

# 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

**Boston**, Massachusetts—SS 9:00 AM; Memorial 10:15 AM; Mid-week Study classes Friday evening; Recording Bro. James Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd., Northboro, MA 01532

Dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we announced last month we are pleased to have Sister Sara Garvey, Sister Joanne Osborne and Brother Ben Naglieri join our ecclesia. This has necessitated some changes in our Sunday school classes. Some have requested that a class be set up for visitors that have been attending so Brother David Sommerville has started a Bible marking program on first principles. Our Sunday School Program is scheduled God willing, for Sunday April 23, 2006

Since our last report Brother Gary Stephen has moved back to the Boston Ecclesia from Glen Ecclesia (New Hampshire) and is now a member of our ecclesia. Also Brother Noah Brown has moved to the Boston Ecclesia from the Austin Ecclesia and has been meeting with us each Sunday. Other visitors have been: Sisters Cheryl Sargent of the Denver Ecclesia, Sister Jessie Prentice, Sister Norma Rankin, both of the Worcester Ecclesia, Sister Terri Rankin of the Holiday Ecclesia (Tenn.), and Sister Shiloh Brown of the Austin Ecclesia. Sister Ruth Garvey is now living at the home of Brother and Sister Wayne Johnson as she recovers from hip surgery. She has once again been able to attend memorial meeting weather permitting.

Last fall we closed our meeting for two Sundays to meet with the Worcester Ecclesia in an attempt to support that Ecclesia in preaching the truth. On Oct. 30, 2005 I gave a power point presentation after memorial meeting on “God’s Seven Thousand Year Plan”. We had one visitor. On Nov. 20, 2005 Brother Paul Garvey delivered the lecture on “How We got Our Bible.” We had visitors from two other fellowships.

We are making arrangements for our fall gathering God willing, to be held at The Highlander Hotel in Manchester, New Hampshire. The subject will be: “Kingdoms of This World- Past Present Future” All talks will be exhortations concerning our life in this present world based on things we learn from the history of the nation under consideration, their interaction with Israel and what God has in store for them in the future. This will be the weekend of Sept 30, and Oct. 1 & 2, 2006 God willing. We welcome any that will be able to attend.

On behalf of the Boston Ecclesia  
Jim Sommerville, Recording Brother

**DETROIT**, Michigan – Memorial, 10am; S.S., 11:30am; Wed. Night Class, 8pm; Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035, 586-790-2156

Loving greetings to all our Brothers and Sisters in the Hope we share,

We have been encouraged by way of correspondence and the E.W.’s as we journey on Zionward here in Detroit.

We enjoyed the company of Bro. Beryl and Sis. Becky Snyder by each of us traveling half way and meeting in Sandusky, Ohio, where we had our Memorial Meeting together and Bro. Beryl gave us the words of comfort and exhortation. Sis. Kay and her children came with us. It was a snowy, winter day in December and we were at a park located by the edge of Lake Erie. When the sun came out a large group of sea gulls came out to fish for their dinner. It was a display of God's wonderful creation. We then went to a restaurant and ate and visited before traveling back home.

On December 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, Bro. John, Sis. Mary and Bro. Michael Phillips came to visit us. We thank our Bro. Michael who gave us the words of exhortation for our Memorial Meeting. We were very encouraged to have them with us.

In January our Bro. Antonio withdrew from fellowship, while addressing some health problems and his situation at home with his parents. We rejoice that he has returned to fellowship after 6 weeks absence and we were able to once again break bread with him on February 16<sup>th</sup>. We pray that he will be able to endure his trials.

We welcome any Brothers and Sisters that are able to come and visit us and we send you all our fraternal love in the bonds of the Truth.  
Bro. Fred J. Higham

### **LasCruces/Nigeria**

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

It is with great happiness and rejoicing that we are announcing the baptism of brother Sylvester Ebere in Nigeria. He was baptized today at 3:30 PM local time there.

Bro Sylvester has learned the Truth via the Key Bible Lessons on the internet, and was examined remotely by the Key Committee via internet and phone. After giving a good interview, he again formally requested baptism and as is recommended the Ecclesia Guide, obtained the assistance of a couple of friends in putting him under the water and hearing him confess his belief in the Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.

Bro Sylvester has already begun preaching to friends and neighbors and needs printed material, in English as soon as possible. He is a Schoolteacher by trade.

I can provide particulars about his address if you are interested in writing to our brother.

Love in Christ, Bro. Michael Morrell  
Las Cruces Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia

p.s. In the coming months, bro Sylvester is going to be visited by a brother from Kenya when time and circumstance permits.

## **FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES**

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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

### **The Day of Atonement**

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach, for here have we no continuing city”—Hebrews 13:13.

Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement. The Jews have been observing this event for over 3,000 years—more than half the time since Creation. This is the central, most important, most solemn day in the whole Israelitish cycle. It is the great yearly occasion of cleansing and reconciling to God.

Natural man is a selfish, foolish, lustful animal—of no value, interest or pleasure to God. But training, and development, and discipline, and divine help can make man fit to become part of the eternal spiritual order.

This is the whole lesson of the Mosaic Law. Law is beautiful. God is a God of order. Law is the training of the mind and character to follow a pattern of harmony and beauty. The High Priest was the apex and embodiment of the Law. His garments, we are told, were “for Glory and for Beauty.”

That sums up the Law—for Glory and for Beauty—the glory of God and the beauty of holiness. Christ's law is but a further, deeper development of the eternal principles taught in Moses' Law.

The ordinance of the Day of Atonement is recorded in Lev. 16. It is no accident that the first verse tells us that these instructions were given following the sudden destruction of Aaron's two eldest sons by God for offering strange fire to Him.

Let us note why they were destroyed. They had not forsaken God. They were not serving other gods. They were not even neglecting God's service to follow their own pleasures. In fact, they were actually serving God at the very moment they were struck down.

What, then, was their sin? Careless, presumptuous service. Not following God's instructions. Doing it as they saw fit. God must be honored, **100—Berean 2006** and presumptuous service—using our own faulty, human judgment instead of following instructions—dishonors Him. They had been chosen from the world to serve and glorify God in His holy Temple. “Ye are the Temple of the living God”—each one of us, personally and individually, and the lesson is as much for us as for Israel of long ago.

Verse 2 – Aaron is told never to enter the Most Holy except on the divinely-appointed occasions, and in the divinely-appointed way. Only the High Priest could go into the presence of God; and he only once a year, and then only with solemn and elaborate ritual.

If God wants man to draw near to Him, why did He set up this complicated and burdensome system of barriers and restrictions? Why did Christ—sent forth to man because “God so loved the world”—keep saying such harsh, penetrating things that the vast majority—all but a mere handful—turned against him?

Before man can have intimate companionship with God, he must be indelibly impressed with his own worthlessness and God's dreadful holiness and majesty. Let us remember with humility and reverence the rigid, lifelong obedience, and the terrible, agonizing death of Christ, which God considered necessary to manifest the requirements of His holiness and to establish a basis of approach.

The Mosaic Tabernacle was about 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. It was entered from one end and divided into two rooms. The outer room (the “Holy Place” where the priests ministered daily) was twice as large as the inner room (the “Most Holy” where only the High Priest could go once a year). Here is the same lesson as the parable of the virgins: there were 10 virgins in the Holy Place tending the lamps of God; but when the Most Holy was opened only 5 went in—5 were left outside, beating vainly on the door.

These rooms were separated by the veil. This was the veil that was miraculously torn in half when Christ died on the cross, signifying the opening of the way to the Most Holy—the presence of God. In the Most Holy was the ark of the covenant, upon which were the two golden cherubim—representing the eternal covenant-purpose of God-manifestation in a holy, perfected multitude.

The Day of Atonement was the center and climax of the last and greatest ceremony of the year. And every 50 years this Day of Atonement marked the beginning of the joyful Jubilee year of freedom and release. On this day the High Priest made two separate sacrifices and two visits into the Most Holy—first for himself and then for the people. For himself, the

sacrifice was a young bullock—for the people, it was two goats. What is the difference between these two offerings? **Berean 2006—101**

In the first place, the bullock was a much more important and valuable sacrifice than the goat. Then the bullock has no implications of waywardness and disobedience, as has the goat. Goats symbolize those on the left hand—the sinners. The bullock, or ox, stands for strength, labor and productiveness.

As befits its greater importance, the bullock is usually considered as an individual unit, but the goat in herds. While the goat symbolizes the waywardness of the flesh, the ox represents the faithful leaders and laborers in the Truth. Isaiah (7:25; 32:20) uses the figure of the plowing ox as the Truth proclaimer, and Paul likewise brings it out when he speaks of the prohibition of muzzling the ox that treads out the corn and applies it to those who devote their lives to preaching the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:9).

So we see that it was fitting that the High Priest (representing Christ) should first offer for himself a single bullock, then a plural number of goats for the people.

On this occasion (v. 4) the High Priest was not to put on his usual ornamental garments “for Glory and for Beauty,” but plain white linen—for on this day he was to offer for himself. The “Glory and Beauty” came later—after the offering—but they would be out of place in this time of humiliation and atonement.

But we notice in this v. 4 that he must first wash himself before putting on the white linen. And this washing, we are told in Exodus 30:20, is “THAT HE DIE NOT.” It meant death if he failed to cleanse himself personally before taking on the Christ-righteousness. All these ordinances are to emphasize eternal principles.

So arrayed, Aaron casts lots between the two goats—one for the Lord and one for the “scapegoat.” It will be noticed that for “scapegoat” the margin has “azazel”—the original Hebrew word. All dictionaries and concordances agree on the general meaning of this word—“sending away, getting rid of, averting, departure, removal, separation.”

Verse 11 – The High Priest kills the bullock, which is for himself and his household. Then (v. 12) he takes a censer full of burning coals from the sacrificial altar in the tabernacle courtyard. References to coals of fire appear several times in Scripture—particularly in connection with visions of the Glory of God, as in Psalms, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

We know the symbolic meaning of fire—consuming judgment. Coals of fire seem to carry the more particular meaning of controlled, useful fire—a regulated purging and trying with a view to cleansing and purifying. For example in Isa. 6:7 (after Isaiah speaks of his unclean lips)

an angel lays a coal of fire on the prophet's mouth saying, "This hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

**102—Berean 2006** Beside the censer of coals (which probably hung by a chain from his arm) the High Priest was to take his hands full of sweet incense beaten small (v. 12). The incense of the Mosaic service had to be made exactly as God specified. It was offering strange (incorrect) incense that caused the death of Aaron's two sons. And this special kind could not be made or used for any other purpose than the properly-ordained worship of God. Two hundred and fifty men of the company of Korah presumed to offer incense contrary to the Law, and were destroyed by fire for their presumption.

In the plague that followed, Aaron (the true, God-appointed priest ran out with a censer of incense and made atonement—standing between the living and the dead—and the plague stayed. From all this we see that incense is a God-ordained form of atonement and intercession. In the Revelation (5:8; 8:3) incense symbolizes intercession and prayer.

The High Priest had to have his hands full (v. 12)—all he could hold. There were to be no limits or half-measures in Christ's intercessory work. Paul says, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

On our part the full hands mean there must be "prayer without ceasing." Our hands, or activities, must be filled with prayer.

It was, we note, "sweet" incense. The process involved in preparing the incense, both for Christ and his brethren, is often far from sweet at the time. But patient endurance is a sweet savor to God, and in the ultimate will produce "fullness—full hands—of joy for evermore."

Then, the incense had to be "beaten small." To be beaten small is to be humbled by affliction. All the lumps of human pride and self-assertion must be pounded to fine powder, so that the whole mass can mix and blend smoothly, and the resultant aroma be a pleasant, balanced harmony of all the elements.

With the censer on his arm and his hands full of incense (v. 13), the High Priest reverently passed beyond the veil into the Divine presence. Then the carefully prepared incense is placed on the purifying fire, and a cloud of incense-vapor fills the room and covers the cherubim mercy-seat above the ark—"THAT HE DIE NOT" says the record (v. 13).

Here again, we are reminded that it was a matter of life and death. Without the purging, purifying fire, the incense-cloud with its sweet odors would not arise and the High Priest—unshielded—would die before the terrible majesty that dwelt between the cherubim above the ark. This is why Paul said he "gloried in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh

patience," and causes the sweet prayer-incense to arise acceptably and protectively before God.

**Berean 2006—103**

Next (v. 14) the High Priest had to sprinkle the blood of the bullock upon the mercy-seat, and before it seven times. The very mercy-seat itself is cleansed with the purifying blood. Then he killed the goat of sin-offering for the people (the one on which the lot for the Lord had fallen) and did the same with its blood as he had done with the blood of the bullock.

Verse 16 – "And he shall make atonement for the Holy Place."

Why did these holy things need atoning for? "Because" (we read) "of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions." Here are two distinct things (though of course related). The original word for uncleanness (tumah) means any kind of defilement, regardless of actual sin, and it is applied throughout the Law to death, disease, unclean animals and childbirth. It is constitutional uncleanness—uncleanness that is the result of being part of an unclean system of things. Natural man is naturally unclean before God. There is defilement in the very process of being born.

Beside their uncleanness, there were also their "transgressions" to atone for. This word means (beside 'sin') "rebellion." Any act contrary to the Word and Will of God, however well-intentioned or however good it may seem to the doer, is—in God's sight—rebellion. "To obey is better than sacrifice," Saul was told. Saul, in mistaken and presumptuous 'mercy,' saved Agag—and lost his kingdom and his life. Man's proper—and only—course is to obey the commands of God and not presume to use his own fleshly understanding.

This word "atonement" has taken on a hazy, ecclesiastical meaning, but the basic idea is very simple. The regulations speak in v. 18 of making atonement for the altar. V. 19 says the High Priest shall—by sprinkling the altar with blood—cleanse it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. "Atonement," scripturally, is simply cleansing. In v. 30 the whole ordinance of the Day of Atonement is summed up, "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to CLEANSE you, that ye may be CLEAN from all your sins."

Any sin—anything out of harmony with God's eternal will—is a form of filthiness, infection and defilement; and it clings offensively and corruptingly to a man in God's sight until it has been properly washed away. Cleansing and cleanness make up the great theme of the Scriptures.

Beside the basic meaning of "cleanse," the Hebrew word translated "atone" (kippur, kaphor) also carried the idea of "cover." The shadowy atonements of the Law were a cleansing by covering, a provisional cleansing, but the true atonement is a true cleansing—

“How much more shall the blood of Christ CLEANSE your conscience  
**104—Berean 2006** *from works of death*’ (Heb. 9:14).

“He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

“The blood of Christ CLEANSETH us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Verse 17 describes a very significant and unusual fact on this great yearly Day of Atonement—All this time there must be no man in the tabernacle. The usual bustle of priestly activity in the Tabernacle and its court are strangely stilled. Alone and in silence the white-clad High Priest goes about his solemn tasks in the otherwise deserted building. How clearly is foreshadowed the passing away of the Mosaic service, and the lonely, single-handed work of the great High Priest to come!

When everything had been typically cleansed (v. 20), then the High Priest turned his attention to the living goat that remained. He lays both his hands (indicating completeness) on the goat's head (v. 21) and confesses over it all the sins, transgressions and iniquities of the children of Israel, thus symbolically placing these sins on the goat. Then the goat is sent away into the wilderness by the hand of a “fit” (that is, a “ready” or “prepared”) man.

It will be noted there is no scapegoat for the High Priest, to carry away his sins, iniquities and transgressions—there was just the single bullock for him. It would seem, then, that one aspect of the double-goat symbol was to distinguish between constitutional uncleanness and actual transgression, and to foreshadow that he whom the High Priest typified was free from the latter.

This is the only place in all the sacrificial ordinances that sins are carried away outside the camp. It is very fitting, on this yearly occasion when the great typical cleansing of the camp is enacted, that all sins are—in a figure—taken completely from the nation.

But there seems more to the double-goat ordinance than this. If we think upon it, we shall be struck by the fact that—while there are a great multitude of symbols of Christ's death in the Law of Moses—there are practically no symbols of resurrection, or of life after death. This is not out of harmony, for the Law was (as Paul says—2 Cor. 3:7-9) a “ministration of death”—a “ministration of condemnation.”

The Law ended with Christ's crucifixion. Resurrection was a step beyond the Law—“beyond the camp,” so to speak. The Law could not, of itself, bring resurrection, so it is in keeping that this should not be a prominent feature of its symbols. **Berean 2006—105**

But still, as a foreshadowing of Christ, it is to be expected that the Law would in some way portray resurrection. Two chapters earlier (Lev. 14) there is something similar to the double-goat arrangement, in the law

concerning the cleansing of leprosy, which we believe gives us a clue. In this ordinance two birds are used. One is killed, then the other is dipped in the first one's blood (identifying it with it) and then SET FREE in the open field OUTSIDE THE CITY. Here clearly is a figure of life after death—life from the dead.

Leprosy was the most spectacular and dreaded form of physical uncleanness. The term “unclean” is always applied to it, and the expression “cleansing” is used of leprosy, while “healing” is used of all other diseases. Leprosy was regarded as a living death. It is understandable, then, that we find very similar symbols in the cleansing of leprosy and the great national day of cleansing from sin and death.

Christ's resurrection is essential to the cleansing efficacy of his death—he was “delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). So Christ's death did not in itself complete the redeeming work. Therefore somewhere in the shadows of the Law (and most appropriately on this great Day of Atonement) there is needed a symbol showing the taking away of sins by the risen Christ. This we see in the second, living goat taking over where the sacrificed goat ended, and departing to a “land of separation” OUTSIDE THE CAMP.

The significance of this expression “outside the camp” becomes clearer when we see what is done with the remains of the slain bullock and goat. They are carried forth without the camp and burned (instead of being eaten by the priests, as was usual with the sacrifices). Why? Why were the priests strictly forbidden to eat any sacrifice that had sanctified the tabernacle? Paul gives the answer in the last chapter of his letter to the Hebrews—

First, this indicated that those under the Law had no right to partake of the Christ-sacrifice. This does not mean, of course, that those who lived during the Mosaic dispensation are excluded from the benefits of Christ's death, but that the Mosaic and Christian dispensations are incompatible—the old must be left behind before the new can be entered. (He was speaking to some who were hesitating between the two and attempting to embrace both.)

Second, it indicated that Christ would suffer “outside the gate.” The great, central, anti-typical sacrifice to which all the others pointed would be OUTSIDE the whole Mosaic sacrificial system, and not part of it. His suffering outside the gate was a sign of his rejection by the Jewish nation.

And thirdly—says Paul—the type indicates that we “have no continuing city.” It indicates a forsaking (like Abraham) of the comfortable, established present for the sake of the glorious promised future—seen by faith. “Let us go forth to him,” is Paul's rallying-cry—to the rejected sacrifice “without the camp, bearing his reproach!”

Now, if these things were indicated (as Paul says they were) by the carrying out and burning outside of the dead bullock and goat, how much more the shameful departure of the living goat shows them! The Jews would regard the scapegoat (upon whom all their sins were symbolically **106—Berean 2006** laid) exactly as Isaiah 53 indicates they would regard Christ—as cursed, and rejected, and banished from God.

As the goat was driven forth (we are informed by historians), they lined the way to heap curses and abuse upon it. In this chapter in Isaiah there is a remarkable parallel with the scapegoat—“We esteemed him smitten of God...the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

How fitting then that—of all the types of the Law—this despised, rejected, sin-laden goat should foreshadow the glorious resurrection that is the keystone of all our hopes!

Following the departure of the scapegoat, Aaron laid aside the holy white linen garments (in which he had come closer than at any other time to his great antitype), and put on again his regular elaborate Mosaic vestments, and took up again his regular duties for another year.

The Temple-veil, after being thus drawn aside to give a brief prophetic glimpse of the future, is closed again—to be disturbed no more until the next year’s Atonement Day.

The men who burned the slain bullock and goat, and sent the scapegoat into the wilderness, return, wash their clothes, and rejoin the camp, and another yearly cycle begins for Israel.

But—arising out of Paul’s remarks—our minds linger with the animals burnt for sin without the camp, and with the goat that has gone away sin-laden and alone into the wilderness—bearing his reproach. For—though Israel did not, and still does not, know it—therein their salvation lay.

Bro. G.V.Growcott

## The Ribband of Blue

My beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic covenant, and particularly our new brother,

Do we need a greater exhortation, Brethren and Sisters, when we consider what we have witnessed this morning on the banks of the Perdenales, when we witnessed another of Adam’s race putting on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism?

I am sure that you all felt the same way as I did, when we stood there on the banks of the river, and we watched in that most emotional experience, our new brother obeying the command to be baptized after giving a good confession of his faith. What was in our minds, Brethren and Sisters? Did we look back to the time when we ourselves put on the saving

name of our Lord Jesus Christ? Did we perhaps consider those of our close relations, or loved ones, who have put on the saving name as well? It was a most glorious experience for us to consider our new brother obeying that command to be baptized. And we are looking forward to welcoming him into our fellowship, into the love and the mercy of **Berean 2006—107** our Heavenly Father, as each one of us walks towards the kingdom of our Heavenly Father. But perhaps, Brethren and Sisters, we look back on our own baptisms, and some of us have traveled a few years, some of us many years, and we wonder how much we have grown in conforming to the image of our Lord and Master.

What we have witnessed this morning, as we each know, was the beginning of a process, not the end in itself. Our new brother has now set his feet upon a path that he must tread carefully, circumspectly, and with a determination to complete the course. As each one of us here have determined in our hearts and minds to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Master.

As our minds have been prepared by that wonderful experience that we have shared with our new brother, it is most appropriate that we consider a word of exhortation, hopefully suited to our new brother and to each and every one of us, as we—each and every one of us—strive to continue on that path with all its trials, with all its temptations, and with the pressures that accompany a walk in Christ Jesus and that our new brother will not be exempt from. And he will indeed need the support and the love and the comfort of each one of us, as we walk together with him towards Zion. And we hope and pray that the exhortation based around the ribband of blue might assist us all in that great endeavor to manifest our Heavenly Father in our daily lives.

The ribband of blue and its command to be worn on the garments of the children of Israel is found in Numbers 15, where I will begin to provide some words of exhortation this morning. And it is indeed appropriate as a word of exhortation that this subject was chosen as the concluding talk under the theme of colors. This is especially the case as we come to remember our Lord and Master in the emblems that are before us.

It is found in Num. 15, but at the end of the chapter, we have the words, “I am Yahweh your Elohim, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your Elohim: I am Yahweh your Elohim.”

How appropriate it is then for us on the first day of another week, as we prepare our minds, being assisted by the brother in the words of praise that we had read to us, as we prepare our minds for the emblems to realize that as Yahweh brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, so He has brought us out of the land of Egyptian bondage—that land of darkness that we have considered through the week.

We have actually witnessed that once again when our new brother demonstrated the power of the Word of God acting upon his conscience. We have seen another of Adam's race come out from Egypt and embrace the light and liberty of the Hope of Israel. We cannot get a stronger **108—Berean 2006** exhortation as to the power of the Deity, when we witness that.

Indeed, the children of Israel were called upon to remember their origins, to remember that they were a purchased people. The passover Lamb had purchased them.

The words in Numbers 15 were not spoken to the first generation. In the beginning of that chapter it says, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations which I give unto you..."

We don't know the time period between this and the previous chapter. The previous chapter read recorded the infidelity of the first generation that came out of the land of Egypt. They had failed! Their carcasses littered the wilderness. And now this new generation was to be exalted once again by Yahweh through Moses to faithfulness. And they were given an additional commandment to apply to their individual garments. It almost seems out of context to see, at this particular point in time, the children of Israel being commanded to place a ribband of blue upon their garments, until we realize the fact that this was a new generation.

The old generation had returned to Egypt—not literally—but they had returned to Egypt in their hearts. They actually tried to make an attempt to return. They weren't successful, but they may as well have gone back, because that is where their heart lay. It lay amongst the leeks and the garlic and the cucumbers—the things of the flesh, which abounded in Israel, forgetting all the problems, all their servitude. Just like human nature; just like ourselves. They had not really left Egypt. They had failed to manifest the faithfulness that was required of them. And that was so apparent. It was so obvious. Their very attitude indicated that they were not motivated by the spirit of God's law. They were so totally different from Moses. So different from those like Joshua and Caleb, who had the same opportunity as each one of them.

The command now to place upon the borders of their garments a ribband of blue was, we would like to suggest, an indication that Yahweh was going, in His love and mercy, a step further to help them and to encourage them to keep His law and His commandments. It wasn't a uniform that the children of Israel had to wear. The ribband of blue was not an additional garment just to designate them, as an Israelite, as opposed to a Canaanite or an Egyptian. It was to be a declaration of their heart, and it was designed to bring God to their remembrance—

Verse 39 – "It shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them."

We understand that the ancient Hebrews divided their garments in the lower part of the front and back so that four corners or wings appeared, so that there was in each of them a declaration of the four-square encampment of the children of Israel. **Berean 2006—109**

It was to be blue—the color of heaven. A number of the brethren in their talks during the week have made reference to the colors, and blue has been referred to. We are tempted to go into some of the origins of that, but I think by way of exhortation we will just remain on the surface as it were. I would just like to remind everyone that the word blue, as it occurs here, occurs repeatedly in and around the tabernacle and the high priest and the things pertaining to that order of things. In fact, if you look up that word blue in the concordance, about 78% of the time that word is used, it is in relation to the tabernacle. It is also the same word as the blue garment that the high priest wore and the lace of blue that we read so often in the tabernacle.

You will remember the glorious declaration in Exodus 25 where the Deity said to the children of Israel and to Moses—

"Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell amongst them."

What a glorious declaration of the Eternal Purpose—that He desired to dwell amongst His people. Yet in their individual daily routines it almost seemed as if the laws and regulations of the Law given through Moses kept the children of Israel at their distance. Yahweh had to be approached in an appropriate way. And it was the high priest, particularly on the Day of Atonement, that was prominent in providing the needs of the children of Israel. But I would like to suggest that this law regarding the ribband of blue to be attached to their garments, was another attempt by Yahweh to show the children of Israel their heavenly origins. The high priest was a representative of the nation, as he went about his daily tasks. The children of Israel were invited to consider him in all his glory and his beauty and to remember the work of God.

When they were required to put this ribband of blue upon their garments, there was an association with the high priest. Actually the word "fringes" is feminine and I would like to suggest that the children of Israel were the feminine aspect of the male high priest—the bride and the bridegroom under a different figure.

They were called upon in their own individual lives to manifest the glorious purpose of the Deity, as seen in the sacrifices that were being offered—as seen in the glory of God, as He dwelt between the Cherubim—

"...that ye may look...remember...and do."

Each of the children of Israel were required to have this ribband of blue on the border. That word border in the Hebrew is *kanaph*— meaning the edge or extremity. It can be rendered wings. In fact, the “wings” of the Cherubim is the same word. On the border or the edge there was this ribband of blue. When each individual Israelite would look upon their fellows, they would get an exhortation. What a wonderful society of called out ones, when everyone was exhorting one another without saying a word. A little bit like, “Let your light shine before men.”

**110—Berean 2006** The Master didn’t use a trumpet to illustrate what he meant in the sounding of the Truth. He said, “Let your light...” Light has no noise, but it is very, very effective. Light dispels darkness. In the same way the children of Israel had a ribband of blue designed to bring to mind the commandments of Yahweh. Without saying a word each individual was a living and powerful exhortation. When the blue was seen they were exhorted to remember their heavenly origins.

We are not commanded to put a ribband of blue upon the borders of our garments. But, Brethren and Sisters, cannot we take an exhortation all the same that each one of us becomes living exhortations to one another, and especially to our young brother. He is going to be looking at you and I, and he is going to be looking carefully at what we say and what we do and how we act and react. And he is going to be looking to us to see a living exhortation.

So we have some questions to ask ourselves, as we prepare our minds for the breaking of bread this morning. Are you and I living exhortations to our new brother? Are we living exhortations to all our new young brethren and sisters? And are we living exhortations to one another anyway? I’d like to suggest that the ribband of blue is teaching us that profound yet beautiful lesson—the glorious blueness of heaven. One of our brothers quoted Bro. Thomas in Eureka, saying that it was a cleansing principle. Yes, it is. Because the commandments of the Deity—the commandments of His Son—cleanse us from the fleshly way of life to a spiritual, ennobling, uplifting way of life, which is altogether different, which our new brother is now beginning to experience.

I would like to make an appeal to the sisters in respect of the end of the verse that I have not quoted in Number 15, which reads “...and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go awhoring.”

My dear Sisters, I do not feel comfortable in the word of exhortation that I now wish to digress slightly upon. But I wish to ask you a question, and you yourselves can answer it. In your dress, do you think that you enable your brethren, and your fellow sisters, to remember the commandments of Yahweh? Or do you think when they look at you they will remember whoredom. Maybe it wasn’t anything at all to do with what

I just said with regards to the priestly connection; maybe it was when the children of Israel came out from the land of Egypt that they were perhaps copying the Egyptian fashions. My dear sisters, please think carefully upon the way you present yourselves. It does seem to be as much a weakness for sisters to reveal their feminine charms, as much as it is a weakness for brethren to look at them.

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And if we are to be living exhortations to one another, just think about that. Am I a living exhortation, or am I causing perhaps a brother to stumble? I’m not trying to excuse brethren. Brethren, including myself, need to learn and practice the commands of Christ, which teach without any obscurity that we need to pluck out the eye, cut off the hand, and cut off the foot. But please sisters, let the ecclesia at least be a sanctuary.

The commandment for the children of Israel to wear that ribband of blue upon the bottom of their garments goes much deeper than just the adornment of that ribband of blue. It was designed to teach them, as we have suggested, the principles of God manifestation. Ezekiel in his first chapter saw “visions of Elohim” (Mighty Ones). And he saw above the firmament that was over their heads the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, a deep blue stone.

And the elders of Israel saw the Elohim of Israel too, as it was revealed in Exodus 24:10 – “And under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone.” Again, a deep blue color, speaking to us of God manifestation. Dr. Thomas wonderfully expounded this subject and wrote regarding it “Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost. God manifestation, not human salvation, was the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit”.

God desires to manifest His character in you and I. And just as the children of Israel had that ribband of blue on their garments, so we must endeavor to apply the characteristics of the Deity in our lives.

They were to wear it at the bottom of their garment. My conception of it was just a long robe that you might have seen in sketches, just a circular piece at the bottom of the garment—that *kanaph*, the border. But it may well have been tied up in some way at the four corners. Both have a circular idea. I like the idea of the four corners, because it does speak of the Israelitish hope—the children of Israel encamped in a foursquare encampment. But it doesn’t really detract from the fact that when the Israelite walked, they were continually walking within the principles of righteousness and within the principles of Deity’s manifested principles of salvation—of His commandments that he may look, remember the commandments, and do them.

That living exhortation was to encircle the very feet which walk one after the other. Wherever they went they were encircled by the power of

the Word of God—the power which changes men’s lives, and which has acted most powerfully upon our new young brother. It is the power that continues to work. It has begun a work in him and in the mercy of our Heavenly Father should continue to work. Our feet, Brethren and Sisters, are encircled, or should be, with the principles of righteousness.

The epistle of Ephesians, which we have considered this week, has **112—Berean 2006** taught that lesson time and time again. We were exhorted in that writing to walk worthy of our calling wherein we have been called. Paul says, “Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanities in their mind.”

Our new brother has demonstrated that to us again and has reminded us that we have accepted the Truth, because we see that the walk of the Gentiles is vanity—the word means empty. It’s an empty way of life outside the principles of God’s Truth. There is nothing there, though it seems otherwise. But we have got to exercise the mind of the spirit to see it as an empty way of life and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

“Walk as children of light,” we read in Ephesians 5:8. Walk circumspectly, or carefully, as it was explained to us. One of our young brethren defined it as being in harmony with divine principles.

Let us give an illustration. You will remember the time in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 24, when David hid in the cave of Engedi, he and his men. Saul didn’t realize that David was in there. And Saul went in and lay down and rested all that night. David’s men said this is the opportunity, this is the time where Yahweh has said unto you, you can take the throne for yourself. We know that David didn’t do that. He went while Saul was sleeping and cut off the skirt of his robe.

The word skirt there is the Hebrew word *kanaph*. It means the border of his garment—same word as in Numbers 15. I would like to suggest to you that what David actually did was to cut off that ribband of blue.

And Saul gets up in the morning and leaves the cave, quite oblivious to the fact that his very life could have been taken from him in the night and goes away on his journey. He didn’t even know that the ribband of blue was gone! David has to shout over to him and hold it up. Saul didn’t even know it was gone!

That’s quite significant, because earlier on in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15, Saul had disobeyed the commandment to annihilate the Amalekites, and Samuel has to go to him. Why have you done this, Saul? “To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of Yahweh, Yahweh hath rejected thee from being king.”

Saul, in his last attempt to keep face with the people, holds onto Samuel, as Samuel was about to depart, and the skirt of his mantel rent. That word skirt there again is the word *kanaph*, the border, and again I’d like to make a suggestion that it was the very place where Samuel’s ribband of blue hung, and it rent. And Samuel said, “Yahweh has rent the kingdom from thee.”

The Word of God in Saul’s life had gone! He rejected it as a way of life. And the consequences were obvious! **Berean 2006—113**

It struck me as I was preparing this exhortation whether my own life is bordered by a ribband of blue. Oh, I’ve got my ribband of blue around me today. I never fail to put my ribband of blue on, on a Sunday. Every Sunday, I attend the meetings, I always have my ribband of blue on, without fail. What about Monday morning? Tuesday? Wednesday? What about tomorrow morning, Brethren and Sisters? And certainly when we get back to our normal routine? Do we get up in the morning and go about our daily business, completely oblivious of the commandments of Yahweh. Are we like Saul was? Completely oblivious to the fact that we are called and that we need to remember every waking moment of our life to the best of our abilities the commandments of Yahweh. Do we look upon them and remember them and do them?

This week, Brethren and Sisters, it’s been easier for us, hasn’t it? Because in a sense we’ve all walked within that ribband of blue this week. We’ve all been basking in the mercy of God, as He has allowed us in His love to assemble one with the other. And we know as we have walked past brethren and sisters, we have heard them talking about the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. We have heard the reading of the Scriptures, references to the Scriptures, talking about the Scriptures. And it’s been wholesome, hasn’t it? We have all enjoyed walking within that ribband of blue. We must continue to walk in it!

Our new brother has in a sense, when he came out of the waters, in a figure, put that ribband of blue on his garment. He has made a public declaration that the flesh is worthless. And that while we are still in the flesh, he has also made a declaration that he desires to walk within the principles of righteousness. And he has given us an example, reminded us of our desire to walk circumspectly until our Master returns.

Israel failed! Ezekiel 16 is a graphic account of how Yahweh had taken them and spread his skirt (the word “*kanaph*” again) over them and covered their nakedness, and how they rejected Yahweh and forgot the ribband of blue, and went a whoring. Time prevents us from considering this in any detail.

We now come to consider the One who did not fail and who has gone before us, our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus. Turn with me to Matthew 9:18 – “While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment.

In Luke 8:44, it says it was the border of his garment. I believe, Brethren and Sisters, that that was the ribband of blue that surrounded Our **114—Berean 2006** Master’s garment, just like every other Israelite should have had.

This woman was in the midst of a crowd. You will remember it tells us particularly in Luke’s gospel that Our Lord and Master said, “Who touched me?”

The disciples said, “There’re people thronging about you everywhere. How can you say who touched me? You are being bumped and pushed around all the time in the crowds.”

Jesus perceived that virtue had gone out of him. The word virtue is the word elsewhere rendered power. The word in the Greek is *dunamis*, from which we get our word dynamo and dynamite.

Jesus perceived that someone had exercised faith in him and had touched the border of his garment. I’d like to think, Brethren and Sisters, that this wonderful woman exercised faith and deliberately touched the very part of Our Master’s garment that reminded one of the commandments of the Deity. She saw in him salvation.

This woman had suffered many things of physicians and had spent all that she had and was nothing better but rather grew worse. The effects of sin that was crippling her body could not be cured. She had spent everything that she had; she had wasted everything to try and be healed, but it was useless. The cares, the pleasures, the spiritual empirics of the world cannot heal us.

The living power of the Word made flesh—the logos—the Spirit of the Eternal Creator manifested in Christ Jesus is the only living power that can help us.

In our trials, in our temptations, in the times of stress and pressure, that can come upon us and will come upon us, in the mercy of the Deity, we have to make contact with him.

Bro. Growcott says, “Making contact with Christ is the simple solution to all our problems.”

We are all going to experience problems and trials. Bro. Thomas in Elpis Israel said, “Probation is the indispensable ordeal to which every man is subjected in the Providence of God, before we can become fit for the Master’s use.”

But, Brethren and Sisters, do not lose contact with God’s Son. Do not fail to make that regular contact with him through prayer and through the study of the Word. This is the simple solution to all our problems.

I’d like you to turn with me please to the book of Ruth, in chapter 3. The study of Ruth, we know, is a beautiful subject. This Moabitess manifested greater faith than the average person in Israel. She was a Moabite, so she was a Gentile, and as such **Berean 2006—115** we can perhaps make contact with her in that sense, as we too are Gentiles made nigh unto the covenants of promise through the blood of Christ, embracing the hope of Israel, declaring, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, whither thou lodgest, I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy Elohim my Elohim.”

She clave unto Naomi because she understood the words of salvation. And Boaz we know is the great redeemer. And in this third chapter, upon the advice of faithful Naomi, verse 3, Ruth is told to—

“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.”

Wash thyself, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee. I’d like us to think of that, Brethren and Sisters, with the same idea, and which it was, of a bride preparing herself for her husband—washing in the power of the Word and anointing with the spirit of holiness. And the Word of God is the means of developing that holy way of life.

We didn’t look at it, but in Numbers 15, the word holiness occurred there. Yahweh wanted the children of Israel to be holy. “Anoint thee and put thy raiment upon thee.” This is a great preparation as a bride who would prepare herself for her husband. The power of the Word must continue to be a living fire in our lives, as we prepare for the Master’s return. We need to prepare daily for the coming of the Bridegroom.

Then we read in verse 8 – “It came to pass at midnight...” Perhaps that is significant. It was at midnight the call came in the parable of the ten virgins—the bridegroom cometh; they that were ready, trimmed their lamps and went to meet him.

Continuing verse 8 – “...that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.” This was his bride-to-be, who had washed and anointed and put the apparel upon her, who was prepared now

to meet him, who was prepared for Boaz to provide the part of the redeemer.

Boaz said, “Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsmen.”

The word skirt there is the word kanaph, that we read about at the start in Numbers 15—the border of the garment, the border which contained the ribband of blue, the principles of God manifestation, of righteousness and salvation and redemption, and Ruth with that wonderful faith that she manifested as a Gentile looked to the Israelitish redeemer of Israel to spread his garment upon her and to redeem her. Brethren and Sisters, you and I **116—Berean 2006** have come to be in that position.

Chapter 4:13 – “Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.”

As we now come to remember, Brethren and Sisters, our beloved Master in the emblems which are before us—the bread and the wine, let us remember the glorious principles of redemption that we have had exemplified to us immeasurably when we witnessed the baptism of our new brother this morning. God’s arm is still not shortened that He cannot save. The work that He has started through His Son Christ Jesus in bringing many sons unto glory continues. And our Boaz, has spread as it were his border, his garment, that ribband of blue, those principles of salvation and righteousness over us.

Once again we partake of these emblems—the bread and the wine—bringing into our minds those same principles. Let us, Brethren and Sisters, hold fast to these glorious principles of truth, not just today. But let us struggle, let us strive to continue to walk in that circle, speaking of the eternal purpose of the Deity, which will be manifested ultimately in eternal life. Let us strive to continue to walk in those principles when we leave here, that when we stand before our beloved Master, he will see in us those same principles of God manifestation that is seen in perfection in Himself, that he will see a reflection of himself in us. That He will perpetuate it in granting us, in His love and mercy, that glorious and wonderful gift of immortality.

Bro. Phillip Hughes

## Bible Readings Notes - April

The following extracts from the preface to the Bible Companion explain their object and scope. “Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections, exhibited in the Scriptures. . . . The infallible advice then to every man and woman anxious about their salvation is, Read the Scriptures daily. . . . The man who sows sparingly in this respect will only reap sparingly. Much spiritual

fructification is only to be realized in connection with fructifying influences of the Spirit in the Word. . . . By a strict adherence to this plan from year to year, the reader will reap much profit, and find himself or herself gradually losing the insipidity of the natural mind, and taking on the warm and exalted tone of the Spirit’s teaching, which qualifies for the inheritance of the Saints in light

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The foregoing advice has been found by many earnest seekers after Truth to be of inestimable value. It has helped them to discover the Pearl of Great Price which is hidden in the Scriptures. Daily reading and meditation on the Word has characterized the servants of God in all ages. Job declared, “I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” David, the man after God’s own heart, exclaimed, “O how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day.” Jesus continually resorted to the sacred writings, and he exhorted his hearers to do the same. “Search the Scriptures.”

The Bereans were described as “noble, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). It is the earnest hope of the sponsors of this monthly production that many will be induced thereby to exhibit this Berean like virtue.

According to the plan, the daily readings in the Old Testament are from the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

## NUMBERS

The book of Numbers takes its name from the two numberings of the children of Israel recorded in chapters 1 and 26. It covers approximately the period of Israel’s forty years’ wanderings in the wilderness. It will be recalled that God condemned the generation which came out of Egypt to wander and die in the wilderness, because of their unfaithfulness in the matter of the spies’ report. Faith is an essential pre-requisite to acceptability to God. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Faith is defined as “confidence for a reason.” The Israelites had ample grounds for confidence in God, for they had witnessed His mighty works in Egypt. Yet they manifested an evil heart of unbelief (Heb. 3:12-19). We have equally strong grounds for faith, firstly, in the evidence of fulfilled prophecy, and, secondly, in the attested facts of Christ’s resurrection. Let us fail not as did Israel, but rather manifest a real, robust faith in God and His promises. The book of Numbers records many of the shortcomings of Israel—their murmurings (chap. 16), their rebellion (chap. 21), their idolatry (chap. 25). Let the reader carefully study the history of Israel. In alluding to these very chapters, Paul says, “They are written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10. 11). God is unchanging, and the same principles

which regulated His dealings with Israel are applicable to us. Disobedience is followed with punishment, faith with favour. The incident of the fiery serpents (chap. 21) should be read in the light of Christ's utterance (John 3. 14). It illustrates that salvation is obtainable only in Christ, "without whom there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Chapter 31 is instructive as illustrating the use in the Bible of the word "soul." It means "creature," and is applied in verse 28 to "persons, bees, asses, and sheep." The term has no reference to disembodied spirits.

## DEUTERONOMY

The book of Deuteronomy contains in the main three addresses delivered by Moses to the children of Israel who had been born in the Wilderness, and **118—Berean 2006** had not heard the original promulgation of the Law. The seventeen chapters to be read in April contain a rehearsal of the experiences of Israel, from their deliverance from Egypt to their arrival at the borders of the promised land. Notice the reference to their exceptional privileges and consequent responsibilities (chap. 4). Notice particularly God's declaration of Himself (chap. 6:4): "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord." These words are quoted by Christ (Mark 12. 29), and they demonstrate the Unity of God. The trinitarian conception of God is entirely unscriptural. Notice further the separation enjoined by God upon Israel (chap. 7). This separation is an essential feature of all God's servants. It has been enjoined upon Christ's followers (2 Cor. 6:14-18), and involves separation from the politics, pursuits, and pleasures of this present evil world. "Be ye holy" is the rule of conduct for all aspirants for the Kingdom of God.

## PROVERBS

The book of Proverbs is a collection of inspired maxims for the regulation of the lives of godly men and women. The keynote of the book is expressed in chap. 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." The daily reading of the book during April commences at chapter 11. Notice the reward promised to the righteous (verse 31): "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth." The earth, not heaven, is their future inheritance (Psalm 37:11; Matt. 5:5). Observe the reference to the all seeing character of God (chap 15:11). In chapter 21:16 the wise man teaches that the ignorant of God's law will never wake from the sleep of death. It is knowledge that makes an individual amenable to resurrection and judgment (John 12:48). Chapter 21:1 sets forth a comforting truth in days of political upheaval. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." It is the same truth expressed by Daniel (4:17), "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." All nations are under His control, and He is directing their affairs

towards the consummation of His purpose which is that the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's (Rev. 11:15).

## ECCLESIASTES

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The book of Ecclesiastes is a treatise on the vanity of all human endeavor, ambition, and attainments, unless the Law of God is the guiding principle. It points the way to the only wise use of life, which is summed up (chap. 12:13): "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." This conclusion is reached by a series of closely reasoned arguments. Human labor of itself is profitless (chap. 1:3). Man takes his place in the unending procession from the cradle to the grave, and is powerless to alter the inexorable laws which have been from the beginning of time. He spends his time and energies in acquiring worldly wisdom and possessions (chap. 1:17; 2:4), but it is all vanity. He dies and leaves them all behind. Like the beasts, he was created from the dust, and turns to dust again (chap. 3:20). In death he is unconscious (chap. 9:10), and is devoid of all power and feeling (chap. 9:5). The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is a pagan myth, and nowhere taught in the Scriptures. The Bible doctrine is that man is mortal (Rom. 5:12), that a future life is attainable only by resurrection (Dan. 12:2), and that only the faithful will receive it (Rom. 2:7). The book of Ecclesiastes teaches that the only wise use of life is to prepare for a future unending life by strict adherence to divine commands (chap. 12:14). The same teaching was expressed by Christ when he said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these (temporal) things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

The New Testament readings for the month are from Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, the gospel record by John, and the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

## GALATIANS

The epistle to the Galatians was written to combat the false teaching of certain Judaisers that salvation could be obtained by adherence to the Law of Moses, and not necessarily by faith in Jesus. In chapter 1 Paul demonstrates there is only One Gospel. Notice the apostle's insistence upon right belief. Sound doctrine must precede right practice. The keynote of the epistle is contained in chap. 2:16, "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Paul shows that this faith was exhibited even before the law through Moses was given. It moved Abraham to obey God (chap. 3:6). The gospel was preached to him in the words, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (chap. 3:8). Abraham was promised that he and his seed should inherit the earth for ever (Gen. 13. 15). Paul says that the seed was, firstly, Christ (chap. 3:16), and, secondly, all baptized believers (chap. 3:27-29). These promises are the

basis of God's plan of human redemption, and will be fulfilled at the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. Participation in them is predicted on a renouncing of the works of the flesh, and a cultivation of the fruits of the Spirit (chap. 5:19-24).

## EPHESIANS

The epistle to the Ephesians was written to impress upon believers their exalted position as the recipients of the Love of God, and the far-reaching blessings of the sacrifice of Christ. Formerly these Ephesians were “dead in trespasses and sins” (chap. 2:1), without Christ, and therefore without hope (chap. 2:12), but by their belief in the mission of Christ and the promises which center in him, they had become a part of the One Body of which Jesus is the Head (chap. 4:15). Paul exhorts them to holiness, love, and **120—Berean 2006** purity of life, as the only possible standard consistent with their exalted calling (chaps 4, 5, and 6).

## PHILIPPIANS

The epistle to the Philippians was written to encourage the believers to steadfastness in the faith. Notice Paul's reference to the hope of all the faithful (chap. 3:20 and 21). It is described as a “change of this vile body.” Immortality is to be enjoyed corporeally, after the pattern of the Lord himself (verse 21). He was a real, tangible being after his glorification, eating, drinking, and conversing with his disciples. His friends will be made like him (1 John 3:2), changed from flesh and blood to flesh and bones, energized by spirit after resurrection and judgment.

## JOHN

The purpose of the gospel record by John is expressed in chapter 20:31. “These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” Nowhere does it teach that Christ was “God the Son.” In chapter 1 it portrays him as the Word made flesh, i.e., the fulfillment of the promise declared from the beginning concerning a seed who should come, whose mission it would be to destroy the power of sin and death (Gen. 3:15). The divine origin of Christ is clearly portrayed (chap. 3:13), his divine authority (chap. 7:13), his possession of human nature (chap. 2:33; 12:27), his blameless character (chap. 8:46), his mission as the Savior of Mankind (chap. 3:16). These are the things concerning Christ, which it is “life eternal to know” (chap. 17:3).

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Acts of the Apostles describes the means by which the Truth was established in the earth in the first century. It opens with a reference to the infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection, and then refers to the promise of his return (chap. 1:11). These two doctrines were foremost in all the recorded discourses of the apostles (chap. 3:19; 4:10). The chapter

appointed for the last day of the month (chap. 8) contains a beautiful description of the purpose and mode of scriptural baptism, without which there can be no entrance into the Kingdom of God (John 3:5).

## Signs Of The Times – Moscow Involvement

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Hamas embarks on a quest for international legitimacy on Friday with an official visit to Russia, marking the Islamic militant group's first talks with a major power involved in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking.

Although it deals a blow to U.S.-led efforts to isolate Hamas since it swept Palestinian elections in January, Russia's mediation is seen by some in the West as a chance to talk the faction into renouncing violence and recognizing Israel. **Berean 2006—121**

In Israel, the Russian overtures toward Hamas drew denunciations at first. But the Jewish state has adopted a wait-and-see attitude since Russia emphasized it was sticking to the view of international mediators.

The United States said Russia must put pressure on Hamas to change its ideology.

"Our position is that if you are going to meet with a terrorist group, you should make it clear to them that their way of doing business is unacceptable, that their philosophy is contrary to the norms of the civilized world, and that they should get with the program," State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said.

Hamas, whose delegation is due to arrive in Moscow early on Friday, regards the visit as a chance to push its position on the international stage.

"We will listen to the Russian government's vision on the Arab-Israeli conflict and we will clarify our own vision," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said on Thursday.

"The visit in itself is a declaration of the failure of pressure exerted by the United States on the world to besiege Hamas," he said. "Now Hamas is on the threshold of international legitimacy, thanks to the visit by Hamas leaders to Moscow."

Hamas, whose charter calls for the Jewish state's destruction, has masterminded 60 suicide bombings during a Palestinian revolt but has largely abided by a truce declared last year which paved the way for Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

While so far ruling out permanent coexistence, Hamas has said it could accept a long-term ceasefire if Israel also quits all of the occupied West Bank and accepts an influx of Palestinian war refugees -- both non-starters for Israel.

Russia, among the Quartet of mediators for a "road map" to peaceful Palestinian statehood, is expected to tell the Hamas delegation, led by exiled politburo chief Khaled Meshaal, it must seek peace with Israel to win worldwide acceptance.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is expected to head Moscow's delegation.

By inviting Hamas to Moscow, President Vladimir Putin is seen as trying to boost Russia's diplomatic clout in the Middle East, on the wane since the Soviet Union fell.

Russia has also been trying to defuse the crisis over Iran's nuclear program, by proposing that Iranian uranium enrichment — a process that can produce bombs — takes place on its soil

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Reuters News Agency 2March

## The Great Movement Of The Post-Adventual Time

The Russo-Gogian enemy having been beaten off from the channel of the river (Euphrates) to the stream of Egypt (the Nile), "it shall come to pass that the great trumpet shall then be blown, and the Israelites shall come who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Yahweh in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah 37:12; 17:3). Another prophet says, "Adonai Yahweh shall blow the trumpet, and he shall be seen over Israel" (Zech. 9:14). The trumpet to be blown by the Anointed One of Yahweh, styled Adonai Yahweh, is a proclamation to the world: as it is written, "I will send, of those that escape to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, Lud, sounders of truth: to Jubal and Javan, the coasts far off that have not heard my name, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations" (Isaiah 66:19). "Yahweh gives the word; great is the company of those that publish it" (Psalm 68.).

This company is Apocalyptically represented as an "angel flying in the midst of the (Babylonian) heaven"; and the truth they sound out about the fame and glory of the Lord is styled "the good news of the aion." It commands the nations to transfer their allegiance to the Deity, under penalty of the judgment in case of refusal. Its words are, "Fear the Deity, and give glory to Him: for the hour of His judgment is come"; and to Israel scattered in all the Kingdom of Babylon, and in its capital especially, the proclamation saith. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

The sounding of this proclamation will cause a general movement among the Jews, who will be allured by it, and prepare to leave the lands of their captivity. "I will allure her, saith Yahweh, and bring her into the

wilderness, and speak friendly to her heart" (Hosea 2:14). As to the Latino-Babylonian powers of Europe, they will be stirred up to war by the proclamation. In the Apocalypse they are styled the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Kings of the earth; of whom it is said "they and their armies gathered together to make war against the Lamb, and against his army." When this war actually breaks out, the contest will be between the Jews as the Lord's army, and the armies of the Babylonian kings; and is styled, "the war of the Great day of God Almighty." The period of its continuance is the day during which "the judgment sits upon Daniel's fourth beast: and the result of which is, the "thrones are cast down," and their kingdoms become Yahweh's and his Christ's. **Berean 2006—123**

The time allotted to the blowing of the great trumpet will be, I doubt not, several years. There will be much to accomplish among the nations which do not belong to the Latino-Greek Babylonian dominion. Yahweh did not send Israel against the Canaanites till forty years after the fall of Pharaoh; and although it will not be so long as this, I have reason to believe that the war between the Jews and the Papal Powers will not begin until some time after the smiting of the Russo-Gogian Image; how long after is conjectural.

The great trumpet to be blown announces that "the hour of the Deity's judgment is come"; and in the apostrophe upon the fate of Babylon, it is said, "in one hour is Thy judgment come." Now, in that judgment, not only Rome, but the Papacy, or false Prophet-power, the imperial Beast that sustains it, and the Papal Governments and nations are judged. The time, therefore, in judging or executing vengeance upon the one, is the period of judgment for them all. At that crisis, they will all be confederates in arms against Christ and his armies; for it is written concerning the Papal powers, represented by the Ten Horns, or Ten Toes, of the Russo-Gogian Image, "they shall receive power as kings one hour with the Beast," or Little Horn, with the Eyes and Mouth. "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast." For the Deity hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of Deity shall be fulfilled. These shall make war with the Lamb. Therefore John says, "I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him and against his army." "But the Lamb shall overcome them:" for "the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, and cast alive into the lake of fire; and the remnant were slain with the sword of the King of kings and Lord of Lords," that is by Israel, as shown elsewhere.

Bible days are twelve hours long; so that an hour is the twelfth part of a daytime. If the time be an eniautos, that which returns upon itself, with another twelfth termed a month, then an hour signifies only thirty days, being diminished by the greater term, as in Rev. 9:15; but if it stand absolutely, that is, with no other sign to qualify it, it signifies thirty years, or the twelfth of a time of 360 years. Half-an-hour is used Apocalyptically

as significant of years in the saying, “there was silence in the heaven about the space of half-an-hour”; that is between the opening of the Seventh Seal and the casting fire upon the earth—a period, historically, of fourteen years, being “about the space,” but not quite “half-an-hour,” which is fifteen years. There was peace among the rulers for fourteen years, or, from A.D. 323 to 337, as may be seen by reference to Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

Thirty years, then, being the duration of an hour in these places, the confederacy of the Papal powers will continue thirty years, during which judgment is being executed upon them by the people of the holy ones, who torment them with all the calamities of war. These thirty years’ war are the last years of Micah’s forty for the grinding of the shattered elements of the Image to powder by the Stone, and ending with the annihilation of Babylon **124—Berean 2006** at the expiration of its 2520 years. —Bro. John Thomas

### World Is Nearing Climax

How far the work in its present form has to go, no man can tell. All that we know is that the world is nearing the climax foreshewn in the visions of God by Daniel and John and promised to the fathers from the beginning. We know this by many indications not to be mistaken, but the day and the hour has been successfully made obscure by the use of three periods—(1260, 1290, and 1335)—which mark out without clearly specifying the graduated endings of the age. The expiration of the 1260 has shown us the extinction of Papal coercion; the 1290 we wait to see the full meaning of; the 1335 we know will bring the full blessedness of the inheritance.

But these uncertainties can make no difference to our attitude as the believers and lovers and friends of the Lord, for whom we look. Over 1800 years ago, Paul exhorted the brethren to be “steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Would he say less to us, living in the very shadow of the Lord’s appearing? Certainly not. Our part, then is not so much to concern ourselves with theories of the times and seasons as to concern ourselves in those great and solid truths and those lovely personal qualifications and services that will give us a place in the Lord’s regard in the hour of His manifestation. Bro. Robert Roberts —1898

### Unpardonable Sin

The forgiven brother of 2 Cor. 2:7, in connection with 1 Cor. 5:2, was not guilty of the unforgivable sin spoken of in Heb. 6:4–6. The sin spoken of in the latter scripture is that of “falling away,” abandoning the position of faith and obedience, rejecting Christ a second time (verse 6); and that, too, after having been partakers of the Holy Spirit and the powers of the world to come (verses 4–5). It is reasonable that such an offender should not be reinstatable. “To whom much is given, of him shall much be required.”

A man who had both seen and possessed the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit was in the position of the Pharisees among whom Christ had

“done works that none other man did,” and who, therefore, he said, had no cloak (or excuse) for their sin in rejecting him (John 15:24, 22). The forgiven sinner of 2 Cor. 2:7, was a weak and penitent man whose sorrow, from what Paul says, was in danger of being excessive.

Bro. Robert Roberts —1897

### Looking for Flaws

Don’t look for flaws as you go through life  
And even when you find them,  
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,  
And look for the virtue behind them;  
For the cloudiest sky has a tint of light  
Somewhere in the shadows hiding:  
It is better by far to look for a star,  
Than for spots on the sun abiding.

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The current of life runs ever away  
To the bosom of God’s great ocean.  
Don’t set your face ‘gainst rivers’ course,  
And think to alter its motion;  
Don’t waste a curse on the universe,  
Don’t shrink at the trials before you;  
Don’t butt at the storm with your puny form,  
But bend and let it go over you.  
The world will never adjust itself  
To suit your whims to the letter;  
Some things must go wrong your whole life long,  
And the sooner you know it the better.  
It is folly to fight with the infinite  
And go under at last in the wrestle;  
The wisest man shapes into God’s plan  
As the water shapes into a vessel.

—E. W. W.

Thank you, E.W.W. Your smartly-expressed sentiments and exhortation reminds one of some scriptural injunctions easily forgotten, but good to remember. They are dedicated anew to those who “search out iniquities and make a man an offender for a word” (Psalm 64:6; Isaiah 29:29); who fail to cover with the cloak of Christ’s perfection the sins of their fellows; who continually look upon the faults of their brethren, instead of remembering the words of Paul, who tells us to observe: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report:” if there be any praise, if there be any virtue—to think on these things, rather than have the mind constantly brooding on evil. There are some who fail to discern the wisdom hidden in the words,

“If thou seest the oppression of the poor and the violent taking away of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for one higher than the high regardeth; and there be higher than they” (R.V.).

Let such take care and consider their ways lest they be numbered with those who learn the ways of the “scorners,” who “whet their tongues like a sword and aim their arrows even like bitter words: that they may shoot in secret places at the perfect” (Ibid). Those who do not observe the precepts of Christ and who condemn others feed their own self-esteem. As an English poet has said, “They compound for sins they are inclined to, by condemning those they have no mind to.” This habit grows until the spiritual perceptions of the man in Christ Jesus are dimmed. Bye-and-by they “stay away.” They cannot come **126—Berean 2006** to the meeting because some other man whom they hate is there. No one is good enough for their fellowship, and they die in isolation. However great their knowledge it only serves to sink them in the abyss of despair. As with a millstone they sink, and all the deeper because they have “known” Christ. More than one instance of shipwreck from this destroying agent has passed under my notice during my connection with the truth.

Bro. Henry Sulley’s American Travels 1899

### The Growth of Hatred

Hatred, says M. Dumas, shows itself now in universal irony, backbiting abuse, and malicious lies. Cannons are pointed across every frontier, revolvers are in every pocket, and vitriol is ready to be slipped into the milk cans. Go into the Parliament, and you will see deputies shaking fists in other’s faces.

Go into the churches, and you will see faction fights. German soldiers swear to their Emperor to fire on their own brethren. The French clergy are hoping for the old Pope to die soon because he preaches peace and obedience to the civil law. They want one to be elected who will hate even as they do. Hatred is no longer kept for foreigners alone, but is vented on men of the same race, blood, and family. Married couples never before mutually hated each other as they do now.

Marriage is no longer a blessed tie. The family falls to pieces. The man despises the woman, and the woman holds the man in contempt when she does not loathe him. Love has flown from the world. We have the comforting assurance that excess of evil will lead to good, and the world will wake up to see the ugliness of hatred, and love will be counted the right thing.

Bro. Robert Roberts—The Christadelphian—1894

No man should be condemned without the fullest opportunity of answer, whatever his crime may be. If on a proper hearing, he is found guilty, the apostolic rule requires that he should be “rebuked before all that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:20). If he defends his sin, or is without token of repentance, the same rule requires that he should be repudiated in all spiritual and social relations (Matt. 18:17; 2 Cor. 2:7). But it does not require this line of action if there is manifest repentance.

If he confesses and forsakes his sin, he is to have mercy (Prov. 28:13) for “all manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men but the sin against the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 12:31). If duly sensible of his offence, he is to be forgiven and comforted, “lest such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor. 2:7). This is according to the character of God revealed so abundantly, leading Him to say in Ezekiel, that “he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather that he should turn and live” (Ezek. 18:23).

Bro. Robert Roberts—The Christadelphian—1898  
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### What Does That Mean?

“And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.” (Num. 33:11)

Why was Joshua allowed into the tabernacle? We know from Numbers 13: 8 that he was from the tribe of Ephraim. Only Aaron and his sons, priests from the tribe of Levi were allowed into the Tabernacle. On what basis did Joshua gain entrance?

Whenever reading our Bibles we must carefully follow the context of what we are being told. Because we read the word translated “tabernacle” we immediately think of the structure made at Mt. Sinai containing the holy furniture, the ark, the golden lamp stand, the table of showbread, the altar of incense etc. but that is not what is spoken of in this verse.

The context of this verse is before “the tabernacle” was even made. This is talking about the time period when Moses went into the mount and received the instructions for making the tabernacle. This was a tent (tabernacle) that Moses set up outside the camp, not the one that was later to be in the midst of Israel. A few verses before (verse 7) tells us about this tent: “And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.”

Joshua was one who sought the LORD “without the camp” and so should we. In Hebrews chapter 13 verse 13 we are told, “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” Israel had sinned and made the golden calf, so temporarily Yahweh was not among them. Anyone from any tribe who sought the Lord in truth was accepted “outside the camp” outside the Mosaic order on a personal basis.

This incident not only occurred before the law regulating tabernacle function but is an allegory teaching us a vital lesson. The terrible sin of the Jewish people in crucifying their Messiah two thousand years ago was followed by Yahweh again removing Himself from His chosen people for a time. (Romans 11:11) Anyone today, seeking to worship God in truth must seek Him in the temporary dwellings that have been set up outside the Mosaic order. This is of course Ecclesias established among the Gentiles in various cities through the world.

When we read and study our Bibles carefully, not only do the apparent contradictions disappear, but we find a wonderful type and lesson containing exhortation for us today. “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

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*Bro. Jim Sommerville*