

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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He healeth the
broken in heart,
and bindeth up
their wounds....
Great is our Lord,
and of great power:
his understanding
is infinite.

PSALM 147:3,5.

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Editor: Gene Hawkins

Definite Sign Posts Of The End

Gene Hawkins

“**A**nd there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; (at a loss mentally) the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Lk. 21:25-27

“...there shall be signs...” cried Jesus, as He then listed numerous harbingers of His second coming, the culmination of which is described in V. 27. This sign indicates a specific time of fulfillment wherein The Great Teacher emphasizes the specific word “...then (or at that time) shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” John described this same scene in Rev. 1:7 when he wrote, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” This latter account will not take place until **AFTER** the tribulation is over, for the Jews as a nation, or “...they...” of Jesus prophecy, will not bow before their Messiah until the time of Jacob’s trouble is complete. It is this intense time of suffering during the 1260 day reign of antichrist which will bring them to their knees in repentance, for we read that “...they also which pierced him:...shall wail (beat the breast, lament, mourn) because of him...” The timing emphasized by the little word “...then...” in the above text is a direct reference to that hour when Jesus will come “...in a cloud with power and great glory.” John vividly portrays the same scene as he depicts Jesus coming with “...clouds (of glorified humanity)...” This will be an appearing wherein the whole world will behold Him for, “...every eye shall see him,....” and is in direct contrast to the time when “...the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” I Thess. 5:2 Those two events cannot refer to the same appearance, for they are directly contradictory, the one to the other.

Thus, Jesus’ exhortation of V. 28 gives reference to an earlier time even before the tribulation begins. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” We are currently in

that specified era when these signs "...begin to come to pass,..." and it is incumbent upon us to be very much aware of the fact that "...there shall be signs,...." of that momentous day.

These "signs" prevail world-wide in our day, but it seems that many would completely ignore them. It is a bit disappointing at times to realize that there are those of this world and wicked humanity who simply, and completely, disregard the truth of God's Word as being non-existent and thus irrelevant to modern day living. But there also seem to be others in the Christian Community who are apparently oblivious to the "eminent threat" of Jesus' soon return, as announced by "...these things,..." for they continue undaunted in pursuit of long term goals. Sadly there are those who have made the statement, "yes I do believe that Jesus is coming again, but not in my lifetime." This would be equivalent to the unfaithful servant of Luke 12:45 who said "...his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;..." It is these who apparently do not actually recognize the signs before them, and completely ignore Jesus' admonition to "...look up,....for your redemption draweth nigh."

4 There are still others who have written letters to Grace and Glory from time to time over the years, chastising Definite Sign Posts Of The End for trying to present a political platform. These letters have at times contained long lists of examples, declaring how the explanations of the "signs" confronting this world are in violation of certain stands on issues adopted by political parties. There are precious few of such complaints which say that these comments are directly contradictory to, or in violation of, God's Word.

A quick perusal of Grace and Glory archives reveals that Sis. Mary Bodie began this segment of the magazine as far back as 1924 under the title "Signs of the Times." The heading "Definite Sign Posts Of The End" was apparently adopted in Jan. 1927 and has continued to this day. Thus, Sis. Bodie wrote extensively of events surrounding WWII. She was not hesitant to commend political leaders such as Harry Truman, who was the first world head of state to publicly recognize Israel as a nation in 1948. Neither did she refrain from severely criticizing by name those who refused to follow Mr. Truman's example of defending God's Chosen People. She apparently had no problem in 1925 of criticizing both "...Harding and later Coolidge..." for their endeavor

to join the league of nations in an effort to achieve world peace. She also criticized a "Mr. Bryan" in the same issue because he urged "...America to buy world peace by liquidating the world's debt." Her blistering rebuke states that "We are surprised that Mr. Bryan, who appears to be a sincere Christian does not know his Bible better. He should be aware that there can be no world peace except by the coming of Christ, 'the Prince of Peace.' Also that nothing can hinder another war; nothing whatsoever men men may do will scatter the 'maggot-like hates' that are brooding in Europe. " History clearly reveals that she was right on target due to having known the Truth of God's Word.

However, Bro. Paul Smith, who wrote this feature for over 50 years before he was taken home to glory in 2010, lamented many times before his departure from this earth that it was "getting harder and harder not to **appear** political when writing The Sign Posts." The reason for that is very simple. The politicians themselves have purposefully tossed "political footballs" that were once defined as "moral and religious issues" into that arena in an effort to achieve their own power and advantage.

Thus when scriptures are used in the Sign Posts that portray the atrocious conditions of these last days being likened unto the days of Noah, or Sodom and Gomorrah wherein the abominable practice of men with men and women with women was practiced, it is considered in the eyes of some to be political. That is because gay rights, marriage, and other abominable relationships and "human rights issues" have been unanimously adopted by political societies around the world. A letter some time ago declared in essence: "We Christians know these things are wrong, and forbidden by scripture. We also know that God's Word prophesies them for these last days, so we simply do not need to be reminded of them." 5

Another political "hot spot" in our day is that of abortion. Scripture is very clear that the shedding of "innocent blood" was one major reason for which Jerusalem was delivered into captivity. "Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh,...And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon." The "innocent blood" of Manasseh's day is not fully defined, but the wholesale practice of abortion at this present

time is a prime example of this forbidden atrocity in these days of violence and ungodliness immediately preceding the judgment of the tribulation. Moreover, it is politicians who are leading the charge in justifying it. Pro-life advocates were appalled to learn that some had suggested not only aborting a child in the third trimester but would also advocate simply “making it comfortable” until it died after having been born. Shedding such innocent blood is touted in our day as being an intricate part of “human rights.” Scripture presents a different view asserting that, “...men shall be lovers of their own selves,... proud,... unholy, **Without natural affection**,...incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;” II Tim. 3:2-4

One letter a while back, objecting to the mere mention of this subject, implied that “There must be some way of preventing these unwanted children from becoming a burden to society.” One can hardly imagine such a tone coming from a Christian, but ours is a day when political correctness must be maintained and defended at all costs.

6 Another political “bombshell” of our day is that of manmade global warming, or “climate change,” and comments in the Sign Posts were challenged by one letter as being unscriptural stating that “You dangerously used scripture to prove a point in climate change. On Mar. 2020 you wrote a Bible passage, ‘see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.’ I believe the oil that was spoke of is olive oil. Olive oil was used as the Holy oil for anointing. It was a symbol of the Holy Spirit.”

There is no argument that both oil and wine are used extensively throughout scripture as symbols of the H.S. However, if the foregoing interpretation and application of God’s Word be correct, then the only conclusion which can be drawn is that anyone who is filled with the Holy Ghost at that time will be exclusively protected when this third seal of judgment is opened. Is that a plausible explanation in view of the time in which the major devastation of this era of judgment comes to pass? Who would be the beneficiary of such a restriction? There seems to be no clear evidence of exactly when the innumerable company of Ch. 7 will be taken to glory, so no one can say conclusively whether or not the bulk of the Church will still be here at that time or not. We do know that the vast majority of The Church today refuses the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the event that

the Church as a whole is still here, does it mean that those who are “filled” will be spared the destruction of this third seal while Christians who are only “saved” will not?

Many erroneous doctrines have been introduced over the years, directly because Scripture was taken out of the context in which it is was written. Thus, it is imperative that men understand the timing of this third seal of judgment in order to ascertain the message in regard to the oil and wine. The era of peace and safety which began when the first seal was opened has given way to an atmosphere of intense destruction represented by the rider on the red horse of bloodshed under the second seal. This is then followed by the black horse loosed by this third seal, bringing forth the tremendous lack of absolute necessities which are required to sustain life on this earth. “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come...And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” Rev. 6:5-6

The very context of this portion bears out the fact that God is speaking of bare necessities, and the effects of all these seals of judgment will be felt worldwide. No nation will be spared. Privation and undoubtedly rationing will be the norm in that day. This will be an atmosphere of absolute judgment, so what does it mean that both oil and wine are to be spared? Surely literal olive oil is not meant here for that would be considered more a luxury rather than the necessity demonstrated by these other provisions. More than one scholar has agreed that preserving the oil is God’s way of seeing to it that these nations have every opportunity to fuel their own war machines and advance the judgments which are yet to come on this earth. Just look at nations like Russia and China, two major powers which are certain to be front and center during the tribulation, putting forth every effort even at this present hour to ensure that their oil reserves remain intact. Due to the tremendous pollution which will be prevalent at that time because of nuclear war, there is great possibility that there will be absolutely no drinkable water to be found. Thus, “...hurt not the wine...” is another beautiful example of God’s pattern for showing mercy in the midst of judgment thus preserving wine in the place of water to drink.

Given this scenario, it is an absolute certainty that man's effort to banish oil consumption on this earth in an effort to control global warming will not come to fruition. Even though both China and Russia have "signed on" to the Paris Climate accords, no nation on earth believes either of them will fully comply with the requirements of that agreement. It is also a certainty that the political battle over climate change may continue well into the tribulation period, for men simply will not accept the fact that God is still in control regardless of their unbelief. One day, however, all men on this earth will, without fail, come to the following conclusion concerning global warming: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory." Rev. 16:8-9 Let God's Word speak for itself in regard to this political monstrosity. The major problem with climate change is that ungodly men purport to do what ONLY God can accomplish!

8 Writers of the Sign Posts have long published Daniel's declaration that God, "...removeth kings, and setteth up kings:;..." meaning that He alone is responsible for putting political leaders in place. Dan. 2:21 Apparently the aforementioned writer does not agree, for these words appear in the same letter. "I pray the voting will not be tampered with again in the next election!" The reasons for which God chooses to put certain men in power at any given time often remains a mystery to men, for His Ways are not always ours. However Paul's instruction to us regarding the powers He has ordained is simple. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;" I Tim. 2:1-3

Believers may not always understand why God does what He does, but it is imperative that all accept His Decisions, and acknowledge that He does exercise the right to put whomever He will in political power.

The current coronavirus pandemic has also become a virtual political battlefield worldwide. More than one leader has heard the demand to explain why they did or did not do certain

things. Some political figures have vehemently criticized the actions of those in charge, oftentimes giving extremely vague generalities of advice, but in no wise offering even a hint of specifics as to how it “should have been done.” This crisis has produced a global economic shutdown. There are those who insist that this cessation of activity should absolutely continue, and here in the U.S. some states which have re-opened are now under pressure to reverse course back to lockdown status. Other “experts” who have been largely silenced by the mainstream media, insist that such a lockdown should have been targeted rather than universal. They are of the opinion that though this is most assuredly an extremely serious issue, whereby this entire world must contend with a very contagious disease, every quarter on earth was not effected to the same degree or intensity. Which side is to be believed? There is one very glaring sign of the end times which blazes forth with irrefutable evidence that God’s Word is right on target. This whole world has just witnessed, and proven in bold and living color, just how easy it is for masses of people around the entire planet to be controlled and manipulated by fear, regardless of whether all the information is actually true or not! “Men's hearts failing them for fear,...” is a stark reality at this present time when Jesus’ words are coming to pass verbatim, but it is only a preview of what is yet to come. Such fear is also the chief tactic which will be employed by the antichrist to force the whole world into “lockdown.” This should come as no surprise whatsoever because all of the elements of destruction which have become so prevalent in recent months and years will intensify into the full blown judgments and miseries of the tribulation period. 9

The aforementioned debate over global warming has also produced great consternation in every nation around the world. It is a matter of speculation as to whether or not current prominent politicians actually believe the timeline they advocate, which calls for earth’s destruction due to climate change. This headline appeared in the New York Post in Oct. 2018, but it is typical of many displayed in various news media over the past few years. “Terrifying climate change warning: 12 years until we’re doomed” Statements such as this are very easily refuted by scripture, for John “...saw thrones, and they sat upon them, ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Rev.

20:4 This simply means that planet earth is absolutely safe for at least another 1000 years after the destruction of the tribulation is over, because Jesus Himself will be reigning over it. Isaiah presents this brief thumbnail sketch showing that there will be no ill effects from global warming or any other destructive force during that time. "...for as the days of a tree are the days of my people,... They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble;... The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: ...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." Isa 65:22-25 What a beautiful description of the peace, prosperity, contentment and freedom from disaster, that will prevail during the Millennium!

10 This world is currently in the midst of great deception which is very often deliberately used to promote fear and uncertainty. Paul described these days as being "...perilous times,..." and they have most assuredly arrived. He then lists a host of grievous elements which describe that time with this summation: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." II Tim. 3:13 This is surely contrary to the popular teaching of the Church today that a worldwide revival is on the horizon. Rather "...evil men..." along with their wicked deceitful ways "...shall wax worse and worse..." as time goes on. It is certain that none can change this atmosphere, but God's people must know how to conduct their own lives in the midst of it. Thus, Paul admonishes his son Timothy, to "...continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;" II Tim. 3:14 This simply means that God's Word must be the standard for us in this day of such spiritual declension and deception. The "opinions of men," be they political or religious, must be measured by whether or not they are in harmony with Divine Prophecy. Thus, is it imperative that every believer loudly proclaim in both word and manner of life, that he truly does see this present and massive global fear along with the multiple signs of worldwide destruction, as precursors of Jesus' soon coming. His admonition, in Lk. 21:28, "...when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh," absolutely must become a very personal and practical reality!

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

Hurry-Up Time --A Last Day Prophecy

Mary M. Bodie

"The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet; the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation and the fir tree shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways. They shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightning." Nah. 2:3-4

The first striking point that we notice in this striking chapter of the little prophecy of Nahum is the dash-ing, the splashing, the running, the raging, the shaking, the hastening that is therein marked. It is "hurry-up time," as it were. Everything seems to be on the move. It reminds us of the present time. We would infer that Nahum was in very spirit of our very day, the end of this age and the beginning of the next. He was seeing things as they are even now. We are impressed with the similarity; for as we are aware all things are hurrying along. Men want speed. They are endeavoring to break records in every imaginable manner, going up higher, staying up longer, running faster, etc. We especially notice this in the streets of the city, "in the broad ways," in the speed of the cars. Laws must be enforced to keep the speed fiends within bounds. It is terrible. The car that cannot make terrific speed is "a wreck," according to the language of the hour. It is "speed up, or get out." "Hurry, up, lets go" is the familiar expression of the day, as we will all agree. Well, there is a reason for this rustle and bustle, this hurry and scurry. God is in a hurry. He is winding up we read in the above quoted citation—a Red Army—"the shields of His mighty men are made red." Russia's army is not the only Red Army. The worthies of the Lord, "...the valiant men are in scarlet..." Their chariots also are red with fire. It is the time of the Lord's preparation and they are hastening on in His will. It is a wonderful time in which to live. One dispensation is moving out to make way for the other. We are at the turning of the road, the last lap of the journey, and we are glad. Jesus is coming and He calls us to fight on and win in the conflict. It will not be long until He will set that incorruptible crown upon our brow---the victor's crown---and seat us on the throne with Himself. To make this possible there are four clarion commands given to this Red Army of the Lord. To obey these is

to be invincible. We find them in the first verse of this portion of Nahum which we are considering. "He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily." Nah. 2:1 We will notice them in detail, for they correspond with Paul's exhortation to the Church at Ephesus. Eph. 6:10-20

Military Orders

One. "Keep the munitions." This word, munitions has several meanings, but the prominent ones are "war-materials," "amunition" and "stronghold," all of which are most significant spiritually as well as naturally. An army is of no force at all without armaments, of which fact the nations of the day are well aware. They are in conference now for the purpose of disarmament, or the curtailment of armaments at least; but at the same time they are all in the building business. War materials are increasing among them, rather than decreasing. All the peoples of the world know that their only safety lies in their preparedness. Nations respect the size of the army rather than the size of the nation, hence the preparation of battle array goes steadily on as the end approaches. It is incredible but true. Each nation is hurrying to keep abreast with the others.

Likewise should the army of the Lord be armed and "keep" their armaments, even as the nations are doing. Furthermore they should be laying hold of more of these munitions. Their strength is in these and their safety also, even as in the case of the armies of the earth.

Someone says; What are these? They are the exceeding great and precious promises of God, relating especially to the triumph of Calvary. The cross is our vantage point in the conflict. We have therein all the war materials we need. When Satan comes dashing in pieces before our faces we are to meet him with the unalterable words of Scripture as to sin and sickness and his positive annulment by the cross. There are different phases of the victory of Calvary which we may use according to the mode of the attack. These are not carnal weapons, but at the same time "they are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds," when wielded by faith from the air (the heavenlies) in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are fiery bombs and will destroy the fortifications of the enemy as we hurl them down upon him.

"Keep the munitions" is the first powerful exhortation

of the Prophet. Supplies are provided all along the way, even as in these natural conflicts. But faith must take and use them. Keep, that is, Guard these mighty implements. Let no demon power loosen your grip on God's eternal Word as to Calvary's victory. Such munition is available and sufficient for every test, for every circumstance in any or all conditions of life. These battle bombs have never failed, cannot fail now, or in the future. They are invincible and those who use them are **MORE THAN CONQUERORS** thru Him that loved them. And we will have occasion to prove their power as the days go by. Satan is not going to let us win without a battle. He will fortify himself in every way against us, and his power is tremendous. We are as nothing before him, except as we take heed to the military tactics provided and use the spiritual artillery that is laid up in Scripture.

God has raised up the Church with Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies, according to the divine plan, but we must fight to hold our place. The enemy knows that we are **ONE** with Christ above, and that He is **ONE** with us below, but he does not want us to enjoy our identification with the Conqueror. He knows we then have positive victory over him through this wonderful union which God has effected by the cross. In all Christ's work, in all His favor in all His honor, all His conquest, all His glory we have a part. We are called to share His throne and His Kingdom. World-sovereignty is offered to us in Jesus' Name. But we must take hold of the victory In living, energetic faith in our war missiles. They are poison-gas and tear-bombs to Satan, loosing his hold of us in an effectual way. Let us keep our munitions handy and in constant use, standing on the firing line where God has placed us, wielding the weapons of our warfare by faith. All the artillery of heaven will back us up. God will fight for us as we dare to hurl our missiles at Satan in Jesus' Name....

13

One with Christ on yonder shore,
One with Christ forever more.
Welcomed long ago;
When He entered glory's door
From the depths below.

Two. "Watch the way," is the next command to this Red Army of the Lord. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour," is the answer to this exhortation of Nahum, Each of us is

called to sentry work in the army. We are to learn army maneuvers, to watch the way of the enemy. His attacks vary, and suit the different aspects of each believer's weakness. We are to be on the wall, a watchman that never sleeps, but warns of the danger from the advancing enemy. We are to cry out against him and awaken the sleepy, slumbering people who are in ignorance of his wiles. We are to resist, to stand, to withstand "steadfast in the faith," and having overcome all to remain victors on the field. Wiles, errors, delusions and subtleties of the enemy are all around us. We must be competent to judge all these religious things in the sanctuary. We must not be ignorant of his devices. He is a crafty general; but we are immune if we depend upon the directions given to us by our Captain. Our eyes must be upon Him. He has already won the battle and is looking for those who in every circumstance will demonstrate His triumph and watch the way until He comes.

14 **Three.** "Make thy loins strong" is the next command of the Captain. How shall we obey? Paul tells us, "Having your loins girt about with Truth"—the whole Truth, from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus said, "Let your loins be girded about," like soldiers who wait for orders. In Nehemiah's strenuous day we see the warriors, every one with his sword girded by his side. They were girded with strength unto the battle. The loins are the strong part of a man. Jesus was the expression of this spiritual strength which He illustrated in the forty day's temptation in the wilderness. As its close He is found standing in the power of that invincible Word, and when Satan admitted in a sense His Deity, but urged Him to prove it by converting the stones into bread, He refused, saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God." He quoted Moses words in Deut, 8:3, proving the inspiration and the unity of Scripture. We must know it all, to eat it all.

But we say, Jesus proved the effectual power of the written Word and His loins were thereby made strong. He was thus well-girded for the battle, and we need to be thus girded if we would conquer as He conquered.

Four. "Fortify thy power mightily." The Red Army of the Lord is not to be a weakling company, but rather otherwise. They are to "add to their faith, courage, fortitude, etc. II Peter 1 They must increase in spiritual vigor. The Apostle Paul advises us how to fortify our power. He says, "Take unto you the whole armor of

God." Put on each piece, the helmet, breastplate, sword, shield, girdle, shoes, etc., and thus stand against Satan. God has provided a marvelous armor for each and every warrior, by which they may all be protected from the enemy. The Church needs to be so panoplied, each warrior standing in his place advancing against the wicked principalities and powers in the heavenlies, "terrible as an army with banners," the cross our ensign and our boast. In other words, we should "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," for each separate part of the armor represents Him. Regardless of how faint or feeble we are in the natural, we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We "can do all, things through Christ," even as the Apostle Paul shouted. Phil. 4:13.

We say again! This is a hurry-up time, an hour of intense activity on every hand in every phase of life, supernatural and natural; therefore why should not the mighty Red Army of the Lord be in a hurry? Why should they not be stirred to a greater activity and zeal than ever before? What should hinder them from going out against the foe and making him to retreat in these last days. As we said, all the artillery of heaven is at the disposal of our faith as we press on "weak, yet pursuing," like Gideon's little band. We should have the wicked spirits on the run, as we dash forth against them, united in faith and love, standing in one accord under the banner of the cross. Satan will not be able to vanquish us in the conflict. God's Red Army will win in the end and the first cohort will be translated shortly. The others will still fight on; but they too will soon be gone to join the Mighty Captain in the sky, "ever to be with the Lord."

15

Hold the fort! 'Tis the Captain's call.
Forward march! Ye warriors all!
'Tis hurry-up time. Haste to the fray!
Jesus comes with the break of the day.
Hold the fort! Put the armor on.
Watch the way! The night is gone,
The Captain shouts to the fighting squad.
"Be strong in the Lord, the Mighty God!"

(Reprint 1932)

"The Love of God Constraineth Us"

Anita Clark

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” II Cor. 5:14,15

The word “constraineth” in the Greek means “to hold together, to compress, to seize.” It comes from a word which means “in union with or to hold as a possession.” We have been “seized” by the love of Christ. Through His great love, we are in “union with” Him, and held in His mighty arms as His very own precious “possession.”

The basis for our assurance and hope “...that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (our natural body) were dissolved (died and went to the grave), we have a building of God, an house not made with hands (a glorified new body), eternal in the heavens,” (II Cor.5:1), is this all consuming, unbounded, constraining love.

16 It was through this unexplainable love of God that He “...reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:...” II Cor. 5: 18-19 Such love!

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Rom. 8:35. The word “separate” implies “to give space or gap, or cause to pass between.” Nothing can cause a space or gap to come between us and the love of Christ! “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:38-39

The Apostle Paul’s prayer in Eph.3:17-19 affirms, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to

know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

No doubt Paul’s own deep yearning desire and pursuit of this love prompted his utterance, “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency (LOVE) of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...that I may win Christ. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:8, 14.

The Other Comforter

The other Comforter ascended to abide.

To send Him, once the Savior died.

The other Comforter now teaches me to pray

And gain the vic’try every day.

My Jesus knew the other Comforter Divine,

And gave Him that He might be mine.

He came from heaven to guide us into all the Truth,

To fill the elders and the youth.

Not only does the Spirit comfort and caress;

With power He doth also bless,

For wonders, signs and miracles He doth command,

That Christ be praised thru-out the land.

The other Comforter a Training School is too,

That we may run the race straight thru.

Without Him, who can hope the Bridegroom to win?

Without Him, none would e’en begin.

Be not deceived. He did not come to earth in vain.

He’s here, that we the best may gain.

Should we not emphasize this truth today,

Lest compromise impose delay?

The bridal crew must like the Bridegroom surely be-

Immersed in love and hope, yea free.

The other Comforter alone can make them so,

Prepared in the first rank to go.

Anon

REFLECTIONS

...From the Editor

“**N**ow for a long season Israel hath been without the true God,...” II Chron. 15:3

The word true means “stability; (figuratively) certainty, truth, trustworthiness, faithful,” and all of these terms must surely define the “...true God.” However, the context of this verse announces the fact that because there is a True God, there must of necessity be a false one and this chapter, along with many other portions of scripture, confirms that reality. King Asa likewise affirms this view for “...when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin,... and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD.” II Chron. 15:8 Note here that

18 Asa not only removed that which false, but “...renewed the altar of the LORD...” as a very positive demonstration that he had genuinely embraced The True God. Asa had also heard these words of prophecy, “But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.” II Chron. 15:4 This message simply means that the people of the land, including “...the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him,...” (II Chron. 15:9) did indeed discover the True God and He was entreated of them. Men always enjoy a difference in their lives when they find The True God by experience and the result in days of Asa was that “...there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.” II Chron. 15:19

There are also a number of other roles where the “Trueness” of God is defined, and all of them indicate a difference between the true and the false. Jesus is described as “...the true light...” in John 1:9 and men must realize that only darkness prevails outside of Him, despite Satan’s endeavor to disguise such darkness as

he transforms himself into "...an angel of light." II Cor. 11:14 He also describes Himself as "...the true bread from heaven," in direct contrast to the manna which Moses called down from heaven. Jn. 6:32 Such life giving bread in the face of pending death was only a type of what God has provided for all men in Christ Jesus. He interpreted this mystery with these classic words: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jn. 6:51 These words have been sorely misinterpreted over the years, but Jesus plainly tells us that the meat for us is the Word of God. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Jn. 6:63

Finally, The True God declares Himself to be "... the true vine,..." as opposed to the false religious vines which entangle so many in our day. Jesus makes it very clear that "fruit bearing" is the subject of this discourse and the only way any Christian can truly bear the spiritual fruit which will glorify the Father is to "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Jn. 15:4-5 The only positive results in this world comes forth from "...the true God!"

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Due to the extension of restrictions imposed on Jackson County here in Missouri, we simply do not have the liberty to announce plans for The LABOR DAY MEETING which we had hoped to have in Sept. We are extremely disappointed but must comply with the laws set before us.

Though we have had a number of technical difficulties putting both the Sunday A.M. and Wed. Eve. services online, they have now been restored and can be found at 10, & 11 AM, & 7 PM Wed. Eve. CST. These are located at gracegod.com. Just go to the link at the top of the page which says "click here."

Instruments Of Righteousness

Dr. Vicky Moots

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”
Rom. 6:12-13

20 What is an instrument? It is a tool that is prepared for a specific purpose, such as a musical or surgical instrument. Since I am a physician, I am going to use the analogy of surgical instruments compared to us as members of the body of Christ and instruments of God. God performed the first surgery when he removed a rib from Adam to prepare a bride for him. He continues to perform surgery on the body, the Church, and is in need of instruments. Even the simplest of surgeries requires a variety of instruments. God desires to use each one of us in a special way for a specific purpose. He has chosen us and purchased us with the blood of His Son.

No matter how good a surgeon is, he cannot perform surgery without instruments. The instruments do not possess any skill; the surgeon does. For each surgery a group of instruments is necessary, not just one; and none of these are more important than the other. The value of each instrument is not based on its size, the brand name or the previous surgeries for which it has been used, but on its intended use. Each one is of equal value when it is in the hands of the surgeon. Each instrument has been created for a specific purpose and will be used as the need arises. Some will be used more often than others, but each one must be clean and sterilized and prepared ahead of time in order to be used. God has fashioned each member of the body of Christ according to His plan and has arranged us in a specific manner in much the same way as instruments on a surgical tray are laid out prior to surgery in preparation to be used when the surgeon calls for them. Just like the surgical instruments, each one of us is unique and

valuable to the Lord, but we must be willing to work together and wait on the Lord for His timing. We must also submit to the necessary cleansing process that prepares us for service, for the ministry He has chosen for us.

Each surgical instrument must be cleansed initially and after each surgery or anytime it becomes contaminated. Instruments in a hospital are taken to Central Supply for a thorough scrubbing and cleansing wash. Paul instructs us in II Cor. 7:1 that we are to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” An instrument cannot cleanse itself; it simply has to surrender to the cleansing process that has been provided. We are to let Him cleanse us through His Word, as is stated in Eph. 5:26: “That he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word.” What does it mean to sanctify something? It means to set it apart or separate it for a specific purpose. Not only does He cleanse us, but He must separate us from the world in order to be useful as His instruments.

After surgical instruments are cleansed, they must be sterilized. Prior to sterilization an instrument is placed in a special package that is capable of withstanding heat, and it is sealed so that the instrument is completely separated from anything that could contaminate it. Then it is put into a sterilizer that is heated to a specific temperature to kill any residual bacteria. It remains in that package with a seal on it, signifying that it is ready to be used when the surgeon needs it. 21

Sterilized instruments are not better instruments. They are the same instruments, but they are better prepared, for they have not only been cleansed but separated and sealed. As God’s instruments we also must be cleansed, separated, sealed and put “through the fire” in order to be declared instruments of righteousness. We are to be separated from the world, for we are in the world but not of the world. God instructs us to do this in II Cor. 6:17: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” It is only then that we can be deemed suitable for service. We don’t like the scrubbing or the separation, and we certainly don’t enjoy the fiery trials, but

it is only through this process that He can purify us.

It is the Holy Spirit Who separates us unto God. Paul was considered by God to be a “chosen vessel”, but he had to be separated for service, as we read in Acts 13:2, “...the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul [Paul] for the work whereunto I have called them.” What about the seal? Eph. 1:13 answers that question: “...after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” So, you see that the Holy Spirit not only separates us but seals us for service. Our job is to yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him do the work in us.

If a sterilized instrument falls during surgery and becomes contaminated it is not thrown away, for it is too valuable to be discarded. It is picked up, cleansed, and put “through the fire” again so that it may be used at another time. Likewise, there are times when we, too, may stumble and fall but God does not discard us. We are too valuable to Him for He paid a great price for us. First, He picks us up. This is described in Psa. 37:23-24. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord...Though he
22 fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.” Then comes the cleansing, so that He may use us. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9 We are also exposed daily to the contamination of this world and need a daily cleansing from the water of the Word of God.

During the time that a fallen contaminated instrument is being re-sterilized, the surgeon has to substitute with a different sterile instrument in order to finish the surgery. We must remain yielded and separated at all times, for God may need to use us outside of our “calling.” Remember, it is the skill of the Surgeon that is important, not ours. Our job is simply to yield our physical members as instruments of righteousness in His Capable Hands. Many different types of instruments are needed during a surgery to perform the multitude of required tasks. Some are very small and may seem insignificant, while others are quite large, but all are necessary. This is also true in the body of Christ. For example, a scalpel is first needed to do the cutting. This would represent the Word of God, which is “...sharper than any two-edged sword...”

(Heb. 4:12), that is given out by the ministers. Then retractors are used to pull back the tissues and hold things out of the way. These could represent prayer warriors who hold back the forces of the enemy (Satan) by their prayers. Without retractors it would be very difficult to perform surgery. Forceps are necessary to pick up things. Spiritually, we are instructed to “lift up” the hands that hang down, to comfort and help those in need. Various clamps are needed to hold things or bring things together, which is also an important ministry in the body of Christ. I could use other examples, but I think you get the idea by now that we each have a ministry that God has given us to perform, and that we are valuable to Him. God did not choose us because we were valuable. We are rather valuable because He has chosen us.

God is capable of taking anyone, no matter how defiled and dirty they may be, and transforming them into an instrument of righteousness. I would like to illustrate this by relating an experience I had while on a medical mission trip to a third world country a number of years ago. On that particular trip a group of plumbers and other handymen had also come for the purpose of trying to restore water and repair plumbing, including toilets, in the hospital where the surgical team was to be working. A patient was brought to the hospital who needed some surgery which required orthopedic instruments, but none were available. One of the doctors realized that the plumbers’ tools were similar to what was needed and suggested that perhaps they could be cleaned and sterilized and used for the surgery. So that is exactly what happened. The filthy tools, which had been used the day before to fix toilets, were scrubbed and sterilized, and became servants of the surgeon rather than the plumber. They had been transformed from dirty to clean and the surgery was able to be performed successfully.

This is also what God can do for us. He sees our potential to become His instruments, and by the blood of Jesus is able to transform us from servants of sin into instruments of righteousness. All we need to do is to be willing to yield ourselves to Him and be cleansed.

The Journey of Noah's Ark

Geoff Haase

“**G**od spared not the old world (before the great flood) but saved Noah the eighth person (with seven others), a preacher of righteousness, God brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” II Peter 2:15 (amp).

Noah was a preacher of the gospel. He preached along the line of righteousness, no doubt, calling the people of his day to repent and believe, inviting them to be saved from the judgment to come by entering the ark.

Noah was a builder who was "By faith,... warned of God of things not seen as yet (the heavy rain), moved with fear (a Godly fear that moves us to action), prepared an ark to the saving of his house by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11:7

24 Several points from the story of Noah present us with a most important and instructive gospel picture. Jesus chose the days of Noah along with the days of Lot to paint a dark picture of end time events that precede His coming. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, ...Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank,...But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven,...Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Lk. 17:26-30

The days of Noah and Lot had two major reasons for the inevitable judgments that came, **violence and gross immorality**. These were the order of the day and filled with blatant refusal to repent and turn to God.

In the days of Noah, the Scripture states, "...the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth,... And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Gen. 6:11-13

As we speak, we are witnessing violence and immoral behavior, never seen to such an extent (at least in my lifetime). The days of judgment are surely upon us...The only safe place to be is in Christ and in fellowship with believers who are steadfastly "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory." Tit.

2:13. "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our mortal body that it may be conformed like His body of glory." Phil. 3:20-21.

God gives simple, explicit directions to Noah to "Make thee an ark of gopher wood..." Gen. 6:14 In this great story we see the awful judgment of God upon an extremely sinful, God hating world, and by way of contrast we observe the mercy and love of God in making a place of salvation for those who enter the ark of safety. Genesis 6-8 reveal the most severe act of judgment found in Scripture, coming second only to the great white throne. Remember History gives us HIS-STORY.

One picture which is presented is that of Jesus Christ seen here as the ark of safety that passes through the floods of death. The fountains of the great deep broken up upon Him on the Cross, and the flood gates of heaven opened up upon His sinless body bearing away our sin and shame. He carried with Him in His cross all of Adam's sinful race, for "...if one died for all then were all dead," (II Cor. 5:14) that they which live may from now on, not live for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again." II Cor. 5. The door in the side of the vessel is seen as His pierced side. John 19:34. Death is seen everywhere here in Genesis from chaps. 6-8. The ark (Christ) comes to rest in resurrection life in the mount and a new creation comes forth. 25

Secondly, it is Christ who builds His Church "the Christ in mystery", the body of Christ made of the knotty timber of humanity. The ark being made of wood is suggestive of humanity. It is also the vessel to carry all creatures, which would represent all peoples, tongues and nations, with Jesus the architect and builder of the ark - The Church. He is our Noah - our Rest, as His name means.

Noah was warned of God, Hebrews tells us; thus, Noah must have been listening. It is hard to believe that he was the only one "seen righteous" in that generation. However, everyone Noah preached to also had the opportunity of entering that ark, but scripture shows they did not take it. Noah was much like Jesus, the sinless one who built a house to save his family. Praise God!

Rooms in the ark suggest order and place designed by God for every kind of creature. Jesus did say "In my Father's house are many abodes - dwelling places". And just as Noah "prepared the

ark”, Jesus said “I go to prepare a place for you.” Jn. 14:2 We each have a special place in the house. I Cor. 12:27.

God said to Noah "...pitch it within and without with pitch." Gen 6:14 This would emphasize our security in Christ in a unique double sense. The inside sealed and the outside sealed. The first word for "pitch" comes from the word "Kaphar," meaning "to cover." It is the same word used for atonement in the Old Testament. That would refer to the first seal by the blood of Jesus. The outside seal of bitumen tells us we are also sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... right through to the day of redemption of our bodies. Eph. 4:30.

26 Those who believe on Jesus are safe and secure in God's perfect love and should have no fear of God losing us along the way. Jesus made it clear when He said of His sheep ..."I give to them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall anything pluck them out of My hand. My father which gave them to me is greater than all, and nothing is able to pluck them out of My father's hand." Jn. 10:28-29 Notice the double seal upon our salvation. Also remember Paul's word in Col. 3:3 "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Double security again. Some fail to see and believe in their eternal salvation. It must be hard goingtrying to keep something that is out of our hands and in His.

"The length of the ark shall be 300 cubits, the breadth 50 cubits, the height 30 cubits.... " This speaks to me of the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph. 3:18-19 God does give us specific measurements as you would have noticed. The ark, the tabernacle, the temple, and yes Jesus. He measured up to the just demands of God's righteous government and was well able by the Spirit to fulfill the will of God and become a perfect vessel to carry all the saved to their God appointed destination.

The window or roof comes next, one cubit and finished above. This window was at the roof of the vessel with openings all around, one cubit high, just under the roof. The word window means - the place of the light, from Zohar. This was the only light into the vessel that shone in and was able to reach through the rooms and timber framing, to all three stories. The one cubit could mean that on our journey in Christ to the New World, one light only is needed to see us through the dark times and storms of life that test us and the vessel. Christ who is in the midst reassures us saying, "...I am the light of the world, he that follows Me shall

not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life..." Jn. 8:12. One window - one light, which brings us to "...the door of the ark...set in the side thereof;..." Gen. 6:16 Yes there is only one door, one way in, to the safety of Christ. He alone could say, "I am the door, by Me if any one enters in he shall be saved...." Jn. 10:9

Jesus' side was opened by the Roman spear and "...there came out blood and water." Jn. 19:34 He was pieced for us. The blood and water are for our cleansing. His precious blood deals with our sin, and we keep our walk clean as we wash in the water of the word. Eph 5:26, John 13:10.

"...lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it." Gen. 6:16 Although none are more secure in Christ than others once they are saved, some believers go higher in their experience. Sadly some saints are content to be in the ark of salvation and have no real desire for the overcoming life. Still others bring forth more fruit and desire the deeper things of God and no doubt there are those who go even higher, "...speaking the truth in love,..." and "...grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" Eph. 4:15.

We close off here with a few words of invitation, whereby God calls Noah to "...Come thou and all thy house into the ark;..." Gen.7:1 That invitation is also for us. He calls to you and me to come in. If we accept the offer, we come in and are safe and secure in the knowledge of salvation by grace through faith. That offer will stand until the end of time. 27

God "...the LORD shut him in..." Gen 7:16. We, too, are shut in, till we reach the end of the journey, till we come to the rest in the seventh month up on the mountains of glory. Gen 8:14 A whole new world awaits us. Judgment will be past, a new day will dawn. It is then that Noah, his wife, the sons, the daughters and all the rest of God's great family will emerge and reign and rule with Christ. Noah and his family are primarily typical of Israel going through the overwhelming waters of tribulation and being delivered safely into the Millennium, after Enoch was translated. However, he may also be seen as a type of Christ, and his wife representative of the bride, along with mature sons and daughters and all others who chose to enter the ark during this Church Age, after they answered God's call to "...come..."

God Is Faithful

Gene Hawkins

28 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful,... Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” I Cor. 10:13-14 “...God is faithful...” is a scriptural fact reflecting only one of the many glorious characteristics attributed to God throughout Holy Writ. This present text presents a 3 fold outline of such Faithfulness declaring first that “...God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;...” This means that He, rather than ourselves, is the One who will make the assessment as to how much we are able to bear in any given situation. Second, this Faithful God “...will with the temptation also make a way to escape,...” indicating that once again, the way of deliverance may be one with which we may not always agree. Most people have an exact idea of how they should “...escape...” or be set free from great difficulty, but such a path may not always be the one which He chooses. The third expression of His Faithfulness is “.... that ye may be able to bear it,....” meaning that His choice for us may be to leave us in a certain amount of difficulty yet He is faithful to sustain us in a manner wherein we do not succumb to defeat, destruction, or annihilation.

It is imperative to understand that the next verse in this text is directly connected to this one with the little word “Wherefore,..” meaning that these “...dearly beloved,...” Christians are to “...flee from idolatry,” directly because the Faithful God described in the previous verse has been clearly set forth before them. The implication is that putting trust or confidence in some THING or someone, rather than The God, Who is defined as “...faithful,...” in the preceding verse, is equivalent to idolatry. The Psalmist stated the effect of this same glorious truth with the following. “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They (who trust in chariots and horses) are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.” Psa. 20:7-8 Those who put their trust in any power other than God will suffer

defeat, but the one who truly puts confidence in God and His Abilities will rise and "...stand upright," as an absolute conqueror.

"...God is faithful,..." must not be reduced to a mere cliché in our experience. It must become our own practical testimony by experience. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, presents a glorious example of this fact. She was a barren woman from her youth, yet in her old age we read that "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised." Heb. 11:11

Moses, the Lawgiver, likewise records this same glorious pattern of God's Faithfulness as that which Paul outlined. "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." Deut. 7:9-10 Moses asserts, as did Paul, that there is only ONE God, meaning that there is none beside Him, thus declaring that there is no room for idolatry. There can be no substitute for Him. He also identifies this same God as "...the faithful God,..." after which he lists three major facts which define such faithfulness. First He "...keepeth covenant,..." signifying the reality that He is Faithful to keep His Word or Promises. The word "...keepeth..." literally means to "keep, or hedge about with thorns," designating the highest priority for protection. God has placed His Word even above His Name. He is absolutely Jealous and protective of The Message He has given and will go to any length to ensure its fulfillment. The second mark of His Faithfulness declares that He also keeps "...mercy..." and is once again a reference to the covenant of Divine Grace given to Abraham. That covenant is important for it reaches down to our day wherein we read that "...that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. 3:17 Let every Gentile rejoice that we are included in this glorious Abrahamic Covenant and God has taken every measure to "keep" it.

It must not go unnoticed that these two examples of God's Faithfulness are directly bound up and guaranteed in Christ Jesus. The very familiar citation from John 1:14 declares plainly, that, "...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." This is the same "...covenant and mercy..." of which Moses spoke.

The third manifestation of this Faithful God is also of paramount importance to every believer for He "...repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them:..." Deut. 7:10 Scripture is very clear, insisting that "...Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12:19 There is no person on this earth who has not been offended at one time or another, even in the Christian Community. However, it is imperative that we be not consumed with bearing our grudges, and trying to punish the offender. Trust in the Faithful God of Vengeance must come to the fore in even this experience whereby we are required to leave all "payment," to "...the faithful God..."

30 Paul also enlarged on God's Faithfulness when he wrote to Timothy, his own son in the faith, and we, too, must discover the depth of that faithfulness in our own lives. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." II Tim. 2:11-13 The apostle asserts here that "... he abideth faithful..." but he begins this discourse following the same pattern as that used by Moses who proclaimed "...the faithful God, which keepeth covenant..." Our first revelation of God's Faithfulness comes when we also know by experience this "...faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:..." Our resurrection, due to the fact that we died with Christ as Paul outlines in Rom. 6, is a guaranteed fact from the moment we believe. There are some however, who decry the glorious teaching of eternal life, using the last phrase of V. 12 to justify their teaching, blatantly isolating the words, "...if we deny him, he also will deny us:" Their interpretation of these words is that God will deny Christians and they will go to hell because

they first denied Him. That supposition is taken completely out of context for the subject of this verse is not life and death, heaven or hell, but rather “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:...” The goal here is not heaven, but rather reigning with Christ. Paul loudly proclaimed this same glorious truth when he wrote to the saints in Rome. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Rom. 8:16 The price of the throne is suffering and if men are not willing to walk the suffering path which God has chosen for them, if they “... deny him...” in this matter, “...he will also deny...” them, that coveted place on His throne. Scripture is very clear that all born again believers are “...heirs; heirs of God,...” and all will be in heaven receiving some degree of inheritance, but all Christians will not be “...joint-heirs with Christ;...” and reign with Him as His Bride, as the bulk of the Church teaches today. That coveted place comes only with the aforementioned suffering.

Note also that if the assessment of “...he will also deny us:” means that one is bound for hell, this verse is contradictory to the verse before it as well as the one after. Paul unequivocally states the truth of this “...faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:” and there is absolutely no other qualification for the promise that “...we shall also live with him:” outside of the fact that we had to die with Him at Calvary.

The truth of V. 13 likewise begins with a contradiction in terms if this same reasoning for “...he also will deny us:...” is followed. “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful:...” Unbelief is absolutely no different than “...if we deny him,...” but here again the God Who is Faithful springs to our defense, for even though we may at times have a lapse of faith in some area of our lives, “...yet he abideth faithful.”

There are multiple examples of those who failed to take steps of faith from time to time. Consider Abraham, the father of faith, who received the Abrahamic Covenant directly from the Hand of God, yet this man chose to depart into the land of Egypt when the famine engulfed the land of promise. That was not wise

and it was not a step of faith, for this man actually put his wife Sarah at risk when he lied about their relationship, claiming she was his sister. She was subsequently escorted into the house of Pharaoh, but the God Who "...abideth faithful..." came to the rescue and both Sarah and Abraham were delivered back to the Promised Land.

Most people are well acquainted with Peter's lapse of faith when he thrice denied Jesus, yet the faithfulness of God prevailed and Jesus continued His efforts, not only to restore this man in fellowship, but also insisted that he pursue the ministry which Jesus offered him, whereby he did indeed become the chief apostle to the Jews.

32 David likewise gave in to unbelief when he fled from Saul into the land of the Philistines saying "... in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me,...." I Sam. 27:1 However, the God Who "...abideth faithful..." not only rescued David and his men from the hand of the Philistines, He also placed this beloved man on the throne of Israel and subsequently gave to him the Davidic Covenant ensuring him an heir on that throne forever.

Timothy likewise must have had a lapse of faith which prompted these words from his spiritual father. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;" II Tim. 1:7-8 He was exhorting this choice son to follow the path of faith rather than fear and willingly partake of the sufferings which accompany full surrender to the path which God chooses. The end of Timothy's life also testifies loudly of God's Faithfulness despite such a lapse in faith.

A good example for us is found in the attitude expressed by the father of a demon – possessed child who came to Jesus seeking deliverance for his son. Jesus informed him, "...If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Mk. 9:23-24

That prayer can surely be answered in our day because even in a particular time when "...we believe not, yet he abideth faithful:" The reason for that declaration follows immediately, and carries with it a most wonderful revelation of truth, for Jesus is faithful because "...he cannot deny himself." This is just one glorious answer to His intercessory prayer for us in John 17. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:...." Jn. 17:20-21 He cannot deny Himself nor us, directly because we are one with Him! What a glorious state to enjoy even though we may have a few lapses of faith along the way.

The statement "...God is faithful..." is most assuredly an all inclusive term, including every experience we might encounter upon this earth. However, this message will conclude emphasizing the fact that He is faithful to complete the spiritual work which began in our lives the day we were born again. The common thread of God's Faithfulness runs beautifully through the following verses. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God 33 your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." I Thess. 5:23-24 And "...do it..." He will if we but give Him the opportunity. "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." II Thess. 3:3 His faithfulness is again the subject here, and that is to establish us in the spiritual realm of faith, thus guarding us against the "...evil,..." which among a great many things also includes unbelief.

Finally Peter comments directly on God's Faithfulness in the area of suffering. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." I Pet. 4:19 There are multiplied examples of suffering and horror in this world, but not all of them can be defined as suffering "...according to the will of God..." That statement is simply a reference to suffering which ensues because a person is submitted to the path which The Lord has chosen for him. All of these citations reveal The "...faithful Creator..." Who is determined to put on eternal display His

Crowning Work. Such a “creation” may indeed prove a bit painful at times as changes are made in us, but this “...faithful Creator...” knows exactly what He is doing and we must trust in the fact that “...God is faithful...” in these closing days of this present Church Age. The difficulties surrounding us are legion, but it is imperative that we do not give in to the panic and chaos which prevails around the entire globe due to the “coronavirus pandemic” at this present time. Our trust must remain in The God Who Is Faithful. We must understand and claim, in the utmost depths of our hearts that, “...safety is of the LORD.” Prov. 21:31 It is imperative to shout with Paul, “...yet he abideth faithful:” and proclaim with Moses: “...that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;” Deut. 7:9

So Be My Going

34

If some time you should hear across the night
A hal-le-lu-jah chorus winging thru the air,
Rise not up from thy rest to mark its flight,
But listen to the challenge it doth bear
Against the hosts of darkness dense and drear,
Whoever seek to keep the soul in fear.

And after the last, lingering sound has gone,
You may not know it bore me forth, nor ever guess
That in its flying, my soul outreached the dawn
And went beyond the night and loneliness.

You may not e'en remember me at all
Until many later years, some dear friend may say,
As chance brings up my name, Do you recall
Her closing words before she went away?

She said, “In Jesus’ name there’s victory.”
Let this be ever thy kind thought of me.

Mary M. Bodie



Our Corn Crib

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