

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, Sask. Sunday School 10AM, Memorial 11.20AM, Wed Bible Class 7.30PM. R R #1, Richard, Sask., S0M 2P0

Our Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

It has been about a year since we have sent in news from this part of the Lord's vineyard. During that time there have been many occasions to meet with those of like faith, and to praise Yahweh for His wonderful works and provisions.

The days of our Master's return loom large on the horizon. We are witnessing the development of the last stages of the prophetic timeline as presented in the prophets and Revelation. Let us all remain determined to be found watching and waiting for the Bridegroom, while upholding and declaring our support of the doctrines of Truth and the principles of proper walk and conduct. This we must do in order to assist one another in preparation to see our judge. We all wish to hear in that day those welcome words, "*well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*".

We were greatly gladdened by our Sunday School student **Amber Jones'** request for an interview for baptism. And so, on August 28th 2010, we witnessed her passing through the waters of baptism, to begin her walk toward Zion. These are always occasions of great joy and encouragement to us. It was only a short time after this that we said goodbye to her (Sep. 4th 2010) as she went to spend the winter months with the Edmonton ecclesia. She returned to us May 1st, 2011, and has just gone back to Edmonton on Sep. 4th.

At approximately the same time, (Sep. 5th 2010) we were cheered by the arrival of Bro. Glendon Rhoades, from the Goldthwaite, Texas ecclesia to spend the year with us here, and he remains here with us this year also. We have greatly enjoyed his contributions to our ecclesia.

Dec. 19th 2010 was our annual Sunday School Program, with the Sunday School students presenting talks, plays and singing to display the things they had learned during the past year.

Also on Jan 9th, 2011, we were pleased to assist **Regan Rayner**, as he committed his ways to the service of God, through the waters of baptism. It was an occasion of great joy and gladness, and thankfulness for the opportunity of introducing another member to the service of our Lord.

Feb. 19th and 20th, 2011, were the dates of our winter study weekend and the subject of our study was prayer.

On March 12, 2011, we held a Family and Friends' Evening, where we extend personal invitations to our neighbors and acquaintances to join us for the evening meal, a short address on the things we stand for as an ecclesia, and often show slides from a Kenya trip or other things of interest. These have given us a number of opportunities to witness the Truth to folks from our area.

Our 2011 Richard Fraternal Gathering was held July 1st to July 4th, at which time we thoroughly enjoyed the company and mutual edification of many of like precious faith. It is a blessing of great value that we are able in these times to meet with so many and share a feast of spiritual nourishment.

Visitors from this past year have been Sis. Amber Jones, Sis. Grace Punter, Sis. Jess Rhoades, Sis. Brenda McChesney, Sis. June Jones, Bro. Steve and Sis. Gwen Armstrong, Bro. Ben and Sis. Jennifer Darter, Bro. Brent and Sis. Rachel Dul, and Bro. James and Sis. Jeanne Fuhr. We thank all those visitors who ministered the word to us, and lent their hands in various ways, both at the gathering and on other occasions.

May the hand of Yahweh be with each and every one, may the angel of the Lord encamp about us all, as we wait with expectation for the appearing of our Master!

For the Brethren and Sisters of the ecclesia at Richard,
Bro. Sid Jones

DALLAS, Texas

Sundays: Sunday School at 10:30AM, Memorial following. Sunday Afternoon Study Class: The visible Hand of God by Robert Roberts.

Greetings, Dear Brothers and Sister in Jesus our Savior,

It's been a while since we have sent out messages to the brotherhood. We are all doing well and wanted to make the following announcements.

On August 6th, two members of our Ecclesia became husband and wife and are walking together Zionwards, hand in hand. Bro. Daniel Adams and Sis. Casey Burgamy were joined together in holy matrimony in Goldthwaite. The ceremony was attended by many in the Dallas, Goldthwaite and Lampasas Ecclesias. Bro. Lenny Naglieri officiated at the ceremony.

We are also happy to announce the joining together in matrimony two other members of the Dallas Ecclesia. Bro. Aaron Myers and Sis. Aldijana Rostoder were married on Saturday, Sept. 17th, in McKinney, Texas. The ceremony was attended by the entire Ecclesia as well as visitors from other Ecclesias, namely, Lampasas and Goldthwaite. We all witnessed Bro. Aaron and Sis. Aldi joining together in marriage and are reminded of our upcoming marriage to our Bbridegroom that we all are longing and waiting for.

“The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.” Jeremiah 33:11

Bro. Lenny Naglieri officiated at the wedding and received many compliments for his words of exhortation, even from those who were not in the meeting. We all wish both couples well in their walk together as husbands and wives and as they strive to please our Heavenly Father.

The following Sunday many visitors stayed over and joined us in Memorial service. Bro. Curtis Hurst gave the words of encouragement and exhortation. Then we hosted a light lunch for all and had good fellowship with our visitors. As we continue to walk straight, Zionwards, may Yahweh be with each and every one in these last days of Gentile times.

Love in Christ, Bro. Bob Bent

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **Oct 8–9, 2011**
Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717
GOLDTHWAITE STUDY WEEKEND..... **Nov 25–27, 2011**
Bro. Curtis Hurst, 250 CR 517, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

The BCAA

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link often as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The 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.

We are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to mp3 format and post them.

The Man That Hath Seen Affliction

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.”

ALTHOUGH no author’s name is attached to this book in the Hebrew, there has never been any reasonable doubt among Bible students concerning its authorship. Since the third century BC, the majority of translators and commentators have acknowledged Jeremiah as the author.

Some today criticize the idea of a single author, others quote Lam. 2:9; 4:17; 5:7 as proof that Jeremiah did not write the book; but evidence favors Jeremiah as the author. The Septuagint (LXX) Version of Lamentations begins—

“And it came to pass after Israel had been led into captivity and Jerusalem had been laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping, and he lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and he said ...”

This has every appearance of being a translation from Hebrew, and apparently stood at the head of the text used by the translator. It is followed in the Syriac, Old Latin, and Vulgate. The Targum similarly ascribes the book to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah’s dungeon experience (37:15; 38:6-13) fits in well with Lam. 3:52-57.

Many analogies can be drawn between the prophecies of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Jeremiah spoke of the sins of the people and their coming desolation and tribulation due to their iniquities. He spoke of the fall of the city, Jerusalem. He also spoke of a coming restoration and glory.

In Lamentations we read an eyewitness account of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies of judgment from God, and we see within the book, as in Jeremiah, a bright future for those who trust, obey, and fear the Lord.

The intense grief of the writer is seen throughout the book. These expressions of grief and tribulation fix the date of the book's writing as shortly after the captivity of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, 587-586 BC.

Most of the book appears to be in the past tense. In Lam. 4:22 it can be clearly seen that Jerusalem was already fallen—

"The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; He will no more carry thee away into captivity."

It will be well to briefly examine the times just preceding the captivity of Judah.

JEREMIAH: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Jeremiah's life is one of the loneliest and saddest in Scripture. His personal experiences were bitter; the message of disaster he had to proclaim was depressing and unwelcome: and the times in which he lived were of unparalleled calamity.

His efforts were foredoomed to failure. It was a lost cause from the very beginning.

He was everywhere hated and misunderstood. While intensely loving and grieving for his countrymen and his nation, he was despised and persecuted as an enemy and a traitor.

Jeremiah was born in the closing years of the long, evil reign of Manasseh, around 650 BC. This king's wicked reign sealed the doom of the kingdom of Judah, and it brought to an end God's much-tried longsuffering and patience (Jer. 15:4-6)—

"I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for all that which he did in Jerusalem ... I am weary with repenting."

Jeremiah begins his ministry in the reign of the good king Josiah. It was a bright interlude of righteousness—but it did not last. Josiah began to reign when he was 8. At 16 he dedicated himself to serve God, and when he was 20 he set about to purge Judah from all her wickedness and idolatry.

Jeremiah began his ministry in the next year—the 13th of Josiah's reign. Jeremiah would be about the same age as Josiah—about 20. It is truly a touching picture of these two young men—king and prophet—laboring to turn the nation to righteousness as the smoldering judgments of God hovered over the land, just as two young men—a prophet and king, John and Jesus—did in the days of the nation's final judgment.

It is notable that Jeremiah's ministry began just 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple by the Babylonians, as recorded in the Lamentations. We remember that Jesus began his ministry just 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the

Temple by the Romans. In each case we see a period of final probation given to the city.

Jeremiah's mission was to witness for God against apostate and worldly Judah. But his work was not only as a witness of condemnation; it had a far more glorious purpose. It was to encourage and strengthen the scattered, faithful remnant—of his own day and of all the ages since.

And in our present sad time of present crisis for the Truth, and imminent judgment, its message of comfort has great and sustaining power.

When the terrible judgments came, it would appear that God had completely rejected Israel, and that all hope was gone. But the lonely prophet with his message of eventual glory was a symbol that God was still concerned with them although they had been unfaithful, and his prophecies gave comforting assurance that those who held fast would never be forgotten, and that, though these dreadful evils should come, the latter end would be blessing and peace.

The name Jeremiah has become in the world proverbial for a pessimist. But we know Jeremiah better than this. The world hates those who call attention to its wickedness and folly, and who raise their voice to warn of the judgments that will come upon it. But the duty of the watchmen is clear, whether in Jeremiah's day or ours (Isa. 58:10)—

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

Jeremiah found he could not hold back: he must speak as God commanded (20:9)—

“Then said I, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name.

“But His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”

The Jews of Jeremiah's day are typical of human nature in every age. They recognized that he was sent by God, yet they still blindly hated him for his faithful testimony, and resented his forebodings of judgment.

Jeremiah's day marked the beginning of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar—the kingdom of men. Our day marks the end of that great image.

He prophesied during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. This was the transition period from Jewish times to Gentile times.

We are living in the close of the 7 times (2520 years) of Gentile times. We are witnessing the times of the cessation of the rule of the mind of man in opposition to the will of God.

When the zealous young men Josiah and Jeremiah set out together to bring Judah back to God, the picture looked very promising; the Temple which Manasseh had profaned and neglected was restored, and at the same

time the Book of the Law was discovered and its contents revealed to Josiah. Very likely Josiah read of the evils which Moses had promised would come upon the Jews if they neglected God.

He sent to inquire of God what he might do to avert this terrible judgment. God's answer was that it was too late. The calamities were on the way, and could not be turned aside. But because Josiah was faithful and God-fearing, they would not come in his day.

And while he lived Josiah did indeed God's will, so that—

“All his days the children of Israel departed not from following the Lord.”

As a result of what he read in the book, Josiah kept a last great Passover feast in Jerusalem. The Passover was serene and peaceful. It commemorated God's blessings upon His children, and deliverance from slavery.

But God's blessings and forbearance were to cease, and Judah was to be delivered into slavery again. God had taken the yoke of Egypt from Israel's shoulders, and was about to replace it with the Babylonian yoke of iron because of their disobedience (Lam. 1:14). Though for a time there was a great show of piety on the part of the people, they failed to be transformed by God's Word.

Thirteen years after this great Passover, Josiah met his death at the hands of the Pharaoh of Egypt. God's Word on this matter was that the righteous Josiah had been taken away from the evil to come—a very sobering warning, had the Jews listened.

It is recorded that Jeremiah lamented for Josiah. Well he might. For he above all others would realize that with Josiah's death the last curtain fell on the happiness and well-being of Judah. The nation now had 23 appointed years of existence left—and they were to be a terrible 23 years.

The most prominent part of Jeremiah's ministry now begins. He seems to have enjoyed an easy enough life up till now, but now he finds himself at increasing variance with the nation and its rulers as they head for destruction.

The people made Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, king—but he lasted only three months. The king of Egypt took him prisoner and set up his brother Jehoiakim in his stead.

Jehoiakim reigned 11 years, and Jeremiah had much to do with this ungodly, hateful man.

In the first year of his reign, Jeremiah was commanded to stand in the temple court and proclaim to all the people that came there, that (unless they put away their wickedness) God would make the Temple a desolation and the city a curse to all nations of the earth (19:12,6)—

“I will make this city as Tophet (byword, contempt) ... the Valley of Slaughter.”

The fifth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, and a very significant year. Again Jeremiah stood before his countrymen—

“From the 13th year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto

this day, that is, the 23rd year (of Jeremiah's preaching), the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking: but ye have not hearkened" (25:3).

Judah now has eighteen years remaining.

At this time Jeremiah understood that the captivity in Babylon was to last 70 years, to fulfill the "sabbaths" which Judah had profaned.

Also Jeremiah is now commanded to write these things in a book, and his faithful aid Baruch writes his words in a book and delivers them to Jehoiakim. When a few sentences were read, the enraged king seized the book, cut it with a knife, and cast it into the fire.

The same was to be done with the children of Judah themselves, as Ezekiel prophesied in chapter 5.

They were so set in their wicked ways that Jeremiah records (36:24)—

"Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants that heard all these words."

This was the point at which the nation's doom was finally sealed. Each step of wickedness led them deeper and deeper into the pit.

In this same year, far to the east, another event of immense importance was happening. Nebuchadnezzar was receiving his dream of the kingdom of men. God was to reject His nation Israel for a period of 7 times. Measuring 2520 from this time we come to the time (approx.) of 1917, the time when the Turkish desolator was driven out and the way prepared for the Jewish state to emerge.

Because of his prophecy, Jeremiah was sought by Jehoiakim, but the *"Lord hid him"* (36:26). And Jeremiah wrote again, this time *"adding many more words"* to his book (36:32). For his insulting manner, Jehoiakim received the judgment of God: his body was to be dragged out of the city, and cast into the garbage—*"the burial of an ass."*

Now that this final written testimony of God has been nationally rejected, a new phase begins. Jeremiah is commanded to keep himself separate from this people, as a witness of their rejection. He is forbidden to join with them either in mourning or in feasting.

He found himself in the same isolated position as the faithful find themselves in the world today. God often used the personal lives of the prophets in this way—as living examples and object lessons.

Like Jeremiah, God's people today are required to manifest a striking difference in their lives from the surrounding world, so that they will be unmistakable beacon-lights of the Truth. The way may seem hard, but the believer must remember God's words of encouragement—

"Be not afraid of their faces: I am with thee to deliver thee" (1:8).

Jeremiah was told that the people would not hearken, but would simply intensify their anger and resentment against him. Finally, the time came when he was forbidden to pray for them (4:11-12)—

“Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry.”

It had now come to this! All opportunity for the nation had passed. As a nation they were doomed. But there would always be the remnant drawn out, so Jeremiah continued to preach and warn.

At this time Nebuchadnezzar had already made his first invasion of Israel, showing that Jeremiah’s warnings were true—but still they failed to listen. Jehoiakim’s reign was troubled throughout by plundering raids from the surrounding nations, as God slowly but surely reduced Judah to ashes. Jehoiakim died and his carcass was cast into the rubbish heap of Gehenna.

Eleven years of misery had passed since Josiah, and more trouble was coming.

Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim’s son, reigned only three months, and was then carried to captivity in Babylon. But he still managed to leave behind a definite record: that he did evil in the sight of God.

At last came Zedekiah, weak, cowardly, and evil—whom Ezekiel called a *“profane, wicked prince.”* Zedekiah was not as bitter toward Jeremiah as Jehoiakim had been, but as disasters came upon Judah with increasing frequency, he came to hate Jeremiah.

The better and more righteous of the people had been carried to Babylon, as was shown in the vision of the figs (ch. 24). The very good figs are those like Daniel whom God had caused to be taken to Babylon, to escape the final days of the city. If we are found watching we will escape the final days of judgment on this wicked age.

Jeremiah sent a letter to the captives in Babylon (ch. 29), telling them to seek the peace of the city, and to wait patiently upon God, to pray to Him and trust in Him. His words here are certainly for our benefit, for we are in practically the same position in the world today—*“strangers and pilgrims,”* with *“no continuing city.”*

Jeremiah promises the captives that in 70 years there would be a reversal. God had not cast off His people forever.

Seventy years after Nebuchadnezzar’s first invasion the decree of Cyrus went forth, to bring the Jews back to the land. And seventy years after the destruction of the Temple, the Temple was again built up—not in its former glory, but it was rebuilt. This partial restoration was only typical of a much greater restoration, for which we now wait and pray. Jeremiah remained in the city, continuing to warn the wayward people.

In Zedekiah’s first year, the false prophet Hananiah arose—saying that within two years the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar would be broken. Jeremiah tells him that he will die within one year for lying. This happens, and still the remaining people refused to repent. They knowingly reject God.

We now come to the final years of the kingdom. Zedekiah has plotted with Egypt against Babylon, until Nebuchadnezzar has decided that the only solution was the complete destruction of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar’s army

comes and besieges Jerusalem—the details of the suffering to be found in Lamentations.

At this point Zedekiah sends to Jeremiah for counsel. God’s answer is harsh—

“Deceive not yourself: the Babylonians shall take this city and burn it with fire.”

Jeremiah is then cast into a filthy dungeon (after being beaten), where he remained *“many days.”* We are now in the 9th year of Zedekiah. The city has 18 months left. Again Zedekiah asks—

“Is there any word from the Lord?”

Again the answer comes—

“Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.”

Jeremiah was released from the dungeon, but again the princes demand that he must die. He is lowered into a cistern, and left there to die. (He must be about 60 years old at this point.) Jeremiah is then rescued by Ebedmelech, Zedekiah’s servant; and he stays in the prison court for the remainder of the siege. Here, most likely, he witnesses the happenings of which he writes in Lamentations.

The Babylonians entered the city, destroyed it and the Temple, and carried its appurtenances to Babylon. In Jeremiah’s day the Temple had become the symbol of lip-service and outward ceremony—and so it was destroyed. This should be a lesson for the believer.

Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem. The few left in the land ask Jeremiah if they should go to Egypt. He pleads with them to remain in the land, as God has commanded. But they refuse to listen; and Jeremiah was taken with them back into the land of bondage, by force against his will.

In Egypt Jeremiah records a few more prophecies, but his long labor has about come to an end. After these few words, we hear no more of Jeremiah. We are not told how, when, or where he died.

The people had rejected the admonitions of the Spirit-inspired prophet. The Kingdom of God on earth is rent. The glory had departed from Israel. The long Gentile night had begun. (To be continued, God willing)

—Bro. Gilbert V. Growcott

Lessons in Parable

I thought it would be appropriate this morning since we are reading the parables in our Nazareth Revisited class, to give an exhortation concerning parables: — their purpose, and the lessons our Savior wanted us to learn from them. So, — what is a parable?— why did Christ use them? – and how many of them are there?

First of all the **parable** comes from the Greek word “parabole” which literally means “a placing beside.” – for purposes of comparison. It is generally used in a story taken either from nature or human circumstance for

the purpose of setting forth a spiritual lesson. And because it is the lesson that is of value; the hearer must catch on to the analogy if he is to be properly instructed and enlightened by the parable. Because there are about 40 parables in the New Testament, and nearly all of Christ's parables were connected with conveying truths about the kingdom of God. So, to capture the attention and imagination of his listeners about the things concerning the kingdom of God, Jesus spoke in parables!! You see, by using figurative language and striking illustrations, he was able to retain their attention with a colorful story concerning people, — things — and social issues going on in their own time, of which they would be familiar. Such things like servants — farmers — travelers — bridesmaids — kings — judges and many other things which were a part of their everyday lives. But they would always involve a deeper meaning. For instance he would use terms like “the kingdom of heaven is like...” or “a certain man had two sons” or one time he used a parable to answer the question “who is my neighbor?” But he knew everyone would not understand his parables nor accept his teachings — and he even had a parable about that — “the parable of the sower.” But for many the parables would remain just a puzzling little story to those who do not understand the Truth. They would be heard, but not understood.

So, this morning we want to focus on one parable in particular that has some meaningful spiritual lessons, but is often difficult to totally comprehend. Not that I personally am blessed with any better comprehension than anyone else, because that is certainly not the case. But we are thankful to Bro. Roberts and Bro. Growcott as pillars for their unique understanding and insight concerning “the parable of the laborers in the vineyard” or sometime known as “the parable of a penny for a day” which we will get to this week in our daily readings.

Bro. Growcott has a unique perspective on this parable in his exhortation entitled “What shall we have therefore”, which actually is a question which was asked by Peter in Matthew 19, which Christ explains in a more meaningful and spiritual manner by use of “The laborers in the Vineyard.”

So Bro. Growcott tells us, in order to understand this parable, we must first read the chain of events with which this parable is connected. And that begins in Matthew 19:16 (if you would like to follow along). A rich young ruler comes running to Jesus and asks what must I do to have eternal life? Now on the surface this man seemed to be a faithful and religious person, because when Christ recited the commandments that needed to be kept he said “All these have I kept from my youth.” But in verse 20 he still felt that something was lacking. So Christ immediately finds the cause and the solution to his problem. **“Sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and follow me.”** Now we don't know if this answer was a surprise to the man or whether it was the one thing he expected and feared to hear. In any case he could not face it and went away sorrowful. Bro. Growcott tells us “how naturally speaking, impossible it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. Riches — possessing more than the basic necessities — they are such a

snare and handicap in the way of life. They make it hard for a man to deny himself, and take up the cross and follow Jesus in true selfless humility.”

Now the disciples had seen the man – heard the conversation and saw him leave. So, now Peter speaking on their behalf said to Jesus in verse 27 – **“Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall WE have therefore?”** This seemed to be a natural and reasonable question. After all, they had sold everything and forsaken all. They had done what the young man couldn’t do, so what were they going to get. He told them that they would sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel and then he broadens the promise to include all in whatever age and circumstance who forsake worldly things for him. Then he ends chapter 19 with a gentle bit of instruction to Peter’s question by saying “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” And then follows the Parable, which by the way closes in verse 16 with the same thought – **“so the last shall be first, and the first last: for many are called, but few chosen”**.

Now bro. Growcott tells us that it is the events that follow the parable that completes the frame and background it presents. So, in verses 17 and 19 of chapter 20 Jesus takes his disciples aside and tells them about his betrayal, suffering and crucifixion he was to endure. But, despite the imminent suffering which he spoke about, the mother of James and John asked him for the highest places of honor in his kingdom. This is the centerpiece of the parable – the concern over self. It is just so hard for us to get these teachings in our minds and adjust them to our lives. We must cease completely from any desire of position – prominence or importance that stands in the way of peace with God. Christ instructs us to **“Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall have rest for your souls.”** The statement “What shall WE have therefore” needs to stop being our basic motive. As Jesus told James and John, **“Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”** You see he came to teach the ugliness of the natural way of self-seeking, and the beauty of selfless giving, even unto death. And it’s not only concerning possessions and positions, but goes to the root of every personal desire – every form of self-satisfaction – every gratification to self and pride. You see, every instance of hurt feelings or our offended pride is a symptom of this universal disease.

Now, when the other 10 heard their request, they were really upset with James and John. But would our reaction have been any different? After all they were seeking preferential treatment!! Oh how much they had to learn about the unselfish way of godliness this parable teaches. And then Jesus says in verse 25, **“the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them.....but it shall not be so among you – whosoever will be chief, let him be your servant.”** Bro. Growcott tells us that “obedience to this command is very easy to counterfeit, but hard to fulfill. For there is no lack of proud humility, but rare indeed is the true servant who serves just for the joy of serving, with no motive of self-gratification or self-esteem. The body of Christ is forbidden the normal human framework of authority and

discipline, therefore, if there is not divine and superlative love among its members, all its functions break down in anarchy.”

So the parable begins this way in verse 1 of chapter 20 **“for the kingdom of God is like a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.”** As we all know, there are many references in Scripture of the vineyard symbol. The vineyard is the community of the Truth – the household of God – first in natural Israel, then in spiritual Israel. And in the natural as well as the spiritual a vineyard is a place of **LABOR** and **PRODUCTIVENESS**, where **WORK** is required and **FRUIT** is expected. Verse 2 – **“and when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.”** Bro. Growcott says, “there has always been discussion as to just what the “penny” in this parable symbolizes. Various things have been suggested – eternal life – resurrection – forgiveness – justification – but none of these seem to fit completely. Perhaps another idea that fits well is justice – true, eternal, all wise Justice. Because the householder said in verse 4 “whatsoever is **RIGHT** that will ye receive.” And to this bro. Roberts details the type of justice to be bestowed. He says....

“So the point to bear in mind is that it was a fair and just compensation agreed to willingly by the first-hired laborers. It was around that fact that the lesson revolves. It was just, fair and mutually agreeable. Now I want you to notice that with the first laborers the agreement was made before the work was begun. It was a legal contract. But the later ones accepted in faith the householder’s assurance of fairness.” This is very important, says bro. Growcott, because we may see in this aspect that it would teach the Jews that their legal contract and priority of service was no guarantee of pre-eminence – “The last shall be first.” And it would be a warning to them not to murmur at God’s gracious gift to the despised gentiles who came into the vineyard later.

Finally the householder goes out at the eleventh hour and finds some laborers standing idle, and asks them in verse 6 **“why stand ye here all the day idle?”** The answer is very significant – **“because no man has hired us.”** The offer had not yet been extended. Then the day was done – the work finished – they were called together to receive their pay beginning with the last. But wait a minute, the last were paid the same amount as the first!! And now the instructive part of the parable begins to unfold. And that is that the rewards of God’s service are all gifts. You see, no matter how much or how little God may give to anybody, it is all unmerited grace and mercy and always more than is deserved. Because our very best – at its best, we are unprofitable servants. For who of us even begin to approach to do all the things that we are commanded? Then in verse 10 we are told **“but when the first came they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny.”** Well, naturally thinking, if we were in the same position we would be shouting that it’s not fair and equitable to give these last who worked for a short time in the cool of the day to get the same pay as those who bore the burden and heat of the day. Brothers and sisters, this is a worldwide disease – no matter how well someone is treated,

they complain bitterly if another **APPEARS** to be treated slightly better. That's why Christ said in verse 15 **"is THINE eye evil, because I am good."** You see, their only ground of objection was that someone else had been treated with kindness, and men who had no opportunity to work all day had received a day's wages. So, instead of being glad that others had been treated well – they were envious and bitter. And let us not think brothers and sisters that we are free from this danger. Let us be aware of our tendency to slide into a selfish attitude. The teaching of the parable is profound, but the reality of life can be far more elusive and deceptive. After all who of us can claim to put into practice the forgetting of ourselves and get all our joy and comfort from the blessing and happiness of others? Who of us is big enough to rejoice when we see others favored at our expense? As we said before this parable ends with **"the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen."** This is the heart of the parable. When the secrets of all hearts are made manifest, then nothing will be counted as anything that was not done for the sake of love. What a rearranging of all present values and positions there will be, when all inner motives are revealed at last and many of the called will not be chosen because they did not apply the lesson this parable teaches.

As we have seen from the disciples' conduct following the parable, the lessons did not at the time make a very deep impression. But the time was to come when all these lessons would be remembered, pondered and taught to others. When we read the epistles of Peter and John, we begin to realize how these men grew in grace and knowledge and spiritual growth. These parables were the means by which He taught them these deep, spiritual lessons, which bore such bountiful fruit and understanding when Peter said **"all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."**

So when we gather around the table of the Lord, do our hearts yearn within us to remember the lessons our Master taught us and his apostles? Do we ever yearn to hear Him speak to us today as He spoke to his apostles 2000 years ago? Let us not forget His perfect example and obedient sacrifice he made because of His love for us. For greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.

Bro. Jerry Connolly

Do we say and do not?

The common definition of hypocrisy is to display beliefs, morals, opinions, virtues, ideals, thoughts, qualities and standards that one does not actually have. Our Lord recognized the great tendency in human nature toward this evil and dealt with it in language both plain and bold. In Matthew, chapter 23, he declared:

¹*Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,*

²*Saying the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:*

³All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

⁴For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

⁵But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

⁶And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

⁷And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

⁸But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

⁹And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

¹⁰Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

¹¹But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

¹²And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

¹³But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

¹⁴Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

¹⁵Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

¹⁶Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

¹⁷Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

¹⁸And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

¹⁹Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

²⁰Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

²¹And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

²²And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

²³*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

²⁴*Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

²⁵*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

²⁶*Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

²⁷*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*

²⁸*Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

²⁹*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,*

³⁰*And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.*

³¹*Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.*

³²*Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*

³³*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

³⁴*Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:*

³⁵*That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.*

³⁶*Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.*

³⁷*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

³⁸*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

³⁹*For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

“They say, and do not,” the Word so describes the practice of a hypocrite. That is to say, he manifests one set of beliefs and virtues before men, but lives after a different lifestyle entirely. While the fruits of such behavior might be pleasant to a person who enjoys play-acting, in the long term the end thereof is death. Therefore, we should take the time to examine ourselves

and be certain that we are not guilty of this sin. If we find that our conduct is one of hypocrisy, then today is the time for repentance.

How do we measure up to Biblical standards of walk? With respect to hypocrisy, the following questions are suggested for introspection:

1. Do we say and do not?
2. Do we manifest a Christadelphian lifestyle before men, but in reality practice another?
3. Do we exhort the brethren and sisters to work in the Master's Vineyard, but we move not ourselves one finger?
4. Is it for the glory of God that we do all things, or for our own to be seen of men?
5. On Sunday morning, do we preach Christian conduct and then return to work the following day to be of the world?
6. If we are husbands, do we expect our wives to submit, but pay only lip service to loving them as Christ loved the ecclesia and sacrifice on her behalf?
7. Are we leading a withdrawal movement against a brother or sister who has "married out of the truth," but pay no mind to our own unequal yoke with an alien business partner?
8. Do we preach against adultery, but think nothing of our own lustful looking upon one of the opposite gender?
9. Do we exhort the brethren to non-resistance of evil, turning the other cheek, and loving our enemies, while our homes are stocked with all manner of knives and pistols?
10. Do we proclaim: "To live is Christ, to die is gain," but in reality when faced with a terminal illness we will go through every last dollar just to live a few more days in this body of sin and death?
11. Do we encourage brethren to preach Christ to a perishing world, while our friends, co-workers, and relatives know nothing about our own faith?
12. Do we pound the moral war drum to deafening decibels before brethren and sisters, while we justify all manner of moral failures in our own lives?

More examples of hypocrisy could be cited. However, thinking on these questions alone should move us toward complete self-examination and meaningful reformation. Let us not waste time in so doing. May we put away this sin that so easily besets us and inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

Bro. Bob Widding

Signs - We Live in the End of Gentile Times

This lecture will consider the fact that we now live in the end of the Gentile Age.

But before we get into this, we would like to remind everyone that the purpose of Bible prophesy is not to be able to predict the future, and the exact date when Christ will return. Life is so very fragile that any one of us could

die tonight, and then for us, the return of Christ is in the morning at our awakening. So the purpose of Bible prophecy is not some magical formula we can use to wait for a while, before we get serious about serving God.

No, the purpose of Bible prophecy is that we might see that the hand of God is active, still working in the earth, bringing about His ultimate purpose of the earth ruled in peace by His son, Jesus Christ. A time when the earth will reflect Isaiah's prophecy in that ninth chapter, so often repeated but so poorly understood:

Isa. 9:6-7 *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, [and that throne was in Israel] and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”*

And in seeing the work performed by the zeal of the Lord of Hosts come to pass, in seeing the prophecies of the Bible clearly taking place before our very eyes, our faith will be strengthened to hold on to the Truth and remain obedient to the truth in these ages of Gentile darkness.

In the prophecies of the Bible that we shall look at this evening, we will see this. We will see that God's hand is, and has been, at work over the ages, slowly and carefully realizing His plan. Yes, in every age, and especially in our age, there have been scoffers. Peter records their speech nearly 2000 years ago, we he wrote words of encouragement to the faithful. Peter wrote:

2Peter 3:3-9 *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

These men, these scoffers exist today in many forms. Some are not religious men at all, but simply mock the idea that God is still working. Some claim to be religious men, but claim that all Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled, and there is nothing yet to be accomplished. But both classes have the same things in common. They are, as Peter said, “willingly ignorant.” They are willing to ignore the facts of the case, and chose instead to follow what the Scriptures calls “cunningly devised fables.”

We will look very closely at Bible prophesy to see that the things prophesied by God have come true, and are continuing to come true before our very eyes, that we should not be willingly ignorant, but rather, believe. We will look at the accuracy of the Bible to see the truth of the words of Daniel 2:

Dan 2:20-22 *“Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.”*

And we will see that the things prophesied by God are truly still unfolding right before our eyes, if we will only look. There are many things, many distractions in the world around us that tend to blind us. But we can, if we will, look through those things, anointing our eyes with eye salve of the Scriptures, as it were, that we can clearly see the hand of God.

* * *

Jesus, in his last week of life, three days before he was crucified, sitting on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city of Israel, spoke a prophesy about the Jews and Jerusalem, and it is often referred to as the Mount Olivet prophesy. The prophesy spoke of many things which would befall the Jews in 70 AD when Rome would destroy the Temple, murder thousands of Jews, and exile the rest out of the land. But of particular interest to us this evening about this prophesy is this last part of this prophesy. Jesus told them:

Luke 21:20-24 *“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, [which were of course the Roman armies] then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”*

Note the way Jesus closed that prophesy. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Well, what have we seen over the past 2000 years? We saw Rome come exactly as Jesus prophesied. Luke records that as Jesus left the Temple this happened:

Luke 21:5-6 *“And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, “As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*

This happened. All the stones of the Temple came down. All that is left now, is an outer wall that ringed the Temple, not part of the Temple, on the

western side of the city. You know, the Roman General Titus, led the final destruction of Jerusalem. And Titus desired to save parts of the Temple from destruction, as a testimony to his own military skill in overseeing the destroying such a strong fortress. He commanded his soldiers not to destroy the Towers, a specific command which they disobeyed. During the battle, and seeing that the Roman soldiers started to destroy portions of the Temple he wished to save, Titus sent Roman soldiers to kill Roman soldiers to stop the destruction. It all failed. The Temple was completely destroyed, exactly as Jesus had prophesied.

The Jews were deported, and driven all across the face of the earth. Certain emperors even made laws like the Roman leader Justinian, that Jews were prohibited from living in Israel. And yet, 2000 years later, what do we see? We see today, Israel, a nation, a powerful nation, standing in the exact area that so many nations, in the past, and even in the present, were determined that she should not stand.

Jesus said that Jerusalem would be trodden down of the Gentiles, but not for ever. Only till the end of Gentile times. It was the same theme that he had expressed to them before, as he surveyed the city of Jerusalem. Knowing what should occur, Jesus lamented in Luke 13:

Luke 13:34-35 *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”*

Note that he doesn't say your house is left desolate forever, but for a time. A time we learn, that was to be called the times of the Gentiles. But at the end of the times of the Gentiles, they were to be regathered on the Mountains of Israel and then they were to stand up a mighty nation.

The prophets before Jesus had said these same things. Jeremiah had made this promise the first time the temple was destroyed under Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, when Babylon had invaded Israel. From the earliest times Israel had this reassurance:

Jer. 46:28 *“Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.”*

Israel was to be driven away because of their disobedience, and their disobedience had been great. When Jeremiah had warned them to cease from their idolatry and worship God, the Jews told Jeremiah:

Jer 44:17-19 *“But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left*

off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?"

That is how complete Israel's rebellion had been. And yet God promised Israel, that yes, they would be taken captive. Yes, they would be scattered across the face of the earth. Yes, they would be punished for their disobedience. But also, yes, though he might destroy all the nations Israel was scattered to, He would not destroy the Jews, but rather, He would correct them, and ultimately return them to Israel. They would be desolate, scattered, until the Times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

As preparation for our lecture tonight we read a few verses from Ezekiel 37, so we won't read them again. They are in your notes for reference. In that section, we saw that Israel was seen as a nation that was hopeless. A valley of dried bones. But slowly, bone came to bone, then they were covered with sinew and flesh, and then ultimately, they stood up a mighty nation. Has this prophesy come true?

But let's look, briefly at the development of the nation of Israel, for the nation of Israel is the greatest witness in the world today, that God is still working out His plan in the earth, and the fact that we are living in the end of Gentile times.

As the 19th century drew to a close, Israel had no homeland. The first Zionist conference was held in 1898. The stated goal of the conference was to get a homeland for Israel. They didn't really seem to be too specific about where the homeland was to be. Different locations around the globe were suggested, including locations in south eastern Africa.

But this was not to be. But the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David was the land of Israel. And therefore the only place for Israel to be rebuilt was in Israel. But how was this to be done? One of the greatest empires of the World, the Turkish empire, with its Moslem people controlled Israel and had done so for over a thousand years.

(We see Turkey today, a weak insignificant nation. But only 80 years ago, she was one of the four great powers of the earth--a testimony to how quickly God changes the nations.)

But, following the Zionist congress, a major event in the history of the world, and Israel, was about to occur. We saw a few minutes ago, that Jeremiah had recorded just how thoroughly Israel had rejected God, how they preferred the "Queen of Heaven" to God. In the Mosaic law, that God had promised Israel that, if she was disobedient, she would be punished 7 times for her sins. God had told Israel:

LEV 26:15-18 *"And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause*

sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.”

What is a time? We see this expression all through the Scriptures. We have been talking about it tonight--"till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Daniel said God changed times and seasons, indicating that a time is a year. And it was. A time was considered to be the full circle of the earth around the sun, which the Jews had divided into 12 months of 30 days, totaling 360 days. This is actually where the 360 degrees to a circle comes from, that we all learned in our math classes in school. So a time was a period of 360 days.

In the Mosaic law, as we have seen, God told Israel that they would be punished seven times for their sins. How long a period was that to be. Well, 7 times 360 is 2,520. Does that match any historic time? Well, the nation that Jeremiah prophesied that would conquer Jerusalem was Babylon, and Babylon, according to modern archeologists, conquered Babylon in the winter of 604 or 603 BC. If we were to read the Encyclopedia Britannica about this date, we would see they use the date BC 604. This date has been changed many times over the last 20 years, and it will soon be changed again to BC 603. Several Archeological magazines such as Archeology Today, and Biblical Archeology already use the BC 603 date.

If we add 2520 years to 603 BC what do we get? We get the winter of 1917, the time in world war one when Israel was removed from the Turkish power, and the power of hostile foreign interests for the first time in 2,520 years.

It was November on 1917, Britain under the leadership of Field Marshal Allenby defeated the Turks in Gaza, and on December 9,1917 Allenby marched into Jerusalem, freeing the city from the control of the Turks, exactly 2,520 years from the invasion of Babylon. The Encyclopedia Britannica records this of Allenby:

Encyclopedia Britannica "Allenby's service in the Middle East proved more distinguished. In June 1917 he took command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. The strength of his personality created a new spirit in his army, and after careful preparation and reorganization he won a decisive victory over the Turks at Gaza (November 1917), which led to the capture of Jerusalem (Dec. 9, 1917). Further advances were checked by calls from France for his troops, but after receiving reinforcements he won a decisive victory at Megiddo (Sept. 19, 1918), which, followed by his capture of Damascus and Aleppo, ended Ottoman power in Syria."

So, in 1917, the seven times had been completed on Israel, and for the first time in 2520 years, Israel was no longer controlled by a hostile northern power.

Then, also, at the same time, in World War I, a chemist name Chaim Weisman developed a formula for synthetic acetone, a necessary ingredient

for certain war weapons. As a reward, the British government asked him what he wanted, and he declared, a home land for my people, the Jews. This request was granted in 1917 in the form of the Balfour declaration. Britain pledged support to the Zionist goal of a homeland for Israel. In 1922, the League of Nations (the forerunner of the United Nations) gave Britain the official mandate over Palestine, which of course eventually was renamed Israel.

Now, while all this was going on, there was very little immigration to Israel by the Jews. Immigration was open to all who wished to go, but none of the Jews wanted to go. For various reasons, political, religious, and economic reasons: the Jews did not readily leave the comforts of life in Europe and the US to go to Israel.

Then came the late 1930s and the growth of anti-Semitism in Europe. The outbreak of persecution increased the number of Jews immigrating to Israel, but this upset the Arabs who were already in Palestine, though living under the British mandate. Support of the Jews against Nazi Germany was guaranteed. But to gain Arab support, Britain then limited immigration to 176,000 per year.

By the end of World War II, through the Nazi persecutions, the Jews had been forced to realize the importance of establishing the Jewish state. The United Nations, with the support of the United States and Russia issued its mandate in November 1947 declaring Israel a sovereign state. The British abandoned their mandate on May 13, 1948 and Israel declared itself a state on May 14, 1948.

Dry bone had joined to dry bone. At the time Israel declared her independence, there were only an estimated 650,000 Jews in Israel. She fought a war in 1948 against the Arabs, outnumbered over 100 to 1 and surrounded on three sides by enemies; yet in spite of overwhelming odds, she was victorious. In one day, she had stood up a mighty nation as the prophesy of Ezekiel had foretold.

Her continued existence has not been easy. In 1956, she again fought a war, this time against Egypt heavily backed by the former Soviet Union and was again victorious. After both the 1948 war and the 1956 war, Israel returned to her original boundaries as established by the United Nations. But after 1956, Israel entered into a period of unprecedented economic growth, and that spurred immigration taking the population numbers up to over 3 million people by the time the next war, the 6 day war of 1967 occurred.

Following the 1967 war, Israel refused to give up the territory she had won, until her Arab neighbors would agree to sign peace treaties. In 1973, during Yom Kippur or the Jewish New Year, the Jews were attacked again by the Arabs, but again had no trouble fending them off.

In 1980 Jerusalem was declared the capital city of Israel, to the chagrin of all the nations. (It had formerly been Tel Aviv.) This was thought to be a stumbling block to lasting peace, because Jerusalem had been a divided city by the United Nations mandate. The Jews had taken all of Jerusalem in 1967,

and now were officially refusing to give it back. It is notable that the loudest voice in this country against establishing Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel came from the American Council of Churches. Christianity, not understanding the role of Israel in God's plan simply cannot see God's hand at work in bringing Israel back into existence, as prophesied in Eze. 37.

But, as we have seen, dry bone came together with dry bone. We can see that this is just how it happened. Events, seemingly irrelevant, became the substance of international debate until Israel was again established as a nation. And when she stood up on that fateful day in May 1948, she stood up a nation mighty enough to take on 14 other nations who outnumbered her over 100 to 1, and she defeated her enemy. Though she still did not know and still does not know that it was God who fought for her.

Now when, in the end of the Gentile Times, Israel was to stand up a mighty nation, the next chapter of Ezekiel describes a mighty power that would invade her, bringing the return of Christ. This power is said to be a Northern power in Eze 38:

EZE 38:1-3 *“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:”*

And the other nations listed with the Northern King are:

EZE 38: 5-6 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.

Europe, we are told by the ancient historian Herodotus, was settled by two families who spread out down the Danube river, the river that cuts east to west across Europe. The families of Magog settled north of the Danube, and became the German people, while Gomer, mentioned in verse 6 became the French peoples. The words translated “Chief Prince in verse 2 should have been left untranslated, and is the Hebrew word Rosh, the ancient name of Russia. Meshech is Muscovy. Tubal is Tubolski. These are the ancient names of the three principle regions of modern Russia, The Kiev, Beolerus, and Siberia.

Persia is the ancient name of modern Iran, and Togarmah is the ancient name of modern Turkey.

This is the confederation that comes up upon the mountains of Israel. Daniel tells us of this advance by this Northern Confederation:

DAN 11:40-43 *“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the*

countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.”

So the treading down of Israel is not yet over. Israel, through her unbelief will still suffer more for refusing to recognize her Messiah. Russia, this Northern King, shall overflow Israel with their US and British protectors of Israel like a whirl wind. So complete will be the destruction of Jerusalem at the hand of this northern invader that the prophet Zechariah wrote:

ZEC 14:1-2 *“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”*

When that happens, the prophet tells us:

ZEC 14:3-5 *“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”*

And again writing of this great battle the prophet Joel writes:

JOE 3:9-16 *“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”*

It is Jesus Christ, fighting for the Great God Almighty who accomplishes the victory, and restores again the Kingdom unto Israel, to the confusion of the world.

It was concerning Israel that God said:

Deut. 32:8-10 *“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the*

people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."

Israel is the Apple of God's eye. His chosen people. Not, because of the wicked men who have brought God's punishments upon Israel, but because of the righteous men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David to whom God made the promises. By watching the nation of Israel, we can see that God is now, and ever has been working out His plan for mankind.

* * *

You know, a few years ago, it was pretty easy to imagine Russia, a great world power descending on Israel in a worldwide battle for control of the world's economic system. 15 years ago, Russia was a great impending power, anxious to bring every nation under Communist control, thereby destroying her great enemy, capitalism. Under then President Ronald Reagan, the United States engaged Russia in a spending frenzy that resulted in the collapse of Russia. Now, terribly disoriented and woefully in debt, we often hear derision from the Bible's critics saying that Bible prophecy is wrong, and that Russia will never be able to rise again.

So we thought we might take a few minutes and look at another point in history, when another King of the North fought the king of the South for control of the Middle east. This was a period called the Classic Greek wars, and it started around 250 BC, after the death of Alexander the Great and before the rise of the Roman empire. The events are found in the 11th chapter of Daniel. The first part which concerns us this evening is:

Dan. 11:3-4 *"And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."*

This mighty king who stood up against the king of Persia was of course, Alexander the Great, who defeated Xerxes, king of Persia, and established the Greek empire. And when Alexander stood up or became the world emperor, he died in a drunken stupor in the city of Babylon. His kingdom then, the prophet says, was to go to the four winds of heaven. Well, what do historians say about the division of the empire after Alexander's death. This is from Rollin's World History:

Rollin II:47 *"The empire of Alexander was thus divided into four kingdoms. Ptolemy had Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Coele-Syria, and Palestine: Cassander had Macedonian and Greece: Lysmachus, Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces beyond the Hellespont, and the Bosphorus, and Seleucus all the rest of Asia, to the other side of the Euphrates and as far as the river Indus."*

These men had all been generals under Alexander. They carved up the empire for themselves and ruled it. Then the fifth verse reads:

Dan. 11:5 “*And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.*”

The southern king was the strongest king, one of Alexander’s princes or generals, and he would have a great dominion. Of Ptolemy, the southern king Rollin says:

Rollin II:55 “*Towards the close of this year died Ptolemy Soter, king of Egypt, in the eighty- fourth year of his age, and two years after resignation of his empire to his son. He was the most able, and worthy man of all his race, and left behind him such examples of prudence, justice, and clemency, as very few of his successors were industrious to imitate. During the space of near forty years, in which he governed Egypt after the death of Alexander, he raised it to such a height of grandeur and power, as rendered it superior to the other kingdoms.*”

So the Southern King was the most powerful king, and had made himself superior to all the other kingdoms, just as Daniel said. And while the Southern king was growing stronger and stronger, the king of the North whose name was Antiochus Theos was so beaten down by internal problems that the northern king finally sought to end any hostility between himself and the Ptolemies by making an “agreement.” Daniel says of this:

Dan. 11:6 “*And in the end of years they (the king of the north and south) shall join themselves together; for the king’s daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement.*”

Our historian Rollin records this:

Rollin II:77 “*The troubles and revolts in the East made Antiochus at last desirous to disengage himself from the war with Ptolemy. A treaty of peace was accordingly concluded between them; and the conditions of it were, that Antiochus should divorce Laodice, and espouse Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy; that he should also disinherit his issue by the first marriage, and secure the crown to his children by the second.*”

This marriage between Berenice from the Southern kingdom and Antiochus Theos from the northern kingdom was supposed to be a peace treaty to end the struggles between north and south. The south was vastly superior. The north was weak and splintered. The north sued for peace, but peace didn’t happen. The agreement would not last. Daniel concludes verse 6 this way:

Dan. 11:6: “*but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.*”

Well, what happened. We will let Rollin tell us:

Rollin II:80 “*As soon as Antiochus Theos had received intelligence of the death of Ptolemy Philadelphus, his father-in-law, he divorced Berenice, and recalled Laodice and her children. Laodice, who knew the variable disposition and inconstancy of Antiochus, and was apprehensive that the same levity of mind would induce him to return to Berenice again, resolved*

to improve the present opportunity to secure the crown for her son...Laodice, therefore, caused Antiochus to be poisoned, and when she saw that he was dead, she placed in his bed a person named Aremon, who very much resembled him both in his features and in the tone of his voice, to act the part she had occasion for. ...In his name were issued orders, by which his eldest son Seleucus Callinicus was appointed his successor. His death was then declared, upon which Seleucus peaceably ascended the throne, and enjoyed it for the space of twenty years....

“Laodice, not believing herself safe as long as Berenice and her son lived, concerted measures with Seleucus to destroy them also: but Berenice being informed of their design, escaped with her son to Daphne, where she shut herself up in the asylum built by Seleucus Nicator. But being at last betrayed by the perfidy of those who besieged her there by the order of Laodice, first her son and then herself, with all the Egyptians who had accompanied her to that retreat, were murdered in the blackest and most inhuman manner.”

So the peace agreement came to an end. Laodice poisoned her husband and set her son on the throne. Well, what did the Ptolemies then do? Daniel writes:

Dan. 11:7-9 *“But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.”*

A branch of Bernice’s roots, her brother, Ptolemy Euergetes, sweeps down upon the Northern King destroying him, his kingdom and taking much silver and gold with him. His victory over the northern king is swift and sure. Here is how our historian records it:

Rollin II:80 “Her [Berenice’s] brother, Ptolemy Euergetes was also as expeditious as possible to advance thither with a formidable army; but the unhappy Berenice and her children were dead before any of these auxiliary troops could arrive. When they therefore saw that all their endeavours to save the queen and her children were rendered ineffectual, they immediately determined to revenge her death in a remarkable manner. The troops of Asia joined those of Egypt, and Ptolemy, who commanded them, was as successful as he could desire in the satisfaction of his just resentment. ..”This prince carried off 40,000 talents of silver with a prodigious quantity of gold and silver vessels and 2,500 statues, part of which were those Egyptian idols that Cambyses, after his conquest of that kingdom, had sent into Persia.”

The king of the South destroyed the weaker Northern King and plundered them. What does Daniel say happened next. It is another battle. The Northern King’s sons again rise up, and the southern king again defeats him. Daniel records it this way:

Dan. 11:10-12 *“But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.”*

Our historian also records this:

Rollin: II:108 *“The campaign was again opened in spring (BC 217). Ptolemy caused 70,000 foot, 5000 horse, and 73 elephants, to advance towards Pelusium....That of Antiochus was something more numerous than the other. His forces consisted of 72,000 foot, 6000 horse, and 102 elephants.”*

“At last the two kings resolving to decide their quarrel, drew up their armies in battle-array...Finding it would now be impossible for him to maintain himself in that country against Ptolemy, he abandoned all his conquests, and retreated to Antioch with the remains of his army.”

‘A truce was therefore agreed upon for twelve months; and before the expiration of that time, a peace was concluded on these terms. Ptolemy, who might have taken advantage of the victory, and have conquered all Syria, was desirous of putting an end to the war, that he might have an opportunity of devoting himself entirely to his pleasures.’

So here we have two battles, the king of the South, superior in every way was victorious in both. But war is expensive. Especially foreign war. It weakens a nations treasury. It weakens a nation’s resolve. And wars fought on foreign soil can become unpopular so very quickly. And that is exactly what the Ptolemy family found.

For the next time Daniel sees the king of the North coming, the end result is completely different. Daniel prophesies:

Dan. 11:13-16 *“For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.”*

As it is sometimes said, the third time is the charm. In the comfort and wealth and splendor of its power, the King of the South could not foresee the rise of a mighty general in the north, whom history has named Antiochus the Great. But he did rise up, as God prophesied that he would. Antiochus the great conquered all his former lands, and took the battle to Egypt, and would

have conquered them, except that a new burgeoning world power came on the scene to prevent them.

How silly must Daniel’s prophesy have seemed to the Ptolemies in Egypt. They were far richer than their northern enemy. They were far more powerful than their northern enemy. The rest of the then world loved the Ptolemies, and despised the Antiochuses. Their country was peaceful within, while the northern king’s country was in revolt, and total chaos and turmoil. And Ptolemy had already twice decisively defeated and destroyed his northern counterpart. Surely nothing could happen to change that. Surely Daniel’s words were mere fairy tales. The Northern King overflowing Egypt? Why that could never happen.

But history records it did happen. And it happened precisely as Daniel said it would. Rollin tells us:

Rollin II: 134 “Antiochus King of Syria, and Philip king of Macedonia, during the reign of Ptolemy Philopater (203 BC) had discovered the strongest zeal for the interest of that monarch, and were ready to assist him on all occasions. Yet, no sooner was he dead, leaving behind an infant, whom the law of humanity and justice enjoined them not to disturb in the possession of his father’s kingdom, than they immediately join in a criminal alliance, and excite each other to take off the lawful heir, and divide his dominions between them. Philip was to have Caria, Lybia, Cyrenaica, and Egypt; and Antiochus all the rest. With this view, the latter entered Coele-syria and Palestine; and, in less than two campaigns, made an entire conquest of those two provinces, with all their cities and dependencies.”

Such was the beginning of the end of the glorious kingdom of the South. The king of the South did survive, but only because a third world power, the Roman empire began to intervene for the behalf of the southern King.

So when the world looks at Russia today, and says it can never rise again against the wealth and power of the US, she forgets the splendor of the Ptolemies in Egypt, and the sorry state of affairs that the Antiochus family in Egypt experienced before. They forget how the prophet Daniel foretold the destruction of the Ptolemies, when such looked to be a complete impossibility.

God changes the times and seasons and sets over them the basest of men. As we have seen, God has prophesied threw his prophets that Russia with Europe will descend upon Israel and conquer the land, and at that time Christ and the Saints will fight to reestablish the throne of David, which shall abide forever. This will happen as surely as Antioch eventually defeated Ptolemy.

—*Bro. Jim Phillips*

Encouraging Words No. 24

IN things natural, with what care does a wise parent or nurse feed the babe committed to her charge. How eagerly she studies the books within her reach which may throw light upon her duty. What diligent inquiry she makes of those who can give reliable information. With what indignation

would she regard the one who should attempt to offer the babe trash, not to mention offal or garbage.

To turn from the natural to the spiritual. As the result of a large expenditure of time and energy brethren and sisters are from time to time introduced into our midst as babes in Christ. By whom shall these babes be fed and what kind of food shall be given to them? It is for all to consider this question. How do Christ's babes fare in our ecclesia? Each one of us who comes in contact with them is engaged in offering them some kind of food, for far more talking takes place off the platform than on it. Do we give them the sincere milk of the Word or do we offer them trash and worse?

As we move to and from our seats in the meetings and walk in company along the roads what is uppermost in our minds? For "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Concerning the topics which should engage our thoughts we have very definite apostolic instruction. Our minds should be occupied with things "true," "honest" and "just," things "pure" and "lovely," things of "good report," of "virtue" and of "praise." After finishing this enumeration the apostle adds impressively: "think on these things." The mind is not naturally furnished with topics such as these. They can only be stored as a result of much study and much earnest endeavour to overcome the natural promptings. True, indeed, is it that "the heart of the righteous studieth to answer."

Apart from a storage such as the apostle enjoins, we can never approach God's requirements as touching our converse one with another. James describes the speech which emanates from the natural mind as "full of deadly poison." Concerning those who give utterance to it, Paul says: "Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongue they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their tongue." This is how the voicings of the natural mind appear in the eyes of God, and it is His point of view we have to consider. In contradistinction to this, we are told that "the lips of the righteous feed many." To do this must be our study and aim if we would be counted with the righteous.

Let us remember that to talk about God is not necessarily to say that which is healthy and life-giving. The serpent talked about God and brought a curse upon itself and death upon those who listened to it. Job's three friends talked about God, but they grossly misrepresented Him, and in consequence were counted as transgressors. Similarly to talk about the brethren and sisters is not necessarily to keep our conversation within the bounds of apostolic precept. In speaking of our brethren and sisters, it is

necessary not only to say of them what is just and true, but to dwell upon those things in them which we see to be pure (and to those who look for them such things are to be seen in Christ's faithful ones), lovely, of good report, and worthy of praise.

Let us not merit Christ's indignation by pouring into the ears of his little ones blameworthy matters, such as offences, grievances, slidings, tittle-tattle, slander—things which are frequently untrue, dishonest, unjust and impure, and are always unlovely, of bad report, and devoid of virtue and of praise.

We cannot expect to transform our native ignorance and ungoverned tendencies all at once, but we should be able to satisfy ourselves that we have raised the right standard, and that we are making strenuous efforts to reach it. Let us recall the time and energy which we devoted to mastering the first principles when the gospel first shone across our path, and let us emulate our course at that period of our lives. The issues which the most lowly sister in the ecclesia may control by a faithful or unfaithful use of her tongue are not to be exceeded in importance.

Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1910

Meditations – Deity's Ways No. 24

SINGLENESSE of heart is the foundation of acceptable prayer. A man's actions must accord with the spirit of his petitions if his petitions are to be heard. God abominates all forms of double-mindedness. It is double-mindedness to pray "*Hallowed be thy name*" whilst pursuing courses which bring reproach and dishonour upon it—for protection from besetting sins whilst running in the ways of temptation—for faith whilst keeping and courting the company of the unfaithful—for wisdom whilst wilfully neglecting the reading of the Word of wisdom—for the well-being of the poor whilst refusing to make a single sacrifice on their behalf—for the spread of the Truth whilst carelessly allowing opportunities to pass whereby the alleged desire might be satisfied—for peace whilst passively or actively opposing the things which make for peace. Effectual prayer can spring only from the righteous and consistent—those who are prepared to co-labour with God in the attainment of the thing asked for. "Ye ask," said James, "and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." Here, again, let us be on our guard. God will have nought to do with pleasure-seeking, worldly men.

An evil heart is the natural inheritance and life-long companion of every one. “The heart of man,” says Jeremiah, “is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things” (17:9). How few have the courage to face this Bible truth! Most people rob the passage of its value by the introduction of unnecessary and unwarrantable qualifications. The heart of man is radically bad—incomparably subtle. It needs no spurring to keep it up to its ungodly work. It easily finds excuses for wrong doing, and is not slow to quote and misapply Scripture in support of the same. Let the wise note their enemy and take heed. By the power of the Word the evil heart of man can be held in check and controlled. Paul did this, though he occasionally failed (Rom. 7:19–20). The apostle’s faithful attitude is eloquently set forth in his letter to the Corinthians, “I buffet my body and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.” (R.V.) The man who permits his evil heart to govern him (and it will govern him apart from an agonising tussle), instead of him governing his heart, will most assuredly reap the fruit of his doing.

“I never read the *Christadelphian*, I read the Bible.” When a brother speaks in this way there is something wrong. The boast is wicked; it manifests either disobedience or ignorance concerning God’s will. God has not told men to read only the Bible. He has enjoined the listening to the admonitions of the Bible-loving. Exhort and edify one another are precepts which demand observance (2 Thes. 5:2; Heb. 3:13). Exhortations may take a written as well as a verbal form. Is it not as incumbent on us to listen to exhortations as it is to exhort? Most surely it is. Consequently, God-fearers—men who have a true love for the Word—do not despise but appreciate the efforts of their brethren to upbuild. To lightly esteem such efforts is to undervalue the means that God has appointed for the perfecting of His children an attitude which paves the way for the forsaking of the assembling of ourselves together. The spirit commends the men who speak often one to another (Mal. 4:16, 17). “But I don’t like things that appear in the *Christadelphian*.” This is another position altogether. Let not such an objector vaunt his supreme love for the Bible. But is the objector sure that he is honest—that he is unprejudiced by bitterness or envy? Are the parts to which he objects so bad as to mar his appreciation of those that are good? Let our brother learn to forbear. Let him cultivate the ability to perceive good. Let him not forget that God may be speaking to him through the utterances which he now so foolishly contemns.

The organ of conscientiousness requires divine guidance, or it is sure to steer in wrong directions. Every faculty with which man has been endowed will, unless Scripturally primed, prove itself an instrument of unrighteousness. The proper function of conscientiousness is to enforce what God has commanded. Without enlightenment the organ will suffer what it ought to disallow, and disallow what it ought to suffer. Conscientiousness made Paul in the days of his ignorance “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Tim. 1:13). Christ alluded to the abuse of the organ when he said: “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, *because they have not known the Father, nor me*” (Jno. 16:2, 3). Well may the Scriptures cry: “Cease from thine own wisdom.” Verily, “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26). God’s word must be the lamp and light if we would please Him; for “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). It is for us to obey whether the Word can be squared with our idea of justice and expediency or not. The Word will test our faith. If the command be, as it was on certain occasions under the law, to destroy, without mercy, man, woman, and child, it is not for us to stop to argue about their handsomeness, their comeliness, or innocence. There are precepts equally trying to us. Let us not be overthrown by them. Let not uninformed conscientiousness, or any other faculty, lead us into unbelief.

Our first parents were put to the test by a subtle, low-reasoning, faithless serpent. We are put to the test by the mind of the serpent implanted in our nature. This serpent-mind prompts us to distrust God and to believe in ourselves, to judge according to appearances, to secure present pleasure regardless of consequences: in brief, to gratify, at any cost, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. There would have been no trial for Adam had no commandment been given. So with us. God is proving us by the commandments that He has laid down. These are numerous and affect us in every relationship of life: as husbands, as wives, as parents, as children, as servants, or as neighbours. As sincere men and women, let us in all these bearings of life find out what the will of the Lord is—like David let us not rest till we are able to say, “With my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy precepts.” Fidelity to the divine law, week in and week out, is exceedingly irksome, but it is essential to eternal life. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not

blot out his name out of the book of life.” Shall we complain because God has appointed probation before exaltation? Let us not be so unreasonable. Let us rejoice rather at the wisdom and beauty of the method. Let us remember that if we are faithful our day of exaltation will surely come. Probation is not for ever. It will terminate both individually and racially. In no individual instance does it extend beyond a brief life-time, and racially it is within the compass of 7,000 years. In either case, is not this, in view of the eternal ages beyond, “a little while?”

Bro. A. T. Jannaway— 1889

Perilous Times

Judging from the ‘perilous times’ at which we have now arrived, it may safely be assumed that the period for the infusion of the supernatural into the crisis cannot be far distant. The situation of affairs which has now been inaugurated is such as to cause the intelligent and believing Scripture reader to rejoice, knowing that his redemption draweth nigh. The development of the present crisis is beyond the control of the persons who have been principally concerned in bringing it about. There may be suspension of arms, and attempts at pacification, accompanied by fresh complications and renewed hostilities. These, however, are only probable incidents and episodes. The drama must still go on, to the consummation of the divine purpose. Heaven speed the day when that purpose shall be fully and happily accomplished!

—Bro. John Thomas

(Last paragraph of Contending For The Faith) What would Bro. Thomas say of today? - Waiting and watching.

Ignorance

No one has any right to set up his own ignorance as the limit of what God hath revealed. A thing may be unknown to such a man, but it doth not therefore follow that it is either absolutely unintelligible or a secret. He may not know of it, or, if explained to him, he may not have intellect enough to comprehend it, or his prejudices, or sectarian bias may darken his understanding — this by no means makes the thing unintelligible or mysterious to other people. All that such persons have a right to say is, “we do not know anything about it.” They may confess their own ignorance, and resolve to look into the matter, or not; but they are presumptuously overstepping the bounds of propriety to venture to do more.

—Bro. John Thomas Elpis Israel

Hints For Bible Markers

As we continue with the commands of Jesus concerning money we find that we are instructed not to labor to be rich, to place money and the things it can purchase as a goal in our lives. But to be content with the true necessities of life, food and raiment. Paul wrote to Timothy pointing out to him how certain brethren were corrupting the “Truth” for “*making gain of Godliness.*” But he goes on to say that being content in the “Truth” with what you have is great gain. James in the 5th chapter of his epistle brings out how this corruption for gain and how those who put the pursuit of money over the Gospel would pay the price. He told those in Israel who labored for riches “*the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth*” (James 5:4)

Some quotes from Josephus will show the gain of “*He that trusteth in his riches*” (Proverbs 11:28). In his record of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus we read in chapter ten, section one, “But as for the richer sort, it proved all one to them whether they stayed in the city or attempted to get out of it, for they were equally destroyed in both cases; for every such person was put to death under this pretence, that they were going to desert, but in reality that the robbers might get what they had. The madness of the seditious did also increase together with their famine, and both those miseries were every day inflamed more and more;”¹ To complete the picture we will look at chapter thirteen, section four, “Hereupon some of the deserters having no other way leaped down from the wall immediately, while others of them went out of the city with stones, as if they would fight them; but thereupon they fled away to the Romans:...Yet did another plague seize upon those that were thus preserved; for there was found among the Syrian deserters a certain person who was caught gathering pieces of gold out of the excrements of the Jews’ bellies; for the deserters used to swallow such pieces of gold, as we told you before, when they came out; and for these did the seditious search them all; for there was a great quantity of gold in the city, insomuch that as much was now sold [in the Roman camp] for twelve Attic [drams] as was sold before for twenty-five; but when this contrivance was discovered in one instance, the fame of it filled their several camps that the deserters came to them full of gold. So the multitude of the Arabians with the Syrians, cut up those that came as supplicants, and searched their bellies. Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this since, in one night about two thousand of these deserters were thus dissected.”¹ —Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

¹Whiston , William *The Works of Josephus*, 1981

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VI. CONCERNING YOUR ACTIONS

Labour not to be rich: having food and raiment, be content.

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. (1 Timothy 6:8)

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. (John 6:27)

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: (Matthew 6:19)