



“Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement;Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” Isa 28:14-20

Many have been amused by Isaiah’s rather poetic analogy of a man trying, in vain, to gain warmth and comfort from a bed that is far too short for him and it’s covering insufficient to bring him the rest for which he longs. The image presented here is of one in somewhat of a fetal position, curled up into a ball of self preservation and defense, trying desperately to grasp the cover of warmth and protection. The exact context of this portion, however, is no laughing matter for Israel. The “covenant with death,” is a reference to the infamous covenant with the antichrist recorded in Dan. 9:27. “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:....” Isaiah declares the rulers of “....this people which is in Jerusalem,” who make such a covenant, to be “scornful men,” meaning that they have scorned the ways of The Lord. His answer for them is what it has always been: the promise of their Messiah, “....a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:...” Isaiah also emphatically states that “...your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand;” meaning that God will intervene for them, and as Paul states “....all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Rom. 11:26

The promise to Israel is that they will indeed be spared from annihilation, but Isaiah declares very plainly that “From the time that it (the covenant of Dan. 9:27) goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation..” The last chapter recorded for Israel is one of complete restoration, but the intervening time is a period of severe testing and vexation, or “agitation and fear.” They shall also be “trodden down,” that is, oppressed, stamped and trampled upon. This brings us to Isaiah’s description of the “short bed.” They would love to be able to lie down and rest in complete peace, and tranquility, but realization of that desire, will be very elusive. They have already made many compromises in trading land for peace, and the agreement with the antichrist will be just one more attempt to find rest, and a covering of protection from their enemies. Isaiah clearly states that their covenant with this man of sin will not produce what was promised and they will endure unprecedented trouble and misery.

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The full impact of Isaiah’s prophecy will not come to pass until the latter part of the tribulation period, but both Israel and the nations are in the throes of extreme trouble and unrest at this present hour. World conditions have been altered drastically in just the past few months as the governments of Egypt and Libya have fallen. Syria’s President Assad is coming under more and more pressure to end the violence and destruction of his own people. Jordan’s King Abdullah has said that Assad should step down and though the U.S. and it’s allies have threatened military intervention; Assad declares that he will not “bow down.” All these “uprisings” and regime changes do directly affect Israel and though the aforementioned dictators may be gone, peace and harmony have in no wise come to the Middle East. Contrariwise, instability, and great uncertainty prevails, because no one seems to be in charge, though many, including Iran and Turkey are clamoring for it.

The current threat, both to Israel and the world, is Iran. The latest report by the Associated Press from Vienna, Austria is that “The United States and its Western allies, bluntly accused Iran on Friday of deceiving the world by trying to hide work on nuclear arms, as the U.N. atomic agency passed a new resolution criticizing Tehran’s nuclear defiance.” Though “Iran shot back that the West’s allegations were based on fabricated American, Israeli, British, and French intelligence fed to the International Atomic

Agency to try to discredit the Islamic Republic,” The Washington Post had published this headline on November 6, 2011. “IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) says foreign expertise has brought Iran to threshold of nuclear capability.” This article goes on to report that “Documents and other records provide new details on the role played by a former Soviet weapons scientist who allegedly tutored the Iranians over several years on building high-precision detonators of the kind used to trigger a nuclear chain reaction....Crucial technology linked to experts in Pakistan, and North Korea also helped propel Iran to the threshold of nuclear capability.” It is no wonder that Russia’s foreign minister “Sergie Lavov has warned that a military strike on Iran would be a ‘very serious mistake’ with unpredictable consequences after Israel’s president Shimon Peres said that an attack was increasingly likely.” This article from “The Telegraph,” goes on to say that “in comments published in the Israeli daily Hayom, Mr. Peres said that the possibility of a military attack against Iran is now closer to being applied than the application of diplomatic option.”

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We know that Israel has been pleading with the U. S. for some time to do something, anything, about Iran, which they considered their most dangerous threat, citing Tehran’s nuclear program, its ballistic missile development, repeated references by the Iranian leader to Israel’s destruction and Iran’s support for anti-Israel militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah. Such threats have prompted the aforementioned comments of Mr. Peres and he was joined in his assessment of Israel launching a pre-emptive strike against Iran, by Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Ehud Barak, and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman. Mr. Lieberman said further that “Iran poses the most dangerous threat to world order.”

There are many confusing and conflicting reports currently coming out of the Middle East in regard to the recent explosion outside Tehran. It occurred at a Revolutionary Guard Base which has missiles capable of reaching Israel. The Iranians firmly insist that the blast was an accident, while a Western intelligence official told Time “not to believe it: It was the work of Israel’s Mossad agency, and the group isn’t finished with Iran: There are more bullets in the magazine.” One would think Iran would jump at the chance to blame Israel, but perhaps they are embarrassed because the world would know the Israelis could penetrate their security.

Will Israel launch a strike against Iran's nuclear facility in an effort to "wrap himself" in his narrow covering? That is the question being asked in Israel and around the world. "What happens 'The day After' an Iranian Nuclear Attack?" Dr. Uri Milstein, one of Israel's most prominent historians, departs from conventional wisdom declaring that "Israel can face the day after." Though all agree that Iran would strike back with a barrage of weapons, – nuclear or conventional, and despite the fact that they would be joined in their assault on Israel by Hizbullah and Hamas terrorists, Mr. Milstein declares that a second strike by Israel, using nuclear weapons would be forthcoming which would "wipe out Iran, Hizbullah and Hamas, and possibly Syria and Lebanon." His assessment is that "Israel will eventually have to deal with these terror groups anyway, but cannot until a major event that would justify it takes place – such as an Iranian attack on Israel."

These are rather sobering comments by Dr. Milstein, for they are a graphic description of the scenario put forth in Rev. 8:7-8. "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: (Israel) and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;.." This portion of scripture surely describes the effects of nuclear warfare, and it seems to be started by a "rogue" nation that will not only affect Israel, but plunge the "great mountain," the seven headed coalition of the end time, into nuclear war and bloodshed. It is quite evident that this event will bring the era of peace and safety, announced in Rev. 6, to an abrupt halt, and sudden destruction will ensue when the second seal is opened.

None of these seals will be opened until after Jesus takes His throne and the bride of Christ is safely in glory, but the events which bring about their culmination are clearly manifest in our day. Jesus described the events happening at this present time as the "beginning of sorrows," meaning that all characteristics of the tribulation period are being witnessed now, and will simply increase, both in frequency and intensity. The rumblings of a nuclear holocaust and other major elements of destruction are coming to the fore at this present hour, and will eventually erupt into the full scale devastation described throughout the book of

Revelation.

Isaiah pictured Israel as a very uncomfortable man trying to stretch upon a bed much too short for him, and a covering too narrow to meet his needs. This same scenario of discomfort and the search for satisfaction and protection, may also be applied to the nations and is portrayed by the volatile, unstable, waters from whence the beast of Revelation 13 rises. That beast is representative of one world government, a seven headed coalition of nations, which is now being formed. It will eventually be reduced to the control of only one man – the antichrist, but this man of sin will not come to full power until about 250 days before the middle of the week. This final regime has a number of characteristics such as cruelty, violence, and a total rebellion against God. Another element, however, which is becoming so very prominent at this present time, is that of economics. Such features are clearly depicted in Rev. 6:6. “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.”

7 The economic factor of this government is further reinforced by the fact “....that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast,....” Rev. 13:17 This final edict of the antichrist will not be forthcoming until well into the tribulation after he is granted full power, but the beginning of that escalation of economic chaos is clearly unfolding in the U.S. and around the world at this present time. The “occupy wall street,” demonstrations, which began in New York, against the New York stock exchange located at “Wall and Broad,” has spread across this nation and around the world to places such as London and Egypt. It was purported to be a “peaceful” demonstration, but violence has erupted not only in New York, but also in Oakland, and San Francisco, as well as both Egypt and London.

Many journalists were frustrated at the beginning of these rallies because there appeared to be no clear cut reason for them, and even after two full months, the question still seemed to be “to demand or not to demand?” Miranda Leitsinger, a reporter for MSNBC.com, now reports that the idea is “to put forward specific demands and build support among the so-called ‘90%’ of Americans outside the economic elite.” Is not this entire multi-national crowd also trying desperately to achieve the same goal as Isaiah described? “For the bed is shorter than that a man

can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” Men are desperately trying to “cover” themselves with some kind of security and we are persuaded, in view of the economic dilemma which will prevail in the tribulation period, that these demands, as further reported by Ms. Lietsinger to “tackle topics like alternative currencies, political and electoral reform, trade justice and tactics,” will indeed escalate.

We continue to pray earnestly for those who have felt the brunt of the over-all current economic crisis. Many have lost jobs and have endured the excruciating hardships of trying to maintain themselves when prices of food, fuel, clothing and other necessities have dramatically increased. Some lives have also been greatly complicated by the severe weather patterns, which are indeed another sign of the closing days announcing Jesus’ soon return. Our minds and hearts must be focused on the admonitions of The Master, as He basically divided people into two different groups when He outlined end time conditions in Luke 21:25-28. It is up to us, as to which path we choose. “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; 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.” This first choice depicts the attitude we have seen in Israel and these other examples who are making every effort to achieve self reliance and personal demand for comfort, safety, and protection. These are described as “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth:..,” for they are occupied only with the affairs of this life and those are crumbling dramatically before them. 8

The second declaration, and indeed admonition, is found in these words: “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” The first group is occupied specifically with the earth. The second looks on these same signs as harbingers of hope and deliverance, and for that bridal company, which has the hope of being taken out of this world before these escalated signs fully materialize, these signs do bring great rejoicing in our hearts, rather than fear and dread because it means:

JESUS IS COMING SO VERY QUICKLY!

THE BIRTH OF A KING

A. S. Copley

“And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ”- Matt. 1:16.

Some folk condemn us for writing on this subject, especially because we emphasize the birth of Jesus at this season of the year. No one knows the exact date of that event; but the fact is so great and it is attended by so many striking happenings, that it demands our most studious attention. It commands our profoundest respect. Were the many Scripture references of the birth of our Lord recorded simply to be ignored, or passed over lightly? Nay, they have been written for our closest consideration and deepest appreciation. Study with me the following appealing facts.

First. Prophecies Concerning Christ. "Three of these cluster about His first advent and are very captivating.

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1. His birth foretold. Isaiah 7:14 declares, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." These very words were quoted at His birth and thus fulfilled. The same prophet gives another significant prophecy which includes both the first and second advents of Jesus Christ. He says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder," etc.- Isa. 9:6. Then the minor prophet Micah gives a major prophetic word, beautiful and far-reaching. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. In these words, to which Matt. 2:6 refers, the Deity of the Babe of destiny is declared. In beautiful and majestic language, the birth of our glorious Lord was foretold; and they were all fulfilled. Again and again Matthew says, "That it might be fulfilled as it was written." Even the coming of His forerunner, John the Baptist, was foretold. See Isa. 40:3 and Mal. 3:1.

2. Prophecy of His Power. To Joseph an angel said, "And she (Mary) shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21 Were such potent words ever written of

any other child? What other man, either before Him, or since His time, has been able to deliver men from sin? Many philosophers have arisen and flaunted enticing theories on the public, purporting to make their fellows better by their religions; but which one ever changed man's sinful heart? Who has ever given any man a new heart? or taken away his stony heart of rebellion and unbelief? Nay! nay! Not one; but it is still true - "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." - Acts 4:12. For 1900 unchanging years, men have demonstrated the ample sufficiency of Jesus Christ to save all that come unto God by Him. We have learned also that multitudes of people, looking forward through the telescope of faith, unto the Promised One, were blessedly saved from their sins; for "He is mighty to save and strong to deliver." And we are expecting, that in a short time, He will save the Jewish nation as such; for it is written, "A nation shall be born at once." Then after that, He will save the other nations.

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3. Prophecies of Christ Dominion. These are many. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it"-Isa. 9:7. "He shall reign for ever; His dominion shall be from sea to sea; He shall reign in righteousness." These are frequent and common expressions throughout the Scriptures. Hear Daniel's thrilling words - "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven;.... and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and His kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. 7 :13,14. Praise God, we shall be associated with Jesus in His glorious reign. "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him"-Dan. 7:27.

Second. The first Advent of Christ was entirely supernatural, an unheard-of thing in history. Even this was prophesied. Therefore we read, " Now the birth of Jesus

Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 1:18. He was begotten of the Father, "the only begotten Son of God"..... John 1:14 and 3:18. Hence, He was termed "that holy thing, ... the Son of God" (Luke 1 :35,) "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens" - Heb. 7 :26. "And in Him is no sin; "therefore, He was able to "take away our sins" -1 John 3 :5. We read of many men of noble character and lofty principles, even praise-worthy saints of high Christian standing: but which of them begat a sinless child? John the Baptist was announced to "be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1 :15) ; but he felt deeply the need of being baptized by the Lord."That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," said Jesus years afterward. He became "the Lord from heaven, spiritual and heavenly." I Cor. 15:46-48. "Never man spake like this man spake," exclaimed His hearers, because never before was such a man born as Was He. He was not born as others are born, simply of flesh. Another striking fact is this,

Third. Satan sought His life at His birth. Joseph was warned in a dream that king Herod would "seek the young child to destroy Him." Matt. 2:13. What did Herod know about the future of the child? The wise men had only asked him, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" The devil knew something of that Child of destiny, and he put envy in the breast of Herod, who had all the youths under two years slain in Bethlehem. He watched Him all His days on earth. He tempted Him before His public ministry began, to hinder Him if possible. While asleep on a ship, a storm arose and was about to drown Him and His disciples; but He awoke and rebuked the winds, stirred up by the devil. Another time, His enemies seized Him and tried to hurl Him down over a precipice. His life was in constant danger; but for His Father's constant protection.

It was foretold that the seed of the serpent should bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman. Consequently, Satan has sought to overthrow and destroy the people of God throughout the ages. The Gentile nations were always

a menace to Israel, and would have demolished them many times, if God had not interfered and delivered them. To this very day, we are in jeopardy every hour. The devil will hinder us from being translated, as he tried with Elijah, if possible. He will stir up men to take our crown. Satan uses sickness, auto accidents and other providences to hinder the saints and rob them of God's best. But He who protected His only begotten Son Jesus, will also keep those who put full trust in Him and His faithfulness.

Fourth. The Titles given to the Baby Christ, are no small item. Before His birth, He was announced to be "the Son of the Highest, the Son of God, and Emmanuel," which latter was also prophesied of Him. He was called "Jesus," or Savior. He was expected as "King of the Jews" and "Governor" over Israel and "Prophet of the Highest and a Horn of Salvation." Immediately after His birth, he was pronounced "Jesus, the Consolation of Israel, the Lord's Anointed, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, the Glory of Israel." Seven hundred years prior, Isaiah advertised Him as "Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." What other child was ever born with so many sparkling necklaces enwrapping him? We read of "high born folk." Who was born higher than our beloved Lord Jesus? Whoever inherited such adorning names, or brilliant titles? And think of the mystery of it all-- the Dignitary of sublimest destiny came to us by way of a cow-barn, cradled in a manger, having been repulsed from the hotel of honor and wealth. They did not know that the Creator of the universe Himself had arrived in swaddling clothes. O the condescension of Jehovah! O what hidden sublimity! O how can humanity look lightly upon such a scene? How can intelligent men view such an event and not fall down and worship the only holy man that ever lived?

Fifth. The Magi were expecting His birth. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His Star in the East and are come to worship Him." We are informed that "the Magi were originally one of the six tribes into which the nation of the Medes was

divided. Like the Levites under the Mosaic institutions, they were entrusted with the care of religion (that is, they were priests.) Their office was held in the highest honor, gave the greatest influence." In some way, God revealed His purpose in a measure to them and made them to watch for a star in the heavens, the sign of His advent. Balaam was compelled to say, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel"-Num. 24:17. Accordingly, Jesus Christ is called "The bright and morning Star" (Rev. 22 :16), "the Day Star," which shall arise in the hearts of the Jews when He shall be revealed to them. Did any wise men ever watch for the sign of the advent of any other personage? Who else ever followed a star hundreds of miles to see a new born king? Marvel of marvels -- God's ways are past finding out.

Sixth. Shepherds in the country were startled in the night. They were keeping watch over their flock by night. Even so was God keeping watch over them. "The glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid." "Fear not," said the angel; "for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." The Father made the angels so deeply interested in the miracle Child, that "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:9-14. Whose birth, other than Christ's, ever demanded such excitement and glorious welcome? What other birth stirred the inhabitants of heaven and charmed the dwellers on earth?

Enoch walked with God for 300 years, and never died. Abraham believed God and was called "the friend of God." Moses became a renowned leader of a great nation. Elijah had power over the heavens to hinder the rain and again to make them give rain, and later went to heaven without dying. David ruled over Israel for 40 victorious years, was termed "the sweet singer in Israel," and wrote many psalms and hymns of praise. Solomon built a great temple for the Lord, reigned long over Israel and wrote 2,000 charming songs. All these and others were notable personages; but not one of them came on the stage of action enveloped with such

splendor and surrounded with such honors and attention as was true of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, the characters and ministries and renown of those men was dependent by anticipation upon the holy character, tested efficiency and His superlative conquest in death and resurrection. The destiny of Israel and of the church was wrapped up in that helpless bunch of innocence. No marvel that Simeon held Him in his glad arms and exclaimed in praise to God, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Luke 2:30. God manifest in human flesh appeared in the temple that day -- the destined Redeemer and Savior of men, the destined Head of the Church, our destined Bridegroom and the destined King of kings and Lord of lords, King over Israel.



WONDROUS GIFT!

Peace! Peace! The angels sang;
Good will to man! The heavens rang;
This the chorus at His birth:
Christ the King has come to earth.
Unto us a CHILD is given;
God's own Son is born from Heaven.

Peace! Peace! The joyful strain.
Naught of sorrow, sin nor pain.
Good will to man, they only tell,
As their voices rise and swell;
Heaven's -Joy has come to earth,
Born a babe of lowly birth.

Peace! Peace! The story this.
Angels sang of Grace and Bliss;
For on Mary's gentle breast,
Lay the GIFT of endless Rest.
And in Christ, "the Lord from Heaven,"
God's Eternal Peace is given.

THE CHILD JESUS

“Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1:30-33

This is the greatest message ever carried from heaven to earth. It is the message of the angel Gabriel to Mary, the virgin of Nazareth. The first part has been fulfilled. The promised One was born to Mary. His Name was Jesus. He was great and was called the Son of God. But what about the latter part of the angelic announcement? Has the Lord God failed of doing what was promised? Why is He not reigning over the house of Jacob now? Why is He not sitting on the throne of David? He has not received the Kingdom.

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The first part of the prophecy was fulfilled at Christ's birth: the latter part will be fulfilled at His second advent. It would have immediately come to pass; but He was rejected. The prophets had foretold this. He received a cross instead of a throne. The house of Jacob did not want this Man to reign over them. They put Him into the hands of the Gentiles. When Pilate reminded them of His Kingship, they answered, "We have no king but Caersar." Then they demanded the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of the Son of David their Kings. The awful choice with its terrible loss was made. After that the mockery, the plaited crown, the purple robe, the frail reed, the marred face and form! Then we see Him on the tree; but on it is written these words in three different languages -- "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." No hand could remove this inscription. Pilate insisted that it remain.

David's throne has been empty ever since; for He, Who alone can fill it, was rejected. The King is no more

wanted today at the end of the age than He was at the beginning. The world does not want David's Son to reign. He is a Jew.

And yet He is the world's hope. While the throne of David is empty, the world will groan. All the misery, disorder, sorrow and suffering; all evil has its source in the fact that the Son of the woman, God's Son also, is rejected. Wars will continue; unrighteousness will rule; no permanent peace; no better world will be enjoyed until He is enthroned.

But who will put Him on the throne? "The Lord God will give unto Him the throne of His Father David. He will set Him upon His holy hill of Zion." He will give Him the nations for His inheritance. The world waits that glad day when all pain and sorrow will be gone; tears will be wiped away, death will be held in abeyance. Happiness and peace will be manifested in the morning of joy that is just ahead. **"Come Lord Jesus, Come."**

Anon 16

WHAT MAKES CHRISTMAS

*It was not the angels' singing
Gave the Christmas thought.
Not the precious gold and incense
By the Wise Men brought.*

*Not the shining star that led them
On their unknown way.
'Twas the Christ within the manger
Made the Christmas Day.*

*So 'tis not the tree and presents
Make our Christmas Day.
'Tis not what we get that counts
But - what we give away.*

WHOSE SON WAS HE?

“Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Matt. 1:16. **“And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.”** Luke 3 :23.

Jesus Christ is called the son of David at least twenty times in the New Testament in harmony with the Old Testament prophecies concerning them. And yet the above verses state that he was the son of Joseph. Speaking strictly, Jesus was not the son of Joseph, the descendant of David; for He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. This explains the phrase, "as was supposed." The genealogies in Matt. 1 and Luke 3 agree from Abraham to David; but from David to Christ they differ. Matthew records that "Jacob begat Joseph;" but Luke says, "Joseph was the son of Heli." He could not actually be the son of both men. Bro. Benton, who has been puzzled over this riddle, sent us the following, which explains it. A commentary, over a hundred years old, covering the Gospels, quotes from Pearce, saying, "As the Hebrews never permitted women to enter into their genealogical tables, whenever a family happened to end with a daughter, instead of naming her in the genealogy, they inserted her husband as the son of him who was in reality but his father-in-law." Accordingly, Joseph was the **son-in-law** of Heli, but really the descendant of David. Other Scriptures warrant such an explanation, Saul called David his son in two instances, though he was only his son by marriage. Thus Jesus became the son of David thru Mary, Joseph's wife, but not by Joseph.

The precision of the inspired Scriptures is phenomenal. The criticisms of men, for example Ingersol's "mistakes of Moses," are in their heads only. The Word explains itself when we study it by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

Anon

REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” II Cor. 9:15

We have come to the time of the year when the hearts of men are often encouraged, or even goaded, into turning their attention to others instead of themselves. There are also those who give out of sheer duty or obligation because another has bestowed an unexpected gift upon them. The above portion of scripture marks the end of Paul’s discourse on giving, as he desperately tried to persuade the Corinthians to finish their commitment to the poor Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. He uses the Macedonian saints as the standard of “this grace,” for these poverty stricken believers had been “...willing of themselves...” and had given sacrificially “...to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power....” as they “.....first gave their own selves to the Lord,....” II Cor. 8:3-5 Paul deemed this subject so important that he devoted two full chapters to it and had written to the Romans that both Macedonia and Achaia had participated in the effort.

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God’s “unspeakable” or indescribable gift is Christ. Romans 8:32 publishes this wide open promise: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” All men did not recognize the magnitude of the gift which God gave to this world as Mary laid that precious “unspeakable” gift in the manger at Bethlehem. Some of that day surely did. The angel had said unto Mary Luke 1:35 “....The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:35 Simeon likewise recognized not only the identity of the small Babe he held in his arms, but what He had come to do as he took “..... him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Luke 2:28-32 Anna was another who recognized this choice gift for she “....coming

in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Luke 2:38

God sets the precedent in giving. His gifts are prompted by love and He shows us that true giving is often done at supreme sacrifice of the giver. Those gifts are also eternal, with no “strings attached,” for they are “without repentance” or revocation as noted in Rom. 11:29. They are also extremely valuable, given with the intent to meet definite needs of the recipient. The Macedonian believers followed this pattern for they too gave out of extreme poverty far beyond their power. They were also a band who “couldn’t wait to give,” for Paul declared that “...they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” I Cor. 8:3,4.

What joy to know that we too, like Simeon, can still look upon this glorious Christ and appreciate the tremendous value of God’s Gift to us. Not only so, but our hearts can also be likened unto that of the Macedonians as we follow their example of such spiritual giving during this season of remembering the true meaning of Christmas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We would remind our readers that Grace and Glory is available in an audio version read by Sis. Kathleen Tye. We have a number who have taken advantage of this service and would be glad to send it out to others who may be hearing impaired or just want to listen to the Word of God in their cars. Sis. Tye has also read Bro Copley’s book on James and it too is now available and ready for distribution. If you desire any of these materials, you may order them through our e-mail address: gjhawk1@msn.com or from our mailing address at P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Missouri 64030.

DIRECT YOUR HEARTS

Walter Anderson

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” II Thess.

This tender petition, invites us to partake freely in God's purpose of our lives. More than anything else, our hearts need to be directed beyond ourselves. Since the Lord is our Creator as well as redeemer, He has the power and direction over our hearts. This gives us a great purpose over the course of “The Way.” Our own path of self determination is so much folly and vanity.

As we learn that God's Spirit bears witness to our own spirit, we gladly accept His leading and rule of our destiny. “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Rom. 8:27 There now follows a positive result in our way. We learn the providences of God in “all things.” “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” V. 28 The positive working together of all things, have a purpose and determination for the Bride of Christ. This is for those “**that love God.**” In turn, this reveals God's choice and election. Here “**the called**” is the Virgin Bride, whose predestination is marked out aforehand, before the world began. We are led with full confidence of faith, because our direction is “**according to His purpose.**” V. 28,29

20

In this path of ordained wisdom, there must be a sure and steadfast “end.” “**To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.**” I Thess.3:13 This pathway of faith, gives our hearts full assurance of our calling and election of wisdom. “**When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.**” Prov. 6:22

In this most pleasant pursuit of happiness, the Bride is led forth by the Holy Spirit. She lives in the confidence of faith over all circumstances. Her heart is fixed on her Beloved Bridegroom. Through the WORD, her meditations are true and stedfast; “**keep sound wisdom and discretion.**” Provl 3:21 The nobility of grace, has a definite witness of her heavenly calling. “**So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.**” Prov. 3:22,23

As the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ is set before our hearts in Paul's Gospel, we press on to full victory. **“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.”** Prov. 4:25-27 In all understanding, the race course is set before us to “WIN CHRIST.”

As our hearts must always answer to the heart of our Bridegroom, we accept His searching in willing obedience. **“Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.”** Psa. 44:21 A pure heart of faith towards Christ gives us perfect desire towards Him in fervent love. **“My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.”** Ps 49:3

21

A divided heart is always unstable, and finds no response in communion with Christ. In true love, the Bride's desire is for a “united heart”, where unbelief is judged by the word. **“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.”** Ps. 86:11,12 In this fashion, with our will in true submission to the Lord of our life, we are in harmony in grace, where God's glory fills up our void and emptiness.

There are untold pleasures that capture our hearts in love, which possess our minds; bringing out all joyfulness. Here we learn the secret of His Presence, abiding over our cleansed spirit: and soul. This jubilee of glorious fellowship holds our hearts in first love. This yearning must be fulfilled in the coming of our Bridegroom. **“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love. What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?”** S.O.S. 5:8,9

Surely the patient waiting for Christ, will draw forth the very depths of our hearts. Our longings are fulfilled in grace, where God reveals His Son for all of our expectations.

To be led of the Lord in quiet repose of love, fills up our vision with the light of the glory of Christ's coming. So also, the Psalmist knew that **“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.”** Psa. 23:2 Surely our cup runneth

over with unspeakable joy everlasting; through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He taketh the things of Christ and reveals them unto us.

This free access into this grace wherein we stand, makes us to know that, The Lord delighteth in thee. How sweetly this was voiced about the fair Shulamite. **“How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!”** S.O.S. 7:6 She exults further in Verse 10, **“I am my beloved’s and his desire is toward me.”**

How easily the heart can withdraw from the beautiful entreaty of love from the Bridegroom. Our response to this precious fellowship of love, will grow cold when other personalities and attractions win our affections. As distance widens through our coldness of heart, we then become barren in our selfish mode. The joy of everlasting glory in union with our Beloved, fades away with cold indifference, in our earthly mindedness.

More abundant grace will fill up our void through a willing spirit of submission. **“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”** Col. 3: 1,2 This beautiful access into the heavenlies, renews a right spirit in us, and then follows the escape from the boring cares of life. **“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”** Col. 3:3 Herein, the whole course of our holy affection after our Bridegroom, are all in preparation of His glorious appearance. **“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”** Titus 2:13 22

Our vision shineth brighter and brighter of the glorious advent from the heavens! All our earthly hopes fade away in this GLORIOUS LIGHT; shining forth by the ministry of grace. Here there is no darkness nor despair - all things are made NEW! With this inspiration of love, generated by the Holy Spirit, we wait in all assurance for our Bridegroom. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Col. 3:4

We must boldly confess that the risen Christ “is our life.” Without this assurance and possession of faith, there is no joy for the revelation of Christ from heaven. It is positively, the “life of Christ” in His Bride, that answers to Christ in Glory. It is above all powers, and dominions, and might in heavenly places. In the

life of Christ, we possess Christ in glory! These are the marvels and miracles of grace working in us NOW! Here is transfiguration by the Holy Spirit, from one glory to another glory. As this is all invisible and by the Spirit, it is the work of faith directed by love. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” II Cor. 3: 18

Such wonders and accomplishment of the **reign of grace**, qualifies the Bride for all approval of her Bridegroom. She desires to be fully possessed by her Beloved, as a chaste virgin. Her life becomes separated unto Christ Jesus for His marriage! **“O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”** S.O.S. 2:14 It is noteworthy in this precious visitation, the “stairs” speak of ascensions. The wings of the Spirit swing upward our ransomed spirit in heavenly visitation! Oh what a trip to glory!

23 In our **“patient waiting for Christ,”** we set our sights heavenward. Through patience of hope, we do not despair, and find our fulfillment of love. “In your patience possess ye your souls. “ Luke 21:19 All around about us is the restlessness of the flesh. This draws us away from our steadfastness. How greatly is our provision in abundance of grace. **“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”** Col. 1:11 Through the energy of the Spirit, there is found for us **“all might”** in the inner man. Here we withstand the wicked course of this age in their fierce rebellion against Christ. Here then, patience must have her perfect work. Everywhere religious zeal would captivate our minds with dead works. Only the patience of God can keep our hearts and minds in full liberty to win Christ. “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;” I Thess. 1:3 Here the “reign of grace” overcomes.

The more we count the blessing we have, the less we crave the luxuries we haven't.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR LIFE?

Paul N. Smith

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:22-24.

Paul’s last testimony to the elders at Ephesus is unique, in that we do not read that he called especially for the elders of any other assembly. Ephesus is typical of the whole Church, because of its place dispensationally and also of the truth written to these saints. Paul’s words here are fragrant and instructive. The lesson which we wish to bring out is that of the apostle’s fervent purpose. From the day that the Lord revealed Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, he had one purpose of life which burned in him brightly. The apostle’s life was given over entirely to the will of God. He considered no sacrifice too great to make, no road too difficult to travel, no pain too hard to bear, no battle too fierce to fight; in fact, he considered nothing but his love for the Lord and for the Gospel of the grace of God.

Paul was constrained in his spirit to make this trip to Jerusalem knowing only that, if he did go, bonds and afflictions were there waiting. He was warned through others what would happen if he went on with his purposed trip. But Paul’s testimony stands as a beacon light and as a source of sustaining comfort to us today.

“None of these things move me!” Nothing could deter him from the purpose of glorifying the Lord in his life. No word, even prophecy, could change him. He was immovable by word of others or by circumstances against him. Only God could move him and it was God who was driving him on - to what, he did not know, and he did not care.

“Neither count I my life dear unto myself.” What expressive words! His safety meant nothing to him. He did not

feel that, even though he was the apostle to the Church, his life was too precious to sacrifice. He did not mind the humiliation of want, nor the shame of rejection and imprisonment. He was impervious to the taunts of his enemies and the words of unbelief from other Christians. He knew what his goal was, so whatever transpired between the beginning and the fulfillment was only a part of his life that led to glory. No single thing, be it defeat or victory, could sway him from completing God's purpose for him. He looked straight ahead. His vision for other things had been dimmed by the light of glory which was seen years before.

Nothing was so important to him as finishing his course in victory. What could compare to running the race and knowing at the end that he had won? Was anything then too hard? Did he let fatigue or pain slow his running? Did he let persecution and threatened imprisonment keep his mouth closed? Did it matter what happened to him, as long as he was doing the will of God? His statement answers all these questions. He counted not his life too precious or rare to give it freely. What is our life for anyway? Jesus taught that "whosoever will save his life shall lose it" - Luke 9:24. Paul spared not himself in any measure, so that he might fully preach the Gospel of grace. If it meant privation, fear, pain, and persecution, that was all right. The Lord was there to sustain him, and pour in resurrection life as his natural life was drained away.

Paul teaches this in his letter to the Philippians. It was some years later when he wrote these words from his dungeon in Rome. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" - Phil. 1:20,21. Paul was ashamed at nothing that befell him, as long as he magnified Christ in his body. Oh, yes, we can glorify Christ in our bodies, even in bodies of weakness and frailty. Paul was shut away in prison, but he magnified Christ while there. He was weak in his body, but he glorified Christ thereby. He never looked at his circumstances and felt shame. It seemed, at times, as though God was not backing him in preaching the Gospel; but

that did not stop him. Christ is glorified in us always when we yield to His working. Thus, all that happens to us brings glory to Christ. Circumstances serve us.

Paul used all his adversities to bring glory to Christ. Whether it was by life or by death, as long as he yielded to God, Christ was magnified. It did not matter to him. If he lived, then he lived by the life of Christ and so it was Christ in him. If he died, it was his gain because he would be with Christ. Either way, Christ was magnified in his body.

Throughout Paul's life and ministry, he was beset by adversity; but, in each instance, we see that he took the adverse conditions and made them glorify Christ. Let us look at some of these experiences briefly. During his first missionary journey, he and Barnabas won a great victory at Lystra through the healing of a lame man. The superstitious folks wanted to make them gods (Jupiter and Mercury) - Acts 14:12. Hardly had they restrained the people from sacrificing to them, when a group of Jews from Antioch and Iconium stirred the people against the apostles. In verse nineteen, we read that they stoned Paul and drew him out of the city and left him for dead. But God raised him, and the next day he continued to Derbe preaching the Gospel. Nothing daunted him! Even though he might have had an excuse to leave that area and shake the dust of his feet against them, yet we note that he returned to that very city and boldly declared the Gospel. The result of that stand is found in verse twenty-seven - "They rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

26

Nothing that happens to us is unimportant. If Paul had yielded to his flesh or even natural tendencies, he could have easily given up his Gospel preaching in that area. Instead, he considered not his own physical condition nor his feelings, but continued as God led him; and the result was an open door of faith to the Gentiles.

During his second missionary journey, we find similar things awaiting him. At Philippi (Acts 16), because he had delivered a young maiden from demon power, he and Silas were beaten and thrown into the inner prison and put in stocks. Surely,

by this time, one would think that he had been too forward and should have waited on the Lord a while longer. Surely he was too zealous, and was sorry for his actions. But how do we find these two men? “At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (16:25). These men, in that condition, were not found whining and complaining. We do not read that they called a lawyer to plead for them. They knew that God had allowed them to be put there. It was to these same people, years later, that he wrote - “in nothing I shall be ashamed” - Phil. 1:20. What victory he had! This imprisonment brought much glory to Christ and salvation to all who were there, no doubt.

27 Paul could have brooded, while in the prison, and thought back to try to find out where he had missed the will of God and had fallen into this terrible place. Previous to coming to Philippi, Paul wanted to go into Asia; but we read that the Holy Ghost forbade him to do so. Then he wanted to go to Bithynia; but again the Holy Spirit did not let them go there (16:6,7). Instead, through a vision, Paul was led into Macedonia and this was the result. So, this imprisonment was not just something that happened - God led him in that direction. Was that cruel of God? We do not read where Paul ever complained about it, but instead prayed and sang praises to God! He had the joy of seeing others receive the Gospel and an assembly established. So, here again he used whatever situation he was in to glorify Christ.

As we read on, concerning Paul’s life and ministry, we find over and over similar instances of his unswerving loyalty to Christ and the Gospel. In Acts seventeen, we read that he ministered in Thessalonica; but had to flee to Berea by night. What shame! Yet Paul did not hang down his head and say, “I quit.” In Berea he preached and many believed. The same thing happened. Unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica followed him and stirred up the people against him. So, Paul had to flee again; this time to Athens.

He was in Athens waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him. Ah, now was his chance for a real vacation! No one could deny that he needed a rest. I am sure he felt that he wanted to get

away from people and noise and tumult. But what do we find him doing? He could not rest because he saw the need there. His spirit would not let him rest, but he had to proclaim the gospel in every way possible. Would there be no end to these travels? Would he ever be free from persecution? It seemed not.

This brings us to his last visit to Jerusalem. Persecution against the Christians was getting stronger, and Paul was the main target. He went his way despite what he knew would happen. We see in Acts twenty-one that he went into the temple for the sake of others, not counting his life dear unto himself. He knew that would be the first place the fanatic Jews would find him; yet for others he went. As he became bolder in declaring the Gospel and preaching the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, a mob came and drew him out of the temple.

They wanted his blood and tried to kill him, crying, "Away with him." The Roman soldiers finally rescued him and had him bound with chains. Here he was, shackled to the guards, bleeding and bruised from the beatings; and surely this will be the time that he will give up. "This is too much to bear," he might have said. The Lord would not expect him to suffer like that. He surely must have been out of the will of God in coming to Jerusalem and being talked into going to the temple. We do not know what thoughts might have gone through his mind; but we do know what his reaction was. He looked at that roaring milling crowd, and decided that this would be a marvelous opportunity to preach the Gospel once again. Instead of complaining or trying to answer their threats, he preached the Gospel. Oh, he seized every opportunity that came his way to preach the Gospel and glorify Christ in his body. In this instance, it was a weak bruised body; but he was manifesting that statement to the Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ" - Philippians 1:21.

Years of imprisonment did not dull his ardor. When embarking on the ship to Rome, still a prisoner, he exhibited the same faith and zeal he always had. During the great storm and shipwreck (Acts 27), Paul was the only sustaining force there. He became the captain of that ship. His faith carried them through to safety. We do not read of a single instance where Paul failed to

lay hold of the circumstance, which always seemed adverse, and turn it into glory for Christ. What a lesson for us today! We are always faced with situations that seem to be against us, but we can always use them to glorify Christ. These things will serve us, if we take them as from the Lord. When we see a trial on the way, we can say, "Come on, you are my servant; you are going to be good for me." We never live alone. Our lives always affect others. So, if it is a victorious life, others will get the victory. If it is a defeated life, full of complaints and murmurs, others will be affected likewise. But Paul could always say, and so can we, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" - Romans 8:37.



A Miracle Child

A miracle Child indeed
Was the Babe of Bethlehem town. .
The King of all kings we read
He should be -- and of great renown.

That Babe was the Lamb once slain
'Fore the ages of time began,
To cleanse away ev'ry stain
And make a new creature of man.

As Physician He made pain go.
And as Shepherd He fed the sheep.
As a Soldier He slew the foe
And cast him into the deep.

That Babe to men became LIGHT,
Whom all in the dark may believe,
And to blind folk He gave sight
That many God's grace might receive.

The Giver of life is He
To all dead in trespass and sin.
That they His dear face may see
And a crown of victory win.

A. S -. Copley

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

By Mary M. Bodie

(Ch. 3 Cont'd.)

The Lord Himself, after His resurrection, speaks in the same manner, using the identical language - "John truly baptized into water, but ye shall be baptized into the Holy Spirit not many days hence" - Acts 1:5. Here is the very same contrast of water with Spirit, and the same word "baptism," applied to each ministry, while we know from the record of Pentecost, that the Spirit did not connect Himself in any way with water, nor were the disciples baptized with water on that day. And it is also positively ascertained by Scripture that they were all born again before Pentecost and that this baptism therefore was not their new birth, but had to do with another experience altogether.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of him." This is the first of the five great scenes in the earthly life of Christ. The other four are His temptation in the wilderness, His transfiguration on the mountain, His agony in Gethsemane and His death on the cross. There is definite purpose and meaning in the "dipping" of Jesus in Jordan, yet from what we have learned of its character, it is the last thing that we would imagine possible - that the Lord should be baptized by John into repentance, for he had nothing of which to repent. And John thinks so; he is startled, even forbidding the humbling of Jesus in this manner. "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." It is clear that Christ's baptism is the entrance to His public ministry. Prior to this, with the exception of His birth and the one incident of His youth at the age of twelve years, which Luke records, the Scriptures are silent as regards His life. And this was all designed and controlled by God; for Christ is here viewed as the Passover Lamb which was "taken" on the tenth day of the first month and "kept up" until the fourteenth day, before being killed. Yet the whole year was changed as is recorded, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you" - Exodus 12:2. Why then were the first ten days of this momentous month unnoticed?

As was intimated Matthew connects the Old and New Testaments; therefore we are in the midst of typical teaching.

The number "ten," in symbolic language, is the number of responsibility; therefore those "ten days" of silence figure the whole of Christ's life before that significant day that He stood upon the banks of Jordan. They testify to those thirty years of silence, yet of responsibility, when He was living in the light with God and proving Himself the unblemished Lamb of sacrifice by actually fulfilling every jot and tittle of the law. Therefore we read here of the Father's approval - giving public witness to Him as His Beloved Son in whom He is well pleased, and accepting Him as the real Passover Lamb.

And as the typical lamb was kept up "four days," this being the number of testing, so Christ was in the public gaze for four years after His Father approved Him, to be tested by the world, the flesh and the devil. Hence He is immediately led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for the express purpose of being "tempted by the devil." And His life afterwards, how different it is from that quiet life at Nazareth in which He had lived so long in fellowship with God. There He was fulfilling His own individual responsibility, which was absolutely necessary in order that He should be able to give Himself for others. And as was said, this was in private. God alone could be the competent witness of the inward excellency of His Son.

31

It is plain then, that it is as the unblemished Lamb that He is presenting Himself here. He, the Holy, the "Last Adam," offers Himself to God as the Substitute in death for sinful "first Adam." Not that He took sin into union with Himself; this was impossible, his holiness repulsed sin; but He took here the place of self-judgment as Israel's Substitute. He went down into the waters of Jordan where Israel had been adjudged by God as deserving to go, being convicted by the law which they claimed to keep. He went down, in figure, into the place of death, the divine penalty for sin. He justified God in His verdict against the transgressor. He there surrendered Himself openly and absolutely to the will of His Father. And we are not surprised that this opens heaven and calls forth the divine approval of the Father upon such devotion. And the Spirit, as a Dove, rests upon this holy Man, the distinct sign of the reward and seal of God upon His perfection. He becomes not simply in title, but in fact, the Christ - the Anointed. As Aaron of old received the typical anointing without blood, before his entrance into office, so Christ is now accepted and set

apart for priestly ministry, as well as priestly sacrifice; for here is Priest and Sacrifice in One. And His perfection is necessary in the one case as in the other. The white linen garments seen upon Aaron, on the day of atonement, and not the garments of glory and beauty, are here in evidence. That is, it was Christ's own intrinsic holiness that prevailed in that awful crisis day when Aaron's glorious Anti-type offered Himself, the only acceptable Sacrifice unto God.

And the perfection which the Father proclaims, the Spirit seals. He finds at last a place to rest, a human heart in sympathy and harmony with His own infinite love, where He may lodge. His appearance as a dove manifests the character of the Man upon whom He abides. The dove was one of the sacrificial birds, the symbol of Christ, in the very attitude in which we find Him here. Thus Father, Son and Spirit are all three for the first time, openly manifested together in the work of redemption.

The dove or pigeon, the two are almost identical, was in fact the only bird named as the bird of sacrifice. As the "bird." speaks of heaven from whence this sealed Man came, so heaven, not earth, has provided the Sacrifice by which heaven is to be appeased and opened to man. That the "Second Man" is from heaven, is the important teaching here symbolized. The "first man" is earthly and by the fact that he sinned, he cannot provide the unblemished offering which divine justice demands. Therefore God Himself must provide a sacrifice, as Abraham announced to Isaac long ago - Gen. 22. He who required has fulfilled His own requirement. This is the message of love which the Gospel proclaims. Thus the closing words of the chapter, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased," introduces Christ to us as the King of Israel, anointed, but not yet crowned; for His priesthood must prepare the way for His Kingship.

A King Indeed, Chapter 4

The fourth chapter corresponds most wonderfully with Numbers, the fourth book of the Pentateuch. It is the story book of the wilderness and follows the priestly anointing in the book of Leviticus. Thus the first five chapters in Matthew are a miniature expression of the five books of Moses. We have Christ's beginning, the Genesis of Matthew in the first chapter; His Exodus out of Egypt in the second; His priestly inauguration in the third; His wilderness journey in the fourth; while the fifth chapter

introduces the Deutoronomic character of Christ's ministry. The latter is the second giving of the law, the very meaning of Deuteronomy. In fact in the five divisions into which Matthew easily falls, we also have a Pentateuch. Who dares say, in the face of such unmistakable evidence, that the Bible is not the inspired Word of God?

“Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil “ - 4:1. The Lord had fulfilled, as we have noted, His own responsibility as Man before God in the thirty years of His private life at Nazareth. And now He comes forth from that retirement to take His public place as Mediator for others and thereby assume their responsibility before God. And He has been anointed and publicly acknowledged as the chosen One for this office. Therefore He is now to be tested, by the world, the flesh and the devil, as to His fitness for the service assigned to Him. He must be worthy of the honor conferred upon Him. He must prove Himself Master of everything. Satan is given the first opportunity to defeat this apparently defenseless Man. He has no hedge whatever round about Him. He comes into the poverty of the creature, absolutely at the mercy, as it were, of the adversary, we are impressed with the manifest weakness of this Glorious Wrestler. He is stripped for the contest. **“He was led into the wilderness,”** that He might be tempted. He is absolutely yielded to and controlled by the Spirit of God.

In a sense of absolute desolation, yea more of awful danger, in the midst of wild beasts, a contrast to the garden of Eden in which the first Adam fell, without one single comfort, no human friend, no shelter and no food; this heavenly Man is tested as to whether He is the Son of God. Circumstances were all against His claim. He was alone. The fast was not only from physical food; but also the fellowship of heaven was lacking. It was a fast indeed.

And when it was ended **“He hungered.”** There was a limit to the fast, forty being the number of trial and probation. It was a preparation to meet Satan. If the Son of God had met him immediately following His anointing with the Spirit before He was tried by the poverty, danger and need of the wilderness, it would appear as though He was protected by His Father, hedged about as it were. But no, there was a due time for the devil to appear - the supreme moment, **“He hungered.”** This was Satan's opportunity and he takes advantage of it; for though Jesus was the Son of God, He emptied Himself of His power and wealth that He might come into the poverty of the creature, the conditions of frail humanity, and these in their utmost straits. The first Adam failed in a garden where everything was especially prepared and furnished for him. He also had a companion, a help, meet for him, to comfort and cheer his solitude. Real want there was none. Only one thing was denied him and in that very denial there was hidden a blessing. The

weakness of the creature was owned. He was dependent upon God for his care and sustenance; but this was only a witness to the tender arms of love that were around him, on which he had but to lean hard to feel their strength.

But the last Adam,, the Second man, is not so sheltered. He is apparently neglected and unloved. The garden is gone. In its place is a barren waste, a desert where even nature itself refuses to yield its substance to feed its Creator. For forty days He fasts, and then with the hunger of those days of abstinence upon Him, the tempter comes with the same insinuation of God's wisdom (though a different interrogation), that he found effectual in the case of the first Adam.

God's Gracious Gift

**Behold
A virgin
Shall con-
ceive and
Bear a Son and
Shall call His
Name Immanuel.
For unto us a Child
Is born; unto us a Son
Is given: and the gov-
ernment shall be upon
His Shoulder; and His
Name shall be called, Won-
derful, Counsellor, the Mighty
God, the Everlasting Father, the
Prince of Peace. Of the increase
Of His government and peace shall
Be no end, upon the throne of David
And upon his kingdom, to order It and
To establish it with
Judgment and with
Justice from hence-
Forth, even forever!
The zeal of the Lord of hosts
Will perform this. The Lord hath
Sworn and will not repent.**