

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 The Berean Christadelphians 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

Richard, Sk.- Sunday School 10:00 AM, Memorial Meeting 11:20 AM. Bible Class Wed. evening 8:00 PM. Bro. Sid Jones, RR#1, Richard, Sk. Canada, S0M 2P0

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

The past number of months have been busy ones here at Richard, as I am sure they have been in other locations in our Lord's vineyard.

We held one of our Family and Friends Evenings on April 18, 2009, as an effort to preach to our friends and neighbors what we stand for, and what is the hope that we hold so dear. We had several visitors for the occasion, and we always hope that the bread cast on the water may bring Yahweh's plan to their attention in the days ahead.

We also held our 2009 Fraternal Gathering, and thoroughly enjoyed the companionship and fellowship of many of like precious faith. We wish to express our appreciation to all who attended, and who lent a hand in the effort, be it help with meal preparation, or those who ministered to the spiritual needs by teaching Sunday School or preparing gathering addresses. In these last days, we must needs refresh ourselves and one another along the way Zionward.

We rejoiced August 3rd, to be joined in walk by our new **Sis. Dawn Gill**. She is a very welcome addition to the ecclesia, and we look forward to the mutual support we can enjoy within the bonds of the truth.

We also rejoice with Bro. Jon and Sis. Liz Jackson at the birth of their son Aiden in the month of September. May he grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to become one of our Sunday school members, and if the Lord remains away, to be a worthy servant in the Lord's vineyard.

Over the past months we have enjoyed, in addition to those who attended our gathering, the company of Bro. Noel and Sis. Brenda McChesney of Edmonton Ecclesia, on several occasions, Sis. Grace Punter of Kindersley Sk. a few times, and also Bro. Jim, and Sis. Donna Snow, Holladay Tn. Ecclesia.

May the grace of our Lord be with you all,
Bro. Sid Jones

HENGOED, Wales, Breaking of Bread – 10.45am; Sunday School – 12.45pm; Lecture – 2.30pm; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class – held alternately in the homes of the brethren and sisters. Children's Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the home of Sis. Alison Hopper at 6.30pm.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

As another year comes to an end, we are conscious of being that much nearer to the Apocalypse of Jesus Anointed. Political events are taking place on the world scene that cannot fail to direct our minds to the prophetic writings. Some of the details may remain unclear, but the general direction is progressing to the end predetermined in the Scriptures of Truth. We also grow to value more and more the sound prophetic interpretations of Bro. Thomas. Various theories are being propounded by other groups, but we are certain that our safety and fidelity lies in the writings of the Doctor. Let us all hold fast to them, be thankful for them, and eschew the Athenian teachings that continue to blow with unrelenting force.

Since our last ecclesial news we have once again enjoyed the company of visiting brethren and sisters. During the weekend of 18th April we enjoyed the company of Bro. Len Naglieri again. We had a Family Day on the Saturday at the seaside town of Llansteffan where the children were able to use some of their boundless energy. In the evening we met at the hospitable home of Bro. Stephen and Sis. Vivien Ford for refreshments. This was followed by a talk by Bro. Steve Male on fishing and fishing nets. While directed at the young, all ages were able to learn and enjoy the exposition of the Word.

We would also like to thank Bro. Len for providing the word of exhortation at Hengoed on the Sunday morning. We appreciate Bro. Len taking the time to visit us during his business trip.

During June, we had the pleasure of the company of Bro. Glendon Rhoades, Sis. Jessica Rhoades, Sis. Amy Hurst of Goldthwaite, and Sis. Carolyn Dylla of Houston. It was an enjoyable experience to have the young brother and sisters. The vigorous discussions around the Daily Readings were spiritually stimulating and thought provoking. We would also like to thank Bro. Glendon for providing the word of exhortation on the Sunday morning.

During July, Bro. Steve and Sis. Gwen Armstrong visited the ecclesia, which provided support for the few who were unable to get to the Hye Gathering. We thank Bro. Steve for providing the necessary word of exhortation on that occasion.

Bro. Stephen and Sis. Vivien Ford have also visited us on a number of occasions, and we have enjoyed their company.

Finally, we held our Autumn Study weekend on the 19th September where we considered some of the Psalms of David (Psalms 36 to 41). The mental anguish of David and of his greater Son were considered in great detail, leading us to a greater appreciation of the suffering of the man after God's own heart, and the inner thoughts of the Master which are not revealed in the Gospels. We enjoyed the fellowship of Bro. Stephen and Sis. Vivien Ford, and Sis. Marilyn Dobson during the weekend, and appreciate their making the effort to meet with us.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Hengoed Ecclesia,

Bro. Phillip Hughes

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**May 21–24, 2010**

Bro. Steve Male, 19 Glas Y Gors, Aberdare, CF44 0BQ, Wales, UK. Email tiscali.co.uk

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 11–13, 2010**

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July 26–Aug 1, 2010**

Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Drive, Buda, TX 78610, USA. 1-512-295-2868, email markbraune@gmail.com

The Study

Class will be on the book of Daniel.

The BCAA

A website called Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3.

The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please bookmark this link as we will be updating this archive with new material as much as possible.

The main purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard. The quality of the material will vary; they have been transferred from audio cassettes and reel to reel tapes. Some have occasional distortion and tape flips.

It is an ongoing project, and we have lots of material to work with. However, we are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email either Brother Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) or Brother Noah Brown (sbsugar@gmail.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to mp3 format and post them.

Any comments and questions are very welcome; we want this website to become a resource for brethren and sisters worldwide.

Cities of Men and of God

We have all doubtless often been struck by the remarkable coincidental relationship between the various parts of a day's daily readings, revealing the marvelous interweavings of the harmony and unity of God's Word.

Such is the case when we find ourselves, by the "Companion," reading Isa. 52 and Rev. 14 together. Therein we have a parallel picture of history's two great symbolic cities, with their ultimate destinies—*Jerusalem and Babylon*.

Isa. 52:1—"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments O Jerusalem, the Holy City; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

And Rev. 14:8—"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

The *Holy City*, the city of life and hope and light—and the *Unholy City*, the city of death and confusion and evil. The city of future eternal joy—and the city of present, passing pleasure.

Both these chapters carry us forward to the time when the wisdom of the true choice will be manifested for the blindest to see—Zion exalted and Babylon destroyed. No exhortation or persuasion will be needed then to point out the advantages of the more excellent way. It will be convincingly clear to all, but the books will have been closed and the decree will have gone forth:

"He that is unjust, LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL" (Rev. 22:11).

Too late then to seek oil in panic-stricken confusion. There was plenty of time once, and constant pleadings, but now it is too late.

This picture of two cities, two rival commonwealths, is woven all through the Scriptures. This pictorial and allegorical form of teaching greatly helps the memory and impresses the imagination.

The seed of the Serpent and the seed of the Woman run parallel right from the beginning. From the time Cain hated and slew Abel because he was annoyed and condemned by Abel's more faithful and fuller life, the two cities have existed. Cain went, we are told, and *built himself a city* (Gen. 4:17)—an establishment, a center, an organization, a foundation of power. *Abel already HAD a city*. He was satisfied and secure. So Cain hated him in the misery of his own misdirected and unsatisfied desires.

The sons of God, in the long years that followed, tired of the Zionward journey. The vision of their distant city grew dim. The glittering cities of the children of men drew them aside and the result was the greatest catastrophe that has yet befallen the race.

Out of the wreckage, only eight were saved, and even among those eight, *all was not well*.

And when men began to multiply again, they said (Gen. 11:4):

"Go to, let us BUILD US A CITY."

Give us a city, give us a king, give us something we can see and handle, something social and exciting. This *spiritual City*, this *divine King*, this "joy of the Spirit" and "treasure in heaven" are rather thin fare for the natural appetite. *"Our soul loatheth this light bread"*—this divinely-provided manna from heaven.

But there was one among them who could see through the emptiness of the present. Abraham set forth seeking *"a city that had foundations"* (Heb. 11:10). He was obsessed with a desire for something *real and lasting*. He knew that (Psa. 127:1)—

"Except the Lord build, they labor in vain that build it."

So he sought for a city—

“Whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

By God's guidance he found the *City of Peace* with the *King of Righteousness* reigning in it (Gen. 14:18), set high upon a mountain in the *Land of Promise*. And Abraham was satisfied, for he saw afar off the glory of this city, and he believed these things, and embraced them, and confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim separated from the cities of the children of men and waiting in faith for the City of God.

Not far from this mountain, in the attractive green valleys below, there was a city of the children of men. And God said to Lot:

“Get you out of *THIS* place...escape to the *MOUNTAINS*...lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of *THIS CITY*.”

And so another chapter in the lessons of God was written, and Sodom, the city of corruption, added its name and example to Babel, the city of confusion.

* * *

Isaiah says, in this 52nd chapter, verse 4,

“My people went down aforesaid into Egypt.”

See how marvelously the hand of God worked in this! And as we read, let us be impressed with the inexorable workings of God's justice—slow, invisible, often disguised, but *terribly sure and strikingly fitting*. Rebekah misled Jacob, very well-meaning but misguided; Jacob deceived Isaac, still well-meaning but still deception; Laban deceived Jacob, not quite so well-meaning; Jacob's sons deceived Jacob and sold Joseph into slavery into Egypt, ill-meaning and vicious; and finally the Egyptians betrayed and enslaved the Israelites and killed *their* children as *they* had thought to do to Joseph. *What a gradually broadening chain of evil and sorrow!*

And what did the Israelites have to do in Egypt? Exo. 1:11—

“They built for Pharaoh treasure cities, *Pithom and Raamses*.”

What irony! The sons of God sunk to ignorant slavery and forced to build cities for earthly treasures of the children of men!

* * *

The next typical unholy city was Jericho. This was an important place, a strong fortress, the gateway to the conquest of the land of promise. It was the first city confronting the Israelites as they set out to occupy their inheritance; its defeat was miraculous and symbolic, and its destruction was complete.

It is several times called “the city of palm trees.” Now palms throughout the Scriptures represent triumph and joy—victory after faithful struggle. Palms so appear in the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40), at Christ's royal entry into Jerusalem (John 12: 13), and in the hands of the victorious host before the throne (Rev. 7:9). In Psalms (92:12) and the Song of Solomon (7:7), the righteous are likened to the straight, erect beauty of the palm tree.

How then is Jericho, the *unholy* city, a “city of palm trees”? Because Jericho is a *counterfeit* copy of the true. The palm trees indicate that Jericho is not just the cities of men generally, but the false *ecclesiastical* city. There is one reference to palm trees that gives us a hint of this meaning. Speaking of the heathen idols, Jeremiah says (10:5)—

“They are upright as the palm tree, *BUT SPEAK NOT*” (10:5).

They have a dead form of godliness, but lack the living power. Trees without fruit, twice dead (Jude 12). In this light, the Roman system is pre-eminently a “city of palm trees,” for their dead idols are legion.

As the destruction of the hosts of Sihon and Og typify the defeat of Gog, so the subduing of Canaan with its *seven* (or completeness of) nations typifies the subduing of the earth. And Jericho came first. At the seventh trumpet-sounding on the seventh day, Jericho fell. So will great Babylon, the unholy city.

Jericho had to be utterly destroyed. The other cities of the land they took over and used—but *not Jericho*. As the fourth beast (Dan. 7:11), a curse of perpetual destruction was put upon it. It was never to be rebuilt (Josh. 6:26).

But what happened? Someone in the host of Israel did not realize the terrible reality and power of the One Who was in their midst and led them, and great trouble came upon the whole camp as a result until they had put away the covetous one from among them. God had promised them abundance in His good time, but *here was something they could not have*.

But Achan was out of harmony with the purpose. He could not wait for God. “*Is it a time to receive money and to receive garments?*” said Elisha to Gehazi (2 Kgs. 5:26). First things first, and all things in God's order. “*Verily they HAVE their reward.*” Achan said (Josh. 7:21),

“*I SAW...I COVETED...I TOOK...and I HID.*”

He *THOUGHT* he hid. What a pitiful delusion! He dug a hole and hid it away from God! Is it possible that *we* sometimes are as foolish as that?

And what was it? “*A goodly Babylonian garment.*” What a snare those goodly Babylonish garments have been to the children of God all through the ages! It was a “goodly” one—doubtless one of Babylon's best, and the *very latest model*. But was it worth the price he paid for it?

John saw the unholy city in a goodly Babylonish garment:

“*And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls*” (Rev. 17:4).

Her gold and precious stones and pearls are counterfeit, as are her palm trees. Her ostentatious parading of these apparently genuine symbols of righteousness and truth deceives the world and in a subtler way may deceive the very elect. Believers are in little danger of deception by the bare Church of Rome itself, or her many ecclesiastical daughters; but her institutions, customs and thinkings permeate the world. The fourth empire still exists in universal diffusion. It is still a Roman world. And each year, on Dec. 25, this Roman world pays more or less conscious homage to the scarlet woman on the seven hills.

“*By her sorceries were all nations deceived*” (Rev. 18:23).

But Isaiah in this 52nd chapter, verse 1, tells us of better garments than the flashy tinsel of Rome:

“*Put on THY beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city.*”

Here is a refreshing and satisfying change of scene. Here is the beauty of holiness, which so delighted the heart of the Psalmist:

“*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*” (Psa. 29:2).

What is this holiness, without which *none shall see the Lord* (Heb. 12:14)? It is nothing strange or mysterious. The word simply means “separateness.” Worship the Lord in the beauty of separateness—separateness from anything that is displeasing to God or out of harmony with His ways. We can see immediately that the result must necessarily be *perfect beauty*.

It is not necessary to point out the desirability of beauty, but it *is* necessary to learn what, in God's sight, constitutes beauty, and what mars it. Solomon says (Eccl. 3:11-14)—

“*He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also He hath set eternity in their heart...Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him.*”

He hath made everything beautiful in its time. All *God's* work, and everything associated with *Him*, is beautiful. Apart from God, *nothing* is. Of natural attractiveness, unassociated with God, Solomon says again—

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain” (Prov. 31:30-RSV).

And further (Prov. 11:22)—

“Beauty without spiritual understanding is like a jewel in a swine's snout.”

Wisdom will always perceive and be repelled by the snout behind the jewel. So beauty is purely a matter of spiritual education and discernment. It is inward, and not outward—

“Whose adorning let it NOT be that OUTWARD adorning (like the scarlet woman), but the HIDDEN man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit” (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

There *is* one item of outward glory and beauty that God *has* expressed delight in; one that He Himself has expressly created for glory. While of great beauty and dignity in itself, its chief beauty in God's eyes lies in its evidence of wisdom and discernment and humble acceptance of, and obedience to, God's will. Its importance rests in its symbolism of harmonious, God-appointed relationship. In God's love and wisdom He has made this a token of blessing and honor, and the marring of it a matter of sorrow and shame. *God's mind is expressed in 1 Cor. 11:6, 15.*

The world's fashions in beauty vary with every age and every nation. What is beauty to one nation appears quite hideous to another. But God never changes. Are we wearing *His* holy garments—appointed “for glory and for beauty”—or the *world's*? When we are called to the judgment seat, we shall have to go as we are. The importance of some of the desires God has expressed may strike us a little more forcibly *then* than now.

* * *

*“Put on **thy** beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the **holy** city. From henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.”*

As custodians of the holy city, believers have the solemn responsibility of maintaining its standards and laws. Bro. Roberts says on this point:

“If the knowledge of the Truth fail to beget the new man in the heart of the sinner, the baptism following his knowledge is not a birth. It is a mere performance of no benefit to him, but rather to his condemnation...”

“It ought, therefore, to be seriously considered by all who contemplate that step, and **by all who are called upon to assist them**, whether there is EVIDENCE of death to sin before arrangements are made for burial. The burial of a living man is cruelty. It were better for the sinner to leave God's covenant alone than to make a mockery of it.”—Further Seasons, pg. 13.

It is no kindness to either the city or the individual to bring in the uncircumcised in heart. The issues are too serious. The Holy City—*God's city*—has been in degradation and misery for 25 centuries. *Why?* Because the custodians of its holiness neglected to keep it holy. What an unforgettable lesson!

* * *

Vs. 3: *“Ye have sold yourselves for nought...”*

We are often reminded that the Jews are God's witnesses. What a sad witness they are to this eternal truth! What have they gained by putting aside the loving guidance and restraints of God's arrangements, and seeking their own pleasure and benefit?

“Unto them were committed the oracles of God...To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, the service of God, and the promises.”

What great blessings this people had! What great responsibilities these blessings entailed! What terrible punishments because they had been allowed to approach so close to God, and *yet* had failed to discern His mind or be transformed by His love!

“...and ye shall be redeemed without money.”

God's purpose will not fail. Regardless of man's failure, injustice or unkindness, we have the divine and eternal assurance that certain things are sure and guaranteed. And Israel's long night is not purposeless. The nation will rise out of it purged and white.

What does He mean, “redeemed *without money*”? Surely this refers to the “*stone cut out of the mountain without hands.*”

“Not by power, nor by might, but by MY spirit, saith the Lord.”

When all natural strength and resources are spent and cast aside, *then* will redemption come. The proud and militant Jews of Palestine have a sad and bitter lesson to learn before that day. And so it is with spiritual Israel (2 Cor. 12:9)—

“MY strength (saith God) is made perfect in weakness.”

The proud, able, self-reliant—all such are no value to God.

* * *

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace and salvation” (v. 7).

Here is real and divine and eternal beauty. The Spirit through Solomon speaks of these beautiful feet in the Song of Songs (7:1)—

*“How beautiful are thy feet **with shoes**, O prince's daughter!”*

The divinely-appointed shoes whereby they walk in the ways of God, and run to do His bidding.

John sees these feet as flaming pillars of the fires of *war*, purging the dross and ugliness of the earth, preparing it for eternal beauty (Rev. 10:1). Paul sees them shod with the preparation of the gospel of *peace* (Eph. 6:15).

* * *

V. 8: *“They shall SEE EYE TO EYE when the Lord shall bring again Zion.”*

Why is it necessary to say that? The sad history of Israel, both natural and spiritual, show how real and necessary this blessing will be. Consider the Jews—at the greatest moment of their history for the past 2000 years, faced naturally speaking with their supreme crisis—yet torn by bitter factions among themselves. And we remember the words of Joseph, as he sent forth his brethren with a message of life and hope for the perishing, “*See that ye fall not out by the way*” (Gen. 45:24).

* * *

V. 11: *“Depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing. Go ye out of the midst of her.”*

That same warning again. That same picture of the two cities—come *out* of one and enter the other. Paul quotes these words of the Spirit through Isaiah when he says (2 Cor. 6:14-17)—

*“Come **out** from among them and be **separate** and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you and be a Father unto you.”*

On this condition alone will God accept us as children.

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

Face of Cherub Replaces Face of Ox

We would like to first read a portion of one verse, Acts 11:26:

“And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

I don't know if that was meant to be a compliment or a derogatory term. A footnote at the bottom of that Bible said derogatory.

Christians are meeting this morning all over this community, in this state, in this country and where ever they meet through the world.

There are many different denominations, but basically they believe the same thing. They believe that in the passing of an individual they immediately enter heaven into the arms of loved ones or the unfortunates descend into a sulfur burning hell.

They believe in 3 gods, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, yet the 3 are one.

They believe in an immortal soul and that Jesus died as a substitute – He died in their place.

But there is a small group meeting here and meeting there – worshiping with another mindset – We know what we believe – We know why we believe it – And we can prove it with many infallible proofs from God's Holy Word.

Believing in the Truth, has not been easy. Much of God's people have suffered many trials and tribulations. They have been tortured, sawed in half; burned at the stake and fed to wild beasts and treated with disrespect, humiliation, disdain.

But worst of all, so many have been subtly led away by false doctrine and have become apostate.

Isaiah said this of the Jews: *“This is a rebellious people, lying children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”*

So it was 2,500 years ago when the Kingdom of Judah had been under the hand or under the control of the Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar, who was in turn under the control of the hand of God.

Just as easily as we can manipulate a hand puppet, God maneuvered Nebuchadnezzar trying to give the Jews a last opportunity to turn to Him, the One True God – the God of their Fathers.

They continually refused, so that wonderful Kingdom of God was overthrown and its inhabitants were carried to Babylon.

By 1,500 B.C. the third wave of Jewish captives were marched to Babylon.

The idea was to take a population and move them out of their own land and replace the moved population with people of another land.

It was to destroy patriotism and to shake their faith in their religion and to conquer the captives' morale.

With this third wave was a 30 year old prophet prepared by God and chosen by God to preach to God's people in that faraway land. He received God's Word and visions.

It is in Ezekiel (Ch. 37) that we read of dry bones when he says: *“And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin, and put breath in you and you shall live.”*

Speaking of that wonderful prophecy, the Jews returned to their land and fulfilled it in 1948 – 61 years ago.

It is Ezekiel that tells us of that Great Gogian Host coming from the north to cover the land of Israel to take a spoil.

Unbeknown to that host of people, it is again the power of God pulling them down for the reason to show the world that He is God and there is none other.

Their destruction will be accomplished by our subject the Cherubim of Glory, a symbolic representation of the multitudinous Christ. The Bride of Christ – this collection of One.

This brings us to Ezekiel Chapters 1 & 10. It is these two chapters and others that the subject is the Cherubim, that many believe to be some of the deepest things of the Truth.

I admit that this study has been somewhat of a challenge for me. I have done a lot of reading on the Cherubim, and study that I am afraid that I might never have done if not preparing this talk.

Proverbs, the 25th Chapter, tells us: *“It is the Glory of God to conceal a thing but the honor of Kings is to search out a matter.”*

This morning we will continue our thoughts on the Vision of the Cherubim of Glory, specifically mentioning a change in one of the faces of the Cherubim in the 10th Chapter.

Ezekiel tells us of the vision, that he was looking in a northerly direction and in the distance he sees a whirlwind, a great cloud, and a fire coming out of the north sweeping towards him.

And out of the fire comes the likeness of four living creatures that moved with the Spirit. They have the likeness of a man and every one had four faces and every one four wings.

All four had faces of man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle.

They had the appearance of burning coals of fire and the appearance of a lamp. Each had the man-face looking towards him. And they had four wheels and they were as though they were a wheel within a wheel and they were so high they were dreadful.

We see these strange symbolic figures appearance throughout the Word of God, from Genesis 3 in the Garden of Eden to Revelation 4.

Cherubim seem to appear at times of great change or that something significant has happened.

For example, the fall of Adam and Eve and the Cherubim are placed by the Tree of Life.

It appeared when the Ark with the Cherubim was brought to Jerusalem by David after many years of wandering in the wilderness and being held captive by Gentiles.

Bro. Growcott states that the Cherubim are pictorial representations of the Memorial Yahweh. The eternal divine purpose, and the manifestation of the Glory of God in a host of redeemed ones.

He continues by saying, *“Basically their likeness is the likeness of man, because it is the gracious purpose of our God to manifest Himself in a multitude taken from among men.”*

The Cherubim’s fundamental characteristic is Life. They are collectively “The Living One,” “the One of Life.” They are full of ceaseless, intense, joyful activity.

Even when they are standing still, there is the appearance of endless, tireless, vigorously exuberant motion.

The whole appearance speaks of life without end, energy without any limit, and joy unlimited.

Ezekiel in his vision, while on the River Chebar, is watching the man-face travelling towards him, with the lion-face on the right, the ox-face on the left and the eagle-face at the back. He is south of the vision.

In Chapter 10 of this prophecy he describes the Cherubic Vision again, but with a significant change. Everyone had four faces, the first was a face of a Cherub, and the second face the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

In Chapter 1, the first face was the face of man, but in Chapter 10, the first is a face of a Cherub in place of the Ox.

Remember this is a vision, not fact.

In Chapter 10 Ezekiel has been taken to Jerusalem in a position close to the door of the Temple. It is the same vision, but viewed from a new position. He now sees it from the west.

As the Cherubim were moving east, the man-face would lead the way, and the ox-face would bring up the rear.

To Ezekiel, looking at the departing vision from the west, this ox-face would be the first and nearest one to him.

Ezekiel declares, the first faced was the face of a Cherub, not ox.

In this description, the four faces on each of the four heads look the same direction and are identical to the standards of Israel. This would be how they marched and camped across the wilderness in the days of Moses, four groups of three tribes. This grouping was for order and protection.

The standard just mentioned was a pole with an army's emblem on top and for Israel each face stood for a group of three of each tribe.

These are the same faces representing True Israel.

These two visions are also for you and me, brothers and sisters. They are for all who have a desire to be part of the Bridegroom of Christ. For all these that want to be part of that Multitudinous Christ – Part of the Redeemed. Those that want to be part of the symbolic Cherubim of Glory.

We cannot be like the Children of Israel and defy their God.

Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day to make changes in our lives. We must first realize that we can do nothing on our own, all is of the Father. We can show Him our desire, with our hearts poured out, we can ask for His guidance and help. The change will come in how we think and how we act.

The rules are very simple and easy to understand. We simply have to make the right choices day by day.

We know the Truth and we realize we can't have one foot in the world and one foot following Christ.

As we see the vision of the face of the Ox, we know it is still in the times of the Gentiles – We are still plagued with sin in the flesh.

The Ox represents hard work, extreme labor and dedication to the Master. There is still a job to do until the end.

There are guidelines and attributes that we can genuinely make part of our lives.

Long suffering – we are to be patient with people, even for those that make it difficult.

It is easy to criticize them and give up when they need you to endure. I looked up the definition of endure and it means to suffer patiently.

If we are not careful, those in need will begin to shy away when they see our intolerance and then we have missed an opportunity to help a brother or sister in need.

Goodness – We need to just be good to our fellow man. Occasionally we hear the praise “he's just a good man”.

Gracious – I looked that word up too. It means “disposed to show grace or favor – kind, benevolent, courteous, indulgent, merciful, compassionate.

Finding Fault, – being too critical. Being critical is so common, so easy, yet it is so damaging to both parties. To find good in each other can be healthy and profitable to all.

Pliable to Divine Will – That is to be easily influenced by the Spirit Word of God. To be humble is an advantage, so God can move us, manipulate us and correct us as needed.

God tried to help Israel, but they would not have it. Let us be part of that True Israel.

Devote our time and energy – all is lost if we cannot find time and energy to serve our Heavenly Father, His Son and our brothers and sisters and our neighbors.

If we work 8 hours a day, sleep 8 hours a day, then we only have 8 hours left out of 24 hours. In that 8 hours we are to drive to work, eat 3 meals a day, devote time to our family, visit each other, do our readings and all other things that need to be done.

It is imperative that we serve God and redeem what time is left. Our talents are one way we can serve and have positive satisfaction in our lives.

For example: If you are a good teacher, we don't necessarily mean a degreed teacher, but one with that talent, find ways to teach others. Make hearing fun, especially on things of the Truth.

If you are able financially, help those in need and teach them ways to save and how to take care of what they have.

If you are one that sees the optimistic bottle half full, you always look on the bright side, get with those who are down and need to be lifted up, that need encouragement. Teach us how not to worry.

If you are a good communicator, a good talker, visit the sick, initiate a conversation with aliens on the Truth, visit nursing homes. Greet brothers and sisters as they come into the hall – making them feel welcome.

If you are a good cook – send meals to those in need. Have a class with the young people and be creative and have fun.

If you are a talented singer, offer your time to help others be better singers. To make a joyful noise.

I would like to make a very important point – you don't have to be a good cook to take food to those in need.

You don't have to be a good singer to sing. You don't have to have a lot of money to help someone in financial need.

We are brother and sisters of Christ and we are always ready to help where ever it may be.

It will soon be time for that Cherub face to appear. We just pray that each and everyone of us are ready.

We don't know if it will be a knock at the door, a tap on the shoulder, or just the sound of a trumpet – it's coming.

It will be a frightful thing if the judge is not pleased with us. We can fool our friends, but we can't fool our Heavenly Father.

For those that are pleasing to our Heavenly Father, they can look forward to this:

I Cor. 15:51-58, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of

the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
Bro. Gary Smith

Signs

“...as with the servant, so with the master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.” Isaiah 24:2

As in the Old Testament time of Israel’s disobedience, so in our day, no one will escape the judgements that are coming upon the world. The credit crunch that is effecting every part of society (buyer, seller, lender borrower) is surely just a small insight into what is to come to pass at Christ’s return.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which oversees the global economy, warns that potential losses from the credit crunch could reach \$1 trillion and may be higher. The UK government is warning that we are facing the worst economic crisis for 60 years. Mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – which account for nearly half of the outstanding mortgages in the US – are rescued by the US government in one of the largest bailouts in US history. Published figures show house sales are at their lowest level for 30 years in the UK, with 1 million homeowners now owing more on their mortgages than what their properties are worth. The European Commission, warned that the UK, Germany and Spain will go into recession by the end of the year. (BBC) The US House of representatives passed a \$700 billion plan to attempt a rescue of the financial sector, with the UK government also announcing they will pump billions of pounds into the banks. But will it be enough?

Bro. Sulley on pg. 102 in the book “The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy” considered the state of the world after Christ’s return — “War, revolution, fire and sword, have done their work; society is disorganized, and all business is at an end. The merchant, the tradesman, the master and the servant, the lady and her maid, all brought to one common level. The unemployed “no longer parading their hunger-bitten and thinly clad forms in our streets; all are unemployed, and none have work to do.” For before those days (the days of the building of the Temple) there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there peace to him that went out or came in, because of the affliction.” All confidence in “the money market” gone, for there will be “neither buyer or seller;” all stocks and shares worthless; all “bonds” lost in the general upheaval of society; all “securities” swept away. No banks, scarcely any money; little or no bread; clothing scarce; every household desolate; and probably not a family in which “there will not be one dead”.

A terrible state of things, truly. But is the scene altogether desolate, or is there a ray of light leading the disconsolate wanderer to newness of life? A voice is heard from Zion, sounding through all the earth: Come and build my city. Have not I spoken it? Are not my people waiting upon the fulfillment of my words? *“And when these things begin to come to pass...lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.”* (Luke 21:28)

* * *

“Behold I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.” Ezekiel 38:3

We watched with great interest this past week as Russian state owned lender–Sherbank–along with a Canadian car parts company, purchased a 55 per cent controlling stake in General Motors Europe. Russia intends on becoming the financing arm of a new Russian and Eastern European car manufacturing empire with global reach. Germany has promised £4.5 billion to rescue Opel and Vauxhall – £600 million of which will go to Russia to invest in its automotive industry. The Russian Prime Minister Putin said, “This is one of the first steps that will take us towards real integration into the European economy.” (Times 14/9/09)

We know that before long Russia will dominate the European economy as well as Europe's energy supply as the “chief prince”. Even Pres. Obama has backed down on plans to build US missile defence

shields in Poland and Czech Republic. This is seen as a dangerous appeasement gesture to Russia. (Times 18/09/09)

It was also reported this month of a secret trip to Moscow, by Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, to urge Russia not to sell weapons to Israel's enemies. It was claimed that a sea cargo ship headed for Iran was carrying anti aircraft missiles to Iran when it was intercepted by the Russian navy. However, the Kremlin defended its right to sell S300 air defence missiles to Iran. (Times 11/09/09)

It emerged this week that tunneling work was being carried out to build an underground nuclear facility near Qom, deep inside a Revolutionary Guards site. Obama has known about the site since entering office, but Israel has known about the site for years, and has already made detailed plans for destroying the plant. Apparently it would be unsuitable for producing reactor fuel that would be used for peaceful nuclear energy. Pres. Ahmadinejad insists that what they have done is completely legal, despite the fact that they didn't bother to inform the IAEA about its existence until a couple of days ago. America, Britain and France are threatening to make "crippling sanctions" against Iran, but they will need the backing of Russia and China, which they have not had in the past. Will this lead to WWII? The nations look for peace, but Yahweh is a man of war (Ex 15); He hath a controversy with the nations (Jer. 25); Proclaim ye this: Prepare War! (Joel 3).
—*Contact Magazine*

Encouraging Words No. 2

MOTHERS! do not be timid in inculcating upon your children divine precept and practice. Is it a question of reading the scriptures, of standing aside from the world and its ways, of attending the meetings? Then hesitate not to be outspoken. You are careful with your children in enforcing the laws of the land and the unwritten laws of propriety. Do not let your recognition of the policeman and Mrs. Grundy outstep your regard for God. Mothers! stir up your faith; apply yourselves to the word and its infallible teaching; strive to realise that God is, and that His pleasure is the only object which will endure. With your minds thus braced, apply yourselves anew to the instruction of your offspring, and there will be fewer complaints concerning worldly and ungodly children. If your children should grow up to disregard God, let not their perversity be chargeable to your folly or neglect.

Strive to make your children realise that God and Christ, though unseen, are present in the assemblies of the brethren; and teach them to conduct themselves accordingly. Cease not your vigilance in this respect when they are in a transition state from childhood to adolescence. Remind them, if necessary, that a closed book during reading or singing is a sign not of manliness or womanliness, but of irreverence; that audible remarks and whispering, whether upon the service or otherwise, are an infringement of duty towards God and man. The transition age is an awkward, critical time, but your incessant and gentle pruning will effect much in developing sturdy young trees. A child who neglects to honour God, to be courteous and considerate to his neighbour, and obedient to his parents, will be of little use to God or man. Paul looked forward to his converts forming for him "a crown and rejoicing" in the day of Christ's coming. Let a similar hope actuate you in regard to your children.

Mothers! safeguard your children against the higher critic canker by carefully instructing them in the Scriptures and familiarising them with the evidences of their truth. A generation ago reverence for the Bible as the inspired Word of God, even when its teaching was ignored and perverted, was an item of common instruction. But how is the Bible regarded today? It is largely looked upon as of human concoction, and teachers of the young are openly advised by the highest religious leaders to incorporate this idea in their instruction. Surely the sin, in this matter, of the present age must reach up to heaven! If it be a wicked act to slander a man and take away his character, what shall we say when this is done to God's Word? Mothers! correct teaching—God's teaching—concerning the truth of the Bible is largely in your hands. Keep yourselves alert and watchful in this matter. Fortify the young minds against unbelief by familiarising them with the evidences contained in such simple subjects as the Jews, fulfilled prophecy, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, etc. Follow in the footsteps of Lois and Eunice, that it may be said of your young charges, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to

make thee wise unto salvation.” What Timothy had learned, he had been assured of (2 Tim. 3:14). Let it be your aim not only to teach, but to carry assurance with your teaching. In no better way can you serve the ecclesia of Christ than by building up the faith of the coming workers in the truth. Abraham found favour with God because of his faithfulness in this matter: “I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken.” Similar faithfulness on your part will not escape divine recognition, for it is Abraham’s God with whom you have to do.
Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1906

Who Shall Stand When He Appeareth?

“But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap” (Mal. 3:2).

Honor, wealth and position in the present world often come unexpectedly, with little or no effort - by inheritance or by a favorable turn of events by which the man of low degree is suddenly brought to the highest pinnacle of human power and glory.

Not so in the case of those who attain to life and incorruptibility in the world to come. It has been truly said that among those who rule the nations with Christ in the coming New Age, none will be found whose presence there is a result of what is called chance or fortune. None will be there because of their native ability in human fields of endeavor, or solely because of their relation by birth or otherwise to some other person on the level of fleshly ties.

There are certain profound and basic principles that will be applied unerringly and without respect of persons in the selection of the favored few who will then attain to the *“world to come, whereof we speak.”*

At the coming of Christ from heaven a great throne of judgment will be set up in the earth for the purpose of choosing, on the basis of divine standards, the “few” of the “many” who have been “called” to the light of God’s Truth.

Supreme quality of mercy will be shown by the righteous judge, else no flesh could stand before him. But the honor of God’s Name and the principles of holiness embodied in His Word will surely be upheld in each case that is dealt with.

Although he prayed earnestly, *“with strong crying and tears,”* —the cup of suffering and death could not pass from the sinless Son of God, *“except he drink it,”* that God’s righteousness might be upheld, His majesty and holiness declared and vindicated. From this we may know that there can be no exception to the divine principle that offers forgiveness and eternal life to us ONLY on the basis of sin condemned, and God honored.

The final outcome of the decisions made by the Great Judge in that day will be the choice of an elect and precious group in whom God will be sanctified, His Name honored, and His Word magnified. The principles employed then to decide the issues of life and woe are to be those eternal, unchanging, irrevocable laws from Divine wisdom that are older than the human race, or even than the world itself.

“The Lord possessed me (wisdom) in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.”

God is, in calling us to repentance and life through Jesus’ Name, working toward the point of time in the future when He will be —Before that point is reached — before it can be said, *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God”*

—before this, there must be a purging; for—

“There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

The purging will be complete when the Great Judge speaks to those on His left:

“Depart from me, ye cursed.” “Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

—Bro. Emmitt W. Banta

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

“...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

Those who scoff at the idea that there are definite signs that Christ's coming is near are helping to create those signs foretold in the scriptures.

They do those things which stir up strife and war (Rev. 11:18); they embark upon great programs of military preparation (Joel 3:9). They expend their time, their talents and energy in expanding scientific knowledge (Dan.12:4); and, *“Walking after their own lusts,”* they have created a state of godlessness only comparable to the days of Noah, all the while *“Willingly ignorant of impending judgment which hangs like a storm cloud over their heads.”* (ref. Matt. 24:37-39).

In like manner the so-called Christian world is fulfilling the Word of God, having departed from the one true faith and are attempting to convert the world to a man-made system of religion by which they hope to avert the very things which the scriptures have foretold will come; that is the total destruction of all human systems, including all false religious systems 2nd Thess. 2:12; Isa. 25:7).

JESUS CHRIST DID NOT PICTURE A BELIEVING WORLD AT HIS COMING, but a world in rebellion against him. And we see today even the Christian elements giving only lip service to Him while denying His teachings and making little or no pretence of obeying His commands. We see church system inseparably connected with the world and its ways. An integral part of that godless order of things which must be removed to give place to that new and righteous order in which no place will be found for them.

And what of the household of Faith? Is it not also true that those who have been given the blessed privilege of being called out of darkness may also contribute to the signs of the times?

Christ does not picture a household at his coming in a state of high spiritual vigor, but a household in a state of weakness, laxity and self-satisfaction, saying, *“I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and poor and blind and naked.”*

Spiritually, this is its condition. Willingly deceived; and self deluded.

The oft-repeated warnings of the Saviour envisions a household, the majority of which will have grown worldly deeply concerned with temporal things, but unconcerned about preserving the unity of the faith or keeping the commandments of Christ.

It is a picture of a people in grave danger of being overcome with *“surfeiting, drunkenness (spiritual), and the cares of this life.”*

So absorbed in temporal things; so weak in the Faith as to say,

“My Lord delayeth his coming.”

It is not a picture of a household growing in spiritual strength and vigor, but a household weak in faith, with FEW ready to meet him when he comes.

Yes, we too, should beware lest we contribute to the fulfilling of this fearful sign of the time.

* * *

The wounds caused by the follies of youth may be healed, but ugly scars often remain. How wise it is then, to —

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” —Eccl. 12:1.

“If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people” (Micah 2:11).

When Israel began to drift into apostasy, they shunned the true prophets and others who tried to show them the right way, and chose for their leaders those who spoke “smooth things” and prophesied deceits. They sought out leaders or teachers who indulged them in their wishful thinking that all was well with them, though they had departed from the way of the Lord.

Such has always been the way of those who wish to depart from a strict adherence to divine principles and seek an easy way of life that is more flesh-pleasing. It is then that true preachers of righteousness become odious in their estimation, and those who speak “*good words and fair speeches*” become highly honored and admired.

* * *

The apostle Paul had many enemies, both within and without, but the one he feared most was himself, in whose flesh, said he, dwells no good thing.

Therefore, in seeking out and subduing his greatest enemy, he said:

“Not as uncertainly so fight I not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection” (1 Cor. 9:26, 27).

This reminds us of the saying that—

“If one wishes to see his greatest enemy, all he needs to do is to look in a mirror.”

* * *

The course of true wisdom is to give one's life in service to God. For, to “*fear God, and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man.*”

—Bro. Oscar Beauchamp—Apr 67

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 5

Ascertain from the Word your duty, and then go forward unflinchingly—regardless of human praise or condemnation. To obey God should be the object of our lives. To test whether we will do this, is the end and aim of our fiery trial. The lover of the Word fixes his choice on God, and is cheered and gratified when his fidelity wins the commendation of those around. When it does not—when it incurs the reverse—he is pained, but not moved. He endures, having “respect unto the recompense of reward.” Such an one exhibits single-mindedness, reliability, and candour. He is of service to God, and is a blessing to man. It is this character that will successfully stand the probationary testing. “*Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.*” “*Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.*”

“I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.” This searching is adapted to the necessities of each case. That which is a trial to one is not always a trial to another. It is no hardship for a man indifferent to wealth to be deprived of it; nor for one devoid of parental love to lose his offspring. It requires no great effort for a man with little self-esteem to refrain from walking in pride’s silly ways; nor for one who has large benevolence and small acquisitiveness to dispense alms. Divine tests call for sacrifices, for endurance, and for resistance. A saint’s first duty is obedience, and should it entail the loss of things near and dear, it must be borne with resignation. Let us not measure our own trials by the experience of others,

nor *vice versa*. Do not let us trouble ourselves with the apparent freedom from trial of others. In so doing, we may misjudge. It is a conceit of human nature to think it knows better than the Deity—it was so with Job's Satan. Everyone is put to the proof in the best and most effectual way, and this way is known only to God.

Though heaven and earth appear to be against us, let us not falter for a single moment in our confidence in God. That we are defamed, ill-treated, impoverished, bereaved, or laid low by disease, is no evidence that God's loving kindness has forsaken us. Affliction does not exclude divine favour. This truth is enforced throughout the Word. Look at the demonstration afforded by the history of the apostle Paul alone. Neither his faithfulness nor Christ's love for him admit of question. "I have fought a good fight," was the apostle's last confession. And can it be denied? "*In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft,*" "*once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a day and a night have I been in the deep,*" "*in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness,*" "*in perils among false brethren,*" "*in hunger and thirst,*" "*in cold and nakedness,*"—"reviled," "defamed," "*made as the filth of the world,*" "*the offscouring of all things.*" With such an experience in view, let us not grow weary nor "faint in our minds," but rather "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."

With the skeptical, Christ thus reasoned—"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me." In addition to miracles, Christ appealed to superhuman traits in his character, e.g., "*He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*" How forcible is it when the Bible is made to argue in this manner. Imagine (and it requires no great effort) the Bible reasoning: "If you will not believe my claim to be divine, if I appear simply human, if my narratives and revelations seem to you improbable, my teaching questionable, my prognostications unlikely, believe that I am true for my work's sake. Could unaided man have wrought what you see in me? Think of my fulfilled prophecy, as directly given; also as set forth in my types; the examples and warnings contained in my records; the blessedness of my doctrine; my simplicity and sublimity; my purity and unity; my peerlessness! If in the face of all this you still doubt, I am constrained to say that you would not believe "*though one rose from the dead.*"

Concerning Christ, the question arose "*From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?*" To reasonable men, the only satisfactory explanation lay in the statement, "*We know that thou art a teacher from God, for no man could do those miracles that thou doest except God be with him.*" Men of this stamp reason upon the Bible in a similar way, and as a result are forced to confess its divinity. Among Christ's contemporaries were certain who charged him with being "*beside himself*"—"thou hast a devil." These worldly wise find their counterparts in those who attribute foolishness and error to parts of the Sacred Word—hesitating not to criticise and condemn the work of God. Others with whom Christ was brought in contact were characterised by unmitigated brutality and ignorance. These mocked and reviled and finally murdered him. Their fellows are not now wanting among the adversaries of the Bible. Such tell us that the Inspired Volume "*contradicts science, outrages reason, and our moral sense.*" They say, in effect, "*Away with him, Crucify him!*" Thank God, the days of the enemies of Christ and the Bible are numbered!

Evil speaking is a characteristic of the world. So common is it that its heinousness is not perceived. God has pronounced it a crime. His hatred to it is repeatedly emphasised. Are we resisting or yielding to this popular sin? "*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.*" This commandment cannot be infringed with impunity. Woe to evil surmisers, false accusers, and tale bearers! Their conduct separates them from God. Gehenna is their certain goal. What righteous man is not pained to hear his brother maligned? Think you not that Christ shares this feeling? Let us not indulge in evil speaking under the unjustifiable notion that we think our brother is deserving of it. God has provided rules for dealing with transgressors. These rules rigidly prohibit us

allowing evil thoughts to rankle in our minds, much less of infusing them into others. Assuming that we have ground for righteous indignation, let us refrain from acting unscripturally. Let us follow an example set us—*“being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it, being defamed, we intreat.”*

The world from God’s standpoint is incorrigibly bad—*“the whole world lieth in wickedness.”* This truth the saints should keep vividly before them. Let us consider the significance of the expressions which the Scriptures apply to it:—vain—ignorant—rebellious—cruel—corrupt—dark—asleep—dead—blind—drunk—mad. If we keep these characteristics steadily before the mind, it will stimulate us to be circumspect—it will steel us to resist the deadly influences which assail us on every side. But though possessed of this character, the world serves a purpose. Otherwise it would not exist. Neither would the faithful be made to struggle within it. *“The creature was subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.”* The world is God’s machinery, by means of which He produces that character which is essential for an eternal life in His kingdom. Christ prayed not that his disciples might be taken out of the world, but that they might be kept or guarded in it. To go the way of the world is fatal. To withstand it—though a painful and distressing exercise—evolves that spiritual strength and vigour which lead on victory. Let us realise the good that God is accomplishing in relating us to evil, and there will be more patience and less complaining. *Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1887*

Analecta Apocalypticae (42)

Seventh Seal and the Trumpets

In the last lecture, we completed our survey of the events symbolized by the imagery of the seals, and in the consideration of the seventh seal we were introduced to the seven trumpets — that is to say, we found the events of the seventh seal to consist of the sounding of seven trumpets by seven angels and the events ensuing upon those soundings. The seventh seal consists of the multitudinous details connected with the sounding of the seven trumpets. To-night it will be our duty to look at the things represented by the trumpets. The common run of people laugh when we talk of the seals and trumpets and vials, and the uncommon run of people too — the respectable and the learned take part in the jest. Their mirth is entirely misplaced. Granted that these terms are so much jargon to the generality: their uncouthness is due not to the subject itself but to the general non-acquaintance of the people with them. They are the technicalities of the most advanced chapter in the Bible. The technicalities of any subject are barbarous to those who are not acquainted with them; but to make them the ground of scorn is an aggravation of ignorance. It reminds us of the words of Solomon: “Wisdom is too high for a fool”. The Apocalypse is a great deep. There is a wisdom and beauty in it that impart an ecstasy of admiration when the mind opens to them. It not only imparts knowledge of the future, but it does so in a system of symbolism that is symmetrical in structure, complete in plan, distinct and vigorous in detail, and perfect in the appropriateness of its figures.

This is not obvious all at once. It is not obvious at all to those who are ignorant of the first principles of divine truth as revealed in the writings of Moses and the prophets, interpreted in harmony with the apostles, and even to those who know the truth, it is dark for a while; only after patient study of the Book of God for a long time, the excellence of the Apocalypse is appreciated. For a time, the matter of the Apocalypse seems wild, austere, high, hard, perhaps inscrutable — something unpractical, something not useful. Such impressions are due to spiritual infancy. Men ought to condemn themselves for such feelings. They ought to be very modest. They ought to assume, even if not able to perceive, that the Apocalypse must be wise and useful because an emanation of the divine mind. We must not set ourselves up as the standard of judgment. We are all fools to start with, if not to finish with. The first step in true progress is to know that we are ignorant. There is hope when we realize this. “But seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?” Solomon says, “There is more hope of a fool than of him.” When we start with a right idea of ourselves, we shall be “as little children” as Jesus prescribes. We shall not measure

everything by our impressions and conceptions. We shall not set ourselves up as the standard. We shall recognize that there must be things as much higher than our conceptions as heaven is higher than our puny stature of five or six feet. Recognizing this, we shall be prepared to ask what they are, if we can know them, and receive them in humility, however hard of apprehension, instead of scornfully rejecting them because higher than ourselves. This is a long step in the direction of wisdom — to know that we are small and know nothing. Any other attitude is the attitude of fools, and it is written that God “taketh no pleasure in fools.” God is wise, as manifest in our own mechanism and in all nature around. Because the Apocalypse is His, it bears the impression of His wisdom, which, however hard to receive at first, becomes a cause of joy and thanksgiving.

We have looked at the significance of the seals. We found a scroll introduced, sealed with seven seals, as illustrating the concealment in the mind of God of certain knowledge of future events, affecting Christ and his people. We found that Jesus was alone esteemed worthy to unloose those seals, or obtain access to that knowledge, the impartation of which by the Father to him qualified him to carry out the programme written in the symbolic scroll. We have seen him break seal after seal, or exhibit one after the other the events destined to occur in the various periods covered by the seals. We have come to the seventh, and find the figure changed. It is no longer a mere disclosing of what course affairs would take in the Roman Empire as affecting Christ and his brethren; it is a blowing of trumpets to summon events, so to speak, to bring judgments on the scene.

We all know what a trumpet blast is and for what it is used. It is mostly an instrument of military use — to direct the movements of large bodies of men who could not otherwise be made aware of the will of the commander. Such an instrument, when used as a figure, must mean the urgent causing of unpeaceful events. The Apocalypse is not the first place in the Bible where the figure is used in this sense. Thus we read in Jeremiah 4:5: “Blow ye the trumpet in the land; cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.” Again (Hos. 8:1), “Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant”. Again (Joel 2:1), “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain;” and again (Isa. 27:13), “The great trump shall be blown, and they shall come who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria.”

Doubtless these allusions to the blowing of the trumpet originated in the use of trumpets in the convoking of the assembly of Israel in the wilderness, as they came out of the land of Egypt, in the monthly blowing of trumpets at the new moons, as enjoined. Still they exemplify a figurative use which finds its boldest illustration in the seven trumpets blown by the seven angels of the seventh seal.

But what was there calling for a different style of symbolism from the seals? The contemplation of the events of the sixth seal will supply the answer to this question. There was an entire change in the situation. Up to that time, Paganism was on the throne of the world, and the Roman Empire an empire of idolatry in consequence. Now concerning nations in that position, it is written that God had suffered them to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16) on the principle that to whom little is given, little is required, and that the ground of condemnation is divine relation and responsibility (Amos 3:2). Nations, like men, though in honour, if they have no understanding are as the beasts that perish (Psa. 49:20). This was the relation of the Roman polity to the divine law under the Pagan Caesars. Rome was the political incorporation of the ignorance that is natural to man in relation to all divine things. But there was a change when Constantine came to the throne, and when the State was organically allied with the profession of the name of Christ. The friends of Christ for a time found themselves under the shadow of the throne, the Scriptures were accepted as the law of the State: a new order of things arose with the name of God written upon it, so far as professed subjection was concerned.

It was therefore natural that with such a change in the constitution of things in the world, there should be a change in the symbolism expressive of its divine relations. It was appropriate, too, that the new symbolism should be representative of a higher degree of responsibility than attached to Pagan Rome. The trumpets certainly were so. They intimated a direct bringing or causing judgments on the Roman body politic in its new relation, on account of its wrong doings against Christ, instead of merely an unfolding, by seal-breaking, of things that were to come.

The use of the trumpets is related to judgment. Of this, we have already looked at some illustrations from the prophets. It finds a rudimentary type in the destruction of Jericho. In fact the scheme of the Apocalypse would seem to find a foreshadowing in the mode adopted to bring that destruction about. The Israelites were to march round it seven days, the priests blowing trumpets of rams' horns as they marched. On the seventh day they were to march round the city seven times, after which the city should fall into their hands. A certain analogy will be perceived between this and the seven seals, the last of which contains the seven trumpets, the last of which again contains the seven vials, and the last of these the seven thunders, as the result of all of which, Babylon falls, and the world comes into the hands of Christ and his brethren. The Bible abounds with beautiful analogies, and this seems to be one of them.

We are introduced to the sounding of the trumpets in verse 7, chapter 8. Verse 6 informs us that the angels who received the seven trumpets on the opening of the seventh seal, "prepared themselves to sound." A careless reading would pass this over: but by the hand of Dr. Thomas, God has taught us to read the Apocalypse with carefulness instead of carelessness. There is nothing superfluous in the wording — nothing put in to fill up. There is a meaning to everything. The preparation to sound has a meaning. There was in point of fact a period of providential preparation for the judgment events of the trumpets. Each of the trumpets brought invaders upon some part of the Roman Empire — so exactly appropriate was the use of the trumpet to this part of Roman history — the trumpet summoning armies to move. There was a preparation for these invasions — an opening of the way to the invaders. These invaders in the first instance were mostly the barbarians who occupied the northern parts of Europe. The way had to be paved for their incursions, and for their ultimate triumph over the military discipline of Rome.

This occurred during the reign of Jovian, successor to Julian, who came first after Constantine. The Roman Empire was confined to the south of the river Danube. The territory to the north of that river was as little known to the Romans then as Central Africa is to us. The most that was known was that it was occupied by fierce and warlike tribes, whose barbarism and want of discipline, however, rendered them somewhat powerless. From these causes, they were for centuries easily kept at bay. But a change came when the time arrived to prepare for the judicial trumpets. This change occurred in its most marked form during the reign of Jovian, just before the commencement of the trumpets — a reign that we must consider as the preparation period of verse 6. It originated in a struggle that took place between two of the barbarian races — the Goths and the Huns. In this struggle, the Huns obtained the advantage; and the Goths being hard pressed, asked permission of the Roman generals to cross to the southern side of the Danube, to escape from the molestations of their successful enemies. The Roman generals consented, and the Gothic nation came over, and settled in Illyricum — a district corresponding to modern Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which the world has recently heard so much. This was the beginning of the trumpet visitations, or rather the preparation for them. The Romans no longer had the Danube as a barrier between them and the barbarians. The barbarians were in their midst so to speak. The Goths grew numerous and formidable. To avert the danger of their presence, the Romans decided to take them into their pay as military auxiliaries. They gave them arms and money, and taught them the art of war, and used them as an addition to the Roman army. The measure, which was intended to make them harmless and allies, had the opposite effect. It converted them into a formidable foe. The Goths gradually woke to a sense of their power, and as the hour was approaching for the blast of the first trumpet, the

Goths were getting into position for the work they had to do, in obedience to its summons.
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Arranged from the writings of Bro. Robert Roberts by Bro. Bob Widding

Hints For Bible Markers

The Table of the Lord, where we come once a week to remember Christ's life of sacrifice and obedience unto death. It brings us to remembrance of his humiliation. It, also, brings into recollection of the time of his glory. Do you think your heart is not right with God? Where better to make it so! Are you angry or upset with someone in the meeting. Where better to make reconciliation with them. Jesus knew our hearts, indeed our very nature, and so set the weekly memorial as best suited to renew our weak minds. Reminding us how completely we are dependent on him for the joy set before us. The time before the Table of the Lord reminds us we are his servants. That we are to eat of his flesh and drink of his life every minute of every day that we might be found fit and worthy servants. That we might be living sacrifices unto God. It helps to keep in memory that it is God's will that we "seek first" His Kingdom. It is his command and our duty to attend the weekly breaking of bread. He also commands that all should know that we are his brethren. We should willingly confess his life, works, teachings and commands to all who know us until such time as they show themselves to be human swine.

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

Continued from last month.

Call him to remembrance every first day of the week in the breaking of bread, as he has appointed.

(24) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. (25) After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (26) For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corinthians 11:24 – 26)

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (Acts 20:7)

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

Be not ashamed to confess him before men

Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: (Luke 12:8)

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38)

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; (2 Timothy 1:8)

At the same time taking care to expose not your holy things to the profane.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. (Matthew 7:6)