

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the whole counsel of GOD

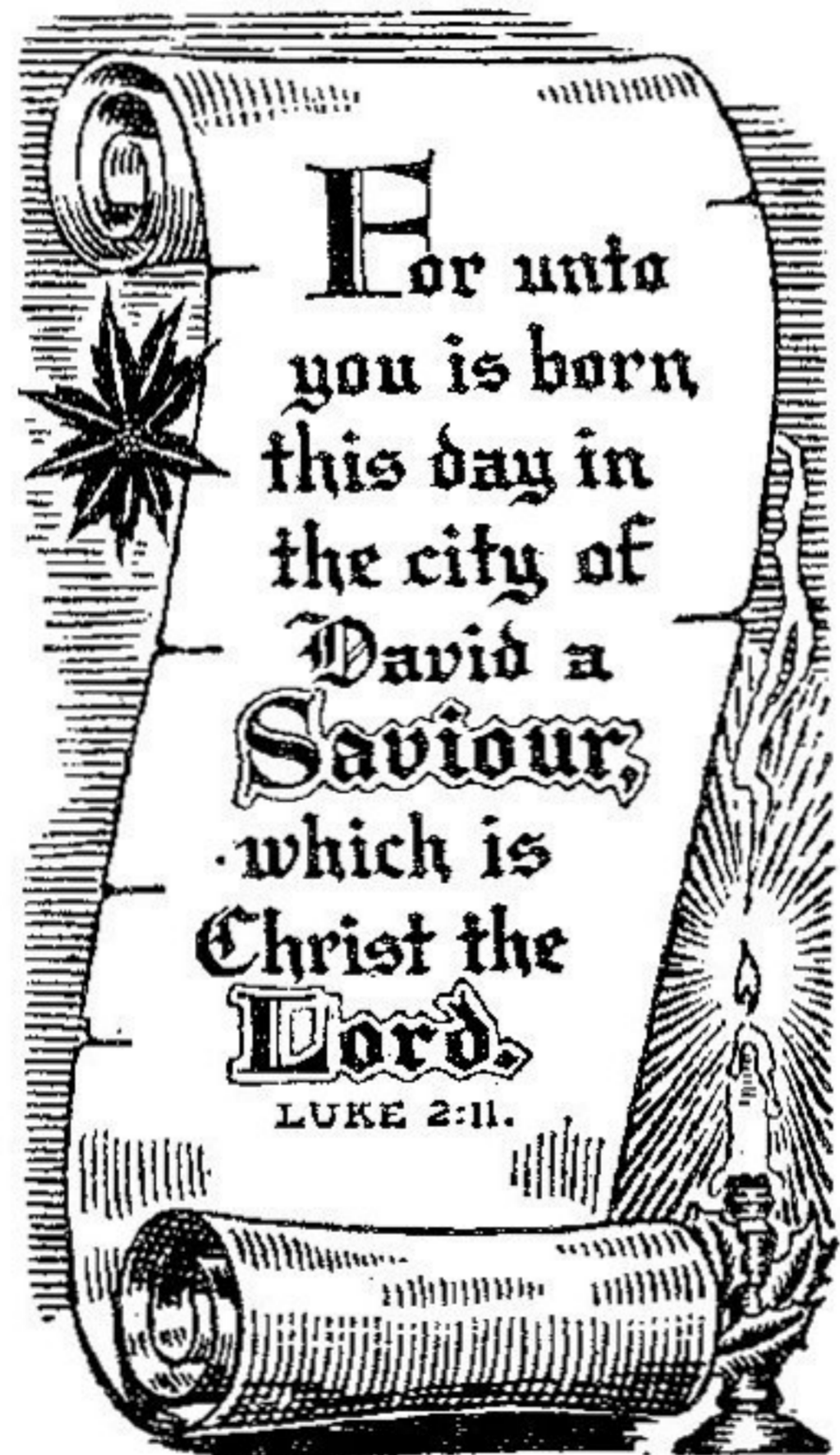
Without Price Since 1910

Loving His Appearing

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For unto
you is born
this day in
the city of
David a
Saviour,
which is
Christ the
Lord.
LUKE 2:11.


Table of Contents

<u>Article</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Page</u>
Definite Sign Post of the End	Gene Hawkins	3
Birth of a King.....	A.S. Copley	10
Your Life.....	David Albrecht.....	15
The Bells of Bethlehem.....	Mary M. Bodie.....	20
Over the Sun	Sharon Townsend	24
Isaiah (book section).....	Gene Hawkins	30


NO ANGELS IN THIS LEAGUE




For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given: ...Isa. 9:6



I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER,
AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON.
HEB. 1:5



THY THRONE, O GOD,
IS FOR EVER AND EVER. HEB. 1:8



LET ALL THE ANGELS...
WORSHIP HIM. HEB. 1:6

BEING MADE SO MUCH BETTER THAN THE ANGELS, AS HE HATH BY INHERITANCE OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME THAN THEY. HEBREWS 1:4

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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“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:.....” Lk. 21:25,26

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast,and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots:” Dan. 7:7,8

“In the first year of DariusIn the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” Dan. 9:1,2

3 **D**aniel understood by books, --- the writings of Jeremiah----- that the seventy year captivity of the Jews had come to an end. He also knew that the Babylonish Empire had collapsed in one night (Dan. 5:30,31) and the Medo-Persia era had begun. The prophet, however, did not understand the specifics of why there was not a mass exodus of Jews back to Jerusalem.

Today, there are many overcoming Christian who likewise understand the “times and the seasons,” and “....know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” I Thess. 5:1-2 There are those who “know” beyond doubt that conditions in this world are absolutely “ripe” for the coming of Jesus, and we continue to rejoice greatly that we do see that day approaching. Like Daniel, however, there are exact specifics that are still hidden from view.

According to the text from Luke 21 quoted above, the world is in an even greater state of consternation and perplexity, due to the uncertainty surrounding this world. Some political analysts and prognosticators are still in a great turmoil trying to understand; in the midst of an economy completely in the tank, an impending scandal out of Benghazi, Libya, which some high ranking officials believe could rival Watergate, along with total chaos in the Middle East, how the American Presidential election could end as it did.

The answer is quite simple: “Blessed be the name of God

for ever and ever;.....he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:.....” Dan. 2:20,21 God has done this from the beginning of time, but it became most acutely prominent in 606 B.C. when He turned the political reins of government over to The Gentiles. These Gentile Powers were given liberty to rule as they pleased, but Daniel makes it very clear that God will advance whom He will to any political seat, around the world. Thus Babylon became the first Gentile World Empire, with Nebuchadnezzar serving as its golden head.

Equally important is the fact that God always has a purpose in His Choices, and so many of those desires center around Israel. Nebuchadnezzar was charged with bringing Jerusalem in captivity. Seventy years later, in fulfillment of Divine Prophecy, Babylon succumbed to the lesser regime of Medo-Persia, as Darius the Mede dethroned Belshazzar. Cyrus, the Persian next dominated the scene, God calling him “my shepherd.” Isa. 44:28 Isaiah prophesied that this Gentile king would free the Jews from their seventy year captivity, a great number of years before they were even carried away into Babylon.

The Grecian Empire appeared on the horizon in due time with Alexander The Great at the helm. His rule was swift and efficient, but again God showed Who was in charge when, after his demise, the kingdom was divided into four major partitions, ruled by Alexander’s four generals. These divisions were passed down to the Roman Empire and remain in place even to this present day, with the East and West being especially prominent.

The Roman Empire was among the cruelest dominions on earth, and it too had a great impact on The Jews. Many preachers have pointed out that God could have brought His Son into the world at any time in history, but He determined that The Jew, Christ Jesus, should be born as a Babe in a manger, during this same Roman era, specifically to redeem “...us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Gal. 3:13

God has, in no wise relinquished His Authority in choosing heads of state during these “modern” times, and such choices very often involve His Own Chosen People. Daniel 4:17 declares “...that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” This was certainly manifest in Jesus’ time, but it is also quite evident in the last days when men like Adolph Hitler,

and Mussolini were given such power of the Jews. Despite the holocaust, however, God removed those wicked kings, not only delivering His people, but bringing them forth as a fledgling nation in 1948. American President Harry Truman claims the distinction of being the first world leader to recognize it, once again proving that God always has His man in place at the proper time. America was founded and built by men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln, on godly principles and the tenets of scripture, and they too ruled by God's decree. Despite the "voting" process, rulers are still chosen by God. Sometimes, as in the case of Israel's first king, Saul, God often gives men exactly what they want, but it is to their hurt, even as Israel discovered. God tried to console Samuel declaring that "...they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." I Sam. 8:7 Later on, after tremendous hardship in Israel, the people acknowledged their wrong as they came to Samuel asking him to "...Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask (demand) us a king." I Sam. 12:19

History shows clearly that God has indeed performed His purposes through the leaders He has chosen. This is true around the world, as He literally puts the pieces of the puzzle in place for these last days. Scripture is quite plain showing that Catholicism will greatly influence government in the end of this age, and John Kennedy undoubtedly did more to inject Catholic influence into modern era politics, since the early Roman Popes. Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal sent reverberations throughout the political world and literally changed the tactics of men even, down to this present day. The iron and clay of democracy, foretold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream image (Dan. 2:43) was greatly advanced by men like former Pres. George Bush, and every President and world leader from 1948 has been faced with the question: what do we do with Israel? These are only a few examples of the fact that God has always put men in power to fulfill His Own Will and Purpose.

This brings us to the present. The world has come to the very brink of time when the aforementioned Daniel 7:7,8 will be fulfilled. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast,and it had ten horns." The horn, in scripture, symbolizes power, and these horns speak of national powers. Some of our day, boast of being "super-powers," and The U.S.

42 months, (Rev. 13:5) to complete his Satanic mission, which will culminate with the battle of Armageddon. He then, along with the false prophet, will be cast into the lake fire. Rev. 19:20

Then comes the period known as the millennium, wherein Satan is bound a 1000 years and Christ reigns as God, with Israel as the head and not the tail of the nations. Deut. 28:13 They will finally be the “kingdom of priests,” which God envisioned, (Deut. 19:6) and will lead the entire world in righteousness unto The Lord. The “day of the Lord,” that is the day of Christ, will be consummated by the battle of Gog and Magog, followed by the Great White Throne Judgment of unbelievers, (Rev. 20) after which Jesus will render the kingdom back up unto His Father. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” I Cor. 15:24,25

God did promise in the days of Noah that the earth would be destroyed and it was. Likewise, there will come a day when the present world will also be destroyed, but only be **after the millennium!** “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Re 21:1

The great question today, is where are we on God’s time table? Even the great destruction that will come to pass during the devastating tribulation period will not bring forth the end of the world. However, Jesus did positively affirm that all the “wars and rumours of wars,” nations “rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and famines, and pestilences,” with “earthquakes, in divers places,” would be a period known as “the beginning of sorrows.” Matt. 24:6-8 We are presently in that period of time, and have been for a number years. We have noted numerous times that the word “sorrows,” is a word used to describe the birth pangs of a woman with child when she is about ready to deliver. Those “contractions,” become much more frequent, and severe, as the delivery date approaches. Such is the case with our world. Men may try and explain that these events have always existed, and the only reason it seems that they are more frequent and severe, is because we have better worldwide communications. That latter statement is most assuredly true, a direct fulfillment of the scripture, but make no mistake, all of these characteristics,

solution to the economic fiscal cliff looming over the country, which must be solved within the next 60 days. America's credit rating has already been downgraded once and rumor has it, that it will happen yet again, should the massive spending continue at the same rate as before the election. Scripturally speaking, the U.S. is also in dire straits as she has willingly forsaken God, even to the point of banning His Name in our schools. The scriptural principles on which she was founded, have also been greatly abandoned, and some are doing everything possible to promote Islam. Her moral compass has completely changed over the past few years, and violence, lawlessness, ungodliness, and immorality have become a way of life. It is hailed boastfully, by some, as "the new norm." The hearts of many godly Christians are in sympathy with Nehemiah & Daniel, who acknowledged that the miseries which had come upon them were because they had forsaken The Lord and His Righteousness.

7 We noted earlier that so many of God's purposes in His leaders, center on Israel. That is surely true in regard to the economic ability of America. We know that nations will be evaluated on their treatment of God's chosen people, but there will also come a day when no nation on earth will be **able** to help them, no matter how well intentioned they may be. God has assailed her repeatedly for trusting other "lovers" rather than Himself, and the time will arise when this once glorious nation will be forsaken by all others. She will then make the infamous covenant of death, with the antichrist, recorded in Dan. 9:27 & Isa. 28:15. The U.S. is fast approaching a line where she will no longer have the economic power to help herself, let alone Israel.

We wonder if this isolation of Israel has already begun, at least in Israel's mind. The Kansas City Star reported recently that Prime Minister Netanyahu "reiterated his willingness to attack the Iranian nuclear program **without** support from Washington **or the world**, returning to an aggressive posture that he had largely abandoned since his U.N. speech in September." Danny Danon, a member of P.M. Netanyahu's ruling Likud party carried this same message, as he also reportedly told Middle East correspondent and talk radio host Aaron Klein: "We cannot rely on anyone but ourselves."

Many of us do admire the "spunk" of this little nation, but as of now, we know from scripture that they are in deep trouble

which will continue to escalate. Only the rule of the antichrist will bring them to their knees whereby they will finally accept their Messiah, and though we support and pray earnestly for this chosen people, we surely know that great difficulty lies ahead for them.

Now for the good news! It has been extremely painful and disheartening to watch the decline of our beloved America over the past few decades, and it has become much more acute in recent years. God's Word also declares plainly that conditions will become worse, and it will only end when Israel, America, and the whole world are plunged into tribulation. A great number of Christians can most assuredly identify and sympathize with Daniel as he grieved for his own beloved people, Israel. But, just as Daniel did not live to see the fullness of the troublous times prophesied for Israel, we too could well watch all these things unfold from the air, having been transported to glory on that first translation tide. What a glorious prospect! We really do not know, nor do we NEED to know, whether these conditions regarding the horns of Daniel 7 will actually come to pass before we exit this world or not. These scenarios are presented 8 to show us that we are living in the last of the last days. Our burden today must be to follow the pattern set by Daniel. The quotation from Daniel 9 at the beginning of this article, tells us that the prophet knew the captivity of his people was over. He was greatly concerned, however, that he had seen no evidence of a mass exodus of Jews back to Jerusalem, and thus began a very lengthy prayer of intercession, especially for the restoration of the city and the sanctuary. Dan. 9:16,17 We too, know the "times and the seasons," and "...know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." I Thess. 5:1-2 Our prayer, however, is not for the restoration of this land or the world, as was Daniel's, for scripture plainly tells us that "...that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" **There will be no revival in this world before Jesus returns!** Contrary to popular teaching in the Church today, neither America, nor any other country of this world, will be spared the great tribulation which is coming "upon all the world to try them." Rev. 3:10 Jesus is, "coming as a thief in the night," meaning that the majority of this world will never know He has made such an appearance. The Church, as a whole, is in the passive, lukewarm, condition portrayed by the Church at

Laodicea. Paul describes it here in I Thess. 5 as a time of darkness, sleep, and drunkenness, meaning that men are simply not aware of the environment surrounding them, and will be oblivious to the fact that Jesus has come, as a thief. But what valuable treasure will He come to steal away from their midst? Quite simply the rib portion of the Church, stolen away while the bulk of the sleeping Body of Christ, remains in its stupor. She is **His Bride**, The Church at Philadelphia, to whom He promised “I also will keep thee **from** (out of) the hour of temptation,....” Rev. 3:10

Thus, the prayer for us is found in Jude 20. “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” The promised result for such a petition is found in V. 24,25. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Paul conveys this same truth to the Thessalonian believers exhorting them: “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” I Thess. 5:8-

10 The salvation here is **not** deliverance from hell, which the Thessalonians already possessed, but rather freedom from the throes of tribulation, shortly to come upon this world.

Daniel’s prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem will be answered in due time, but he had to learn that it was not going to happen at the time then present. We too must pray for the world, not to be restored, but “.... of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” Jude 22,23 Jesus further exhorted us to “occupy (engage, mingle) till I come.” Lk.19:13 We must be about our Father’s business until we be taken out of this world, but rather than succumb to despair, let us “look up,” and pray earnestly for the fulfillment of Jesus final glorious promise to us: “Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Rev. 22:20

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. We believe that He was born in Abid (April), of the Jewish sacred year; which is at the Passover, because it is written He was twelve years old when He and His parents went to the feast. Luke 2:42. Let us note the many Scripture references to the birth of our Lord which have been written for our closest consideration and deepest appreciation.

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

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 the days of eternity." 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. 8:1.

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 thru 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 borne at once." Then, after that He will save the other nations.

3. Prophecies of Christ's 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 thruout 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

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"-1 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 thru-out 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 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 announced 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? Who ever 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?

13

Fifth. The Magi were expecting His birth. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea 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 intrusted with the care of religion (that is, they were priests). Their office was had 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.

14

"All hail the power of Jesus' name.
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all."

Edward Parronet

YOUR LIFE

David Albrecht

What is your life? Pretty straight forward question, I would say. It could mean a lot of different things though, such as what does your life amount to? Or, what is important to you...what have you accomplished...what is the legacy that you will leave behind...what makes you tick, or maybe what makes you feel fulfilled? For many men it might be... what do you do for a living... and maybe even what do you have?

We have heard life compared to dozens of things: "Life is a bowl of cherries!" "Life is a bed of roses!", a "Rocky road", a "Merry-go-round" or a "Circus". One Christian song writer from years ago said, "Life is like a Mountain Railroad." Can you find your assignment in there? It seems there are many interesting perspectives to consider. James posed this question in his letter to believers in a way that I feel really puts life in perspective in regard to eternity. He said, *"For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"* (James 4:14). One translation of this verse says, *"Your life is like the morning fog...it's here a little while, then it's gone."* In a word - your life on earth and mine are very, very SHORT!

15

You and I, as Christians, are on TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT! We have things to accomplish and not much time to get them done. We have lives to touch. There are people to help, many to lead and some to save. Don't get discouraged or sidetracked. There are many things the enemy would put in our paths that would, in effect, derail us from what should be one of our primary goals — serving God by helping and loving people. Jesus said, *"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful"* (Mark 4:19). He highlighted these 3 things:

1. "Cares of this world" we all have concerns about things that can literally bog us down spiritually if we don't just turn them over to the Lord and leave them with Him. We are on TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT and are traveling very light; we need no extra baggage.

2. "Deceitfulness of riches" this is a lie from the

enemy that promises money and things will make us happy and that we just need more of it. We can find ourselves deep into materialism and chasing little green pieces of paper if we aren't careful. We are on TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT and are not here to build ourselves a kingdom.

3. "Lusts of other things"..... is coveting things that God did not provide us with or want us to have. We are on TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT and want nothing that He hasn't given us.

What we do in these few short years are critical to our eternal well being and potentially to many others with whom we have contact. Paul wrote, *"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not..."* (I Cor. 7: 29&30).

Recently I woke up one morning with these 4 words on my mind: *"Your redemption draweth nigh"* 16 (Jesus words, again, from Luke 21:28). What a hope! I was instantly reminded of my assignment and how temporary it is <> a literal wakeup call to do more, say more and take some kind of action. If you knew that today was your last day to be away from home and that you would be going home soon, you might prioritize things differently, live differently, refocus and put your traveling clothes on. Let me remind you, you can take nothing with you. Oh, to be like Abraham who was a pilgrim and a stranger in the land. The Bible says he *"looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and Maker is God"* (Hebrews 11:10).

Be confident in your assignment today and consoled in its tenure. You are a Special Agent selected for a specific mission. God has called YOU to be a witness for Him. You were bought with a price, the Precious blood of The Lamb, slain before the foundation of the world. You are an ambassador of The Most High God; a frontline representative of The Lord Jesus Christ. You are assigned to do the work of the ministry of The Body of Christ. It is His presence, His power, and His Spirit living in you that will enable you to be the shining light

God wants you to be. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory, that will appeal to the lost or hurting of this world we live in. You are empowered to help others! You could save some from the fire! Your assignment is only temporary and you can take nothing from this earth with you when you leave ▲ except people. Let Him shine through you!

Sometimes we seek direction
Or some purpose from the Lord
and . . .

All the while we're list'ning for His voice
It was written in His Word.



THE ROYAL BIRTH

Oh, thou Bethlehem Ephratah,
thou town of little worth.
How sovereign, the chosen place
of Jesus' matchless birth;
For out from thee has come the King
Who soon shall rule the earth.

Oh, thou Bethlehem Ephratah,
who art almost unknown;
Yet from thy midst, the seer declared,
should come great Israel's Stone—
The Ruler, who shall sit upon
the universal throne.

Oh, thou Bethlehem Ephratah,
what glory shall be thine!
When men of ev'ry kindred
shall bow at His great shrine!
And thou canst point to Him and say,
That Royal One is mine.

Mary M. Bodie

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

... *From the Editor*

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isa 7:14

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” Luke 2:12

Paul, a Jew, declared plainly that “...the Jews require a sign,...” (I Cor. 1:22) but when this one appeared, they seemed to be completely oblivious to it. Joseph, Mary’s husband “...a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.” Matt. 1:19 His actions are certainly proof that the Jews, as a whole, did in no wise recognize the “sign” that had appeared before their eyes, and even years later strongly hinted at the prospect that Jesus, contrary to themselves, was indeed “born of fornication.” John 8:41 The lowly sheperds seemed to have been of a different mindset as “...said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.” Luke 2:14,15 Simeon, likewise did not ignore this “small sign,” placed before him when the Latter was only eight days old. He cried out in great recognition as he “... 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;..” Luke 2:28-31 Anna too, coming into the temple “.....in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” V. 38

Satan and his ungodly surrogate Herod, however, were not so observant. They heard about the “sign” of His Star from the wise men, but that could have been up to two years after Jesus appeared in the Bethlehem stable. Thus, the decree to slay

“...all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.” Matt. 2:16 Likewise in these end times wherein we dwell today, some seem to be completely oblivious to the signs of Jesus second advent. After Jesus informed the disciples that their beautiful and beloved temple would be totally destroyed they asked Him “what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?” Luke 21:17 He then proceeds to list a vast array of signs describing upheaval which will affect every area of life. The Master concludes by emphatically declaring “And when these things **begin** to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28

Those signs are upon us just as surely as the sign announcing Jesus’ first advent. We can choose to ignore them or be like Simeon, knowing that we too have the glorious opportunity to see and experience “...thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;..”

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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Come fellowship with like-minded saints during this annual gathering. Sermons, studies, and plenty of food will be provided throughout the weekend. You’ll be encouraged and refreshed in the Lord as His love abounds!

*For further information, please contact
Shelli Coe (303) 791-5567*

The Book of Jude has been reprinted and is now ready for distribution. Please order online at gjhawk1@msn.com or from P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Mo. 64030

The Bells of Bethlehem

Mary M. Bodie

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end—upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this”—Isa. 9:6.

In the early dawn of the ages, the Spirit of God declared that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—Gen. 3:15. Adam, the fallen man believed in this coming deliverer as did his sons, Abel and Seth, and also others of his progeny. There was a line of faith in active expectation of the Redeemer; but the years lengthened into centuries and still He did not come. God called the man Abraham out of Ur of Chaldees a land of night and idolatry. He believed the good news concerning a child which Jehovah promised to give him, a seed thru whom all nations should be blessed. Isaac was born, the type of the Seed, but not the reality. Men continued to look forward for Another in whom all the promises would be fulfilled.

Finally, the shadows deepened into Egyptian bondage. Abraham's seed were captive in that iron furnace of the Pharaohs for several hundred years, when lo, there is a ray of light. Moses, a deliverer appears. He is sent of God to loose them from slavery and bring them into freedom. They follow him into the Red Sea and on out into the wilderness. Later they entered...Canaan, a land of rest and prosperity.. But yet the reality had not come. Moses was only the figure of Him, the Seed. Joshua also was not the image, neither was Canaan the rest and plenty of the promised land.

Again the centuries drag on. The time went by with leaden feet to those who looked for the Messiah to appear. He came not; tho' there were many types of Him along the way.

At last a sound booms forth announcing Him. - Isaiah rang his gladsome chimes of prophecy, after telling that a Virgin should conceive and bear a Son. Chap. 7:14. But the Prophet

could only foretell. He could not fulfill his prophecy. That was still for the future. The weary world was still left waiting while seven centuries passed. But God is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, (II Pet. 3:9) but He is oft-times slow. He has purposes to effect—mighty counsels to bring to the birth and He takes His time. Not one jot or tittle shall fail of fulfillment. His clock will strike the hour and lo, the thing is done; the event has transpired, even as the promised Child was born.

It was night—apt figure of the world steeped in darkness morally and religiously, into which He journeyed from on - high. The shepherds heard the song from heaven celebrating His birth. The wise men saw His Star arising in the East. The high and the low were apprised of the fulfillment of prophecy. They hastened to the place designated and found the Virgin in a stable, cooing a lullaby to the Babe upon her breast. God had not forgotten His promises. Here was the long-looked-for Seed of the woman, who was destined to crush the head of humanity's foe and loose men from His grasp. Here was the Kinsman Redeemer.

21

The angel of the annunciation appeared to Joseph, the affianced husband of Mary, and told him of the mystery relating to the Virgin and the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the coming Redeemer. He said, "*She shall bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His Name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins*"—Matt. 1:21. Hence, Jesus, He was called, which Name is all the following prophesied names rolled into one. Listen to the FIVE reverberating strokes of Isaiah's Bells, as they peal forth the future glory and greatness of the Babe of Bethlehem and His destiny as Sovereign of the world.

Five is a most significant number in this connection. It is 4 plus 1, expressive of man, the helpless human, in union with God, the mighty Creator. Man's hand shows this connection admirably. The four fingers represent him—four being expressive of the weakness of the creature; the one thumb represents God—one signifying His indivisible unity and sufficiency. The hand is helpless without the thumb and vice versa, the thumb is useless without the fingers.

The analogy is simple and clear. Man can do nothing without God. He is dependent upon His power to fulfill his

destiny. At the same time, God cannot fulfill His divine counsels without humanity's co-operation. Man has need of God; but oh the marvelous condescension, God has need of man. So, let us hear the chiming bells of the Prophet Isaiah, revealing the stupendous miracle—God has come to dwell with man.

First Chime. "His name shall be called *Wonderful*." This has been fulfilled in His first advent in every phase of His life from its beginning to its end; but the manifestation of the wonder is still future. He was wonderful in His birth, for no other man was born as this Man. "Great is the mystery of Godliness—God was manifest in the flesh"—1 Tim. 3;18. Angels desire to look into this mystery. It is divinely marvelous. Who can explain the interweaving of Deity with humanity in the warp and woof of the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger? Yet upon those humble wrappings, we may read, "*Immanuel*—God with us." No other man was born as this Man. 22

He was wonderful in life—different from all other men. "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil." Jesus was the one man that not only was negatively good but positively good. He lived an unchallengeable life and performed unchallengeable deeds. His life was perfect, powerful and pregnant of holiness—possessive of infinite possibilities. He healed the lame, opened the blind eyes, broke the shackles of the maniacs, cured the sick and raised the dead. His life was freighted with wonderful deeds--dynamic supernaturals followed Him all the days of His earthly pilgrimage. He amazed men, angels and demons. He still amazes us as we read the writings concerning Him. There never was another like Him,

Wonderful in His death, No other man died as this Man. There was no penalty of death attached to His life. We must die because of sin; but He need not die; for He had no sin in Him. He willed to die, else no power of man or Satan could have nailed Him to the cross. He was immortal until He said, "Amen," to the will of God in the garden of Gethsemane. His death was a miracle even as His birth and His life. He gave up His Spirit. it was not taken from Him. He was a willing offering for sin- tasting death for every man, as the Scripture affirms.

Wonderful, in His resurrection. Death could not hold Him in its embrace. He tore its bars asunder and

rose triumphant over its terrors —unlocking the graves and leading out a multitude of captives when He arose. He will bring many more out from their prison shortly, for He has the keys of death and hell as His resurrection proves.

Wonderful, in His ascension. In Him man is received again into fellowship with God—not to dwell in the garden of Eden, but better far—the Paradise above. Christ went up to God, but He did not go alone. His risen associates, the Old Testament overcomers went up with Him, passing all the wicked principalities and powers in the heavenlies in virtue of the precious blood of Calvary. The wonderful Head of the new creation in triumphant procession led captivity captive in His train into the very presence of a holy God. And He is there today, sitting upon His Father's throne making intercession for His church, influencing individuals and dynasties. It is wonderful, even as men acknowledge, because His name shall be called WONDERFUL. Napoleon said of Him—"Is it not amazing that whereas the ambitious dreams of Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and myself should have vanished into thin air, a Judean peasant should be able to stretch forth His hand across the centuries and control the destinies of nations and of men."

And that is not all. His name shall be called WONDERFUL in greater measure when He comes again. His glorious Self and His mighty works will be visible around the world, not in the few and separate places as is witnessed today. He will show Himself and all men will marvel, from one end of heaven to the other. As King of kings and Lord of lords, He shall be extraordinary, majestic, sublime and divine. As sovereign Despot of the ages He will reign as the WONDER of God upon the earth. This is no vain dream nor imaginary vision. The Babe that was born in Bethlehem lives to rule in regal royalty over the earth.

Second Chime. "His Name shall be called COUNSELLOR." In a measure this was fulfilled at Christ's first advent, and during these two millenniums since He has been the Adviser and Advocate of His people. Happy are they who consult Him and follow His counsel. They will walk in the light and be successful spiritually, even though in the natural they may not always be in the first rank. But it is at His second coming, that He will be announced as Counselor. The whole world will then acknowledge and seek His counsel and advice. He will solve their problems, answer their questions and untangle their difficulties. He will be

able for every situation and equal to any emergency that may arise.

Third Chime. "His Name shall be called *The Mighty God.*" Remember, Isaiah is announcing the future greatness that will fall to the lot of "the Child that should be born and the Son that should be given" the nation, Israel. It is true that from a past eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, was equal with Him as the Mighty God, but this Scripture does not apply to Him as He was at that time. Neither does it refer to Him at the present time as He sits upon His Father's throne, the Mediator and Intercessor of His church. It refers to Him at a future time when He will as a Man, the Seed of David, sit upon His own throne in the heavens. All the authority of the Almighty God will be vested in Him, for a thousand years. The Father will take a back seat, as it were, and watch His Son (who emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives for the few years of His earthly pilgrimage) rule and reign and put down everything in the universe that is not in harmony with the Creator. The holy Man glorified the Father to the uttermost by His obedience to death upon the cross, therefore the Father will glorify the Son to the uttermost, seating Him upon the throne of David where all the honor, glory and authority of the Godhead will be manifested in Him for the millennial age.

Fourth Chime. "His Name shall be called the everlasting Father," or Father of eternity. The above peal continues the harmonious strain of Isaiah's bells. Folk who do not give the Trinity any place, lay great stress on this name, as well as the former, "The Mighty God," seeking to thus prove that Jesus is so named now. But their conclusions only show their ignorance of Scripture; for these appellations as well as their proclamation, is still future. Christ was not so called at His first advent; neither is He so honored at the present time. His exaltation as described by these marvelous names will be evidenced in the next age. He will be looked upon, worshipped and glorified as Deity at His second advent.

Fifth Chime. "His Name shall be called *The Prince of Peace.*" He made peace by the blood of His cross. He preached peace, and He is, "The Peace" of His believing people during the present age; but He has not yet been proclaimed "The Prince of Peace." Men are continually endeavoring to make peace, keep peace, etc, etc, but there is no peace. The world is anything but peaceful. War is in men's minds and war will be in evidence again upon

the earth; but when the Prince of Peace has been manifested wars will cease to the ends of the earth. War cannot be present when the Prince of Peace is on the scene. The one precludes the other. The ringing of Israel's bells which are based on Bethlehem will signal peace for all men and nations. The Prince of Peace in manifestation will cause all strife and discord to flee. Peace will flow like a river when its Prince is reigning.

How foolish for folk to teach that these blessed, glorious divine appellations belong to the Man on His Father's throne. He is there subject to His Father; but when He comes again He will be manifested Sovereign of heaven and earth. All things shall be subject unto Him, "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Cor. 15. The Father will not be subject unto the Son, but neither shall He reign over Him until the thousand years have passed. Then the Son will hand the reins of government back to His Father and He and all the redeemed will be His willing subjects forever and forever. God will be glorified in a new humanity, as He never was in the old creation. This new line of mankind will be in harmony with all God's will and ways. They will be in tune with Him. His Kingdom will be safe in their hands as He will prove by investing His Son with divine power for a millennium. It is a marvelous mystery, the drama of all dramas, and it will all be played upon the earth—stage. The last act will shortly be put on. The great Conquering Man, the Hero of all heroes, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lover of mankind, who stooped to conquer will enter the scene. The curtain will fall on all the preceding things. They will be eclipsed by the glory and grandeur of the last act. Isaiah's proclamation will be heralded far and wide. The bells will ring out this challenge to the world—"Behold The Wonderful, The Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace is on His throne. The government is upon His Shoulder. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end—upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isa. 9:6,7

OVER THE SUN

Sharon Townsend

We heard some wonderful teachings recently on Ecclesiastes, King Solomon's autobiography. One of many things emphasized was that Solomon chose four paths "UNDER THE SUN," none of which, ended well. They did not bring him the satisfaction or fulfillment he sought. These four chosen paths were labour, wisdom, pleasures, and works (possessions). Labor ended in "no remembrance," (Ch.1:1) while knowledge perished in grief. Ch. 1:18 Pleasures were found to be fleeting, (Ch 2:1) and works or possessions ended without profit. Ch 2:11 Truly these paths under the sun can be summed up as "vanity of vanities"

The good news is that we are in Christ Jesus, and therefore an "OVER THE SUN" people? It is always good to agree with what God says in spite of how we feel or look. Ephesians declares that, because of our new birth, we are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. If God, our Father, says it, then lets agree with Him and take our place there, for such faith is the path that brings glory to God.

26

When we agree we are a heavenly people, an "over the sun" people, we can look at these four paths from a heavenly perspective, and thus be profited by them.

LABOUR – Our idea of labor is "work". God's idea of labor is "rest". If God rested in the finished work of the cross, it is meant for us to rest in that same work even when it comes to our spiritual growth. God's grace, given to us freely in Christ Jesus, did not end the day we were saved. Hebrews 4:9-11 proclaims that "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his (God's) rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Philippians 1:6 likewise publishes this same message: "Being confident of this very thing, (it's a fact) that he (God) which hath begun a good work in you will perform (finish) it until (in view of) the day of Jesus Christ. What a weight is lifted off of us when we can rest in the fact that God who started this work will finish it. When we are depending on our own labor, that is, our works for our growth, we have really fallen from grace (Gal 5:4). Our part is to rest in the Hands of The One who is capable of taking a bloody,

broken rib and making it a help meet or fitting to rule with Jesus.

A beautiful example of this can be seen in the life of Mary of Bethany, as she sat at Jesus' feet. Luke 10: 39 Can you imagine the rest she must have felt as she sat there, seeing Him, hearing Him? Everything revolved around Him. She was focused on Him, and a wonderful work was being done in her. Her love was abounding yet more. Her knowledge of Jesus was growing. And she could discern as to the right time to anoint his body which was BEFORE his death. John 12:1) Phil. 1:9 was being worked in her simply because she was resting in Christ Jesus. And what's so funny (?) is that when the time was right for her to do a "good work," that others could see, no one appreciated it but Jesus! The profit, which came from her labor, can be summed up in the words of Jesus: "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Matt. 26:13. Even to this very day we can smell this sweet odor. It certainly did not end in "no remembrance" like the labor under the sun does.

WISDOM (knowledge) – We learned at camp that there was nothing wrong with the wisdom God gave to Solomon. He had wisdom to understand all things but chose to use this wisdom to understand all things under the sun. What a wasted opportunity he had! He could have gotten to know The Wisdom, (Jesus) over the sun. How sad! No wonder he felt that "in much wisdom is much grief."

Both Moses and Paul illustrate the wisdom of which we speak. They were both educated and knowledgeable men. Moses had knowledge, power, position and wealth. His education was in the wisdom of Egypt, or this world. Acts 7:22 asserts that ".....Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." The Apostle Paul had been born a Roman citizen. He no doubt had been wealthy, and would have had an education in both the Roman and Greek cultures. Not only was he instructed in things pertaining to this world but he had a religious upbringing as well, for he was "...brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God..." Acts 22:3 All that these men had, under the sun, was nothing in comparison to knowing what they had in Jesus, over the sun. The scriptural record is clear for both.

MOSES --- Hebrews 11:24-28 "By faith Moses,

when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible....”

THE APOSTLE PAUL – Philippians 3:7-8 “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

Do you think either one of these men left this world quoting Ecclesiastes 1:18? “For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” Absolutely not! In fact Paul's last words in II Timothy 4:6-8 read in part “..... and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give at that day...” There was absolutely no regret in choosing The Wisdom (Jesus) “over the sun”. Oh what joy, what victory are seen in his last words!

28

PLEASURES – Solomon found that pleasures under the sun were fleeting. Our Jesus is at our Fathers right hand and we find that all the pleasures we will ever need can be found in Him. Psa. 16:11 assures us that “...at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Notice they are “for evermore” There is nothing fleeting about them.

WORKS (POSSESSIONS) – Solomon had many great possessions. They included houses, vineyards, gardens, orchards, pools, servants, cattle, gold, silver etc. He sums it up in Eccl. 2:10 “And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them.” In other words, whatever he wanted from this world, from “under the sun” he TOOK. Whatever he took under the sun, however, did not give him the satisfaction or fulfillment he was seeking. It was without profit.

This point, in regard to possessions, is beautifully illustrated in John 1:11. “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT. This verse records the fact that Jesus came to his own nation and His Own nation did not receive Him. However, we as Christians may be guilty, at times,

of the same thing. The word "OWN" means "uniquely his own," while the word "RECEIVE" signifies to "take from. Thus we can read this verse as follows: "He came to those who were uniquely His, and those who were uniquely His did not take from Him". The new birth, has made us "uniquely His." In fact, the first time we "took" from Jesus was when we saw Him as "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29 He took our sin, we took His Life. But our taking, from the Lord, must not end with the experience of initial salvation. It is meant for us, throughout our lives, to take what He has to offer—all of Himself. John 1:1 sets forth Jesus as The Word. Maybe we need Him in this manner. He is after all Alpha and Omega and all the letters in between. The centurion of Luke 7 told Jesus "say in a word and my servant shall be healed. He saw The Living Word standing before him and claimed Him immediately, knowing assuredly, that the Word He spoke would surely come to pass. He was in no wise disappointed! Perhaps we need Him as Light, in our times of darkness. John 1:7-9 Because we are uniquely His Own, He does not come to show up the dark and dreary portions of our lives to bring us into condemnation, but rather to replace such darkness, and show us that we are light in Him. So we take Light from Him, to overcome our darkness. Is He not wonderful!

The record of man begins in the Garden of Eden showing Jesus as the Tree of Life. Revelation likewise closes displaying Him as that Same Tree. Every time we take from Him, it is as if we are taking a piece of fruit from off that Tree. But there comes a time, as we continually take from Him, that it is not so much the fruit we want, as it is the Tree. He becomes more important to us than anything else. This is probably how Ruth felt with Boaz. Every time she gleaned in his field, she took from Boaz, but there came a time when she quit taking FROM Boaz and just plain took Boaz himself. It is true! There really is no profit under the sun in possessions. But oh the profit there is for us in taking Jesus and all He has for us!

We will close with the progression of these 4 paths "over the sun". Our **labour** begins with rest at the feet of Jesus. Next, our **knowledge** of Him abounds (because He IS wisdom) which then brings **pleasures** to such a degree that the only **possession** we want is Him.

Is it not wonderful to be a heavenly, "**over the sun,**" people!

ISAIAH

Chapter 3

Gene Hawkins

“For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,” V. 1

This third chapter of Isaiah corresponds with Leviticus, the third book of the Bible. Leviticus is often called the book of sanctification, but it too is a book of judgment even as is evident in our present text. Israel was to be a separated people, but Leviticus 26 also declares that great judgments would follow if they did not adhere to Gods’ requirements. This chapter begins with a warning against idolatry. “You shall make no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God.” This is followed by the command to “....keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary:...” Verse three then follows with the promise of blessing “If you walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.” This same pattern prevails down to verse 14 where there is a decided change. “But if ye will not hearken unto me,and if ye shall despise my statutes,so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins..... I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: and your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.” The rest of this chapter lists a host of terrible calamities and judgments that will befall this people if they fail to bow down before the Authority of God.

Thus the message here in Isaiah is predominately one of judgment and continues with a list of things of which this

people shall be deprived. “The mighty man, and the man of war,...” declare that their defenses shall be stripped away, and even at this present day, such defenses are not always available to them. Next follows “the judge, and prophet,” along with “the prudent, and the ancient.” The judge could perhaps be a wise one who would lead them in the right direction or make a right decision, but the prophet and “honorable man,” of verse 4 seem to be the only clear spiritual advantages listed here. Their removal follows a principle we see throughout scripture; that when men refuse to listen to The Word of God, He simply quits speaking to them. The “prudent” is actually one who is associated with “a soothsayer, or diviner” meaning that he uses witchcraft, while the “ancient” is reproved in V. 14 and indicates that these elders, who should have known better, simply did not live up to being the “senator” that they should have been.

31 Military leaders such as “The captain of fifty”, and the aforementioned “honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator” are also removed. Israel has had some tremendous “orators” or politicians in their history, such as Abba Eban, who argued so eloquently in behalf of Israel, before the U.N., after the six day war. He died in 2002 and there will come a day when all those silver tongues will be totally silenced leaving Judah and Jerusalem with no advantage whatsoever.

The first three verses of this chapter record the many things that God will take away, but verse 4 declares; “I will **give** children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.” This is a reference to those who have absolutely no idea how to govern. Solomon recorded the same dilemma in Eccl. 10:7. “I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.” It means that unqualified people have been placed upon horses in places of power while true leaders are actually following on foot. The result of such a scenario is manifest as “.....the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour:...” Without true leadership there is chaos, with every man seeking his own advantage. Rebellious attitudes are described next when “the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.” This is the typical attitude of our day wherein we see a total lack of respect for the aged, as one whose advice and experience should be sought out rather than disdained. The “base,” or

“despised,” is just as insulting to the one who should be honored.

The results of forsaking the ways of The Lord continue, with some seeking to implement the leadership of those who are “apparently” prosperous. “When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:” V. 6. In other words, “we would have you assume responsibility for correcting this ruin that has come upon us. Because you have demonstrated such success in your own life, you must now lead us in the same path.” However, such a brother wants no part of that position. “In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.” V. 8 While this one will not accept the role of leadership conferred upon him, he most assuredly does indentify the problem. This is the same pattern outlined in Leviticus. Because they refused to walk in the ways of The Lord, all these difficulties have come upon them. The wise instructor now tells them that their “tongues,” have spoken against the Lord and their “doings” or their actions have followed exactly the same path. This messenger further instructs: “The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.” V. 9 Even as was promised in Leviticus, they are getting their just desserts. Their own actions have prompted the miseries which have descended upon them, but there is also a reprieve. “Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.” V. 10 “Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen,” as stated above, but there is hope for Israel. Verse 8 declares that they have provoked the “eyes of his glory,” but “the last chapter” in regard to Israel’s history, tells us that they will indeed come into promised glory. The righteous here are a reference to Israel as a new creation in Christ Jesus, and they will experience the glorious of restoration of Jerusalem in the millennium, and it shall indeed “be well with them,” even for eternity.

That same promise is in no wise given to those who reject the ways of The Lord. “Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given

him.” V. 11 This will apply to any nation who continues in rebellion against The Lord and His people. They will also receive the just rewards of their own hands or works.

“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.” V. 12-14 These words are, once again very plainly directed toward Israel. Everything is out of order for them as children oppress and women rule. Their leaders cause them to err, and destroy and thus God Himself takes the “ancients,” or the senators and the princes to task. They are here accused of consuming the vineyard to gratify their own appetites and enrich their own houses with the spoil of the poor. They are getting rich off of the very people they were supposed to protect. God further demands of them, “What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” V. 15 These are “My people” says The Lord and therefore, these leaders will give an account to Him.

“Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth (to bend away - including moral deflection) necks and wanton (flirtatious, amorous manner) eyes, walking and mincing (sexual, romantic, overtures) as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.” V. 16-17 The final verses of this chapter are addressed to “the daughters of Zion,” as God assaults the religious idolatry of Israel, even as is evidenced in Lev. 26. This describes Israel who pursued other lovers, rather than God, and He will one day judge them severely for such transgressions. “In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.” V. 18-23 All these

are simply “ornaments” of false worship and religious pretense, whereby the people go through great religious ritual, but it has absolutely no scriptural or spiritual import in worship of the True God. The resulting judgment of such ungodly observance is severe. “And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink;...” This false worship using all these “instruments” or ornaments rather than simply worshipping God out of a genuine heart of love, is an absolute stench in the nostrils of God. Furthermore, “....instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher (mantle for holidays) a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.” V. 24 All these things which brought them such idolatrous fleshly pleasure, will now be turned into the pain, suffering and grief, of the tribulation. This chapter closes with the announcement that “Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her (Jerusalem’s) gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.” V. 25-26 All these calamities will force this people into submission and repentance, whereby they accept Christ as their Messiah, that they might receive the ultimate promise of V. 10. “Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.”

34

XMAS

Means to hosts of people -

X-haustion -
X-cuses -
X-changes -
X-travagances -
X-asperation -
X-hibitions -
X-citement.

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“...Lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Matthew 2:9