

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. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness, and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed.
Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.*

Vol. VII No. 5 (XCII)

MAY, 2004

Please send Ecclesial communications to:
Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.
Phone: (586) 790-2156 Fax: (586) 790-8519 e-mail: fredhigham@ameritech.net
Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

ECCLESIAL NEWS	Kilifi Maweni
FRATERNAL GATHERINGS	Lampasas, Hye, Kilifi Maweni, Canton
EXHORTATION.....Psalm 103.....	115
EXHORTATION.....Temples Made With Hands.....	115
STUDY.....The Seventh Vial.....	108
STUDY.....Daniel – The Kings Of The North And South.....	103
The Deep Things of God: Christian Diciples.....	154
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN.....	156
B.E.N.'S PAGE	(Insert)

God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian 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

Kilifi Maweni Ecclesia S.S. 10am Memorial, 11.30 Wed. 2pm meetings held at Maweni Ecclesia Hall Bro. John Wanjala P.O. Box 228 Kilifi Kenya

Dear Brethren & Sisters in Christ, greetings in our grace, on behalf of Kilifi Maweni Ecclesia we would like to report the following.

We enjoyed the visits of Bro. Philip Wekati and currently Bro. Epaphrus Wekati both from Bungoma while Bro. Wekati was here. The two new ecclesias were established in Kilifi District.

Kaereni ecclesia then moved to Takaungu ,whereby another ecclesia was established. Kaereni ecclesia is 14 kilometers from Kilifi Town towards Malindi and Takaungu is about 17 kilometers from our residence towards Mombasa.

We believe that God willing this effort will even expand and strengthen the brotherhood in this part of the world. Currently with Bro. Epaphrus, we discussed more about the morning star “LUCIFER”. God willing, the listed friends below will be interviewed and immersed. Samuel Karisa, Stephen Mbitha, Mathias Thoya, Patrick Wanjala, Christopher Katana,

Bro. John Wanjala, Recording Brother
Bro. Julius Garama, S.S.S.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

VIRGINIA & NORTH CAROLINA STUDY WEEKEND... May 29 - 30, 2004
Contact Bro. Dale Lee at dleecpa2@mindspring.com

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING..... June 10 - 13, 2004
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 19 - 25, 2004
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

KILIFI MAWENI FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 30 – Aug 1, 2004
Bro. John Wanjala, Bro. Julius Garama – Maweni Ecclesial Hall

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Oct 9 - 10, 2004
Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 330-494-7717

Psalm 103

Have you ever stopped to consider the words of the psalmist (David) how he words the very thoughts of God himself?

In the past few weeks we have had a great uprising in the world with the recent terrorist activities, and the world thrown into a tailspin.

Did any of you have a feeling of anguish? Perhaps fear? Rejoicing? Did you have thoughts of boy, I am ready for the Lord to come today? Or did you

126 think boy, do I need to shape up if I am ever going to bring honor to God during my probation?

This exhortation will come easy for me, for I am one of the ones who had a feeling of despair, fear, anguish, etc.

My words this morning are not to create anguish or fear, but to help us all together find a way of self comfort, to encourage those of you, like me, that had these very feelings.

We must be honest with ourselves if we are truly going to pursue the truth during these last days of the Gentile times. If we can come to terms with our feelings, we will then be able to deal with them in an appropriate way.

Today we read in Luke 23:42-43 – “He came to Jesus and he was forgiven.”

Just yesterday in our readings from Luke, we read of the account of Jesus being led away to be crucified. During his trial, Peter was asked three times if he was one of the disciples that followed Christ during his ministry. Luke 22:55-60. All three times Peter denied knowing him, yet you have to know that internally this was killing Peter to say. Here he was faced with the opportunity to stand up for what he believed in and who he had believed in, who he followed for three years, had seen the wonderful miracles Jesus had performed, was at the transfiguration. Yet he denied him!

Do we say shame on Peter, he should have known better! If I were there I NEVER would have denied that Jesus was Lord! HA! If you felt at all worried during these last few weeks, if you saw your shirt palpitating with every beat of your heart, then guess what, you probably have been denying your Lord!

One of my most favorite Psalms is that of Psalm 103: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous to mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”

Why is this one of my favourite Psalms? Because it tells me that My God is a forgiving God. No matter how many times I have denied Him in the past, I can wake up every morning and know that I have a new day to rejuvenate my walk in the Truth. There is no measure of His forgiveness if we can truly repent, or change the direction of our path. Only you have the power to make the right or wrong choice in life. And we must keep in mind that there are only two choices that we can make, the right one and the wrong one.

127

Luke 22:61-62. Peter made some wrong choices, and we know that he felt truly sorry for these choices. He went out immediately and wept. Can you imagine after the third denial, Jesus' and Peter's eyes would have met, and

words could have never described the feeling the two of them shared at that moment.

Peter's emotion following would have showed God the repentance that he felt in his heart, and as we just read in the Psalms, he would have been forgiven. Peter would not repeat this mistake, as we know he went on in life after Jesus' ascension to heaven to preach the gospel given to him. His death then was a result of the teachings of Christ. He did not deny his Lord again after realizing what he had done during the trial.

We too have this opportunity now. If we feel we have been denying our Lord, he has given us yet another sign of His coming, to get busy and change those things that are not compatible with His teaching. We, too, will receive the same forgiveness as Peter received upon realizing and changing.

The Psalm continues to say in verse 17:

“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

God in His wisdom and definitely His mercy has seen fit to give us mortals more opportunity in this time of probation to come back to Him.

The thought came to Sandra and I during one of our conversations regarding this topic, about the parable of the prodigal son. We see ourselves as the son who perhaps has taken the easy life with little or no regard of thanks to Him who gave it. The son in the parable blew all his inheritance in the folly of the world. With nothing left he realized the importance of a structured life with his father and decided to return home and repent of his evil ways.

His father would have anxiously awaited his return each day. He would have been looking down that road expecting to see him return. Day after day would have gone by, and yet he did not give up hope. Finally one day he sees his son return afar off, and not waiting for him to get to the house, he ran out to meet him. He made a feast, put a ring and a robe on his son and rejoiced exceedingly.

Does God do this for us when we stray? Do these signs come to us as a reminder of his goodness and mercy? Notice the awaiting father ran out to meet the son. How much comfort that must give us, to know that God comes to meet us when we realize the folly of our ways when we repent and come back to Him.

David's words, our very thoughts: "Remember not the sins of my youth, or my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great."

128 "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins."

"O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee. Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever."

In fact the word mercy appears 99 times in Psalms and in fact every verse of Psalm 136.

Paul writes to us an encouraging word as well as to the Hebrews:

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We look back to Peter again and we see Peter in these next few verses demonstrating his true growth into spiritual maturity:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, yet 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 honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

What encouragement again for us Brethren and Sisters. We know that by failing we will grow. By recognizing these failings we will grow to face our judge to be found with praise and honour and glory. The secret is to realize that these times are the last times. That the signs that are in front of us are there to restrengthen our walk, to remind us of our commitment at baptism, to wake us out of a spiritual sleep.

Yes, we are told that God will have mercy on those who repent, he will reach out to us and comfort us. It is God's wish that we bring honour and glory to him. How we live the Truth will be a demonstration of this. Ask yourself questions all the time. Am I pleasing God by doing this? Am I wasting precious time? Do I put all my effort into serving him? What do I need to change in my life right now to become more effective in serving him,

so that I may be a useful servant in the future? One question I ask 129 myself is what would I like to do in the Kingdom? This I find helps to focus on the future goal. Do you see yourself singing with the angels? Or tending to the animals? Or healing the sick? Or teaching the mortals? What do you see yourself doing in the future? I find that this helps to bring comfort in times of distress and really helps me focus on the mercy of God.

There are many other proofs that point out the mercy of God, however I do believe that we may all receive his mercy if only we persevere. Help to encourage one another, no back talk or talking behind the back. Continue to ask yourself questions each and every day, and over time we will find ourselves enjoying the labour of the Truth.

As we sang this morning:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Don't let the troubling times bring you to your knees in fear, take the time NOW to prepare for the next event in the earth that will bring about the plan of God, whether it is an event like what happened in America, or perhaps something that develops overseas. Read the beautiful Psalm 103 if you ever feel despair, or feel empty. Remember that God called you out for a reason. And remember to always give glory and honour to God in all our life, blessing God almighty for all His wondrous works.

In closing I want to repeat a couple of verses from Psalms 103. Repeat these words to yourself over and over: "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his host; ye ministers of His, that do his pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul."

Bro. Dan

Jackson

Temples Made With Hands

"The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing. "

IN OUR readings for today (August 12) we see the nation of God's special choice in three important epochs of their history.

It is a wonderful privilege to be able to view at a glance the great historic panorama of the Hebrew people, for God has chosen them as the vehicle of His manifestation to the world. By their history He teaches us His ways, His

divine principles of righteousness, His great purpose of salvation.

130 In the first reading (1 Kings 7) we are with Solomon in the building of the Temple—the most magnificent building of its time, and perhaps of all time. Its value is estimated as up to 5 billion dollars.

It was a great, intricately ornamented jewel of stone, cedar and gold—the pride of the nation and the wonder of the world—breath-taking in its lavish splendor.

But it was not God's idea. Like the appointment of the king, it was man's idea and desire. True, in God's great purpose there was to be a Temple, and there was to be a King. But the time had not come; and this was not the kind of Temple or King that God had in mind.

The Temple and Kingship were great paradoxes. They were types of the Spirit, but they were manifestations of the flesh. How beautifully does God bring the promise of future good out of present evil!

No trouble or expense was spared upon the Temple's external glory and beauty. If ever a splendid edifice could contribute to the value of divine service, this was such.

But as to inner, spiritual glory, it was a beautiful monument of failure, and God Himself had to finally destroy it because of all the evil that had become associated with it.

Our second reading (Jeremiah 33) deals with that time—the days of the prophet Jeremiah, when both the Temple and the Kingship were thrown down—

“Remove the diadem (the royal crown), and take off the mitre (the priestly headdress)...it shall be no more until he comes whose right it is” (Ezekiel 21:26-27).

There is a great lesson in all these things, to be found in the words of Paul (1 Corinthians 3:17)—

“The Temple of God is holy, which Temple are ye...If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy.”

The building of the Temple was David's idea. It was an expression of deep thankfulness and reverence (1Chronicles 17:1)—

“David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.”

"Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee."

King and prophet—both worthy men—decide that God needs a splendid Temple for His honor. Nathan was so sure that this would be a good thing to do that he immediately gave assent on God's behalf. What could possibly be wrong

with such a great and righteously intended plan to advance God's honor and worship?

But that night the Word of God came to the prophet— 131

"Go and tell David My servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt NOT build Me an house to dwell in; for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day...Spake I a word to any of the judges, saying, Why have ye not built Me an house of cedars?" (vs. 4-6).

Then follows the great Covenant of God with David—the raising up of Christ to rule the world in righteousness and peace from David's throne in Jerusalem. God continues—

"Furthermore, I tell thee that the Lord will build THEE an house" (v. 10).

God is the great Builder. That is the point. We cannot build to God, but He to us. Paul says (Heb. 3:4)—

"Every house is builded by some man, but THE BUILDER OF ALL THINGS IS GOD."

Houses are manmade, but God is building a universal house, not of dead stones, but of living hearts.

How gently and graciously He takes the sincere desires of David to glorify God with a magnificent building, and lifts them to an application to eternal things!

David, the man of war, the man of struggle and conflict, is permitted to prepare for the house.

David, the man after God's Own heart, desires to build Him an house. God holds up a gently restraining hand to his hasty zeal, and begins to explain many things to David, and through David to all like him who seek God's heart.

Taking up this desire, God fashions it to a pattern of type and lesson for all succeeding generations. David, the man of war and conflict, must prepare. Solomon, the man of peace, must erect. To David was given a revelation of all the plans and specifications.

God must be recognized above all as both the Planner and the Builder—"both to will and to do in us of His good pleasure"—and to Him are reserved the times and the seasons.

The Temple, like the Kingship, was to prove to be a lesson in many ways, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Its splendor lasted but 40 years from the time its first foundation was laid—40, the period of trial and probation.

In the 5th year of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, came and plundered the Temple's gold. Its great external glory and magnificence was no defense, but a weakness and danger.

It was the king of Egypt who first came and robbed it. In our reading today we read of other buildings of Solomon as part of his royal estate. Among them (v. 8) was a house for the daughter of the king of Egypt, whom Solomon had 132 taken to wife.

The House of God was not Solomon's only project—it was not his ONLY alliance and defense. He had considered it prudent also to make political affinity with Egypt—

"And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter" (I Kings 3:1).

He felt safer to seal his friendship in this way with this great world power. All the "wise" kings did so. It was considered very foolish not to take out this political insurance.

"And it came to pass in the 5th year of Rehoboam, that Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the House of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away ALL."

Solomon's misguided affinity with Pharaoh and marriage with his daughter had given Egypt a foot in the door and excuse for a hand in Israel's affairs. How often God turns our world scheming against us, to teach us wisdom, and smite us with the very rod we made for our defense!

Were the children of Israel able to build this Temple to God themselves? When God directed Moses to build Him a Tabernacle of the materials that had been offered freely and willingly by Israel, He said to Moses (Exodus 31:2)—

"See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship."

God says He called him "by name." His name means "the shadow or protection of God."

But when Solomon came to build the Temple out of the materials taken by force as spoil from the heathen nations around Israel (1 Kings 7:13)—

"He sent and fetched HIRAM out of TYRE."

The meaning of Hiram's name does not seem to be known. God did not call him by name. It was a Gentile name—he was named after the Gentile king of Tyre.

Hiram was not an Israelite. He was the son of an Israelite woman who had married out of Israel. He had a Gentile name and did not live in Israel.

Here again is manifested both weakness and promise. Weakness in the choosing of a half-alien as the chief artificer of God's Temple—promise in the union of both Jew and Gentile in this Temple-builder. In the beauty of God's

infinite wisdom and mercy we see future promise and strength brought from the womb of present failure and weakness. 133

IN THE second reading, 400 years have passed. The Temple has seen much iniquity and neglect, and very little true worship. The 400 years (10x40) have measured the patience of God with a fleshly and unholy people. The conditions leading to this crisis are described in 2 Chronicles 36:14—

"All the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after the abomination of the heathen, and polluted the House of the Lord which He had hallowed.

"And the Lord God sent to them by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.

"But they mocked His messengers, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people TILL THERE WAS NO REMEDY.

"Therefore He brought upon them the Chaldeans...and they BURNED THE HOUSE OF GOD...and all the vessels of the House they brought to Babylon, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah."

And so the great Temple for which David had longed, and planned, and labored, and which had been built to the design given by God Himself, was destroyed because all its splendor had failed completely to bring the people to godliness and purity of heart.

And so our second reading begins—

"Moreover the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison" (Jeremiah 33:1).

The end for Jerusalem and the Temple is very near. The Chaldean army has surrounded the city for the last time. All escape is cut off. It is during the last year of the last king of Judah.

Jeremiah is in prison for devoting his life to proclaiming the Word of God. The nation is making its final stand against a cruel and terrible enemy, and Jeremiah is telling the people that there is no use to resist but that they should give in and allow the Babylonians to take them captive.

The people were doing just what Hezekiah was praised so highly for doing one hundred years before.

But there was a great difference. Hezekiah defied Assyria in faith and righteousness and obedience to God; Zedekiah defied Babylon in wickedness and disobedience. And there was a difference in the purpose of God. The cup of His wrath was filled; the time had come to pour it out.

How easy to be deceived by His apparent forbearing! But the cup is being filled—drop by drop—and finally it is too late. In v. 5 God says—

"I have hid My face from this city."

Its doom was sealed.

Then from this point to the end of the chapter there follows a stirring prophecy of their time of final blessing, especially striking in view of the background against which it was uttered: the enemy overrunning the whole land—134 the city shut up and surrounded—the people in misery at the end of their endurance—the one man of God among them shut up in prison. There is always promise and hope shining through judgment—

"Behold I will bring it HEALTH AND CURE, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth"(v. 6).

The nation was sick—very sick of the evil disease of sin. As another prophet described it (Isaiah1:6)—

"From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, bruises and putrifying sores."

If sin is thus described as a sickness, why should not its sufferers be pitied rather than punished? Because a divine remedy has been freely offered, but men love the sickness rather than the cure. Jeremiah says (8:22)—

"Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?"

Gilead was proverbial for its healing balm. God is here asking in a figure: "Why is Israel corrupted with sores—have I ceased to be available as a Forgiver of sin and Guide in righteousness?" In Jeremiah 3:22, God says—

"Return, ye backsliding children, and I WILL HEAL your backslidings."

This figure is used frequently throughout the prophets. God says similarly through Hosea (14:4):

"I will heal their backslidings."

And we remember the familiar words of Isaiah (53:5)—

"The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are HEALED."

"With his stripes we are healed." Can we not then see a deeper meaning to the healing ministrations of Jesus, as he went about the villages of Galilee and Judea?—especially when he said, as he often did to those whom he healed—

"Thy sins be forgiven thee: go and sin no more."

Sin and sickness are inseparable parts of the great pattern of evil that holds the world in bondage. "With his stripes we are healed." In the New Testament reading it is recorded that, as he was healing the deaf man, Jesus—

"Sighed, and looked up to heaven."

Sin is the greatest disease, and God is the Great Healer. This is the lesson that underlies the first incident in the New Testament reading—the issue between Jesus and the Pharisees over the endless traditional washings of the Jews.

It is so easy to fall into the same pattern as the Pharisees—careful and troubled about external washings—physical cleanliness, bodily ailments, fleshly diseases, natural infections—yet have far too little anxiety about the INFINITELY MORE DANGEROUS germs of impatience and anger, the virus of harshness and sourness, the infection of thoughtless living for self, and the gangrene of covetousness for worldly things. 135

Verse 6 of Jer. 33 continues—

"I will reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth."

Surely here is a foreshadowing of God's great manifestation of Himself through His Son in the fullness of times—"the abundance of peace and truth."

"I will cause the captivity of Judah and Israel to return."

There is no hint here that 2500 years were to pass over them before this would be fulfilled. It is hard for us to get the divine perspective of time. The workings of God are a great lesson in quiet patience. The few years of a lifetime mean nothing to Him. See how long Abraham merely waited in faith. And Moses, who had such a great work to do, was 80 years old before God began to use him—before God was ready to use him, and he was ready for God's use. He kept sheep in obscurity for 40 years after he thought that he was ready and the time was ripe.

"And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity" (v. 8).

This is the part the Jews did not, and still do not, realize the need of. The cleansing and purifying and preparing of the individual is everything. 99% of our work for God is right inside ourselves—inside our own hearts.

The Jews wanted a Savior, but they did not realize his greatest work was saving them from their own sins. DO WE? Take care of that—the preparing of the individual—and all the rest takes care of itself. Subduing the world will come easily, at the proper time, once we have subdued ourselves.

Our greatest work in the Truth is making ourselves fit for God's use. It is so easy to forget that in our enthusiasm to prepare others. God will erect the Temple visibly at the proper time. Now is the time for preparing the stones, for hewing the timbers and refining the gold.

WE MAY wonder how God can suddenly cleanse a whole nation that has lain in wickedness and blindness for so long. Is not righteousness and cleanliness an individual matter of voluntary acceptance?

The method and circumstances of the purifying gives us the answer. Zechariah (ch.13) reveals that 2/3 of the people in Israel will be cut off and destroyed in the terrible days of the Armageddon conflict.

Ezekiel (ch. 20) reveals that the Jews of the world will be gathered into the wilderness of the nations, and there God will plead with them, and make them pass under the rod, and will purge out all the rebellious and unrepentant.

They are a strange and closely-knit people. There have been times in the past when a wave of earnest repentance has swept the nation. This time the

shock of realization will be greater than ever, for after 2000 years of fighting against the light, they will suddenly be confronted—in the sight of all the world—with inescapable evidence of the age-old rebellion and folly—

"They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn... In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem ... And the land shall mourn, every family apart."

Can we picture the unprecedented anguish of their remorse?

"His blood be upon us and upon our children!"

2000 years of nightmare suddenly revealed to be self-imposed! 2000 years of self-pity suddenly exposed as 2000 years of self-justification for the vilest of crimes against their own great Messiah—the Son of God who loved them and gave himself for them.

Consider their utter humiliation in the sight of all the world! Never was such a scene as this—never was there such a national self-searching—never was there such a sudden stripping away of all self-esteem! And coming just at the moment of the deepest danger and greatest deliverance of all their long history. What an emotional turmoil will twist and rend the nation to its depths!

Can we not see how in the marvelous wisdom of God the scene is gradually being prepared for this great national cleansing and transformation—a nation born in a day?

"And it shall be to Me a Name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth" (v. 9).

Out of this purified humility of the Jews will come honor. In weakness they shall be made strong.

Their past repentances have short-lived, and have died with the death of the powerful and righteous leaders who have from time to time led them back to God.

But this time they shall be given righteous judges who shall not be taken away—judges who will be able to discern the thoughts and intents of the hearts, and render swift and unerring judgment, as promised in v. 15—

"In those days and at that time will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

"David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."

Never again will they drift into evil through lack of righteous leadership. Never again will evil men pervert justice and set iniquity up in power.

And as by this divinely-contrived arrangement the nation of Israel will be prepared for God's use and honor, so that nation will be used to carry God's praise to all the world.

And not just honor and praise, but a name of joy before all the nations of the earth. How different from all the powers that have dominated the world in the

past, even the hypocritically self-righteous ones! Here is one that will be a name of joy before all the nations under her divinely-guided sway!

"In those days Jerusalem shall dwell safely, and this is the name wherewith she shall be called: The Lord our Righteousness"—Jer. 33:16 137

This is the name that is applied in ch. 23 to Christ—"The Lord (Yahweh) our Righteousness." Here it is applied to Jerusalem as the "city of the Great King" and as emblematic of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem, who share the Name of her Bridegroom, for they are all "in his Name"—part of the Name (Rev. 3:12)—

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God..."

—the living Temple of which that of Solomon was but a shadowy type—

"...and I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the city of My God, which is NEW JERUSALEM, and I will write upon him my new Name."

—"The Lord (Yahweh—He shall be) our Righteousness." This name expresses the purpose of God to manifest Himself in righteousness in a multitude whom He has made conformable unto Himself. God speaks of Jerusalem as—

"The place I have chosen to put My Name there."

The putting of God's Name—Personality—Identity—Authority—there means bringing it to the condition of righteous blessedness that Jeremiah foretells—making it holy and godly—the world center of His Power and Presence.

IN THE New Testament reading (Mark 7) the Nation and the Purpose are brought face to face in the great crisis of their long and strange history. The Son of God—"the Lord our Righteousness"—walked among them, seeking to write his Name upon the city and the people. Verse 1—

"Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem."

It is significant that this delegation was from Jerusalem, the city in which the purpose of God centered and which was the scene of the events of the first two readings for today. Jesus said, when told that Herod sought to kill him in Galilee—

"I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem... O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee!"

Jerusalem must be both the murderer and the scene of the sacrifice. Jerusalem was now just 40 years from its last and greatest destruction, just as it was just 40 years from destruction when Jeremiah began his ministry.

Forty more years and the Roman armies would come and destroy the city and the sanctuary, amid some of the most terrible scenes ever recorded, as Daniel foretold.

THIS delegation from Jerusalem calls Jesus to task because his disciples do not observe the ceremonial ritual of frequent washings required by Jewish tradition.

These lessons are laid out for us so clearly, and Jesus—with divine wisdom—so plainly discerns and manifests their error, that we may wonder how a learned, intelligent and responsible class of men could get things so much out of proportion, to be so fastidious about superficials and so blind about important principles.

But these things are written for our guidance and admonition, and we must find admonition in them. There are lessons here that apply to us, if we can but see the application

We remember the parable with which the prophet Nathan approached David regarding Bathsheba. David was violently aroused against the rich man of the parable who took the poor man's lamb. He saw the point instantly...How could anyone be so senselessly selfish and cruel! It must be immediately punished with death!

It was not until Nathan said: "Thou art the man," that the terrible light broke upon David. So of all these lessons of Jesus. Let us say to our own old man of the flesh: "THOU art the man!"

The more we examine our old man in the light of Scripture the more we see him in all these Biblical lessons.

The Pharisees were very fastidious and correct in a shallow way, but they were very inconsistent in deeper things. They failed to comprehend even the existence of the deeper things.

The deepest principle of Truth is that all things must be done in, for, and by, love. To the extent that we fail to reach this depth as the motive and method of all that we do and say, to that extent we fall into the error of these Pharisees. Whenever we are harsh, or impatient, or unkind, we are exposing our professed worship as mere Pharisaism.

It is mean and unworthy (and a subtle gratifying of the flesh) to justify rudeness and impatience and sourness toward children as necessary discipline. Instruction and discipline must be in patience and godliness and love, or they are simply a cowardly diverting to defenseless children of our inner evil characteristics.

How could these scholarly Pharisees devote their lives to studying God's Law without perceiving and living the true spirit of that Law? NOTHING IS EASIER. Natural flesh, having devoted itself to God's Law, naturally becomes self-righteous and critical. This is one of our greatest dangers—

"Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth."

The Pharisee is present in us all, every ready to parade his own self-esteem upon the stage of God's Word. When, instead of applying this lesson to ourselves, we give vent to self-approving indignation at the Pharisee of this

chapter, we ourselves are in that very act manifesting the hidden Pharisee of the heart.

How true are the Spirit's searching words (Jer. 17:9)—

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" 139

And the apostle's anguished cry at perceiving the natural hopelessness of this fact (Rom. 7:24)—

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

Let us remember the prophet's words: THOU art the man Consider the example of Pharisaic hypocrisy Jesus exposes. How does it apply to us? Verse 11 of the 7th of Mark—

"It is Corban by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me."

"It is a gift to God—It is already dedicated—I am sorry but I am not free to give you any of it."

Perhaps the way in which we are most likely to manifest this Pharisaism is in respect to our time—"I am too busy—I must prepare my article—All my time is already Corban—I cannot stop to help you—I cannot write that so-needed letter of encouragement; I must hurry to a meeting; I am late already."

It is so easy to get into a comfortable Corban rut, like the priest and Levite hurrying to Jerusalem right past the wounded man, busy with our pleasant little self-appointed tasks, and lose contact entirely with the real issues of life.

They did not mean to be hypocrites, but they had allowed the old man of the flesh to completely deceive them. They had gotten things so terribly out of proportion that they had turned religion from a beautiful way of life into a dead skeleton of bare, rattling doctrines and meaningless technicalities. All the emphasis was on externals—none on the fruits of the Spirit in the heart.

Religion had become just a fixed set of beliefs and the repeated mechanical performance of certain acts—

"Except they wash oft, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold."

The traditions of the elders. Some of their predecessors, with well-intentioned blindness, had invented a host of regulations, to keep small minds busy and self-satisfied, believing that if every aspect of life had its set religious performance, then the individual will of necessity be kept safely hedged within the path of righteousness.

They must have recognized that in the main their system did not work—did not produce holiness—but they would doubtless console themselves with the thought that the fault was not with the system but the people. We may very easily make the same mistake. We must constantly examine our own system for similar weaknesses. If our system merely produces self-satisfied doctrinists, and does not purify the Body from the fleshly corruptions of worldliness, selfishness, unkindness and impatience, and produce a people of outstanding

gentleness, kindness, holiness, and zeal, it is mere surface Pharisaism, and our standing aside from other groups is mere hypocrisy.

Jesus tried to show them that what had been meant to be a living force in the hearts of men they had dried up into a multitude of legal technicalities—cold, 140 dead, powerless.

Here again we are in great danger. We so easily drift into performing our religion, rather than freely and enthusiastically living it. We so easily go through its exercises—the readings, the meetings, the set times for prayers, the customary thanksgiving for our meals—and then leave it behind and forget as we step out into the realities of life. The holy Word of God on our lips one moment—impatience, irritableness, rudeness and worldly foolishness the next—sweet water and bitter from the same fountain!

As soon as custom begins to form a crust, as soon as there is any tendency to drift thoughtlessly through a performance, we are in danger of “making the Word of God of none effect by our traditions.”

One very tell-tale evidence of this tendency to ritualism is self-commendation. We do our readings faithfully, no matter how tired we are or how late it may be—we struggle through them. And if we should happen to miss, we faithfully catch up, and have a pleasant glow of self-approval.

This begins to sound very much like ritualism. Why? Because self-approval immediately reveals that we have forgotten why we are doing them.

It is not a matter of commendable performance of some task—it must be the joyful fulfillment of a spontaneous desire. Do we have any feeling of self-approval when we do something we genuinely enjoy? No. Rather, we have a feeling of pleasure and thankfulness.

We must read, not just to get the readings done, but to enjoy learning more of God, to enjoy godly company and godly memories, to satisfy hunger and thirst for righteousness.

There is, of course, no virtue in not doing the readings. It is even sadder to miss them than to do them mechanically.

But in anything arranged according to a schedule (and some things, such as this, must be) there is the danger of the Pharisaism illustrated in this very instructive incident.

As he concluded this lesson, Jesus said—

“There is nothing from without a man that entering in can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they which defile the man.”

Some have used these words to justify the use of tobacco. This is doubly sad, for the true spirit of it is missed, and a wrong idea is encouraged. Any with spiritual discernment will perceive this fallacy, for these words could just as well be used to justify addiction to drugs, to say nothing of alcoholism.

The defilement of tobacco, like that of alcohol and drugs, is from within. The heart that seeks these forms of self-gratification, and that subjects the

mind and body to the unnatural and habit-forming influences and slavery of these things, is defiling himself.

But let us perceive the great truth of Jesus’ words. All defilement is from within—from the heart. It is the state of the heart and mind—the lusts, desires, reactions, intentions, motives. 141

Jesus mentions several things that come out of the heart and defile the man. The various lists of virtues and vices which occur throughout the Word should be carefully studied. The tendency is to slur over them, without considering each individually. But each is there for a purpose.

The tendency also is—noticing in passing that some are things we would never think of doing—to dismiss the whole list with a feeling of relief that we, like the Pharisee—

“...are not as other men are—extortioners, adulterers, etc.”

Instead of judging ourselves by noticing the things we do, we commend and gratify ourselves by noticing the things we don’t do, and so the list—meant to purify and humble us—is perverted to the feeding of our pride. So, in this list, let us not concentrate on the “murders” and “fornications,” but let us take note of the two things with which the list closes—“pride and foolishness.” No one can claim to be free of these two final defiling evils—pride and foolishness.

“And from thence he arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon” (v. 24).

This is the only recorded time that Jesus during his ministry left the land of Israel, for he was not sent—as he said—except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

It is striking that it should be Tyre and Sidon, the dominion of king Hiram—“ever a lover of David”—who had helped Solomon build the Temple 1000 years before.

On this visit to the borders of Tyre and Sidon there is an occasion of the manifestation of great faith and spiritual discernment on the part of a Gentile—the incident of the Syro-Phenician woman. She said as recorded in Matthew—

“O Lord, thou SON OF DAVID.”

What did she know of David... and of David’s times...and of Hiram’s love for him...and of Tyre’s contributing the skill and materials for the Temple? And what did she know of Jesus, to call him “Lord” and “Son of David”?

At first Jesus did not answer her at all, in spite of her faith and tearful entreaties. Let us not then be discouraged when we seek and he does not immediately answer.

And when the disciples became weary of her persistent entreaties, and besought him to do something about it, he simply said (again reading from Matthew)—

“I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Then she came and worshipped him, and said: "Lord, help me!" But still there was not the slightest hint of acceptance—

"Let the children first be filled, for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs."

142 Would WE still have persisted? Would we still have loved him? Would our faith have said, "I know he is the Son of God, although he seems so narrow and cruel—I know there is a reason, though I cannot understand it"?

The Jews were children of God, and the Gentiles were but dogs. What an exposure to all the world's fleshly pride and patriotism! Would we have burned at this humiliating rebuff, and have turned away in angry mortification? Or would faith, humility and wisdom have kept the way of hope open, and have brought forth the simple, beautiful reply—

"Yes, Lord, but the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

And he said unto her—

"O WOMAN, GREAT IS THY FAITH!"

Under great trial, the spirit held firm against the perplexity, disappointment, and resentment of the flesh. Like Jacob, she had wrestled through the darkness, and prevailed—

"I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me!"

Have we less faith, less love, less perseverance than this nameless alien woman of Canaan? We, too, are Gentile aliens, the dogs that eat of the children's crumbs.

The last incident of this chapter is the healing of the deaf and dumb man. Sometimes Jesus healed with a word. Sometimes the healing is an extended, detailed process, as here. Here seven things are listed that Jesus did in healing this man. There must be some meaning to these things, for faith and wisdom to search out. First we read (v. 33)—

"And he TOOK HIM ASIDE from the multitude."

The significance of that, at least, is clear.

"And put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue."

There are three occasions where it is recorded that Jesus spat in connection with his healing—this case, and two with blind men. The deaf and the blind—types of people in Israel—

"Their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes have they closed."

The only other references to spitting are the several that refer to the treatment of Jesus by the people he came to heal. The ones he came to suffer and die for. Of the great Jewish council that condemned him it is recorded—

"Now they did spit in his face, and buffeted him."

He himself prophesied this (Luke 18: 32)—

"He shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on."

And the Spirit of Christ in Isaiah said (50:6)—

"I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

143

Spitting was a sign of deepest insult and shame—to submit meekly to spitting was utter degradation and contempt. We see then in the spitting in connection with the healing a reference to the way in which the healing of mankind was to be accomplished. "He endured the cross and despised the shame"... "He was despised, and we esteemed him not."

"And looking up to heaven he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is Be opened" (v. 31).

"He sighed." Why did he sigh? He was a "man of sorrow and acquainted with grief." How heavily the sorrow of mankind weighed upon him! Have we not, at a hospital, sat and watched the endless passing to and fro, and felt in some small way this acquaintance with grief? But to the infinitely tender spirit of Jesus, the grief of the world was a close and constant companion—

"Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrow."

The people said in awe and thankfulness (v. 37)—

"HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL!"

How little they understood the full meaning of what they said! How little we understand! In everything he was the perfect manifestation of God among men—"He hath done all things well."

Bro. G.V. Growcott

The Seventh Vial

It was Solomon, king of Israel in her former glory, who writing by inspiration of God in the book of Ecclesiastes declared, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof."

That is a truth which we fully appreciate as we approach the end of the consideration of the Apocalypse which has engaged our attention during recent months.

When John was in Patmos at the end of the first century, the Revelation of Jesus the Anointed was given to him to record for the servants of the Deity the things which would be speedily accomplished. Thus John stood at the beginning of these things. He lived in the twilight, which was about to change into the night of darkness during which the Gentiles, in their many political and ecclesiastical phases, would persecute the saints of the Most High until the day of the Lord dawned.

We, in the mercy of God, have been called to hold the same hope possessed by John, and are privileged to stand at the end of these-things, with the night of darkness almost gone, and the dawn of the day of glory ahead. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. We look back along the road of history, and see how the events prophetically foreshadowed by Jesus the Anointed, have been accurately fulfilled, testifying to the Divine origin of the

message, and giving an assurance of the fulfillment of those events which are yet in the future. All, whose minds are scripturally enlightened, realize that we are now fast approaching the end of those things which precede the return of Jesus Christ, and mark the beginning of the Lord's day.

144 "But ye, brethren," wrote Paul to the believers in Thessalonica, "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." In our contemplation of the judgments of the Seventh Vial, coupled with the desire for a share in that state of glory, in the age of peace which lies beyond, those words of Paul provide a solemn warning, and also an exhortation. All those who live in the hope of life eternal, are not of the night, this night of Gentile darkness. They do not sleep, for the Deity hath called them out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of the Truth, not having appointed them to the wrath of the outpouring of this Seventh Vial, but to obtain salvation by Jesus the Anointed.

When John was given the Apocalypse to record Jesus said, "Blessed is he who knows accurately, and they who give heed to the words of the prophecy, and observe narrowly the things which have been written in it; for the time is at hand."

How great then is the need to narrowly observe the things which have been written concerning those events to take place in the near future, for verily the time is near, even the manifestation of the Son of God. If the signs of the dawn are not narrowly observed the watchers will slumber amid the present troubles, and, casting away their confidence of the reward will stumble, and fall by the way, even as the dawn breaks.

The pouring out of the Seventh Vial, which is the concluding period of the Seventh Seal, and of the Seventh Trumpet, will not begin until after the resurrection of the dead, and the establishment of Jesus of Nazareth upon the Throne of David in Jerusalem, after the king of the North has been driven from the Holy Land. These events must precede the outpouring of this Vial, because the Apocalypse in chapter xvi. v. 17 plainly declares that "the Seventh Angel poured out his vial into the Air, and there came forth a great voice, from the throne, saying, "It is done." It would not be possible for the great voice of the Yahweh Name, Jesus and his glorified bride, to go forth unless they were enthroned in Zion. Joel prophetically confirms this in chapter iii. v. 16 where it is written, "Yahweh shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem This is the Great Voice of the Seventh Vial, which will cause the political heavens, and the earth to shake, and fall, to rise no more at all". Thus the Seventh Angel who pours out this vial is Jesus and his brethren, who will then be, like him, partakers of the divine nature. Nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus said to his faithful followers, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And in the outpouring of this Vial they take the kingdom, and bring the whole earth into subjection to the will of the Deity.

When John saw Jesus and his brethren symbolised as the Rainbow Angel in Apocalypse chapter x, he heard seven thunders utter their voice, but was commanded not to write what those thunders revealed, but to seal them up. Thunders apocalyptically symbolised are wars. Therefore seven thunders are seven wars, or the completeness of the war of that great day of the omnipotent Deity. Although the details have not been given, the results are stated in the prophecy of this vial. John was told that the Seventh Angel poured out his vial into the Air. The Air here mentioned is the territory of the Four Beast dominions, referred to by Daniel in chapter vii. v. 27 as, "the kingdom under the whole heaven, to be given to the people of the saints of the most High." This is the same political heaven in which John saw a door opened, and a new throne established, as recorded in Apocalypse iv. v. 1, 2. This new throne will be the Throne of David restored, and by the power of Jesus who sits thereon, and his immortalised brethren, the thrones of this Gentile age will be broken to pieces, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ (Apocalypse xi. 15).

But this state of peace can only be attained by the outpouring of Divine judgment expressed in the words of Apocalypse. xvi. 18, 11: "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great". It is written, "Yahweh shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel iii. 16). The result of this shaking is prophetically shown through Haggai, " I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother." (Haggai ii. 21, 22).

The work of destruction will take time, although Jesus, if He wished, could instantly destroy all who refused to submit to his commands. But there is a purpose to be served in the outpouring of this vial, which is to compel the whole world to at last recognise the existence, and the power of God, and to realise that they must obey His law.

When Jesus is enthroned in Zion, the prophetically revealed promise of the Deity, as recorded in the second Psalm commences its fulfilment.

" Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession " (Ps. ii. v. 7-9).

It is clearly revealed in the Apocalypse chapters xvii. and xviii. that Jesus then commences the next phase of world conquest by the destruction of Rome, through whom, and her daughter religions, all nations have been deceived during this so-called Christian era. Before so doing, he will issue a warning proclamation of his intentions, and extend an invitation to any who are then willing to forsake her blasphemous doctrines, and to become subject to his commands. His invitation is, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not

partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Apocalypse xviii. 4-5).

146 Those here referred to as " my people " are not the saints, for they are then with Jesus in Jerusalem. The invitation is addressed to those Jews then still in Rome, and also any Gentiles of a willing mind, who may become the Lord's people by obeying his command to come out, and thenceforth be in hope of eternal life to be bestowed upon them, if faithful, at the end of the Millennium. This is foreshadowed by the prophet, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people." (Zecariah I, v. 10-11).

The reason for the destruction of Rome, is that her sins have reached unto the heaven. She has continued her wickedness until the establishment of the New Jewish Heaven, and has not repented. Paul speaks of her as, "that Wicked whom the LORD shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall. destroy with the brightness of his coming." (2 Thessalonians ii, v. 8). The destruction is represented by a stone, like a great millstone, being cast into the sea, so that she shall be found no more at all. The crimes of the Roman Babylon have been greater than those of the Chaldean Babylon, for Rome in addition to destroying God's temple, oppressing his people Israel, and making all nations spiritually drunk with her false doctrines, has persecuted the faithful witnesses of Jesus, who have held the Truth during her long reign of blasphemy.

The kings of the earth shall bewail her, and lament for her. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her. Painters, sculptors, jewelers, and others will bewail her destruction, because their trade with her in decorations, crucifixes, images, beads, cassocks, gowns, and other religious consecrations, will have passed away. Others will lament at the loss of social position, and respectability, with which they were regarded by reason of their association with the Roman Woman.

And many kings, priests, and other rulers of the nations, in spite of Rome's terrible end, will harden their hearts, and perish when later they oppose the armies of the Anointed Jesus.

The nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse reveals the next step in the Divine programme. The scene is changed from Rome to Jerusalem, the true eternal city. John says that "after these things" destruction of Rome as detailed in the previous chapter-he, "heard a great voice of much people in the heaven saying, HALLELU YAH!" The reason for this praise to YAH is the arrival in Jerusalem of the news of the destruction of Rome. The world has never yet witnessed a time of thanksgiving to compare with these rejoicings. They who then praise YAH will be of two classes. The first class will comprise all those who had believed the gospel of the kingdom of God, and after immersion had continued patiently in well doing until death, and having been raised from the dead, at the return of Jesus, had received exaltation to the Divine nature. The

second class will consist of the regathered of natural Israel, and the many from the other mortal nations, who will be joined to YAHWEH in that day as the subjects of his kingdom. And they all rejoice saying " HALLELU YAH! For Yahweh Elohim the all-powerful, hath prevailed. We can rejoice and 147 exult, and have given the glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb hath come, and his betrothed hath made herself ready " (Apocalypse xix. 6-7).

The marriage of the Lamb, whilst a very important step in the Divine programme, does not of itself remove the veil spread over all nations, for the evil influence of Rome and her daughters still remains. The " kingdoms of this world " are not yet become " the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ". That can only be reached by conquest, and therefore the scene is changed from one of rejoicing, and thanksgiving, to preparation for conflict, in which the Hosts of this Jewish Heaven will carry war into the enemy's country in the struggle for the mastery of the world.

The opposing forces are the King of kings, or YAHWEH; the Hosts in the heaven; and the White Horses upon which they ride. The symbols will be readily recognised as, the Lord Jesus Christ as Commander; his immortalised brethren filling all the offices of the army; and the men of the Hebrew race as the soldiers of the kingdom. Their opponents are " the Ten Horns which receive power as kings one hour with the (Eighth Head of the) beast. 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: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful " (Apocalypse xvii, 12-14).

This is "the war of the great day of the all-powerful Deity ": and will be waged in righteousness. Zechariah prophesied thus: " YAHWEH Tz'vaoth hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. And they shall be as mighty ones who tread down as in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because Yahweh is with them." (chapter x. 3, 5).

Moses prophesied of them so long ago, that one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

The result of this great conflict will be the transfer of all the kingdoms of the earth to Jesus Christ, who will then be, not only King of Israel, but king of all the nations of the earth, with none to dispute his claim (Psalm ii. 8).

Then John sees the establishment of a new order of things wherein dwelleth righteousness as recorded in Apocalypse chapter xx. The first " heaven " was the kingdom of Israel, the Jewish Commonwealth which was overturned so long ago, but this will be the second " heaven " or Millennial Age which will change the constitution of the whole world. The present Gentile Constitution of Society, both Church and State, will be entirely abolished. Popes, Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, and all others who have

taught lies in the name of the Lord, all Gentile kings, emperors, officers of state, war lords of all kinds, all parliaments, and all kinds of legislative committees will be replaced by the immortal friends of Jesus who will reign 148 with him as kings and priests in that day of glory.

The sweetness, and the beauty, of that peace which will then be enjoyed by the mortal nations, over whom these immortal kings and priests will rule, is now only understood by those who, have carefully, and prayerfully studied the beautiful word pictures presented in the writings of the Old Testament.

All men will speak one language, and worship One God, for those who have believed the false doctrine of the Trinity, and those who have followed Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius and other false teachers will come to Zion, and say "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein is no profit." And then all national envy, and rivalry will be removed, and every man will sit under his vine, and under his fig tree, with none to make him afraid.

But even this state of peace and quietness will be disturbed by a rebellion of the nations toward the end of the Millennial Age, for they will then attempt to re-establish mortal government. Their fate will be the same as that which befell the nations who opposed Christ, and his armies, before the Millennial Age commenced. They will meet with defeat, and death, and be engulfed in a great catastrophe that will finally remove rebellion from the history of the world. Then the faithful living of the mortal nations, together with those found faithful from among the resurrected dead, who have died during the Millennium, will be made immortal, and thus sin, and death, will for ever be removed.

John speaks of the passing of the Millennial Age in Apocalypse xxi. 1. He says, "I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away." The Millennial Constitution of the World, here referred to as the Former Heaven and the Former Earth will not be perfect, and must give place to that Third Heaven and Third Earth, beyond the Millennium, in which there will be perfection.

Paul had a vision of this glorious constitution of things and told the believers in Corinth that he heard unspeakable words, or secret things, which it was not lawful, or possible, for him to utter. But John tells us something of what he heard. He says, "I heard a great voice out of the heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of the Deity with men, and he will dwell with them: and they shall be his peoples, and the Deity himself will be with them their Deity. And the Deity shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death; nor shall there be sorrow, nor crying, nor pain any more: for the former things have passed away. And he that sitteth upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." And John added, "And he saith unto me, Write: for these are true and faithful words." (Apocalypse xxi. 3-5).

And once more the statement is repeated to John, as if to convince him of the future reality of the glorious things he had seen in vision. John says as recorded in Apocalypse xxii. 6, "And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and YAHWEH Elohim of the holy prophets sent his angel to show to his servants the things which must come to pass with speed." 149

And then Jesus gives comfort to the aged apostle, with an exhortation added for all those to heed, who would hope to share in the glories of the eternal future.

"Behold I come suddenly. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (Apocalypse xxii. 7).

The promise is repeated, coupled with a promise of reward.

"And behold, I come suddenly, and my reward is with me, to render to every one as his work shall be." (Apocalypse xxii. 12).

And the promise is again repeated, "Yea, I come suddenly," (Apocalypse xxii. 20).

And John aged, and weary with the strain of the sorrows he was enduring in exile, and looking forward to that age of glory of which he had seen such wonderful visions, replied,

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

To-day, we behold a troubled world that is distressed, and perplexed, with its many difficulties, and sorrows, and yet is heedless of its doom. We think of the glorious future which the Deity has offered to all those, of the sons of men, who are prepared to believe, and obey His will, and like John, weary, with the difficulties of this present existence, we say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Bro. W. P. Lane – 1932

Berean

DANIEL – THE KINGS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH (continued from last month)

"The eleventh chapter, from the fifth to the thirty-first verse, treats of two (of the four horns), the northern and southern horns in their struggles with one another for ascendancy in the Holy Land, and consequent lordship over Judah; and thus the treatise fills up the interval between the foundation of the horn kingdoms and the incipient intervention of "the breakers of Daniel's people" who should exalt themselves to establish the vision." (Exposition of Daniel page 24)

Our last article finished in verse 9 of Daniel chapter 11. From verse 5 of that chapter we were able to see the clear development of the Greek kingdom into North and South, and the antagonism that existed between them, as required by the prophecy. Although the history is quite involved, we were

able to see the value of contemplating this part of the inspired word, as it forms the historical basis of what will exist at the time of the end when Russia makes her grand move for world domination as the King of the North.

The verses considered brought us to the time when Ptolemy Euergetes (the King of the South), plundered the kingdom of Seleucus (the King of the North) 150 with an immense army, avenging the murder of his sister Bernice. He also took an enormous booty from Syria and Cilicia, before returning into Egypt. This occurred in BC 244.

We will recommence the exposition at verse 10 following closely the writings of Bro. Thomas and Bro. Roberts, and any other historical sources we can find, so that we may be helped in the analysis of this intricate and interesting part of Daniel's prophecy.

(b) verses 10 – 19 The Excursions, victories and defeats of Antiochus the Great.

The tenth verse states that "his sons shall be stirred up." These were the sons of Seleucus (the King of the North), Ceraunus, and Antiochus, and they were stirred up to war, both desiring to vindicate the cause of their father and country. The elder, Seleucus, first took the throne, but being weak, was unable to keep his army under control. He was poisoned by two of his generals after a reign of two or three years. Antiochus was much more capable. He opened his career by quelling a rebellion on the Tigris, and then attempted to extend his authority over all the territories that Alexander the Great had at one time conquered. He retook Seleucia and recovered Syria.

The verse says that he "assembled a multitude of great forces," that is, against Egypt. In BC 218 he attacked Nicolaus, an Egyptian general, thus recovering Syria from the dominion of Ptolemy king of Egypt. He "overflowed" (through the passes of Libnus) and "passed through" into Galilee. With winter approaching, he "returned" to Ptolemais, putting his forces into winter quarters. But early in the Spring BC 217, Ptolemy Philopator marched with a large army to Raphia, having had time to strengthen his army. Antiochus was defeated and compelled to retreat "even to his fortress."

Verse 11 indicates that the King of the South was then "moved with choler and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north." Ptolemy was "enraged" (as Rotherham renders choler) against Antiochus, and advanced to wrest Syria from him. Antiochus attacked him with 72,000 foot and 6,000 horse, but was again defeated. Ten thousand of Antiochus' army were slain, four thousand were taken prisoner, and with the remainder of his forces he retreated to Antioch. The scripture states "But the multitude shall be given into his hand." The following quotations from historical writing describes the times:

"The campaign was again opened in spring (BC 217). Ptolemy caused 70,000 foot, 5,000 horse, and 73 elephants, to advance towards Pelusium....That of Antiochus was something more numerous than the other. His forces consisted of 72,000 foot, 6,000 horse, and 102 elephants....At last the two kings resolving to decide their quarrel, drew up their armies in battle array....Finding it would now be impossible for him to maintain himself in that country against Ptolemy, he abandoned all his conquests, and retreated to Antioch with the remains of his army....A truce was therefore agreed upon for twelve months; and before the expiration of that time, a peace was concluded on these terms. Ptolemy, who might have taken advantage of the victory, and have conquered all Syria, was desirous of putting an end to the war, that he might have an opportunity of devoting himself entirely to his pleasures." (Rollin's Ancient History)

"In the beginning of the war, Antiochus obtained some advantages over the Egyptian troops; but shortly after in a great battle fought at Raphia, near Gaza, he was completely defeated, with great loss; and Ptolemy obtained a large extension of influence in Palestine and Syria. Humbled by this defeat, and alarmed at the progress of Achaeus in Asia Minor, Antiochus was anxious to make peace with Ptolemy; and the Egyptian king, although he had every inducement to prosecute the war, being equally anxious to return to his licentious pleasures, was ready to receive his overtures. In consequence a peace was concluded by which Coele-Syria and Palestine were confirmed as belonging to Egypt." (The Historians History of the World)

Ptolemy did not capitalise on his victory as the above extract indicates. Verse 12 says "when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up". Bro. Thomas says his heart was lifted up because he desired to enter the holy place. History indicates that he did act foolishly, to the extent that his subjects rebelled against him. This was especially the case with the Jews. Coming to Jerusalem he was well received and treated the inhabitants kindly. However, he did desire to see the inner sanctuary, but was restrained by the priests. He was angered by this, and commenced a terrible and relentless persecution against the Jews. In Alexandria, 40,000 to 60,000 Jews were slain in his persecution ("and he shall cast down many ten thousands" – verse 12).

However, the last part of verse 12 stated that "he shall not be strengthened by it." He returned to Egypt, and gave himself up to luxury and sloth. He died about BC 203, and his son Ptolemy Epiphanes (who was five years old) succeeded him.

It was now the turn of Antiochus to increase his influence. Verse 13 states "For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches." Antiochus had suppressed rebellion in his kingdom, and was able to raise a mighty force. In BC 198 in the battle of

Panias he recovered his lost possessions of Coele-Syria and Palestine. However, other kingdoms were challenging the dominance of the kings of the north and the south at this time.

Verse 14 states, “And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south.” These were the times when Ptolemy Epiphanes reigned over Egypt. The kings of Macedonia stood up against the infant king, along with those of Syria, and even Scopas, the general of his deceased father, tried 152 to take advantage of him.

Rollin records:

“Antiochus King of Syria, and Philip king of Macedon, during the reign of Ptolemy Philopater (BC 203) had discovered the strongest zeal for the interests of that monarch, and were ready to assist him on all occasions. Yet, no sooner was he dead, leaving behind an infant, whom the law of humanity and justice enjoined them not to disturb in the possession of his father’s kingdom, than they immediately join in a criminal alliance, and excite each other to take off the lawful heir, and divide his dominions between them. Philip was to have Caria, Lybia, Cyrenaica and Egypt; and Antiochus all the rest. With this view, the latter entered Coele-Syria and Palestine; and in less than two campaigns, made an entire conquest of those two provinces, with all their cities and dependencies.”

The latter part of verse 14 introduces a new power upon the scene. Daniel is addressed personally. “Also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision.” (Bro. Thomas translates robbers as “deputies.”) This was the power of Rome. It was not the powerful Empire that we are familiar with at that time, but its influence was to grow steadily. Deputies of Rome became the guardians of Ptolemy Epiphanes, and interfered in the affairs of Egypt. Bro. Thomas records the following in Elpis Israel:

“They became the guardians and protectors of Epiphanes during his minority; and appointed three deputies, who were ordered to acquaint the kings with their resolution, and to enjoin them not to infest the dominions of their royal pupil; for that otherwise they should be forced to declare war against them. The deputy, Emilius, one of the three, after delivering the message of the Roman senate, proceeded to Alexandria, and settled everything to as much advantage as the state of affairs in Egypt would then admit. In this way the Romans began to mix themselves up with the affairs of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria; and in a few years established themselves as lords paramount of the East, and so constituted a power in Asia, symbolised by the Little Horn of the Goat, and in the thirty-sixth verse, styled “THE KING.” (page 400)

However, Daniel was given the assurance that although they were the breakers of his people, “they shall fall” at last.

Verse 15 describes the power of the king of the north at that time, who would come and “take the most fenced cities; and the arms of the south shall not withstand.” In spite of the interference of the Romans, Antiochus advanced against the Egyptians to Syria, besieged Sidon, and captured Jerusalem. The arms of Egypt had no power to arrest the progress of Antiochus. He did “according to his own will...and shall stand in the glorious land which by his hand shall be consumed” (verse 16). His power was paramount in Palestine, which he devastated. 153

Antiochus also sought to increase his power as verse 17 indicates. Bro. Thomas’ paraphrase in Elpis Israel is quoted in full below to outline the intrigues of the times.

“He shall also set his face to enter into Greece, with the strength of his whole kingdom, and Israelites (Ishrim) with him. Thus shall he do to incorporate Greece into his dominion, by which the Romans, who had recently proclaimed it free, would be stirred up against him. Therefore, to secure the neutrality of their Egyptian ally, he shall give Cleopatra, the daughter of women, or princess royal, to Epiphanes to wife, corrupting her to betray him by resigning to him Coele-Syria and Palestine as her dower, but on condition that he should receive half the revenues. Thus, the land of Israel was given over as a bribe to bind Cleopatra to her father’s interests, that she might influence Epiphanes either to remain neutral, or to declare against the Romans, his protectors. But she shall cleave to her husband and not stand, neither be for him, but shall join with her husband in congratulating the Roman Senate on the victory they had gained over her father at Thermopylae (BC 191). (page 400)

Thus, even though Antiochus gave his own daughter in marriage to Epiphanes to secure his own ends, she sided with her husband in favour of the Romans!

“After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many” (verse 18). Antiochus then subdued most of the maritime places on the coast of the Mediterranean and took many islands, including Rhodes, Samos and Colophon and those around Greece. He thus sought to check the rising power of Rome. However, a military commander (“a prince for his own behalf”) of the Roman armies by the name of Lucius Cornelius Scipio led an attack against Antiochus and was successful. Scipio repulsed Antiochus from every part of Asia Minor, thus wiping out the disgrace at first inflicted on the Roman arms and name as the protectors of Greece, and turning it on Antiochus (“he shall cause it to turn upon him.”)

“Antiochus lost all presence of mind, and withdrew his garrisons from all the cities on the Hellespont, and, in his precipitate flight, left all his military stores behind him.” (Jahn’s Hebrew Commonwealth)

“As the condition of peace, the Romans required him to pay 15,000 talents; 500 down, 2,500 on the ratification of the treaty, and the rest in twelve years at 1,000 talents per annum. These terms being acceded to, he shall turn his

face toward the fortress, or capital, of his own land, being much at a loss how to raise the tribute (see verse 19). While in the province of Elymais, he heard of a considerable treasure in the temple of Jupiter Belus. He accordingly broke into it in the dead of night, and carried off all its riches. But he shall stumble and fall, and not be found; for the provincials, exasperated at the robbery, rebelled against him, and murdered him and all his attendants (BC 187)" (Elpis Israel page 401)

Thus terminates this part of the prophecy in relation to Antiochus the Great.

154

Bro. Phillip Hughes

The Deep Things of God: Christian Disciples

This term "disciple" is derived from the Latin noun, "discipulus," which signifies a learner or scholar. He then who styles himself a disciple announces to mankind that he is a student whose object is to learn. If he adopt the term as a sectarian distinction, it then imports that he is a student of the system of theology approved by his denomination, that he may learn all its mysteries. There are innumerable disciples of this class, subdivided also into a multitude of orders. In this sense they are as followers and adherents to the doctrine of another, who is therefore always more or less in advance of themselves; and therefore their leader.

But there is a non-sectarian sense in which men are styled disciples, namely, when they are students of the Word, "proving all things," (1 Thessalonians 5:21) that they may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with The fulness of God; and so understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians. 3:18,19).

Hence an ecclesia of disciples is an assembly of learners; and an ecclesia of Christian disciples is an assembly of persons who believe the things of the Kingdom of God, and of the Name of the Lord Jesus, and, thus believing, have been immersed into Christ and patiently continue in the faith and well doing of their vocation, reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting all things revealed in the scriptures of truth.

Such were the disciples first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26). These Christian disciples shone as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life. They counted not their lives dear unto them: but hazarded everything, reputation, liberty, wealth and friends, for the Word's sake. Their treasure was in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20); therefore their anchor was within the veil (Hebrews 6:19). The icy coldness of their old nature

was thawed into the genial sympathies of the new man (Ephesians 2:15; 4:24; Colossians 3:10; see 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galations 6:15) by the benevolence of God. Heart clung to heart, and hand joined in hand, the expressive symbol of unity and love.

We want to behold an Ecclesia of Christian Disciples such as these; we fear that such an one is yet a stranger in our world. When such a community of ecclesias is restored, we shall glory in it as a Reformation in verity and deed.

155

Bro. John Thomas

What Does That Mean?

"The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

This verse tells us that the Lord is not willing that any should perish; yet we know that people perish every day by the thousands. Wouldn't you think that, if God "willed" it (whatever "it" is), that "it" would be automatically done? In other words, if an all powerful being willed that something be done, doesn't it, by definition, have to be done?

We have to look at the will of God on two levels. The first level is what God is going to do, regardless of what we choose to do. For example: He is going to bring about a kingdom on this earth and fulfill His promises to the patriarchs regardless of whether we accept that or not. We often refer to this as "God's Sovereign Will." The prophet Daniel refers to God's Sovereign will when he says "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35)

Yet, it is part of God's Sovereign will that mankind has the exercise of choice or, as it is

styled, "free will." This choice is restricted, of course, by God's will and the natural laws that He o r d a i n e d t o g o v e r n this planet. However, because we have unlimited choices within the natural framework provided by God's will and natural laws, we have "free will" to exercise those choices. When the Bible says things like "The Lord is...not willing that any should perish", it should be understood by the reader that man has a choice in the matter. God does want all of mankind to serve Him, but at the same time, He allows us the choice to serve Him (or not), with the resulting consequences for each chosen path.

Only by understanding God's will and humbling ourselves before Him can we align our will with His. We need to have the determination counseled by Paul when he said, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17) We also have to be like the Psalmist when he said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

God's Sovereign will is, ultimately, going to be done on earth. Yet, for the time being, we have the choice to make God's will a part of our lives or not. Let us follow the example of our Master. When he was under severe trial and facing death, even then his attitude was, "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42) We are therefore exhorted, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*" (Phillip. 2:5)