



“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” II Tim. 3:1

“Perilous times shall come..” wrote Paul, and then in the next four verses, he proceeded to list no less than 20 specific items defining them. The word “perilous” signifies “reducing the strength; difficult, dangerous, furious, fierce.” It comes from a word meaning to lower or create a void. All of these terms describe the multiple characteristics of our world today.

The aforementioned list is a portrait of prevailing moral decay, along with the collapse of families and natural relationships, as men pursue their out of control desires and purposes, regardless of the effect it might have on others. There are references to the political world, the religious world, and the general rebellion of men against God. Jesus also gave numerous signs of these same last days in Matthew 24, describing deception, wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. He summed it up likening end time days to those of Noah. These latter signs, which are also repeated in Luke, tell us of happenings that are quite beyond the control of men.

The constraining point we would make here, is that all of these signs are literally converging, both in intensity and frequency, in this present day. Daily news reports are filled with accounts of both domestic and political violence. The religious falling away is rampant as the Church has seemingly forgotten even the basic fundamentals of the gospel and engages more in “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:...” II Tim. 3:5 False religions, which absolutely deny the blood of Jesus, are growing at a rapid pace and contribute to the religious confusion and deception prophesied by scripture.

Though man-made global warming has, for the most part, been debunked as a myth, weather patterns, which were supposedly caused by it, have continued to become more erratic and intense. Flooding in some parts of the country, along with drought in other areas is producing both loss of life and food shortages. Record snow fall in parts of Europe is in sharp contrast

to a very meager supply of the white stuff in this country which has forced some ski resorts to try and replace it with “artificial snow,” or abandon their operations altogether. We would also note that these conditions continue to abound despite the millions, and even billions of dollars spent around the world, because of government regulations, trying to control “global warming.” We wonder when men will get the message that scripture emphatically predicted all of these things, and they are quite beyond the control of men. It is God Who determines their arrival.

Israel too, is a most intricate part of these perilous times, and can surely identify with all the terms, mentioned previously, which define the word. Their story is found in God’s promise to them **after** they have been restored and will enjoy the utopian peace of the millennium. “But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.” Isa 51:23 This affirmation follows their experience of verse 22. “Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:” These are actually words of deliverance from the horrendous days of tribulation which the Jews must endure at the hands of the nations. Though God will one day remove this “cup of trembling,” from them, it is already being put to their lips.

The central threat to both Israel and the world, at this present time, is Iran and her nuclear threat. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vehemently declares that the reactors, being constructed in his country, are only for domestic nuclear power, but no nation, including those who support her, believes that assertion. Britain’s Foreign Secretary, William Hague, has warned “that a nuclear-armed Iran would result in another Cold War in the Middle East.” According to the “U.K. Independent News,” Mr. Hague went on to say that “sanctions and negotiations needed to be given a “real chance” to convince Tehran not to pursue a military nuclear programme. He further added: “I don’t think a wise thing at this moment is for Israel to launch a military attack on Iran.” He further lamented, “If they obtain nuclear weapons capability, then I think other nations across the Middle East will want to develop nuclear weapons.”

Both of these possibilities seem to be the great concern

among all the nations. The Associated Press has reported that “The U.S. says tough international sanctions against Iran must be given more time to work. Israel, while welcoming the sanctions, has warned that time is running out and all options, including military action, must be considered. Israeli officials have said Iran could be capable of building a bomb within a year.” Top level U.S. officials have almost created a revolving door in Israel over the past few weeks, in preparation for a White House meeting in March between P.M. Netanyahu and Pres. Obama, in an effort to “change Israel’s mind about pursuing such volatile action. This could be a rather formidable task, given the less than exemplary treatment which Mr. Netanyahu and his entourage received from the White House in the recent past, but “The Israeli Prime Minister met Tom Donilon, Washington’s National Security Adviser, after General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, declared that it was ‘not prudent at this point’ for Israel to launch an attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities, which would not ‘achieve their long-term objectives.’”

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Middle East expert Walid Phares also told Newsmax, when “Asked whether Israel will disregard urging from the United States not to launch a pre-emptive attack on Iran, ‘Certainly the Israelis have their own clock that is different from the American clock, the European one, or the Arab one. It has to do with the width of Israel. It has to do with Israel unaccepting the idea that they could absorb one strike.’”

All these nations are fighting and positioning themselves to their own advantage. Israel apparently does not think sanctions will work but the report from the “U.K. Independent,” seems to indicate that Tehran is feeling some kind of pressure. “The US-led calls on Israel to stay its hand came on a day when Tehran said it was halting oil exports to Britain and France in an apparently pre-emptive retaliation against the EU’s decision to boycott Iranian oil from July. The terse announcement followed earlier contradictory signs over whether the regime would halt sales to up to six countries in the EU, which accounts for 18 per cent of Iranian oil exports. The Mehr news agency later said crude exports to Britain and France had been halted and the National Iranian Oil Company had sent a written ultimatum to some European refineries, demanding that they sign long-term agreements of up to five years or be cut off altogether. No details were given of which countries had been threatened, but Spain, Italy and Greece

are among its biggest European customers.” The declaration “hurt not the oil,” (Rev. 6:6) seems to be coming clearly into focus, and even though this verse will not be completely fulfilled until after Jesus takes His throne, the importance of it in our day is surely manifest. The question is what will these nations do, to ensure their own well-being?

Insofar as Israel is concerned, we might wonder when they will begin to “bow down,” in accordance with Isa. 51:23. “The Independent,” goes on to explain how “General Dempsey said Israel recognized US ‘concerns’ about unilateral military action against Iran, but ‘I wouldn't suggest, sitting here today, that we've persuaded them that our view is the correct view.’” We can be sure that the upcoming White House talks will be extremely intense, and whether or not Israel will see enough concessions on the part of Iran or can be convinced that the U.S. will come to her aid in time of crisis, remains to be seen.

The situation in Syria is already drawing a sharp division in the way the nations respond to certain crises. The Post Gazette. com reports that “China, Russia and Iran all made declarations of support for the Syrian government Tuesday, reaffirming their alliances in the face of broad, intense international lobbying for unity against President Bashar Assad as his nearly yearlong crackdown on domestic opponents has sharpened against restive areas.” Conversely, “Newsmax” declared that, “The Obama administration opened the door slightly Tuesday to international military assistance for Syria's rebels, with officials saying new tactics may have to be explored if President Bashar Assad continues to defy pressure to halt a brutal crackdown on dissenters.” It is rather interesting that Iran, which has declared support for the Syrian President, has drawn Israel into the mix, according to an account published by “post-gazette. com. “Iranian officials, at a regular foreign ministry news conference in Tehran, did not explicitly discuss the conference, (Friends of Syria calling for Assad’s removal) but denounced Western meddling in the affairs of its longstanding ally as benefiting Israel at the expense of those who resist its power.” It is no secret that Iran needs Pres. Assad to remain in power for Syria virtually provides a super highway for Iran’s supplies and weapons to various terrorist groups determined to destroy Israel.

We do know that eventually Israel will “bow down” to the demands of these nations who are driven by their own political

aspirations, even as Isaiah indicated: "...Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." The language here records it as past tense, and given the history of this nation in bowing to compromise, we are quite sure that many, many, compromises will result in Israel becoming a "door mat," for these nations, as they "laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." The ultimate compromise or "bowing down" will be to the anti-christ, as we read in Dan. 9:27. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Isaiah calls this a covenant with death. "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:" Isa. 28:15

7 Such lies, deception, and falsehood are all part of the perilous times for Israel at this present hour. Isaiah asserts that one day they will realize their mistake, and we can rejoice with them, that God will intervene, when they discover that all other measures have failed. We have already seen from these texts in Isaiah 51, that these same nations who have afflicted them will, themselves, be given the "the cup of trembling," that God will remove from Israel. We read also that God will disannul the covenant that they so foolishly made. "And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand;..."

But what of the nations who are on "opposite sides of the fence," concerning this chosen people. We are plainly told that Jesus will divide the sheep nations from the goat nations. "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matt. 25:32,33 The remainder of this chapter tells us that Jesus' determination, regarding these nations, depends on their treatment of Israel. Those who have befriended them will be preserved as nations throughout the millennium. Those who oppose them are doomed to destruction.

Those nations are taking their places today, and though

there will be many more involved than just the ten that Daniel saw, wherein one rose up and removed three, (Dan. 7:8) it is quite apparent that the seven who are left must of necessity be goat nations, for every one of them will go down in oblivion. The question today is; who are they? We have thought for some time that the G7 nations, which have expanded to G8 with the addition of Russia, might well make up this ten nation coalition when two more are added. China would be a likely candidate given the fact that she is fast becoming the greatest world economic power. Some are asking politicians in this country; “what do you intend to do about the China problem?” It is a legitimate question because China does own at least 90% of our debt and making global economic strides daily. We can surely see how that America along with two other sheep nations could be very quickly eliminated economically, for both this nation and a number of European nations are in dire financial straits.

Perilous times shall come, and there will be no reversal of them, despite the efforts and assertions of political or religious leaders, that they “can turn this thing around.” However, this is no time to despair. God is truly calling out a people that genuinely believe, from the depths of their hearts that “this world is not my home.” I am only a pilgrim passing through. “For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:” Phil. 3:20 The perilous times will wax worse and worse but we need not be disheartened, nor can we be a part of them. We must, however, honestly assess our own lives in accordance with whether or not we truly believe that we are no longer a part of this world. Paul said it thus in Col. 3. “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. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore (because of the foregoing verses) your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:” V. 1-5 If indeed we are looking steadfastly for Jesus, our actions, not just our words, should preach that message, first to The Lord, and then to those around us. And through it all, let us never forget to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:...” Psa. 122:6

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS NEAR

Paul N. Smith

*"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord... Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for **THE DAY OF THE LORD IS NEAR IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION**. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. **SO SHALL YE KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD DWELLING IN ZION, MY HOLY MOUNTAIN ...** " -- Joel 3:9-17.*

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All signs point toward the fulfillment of these words of prophecy by Joel. We are almost submerged with various signs that tell us the Day of the Lord is at hand. There is no need for us to be ignorant of this fact, and no one can justifiably say, "I didn't know." It is not necessarily so that we who do know of these signs are responsible to collar every one we meet and tell them. In many cases, it would be like "casting our pearls "before swine," as Jesus said. The Bible is available to most people throughout the world. Even in those countries where the Bible is prohibited, the Scriptures are smuggled in, and, through much persecution, believers read them. My point is, that after almost 2,000 years of witness, the Bible still declares these truths to those who will read.

THE DAY OF THE LORD REFERS TO THE DAY WHEN CHRIST IS CROWNED KING AND TAKES HIS THRONE IN HEAVEN. This is not God's throne, for only Deity can sit and rule from that seat. This will be the throne where Jesus, glorified Son of Man, will execute judgment upon the nations. His people will also sit and reign with Him, in various stages of authority and power. This is the throne in heaven from which the various judgments will be sent forth. Revelation 4 to 19 describe this time of trouble, called "The Tribulation."

The "Day of the Lord" will be in contrast with "man's day." Since 606 B.C., when rulership was handed over to

the Gentiles, man has been ruling the affairs of the earth. The God of Heaven has stayed in the background, observing the actions of men. He has not relinquished all of His authority to the nations, but is still ruler overall. As Nebuchadnezzar, the first Gentile world ruler learned, God does rule in the affairs of men, and sets up kings and puts down kings, and in some cases, puts in authority even the "basest" of men (Daniel 2 & 4).

Let not men think that they will continue to rule forever! They are making plans far into the future, as though they are the masters of their own destiny. They are only deluding themselves. God will have the last laugh, for we read that He that "sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; He shall have them in derision." (Psa, 2)

This day of which the Scriptures speak is right at the door. When God revealed to Daniel about the four world empires which would be formed in history, from his time on to the end, he did not realize that Gentile times would be for such a long period. Daniel hoped that after the 70 year captivity of Babylon was over, the Jews would be freed from Gentile dominion. That was not the case. Although the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, they were still ruled over by governors appointed by the ruling world empire. This continued through the years, even to the Roman Empire which was in power when Christ was born and later crucified.

But God showed Daniel a world empire of the very end. It is seen first in Nebuchadnezzar's dream image as the feet and toes of the image, made of iron and clay, a confederacy of nations made up of strong imperialistic type of government mixed with the weaker democratic form of rulership. To Daniel was given a private showing, and more was revealed to him. The world empire of the end was as a beast rising up out of the sea. In Prophetic terms, that means the empire will be beastly in character, ungodly, and will be formed from the wicked nations. In Revelation 13, John tells about his vision of the same beast, which will have seven heads, or nations. Daniel first saw the beast with ten horns, but three are plucked up by another little horn. The seven horns left on Daniel's beast refer to the seven heads of John's beast.

The "little horn" will become powerful, have a mouth speaking great things and will eventually take over as world ruler. He is known as the anti-Christ (2 John 7). In other Scriptures he is called, "Prince, Abomination, Beast, Man of Sin." A man

will stand forth in the midst of international crisis and will influence the nations to form a one-world government and to sign a treaty involving Israel. When the one-world empire is formed, know for a surety that Christ has taken His throne in heaven.

This Gentile empire will be usurping authority that belongs to Christ. Satan will have put it in the hearts and minds of these rulers to take over the affairs of the world. The anti-Christ will be his man to influence the nations. Already we see the spirit of the anti-Christ spreading his propaganda throughout the world. The world has steadily grown closer together in the past 50 to 60 years. There are very few nations which could be called "isolationists." Militarily and economically, the nations are interdependent. This is expedient for these modern times. When inflation in the United States rises, the value of the dollar decreases, the value of gold jumps, and other nations become alarmed. What Japan does affects the economy in the U.S. and the rest of the world.

The Day of the Lord is near. He will call all nations to meet around Jerusalem "in the valley of decision." Jesus warned, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee" Luke 21:20 Joel informs us that the nations will be drawn to battle in the nation of Israel. Jeremiah, Zechariah, as well as other prophets also tell of this time.

This is the valley of Jehoshaphat. Some think that it is the valley of Megiddo. It is close to Jerusalem, near Mount Olivet. Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah judged." Megiddo means "rendezvous." Joel translates it, "valley of decision." These meanings are significant pertaining to the Day of the Lord. The last king of Babylon was Belshazzar. On the night of his overthrow and death, God sent a hand to write upon the wall of the palace where he and his lords were feasting and drinking. The essence of the writing was, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting."

The Lord is judging the nations today, keeping records of their activities, of their treatment of His chosen people Israel. His decision will be the same as at that earlier day, the nations and their leaders fall short of what God demands. His judgment will be true and impartial.

God will keep a rendezvous with the nations. They will meet at the valley of judgment, where God will punish them for their wickedness. It will be a time of decision, or incision,

where nations will be cut off, their power taken from them. The Righteous God will determine which nations will survive to be a part of Christ's millennial Kingdom. Jesus terms these different nations "sheep and goats." (Matthew 25).

This valley is called "Armageddon" in Revelation, or the valley of destruction. It is a symbolic name which carries the thought that God will confine the nations to that valley, where they will feel the wrath of God. The description in Revelation is terrifying--surpassing the bloodshed of Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and all other wars. Jesus said that there had never been such a time before, nor would be after. That "valley of slaughter" (Jeremiah 19:16) is described as a "winepress" with the blood running for a distance of some 200 miles and as high as the horses' bridles! (Revelation 16). There will also be a great earthquake and Jerusalem will be divided into three parts, "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." There will be great hail, the stones weighing from 50 to 100 pounds each. This is not my description, but God's vision given to John in Revelation.

WHAT "MANNER OF MEN" SHOULD WE BE IN VIEW OF THE NEARNESS OF CHRIST'S COMING? The Apostle Paul speaks of this day when writing to the Thessalonians and writes: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore LET US NOT SLEEP, as do others; but LET US WATCH AND BE SOBER." I Thessalonians 5:4-6

As Christians, we are admonished to stay spiritually alert in these days of turmoil and declension. We cannot afford to sleep or be drunken with religious and worldly "wine," lest the Day of the Lord come and we will not be aware of it. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, and of course, he will not know when that day arrives; but as believers, born with life from above, it is inexcusable for us to be taken unawares. There is plenty of power to keep our eyelids from drooping and our hearts excited about the coming of the Lord. We will not need the intoxicants of religious activities to keep us enthusiastic. The joy that the Holy Spirit gives, will far outlast the religious entertainment.

SOME OF GOD'S ENDTIME LEADERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT TODAY'S CHRISTIAN MUSIC. I'm glad there are others who decry the use of worldly music in

Christian services. The familiar statement is: "We have to use 'Christian rock' to attract young people." We have written of this before, so will not dwell upon it. David Wilkerson wrote a recent article about attending a Christian music festival. He went with an open heart, full of love, and compassion for Christian musicians, and "especially for the 3,000 or so young people attending the festival." To his dismay, the music became something weird, ghostly, strange, "and the crowd went wild--they seemed to love it." He could not believe that the leaders of that youth ministry could be so blind, so undiscerning. Suddenly he found himself on the floor, weeping and sobbing, and groaning in the Spirit.

"I sat up and took another look at the stage. I was horrified by what I saw in the Spirit. I saw demonic images rising from that stage! I heard Satan laughing! Laughing at all the blind blind shepherds-the blind youth-the backslidden Church! It was an overt manifestation of Satan-worse than anything I've ever seen on the streets of New York" Brother Wilkerson ran through the crowd crying "Ichabod! Ichabod!" (the glory of the Lord has departed). He was ignored, he wrote, and, "most thought I was a crazy lunatic."

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This is but one example the blindness of Christians. They are already asleep and WILL NOT HEAR THE TRUMPET SOUND WHEN JESUS COMES! There are many other examples of apostasy, which is widespread. If you are true to the Scriptures and believe in holiness, you are looked upon as strange. There is no place for real Bible-believing, Spirit filled Christians in the world today. And that is as it should be. We are not of this world and we should not act like it. We are pilgrims and strangers. Our home and citizenship is in heaven.

A GROUP OF "SCHOLARS" HAS DECIDED THAT JESUS MADE NO CLAIM AS MESSIAH. The group of Biblical scholars met recently at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, as part of a five-year effort to agree on which sayings attributed to Jesus are historically accurate and which were added by the early Church. The group includes about 125 Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-Christian scholars who examine the Gospels and vote on specific passages.

Great! As if God needed a group of so-called scholars to examine His Word. These people miss the whole point of the Scriptures. We must receive them by faith, and then comes the divine revelation. As for Jesus declaring Himself to be the

Messiah, He had no need to. He is the Messiah and His works while on earth testified of that. Also before His birth, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet (Isaiah), saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US." Matthew 1:21-23 These people had better examine the Old Testament Scriptures too! Better still, they need a born-again experience.

AS CHRISTIANS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR JESUS TO APPEAR SOON, WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF ALL THE WILES OF SATAN. For this we need to put on the whole armor of God, of which Paul writes in Ephesians 6. **HUMANISM** is one of Satan's favorite ploys. He used it when tempting Eve to disobey God and also her husband. He whispered, "You can be as smart as God. You won't need Him telling you what is right and wrong. Go ahead, be your own person. Decide for yourself. You don't need your chauvinistic husband to tell you what to do. And as for God, He just doesn't want you to have any fun."

14

We would caution parents to examine what their children are being taught in the public schools. Become knowledgeable of your children's curriculum and confront the teacher and principal when you see something that is against Scripture. You probably won't stop the spreading of humanism, but you may save your child from its devilish influences.

We cannot stop the teaching of humanism. We cannot stop the spreading of evil, nor can we change the course which the nations are taking. It is not our responsibility! I repeat, it is not our responsibility! We are to live a Godly life in this world, witness whenever we can, and pray for lost souls. This tide **IS** here because the Scriptures declare that there would come a falling away. God's Word said that there would be a one-world government. For us to try to stem the "tide" would be for us to try to stand against the Scriptures. Of course, we are to be concerned, but no amount of prayers, are going to stop these things. No matter how much we scream, they will continue. Our only recourse is to pray and try to snatch lives out of the burning.

I have always felt and taught that we will do more good by

dwelling on the positives of the Word of God, than on the negative things of the world. Yes, we need to warn people, but our main message should be “what saith the Scriptures.” If we teach the Truth, and people learn God's Message, they will be well fortified against the devil's errors. When we are grounded in the Truth, we will be able to recognize the very first hint of error. If we walk in the Spirit, we will be able to sense a wrong spirit in an individual without that person saying a word. The armor of God is applied only as we learn the Word and make it our very own. When we are covered by this spiritual armor the “darts of the devil” will not penetrate to our souls. That is why some Christians never fall for every religious fad that comes along. They may seem stodgy and old fashioned, but they are generally reliable and steadfast.

Let's put aside everything that would darken our vision and look for Jesus to come! We don't need to be "entertained" in Church services. We need to be fed on the Word. We don't need our soulish nature to be stirred by loud and fast music. We need our spirits to be enlightened and refreshed with “spiritual songs,” whereby we can make melody in our hearts to the Lord. Eph. 5:18-20 We don't need more trained musicians and singers, we need more prayer warriors. Some of the most beautiful singing I have ever heard has come from a person with a broken and contrite spirit, with no training whatever. This is not to say that a person trained in music cannot be spiritual. I have seen some of them also. Let's get our spiritual priorities in line with God's Word.

15

Enough preaching! Let's get ready to leave this world. It is no place for Christians to be. This world is facing judgment, and no amount of preaching is going to change that fact. God has weighed the nations, and its inhabitants, in His righteous balances and found them wanting. They have rejected His Word and His Sacrifice for sins -- Christ. What else can He do? He has been longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but He can go on for just so long. He is just, and sin must be judged. If He were to let men go on longer as they are, no one would be spared death and destruction. He will be merciful to stop the terrible spread of evil. Christ must come!

Let us pray for one another! The Day of The Lord is near. Let us lift up our heads and rejoice. Perhaps we will celebrate Thanksgiving in heaven! Amen. Hallelujah!

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Who Killed Pentecost?

A few weeks ago, I was praying and was exceedingly burdened because of conditions in the ranks of Pentecost. In this state of mind, I retired still weeping and praying. During the night, I had a vivid dream which stirred me to the depths. I awoke saying, "Lord, revive us in the midst of the years."

My dream was that my sister and I called upon a brother, whom we heard was offended with us. He was not home; but, his wife began loudly to berate us, ordering us from her home. I softly spoke to my sister as we turned to go --- "He opened not His mouth. "Sadly we left by the back steps only to ascend old and leaning steps into a side door of another house. Upon opening the door, we heard weeping and moaning and great confusion. The room was dimly lighted (just like evening shadows). I whispered to my sister, "Oh, I forgot to tell you, Pentecost is dead and her body lays in state here today." We filed by the casket of somber black -- a very long, narrow one and even the handles were black. The "corpse" was dressed in the same somber hue and had on an old fashioned, ruffled, black bonnet. The face was scarcely discernable, so gray were its outlines. We wept copiously with the others who were moving about in grieved confusion. From this "hall of grief," one could look through a narrow corridor containing a stone altar where people in white were kneeling in prayer. I led my Sister thence and said, "Here are two spaces; let us kneel with these holiness people." A tall altar worker, a woman in spotless white, directed us where to kneel. We prayed and passed on into a hall on the other side. But, in marked contrast, it was light and the cheerful chirping of birds could be heard. It was empty save for a long table almost the length of the room, and peacefully quiet and scrupulously clean.

We departed by the front door out upon a beautifully paved street. Across the street, but a bit farther down, was a house of 3 rooms, a stucco, with shades all drawn down. Two rooms faced the street but were connected by the one room slightly setting back. In front of this was a pergola and a lawn. The grass was dead with many dead sycamore leaves scattered about. Sadly we gazed upon it. I kept repeating, "Summer is past and winter is ending and yet no one cares. Who will arouse the people?" A lady stood close by. (She was one whom I had

known and was not very spiritual.) She asked us in but we turned away saying, "To late, too late; but it is the message."

Dear hearts, we are truly looking upon such a sad condition today in our full-gospel ranks. Lethargy, or confusion has

it. Who will dare to go forth preaching, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light?" God will have a people -- a blood-washed, blood bought bride. Yet "God's Spirit will not strive with man always." If we fail, He is able to call out another people who will worship Him in "Spirit and in truth."

At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus commanded, "Take ye away the stone." There was something for them to do, who stood idly by. There is much that we can do now. One need not stand helplessly by. Martha said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." The condition of Pentecost must truly be a stench in His nostrils now. Someone has remarked there are 57 varieties of Pentecost (with apologies to Mr. Hienz Of pickle fame), and I will add that everyone is in a pickle. Pentecost is dead! Who will call her forth? When I was a child in school, we sang a little song "Who killed cock robin?" I say without any disrespect, -- "Who killed Pentecost?" Division, strife, confusion, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, seditions heresies, have done their sad work, instead of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law."

"Awake thou that sleepest and Christ will give thee light. "Let us lay aside all differences. Let us meet again on common ground with a deeper consecration. Let us stand in the place where we are unafraid to pray. Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus.

Myra G. Connell

- * Happiness is the perfume you can't give to others without spilling on yourself.
- * Satan is never too busy to rock the cradle of a sleeping Christian.
- * Blessed is the man who knows when to laugh.
- * The Bible should do more than inform us, it should transform us!
- * The Lord sees not only how much we give but also how much we keep.

REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? I Cor. 4:7

These words are a part of Paul’s instruction on stewardship, the context of which seems to be knowledge. He uses himself and Apollos as examples of what a true steward should be. V.1-5 The question “what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” could apply to many things, but again the context of this entire portion points to knowledge. We would wonder from verse two if perhaps the Corinthians thought they knew more than the apostle who taught them. “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment:...” Verse 5 speaks of men being judged according to the “counsels of the heart,” while v. 6 declares “that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.” This could well be interpreted as a warning to “competing preachers,” as Paul further declares in chapter 8 “..we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up....”

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The opening text assails these Corinthians for glorying as though they were responsible for what they had received rather than realizing that God alone is responsible for such gifts. This is the first thing a real steward must realize. The secret things belong to God and He has graciously chosen to reveal them to us.

Secondly the faithful steward must realize the value of such gifts. Paul designates them as “mysteries,” in verse 1, indeed that which is “hidden or secret,” and thus, according to Proverbs 2:4,5, valuable. “If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.” God is so very jealous of these mysteries. He was angry with Solomon “because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, **which had appeared unto him twice.**” Perhaps such revelations meant nothing to

Solomon, but God valued them highly and the faithful steward of today must also esteem them as the greatest of treasures, and safeguard them accordingly.

The third burden, for such a steward, is to faithfully dispense these mysteries to others. Jesus said “freely ye have received, freely give,” (Matt. 10:8) and “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:....” Luke 12:48 This latter passage was recently invoked at a White House Prayer Breakfast, in an effort to use Jesus’ Own words as leverage in justifying the excessive taxation of the rich. One major problem is that God, not man, must exact this requirement. V. 46-48 In addition, it is in answer to Peter’s question, “...Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?” (V. 41), meaning “is this for everyone or just us preachers?” Ministers of the gospel are apparently meant, for Jesus immediate answer is, “Who then is a faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?” A previous admonition, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;” (V. 35) also indicates that Jesus is speaking directly to faithful servants charged with the responsibility of dispensing truth, and “...unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:....”

Finally, reward for service is based on faithfulness, rather than results of ministry. The parable of the ten talents, (Matt. 25:14-30) reveals that though one servant gained five talents in addition to the five he was given and another gained three of the three given to him, both received exactly the same commendation and reward. “His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” V. 21,23 Today, ours is simply to be faithful to the revelations of truth that God has given and leave the results to Him. “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” I Cor. 3:6

Announcement:

“Ranks In The Resurrection” has been reprinted once again and is now ready for distribution. See the inside front cover about contacting us.

What Ailes Pentecost?

John F. Ney

"While I was setting type on the article, "Who Killed Pentecost," (Page 16) Pentecost was mightily alive in me. Thank God, the Holy Spirit is a Person, who never died and never will die, and Christ died but once and is alive for evermore. But of course a multitude of questions have been asked, and are in the hearts and minds of people, as to what is the matter, and what is the cause of the sleepy and lifeless condition among many Christian people. We need not go outside of the Word of God for the answer. Let us consider several scriptural causes.

1. **Christ is not given the right and preeminent place.** Peter declared on the day of Pentecost, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both **Lord and Christ**, (Anointed). Jesus Christ is Lord and the anointed Head of the Church which is His body. No one can practically say that "**Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**" The Holy Spirit in believers will not bear witness to any other lord, or head, but the Lord Jesus Christ. God made Jesus both Lord and Anointed when He raised Him from the dead; and the Holy Spirit crowns Him Lord in our hearts when we give Him His rightful place. In Acts 4:33, we read, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." The Holy Spirit is not asleep in the believer, but wide awake to glorify Christ. He works automatically, if I may so say. When Peter preached Christ to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word. "

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We have a wonderful illustration of this in the Old Testament in David and the ark. II Sam. 6 David went with his people to the house of Abinadab to get the ark. (The ark is a type of Christ.) But all was not in Divine Order. There was a new cart drawn by oxen, and the ark was on the cart. The sons of Abinadab drove the oxen. Nevertheless, there was some joy, because of the ark. David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner, of instruments. But when the oxen shook the ark on the cart, Uzzah tried to steady the ark, and God smote him for his error. (Think of it, a man trying to steady the Lord Jesus.) Then David was displeased. And the ark was carried

into the house of Obededom. When David heard that the Lord blessed Obededom and all his household, he brought the ark into the city of David with gladness. Let us read verses 13 to 16.

“And it was so, that when they (no longer oxen and cart) that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod, So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.” Mighty power was manifested there; was it not? And it was before the Lord that David danced with all his might. Why David could not help himself! The Holy Spirit was pleased because the ark was carried, not on a cart, but by the priests in Divine Order. Oh, how much unscriptural exhorting and praying and agonizing for power, or of another Pentecost we hear. Thank God! The Holy Spirit comes into the believer to abide. There is not another Gospel; neither is there another Pentecost. The Rock Christ Jesus was smitten once, which is sufficient, and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven once. The Holy Spirit will never witness to a second smiting of the Rock; but will reprove such unbelief.

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2. The members of the body of Christ interfere with one another in their God-appointed place. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ: for in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews, or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."- I Cor. 12:13 The very same Holy Spirit who anointed the Lord Jesus, anointed His body, though it be many members. The Holy Spirit in each member of the body does not work independent of, or contrary to the anointed Christ in glory. The Holy Spirit does not appoint one member to rule over another member arbitrarily; for all the members have need of one another.

“Now there are diversities of gifts: but the same Spirit. And there are differences or administrations; but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” And then we have the mention of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. “But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally

as He will.” Is there any room here for anyone to get in a scheme, a plan, or even a thought edgewise? No, beloved, the Holy Spirit does not move in carnal grooves, nor raise up dictators over one another. God has set different officers in the Church and the Holy Spirit makes them overseers over a flock, but not by any carnal wisdom and maneuvering. By the constant wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, they seek to make all the sheep hear the voice of God for themselves; not to draw the sheep away from Christ after themselves, but to Christ. The Holy Spirit leads the sheep to the Great Shepherd and the sheep follow. And those whom the Holy Spirit appoints over a flock are sheep who have learned to know the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him. The Holy Spirit is for the new creation, not for the old creation who loves to rule independent of Christ and others instead of with others. First of all, let each of us leaders be an example to the flock.

We have a good example of this in the birth and life of Samson. The children of Israel had done evil again in the sight of the Lord and they were in the hands of the Philistines forty years. Manoah's wife was barren – “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren and barest not. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: for lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” Judg. 13-3-5 Manoah was not present when the angel appeared unto the woman, and she was alarmed and stirred and told her husband, “A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible. No doubt Manoah, with his wife, felt highly favored of God that they should have a son who would begin to deliver Israel. But they also felt serious about the responsibility of rearing the child, perhaps about his education and college training. Then Manoah entreated the Lord and said, “O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.” - V. 8.

Note the words of the angel in verse 13,14 – “And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware. She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine, or strong drink, nor eat

any unclean thing: all that I commanded her, let her observe.”

Oh my, no doubt this was beyond their understanding. Not one word of how they should train the child who should become the deliverer of Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. When the angel spoke to the woman he gave her one exhortation concerning the child, and that was hands off, keep out of his hair. “No razor shall come on his head.” But the exhortation was to the mother of the child how she should live, with a repeated beware. It seems like God's people are always forgetting, even Pentecostal people, that we are a new creation, born of God, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” and “that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” We should not try to train the flesh for spiritual things. That is what the Philistines are trying to do. As the new birth is of God and supernatural, so also is the abundant life of Christ. If we want others to become supernatural, let us live the supernatural life before them, and not trim up the natural life and try to pass it off for supernatural. If we have not proved the supernatural life sufficiently, how can others believe our words that it works.

Paul called to remembrance the unfeigned faith that was in Timothy, which first dwelt in his grandmother and in his mother also. Others are more convinced by our lives than our words. To exhort the flesh is apt to have the same effect that the farmer's exhortation had on his parrot. The farmer wanted the parrot to say, Polly wants a cracker, but Polly would not do it. So the farmer became angry at the parrot and took it by the head and cast it out of the cage. A little later Mr. Farmer found Polly in amongst his chicks pecking them in the head and tossing them around because they refused to repeat after him, Polly wants a cracker.

But of Samson we read, “And the child grew and the Lord blessed him. **And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times** in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol...**And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,**” etc. etc. Thank God, some people are still moved by the Holy Spirit, regardless of all the activities of the flesh.

3. The Holy Spirit has been resisted, grieved and quenched. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached by the mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit to a great audience and they were pricked in their hearts and said, “What shall we do?” The result was a great revival; several thousand souls were added

to the Lord. A few years later, Stephen full of the same Holy Spirit, power, faith, and wisdom, preached the longest sermon recorded in the Word of God; but we do not read of any being added unto the Lord. Stephen's audience did not say, "What shall we do?" But the Holy Spirit made Stephen say these scathing words, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." The result was a multitude of stones and Stephen's death. The cause was not in Stephen, nor with the Holy Spirit; but the people's hearts were hardened, against the Lord Jesus Christ. That is one reason why we do not see as great a revival spirit today as there was 20, or 25 years ago. People are Gospel hardened.

But God is moving on anyway. The Holy Spirit has come to lead and guide us into all the Truth. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of Truth. As the Holy Spirit in a revival meeting bears witness with great power to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, so after the sinner has believed and is filled with the Holy Spirit, that same Spirit also begins to bear witness of the Christ within. In Ephesians the fourth chapter, the apostle Paul gives this exhortation, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." But with this exhortation he gives other exhortations, which if not heeded, will grieve the Holy Spirit. He exhorts to put off the corrupt old man, his conversation, his deeds -- steal not, lie not and to put on the new man "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth (Christ) in one another. How can the Holy Spirit be manifested in an assembly when the old man is not put off? Where there is envy, malice, lying, etc.

In I Thessalonians 5, we have the exhortation, "Quench not the Spirit." Let us read a few verses before and after this verse. "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Despise not prophesyings....Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." If we rejoice evermore within, the Holy Spirit will move us to rejoice and shout out loud at times. If we pray without ceasing within, the Holy Spirit will move us to pray out loud at times; and if we have the truth within, the Holy Spirit will move us to testify at times. Not heeding the promptings of the Spirit is quenching

the Spirit. Timid saints are more apt to quench the Spirit than those who are forward; but those who are bold in themselves are more liable to grieve the Spirit. Thank God! We need not grieve nor quench the Holy Spirit. David prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit." To know that salvation is of the Lord and be filled with the Spirit and neither grieve nor quench Him, is a joyful, free and happy life. Happy is the individual, or assembly who are in such a state. They are not praying for another Pentecost, or back to Pentecost; but they are joyfully and victoriously looking forward to the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

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***Since The Spirit Came***

25 Since the Holy Spirit came, He has set my heart aflame  
With His love, with His love:  
He is with me day and night And my lamp is burning bright,  
From above, from above.

Since the Holy Spirit fell, In me rings a vict'ry bell,  
Every hour, every hour;  
Tolling in melodious sound, To the sleepy all around,  
Words of power, words of power.

Since the Spirit dwells in me, I can shout o'er land and sea,  
"Come and dine, come and dine.  
See the table daily spread Milk and meat and barley bread,  
Oil and wine, oil and wine"

Since the Spirit fills my soul, I am pressing to the goal  
In the skies, In the skies;  
Boxing, battling all the way Loosing captives in the fray,  
For the Prize, for the Prize.

Refrain:

Come with me, Oh, come with me,  
Let the spirit fall on me, let Him give the victory  
Come with me, Oh, come with me  
Come enjoy a full and glorious victory.

A.S. Copley



## Showing Grace Rob Hawkins

*“Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.” –Acts 21:26*

In his study book on the Acts of the Apostles, Brother Copley wrote that the above verse, ‘stumbles many Bible students’ p. 149. He would know first-hand the perplexed expressions and much discussion that followed its reading. And it should. The Apostle Paul had seemingly contradicted 20 years and a dispensation of grace by purifying himself for a sin offering.

I think it could have been one of the hardest things Paul ever did, but where the law entered, ‘*grace did much more abound.*’ Rom. 5:20. Going through those ceremonies with a temple full of zealous Jews took some grace, but maybe that was the easy part. The real test, the moment that might have used most of that all-sufficient grace, was for the man who asked him.. Or rather, told. You see, it wasn’t Paul’s idea that day to be as ‘*them that are under the law*’ I Cor. 9:20. 26

Brother Copley’s students of old had questions and so should we. Where is the line between showing grace and making a stand? Argue a point or be silent? Jesus knew the value of a good question, and the merits on each side of that line. His first recorded one was to his parents, and like many to follow, sometimes they ‘*understood not the saying which he spoke to them.*’ –Luke 2:50. Thank God the Holy Spirit doesn’t have to let it stay that way.

Mine own stumbling in Acts 21 started not in verse 26, but in verse 4. Paul is on his way to Jerusalem and stops in Tyre to unload the ship. He meets some disciples there who tell him ‘***through the Spirit**, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.*’ Here is my question. John 16:13 tells us that the Holy Spirit ‘*...shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear....*’ So what had HE heard? What MIGHT have happened, is the question, and it’s a good one.

### **‘NOT KNOWING WHAT SHALL BEFALL ME THERE’**

If we back up to the homestretch of Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey in Acts 20, we find him suddenly in a hurry. After taking a walk from Troas to Assos while Luke, Timothy, Tychicus and several other ministers travel by ship, Paul announces that he is going to



do everything he can *'to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost'* Acts 20:16. Apparently, during that walk across the northwest tip of Asia, Paul had a revelation.

So they sail past the landing whereby he could visit his beloved Ephesus and instead land at Miletus. Now they hurry up and wait because someone has a 50 mile trip over land to Ephesus to bring back the elders. I think Luke knows it's a bit strange, and oddly time consuming, so he is standing by when the elders finally arrive. In Acts 20:18-38 Luke records that meeting in detail as if he had been hanging on every word. As we do the same, notice it hints of an end to the Apostle Paul's ministry.

It is an inspired address. The Ephesian elders hear bridal teaching, prophecy, minister conduct, and the fruit of divine Love, pressed for time, and compacted into a divine eulogy. He tells them in v 24 that they shall *'see my face no more'* but consider his choice of words in verse 23. This is where Paul utters the phrase *'finish my course'* for the first time, but Praise God, he'll get the chance to do it again.

You know Paul had to be aware of his final chapter. He has been on the road for over 25 years - and we know just how rough those years had been. II Cor. 11: 23-27 He had a blessed revelation of heaven -- II Cor. 12:2, so who could blame him for looking at Jerusalem on Pentecost as a fine place to put his finish line. If he had never written another word in his career, the recording of Acts 20:32 could still be his closing statement to the Church: *'And now brethren, I commend you to God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.'*

**An inheritance that separates believers.** That is the full purpose for us, the Church, and Ephesus is our model. After all Paul's labor, all the love and all the tears, he shows us that eventually you just leave it with God. So he does. As he and the others board that boat for Tyre, Paul must have felt he was getting ever so close to his own *'crown of righteousness'*.

### ***'ALSO TO DIE AT JERUSALEM'***

When they land at Tyre in Acts 21, Paul is only 100 miles from Jerusalem. This is where the question starts. Disciples in Acts 21:4 are used by Holy Spirit to send a message to Paul: **Don't go.** It gets louder at the house of Philip the evangelist at their last stop in Caesarea. A prophet named Agabus arrives and illustrates something



Paul did not need to be told, *'in every city, . . . bonds and afflictions abide me'* 20:23.

But this trip to Jerusalem is different and everybody in Phillip's house seems to know it. We have Philip and his prophesying virgin daughters. Luke, Timothy, Tychicus, and now Agabus is using Paul's girdle for a visual aid. All are in a chorus led by the Spirit and they *'besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.'* V.12 It is no wonder Paul becomes frustrated and silences them all in v 13: *'I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'*

Would Paul have been in the will of the Lord by avoiding Jerusalem? Yes. Then what about going? Yes again. Here is a good time to quote Brother Copley: 'Sometimes the Lord seems to set before us two objects of choice, informing us of the outcome of both. He lets us take either one, not condemning us, whichever one we choose' .-p.146.

It brings us back to our question. Besides a threat of death, what was waiting for Paul in Jerusalem that had the Holy Spirit so concerned? It goes back to those confused Bible students of Brother Copley's who would have done well to remember, that going into the temple was not Paul's idea.

The request came from James, a fellow apostle and pastor of the Church at Jerusalem. The Spirit had long been aware that if Paul was ever to have the liberty to tell a *'brother'* something they needed to hear, it was just about to happen.

### ***WHAT IS IT THEREFORE?***

It was James, although indirectly, who was also involved in Paul's first occasion to take another apostle to task. In Galatians 2 disciples come to Antioch, sent from James in Jerusalem, and Peter gets up from eating with Gentiles because of it. Barnabas and others follow and you know Paul's blood is boiling. Peter *'was to be blamed'* Gal. 2:11, and Paul did just that, but you know he wasn't blind to the long distance influence that James projected.

Maybe Paul had read a copy of James epistle. His letter makes no mention of the council he presided over in Acts 15, but his writings do witness to the Grace of God. The epistle from James is presumed to have been written during the Church's infancy, and though basic in scope, it is inspired scripture that simplifies our walk with Jesus down to one word: Faith.

So Paul and this travel party of battle-hardened grace saints



pay a visit to James and another set of Church elders. If James knew they were coming, it had to be on short notice. I would like to think that he only had minutes to digest the fact that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, wanted in most every province he had touched, was coming up the stairs.

“I thought he was in Asia . . . or Galatia for that matter!” James might have said to the elders as he straightened his vestments, but there was no avoiding this moment in time. They all come in and Paul did what Paul always did: testify of God’s grace, and particularly ‘what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.’ v 19.

Try and read James response in v 20-25 and not find it lip service. ‘*Thou seest, Brother, . . .*’ ( That’s great Paul, but listen. Jerusalem is filled from one end to the other with zealous law keeping Jews) and ‘*they will hear that thou art come v 22*’. *Do therefore this that we say to thee.*’ v23. ‘. . . thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.’ v24.

Here is why we study the life of the apostle Paul and why I have so very far to go. I would have quoted James to James at this point. His letter to Christian Jews may not have been called scripture yet, but consider James 1:8: ‘*A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*’ James sending Paul into the temple to purify himself for a blood sacrifice demonstrates this, and Paul had already given it a name: The two-natures.

**But for the Grace of God.** If James were ever to see it, he need only trace it back to this point. His reasoning solution was to perpetuate a lie. Unlike Paul, who often was ‘*made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*’ I Cor. 9:22, James was using this liberty to remain sitting on the fence. (Not here, Paul. Not now. It sure would make me and the elders feel better if you just went along with the traditions. Keep the peace.)

The saving thing about James is that he knows he’d been mightily used of God to settle an issue regarding the conduct of Gentile believers in Acts 15:14. James actually announced the Church age by proclaiming that ‘*God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.*’ It was a huge endorsement for Paul’s ministry and now, after making this incredible demand of Paul, he is careful to remind him what he had once ‘*written and concluded that they(Gentiles) observe no such thing.....*’ V. 25

It might have taken a “bit lip” but Luke does not record a



response from Paul; only that he complied with James' request. V. 26 The weight of that scene is in the silence that followed for it had to be that '*grace in the time of need*'. We have no idea how God works in the lives of others, only that silence oft gives way to a '*still small voice*'.

James' plan didn't amount to much. After close to 7 days in the temple, the Jews which were of Asia, '*stirred up all the people and laid hands on him*' v 27, but as we will discover, it changed the course of both men's lives.

### *BE OF GOOD CHEER, PAUL*

It's going to happen. Eventually, your path is going to cross that of another spirit filled grace saint who should know better. Paul didn't need to quote anything to James because James knew already. If he had anything on Paul, any kind of advantage, it might have been both his pedigrees. Not only was James with the 120 when the Church was baptized in holy fire on The Day Of Pentecost, but he saw our Lord Jesus after his resurrection. He also had family ties. Not by blood, though he was Joseph's son, he is distinguished by the title of 'the Lord's brother'.

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Despite those credentials, what I have learned of James is summarized by this request of Paul. He was heavily influenced by law-keeping Jews and it was an identity he tried to mingle with his faith in Jesus Christ. The silence Paul left ringing in James' ear was divine grace because the situation was ripe for correction, but that didn't happen. Instead James sent a silent Paul into a volatile mix only needing a spark. It was never his intention to feed him to a mob, but that is what happened. Over time I believe James figured all this out.

That perhaps started when Paul gets the chance to speak to the hostile crowd. Soldiers had to literally pull him out of the melee in 22:1 and James could well have been in the shadows, as Paul gives his conversion testimony on the road to Damascus. He was undoubtedly there the next day, when Paul is '*set before*' the council meeting of the Sanhedrin and he calls the high priest a '*whited wall.*' V. 3

Calling the high priest by his true name, earned Paul a fat lip, for having the kind of boldness for the Lord, that everyone would hear about. Now, in the midst of that stuffy council, '*Paul perceived the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees*' v 6, so he turns the crowd on itself. He cries out '*. . . of the hope and*



*resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*' Truly that was wisdom. The only thing for Paul to do is sit back and watch.

And the apostle will finally get some time to do that. The next eight years to be exact. Even though he had proclaimed to everyone at Phillip's house his readiness to die at Jerusalem, we know that was not The Lord's intention. Imagine life without Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians, the prison epistles that he would write from Rome. and the same goes for that goodbye in II Timothy. Not only would he get that second chance to say '*I have finished my course*' 4:6, but he gives the single best measurement for being in the bride of Christ: *Love his appearing.*

***But what about James.*** Once again the historians write the ending. About the time Paul is being deported to Rome, there is a change in Roman leadership. A brief window of opportunity is seized by the Pharisees who are still smarting from the Roman intrusion into their handling of the Apostle Paul. In that brief power vacuum, they approach James. They want him to do something for them:

31

*"We entreat thee, restrain the people: for they are gone astray in their opinions about Jesus, as if he were the Christ. We entreat thee to persuade all who have come hither for the day of the passover, concerning Jesus . . . persuade the people not to entertain erroneous opinions concerning Jesus: for all the people, and we also, listen to thy persuasion."* - Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae*, 2.23

Josephus records James martyrdom by the Jewish leaders first hand but historians Eusebius, Hegesippus and Clement of Alexandria comment further in more detail. The Pharisees tell James to stand on the summit of the temple so that his disclaimer can be seen and heard of all.

We know that James complies and makes the climb to the top of the temple where he looks out over the multitude and then says this: **"Himself sitteth in heaven, at the right hand of the Great Power, and shall come on the clouds of heaven."** History records James was pushed to his death by the same men who sent him up there.

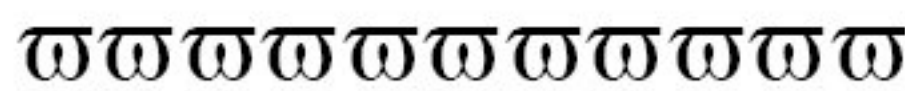
**What a turn of events.** James and the Pharisees co-existed in Jerusalem for almost 30 years but somehow he got in the middle of something that had their attention. Whether he had much to do with so many going '*astray in their opinions about Jesus, as if he were the Christ*' is uncertain, but I want to believe he had everything to do with it. We know this: the Pharisees thought they had the man



who could stop it.

Well, they didn't. It had been two years since Paul and his friends stood before James and a lot had changed. After all the chaos, the councils, and the crowds, Paul left James a picture of Christ 'a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.' I Tim. 1:16. For this reason Jesus makes another personal appearance to Paul. Scripture states that he 'stands' by him in Acts 23:11 and says, 'Be of good cheer Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem. . . '

**Our testimony.** We need it to show God's grace. We'll discover it has wisdom. And like James that day before the Pharisees, it leads to boldness. As for Paul? Well, he was surely of good cheer. He was getting to do it all over again in a place he'd wanted to go for a long, long time: 'so must thou bear witness also at Rome.'



## SAFELY HOME

32

*I am home in heaven, dear ones, Oh, so happy and so bright!  
There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light.  
All pain and grief are over, every restless tossing past:  
I am now at peace forever, safely home in heaven at last.*

*Did you wonder, I so calmly trod the valley of the shade?  
Oh, but Jesus' love illumined, every dark and fearful glade!  
And He came, Himself, to meet me in that way so hard to tread;  
And with Jesus' arm to lean on, could I have one doubt or dread?*

*Then you must not grieve so sorely, for I love you dearly still;  
Try to look beyond earth's shadows, pray and trust our Father's will.  
There is work still waiting for you, so you must not idly stand;  
Do it now while life remaineth. You shall rest in Jesus' land.*

*When that work is all completed, He will gently call you home;  
Oh, the rapture of that meeting! Oh, the joy to see you come!  
(A tribute to Ruth Curtis, who passed away August 1, 1987)*

--Maynard Curtis



# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

By Mary M. Bodie

## The Prophet of the New Age

Second part of Sermon

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

We have now before us a new and distinct section of the discourse on the mount. Christ here emphasizes His place as the Greater than Moses the lawgiver of the Old Testament fame. He confirms, expounds and reveals the spirituality of the law, while at the same time, He adds to and amplifies it. Furthermore He does not hesitate to put His own interpretation upon that which was spoken by them of old time; **“for the law made nothing perfect,”** and though Moses for the hardness of their hearts may concede some points, He, because of the greater light now shining, emphasizes the fulfillment of every jot and tittle of the law. Therefore at the outset He affirms in the most positive manner, the authority of the **“Law;”** but here we must consider to what this applies; for many and grave mistakes in theology have arisen from failure at this point. **“The Law and the Prophets”** were the recognized name for the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole. They related especially to the past dispensation. **“The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached.”** Thus it could be said that they had now passed away, for as the sole and governing truth, they as John had fulfilled their course. They were only the preparation for something better and higher; though necessarily bearing witness to, and establishing that which they anticipated. For no truth can, in the fullest sense, vanish away, though it may, as in the present instance, be superceded by a fuller revelation.

Hence, Christ insists that He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets: rather He came to substantiate and fulfill them. He was the embodiment of that of which they were but the shadow; therefore they are perpetuated and eternalized in Him who was **“the Word made flesh.”** As was intimated, the Lord is talking to Jews and in their relation to Himself as the Lawgiver of His own kingdom. He is assuring them that He is not doing away with the righteousness which the law demanded, rather He insists upon a greater righteousness than that of which the scribes and Pharisees boasted. The latter were extremely zealous for the external. The Lord proceeds to develop the inward righteousness which He requires, as in contrast to theirs which was outward. He emphasizes the second table of the law rather than the first, because man’s conscience is more accessible on this side. The old creation are rarely concerned with their attitude toward God, while sometimes very sensitive about their conduct toward their fellow man. He shows the bearing of the law upon the heart of man, as



well as upon his hand. Therefore He takes the sixth commandment first, to illustrate the righteousness which He proclaims. Not only is the man guilty who kills his brother, according to the new Lawgivers standard; but he who is simply angry with his brother. And though he does him no injury whatever, yet he is liable to judgment; while causeless cursing and railing, of which all men are more or less prone, will not be tolerated during His righteous reign, He assures them.

This was intended to impress the hearers, which no doubt it did, as to the impossibility of any mere human righteousness being acceptable to God. The very best gifts that they could offer were defiled with their sinful hands. The Lord is teaching that the law is spiritual, and in this manner it applies to us today. How can we enjoy fellowship with God when we have injured our brother and never have made any amends for the evil? We little realize how much we lose of the joy of salvation because of an un-judged condition of soul. The people Jesus was addressing were going on with the law, not understanding its requirements, nor their own inability to fulfill its demands. He exhorts them, saying, **“Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, etc.”** They did not know that Moses in whom they trusted was their greatest adversary. He brought them to judgment unless they agreed with him, quickly, acknowledging their bankrupt condition and availing themselves of the mercy-seat which covered the tables of the law in the ark. There was absolutely no hope for them in Moses. **“Do not think that I will accuse you,”** He said at another time. **“There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom you trust.”** - John 5:45.

34

Then He proceeds to the seventh precept of the law to enforce the above lesson - that out of the heart of man comes the positive transgression. For what was in the heart to do, even though the external trespass was not committed, made the offender. The opportunity or courage to carry out the desire might be lacking, this altered not the guilt; the sin was in the heart. Then He proceeds to develop the teaching further upon this line. If the right eye offends, pluck it out, He urges; as also the hand which causes the trouble is to be cut off. Oh, this is bringing up the standard indeed. Moses could, and did lower it, because they were unable to bear it; but not so the new Lawgiver. Hear the law then if you are going to keep it! It demands and absolute obedience even unto death. For, say one would pluck out the sinning right eye, later the remaining one might offend, and it too would have to go; then the right foot and also the left foot, might bring a man into sin, therefore each must be cut off. Hands likewise would follow and shortly there would be nothing left to the sinner except the tongue to express his awful inward condition. Well having amputated this organ, there would still remain the incorrigible heart, which could only be stilled of its lusting, by death. What is the lesson? That which the Scriptures constantly affirm and man is loath to believe - the total and eternal depravity of the old Adam. Have we ears? Let us hear.

(To Be Continued)