

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. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

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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

Nakalira, Kenya Memorial 10:30am; SS & Sisters Study Class 8:30am; Bible Class Wednesday 3:00pm; Ecclesial Special Effort every last week of April, August and December; Robert Khisa, PO Box 909, Webuye, 50205, Kenya, East Africa

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings of love from the members of the Nakalira Ecclesia,

We do hope this finds each one in our Berean Fellowship being kept safe by the able hands of our Heavenly Father, and fervently striving to obey and serve our Lord Yahshua Messiah.

Last December on 28th we had our Ecclesial Special Effort and were encouraged on the theme “Keep growing in the Faith that pleases God – Hebrews 11:6.” It was really an uplifting day to us Spiritually as most of our brothers and sisters who happen not to meet with us regularly around the table of our absent Lord because of job placements were able to attend.

The ecclesia now numbers 22, namely; Brothers and Sisters Eliud and Jessica Simiyu, Moses and Gladys Wafula, Paul and Lydia Wafula, Amos and Dorine Wanjala, Shawn and Cynthia Tyler, Patrick Nyongesa, Wycliffe Barasa, Godwin Wanyonyi, Yvanov Alawi, Sophie Macklyn, Boaz Wafula, Nancy Nanjala, Samuel Simiyu, Abraham Simiyu, Hassan Mulongo, Jacob Mukhwana and Robert Kisha.

Those under baptismal instruction class are: Mrs. Abigael Khisa, (wife of the undersigned), Mr. and Mrs. Ainea and Emily Wafula and John (Wafula).

We had our annual ecclesial meeting on December 31st, 2005 and elections of our serving brethren were done. Bro. Robert Khisa has taken over the ecclesial recording responsibilities.

God willing, our April, 2006 Ecclesial Special Study Effort will be held starting from the morning of 29th and ending with the Memorial service on 31st. Arrival date is 28th in the afternoon. The Theme of the effort will be “PROVE YOURSELF FAITHFUL AND WISE AS THE DAY OF CHRIST’S COMING DRAWS NEAR.” During this occasion, we will also share and witness in the joy of the wedding of our Sister Nancy Nanjala who will marry Brother Samuel Simiyu, these are both from our Nakalira Ecclesia. We hope all these will prove to be encouraging practical examples of living the faith.

We, therefore, offer our heartfelt welcome to all of our Berean fold who are able to attend the effort. Let also Bro. Epa Wekati be advised by this notice to prepare for officiating the marriage.

Yours on behalf of the Brothers and Sisters of the Nakalira Ecclesia,
Bro. Robert Khisa and Bro. Shawn Tyler

Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias - Corrections

LITTLE ROCK, AR, Bro. Bob Wdding, 1490 Joyner Dr., Conway, AR 72034

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Mar 17–20, 2006
Bro. Stephen Male, 63 Ty Llwyd Parc, Quakers Yard, Treharris, South Wales, CF46 5LB,
United Kingdom, Phone: 011 441 44381 3828

NORTH CAROLINA–VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 27–28, 2006
Bro. Dale Lee at dleecpa2@mindspring.com (Details to follow shortly)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Jun 9–11, 2006
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Jul 24–30, 2006
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868
Study Class Topic: 1Thessalonians; Daily Bible Readings; Discussion on Zech. 1-7

NE FRATERNAL GATHERING – BOSTON.....Sep 30–Oct 1, 2006
Bro. Len Naglieri, romans6@mac.com, USA. 1-603-598-1745

Psalm 119

"I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge
my heart"—verse 32.

The theme of this Psalm is the glory and beauty of the Word of God, and the divine blessedness and happiness God's Word brings to all those who love it. This Psalm contains 22 sections of 8 verses each. Each section is identified by one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and each of the 8 verses in each section begins (in the original) with the letter that is applied to that section. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet and 22 books in the Hebrew Scriptures.

We may at first wonder at the use of such an arrangement like this in the inspired Word of God. It may at first seem artificial and mechanical and out-of-place, and beneath the dignity of divine inspiration.

But as we think upon it, two related thoughts emerge. First, we are impressed with the fact that order and arrangement and pattern and harmony are characteristics of all God's works—from the microscopically small to the infinitely large. From the structure of the atom to the vast framework of the heavens, all is beauty and order.

Next, we are led to the thought that as this Psalm, extolling the Word of God, so obviously manifests pattern and arrangement, so we can expect to find—in greater and greater degree as we search—pattern and arrangement throughout the whole Bible. Type and antitype—parallels and contrasts—symbols and allegories—repeated themes in different forms—basic principles taught by a variety of lessons and examples—histories of men and histories of nations, precepts, parables, commands, entreaties, things very simple and things very complex—through all we see the pattern and purpose of infinite wisdom.

* * *

THERE ARE nine words used throughout this Psalm to describe the Word of God in its various aspects of guidance, instruction, enlightenment, admonition and comfort.

In the Common Version they are consistently translated by English words which quite well express the meaning of the original terms, and all translations are practically unanimous in rendering these words in the same way. This is a help in studying their various shades of meaning.

With one or two exceptions, every verse of this Psalm contains one of these nine words. They all occur within the first eleven verses, and throughout the Psalm they occur around 15 to 20 times each.

These nine words are: law, testimony, way, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgment, and two Hebrew words—dabar and imrah—both translated "word" in the Common Version.

The first is LAW—which occurs in the first verse. The Hebrew is torah, the term applied to the five books of Moses, though the meaning in this Psalm is not just the Law of Moses, but the Law of God generally as a body of instruction and regulation for the well-being of man.

The first verse sums up the whole Psalm—

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the LAW of the Lord."

The second, (verse 2), is TESTIMONY. It is from the root meaning "witness"—"repetition"—"going over." It is the word used in the phrase, "The Ark of Testimony." It carries the idea of the established sureness and faithfulness of God's Word, purpose and promises.

The third (verse 3) is WAY or WAYS, from the word meaning to "tread" or "walk." The thought is that God's Word defines a certain way or manner of life and conduct—a consistent pattern of goodness, an unswerving traveling in a certain direction.

The fourth (verse 4) is PRECEPTS, from a root meaning "to have charge or oversight." It emphasizes God's oversight and superintendence of His children—His watchful guidance concerning the details of their lives and conduct.

The fifth (verse 5) is STATUTES. The root means "to hew or engrave," hence "to decree or ordain." Here we are taught the firm inflexibility of His principles and requirements.

The sixth (verse 6) is COMMANDMENTS, emphasizing the authority and rulership of God as the Creator and Possessor of heaven and earth.

The seventh (verse 7) is JUDGMENTS, from shaphat—"to judge, to discern, to set right." Here is the thought of God's holy and impartial righteousness, as illustrated by Abraham's plea:

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The eighth occurs in (verse 9)—WORD. The original is dabar—"word, purpose, expressed will." It corresponds with logos in the Greek—

"In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

This presents the aspect of God's glorious, eternal purpose of self-manifestation in a perfected host, redeemed from among men by the precious blood of His only begotten Son, the Head of the Body.

The ninth and last, found in verse 11, is in our version also translated WORD, but the original is not the same as verse 9. The original here is imrah, from amor—"to say or speak," first occurring in Gen. 1:3—

"And God said, Let there be light."

The basic root actually means, "To bring forth to light—to inform." This word, therefore, speaks of the aspect of God's revelation to man, teaching and enlightening—causing to understand—dispelling darkness.

* * *

THUS WE are impressed with the rich and many-sided beauty of God's holy Word—its divinely ordained position as the source and center and foundation of life and light.

Throughout this Psalm are interwoven two major thoughts—on the one hand, the ecstasy of intense rejoicing in the contemplation of the infinite light and glory revealed in the Word, and on the other, intense desire and yearning and supplication for comfort and strength. The Psalm begins—

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

"Blessed"—This is the word with which Jesus began his marvelous discourse on the godly life—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit;"

"Blessed are the meek;"

"Blessed are the pure in heart."

The word for "Blessed" literally means "happy." But it means more than just happy—it means to be truly, fully, and soundly happy—happiness with a divine foundation—happiness in harmony with, and related to, eternity. Blessedness—divine happiness—is God's great gift to His children. If we are not happy we have not truly laid hold on God.

"Blessed are the undefiled"—this word means (and is translated) "whole, complete, perfect." It is the word used throughout the Law of Moses that is translated "without spot"—"without blemish," as applied to the sacrificial lambs. It is the word used in Psalm 19—

"God's way is perfect."

Blessed are the undefiled—there is no other blessedness than this—no other happiness than calm and peaceful acceptance and harmony with God.

The rest of the Psalm is a commentary and elaboration on this opening verse. The thought in the second verse is wholeness of heart.

In the third—doing no iniquity. These opening verses draw the broad picture and declare the basic principles. It must be all or nothing. If there is any

conscious and voluntary disobedience, or division of the heart, then the whole pattern is marred and useless.

Diligence is the thought of verse 4. Just doing is not sufficient—there must be a loving and painstaking earnestness to do the very BEST we can. The word here translated "diligently" is a word of extreme intensity—it is elsewhere translated "very, greatly, exceedingly, mightily, with all thy might."

Let us not look upon this demand for obedience "with all our might" as a hard command. Things are much easier and far less of a burden—much more enjoyable—if they are done heartily and with all one's might. It is the divided, slack and half-hearted service that is so hard and tiresome.

Verse 6—"Then shall I not be ashamed."

John speaks of being ashamed "before Christ at his coming." But to the mind enlightened in the Truth, there is a very real present aspect to this verse. There is shame in failure and weakness, and there is the blessedness of freedom from this shame whenever, and as long as, there is a true putting away of weakness, and walking in conscious harmony with God's will and holiness.

The thought in verse 7 is learning—

"I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart when I shall have learned Thy righteous judgments."

Bro. Roberts said—"The natural man is an ignoramus with us all . . . left to himself, he is a fool and a liar."

These are harsh words, but true. Holiness, and godliness, and spiritual-mindedness must be laboriously learned by persevering effort, and above all by a frank and searching recognition of the ugliness and hopelessness of our natural death-tending ignorance. Our life, if it is at last to lead to life, must be a constant learning and searching of the ways of God—and not then just a learning of facts and information, but a learning in the heart of the principles of wisdom and godliness.

Verse 8—"FORSAKE ME NOT."

* * *

SO, IN each verse, we find a special thought, which—all together—make up the pattern of a pure and Godly life.

In verse 9, the thought is cleansing.

In verse 10, the plea to be kept from wandering and straying.

In verse 11, the Word hidden in the heart—treasured and cherished and guarded.

In verse 12, "Teach me."

Verse 13—"I have openly declared."

In verse 14—"I have rejoiced." Rejoicing is an essential part of godliness. If rejoicing in all the eternal beauties and goodness of God is not the peaceful underlying current of our minds, then we are carnal, and walk as men. Any dissatisfaction or unhappiness is a reproach against God's goodness.

Verse 15—"I will meditate." We all do far too little meditating—the things

of the present press in so much upon us. It is meditation on the Word that develops spiritual depth and fullness. But it must be disciplined, effectual meditation upon what is revealed—not the self-pleasing speculation of the natural mind—upon what is not revealed. The one is hard, and rare, and useful—the other is easy, and common, and much worse than useless.

Verse 16—"I will not forget." Forgetting is perhaps the one greatest single enemy of godliness. How often do we start out determined to remember, to carefully keep in mind—and then, hours later, suddenly realize that we have forgotten—that the pressure of the present has obliterated everything but itself.

Peter spoke of faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love—of the need for constantly abounding in these things—constantly living in this spiritual atmosphere of holiness, and he says—

"Though ye know these things, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

In our weakness, we need constant "stirring up" and "putting in remembrance." It was these things that made Paul exclaim—

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death!"
"I will not forget"

* * *

Verse 17—"Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live, and keep Thy Word."

Here the Psalmist seeks the graciously-promised blessing and strengthening power of God that he may live unto God and hold fast to His Word.

Verse 18—"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law."

We think of the fleshly veil that obscured Israel's spiritual vision all during their national history, and of Jesus' words to his few humble disciples—

"Unto you it is given to understand, but unto them it is not given."

Is it fair that it should be withheld from some, and revealed to others? It would not be fair any other way. If spiritual understanding were like any other learning—governed by mental capacity and education, in which all vary through no fault of their own, where would be fairness?

But the way to spiritual understanding is through lowness, and meekness, and humbleness, to which all can bring themselves down if they choose.

"The meek will He teach His way . . . To the humble and trembling will I look, saith the Lord."

How fitting and how beautiful are the ways of divine wisdom! The blessings of spiritual understanding are reserved for those few among men who bring themselves down—empty themselves of all desire and truly and consistently seek communion with God with all their hearts, putting aside all earthly things as useless impediments in the way.

"I am a stranger in the earth"—verse 19.

Here the Psalm touches another major aspect of the Way of Truth. "I am a stranger in the earth." Are we always conscious of the SEPARATENESS of our holy calling in Christ Jesus? Is it apparent in the common, day-to-day pattern of our lives? Wherein does the distinction lie?

Are we kinder, more patient, more calm? Are we distinguished among men for quiet, cheerful, sobriety and godly dignity? Is our speech always seasoned with godly grace?

Consider how some men, in natural things—through constant perseverance and application—excel in some particular activity. Consider the heights of dexterity and accomplishment to which the human mind and body by patient practice can be developed and trained.

It is in this way that the children of God are to approach the development of spiritual-mindedness and godliness—constant effort and practice. The outstanding pianist practices and studies many hours a day. So does the athlete, and all who desire to excel in anything. They do it for a corruptible crown. Why is it that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than those who consider themselves the children of light—as Jesus so sadly observed?

* * *

EVERY VERSE has its own particular thought and lesson but there are some verses that seem to stand out as especially bright beacons along the path—

Verse 32—"I will RUN the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."

Largeness of heart is a blessing greatly to be desired and sought after. We understand better what largeness of heart signifies when we contrast it with smallness and pettiness of heart. Largeness of heart does not here particularly mean generosity, although that, of course, is necessarily included. It means a broad, spiritually-balanced and mature attitude and outlook. Paul said to the Corinthians—

"O Corinthians, I have enlarged my heart unto you . . . It is not I that am cramping you . . . you are cramped in your own affections . . . My children, you must enlarge your hearts too!"

And he describes largeness of heart in his previous epistle to the same ecclesia—

"Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

There is nothing small and petty about the true children of God. They think and act in harmony with their relationship to infinity and eternity. This quality of breadth and nobility is the gracious gift of God to those who seek Him—

"I will run in the way of Thy Commandments when Thou —(it is all of God)—when THOU shalt enlarge my heart."

* * *

Verse 57—"Thou art my portion, O Lord." The thought is that expressed by Joshua—

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

And not just serve Him, but HAVE Him—POSSESS Him as their portion—the treasure that they choose to own in preference to all other treasures.

* * *

Verse 62—"At midnight I will rise to give Thee thanks!" What a vivid picture this presents of overwhelming affection and desire!

The godly man awakes at midnight, and with his first waking moment God is in the forefront of his thoughts. And so great is his love and gratitude that he must arise to offer thanksgiving and praise. It is not sufficient that he lie there in loving meditation—he must arise and perform some act of worship to give vent to his over-flowing heart.

Do we realize the true, overwhelming power of divine joy? Do we enjoy this intense thrill of divine affection, or are we living in the shadows and missing the best of life? These are the joys that divinely bestowed largeness of heart brings.

* * *

Verse 71—"It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn Thy statutes."

There are many keen joys that are discovered in the midst of affliction that are never dreamed of in the stupefying atmosphere of prosperity and ease. This is of God, Who hath given even to affliction its compensating sweetness. In affliction the shell of thoughtless shallowness is broken through and heart speaks to heart in intimate and comforting communion. All the little meaningless things fade into their true insignificance, and the real and true things stand out in large, clear perspective.

* * *

Verse 74—"They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me."

What companionship is there like the rich and deep companionship of the Truth? This Psalm seems to review every aspect of spiritual experience.

* * *

THE GROUP of verses beginning with verse 97 sum up the whole spirit and meaning and purpose of the Psalm—

"O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day!"

Let us think upon this—"my meditation ALL the day." The law of the Lord was, to the Psalmist, an object of continuous and absorbing marvel. It was the center of his affection and interest. His mind constantly gravitated to it, as the focus of all his desire and affection. It was his greatest source of pleasure and satisfaction.

Is it ours? And if it is not, why is it not? Are we at least approaching closer to that condition? Can we enter more fully, and understandingly into the Psalmist's feelings than, say, a year ago?

These questions demand a positive answer. These are the questions that will lead us to life, IF we will seek their solution. And if we seek in the appointed and acceptable way, it is promised that we SHALL find.

We are not to be cast down if we do not immediately find ourselves sharing the full intensity of the devotion here expressed. That will come of itself in time, if we, on our part faithfully follow the steps that lead to it.

* * *

Verse 98—"Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they (that is, the commandments) are ever with me."

It is the wisdom—the knowledge—that develops the full intensity of the love. The more we know of God, the closer we feel to Him, the more real and present He seems.

His Word is His great revelation of Himself, that we may know Him. We are closest to Him when our minds are drawing inspiration and comfort from that Word. The Word is the mercy-seat or place of meeting.

* * *

Verse 99—"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation."

He clearly does not refer to teachers of righteousness, for his comparison then would not be fitting or brotherly. As this Psalm portrays the godly mind in general, the "teachers" who have been excelled in knowledge must refer to natural education and instruction. The godly mind, as it develops, increasingly perceives the errors and blindness of the natural mind in regard to the only real and lasting things in life, however superficially clever and well-instructed the natural mind may be in purely natural things.

Even in childhood, the world in its instruction seeks to indoctrinate the mind with false theories of existence and false principles of conduct, but this is much more subtle and intensified in the so-called "higher" levels of education.

The man who prides himself that he can safely expose himself to them is just foolishly priding himself that he can safely swim in polluted water.

* * *

Verse 100—"I understand more than the ancients, BECAUSE I keep Thy precepts."

There is another basic foundation truth revealed here. Obedience is the only path to growth in spiritual understanding. Obedience is the only way out of doubt, and darkness, and confusion. There is much that we do not know—but there is plenty, very close to us, that we DO. There are plenty of close, personal commands that we understand, or can easily understand, very well—commands to do with speech, conduct, character, and how to use our

time, and possessions, what kind of thoughts to fill our minds with, how to act in godly gentleness in daily contact with others.

Obedience to these is the ONLY way to a fuller and more comforting knowledge of God.

"If any man will DO HIS WILL, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17).

"The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way."

The meek are those who see the ugliness and foolishness of all the pride and assertion and roughness and unpleasantness of the flesh, and endeavor to overcome it and put it all away. Such alone are the sons of God.

* * *

THERE ARE two more verses we would like to consider—

Verse 103—"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

How many experience the intense pleasure and enjoyment so beautifully described here?—an enjoyment not fleeting and deceptive like the pleasures of the flesh, but full and deep and ever-increasing.

In what a pitiful deluded state are those that look upon the Law of God as burdensome and oppressive and restrictive of pleasure, when actually it opens the ways to the most intense and lasting of pleasures, both now and in the future:

"In Thy presence is FULLNESS OF JOY; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

There is no use seeking happiness anywhere else, and the sooner we learn that lesson the happier we are. This leads us to the thought of verse 165—

"Great peace have they which love Thy Law, and nothing shall offend them."

If we do not have great peace, and if anything or anyone offends us, then according to this verse we do not sufficiently love God's Law, we are small and cramped in our affections, we have not found the divine blessing of largeness of heart.

If we are offended, the fault is with ourselves. No one has any RIGHT to be offended. It is just a childish catering to pride and vanity, which love of God's Law will teach us to grow up and put away.

Speaking of divine, spiritual love, Paul says—

"When I was a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things."

The fleshly habit of pouting and being offended was among these childish things, for he further says—

"Love suffereth long, and is kind: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things—Love NEVER faileth."

There is its beauty and power. "Love never faileth."—"Nothing shall offend them."

This is the goal to which we and the Psalmist struggle. He concludes with words of fervent petition and desire, seeing as afar off the perfect and eternal beauty of holiness—

"Let Thine hand help me; for I have chosen Thy precepts."

"I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord; and Thy law is my delight."

"Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee; and let Thy judgments help me."

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments."
Bro.
G.V.Growcott

400 Silent years - The Macabees

We left off with the introduction of Antiochus Epiphanes. He was the powerful King of the North from BC 175 to 163 whose history had been pre-written in Gabriel's message to Daniel in Chapter 11 beginning at verse 21. Although he had a strong army he depended on art rather than arms for his victory. He endeared himself to the people and other nations with his generosity, practical jokes, and flatteries. None suspected his takeover of Syria.(verse21)"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

Meanwhile, we have the corrupt High Priest in Jerusalem whose family is working with him as Publicans for the King of the South. Joshua, a member of this family goes to Antiochus and offers him a large sum of money if he could be the High Priest in Jerusalem. He promised to do all in his power toward Grecianizing the Jews, even to the changing of their name from being Jews to "Antiochians." This offer delighted the ruler, and Joshua, changed his name from Joshua "YA saves" to Jason, a Greek hero. He constructed a gymnasium, and furthered in every way the adoption of Greek learning, fashions and games. Four years later Jason, this pseudo-priest, sent a younger brother, bearing the tribute-money to Antiochus. Jason reaped the same deceit and treachery he had sown. The younger brother decided he wanted the lucrative and honorable position of high priest for himself. He offered a higher price to Antiochus and obtained the position. He returned to Jerusalem with enough support to leave no doubt who was in control. He proceeded to rob the temple of its golden vessels to pay the tribute-money, kill any in the priesthood who opposed his actions and abandoned himself to gross wickedness, all the while wearing the sacred miter inscribed with, "Holiness unto the Lord." A priesthood that had begun so well under the leadership of Ezra, now an anything goes rationalistic, pre-Sadducean political party.

Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Egypt in 171 BC and soon a rumor reached Jerusalem that he was dead. Jason decides to attempt a comeback for the high priest position. He gathers thousands of Jews and soon Jerusalem has civil

war fighting for control of this priestly position. Although warring internally, they were all celebrating and rejoicing over the death of Antiochus. When Antiochus learns of this he sees it as an uprising and revolt against him and his authority. He becomes enraged and led his armies like an overwhelming flood through the land, assaulting Jerusalem with wrathful energy. In three days Jerusalem was sacked, over 40,000 Jews slain and an even greater number torn from their homes and led away as captives. He forced his way into the temple, carried off the golden candlestick, the table, the incense altar, and erected an idol-altar on the altar of burnt-offerings, upon which he sacrificed a great sow, and with a broth made of it sprinkled and defiled the entire temple.

Gabriel tells Daniel of this drive into Egypt and the attack against the Promised Land. (verse25) "And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him." The king of Egypt although having a great and mighty army, was driven out of the kingdom by his own men. (verse26) "Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed."

The Elohim interrupted the manipulations of these kings to reinforce the fact that we spoke of in our last talk. God has a set plan; the deceitful works of these kings would not prosper. God is in control of the affairs of the nations. He had appointed that the power of Rome, that forth and dreadful beast must stand up on the seen first. Indeed the King of the North will come down and the King of the South will have his great army defeated; but this was only a fore shadowing of future events. The end when the King of the North comes into the land and defeats the king of the South will be a future date, not related to the decrees of these two kings.

Gabriel continues to reveal that Antiochus would return from Egypt and invade the land of Israel as we have just reviewed. (verse 28) "Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land."

He returned to his own land with over 80,000 prisoners and slaves. But he then returns to Egypt. (verse 29) "At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter." This excursion would not be as victorious as the former. Upon reaching Egypt Antiochus meets an old friend from Rome. Instead of accepting the friendly right hand which Antiochus held out to greet him, his old friend placed into his hand a copy of the decree of the Roman Senate bidding Antiochus to leave Egypt at once. Antiochus said he must have time to consult with his advisors and asked for time to consider it. Popilius took his rod and drew a circle on the ground around Antiochus, telling him he could

have as much time as he desired; but he needed a yes or no answer before he stepped outside of the circle.

Antiochus, alarmed, submitted and left Egypt, determined to vent his rage against the Jews again. He fell upon the defenseless people as a mad man in rage. Pretending peace, he entered unopposed, and on the Sabbath day fell upon the wretched inhabitants, slaying thousands and carrying many away captive. The walls of city and homes within were demolished and the city set on fire. (verse30) "For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: (IE Europe headed by Rome) therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." So Hellenized were the High Priest and his followers that they actually assisted Antiochus, knowing it would be in their best interest to cooperate rather than oppose.

(Verse 31) "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, (June BC 167 the Mosaic sacrifices were forbidden) and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." Christ used this history, which occurred approximately 200 years before his day, as a warning to his disciples and to us. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)" Matt. 24:15 We must be aware of what is happening in the world around us and relate that to what God has warned us would happen. There is a plan, a set time, a time table that is right on course whether we understand it or not!

Antiochus compelled all people to worship his gods and no others. In Jerusalem, the temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympus, in whose honor sacrifices were instituted, and the miserable Jews that remained among the ruins were forced to take part in the horrid seices, and to eat the unclean sacrifices offered to those idols. Defilement could not go any further, Israel had been made to know the full the tender mercies of the heathen, whose culture and brilliancy they had been so attracted to. This outward contamination was but the manifestation of what God's holy eye had seen long before in his people. He gave them over to what was in their hearts, and brothers and sisters He has promised to do the same for us, if our hearts are as theirs were. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"

Antiochus and his minions knew no mercy. They spared neither age, sex, nor condition. Young and old, men and women, priest and people, rich and poor, suffered alike in those fearful days of vengeance. Women who attempted to keep the law and circumcise their sons, were led publicly through the city with their babies at their breasts and flung bodily from the city walls, thus literally being broken to pieces. Any who were discovered observing the Sabbath day were apprehended and burnt alive. Judaism and the worship of God was absolutely forbidden in Israel.

I will relate one incident as an example of many. One woman and her seven sons were apprehended together and dragged before the infamous king,

who commanded them to cast off their faith and to become worshipers of his gods. As they boldly refused, the first son was seized in the presence of his mother and six brethren, his tongue torn out, and other body parts cut off and tossed into the fire. He was then slowly roasted alive over the fire in front of them. Again the alternative was presented to worship and live, or be faithful to Yahweh and die. Unyielding, the second son was taken and flayed alive before the eyes of the rest. And so the horrid trial went on till only one son was left, the youngest. The king personally pleaded with him to renounce his faith and bow to the gods, promising riches, ease and honor for himself and his mother. Fearing he might weaken, the devoted woman pleaded with him to accept death and fear not the tormentors, so she may see him again with his brethren.

He defied the king, rebuked him for his wickedness; which so enraged the monarch that he treated him worse than all the rest. The writer to the Hebrews uses these people as examples of faith. He says, "others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Would you die for Christ? This sounds like a hypothetical question and seem very foreign to those of us in the west who presume upon the freedom of religion we have grown up with. However, throughout history there have been times, as we are looking at now, and even today in the Middle East, where it becomes a very real question. Would you die for Christ? It is an interesting question, and one which most of us will never know the final answer to as God's grace and mercy, we will never be put into that position. So let's ask a more realistic question. Instead of asking, would you die for Christ? I will ask you, will you live for Christ? It is really a silly question to ask ourselves if we will die for Christ if, in fact, we are not already living for him. If we put trivial things like our creature comforts, pursuit of wealth, leisure and pride above Christ now, it is highly unlikely we would put our very being on the line in the future. If we can't sacrifice our life now, what makes us think we will do it if called upon to do so in the future? Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me".

Back to the Elohim Gabriel's history written before hand (verse 32) "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." There were those who apostatized, and who were willing to follow the foreign religion.

They forsook the old ways in favor of the new, to enable them to become accepted as "citizens of Antioch" with all the associated privileges; "but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."

Among this latter class was an old priest living in a town about 15 miles outside of Jerusalem. Antiochus sent ambassadors through Palestine demanding that the priest or ruler of each town offer a sacrifice to Zeus on behalf of the town. This old faithful priest, Mattathias of the house of Asmonaeon (Hasmon) was called upon to set the example for his people by coming forward to offer the pagan sacrifice. Mattathias came forward and refused. He declared without reservation, that neither he nor his sons would hearken to the king's words. Knowing it would mean the death of the old respected priest; a townsman came forward and offered the sacrifice on behalf of Mattathias and the town. The enraged priest approached the altar and killed both the apostate Jew and the ambassador of Antiochus. Thus a second Phinehas arose in Israel. The die was cast, the king was openly defied, the aged Mattathias with the help of his five sons destroyed the altar and fled into the mountains, crying, "Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me," This part of Jewish history reads like the time of David. Jews from all over came to Mattathias into the mountains, all the devoted, the old, the discontented, those in debt, and distresses, rallied to the standard of Mattathias until he has a good band of fighting men.

They were at a distinct military disadvantage compared to Antiochus' forces. They were out numbered, out equipped, out trained, but their biggest disadvantage was as devoted Jews they would not fight on the Sabbath day.

Antiochus' forces marched against them one Sabbath, surrounded them and murdered many of them, for they would not defend themselves. After this Mattathias established the principle that fighting in self defense was permissible on the Sabbath day. Although Mattathias may not have been wrong in his understanding, we find the Jews using this principle going forward, that the law had to be interpreted in a practical way. As history progresses we find the Jews expanding this principle to interpreting the law in a self serving way. What is in my best interest? Then it must mean this or that. Do not we learn from history? Should we not question ourselves? Even if what we are doing is not wrong, are we establishing a precedence? Will others fall because of us? Paul says, "All things are lawful to me but not all things are expedient."

Soon after the beginning of the revolt, Mattathias died, but Hasmonaeon rule continued in Israel for the next 100 years until Rome installed Herod over the area. Mattathias had urged his followers to choose his 3rd son as their military leader; and not to turn aside from the service he had committed to them, till the land and the temple were cleansed of the pollutions of the heathen. This 3rd son, Judas, was a brilliant military leader. He was nicknamed "the hammer" or "the hammer of God." Judas the hammer; or Judas the Maccabee. The choice was a good one; the Maccabees, as his followers become known as, were able to annihilate Antiochus's armies.

They were gorilla warriors, making surprise attacks in the middle of the night, spreading terror and confusion, here and there, unexpectedly in the enemy's encampments. Antiochus underestimated the zeal and determination of these gorilla warriors. They were willing to die for their faith, but they were no longer going to die passively. (verse 34) "Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help:" Judas Maccabee with 3,000 decimated an army of 47,000. Another and greater army, haughty and defiant, was sent to annihilate the Jewish company. Judas, strong in faith but leading a small company, fasted all day. His men were weak and discouraged as they saw their mighty forces approaching. "How, shall we be able, being so few, to fight against so great a multitude and so strong?" they asked. Like a second Asa, Judas replied; "With the God of heaven it is all one to deliver with a great multitude, of a small company." His faith was not disappointed. The Jews threw themselves, in apparent recklessness of faith, upon their disdainful enemies and scattered them like chaff before the wind and completely defeated them. Proving the words of Moses that if they were faithful that, "One should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."

News of these events threw Antiochus into a fury; he raged like a mad man as he heard stories of success after success of Judah and his bands. He assembled a great army led by the king in person, that would once and for all utterly annihilate the detested Jews and any vestige left of that nation that had dared to defy so mighty a king. The King of the North divided their hosts into three companies and prepared to attack. Judas and his men, with less than 1/10 the men and without the Calvary and armaments, spend the day in prayer and fasting clothed in sackcloth. As they waited and watched, faithful sentries noted every move of the over-confident Syrians. Before daylight, scouts came to Judas to tell him that the main division of the enemy was already on the move, hoping to surprise the sleeping Jews. The little army of Israel was roused at once. When the host arrived at the Jewish camp, they found it deserted, for Judas and his men were already marching down upon another division of the Syrians by a different road. Suddenly the cry of Judas, "Fear ye not!" rang out on the still air, and a loud blast of trumpets sounded the assault. Like men who knew neither fear nor danger, the Jews flung themselves upon the great army before them, and in a few moments the enemy was scattered in all directions. The first host, ignorant of what was going on and returning at this time, and supposing that the Jews had fled their camp and were being chased by the Syrians, marched his men directly into the midst of the host only to find the camp in disarray, the tents burning, and Judas and his men bearing down on them. The great King of the North was disgracefully defeated.

Judas and his men entered the temple, and removed all the statutes of Jupiter grinding them to powder. They cleansed the temple of all signs of paganism and re-dedicated it to Yahweh. This is the dedication spoken of in John 10:22 "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter." The dedication is remembered even today in the observance of

Hanukkah. It is said that when Judas entered the temple the oil supply had been desecrated and only a small vial remained, but that this lasted the full 8 days of re-dedication the temple. Hanukkah extends for 8 days. One candle is lit on the first day, two on the second etc. symbolizing that the light of faith is certain to grow, even if only a small remnant of the faithful remain. The Jews see the lighted Menorah as a symbol of God's words to Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord of host".

Back to Daniel 11 in verse 34: "Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries." Many joined Judas because of his success, attempting to keep one foot in each camp. Verse.35 "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed"

Judas would meet temporary defeats in order to test the sincerity of the others. After taking Jerusalem, Antiochus sent reinforcements and defeated the Maccabees, who were placed under siege in Jerusalem. However, Antiochus had troubles at home, more pressing than the Jewish insurrection so offered conditions of peace. The Maccabees would go unpunished, the Jews could continue to practice their religion and be given limited self rule. A council of Maccabean army officers, scribes and elders of the Jews accepted the compromise against Judas advice. Judas and a few of his loyal followers left the city, but their fears proved correct. Hellenized Jews with Antiochus' support began executing the loyal followers, and once again, the people turned to Judas for help. With an ill-equipped army of 800 he marched against superior forces and lost badly. Judas was killed and others were severely tried. Verse.35 "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed." This was not the set time to favor Zion, the great King of the North will be defeated by Israel but at the time appointed which is yet future.

The death of Judas and others would severely try the faithful. Had God withdrawn His protection and help? Should they continue the struggle? Could they continue the struggle? Why did this happen? "To try them and to purge and to make them white." To try to smelt as with metals. This is the method by which the value and durability of metal is achieved. Brothers and sisters, this has been the experience of the ecclesia in every age. Chastisement will, and must come for each of us. Never let the distressing circumstances of life destroy the glory of our high calling. Never get discouraged, always keep the big picture in sight.

After Judas' death Jonathan his brother led the Maccabean revolt. Although he was ill equipped for war, he was victorious in the field of diplomacy. The successors of Antiochus Epiphanies faced more important problems than the Jews. Jonathan was able to establish himself as governor of Judah and as high Priest. His brother Simon became governor of the coast of

Philistine. The Hasmonean period or Maccabean period extended over 100 years. Israel was able to enjoy self-rule once again, and greatly expanded their territory. However, once again, we see a time of prosperity resulting in disaster for the Truth. At the end of this period we have the “fullness of time” finally arrived. Conditions so bad, that God could stand them no longer. A godless nation; and yet a very religious nation. A state of affairs that we can all relate to as we see Christianity today, self confident in themselves as righteous and posed to oppose Christ just as the Jews did 2,000 years ago. To quote Christ once again, “let him that readeth understand.”

Bro. Jim Sommerville

Bible Readings Notes - March

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your head; for your redemption draweth nigh”.—(Luke 21:28)

In his memorable address to the elders of Ephesus, the apostle Paul declared, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” There are comparatively few, even among earnest Christians, who make a comprehensive study of the whole Scriptures. It is usual to confine one's readings to “favorite” portions, notably the Psalms, the gospel records, or the epistles, and to pass over the seemingly less interesting parts, as, for instance, the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and the Kings. Such a course must inevitably leave the reader deficient in the knowledge of “the whole counsel of God.” A careful, daily reading of the inspired Word with the aid of “the Bible Companion” will remove any danger in this direction and will prove both profitable and attractive. According to this plan, every part of the Scriptures receives equal attention. The appointed readings for March are the books of Leviticus, Numbers 1 to 14, Psalms 105 to 150, Proverbs 1 to 10, 1 Corinthians 14 to 16, 2 Corinthians, and the Gospel record by Luke.

LEVITICUS

This book, written by Moses, is so named because it relates principally to the Levites and their service. Notice the frequent repetition of the phrase, “And the Lord spake.” Israel were commanded to carry out with meticulous care the divine directions upon all matters connected with their worship. Paul gives the reason in writing to the Hebrews (chap. 10:1), where he describes the law as “a shadow of good things to come.” Its types pointed forward to Christ, and throw a strong light upon his sacrificial work. Chapters 1 to 7 contain the laws relating to sacrifice, the underlying principle of which was that of atonement. “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. 9:22.) Some sacrifices were obligatory, and others were voluntary. Among the former were “sin” and “trespass” offerings, and among the latter were burnt, “meat,” and “peace” offerings. Chapter 1 deals with burnt offerings. They were acts of worship, expressing the offerer's recognition of man's sinfulness, God's supremacy, and the necessity for a sin-covering before acceptable worship could be offered. Chapter 2 describes the meat (food) offerings. They were acts of love, in the

spirit of the proverb, “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.” (Prov. 3:9) Even these offerings had to be made according to specific commandments, thus showing that acceptable service must conform to divine requirements. Their antitype is seen in Paul's words, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.” (Rom. 12:1) Chapter 3 concerns the peace offerings, which were acts of contrition, indicating a consciousness of man's estrangement from his Maker, and a sense of gratitude for the way of reconciliation. Chapter 4 deals with sin-offerings, which were acts of propitiation for sins of ignorance, whilst the trespass offerings (chap. 5) related to willful sins. In their general significance, all these sacrifices pointed forward to Jesus as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) The unblemished nature of the sacrifice typified the Savior's perfect character. Chapter 8 describes the consecration of Aaron and his sons. Notice how the blood of the sacrifice was necessary to sanctify both the priests and the altar. In the antitype, Jesus stood in need of the same purification, which was effected in the shedding of his own blood. The incident of Nadab and Abihu (chapter 10) illustrates that acceptable worship can be offered only in the way of God's appointment. It cuts at the root of the popular belief that man may worship in his own way. The laws relating to clean and unclean beasts (chapter 11) contain many instructive types. Clean beasts were those that “parted the hoof and chewed the cud.” They stand for the refined among men who ruminate upon God's Word, and are surefooted in His way. Animals which fulfilled only one condition were classified as unclean. They represent those that are “hearers only, and not doers.” The characteristics of clean beasts are typical of the virtues of righteous men and women, such as the innocence and docility of the lamb, or the patience and untiring service of the ox. Conversely, the unclean beasts possess unpleasant characteristics, such as the greed and grossness of the swine, or the rapacity of the birds of prey. The laws governing leprosy (chapter 13) should be read with the thought in mind that the disease represented sinful human nature, which can be cleansed only by following divine directions. The plague in the head was incurable (verse 44), and the same is true in the antitype. There is no hope for the man whose mind is controlled only by human propensities and desires. Chapter 26 should be carefully read as an undeniable proof of the inspiration of Moses. Its references to the scattering of the people (verse 33), and to the desolation of the land (verse 34) have been so minutely fulfilled in history that the authority of Moses as an inspired servant of God is fully established. For a comprehensive treatise on the enactments and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy, the reader is strongly advised to read “The Law of Moses” by Robert Roberts.

NUMBERS 1-14

The book takes its name from the numberings of the people recorded in chapters 1-4, and in chapter 26. It covers the period in Israelitish history from the time of the departure from Sinai to the arrival at the borders of the

promised land. Notice the growth of the people in the 225 years from the going down of Jacob into Egypt (Exodus 1:5), to the deliverance of Israel there from. The number had increased from 70 to 603,550 fighting men besides Levites, women and children (Num. 1:46). Chapter 6 contains the laws concerning Nazariteship. A Nazarite was one separated, having voluntarily dedicated himself by a vow to the service of God. He was not to drink wine, nor shave his head, nor come in contact with death during the days of his separation. These prohibitions indicated a life of self-denial, holiness, and sanctification. Under the law of Christ the same principles are operative. The divine appeal is "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." (2 Cor. 6:17) "Be ye holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16) In chapter 12 is the record of the sedition of Miriam and Aaron. They challenged the divine authority vested in Moses, and swift retribution followed. The incident should be read as illustrative of the high place which Moses held in the estimation of the Almighty, and of the heinousness of the sin of questioning his authority. Comparatively few are mindful of this lesson in these days when the writings of Moses are derided and unread. Chapter 13 records the visit of the twelve spies to the Land of Promise. Ten brought back an evil report, in declaring that though the land "flowed with milk and honey," yet the inhabitants were too strong to be dislodged. The people believed them, and rejected the counsel of Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies, who declared, "The Lord is with us: fear them not." (chap. 14:9) God threatened to destroy the murmurers, but hearkened to the pleadings of Moses for their forgiveness. The rebellious generation were condemned to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, and only those under 20 years of age, except Joshua and Caleb, were ultimately permitted to cross the border into Canaan. Paul comments upon the incident in Hebrews 3, where he speaks of Israel's "evil heart of unbelief," and warns against falling into the same error in "departing from the living God." Two other points are worthy of especial notice in Numbers 14. One is the principle of "a day for a year" (verse 34) which is the basis of the prophetic times of the scriptures. The other is the declaration of God's great purpose (verse 21); "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." These words will be fulfilled when the earth becomes the everlasting abode, of the redeemed.

PSALMS 105 to 150

These Psalms contain a recital of God's great works in delivering Israel from Egypt and planting them in the Promised Land. They show the privileges and responsibilities which rested upon the Chosen People, and explain the severity of the punishment which overtook them because of their unfaithfulness. Psalm 110 contains a striking picture of the future mission of Christ as conquering king of the world. Psalm 119 magnifies throughout the Word of God (See exhortation this month). It is divided into 22 sections of 8 verses each. Each section is headed by one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the verses of each section commence with the letter at the head. The Psalm shows that the Word of God is more necessary to the godly man than

daily food, and exhorts the servants of God to make it their daily guide. Psalms 120-134 are called "Songs of degrees," or literally, "Songs of Going Up." They were so called because they were regarded as pilgrim songs sung by the people as they went up to Jerusalem. Psalm 139 demonstrates the fact that the Spirit of God is His power by which He is omnipresent and omniscient. Psalm 149 describes the power which will be wielded by the saints of God when they rule over the nations, and execute the judgments written. The Psalms conclude with the all-embracing appeal, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

PROVERBS 1-10

The book of Proverbs contains inspired counsel whereby the godly man may wisely regulate his life. Its sayings should be studied as aids to the attaining of a future life rather than as applicable merely to this temporal life. The keynote of the book is contained in chap. 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Chapters 1-9 set out the relative results of rejecting or accepting Wisdom's call. Notice the rewards which wisdom can bestow. "Length of days," "riches and honour," "she is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her" "The wise shall inherit glory" In view of these rewards, Solomon declares, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding". (chap. 4:7) Chapter 8 demonstrates that true wisdom comes only from God. It speaks of its nature, power, and eternity, and declares, "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (verse 35). Chapter 10 commences the section of the book wherein is set out in trite form a series of contrasts concerning virtues and vices. They should be read as exhortations and warnings in the effort to attain salvation. Notice the insistence in this chapter upon sound, truthful, sober, and edifying speech. "The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life". (verse 11) "The lips of the righteous feed many". (verse 21). See also verses 13, 19, 31, 32.

1 CORINTHIANS 14-16 thru 2 CORINTHIANS

Chapter 15 contains a comprehensive exposition of the doctrine of immortality to be bestowed conditionally by Christ at His coming. It teaches man's mortality (verses 22 and 53), the necessity for resurrection of the body (verses 20 and 44), the reception of eternal life by a change of nature (verse 54), and the ultimate abolition of death from the earth (verse 26). It is a chapter to which earnest seekers after truth should give the closest study. The same theme is expounded in the second epistle to the Corinthians. The apostle speaks of "our mortal flesh" (chap. 4:11). He points to the day when mortality will be swallowed up of life (chap. 5:4). He refers to the judgment seat to be set up at the return of Christ (chap. 5:10), and of the hope of salvation obtainable only through Christ (chap. 5:19). These apostolic allusions are diametrically opposed to the popular doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and universal salvation.

LUKE 1-23

Chapter 1 records the birth and boyhood of Jesus. Notice the relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (verse 35). The Father is the "Highest," the Holy Spirit is His power, and Jesus is the Son of God by begetting. The trinitarian doctrine is entirely at variance with these sublime facts. Notice the mission of Christ declared to Mary in verse 32. He was destined to reign on David's throne for ever. This kingdom was the theme of his preaching (chap. 4:43; 8:1; 9:1; 13:29). A place of honor therein was promised to his disciples (12:32; 22:29). This kingdom will be established at the second coming of Christ (chap. 21:27), and all true followers of Christ are exhorted to be daily watchful for this great event (verse 36).

The Roadmap For Peace

A question was asked: "Under the terms of the road map, half of Jerusalem would be given to the Palestinians, and as such does Zechariah's prophecy relate to the fact that the one half which will be taken captive will be occupied by the Jews whilst the other half wouldn't be taken because it would be occupied by the Palestinians?"

The terms of this 'road map' are the wisdom of the flesh. This is not much upon which to build the basis of our faith. There have been several 'road maps' produced from the same source in the past. Hamas has usually destroyed them and now with the Hamas in the Palestine ruling position there is not much hope of progress.

The road map of Scripture illustrates that the same source which produced man's map, will fall victim to the advancing armies of the North, and fall back into Moab, Ammon and Edom, to their confusion. While we look to world events as harbingers of the coming of our Master, it is important for us to look to the Word of God for illustrations of the mind of the Deity. What is the context of the particular prophecy? What are the other prophecies in association with the particular prophecy?

Zechariah mentions certain events in connection with this prophecy. The one point, 'one half which will be taken captive' has been singled out. There are others in the same connection – "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished...and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city". Zech. 14:2

Looking at this prophecy as a whole, it is identified with the final coming down of the Northern Host, Russia and all her associates. Further Zechariah speaks of the physical events to happen in Palestine at the same time, to such an extent that the people flee from what was happening.

There may be an interim division of Jerusalem by the 'road map,' but from past declarations by Jews and Palestinians in claiming their rights in that city, this will not last long, and soon dissolve in conflict. Hamas and other countries adjacent will not countenance this very long.

That city is claimed not only by Jews and Arabs, but also by Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, and Russians. Each have staked

claims in their edifices therein. And in what possible way could that city be divided between two nations who are constantly at each other's throats? The Temple Mount abuts the Jews Wailing Wall. Ariel Sharon showed his disdain for the temple site by walking through the holy precincts of that area, to the abhorrence of the Moslems in the city. It is God's holy mount, and He will not sanction any such being divided by man.

Zechariah was speaking of Jerusalem with the people of God in mind, not with others who may be interlopers on that scene. Read the history of the Arab opposition to any Jewish settlement in Palestine, from before the Balfour Declaration, back as far 1918, the end of the first world war.

Zechariah's (the Spirit's) remarks have to do with the ascending of the King of the North as shown in Ezekiel 38, Joel 3, and Zech. 14. The division of the city is effected by that force, in the disposing of the Jews at that time in Jerusalem. The expression 'half of the city going into captivity,' is the work of Russia et al. But they leave 'a residue,' still of the Jews.

Who are the people who have conversation in the following manner?

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah". Psalm 24:7

"And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends". Zech. 13:6

The half of the city that goes into captivity are probably Jews who have no desire to see Christ. They are disposed of amongst the nations of the world, but if amenable to the will of Christ will be saved out of them, like the 10 tribes under the care of Elijah. Those that are left are shown in other words of Zechariah, in this fashion, "as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn". Zech. 12:10

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the

house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.” Zech. 12:9-14

“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends”. Zech. 13:6

These are the ones who are looking for their Messiah, but not in this form. These ask the question "Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah”. Psalm 24:10

There won't be any city divided between Jews and Palestinians then. Hamas will all have fled before the oncoming torrent. The Jews will comprise the 'residue.' These will be the ones who first accept Christ as their true Messiah, and humble themselves and form the little kingdom of Judah under Christ and the Saints.

But hear the words of the Spirit in this regard. --

"Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land". Ezekiel 38:9-12

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south..” Zech. 14:1-7

Bro. Thomas, in Eureka 5, (logos) page 274

"In conclusion of this exposition of the Sixth Vial, it may be remarked, that the crowning events of the series are the capture of the Holy City; the establishment therein of the Little Horn of the Goat, who thus 'stands up against the Prince of princes' Dan. 8:25; 11:45, as the representative of Nebuchadnezzar's Imperial

Image--Dan. 2:31-35; and its being broken by the Stone not in hands; and no help for him--Dan. 2:45; 11:45. Of the capture of the city there is no doubt. 'The city shall be taken,' saith Zechariah, 'and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city'. Such is the situation; the City of the Great King in the hands of the Greek and Latin Catholic crusaders, who cover the land like a cloud; and no safety for any but in Edom, Moab, and Ammon, on the east and south of the Dead Sea."

Eureka 2, page 90 (logos) 6th. Vial

"The saints being 'gathered together unto Christ,' his day is come; and the due season at length arrived for the consumption and destruction of the Lawless One by the spirit of his mouth, and the manifestation of his presence-- 2 Thess. 2:1-8. All things being thus ready, the messenger-power of the Sixth vial proceeds to the gathering of the kings of the earth, and of the whole habitable, into Armageddon. This introduces the fourth part of the vial, and creates the situation necessary to the parallel outpouring of the seventh. In this fourth section of the vial-period the peoples will associate themselves against Israel, in whose midst Immanuel now is; and, under the fiery flying serpent of Assyria, will rush as the rushing of many waters, and with the sound of the roaring seas, to spoil and scatter them--Isa. 8:9-10; 14:25,29; 17:12,14. They will ascend like a storm cloud to cover the land in this the day of Yahweh's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion--Isa. 34:1-8; 63:1-6. He will cause them to come up from the north parts, and bring them upon the mountains of Israel, which are the apocalyptic 'Armageddon' Eze. 38:9; 39:2,4. There, under the King of the North, encamped between the seas, even to the mountain of the glory of the holy -- (Dan. 11:41, 45) 'will they be gathered against Jerusalem to besiege and take it, and rifle it, and to make captives of its residue'--Zech. 14:2. But they will not find therein the King of Israel. By this gathering of all nations against Jerusalem, in tempestuous conflict among themselves for the possession of the holy city, which becomes to them 'a cup of trembling,' and 'a burdensome stone'--Zech. 12:2,3 the judgments of the Sixth vial are closed".

Apostasy – Signs of Danger – The Love of the Truth Dislodged from the Heart and Mind

“Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” – (Apoc. 2:4)

A few months ago we had the pleasure of meeting again a brother whom we had not seen since 1983. As can be imagined, there were many things to

talk about. The signs of the times for instance received obvious attention, being one of keen interest to the watchers for the Dawn. Many things had taken place since 1983. World rulers have come and gone; the iron curtain came down followed by amazing reforms in Russia; the Gulf Wars; a new False Prophet of Baal; wickedness has increased in various insidious ways, and many other events. The political landscape was certainly different in many ways. However, the indications still pointed strongly in the direction of the Bridegroom's arrival, and these aspects were refreshing and strengthening to contemplate.

The one aspect that was discussed for some time was the dangers of apostasy, apathy and indifference. There were a number of signs that indicated that we could be departing from the faith, while all the while thinking that we were holding fast! This was extremely thought provoking and humbling. It produced an opportunity to examine ourselves, what our real interests were, where our love was really centred; was our work in the Truth sincere or a mere veneer.

With that in mind the following series of articles have been penned in the hope that others may find benefit in these last treacherous days of darkness and intense wickedness. This will be the first of these articles.

“Thou hast left thy first love.”

The quotation above was addressed to the ecclesia at Ephesus in Apocalypse chapter 2. The words of the Spirit to this ecclesia were for the most part very positive. They were an active ecclesia and the One who walked in the midst of the Lampstands was not ignorant of their “works.” Indeed, as James in his epistle records, “faith without works is dead” The evidence of life is in activity, and the brethren and sisters were noted for the works of faith in which they were engaged.

Not only were they working, but they were exerting effort in doing so. Verse 2 indicates that the One whose “eyes were as a flame of fire” knew their “labour.” Strong's Concordance defines this word as meaning ‘toil (as reducing the strength).’ Thayer's lexicon says the word has the idea of ‘intense labour united with trouble, toil.’ The Apostle Paul says that God is not unrighteous to forget such work and labour (Hebrews 6:10).

They were also noted for their “patience,” a word which Strong says means ‘cheerful or hopeful endurance;’ and Thayer's defines it as ‘steadfastness, constancy, endurance’ and adds that in the New Testament it is the “characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.” They were obviously working and labouring despite the oppositions of the pagan world. Nor were they doing so with the blind faith that characterised many of so called Christians who very soon after the apostolic era rushed with intense zeal to martyrdom in the vain hope of atoning for their sins by a brief moment of pain and suffering.

No, the brethren and sisters of Ephesus were bearing the burden of the Truth for the sake of the Name (verse 3). They had not fainted in all this great tribulation, and were keen to defend the Truth against error, trying those who said they were apostles and finding them liars. They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, a word meaning ‘Vanquishers of the People,’ a group of Gentile professors who retained “a hankering after their old foolishness” (Eureka volume 1 page 199). Surely this was an exemplary ecclesia! In the words of Bro. Growcott, “What more could be asked? What more could be done? They had fought the fight and kept the faith. Surely they could say with assurance, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown.”

However, the words of the Son of Man are “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent.”

Such sobering words of exhortation call for deep consideration and self examination. How many of us would be pleased to sincerely own the words of commendation that the ecclesia received? However, this spiritually energetic ecclesia was called upon to repent because they had left their first love! Is it really possible to be so engaged in the things of the Truth and yet have no love? Evidently it must be so, and the piercing eyes of him who had in his right hand the seven stars saw the true state of the hearts and minds.

Bro. Growcott helps our understanding of this apparent anomaly when he continued his comments by saying “the outer shell of works and labour and patience continued, but the original inner love was gone. They worked and endured and had patience, but just as a matter of duty, and were doubtless glad to get away from it all occasionally when they felt they had legitimate excuse to do so....They performed the service of God as a necessary burden, faithfully done, but without the spontaneous pleasure and enthusiasm of love.”

Incredible as it at first sight appears, it is possible to be fully employed in ecclesial activities and yet be bereft of the love that the Deity requires as a prerequisite of any service done in his Name! We can become mere organisers in the Truth, mistaking activity in the Truth for the deep love and appreciation of it. While organisation is important, and in many ways necessary to facilitate the various ecclesial activities that we enjoy so much, there is a danger of becoming like the Judaisers who were absorbed in the externals of the law and missed the glorious way of faith and righteousness set forth in the Gospel that Paul preached.

How we need to look carefully and ruthlessly at our motives, and “repent” if such is necessary.

The lack of love detected in the Ephesian ecclesia was more serious than perhaps we have fully realised and appreciated. There is no mistaking the seriousness of the Spirit's words of warning. They are quite clear! But why

the urgency and call for repentance? Is there more to the words of the Spirit than the possible loss of individual salvation? The words of the Apostles as recorded in the New Testament epistles and letters provide the answer.

We may not have considered what a great apostasy grew from those who received not the love of the Truth. The Apostle Paul in writing to the Thessalonians prophesied of a “falling away” (2 Thes.2:3). The word in the Greek is ‘apostasis’ - an apostasy! This would develop into the unmistakable “man of sin” power. History has testified to the enormities of this wicked and idolatrous system that has blasphemed the Deity through a long and dark series of ages, trampling under foot the Word of Yahweh, and those that kept the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Anointed. Paul saw the “mystery of iniquity” working in his day, as professors were creeping in unawares, disseminating pernicious doctrines and philosophies. These apostates had itching ears and peddled damnable heresies. Paul indicated that God would send them a “strong delusion that they should believe a lie” because they received not the love of the Truth (ibid verse 10). When the deep love of and for the Truth is lost, then the defence for it’s purity evaporates and the danger of apostasy is increased

The Master himself in the Olivet prophecy warned that because iniquity would abound, “the love of (the) many” would wax cold (Matt.24:12). The days leading to the destruction of the Jewish State in AD 70 would be characterised by iniquity (lawlessness). The believers were liable to be effected by their surroundings, and their love for the Truth would wax cold. This came to pass in the days of the Apostles as James clearly shows in the fifth chapter of his Epistle (verses 1-6). The dangers are the same for us in the present evil and godless environment in which we sojourn.

How can we insulate ourselves from the position that the ecclesia at Ephesus fell into? First of all, we must talk about the things that are “most surely believed among us.” Malachi testifies that “they that feared Yahweh spake often one to anther: and Yahweh hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Yahweh, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith Yahweh Tzvaoth, in that day when I make up my jewels.” (chapter 3:16-17)

How easy we find it to talk about the mundane things that interest us. A huge catalogue of useless trivia could be compiled, and each of us would have a particular subject that we could talk upon at length. Why? Because these things interest us, and we have filled our mind with them. We know they are all going to perish, and we confess that they will all be left behind when we are taken to Sinai, and that we will have no reason to discuss them in the Kingdom, yet that does not seem to deter us from filling our minds with these things. If we truly had the truth firmly embedded in our hearts and minds; if it was the most precious item we have in our lives (as we profess it to be), then we would not want to talk about anything else. In fact, it would be impossible to suppress the desire to talk about the eternal things of the Spirit. How often

we fail! But unless we can make the supreme effort to make the Truth a living reality in our lives, and talk about the marvels of the plan of salvation, we are in danger of losing the love of the truth. It will be dislodged by other, temporal things (even seemingly innocent things), and Yahweh brooks no rival. “I Yahweh thy Elohim am a jealous El,”“Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our Elohim is one Yahweh: And thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” (Exodus 20:5 Deut 6:4-5)

Instead of filling our minds with the rubbish of the world, let us strive to fill it with the Word, for unless we place the Scriptures in our mind, then we will only have the things of this life dominating our thinking. The mind soon becomes empty of spiritual things if we fail to replenish the oil. The lesson of the Lampstand in the Tabernacle very powerfully taught this. Morning and evening the Lamps were trimmed to enable the Light to burn. What a glorious pattern for us to follow in the one opportunity we have of developing a character that is based upon the image of the Son of God. With such an image in mind could we ever lose our first love? Bro. Phillip Hughes

Talebearers

We were not allowed to “go up and down among our people as talebearers” or to make ourselves “busy bodies in other men’s matters.” Our part was to be silent about our neighbours unless you have something good to say. I took them to witness how often for thirty years past I had had to insist at management meetings on this rule, and to stop the mouth of the accuser in the absence of the accused, still more in the absence of that course of private interview for which the law of Christ called.

I implored them to stand as with a drawn sword over this principle. Their present well-being as a community depended upon it, not to speak of their acceptability with Him who would judge us all presently by the standard of His revealed will. Nothing would sooner chill and disaffect and finally disintegrate them, and scatter them one from another than the habit so common among men of repeating evil rumours or indulging in personal criticism, or making charges on hearsay. Bro. Robert Roberts 1897

Babies In The Assembly

The “babies” also were at first a nuisance. Oh! little ones, I feel sorry to use such a strong term, you are lovely and beautiful in your proper place, when you prattle upon the knee, or play about the hearth; but are not required in these assemblies.

I understand that in some so-called “places of worship,” the little ones run about the passage ways while the “service” is proceeding. That kind of thing may do for the daughters of the apostacy, but never in the assembly of the saints. There all things should be done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). It is neither decent or orderly for children to interrupt the supplications of the saints.

How is it possible to bend your soul in prayer to the Father in the midst of unseemly noise? And how is it possible to hear the voice of God as expressed in the reading of the Word, if the attention is distracted by discordant sounds? I am astonished at the supineness of some brethren and sisters in the matter. When you consider the regulations of good society, even, we are put to shame.

It is considered rude to interrupt two when engaged in conversation, how much more so when the two in communion are the Deity and His children. Interruption is equally out of place whether in reading or in prayers. Again, in the world, it is considered improper in the highest degree to spoil the effect of a song by the slightest sound; how much more out of place is it to mar the impression created by an exposition of the word of God.

The fact that self-sacrifice and inconvenience is called for upon the part of the parents should not be allowed to stand in the way of the public good. Nehemiah defines the constitution of the assemblies of the saints exactly when he tells us of those who came together to hear the Word, which was read “before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding” (Nehemiah 8:2–3). Bro. Henry Sulley – 1899

Wicked At The Judgment

To contend as some do that the wicked will not appear with the righteous at the Judgment Seat is to flatly contradict Paul. Those who so contend occupy a very different position from those who seek to find a natural place for words which will not be out of harmony with any divine testimony.

If there are brethren who, in view of John 5:29, do not wish to say the dead are raised mortal, that is one thing, but if they go on to say that just and unjust will not appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that is another thing and altogether different. The one may be allowed without dispute, but not so the other. Bro. Robert Roberts 1898

Women In Business Meetings

“Should women rule?” “Does not Paul forbid her to ‘usurp authority over the man’?” If this question is treated in the spirit the Lord prescribes for all his brethren, there will be no danger or even question of the woman usurping authority over the man. If the last thing is for man to usurp authority over his brother—if, as Peter commands, “all are clothed with humility and all are subject one to another”—there will be no room for the usurpation of either man or woman to come in. But in point of fact, there was no question of usurpation, though Paul’s interdict was quoted. It was in reality a question of whether woman’s voice was to be heard in consultation or suggestion. There was no question of public speaking. All were agreed that the law of the Lord prohibited woman’s voice from being heard in public assembly. The question really was whether in the non-public working or management of things, woman’s voice might be allowed a place.

The question seems an extraordinary one. The Lord’s law is never directed to the prescription of impossibilities. You can no more suppress a wise woman’s influence and a wise woman’s voice than you can suppress the law of gravitation. You may prevent her delivering a public address: but you cannot prevent her giving good counsel, and you ought not. Though woman, by divine law is in subjection, she is not to be extinguished. If man is her head, it is not to domineer over her, but to protect and cherish and serve her in honour “as the weaker vessel,” content with the casting vote in matters of difference, which is the extent of his superior privilege.

If the Scriptures appoint man as her head, they do not exclude her from partnership in all that concerns their mutual well-being. They show us women “labouring with Paul in the Gospel” (Phillip 4:3): as official servants of an ecclesia with business in hand, which the ecclesia was called upon to promote (Rom. 16:1–3): exercising the prophetic gift (Acts 21:9); prominently ministering to Christ himself (Luke 8:2–3): sometimes leaders in Israel, like Deborah (Judges 4:4). The denial of public speech to women is as far as we are justified in repressing them. I have seen tyrannical and unsympathetic men wrongly using Paul’s authority to put down and quench godly women more qualified than they themselves to exercise judgment and give counsel. Let women certainly be modest, but let her not be reduced to a cypher, which God never intended. She is intended as a comrade and a help which she greatly is, when enlightened and treated rightly.

We ought to be thankful when women turn up who are able to help with wise suggestion. To object to such on the score of “ruling the ecclesia,” is to evince either a shameful misconception of duty or an itch for headship which disqualifies for the true service of the ecclesia. No man who wants to be head is fit to be head. The headship that comes from service is the only headship that is either useful or tolerable, or, in the long run, possible. Where the spirit of exalting each other, instead of exalting ourselves prevails (as Christ commands), there is little danger of difficulty arising, and an easy settlement of them when they do arise.

Bro. Robert Roberts – 1897 Voyage to Australia

What Does That Mean?

“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days”. Gal. 1:17-18

“Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple”. Acts 9:25-26

The apparent discrepancy between Paul’s account, in Gal. 1:18–19, of his proceedings after his enlightenment and the account given in the Acts of the

Apostles is due to the omission in the Acts of the Apostles of any reference to Paul's three years' visit to Arabia, which comes between verses 25 and 26 of Acts 9.

The omission of this account does not mean an ignoring of the matter omitted, unless the matter is excluded by the construction of the text before and after the omission. If Acts 9:26 had said that Saul or Paul went straight from Damascus to Jerusalem, without going to Arabia, there would have been a difficulty that could not be explained, but there is nothing of this sort in the narrative of the Acts.

On a rough reading it appears as if Paul went straight to Jerusalem from Damascus; but on a close consideration this is not involved. It closes the account of what happened at Damascus at verse 25, and then says: "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem," &c. This does not say how long afterwards it was that Paul came to Jerusalem. When let down by the wall in a basket, he went to Arabia, as he himself informs us. Acts 9. does not say where he went to when he got out of the basket, but simply proceeds to tell us what happened when he went to Jerusalem. There is, therefore, no contradiction, but merely an apparent one.

Bro. Robert Roberts – 1895