. Sid Jones

KILIFI, Maweni Ecclesia S.S. 10am Memorial, 11:30am Wed Class 2pm meetings held at the Maweni Ecclesial Hall. Bro. John Wanjala P.O. Box 228, KILIFI, Kenya

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

On behalf of Kilifi Maweni Ecclesia, we report the following news:

We held a very successful Bible School in company of Mtondia Ecclesia on 18th October to 20th, 2003.

We enjoyed the visits of Bro. Phillip Wekati and Bro. Arphaxad Wekati both from Kimukungi Ecclesia Bungoma. We believe that, God willing, this effort will even expand and strengthen the brotherhood in this part of the world.

Among the topics covered were Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, Abraham a friend of God and Baptism which were taught by Bro. Arphaxad Wekati. While Bro. Philip Wekati taught about the Bible our guide, God, the Spirit, Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday 19th, October 2003, we shared the Lord's table while Bro. Philip Wekati gave the word of Exhortation.

Keep the faith, watch and be ready.

Your Brother in grace,
John Wanjala - Recording Brother
Julius Garama - S.S Superintendent

ODIADO, Ecclesia S.S. 9am Memorial, 10am Tues. Farmer Field Class 2pm; Wed. Sisters meeting 2pm; Fri. Bible Class 2pm; Bro. Humphreys O. Budedu, Box 142, Bumala, Kenya

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Loving greetings to all in Christ,

We break our silence with a lot of joyful information to share with all of the same faith. Since our last communication we have had a number of activities in the Ecclesia.

May we thank Bro. John Simiyu among others who have greatly been close to us both spiritually and morally. He, in August, took the pain of initiating a Farmer's Field School in our Ecclesia in which members were lightened to modern farming skills. Demonstration plots were set up from which ecclesial members are going to learn modern farming methods for maximum food production. We pray that we have good weather.

August was quite busy in our ecclesia in that on 27th and 28th, the Sisters had their joint meeting in which they were joined by others from our sister ecclesias among them Sis. Caroline and Sis. Evaline of Kimikungo. This was followed with a Bible School from 29th to 31st August. We were blessed with the presence of Brethrens and Sisters from our other ecclesias. Among them Bro. Rodgers Museve, Bro. Simiyu and Bro. Steven, just to mention but a few.

The highlight of our August meetings was the baptism of **Sis. Janet Budedu** and **Sis. Pauline Adongo**. These two took a choice to change their allegiance from the flesh to the saving name of our Saviour. They had been under instruction for sometime and after a good confession of the faith they were offered the right hand of fellowship on Sunday August 31st by Bro. John Simiyu. *"There is joy in the presence of angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*

On another note, we report the ailing condition of our Sis. Jenipher Mabangu who is in bed at Provincial Hospital in Kisumu. We pray that Almighty hold mercy on her. Also in a similar note, we share the grief with Sis. Fridah Nakholi who lost her daughter-in-law after a long ailment.

Finally, we thank all Brethrens and Sisters who have always had us in mind and have wished us spiritual growth to maturity through continuous mailing of Bible Literature, tapes and Sunday School lessons among other things.

We say thank you and may Almighty bless you more.

With love in the Truth,
Bro. Humphreys O. Budedu

HOUSTON, Texas – Sunday School 10am (verse by verse study of Genesis); Memorial 11am; Study Class 1pm (Phanerosis); 4th Sunday 1pm (Open discussion 1st Principal Class); Wednesday 7:30pm (The Minor Prophets). Meeting Hall address: 8008 Junius Street, Houston, TX 77012.

Loving greetings in Christ Jesus,

Last month we reported updated contact information for Sis. Bea (Groda) Arredondo. We need to update everyone yet again. Sis. Bea has moved a short distance this past month and therefore has another new phone number. In addition, she is having a great deal of trouble getting her email operative and will be unable to receive emails in the near future. Her post office box address that was given last month is still accurate. However, she is unable to receive any large packages. More than one have been sent back to the sender when Sis. Bea did not pick it up quickly. The central post office (where her post office box is located) is downtown in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and she is unable to get to the post office everyday, or even every week, and they will not hold larger packages. As such, if you wish to contact her, a phone call or a regular postal letter will be the best avenues. She sends her love.

New phone number for Sis. Bea: 011-52-329-295-8594

With love to all in the hope we share,
Bro. Shauywn Smith

Books For Kenya

If you have books and material that you can send and would like to help in this effort, please contact Sis. Kaye Yuen at Syuen33550@aol.com or fax (604) 925-0649.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Mar 19 - 22, 2004

It will be held at Buckland Hall - (See web site www.bucklandhall.co.uk)
Bro. Phillip Hughes 25 Hoel-Y-Gelli Fforchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid-Glamorgan, South Wales, U.K., CF44 6LN, phone 011-441-685-870254

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING..... June 10 - 13, 2004

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868
Study Class Topics: Galatians – **Daily Bible Readings** - Discussion

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 19 - 25, 2004

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868
Study Class Topics: Galatians – **Daily Bible Readings** - Discussion

Jonah

We are all familiar with the man Jonah. He was a man instructed by Yahweh to warn the people of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, that unless they turned from their evil deeds, that city would be destroyed. This proved a severe trial of Jonah's character. He recognised that the political revival of Assyria would be at the expense of the waning kingdom of Israel, and he was more willing to jeopardise his own salvation than to assist the nation who he suspected would shortly overthrow his nation. He was unable to manifest God's mercy for a nation who were renowned for their unspeakable brutality, and he made a conscious decision to disobey God's commission by fleeing His presence. He purposed to leave everything behind, and depart to a far away land – as far away as was possible from the countries of Israel and Assyria. By boarding a ship embarked for Tarshish, he intended to forsake any opportunity for the extension of God's forgiveness, but in so doing, to save the Israelites from the grim prospect of conquest at the hands of the cruel Assyrians.

But God's work of grace was not to be thwarted. After setting sail, a great wind was sent that caused the sea to become fierce and tempestuous. The waves thrashed against the sides of the vessel, tossing it back and forth and threatening to destroy both it and the mariners aboard. The panic-stricken sailors strove in vain to ease the situation by casting forth the wares that were in the ship. They pursued other methods in the hope of redeeming their lives, but all to no avail. They decided to cast lots, to let fate determine who among them was responsible for the exceptionally violent storm, and the lot providentially fell upon Jonah. The men interrogated him and anxiously sought his advice on what was to be done to save them all from inevitable calamity. Jonah requested that they throw him overboard, but having learned that he feared "Yahweh Elohim of the Heavens", they were reluctant to destroy a servant of such a powerful God, lest they incurred His wrath upon them. It soon became clear, however, that there was no option but to submit painfully to Jonah's advice, and eventually, after seeking God's mercy, they cast the prophet into the raging waters.

Jonah sank into the depths of the Mediterranean and as he writhed in the swirling waters grasping for the surface, he felt he was drowning and despaired of life. In this moment of direst extremity, when he felt that he had breathed his last breath, there loomed out of the murky depths a huge fish "prepared of Yahweh" and swallowed him whole. It is suggested that the horror of this experience shocked him to such an extent, that he fainted and a merciful unconsciousness claimed him. He remained in this state in this sea creature for 3 days and 3 nights. When he regained his senses and realised his hopeless position, he cried by reason of his affliction unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. The fish vomited him

forth onto dry land and there, God repeated to him the same command to go and demand repentance of the inhabitants of the great city Nineveh.

Jonah, though exceedingly thankful to Yahweh for mercifully preserving him, was still emotionally unsettled about the affair. He had learned a powerful lesson through an incredible divine demonstration about attempting to resist God's plan and purpose, but he still felt no sympathy for the barbarous nation of the Assyrians who were by no means changed by his experiences hundreds of miles removed from them. He nonetheless accomplished his mission no doubt with rigour, and effected a repentance in them, much to his distress. He possibly wished that he had died in the Mediterranean, for he spoke in prayer to God saying, "O Yahweh, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live" (ch.4:3). With this perplexed frame of mind, Jonah would never have considered the possibility of these recent events being printed in a book, "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" And neither he nor his contemporaries would have ever *dreamt* that they would have been used with such emphasis so many years after, by the greatest personage ever to walk upon the face of the earth. Jonah would have been unable to discern anything more in those transactions than the mere historical facts of the situation. The revelation and explanation of the spiritual lessons to be gleaned from this account was reserved for the Son of God 6 centuries hence.

Let us then, revisit Nazareth, the area of Jonah's birth (cp. II Kings 14:25), at a later period in history, when it was traversed by the prophet like unto Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ. And before examining the reference to Jonah, it will be beneficial to consider the context in which those comments were made. Let us turn to Matthew chapter 12.

v. 1 "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat." "It was on a Sabbath Day," as brother Roberts describes, "in the open air, when many people would be out enjoying the blue sky, clear atmosphere and beautiful scenery of a Syrian climate, in the interval between the Synagogue attendances."

v. 2 "But," we read, "when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day."

In this one verse, we are immediately introduced to the character of the leaders of the people. They certainly *appeared* to be fanatical about the strict observance of the Law of Moses and seemed to be careful to ensure that the people followed their example. But was their criticism consistent with the Scriptures? The Lord Jesus had an acute perception of the Scriptures and his mind was in tune with the things of the spirit, because he was the word made flesh and, therefore, possessed the mind of the initiator and author of the testimonies which the Pharisees professed to adhere to. There is unquestionably no individual better equipped to provide an analysis of the nature of these comments. His response is recorded in the following verses:

v. 3 – 7 "But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

Christ proved to them that their sanctimonious fanaticism violated the principles of the Law. Their demeanour, however was unchanged and still, they watched attentively to find something wherewith to accuse him.

v. 10 "And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him."

Christ answered this challenge with words that displayed his mental aptitude for the "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of the multifarious wisdom of God, as exhibited in the Scriptures, and stultified the fallacious, fleshly arguments of his opponents:

v. 11-12 "And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days."

There was a silence as the Pharisees struggled to think up a valid retort, but they were unable to supply an argument equal to his. In the presence of the people, they were exposed as fools and hypocrites. Christ departed, leaving them confounded and smarting from the wounds, he had inflicted upon their self-esteem. After this humiliation, they held a council and agreed that this man was no longer to be tolerated, and decided that the best way of silencing him was by removing him from the scene. Jesus, however, heard of their conspiracy, and knowing that his time was not come, removed himself into another neighbourhood, where he would be momentarily out of their reach.

But Christ was again confronted by the ruling classes. In verse 22 we read:

v. 22-24 "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

In reply to this presumptuous allegation, Christ said:

v. 25-32 "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the

kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.... Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The damnation of the Pharisees was just. Their blasphemy was altogether inexcusable. They had beheld on several occasions the tokens of Christ's authenticity – the miracles, which were a living testimony to his claim that he was "doing the will of his Father". The evidence that he was executing God's commands, could not be contested, as Nicodemus was able to perceive.

John 3:1-2, "*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."*

John 14: 10, 11, "*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."*

But the state of the Jewry, excluding the exceptions, such as Nicodemus, was well depicted in John's figurative description in the first chapter of his gospel record, and verse 5: "*The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*" Christ was the impersonation of the wisdom, or Logos, which has designed and contrived the universe. But the minds of the people of Israel were so blinded by "the god of this world", (II Corinthians 4:4) that they did not realise that in their midst was the very nucleus of Yahweh's grand scheme of redemption, by whom all things were created "*that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*" (Colossians 1:16-17).

"What a perfectly melancholy picture;" writes Brother Roberts in Nazareth Revisited, "a conclave of shallow egotisms—a league of pious mediocrities, whose piety consisted of long-faced and holy-toned superstition; a band of petty respectabilities, whose respectability consisted of carefully doing nothing that would hurt a human sensibility or shock human propriety; and most carefully and industriously doing, or appearing to do, what everybody was agreed to consider the right and the meritorious thing; a company of ornamental, self-satisfied parasites and monopolists, trading in the name of Moses while outraging his wisdom and righteousness, professing to serve God while most skillfully and decisively serving the craft only; simulating mercy

and righteousness, while systematically practicing the vilest oppression and wickedness in secret. Such a set of human contemptibles sitting in solemn judgment on the Son of God—the glorious Son of God, who, with power to hurl them all to destruction in a moment, patiently accommodated himself to a worthless population, while exhibiting in their midst the grandeur of God's character in his own compassion, and wisdom and dignity; and His power in the undeserved healing of all their diseases—such a picture is the saddest the sun ever looked down upon. Its sadness is unutterable if we look at it by itself." (NR).

Let us return to the discourse in Matthew 12:38 to see the Pharisees' retort to Christ's scathing criticism.

v. 38 "*Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee."*

What irony! And what audacity! That very day, many "signs" had been performed before their eyes. What sign could be more effective than the healing of the infirmed, the restoration of sight to the blind, and the raising of the dead? If they could contemptuously attribute this manifestly Divine power to Beelzebub, then *nothing* could convince them of the truth of Christ's words.

This account is a striking example of Christ's statement in Luke 16:31, when giving the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: "*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*" The minds of the authorities were too tarnished to reflect the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ", and their moral sentiments were insufficient to allow the seed of the gospel to germinate in their hearts and engender that faith without which it is impossible to please God. "*And In them" was fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*" (Matthew 13:14-15).

Bearing in mind the spiritual condition of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the nature of their comments, we can understand Christ's harsh response in v. 39:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign."

They wanted a great display of power such as was seen at the shore of the Red Sea, or on Mt. Carmel. Some dramatic occurrence such as fire being brought down from heaven, or a disclosure of 12 legions of the angelic hosts arrayed on the hills about them. So typical of human nature: unwilling to exercise faith in the evidence that God sees fit to provide, and unable to meekly accept God's testimony without dispute. "It is evident" remarks Brother Roberts "that God intends men to exercise their senses, and only grants so much evidence as is sufficient to afford a basis for intelligent faith." Christ could have granted their request and shown them a more incredible act

of power than they could have imagined, but this would have achieved nothing. The purpose of the miracles was to support Christ's words, not to provide open-air entertainment, or to satisfy "an idle curiosity".

Christ offered them evidence of a completely different character, which was nonetheless proof conclusive of the validity of his claims, though less tangible than the form of sign that they desired.

"There shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas"

His appeal was to the Holy Scriptures. The greatest evidence that this was "of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" was the writings of the Old Testament. On another occasion, he said: "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me." The person whose mind is not conformable to the things of the Scriptures will by no means be influenced in spiritual things, by a miracle of whatever shape or form. The proportion of influence that a miracle can exert on an individual, is dependant upon that person's reception of it; and the Scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees and Lawyers were too steeped in their own traditions to receive the truth in the love of it, despite the numerous forms of evidence that were provided. If they could only have had a greater zeal for the weightier matters of the Law and Prophets, and exercised greater diligence in the study of the Holy Writ than in their vain traditions, by which they made the word of God of none effect! If they had perceived the spirit of the Law, they would have understood that it didn't consist of aimless ritual and ceremony, but that it in essence pointed to the person in their very midst – the antitypical lamb of God. Had they read the Messianic prophecies with the eye of faith rather than with pious self-righteousness, they would have discerned the fulfilment of a substantial part thereof in the Lord Jesus Christ. They could, for example, have calculated the date for the culmination of the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, and hence, known the whereabouts of the time period for the cutting off of Messiah. A good example of the Pharisees' ignorance of the Scriptures, and quite appropriate to this subject, was their statement to Nicodemus in John 7:52: "*Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*" In this they were wrong. They failed either to realise, or to recall that the prophet Jonas came from Galilee, from a town *Gath-Hepher*, 3 miles from Nazareth (see II Kings 14:25).

On this occasion, however, Christ did not refer to any prophecy regarding himself. His words were "There shall no sign be given this generation, *but the sign of the prophet Jonas.*" This statement may have appeared somewhat surprising, as well as unintelligible, for those unlearned in the things of the spirit, as the authorities were; because in this short book, from beginning to end, there is not a *single* direct reference to the Messiah. The prophet Micah foretold his birth in Bethlehem Ephratah in Micah 5:1. Isaiah prophesied his life of service and death throughout his 66 chapters. But Christ did not use these examples, nor any other such prophecies. To truly appreciate the significance of these words, we need to apply the lesson of Proverbs 25:2 "*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings to search out a matter*". It is also important to recognise that many events were what Paul

terms "our ensamples", or "figures" as it is in the Greek: that is, they occurred in such a fashion that they can serve as signs, types or shadows to us so that we "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope". Like the Pharisees we must "study" to show ourselves "approved unto God", workmen that need not to be ashamed; but unlike them, we must also *rightly* divide the Word of Truth.

Jonah is in fact, the greatest allegory that may be found in all the prophets, because it is the only one. Although there are analogies to be formed with the incidents that occurred in the lives of other prophets, the example of Jonah is unique, because the whole account is a parable of something that was to come. Consider the general message presented – the salvation of men and women (of Nineveh) as a result of a man, Jonah, being saved from the belly of a whale, where he had been for 3 days and 3 nights. There is a clear resemblance to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Master likewise was sent for the salvation of men and women, *through* his death and resurrection and he also was caused to remain 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the *earth*. So, accepting that the book of Jonah as a whole is a parable of Christ, what specific part or aspect thereof, was Christ alluding to? What *was* "the sign of the prophet Jonas"? Was it that the word Jonah in the Hebrew signifies "a Dove", and thus the *name* Jonah points to the time when the spirit descended upon Christ in the form of a dove after his baptism in the Jordan? Or was it that Christ was a prophet with grim tidings for Jerusalem and her children, as Jonah was to Nineveh? These examples truly illustrate Paul's declaration that "these things were our figures", but neither constitute the "sign of the prophet Jonas", to which Christ referred. The answer is provided by the Lord himself.

Matthew 12:40, "*For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*"

When Christ spoke these words, "the sign of the prophet Jonas" was not in effect. The confirmation of Christ's words was yet to come. He spoke of his death and resurrection after 3 days and 3 nights in hell, and when this was accomplished at the end of his ministry, everything which Christ and the prophets testified regarding the cutting of the covenant, was ratified. This incredible exact fulfilment of those things which "God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets" was ample evidence to any witnesses that "truly, this was the son of God" (Matthew 27:51). The raising of Lazarus was sufficient proof that God was with and *in* Christ, but God's resurrection of Christ was one further personal indication, that this was Yahweh's beloved son, in whom he was well pleased. This refuted the doctrine of the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection, and also the doctrine of the Pharisees, who believed that Messiah could not die.

In appealing to the lesson of Jonah, Christ was revealing to the Jews the means whereby they could be saved from impending destruction. "For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the son of Man be to this generation" (Luke 11:30). A message requiring repentance was issued to those

attendant in Christ's time, as was to the inhabitants of Nineveh. The question was: would Israel repent and turn from her iniquities? The same fate was decreed for an unrepentant Jerusalem as was for Nineveh, 7 centuries before. Christ vividly described the judgement that was to befall the house of Israel in passages such as Luke 21 and Matthew 24. The destruction was to be devastating and without remedy: "tribulation" was to be experienced by the rebellious people "such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be". The choice was theirs, although the choice they made was foreknown and prophesied. Sadly, they sealed their fate in the crucifixion of the Son of God and their invoking a curse upon themselves with the words: "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children". The knowledge of the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ, which could have given them life everlasting, served only to make them more accountable for their transgressions. It became a stumbling block to them. They established the truth of the Scripture, which they unconsciously disregarded: *"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner"* (Matthew 21:42).

"An evil and adulterous generation". Is this not, brethren and sisters, an apt description of the kind of generation that we live in? A period of thick Egyptian-like darkness, of such intensity, that the light of the gospel is seldom able to penetrate. In both word and action, the attitude of the world at large in regard to God, is: "depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Meanwhile, they wantonly engage in iniquity, indulging in the pleasures which prosperity affords them. And the ecclesiastical authorities are blind leaders of the blind – no more able to see or navigate in the darkness than the Scribes and Pharisees. The clergy of various orders of the multiple forms of the apostasy, fail to interpret the gospel message accurately, and thus the Law and Prophets to them are a mere dead letter. It appears to them that the spirit of the Law and Prophets is disharmonious with the spirit of Christ, and the "inconsistencies" that they find, they attribute to inaccuracy of Scripture, rather than to their own incompetence. The voice of the geologist, physicist or biologist is more highly esteemed than the Oracles of the Deity. The Mosaic account has been disregarded to give place for science, falsely so called, or if retained, has been nullified by doctrines such as "theistic evolution", which in effect, denies it of any veracity. It has been decided that rather than confronting and opposing error, it should be adopted conjointly with the testimony of Genesis. The result of this peculiar combination is the mutated doctrine that Elohim took several thousand, or several million years to create the earth, rather than six days. However, the most popular fashion is to reject the Old Testament altogether, and label it uninspired and mythical. Such a view reveals bad perception, insufficient knowledge, or disbelief of the New Testament as well, for the Master endorsed the Scriptures on many occasions (such as in the reference for the title of this Gathering) and was careful to inform the people: *"I am not come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."* (Matthew 5:17) *"Had ye*

believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46)

The sign of the prophet Jonas is as applicable now as it was to the multitude present when those words were uttered. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so the Son of man" *was* "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." There is ample proof of the occurrence of this memorable event, if men were prepared to open their eyes to the things of sobriety and truth. Every coin bearing the inscription, A.D. (the year of our Lord), is a living token to a unique character written on the pages of history; a character remembered weekly throughout the world, not because of some extraordinary feat, or because, like in the case of the Mohammedans, remembrance was enforced and maintained by the sword, but because, as was briefly stated by Paul, in I Corinthians 15, that: *"he died...and...rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures."* The spread of Christianity was not due to brute force, but due to the honest, logical records of humble men of Galilee, who were prepared to suffer execution for what they clearly saw as a reality. *"Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."* (Romans 10:18) Never has any man's claim been spread throughout the whole habitable in so short a time, by peaceful means – apart from the claim of the apostles, that they were eyewitnesses of the resurrection from the dead of the man of Nazareth.

But besides the proof of the present, and the proof of the empty tomb, we have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto we do well to take heed. That prophecy is the book we have in our hands, commonly termed "the Bible". This book has survived hundreds of generations, and remains in our possession intact, irrespective of the numerous attempts there have been to destroy it, or insidiously undermine its influence: which is a miracle in itself. We do well to take heed to this book, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts. For *"no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,"* writes Peter in his 2nd epistle and chapter 1 *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* May we be commended like the Bereans of old who were said to have *"received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

Turn with me, please, to Acts 17:31, to find out what bearing Christ's resurrection has upon the secular world.

Thus, the world who are more than happy at present to neglect this remarkable figure in the distant past and live their lives to the lusts of the flesh free of conscience, will be very soon powerfully reminded of the duty incumbent upon them to obey God's commands. The nations of the earth are accountable for their wickedness, not because they understand the gospel message, but because, like the Assyrians, they have been provided words received directly from the Deity, demanding their repentance. God's word has been translated into many languages and is widely accessible to all classes of

society. But this liberty has been despised, and the Scriptures in the present age are blasphemed more than they are obeyed. Judgment befell Nineveh at the hands of Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon, and now, the only traces of the once powerful, arrogant empire, are a few relics in museums scattered throughout the world. Shortly, the heathen will be recompensed for their desertion of God's Law in judgments far surpassing Nineveh's or Jerusalem's in time and intensity. The inhabitants of the earth will learn the ways of truth not by the force of argument, but by the argument of force.

Isaiah 26:9, *"With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."*

As Christ's brethren on the other hand, we joyously anticipate the day of his appearing as the lion of the tribe of Judah. We "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake" us "as a thief." We "are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thessalonians 5). We are now able to live in hope – in hope of being transformed physically into spirit nature – consubstantial with his; for "we know" saith John in chapter 3 of his 1st Epistle, *"that when he appeareth, we shall be like him."*

Philippians 3:8-14, *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

Christ is not an abstract individual as far as we are concerned. The resurrection of Christ testifies to us that he will return to "reward every man according as his works have been" – in the same way that the light of the moon is proof that the sun exists, though invisible, and that it will at the appointed time, arise and dispel the darkness. This knowledge has an impact upon the lives that we live, for *"henceforth we should not serve sin."* As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6). The "sign of the prophet Jonas" has a direct relation to our disposition and daily conduct. The incomparable privilege we have, incurs an awesome responsibility to conform to the

principles that are required to be our constant motivation. Our comprehension of the resurrection of The Lord Jesus Christ and the things relating to it, places every one of us into one of two categories. Either we are his servants, gladly subordinating ourselves to his will; or we are wicked and slothful servants fit only to be cast into outer darkness. What does the sign of the prophet Jonas mean to us? Rejection or acceptance? The choice is in our hands.

In closing, turn again to Isaiah 26:19–21. May we be the executors of the judgments, and not the recipients thereof.

"With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD. LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth. LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Bro. Matthew Hughes

DANIEL - THE MULTITUDINOUS SON OF MAN

"The thing recorded in the eighth and ninth chapters gave Daniel more particularly to understand what should befall Judah and Jerusalem in "the last days" of the Mosaic constitution of things. The idea of a great national overthrow after the expiration of the Seventy Heptades, or 490 years, was distinctly impressed on

his mind. But, then there was a long lapse of time to be accounted for in the history of Judah, first from the appearance of the Four Horns of the Goat in the place of the great horn that was broken until the occupation of Judea by the Little Horn that was to arise out of the Northern Horn of the Four: and secondly, from the destruction of the Holy City and suppression of the Daily unto the breaking of the Little Horn of the Goat without help to save it, and consequent deliverance of Judah by their great commander and prince in "the latter days" of the seven times of the kingdom of men. This was a subject Daniel desired much to hear discoursed upon. His anxiety to understand had at length become so acute, that he mourned for its gratification during three whole weeks." (Exposition of Daniel – page 44-45)

We reached the end of Daniel chapter nine in our last article, with a consideration of the 70 weeks prophecy. However, there were one or two points we wanted to make before moving on to chapter ten. The additional comments we hope will serve as a clarification to some of the ideas expressed.

Messiah shall be cut off but not for himself

The first point we want to consider is contained in verse 26. The first part of that verse reads as follows:

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself."

What does it mean "*but not for himself*"? It is possible that the verse will be used to support the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ did not benefit from his own sacrifice. This is a false doctrine, but one that is supported by many who call themselves Christadelphians. The Nature and Sacrifice of Christ is a fundamental doctrine that has been twisted and distorted in other groups. The Berean position however, (fully supported by the pioneers), has always been clear and uncompromising on this issue. The Lord Jesus Christ undoubtedly benefited from his own sacrifice. This is not the place for an exposition on the Nature and Sacrifice of Christ, but with the winds of false doctrine continually blowing, it is important to remember the firm stand Bereans took on this subject in 1923 in defense of the Truth. That stand was not new or different. It was the position occupied by Bro. Thomas and Bro. Roberts, supported by a sound understanding and exposition of the Word of God. The Christadelphian for 1873 stated:

"The Son of God...had to offer for himself...Jesus had himself to be saved..."By his own blood he entered the Holy Place, having (thus)

obtained eternal redemption" ('for us' not in original)...It follows (from Hebrews 7:27) that there must be a sense in which Jesus offered for himself, a sense apparent when it is recognised he was under Adamic condemnation." (page 404)

That position has been faithfully maintained since that time, and it is a position that needs to be constantly guarded. Bro. Growcott, too, was unequivocal on this vital teaching of Scripture. On the question of whether Christ needed a blood cleansing sacrifice he wrote:

"Christ cleansed *himself* first, in the God-appointed way. His sacrifice cleanses and redeems US *only as we become PART OF HIM.*" (see Purifying of the Heavenly page 31)

It is vitally important that we maintain the original sound teaching on this subject.

But what does this particular part of the verse mean?

We note that the margin of the Authorised Version has "and shall have nothing". Bro. Thomas renders the verse "though nothing will be in him." While the Scriptures are clear that Christ had sin's flesh, they are also clear that he did not actually commit sin. It is the latter that the verse in Daniel is referring to. Christ did not transgress at any time. There was no transgression that could be attributed to Christ. "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" he asked the Jews (John 8:46). There was "no (transgression) in him".

The overspreading of abominations

Some clarification is helpful in the reading of the last part of verse 27, as it is quite difficult to understand the way it is written in the Authorised Version. The verse is rendered as follows:

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

We have considered in a number of articles the interruption of the national sacrifices in A.D.70, when the Roman armies came against Jerusalem and destroyed the city and Temple. The last part of the verse relates to these events. Bro. Thomas translates the verse here as:

"And because of an overspreading of abominations there shall be a desolating even to destruction, and that decreed shall be poured out upon the desolator."

Bro. Thomas refers to a 'Desolator' at the end of the verse. He comments further as follows:

"The things to be destroyed when the desolation should be consummated were the people and holy city; and the Desolator, the "king of fierce countenance, who shall stand up against the *sar sahrim*", or the Commander in Chief of Judah, shall be broken by him, and so come to his end, with none to help him in a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation to that same time." (Daniel 8:23-25, 10:45; 12:1) Since the days of vengeance which came upon Judah thirty eight years after the ending of the seventy weeks, various "abominations" have rested like a *kenaph* upon the land. These have all been of a desolating character, such as the Roman-Greek, Persian, Saracen and Ottoman abominations. Hence they have been an overspreading of abominations making desolate." (Exposition of Daniel page 39)

The subject of "desolation" is actually referred to by the Lord Jesus Christ in the 'Olivet prophecy'. The Desolator or the desolating power is also referred to. In Mark chapter 13 Jesus said:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (that is, in the holy place – Matthew 24:15) (let him that readeth understand), then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains." (Verse 14)

The prophecy that the Master gave here is clearly referring to A.D.70. Bro. Thomas comments on this verse in Eureka. He draws attention to the Desolator of Daniel 9 and states that it is unquestionably the Little Horn of the Goat (i.e. the Roman power). He also makes similar comments to that referred to in the above quote from Exposition of Daniel, indicating that there has been more than one Desolator. On page 543 of Eureka volume 3 he says:

"This was the first of the series of abominations of desolation that overspread the Holy Land. Its existence there was signalled by the abolition of the Jewish State; the taking away or suppression of the Daily Sacrifice; the ruin of the city; the burning of the temple to the ground, and the scattering of the power of the people of the holy Ones. The Daily, or continual, evening and morning sacrifice, was taken away to make room for this series of abominations, of which the principal have been the pagan Roman, the Greek Catholic, and the Mohammedans; all of them constituents of the Little Horn of the Goat; so long as these abominations overspread the land of Israel in power, the power of the people of the Holy Ones will be in a scattered state: that is, they will prevail until the consummation, "and that determined shall be poured out upon the DESOLATOR."

We have seen the Holy Land liberated from the Ottoman Desolator by General Allenby in 1917. The people of Israel have also been partially restored. However, before the consummation arrives, another Desolator shall "*plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.*" This will be the Russian Desolator, of which we will have more to say when we come of comment on Daniel chapter eleven (God Willing). However, "*he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*" (Daniel 11:45)

Daniel Chapter 10

There is an obvious connection between Daniel chapter 10, and what has been revealed to the prophet in the previous chapters. In chapter 9 and verse 2 we learned that Daniel "*understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*" Daniel was now no longer the young man we observed in chapter one, who refused to eat of the king's meat. He was approximately 90 years old now, and had been eagerly anticipating events that he knew would lead to the overthrow of Babylon and the restoration of his people to the land of his fathers.

Then came the prophecy of the seventy weeks that we have considered. He now knew that there would be a long time before Messiah appeared. "*the thing was true, but the time appointed was long*" (Daniel 10:1). The appearance of Messiah was not to be in his lifetime! The consummation of Yahweh's purpose in the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, and the Covenant made to David were still a considerable way into the future. In fact, the appearance of Messiah would even introduce a period of further devastation!

Gesenius renders this part of the verse as "*the edict belongs to a long warfare*". Further desolations would come upon Israel even though they would be restored from Babylon. The Temple would again be destroyed. We can imagine how Daniel must have felt. His life had been completely dedicated to Yahweh. His interests had been in the restoration of Israel. He would have witnessed the preparations to return to the land, but with the realisation that Messiah's kingdom would not be established then. What was to be the end of all these things that had been revealed to him? When would Messiah's kingdom be established?

Characteristic of Daniel, he greatly desired to understand the purpose of God. We have more than once commented upon this aspect of Daniel's character. The intense desire to know and understand the word of God was an integral part of his spiritual make up. It is a profound and

humbling lesson for us as we compare the level of our own desires to understand the Scriptures!

Daniel now mourns “*three full weeks*” and fasts, so that his mind is finely tuned to study and understand the Word of God. His words are:

“I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” (verse 3)

Daniel was given further details, and also an inspiring vision. It was the vision of the Multitudinous Son of Man. A vision that would strengthen and encourage him, so that he could look forward to the Kingdom with joy in recognition of the victory of the Deity over flesh; in the setting up of that long looked for kingdom; and in the participation of the glory and majesty of that glorious age of righteousness.

Every one of us needs that vision to encourage and motivate us. As the Proverbs record in chapter 29 and verse 18 “*Where there is no vision, the people perish*”. But that vision does not remain in our minds without our effort to keep it there. If we are not prepared to exercise the same diligence in the study of the Scriptures, then the vision will become blurred and dim, and ultimately fade from our minds completely.

Let us then study the Scriptures to keep the vision of the Kingdom ever before our minds, that we may hold fast in these evil days, and be approved by our Lord and Master when we stand before him.

God willing we will consider the vision Daniel received in our next article.

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Signs and Events

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Matthew 24:35)...

Recently, we have been struck by the fact that the churches of the world have completely disregarded the Bible and its teachings, in order to draw in the crowds, as they once did decades ago. They are willing to compromise God’s Word in order to cater to the (so called) changing needs and wants of our evil society. The BBC has recently reported one example of this:-

“A church of England report has declared that divorce can be a good thing – if it brings unhappy marriages to an end. A study by the church’s Doctrine commission has said marriage can shelter abuse, stifle personal development and cut families off from the rest of the world. It reads “An

increasing number of people have lived through difficult and painful divorces, to which there sometimes seems no realistic alternative”.

“The report called Being Human: A Christian Understanding of Personhood, is the church’s latest attempt to make itself more relevant to contemporary society – and also gives support to unmarried couples. And the report recognises that the church needs to change with society if it is to remain relevant.

“It says that, in light of society’s changing attitude towards sex and relationships, “a merely nostalgic or conservative reaction is out of the question”.

And it argues that people need ever greater wisdom to deal with modern pressures such as power and money.

The report says that marriage has changed considerably over the centuries, claiming that it has not always been seen as an ideal.

What do the Scriptures say on this subject? “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”. The old fashioned phrase “living in sin” is not even recognised by the churches of this generation. Why? Because the people no longer fear hell fire, so, if the church cannot intimidate them into filling their pews and their pockets, they must persuade them in a different way. They must take the “compassionate” approach, which fosters every way of life, whether abominable in God’s eyes or not.

We have been warned that in the latter days, this lukewarm attitude will exist even in the brotherhood. Even in the Apostle Paul’s day there were some seeking to pervert the gospel of Christ. What was Paul’s command? “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Let there be no mistake. There will be no compromising at the judgement seat when Christ returns. We are either servants of Christ, or willful sinners. There is no in-between.

Bro. Steve Male

Aaron and Christ

“Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Matt. 3 :15

. . . Representations of the Law and the Prophets could not have found their antitype in Jesus if in the days of his flesh he had possessed a holier or purer *nature* than those for whom he was bruised in the heel. His *character* was spotless. But, as being the Seed of the Woman of whom no clean flesh can be born (Job 14 :4), and the Seed of Abraham, which is not

immaculate, be it virgin or Nazarite, his *nature* was flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14), which Paul styles 'SINFUL FLESH,' or *flesh full of sin*, a physical quality or principle which makes the flesh mortal, and called 'sin' because this property of flesh became its law as the consequence of transgression -

"God made Jesus sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God IN him." (2 Corinthians 5:21).

In *this* view of the matter, the Sin-bearer of the world indicated, was a fit and proper subject of John's baptism of repentance for remission of sins. The holy and undefiled disposition of Mary's son was *granted to him for repentance*, in fulfilling the symbolical righteousness of the law when he descended into the Jordan to enter into the antitypical robe of righteousness, with which he must of necessity be invested before he could enter into the Most Holy as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

In being baptised, he proclaimed the development of a *character distinguished by perfect faith and obedience*. This character was his holy raiment, and was without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This was the 'fine linen, clean and white' with which he arrayed himself - "The righteousness of the (king of) saints." (Revelation 19:8)

It was the antitype, in part, of Aaron's holy garments. And he had to put it on in the same way as that Aaron did -

"By washing his flesh in water, and so putting it on."

He was baptised of John into a *holiness of his own*, which publicly BEGAN with *obedience* in the Jordan, and ENDED with *obedience in death* on the cross (Philippians 2: 9-11) -

"He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every name; that every tongue should confess he is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Had Jesus yielded to John (supposing the thing to have been possible), he would have stood before his nation as the High Priest of Israel, claiming to officiate in the Most Holy Place, without baptism - a spectacle it had never seen before, nor ever will while the world stands.

But the symbolic righteousness of the Mosaic Law not only required the High Priest to put on the holy vestments by having his body baptised, but it also commanded his *household* to be baptised into *theirs*:

"This is the thing Yahweh commanded to be done: and Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water . And he put on Aaron the coat ... and he put coats upon his sons, and girded them with girdles, and put turbans upon them, as Yahweh commanded" (Leviticus 8: 5-13, 16: 4).

Here, Moses performed the part of John the Baptist to Aaron and his sons, who were to be rulers and priests in Israel. Aaron and his family

were the nation's priestly household; and it was the office of the High Priest to make atonement, or reconciliation - first for himself, *then for his household* and lastly for all the congregation of Israel.

But admission into the Holy and Most Holy Places was only permitted to the baptized: they must bathe their flesh in water, and so put on their holy garments. Hence, all Israel's priests were immersed persons. And so also all that shall be their Priests and Kings in the Age to Come, and have power over the Gentiles, must be immersed likewise.

Jesus, the Melchizedek High Priest of Israel, has a household as well as Aaron had. A proof of this is found in the words of Paul.

Writing to certain Hebrews who had *believed* the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus, and had *obeyed* it in having their 'bodies washed with pure water,' he says (Hebrews 3: 6,14) -

"Christ as a Son over his own House, whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of THE HOPE firm unto the end."

Now Jesus, speaking for himself *and others*, said - "THUS it becomes US to fulfill all righteousness."

It is, therefore, necessary for all 'his house' to do as he did, but with this modification of the significancy of the deed: *he* was baptised as the initiative of his *own* holiness, sacrificial and priestly. *They* must be baptised into *his* holiness, and into *a development of their own* conformable to his; and - with this induction for a beginning - thenceforth 'continue patiently in well doing,' that they may be holy as he was holy in the days of his flesh, as it is written, "BE YE HOLY BECAUSE I AM HOLY."

Jesus and Household are the future Kings and Priests prepared of God to rule Israel and the nations for Him. The Law and the Prophets, which attest the righteousness of God, require them all to put on that righteousness by bathing. Jesus commanded the same thing, and says,

"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5: 18)

Therefore he said to his apostles (Matthew 28: 19 - 20) -

"Go and preach the Gospel to every creature, and teach them (who receive your proclamation) to observe whatsoever I command you." . . .

Shall it be said that it was necessary for the Melchizedek High Priest , who was innocent of transgression, and who for thirty years had enjoyed the favour of God and man (Luke 2:52), to be immersed in a baptism of 'repentance for remission of sins'; but that it was not necessary for the pious of his Household, who are sinners by nature and practice?

Now, if it were indispensable for Jesus to be buried in water, that he might begin an (official) career of *holiness to Yahweh* in coming up out of

it, it is infinitely more so that all who should follow in his steps of perfect faith *and obedience* who would be invested with - "Robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7: 14) - having their - "*Loins girt about with the girdle of Truth, and having on the breastplate of Righteousness, and their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, and on their head the helmet of Salvation.*" (Ephesians 6: 14-17)

An immersed High Priest requires an immersed Household. There is one law for both, as there was 'One Baptism for Jesus and his apostles; on whom - as on all others of the Household - the necessity is imperative to *fulfill all the righteousness foreshadowed in Aaron and his sons.* There is no discharge for this necessity for Jew or Gentile -

"For THUS it behoveth US to fulfill ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Bro. John Thomas - Herald 1855

COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU MEET VARIOUS TRIALS

You lack wisdom; ask God who gives to all men generously and without reproaching and it will be given to you. Ask faith, with no doubting for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double minded man or woman, unstable in all his or her ways will receive anything from the Lord.

Let the lowly brother or sister boast in his or her exaltation. Who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he or she will receive the endowment and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. His own will he brought forth by the Word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

Let every brother or a sister be quick to hear and slow to speak, slow to anger, because man or woman does not work the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save you.

If a brother or sister is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he or she is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror and goes away and at once forgets what he or she was like. The Bible tells us, "*all flesh is grass and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows upon it, grass withers, the flower fades but the Word of our God will stand forever.*" Isaiah 4: 6-7, 1Peter 1:24-25

So speak and so act as those who are to be charged under the law of liberty. Judgement is without mercy, yet mercy triumphs over judgement

as a farmer waits for the precious fruits of the earth. Be patient, establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

The letter of James says, "*do not grumble brethren against one another that you may not be judged, behold the judge is standing at the doors,*" James 5:9.

God's powers are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Outcome of your faith will obtain the salvation of your souls. Know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold. But with the precious blood of Christ without blemish or spot.

Let us who are mature be thus reminded if in anything you are otherwise minded. God will reveal that also to you. Others among believers are as Jesus said, "*your father the devil, he was a murderer from the beginning when he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*" John 5:44.

Be aware that your sins will never be a side of you. Trust in God, not in other things, Paul said in Philippians letter 3: 19. "*Their end is destruction, their God is the belly,*" Romans 16:18. And also 1Timothy 5:24 the sins of some men are conspicuous pointing to judgement, but the sins of others appear later. Paul said in Timothy's letter 1Timothy 6:10, "*For the love of money is the root of all evils, It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pang.*"

Therefore, "COUNT IT ALL JOY," my brethren.

Bro. Phillip Wekati

The Deep Things of God: Christ's Offering for Himself

I am particularly fond of the following piece by Brother Thomas because it constitutes one of the very few instances in his writings wherein he declares that Christ offered for himself (cf. Hebrews 7:27). Granted, he teaches this elsewhere, but it is usually through inference or implication. Here it is direct. Not to believe that Christ offered for himself is to believe as the churches of the apostasy: in a ghost-man or fictitious Jesus.

"Read Plato, read Cicero, read the Mythology of the Greeks, read the saintology of Rome, and read the demonology and psychology of Protestant colleges and divinity schools; and in all these readings you will find all that is knowable of the Ghost-Man, whose image is borne by deceivers and deceived! He is the fictitious Jesus of the Apostasy; the 'other Jesus,' the clergy then just coming into existence, preached contrary

to the Jesus preached of Paul -- a Jesus, that has thrown the Lord Jesus Christ for the present, totally into the shade (2 Corinthians 11:4). This is the kind of allusion we find in the New Testament to the Ghost-Man of Christendom; an allusion, too, which repudiates him.

"We repeat, this Ghost-Man is the clerical Jesus, to which all their disciples expect to be conformed. Their doctrine concerning him may be resolved into the following points; they affirm:

"1. That when Jesus assumed our nature, he was made flesh. This, however, was not sinful flesh; it was nothing more than the likeness of sinful flesh; and therefore, of course, some other flesh; it was essentially and immaculately pure and undefiled;

"2. That he was not capable of sinning;

"3. That in dying on the cross, he did not offer up a sacrifice for himself;

"4. That he suffered as a substitute for the ungodly; and that in suffering, the hate and wrath of God against sinners, fell upon him;

"5. That when buried, his body was in the tomb till the third day; and that during the interval between death and resurrection, his 'immortal soul,' which was the real Jesus, went to Paradise, and also into Hell, where he preached the Gospel to "spirits in prison!!!"

"6. That his body in the tomb was essentially incorruptible;

"7. That he will never come to the Holy Land, there to reside among the Jews; and sitting upon David's throne, to reign as king over them and all other nations; but that, on the contrary, he will come to earth, at what they call 'the last day,' and in one general conflagration, sublimate the globe and all upon it, into gaseous invisibility.

"These seven particulars define the Ghost-Man of Christendom, whom the clergy worship as their Lord and Christ, and preach as the redeemer of the 'immortal souls' of all men, women, and children, babes and sucklings, who submit, and are submitted to, the influences of the sort of Christianity by which they have their wealth and honor in and from the world." ("The Ghost-Man," from *The Herald*, 1857, pp. 127-128.)

Dear brethren and sisters, let us be ever circumspect in our beliefs. It is a knowledge of the Truth -- in tandem with a faithful walk -- that shall ultimately set us free from the prison-house of sin and death. Not half-truths or lies (cf. John 8:32). The doctrine of Christ offering for himself is an integral part of the whole Truth revealed through Holy Writ.

Bro. Bob Widding

What Does That Mean?

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. (2 Peter 2:22)

Why does Peter refer to this proverb as a "true proverb" which could imply that the other proverbs may be false?

Peter describes this as a true proverb, not because other proverbs are false, but because this one is self-evident, being true to nature. As a matter of fact, in the Hebrew language the root word for "sow" signifies "to return" because that creature, as soon as it is out of the mire and dirt and is washed from its filthiness, naturally returns to filth again.

To return to filth and vomit seems disgusting to us, but it is a natural impulse for these animals, so Peter is showing us that it is natural for our flesh to act in a manner that is disgusting to the spiritually enlightened. We can understand why the spirit would consider both of these animals as unclean and also use them as symbols of the unenlightened Gentile.

As it is "only natural" for these unclean animals to act in the way described, how many times do we excuse sin on the ground that is "only natural" to act that way? But-- have we not been washed from our former filthiness, and have we not elected to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts" and to subordinate fleshly tendencies to his will through self-denial?

Although it may be natural to behave like the dog or sow, we must be able to look at our actions as seen through the spirit word and conclude that those thoughts and actions are abhorrent and disgusting. Peter is explaining in this chapter that enemies from within the ecclesial world can seduce us and cause us to return to our former state. We must dedicate ourselves to study and prayer or we will find ourselves slipping back into these natural tendencies, which are disgusting to God. Sin and error must not only be repudiated, but truth must be affirmed and righteousness must be practiced.

So he warns us; "*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*" (2 Peter 2:20-21)

The knowledge that we have embraced makes us amenable to the judgment seat at the coming of Christ. We cannot trifle with the things of Yahweh.

Bro. Jim Sommerville