

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole counsel of GOD

Without Price Since 1910

'Loving his Appearing'

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Great peace
have they which
love thy law: and
nothing shall
offend them.
PSALM 119:165.

ANOTHER MIGHTY OAK CALLED HOME

In Memory of Our Sister Faith Neidholt Vieta

by

Grace Neidholt Ferris

Faith, at 3 1/2 yrs. of age was praying with me at the altar of a meeting house in Watsonville, CA, where our father held services. The two of us were “playing church” one day while our parents were busy. Suddenly, I felt Jesus come into my heart (at 5 yrs. of age) and I ran into the kitchen to tell Mother.

Faith continued to pray, with and for, people down through the years. We were both blessed to be able to attend the Grace and Glory Bible School in Kansas City, Missouri in later years. Faith was Sister Bodie's secretary, chauffeur and companion.

Our parents, Claude and Lois Neidholt, were pastors at an assembly in Emporia, Kansas, at the time. When the Lord called them to glory, Faith became the Pastor of that assembly.

Now she's with Jesus. Surely, her younger sister Rebecca and I will be with them soon, for eternity.

August 5, 2012

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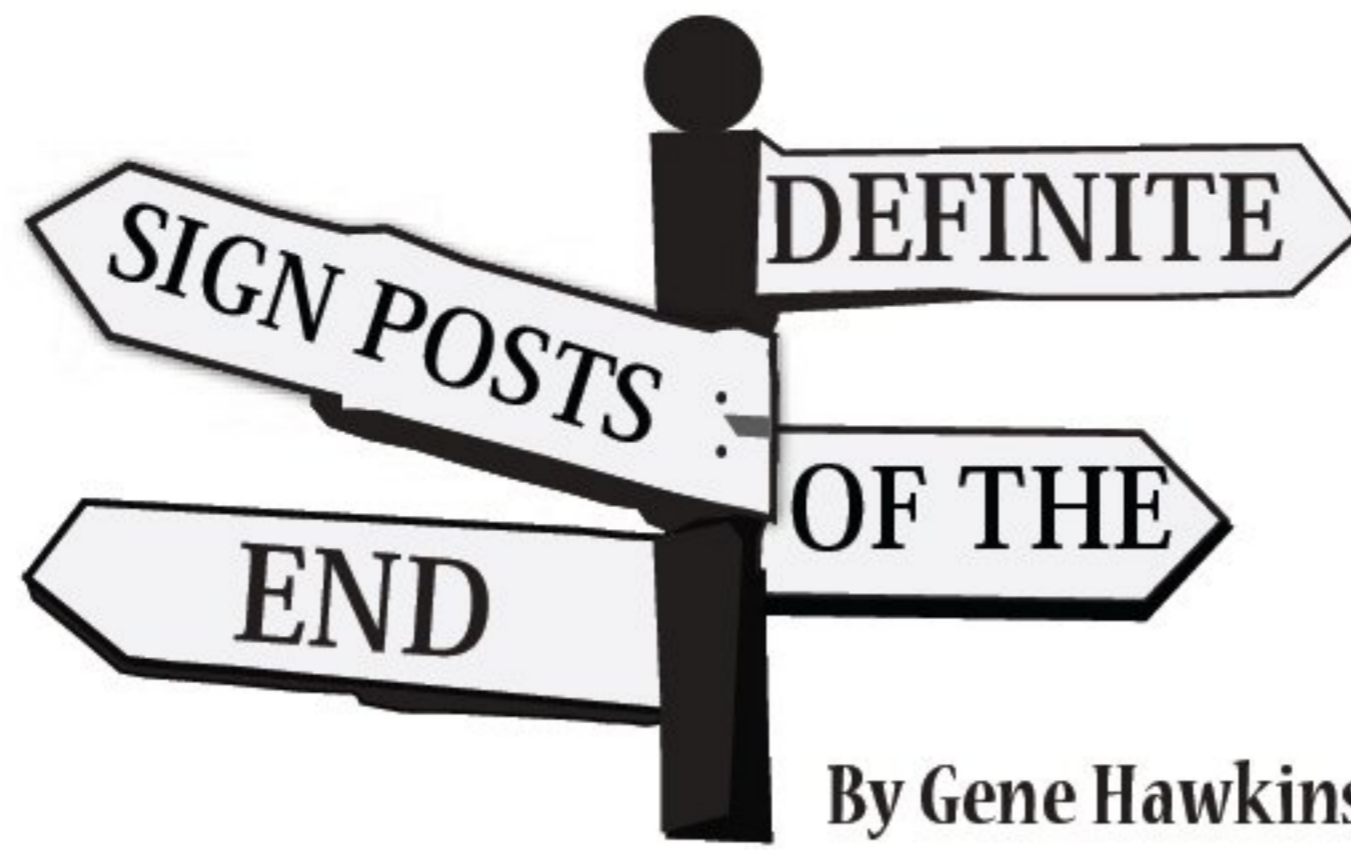
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Editor: Gene Hawkins



By Gene Hawkins

“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (age) And Jesus answered and said unto them,.....” Matt. 24:3-4

3 These are extremely familiar verses whereby Jesus introduces a long list of “signs,” beginning with “take heed that no man deceive you,” (V. 4) to --- “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” V. 37 Between those opening and closing signs, lies a vast host of characteristics marking the days in which we live. We wrote previously in this feature, that the sheer fact of all these signs being reported simultaneously is, in and of itself, a striking sign of Jesus’ eminent return. The Master here continues His end time discourse, in verse six, announcing “wars, & rumors of wars,” followed by “...famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” V. 7 Israel, as a nation is the next subject as they shall “...deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all **nations** for my name's sake.” Verse 11 seems to be a direct reference to the rampant “religious” deception which is literally engulfing the entire world. “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” We read further “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” This chilling statement applies to the national, social, and religious scenes of our time, and iniquity abounds in multiplied ways and levels, simply because there is no real love to restrain the wicked hearts of men. The recent movie massacre in Aurora, Colorado, followed by the carnage left at the Sikh Temple in Wisconsin, and rampage just off the college campus of Texas A&M in College Station, serve to put the exclamation point on this declaration.

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” V. 36 Verses 13-35 of this chapter point to the final days of the tribulation period even as we read in verse 22 “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's (Israel’s) sake those days shall be shortened.” However this verse, announcing

the secrecy surrounding the coming of Jesus, applies to multiple appearances He will make and is most assuredly a reference to the same message which Paul preached in I Thess. 5:2 “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” Matthew 24 continues then, with the days of “.....the coming of the Son of man...” being likened unto the days of Noah, and those days included many characteristics. Jesus specifically alluded to the insatiable appetites of men and “marrying and giving in marriage.” V. 38. Genesis six also describes that same era from God’s perspective, when He “.... saw that the wickedness (bad or evil-- natural or moral) of man was great (great, abounding, exceeding) in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” V. 5

The following are quotes from an article by Janet Porter, president of Faith2Action and author of “The Criminalization of Christianity.” “According to Jeffrey Satinover, who holds an M.D. from Princeton and doctorates from Yale, MIT and Harvard, the ‘Babylonian Talmud’ – (the book of rabbis’ interpretation of the scriptures) declared the days of Noah as a time ‘**where men were given in marriage to men, and women given in marriage to women.**’ Rabbi Aryeh Spero verified this to be true, and went on to say that ‘the Talmud’s writings reveal that before the Flood people started to write marriage contracts between men, in other words, homosexual ‘marriage,’ which is more than homosexual activity – it’s giving an official state stamp of approval, a sanctification ... of homosexual partnership.’ The Rabbi further asserted that ‘the writings indicated that it wasn’t even so much the ‘straw that broke the camel’s back,’ but that the sin in and of itself is so contrary to why God created the world, so contrary to the order of God’s nature, that God said then and there ‘I have to start all over ... to annihilate the world and start from the beginning. ...’” These declarations seems to be in perfect agreement with the order we see here in Matthew, for after Jesus specifically targeted the atmosphere of “marrying and giving in marriage,” the very next item on His agenda is: “And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” We would also point out here that this same order is repeated in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Our text here in Matthew next relates verses which many of our day have applied to “the rapture.” “Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

V. 41,42 These verses have been largely interpreted to mean that the one taken, was taken away to heaven, but that is, in no wise, the context of those being “taken away,” in Noah’s day. There is certainly no allusion that the wicked in the time of Noah were taken away to heaven. Quite the contrary! They were taken away in judgment, and that is the meaning here in Matthew. Those “left,” represent those left on the earth to live another day after the judgments have been poured out. It is worthy of note that this scenario will conclude at the **end** of the tribulation period, well after the Church is already in glory, and those who are left will be those who will inhabit the earth during the Millennium. Let us also understand, however, that the days of Noah have already begun and will escalate until this final chapter of judgment is written.

5 Once again, the very first sign, of which Jesus spoke, was “Take heed that no man deceive you...” and such deception is surely taking center stage today. Present political campaigns seem to show no restraint, as recent news casts reveal political ads publishing deliberate lies in order to cloud the issue and deceive voters, at least until after the election. The News Media even has a name for it: “Pinocchios.” The more lies found in the content of the ad, the higher the number of “pinocchios” ascribed to it, and some of them are almost off the chart.

Deception among the nations is also rampant, as is clearly evident in the horrendous ploys displayed by Syria and her surrogates. Though they try to give the impression of bringing the Syrian atrocities to a close, nations such as Russia, China, and Iran along with terrorist groups like Hezbollah, continue to supply arms and other assistance to “prop up” the regime of Bashir Assad. Iran also has repeatedly published, what are now known to be, direct lies in relation to the nuclear program being developed in that country. Trust, on any level, must be built on truth, and that is something that is woefully lacking among all these nations. Thus, not one of them is able to trust the other. Israel is currently at the center of “the wars and rumours of wars,” of which Jesus prophesied, and much of their consternation is simply because they cannot even trust their supposed allies. There continues to be much speculation as to whether this small nation will launch a unilateral attack against Iran, in an effort to thwart that state’s nuclear program. Some reports have suggested that they may do this even before American elections. Israel’s main TV news, Channel 2, reported recently that “Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud

Barak have 'almost finally' decided on an Israeli strike at Iran's nuclear facilities this fall, and a final decision will be taken 'soon.' The country's leading news program, devoted much of its broadcast to the issue, detailing the pros and cons that, it said, have taken Netanyahu and Barak to the brink of approving an Israeli military attack despite opposition from the Obama administration and from many Israeli security chiefs. Critically, the station's diplomatic correspondent Udi Segal said, Israel does not believe that the US will take military action as Iran closes in on the bomb. The US, the TV report said, has not provided Israel with details of an attack plan. President Obama has not promised to attack Iran if all else fails. Conditions cited by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta for an American attack do not calm Israeli concerns. And Obama has a record of seeking UN and Arab League approval before action. All these factors, in Jerusalem's mind, underline the growing conviction of Netanyahu and Barak that Israel will have to tackle Iran alone."

Israeli parliamentary candidate Ari Abramowitz seemed to reinforce the possibility of a unilateral attack on Iran, with the following statements from an interview on Fox News. "The government is saying more and more that if we need to, then we need to strike Iran and that's a real possibility. Even if it just delays things for a few years, that few years in the current landscape of the Middle East, that the Arab Spring, can change the entire game. I think many Israelis are getting the feeling that the US administration is trying to dissuade us from attacking Iran, not because they think that sanctions may work, but because they're afraid that our attack of Iran would jeopardize the campaign. And as a matter of fact America should not be just waiting us to attack Iran they should be saying Israel, listen, you have the best intelligence. Do what you have to do -- we have your back a 100%." Mr. Abramowitz went on to say "that nothing short of an all out international embargo will stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and it just doesn't look like that's in the cards. Full unwavering support (of America) I think would be enough to really topple the regime, and we can have peace in the Middle East."

We could not help but notice Mr. Abramowitz suggestions, that this entire scenario could lead to peace in the Middle East, or at least delay the current pace of war. Brothers Paul Smith and Jack Bannister, both tremendous students of prophecy, were persuaded that some major skirmish must occur in that region to bring about the rumors of peace and safety prophesied by

scripture. Could this be it? Such thoughts prevailed during the days surrounding Israel's 67 war with Egypt, but that situation had more of a local presence to it. Today the landscape is entirely different, for nations across the entire globe are on alert, knowing that a nuclear holocaust is a major threat to the whole world.

7 We can surely understand Israel's feelings of insecurity and, who could blame them for not telling the U.S. of their plans, given the massive top secret intelligence leaks which have occurred in recent months, wherein some of our allies have suffered tremendous set-backs, and some informants have been imprisoned? The apostle Paul likewise spoke of this atmosphere of deception when he warned Timothy "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come," and that "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." II Tim. 3:1,13. I doubt anyone could argue the validity of these words as men set forth to gain the upper hand using the tactics of deception, and are themselves caught in the same web. Israel has also experienced such tactics of late in regard to Egypt. The Israelis reported that recently elected Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi had sent a letter to Shimon Peres, President of Israel, stating that "I am looking forward to exerting our best efforts to get the Middle East peace process back to its right track in order to achieve security and stability for all peoples of the region, including [the] Israeli people." Though diplomats in the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv were the ones who reportedly passed on the missive, which was printed on the official letterhead of the ambassador along with the embassy's stamps, Egypt now claims that the letter was a fake. Since his victory, Morsi and his aides stressed to U.S. and European officials that they intend to respect all international treaties which Egypt has signed, including the peace treaty with Israel, but in view of these allegations, the international players, and especially Israel must contend with such deception and uncertainty.

There have been numerous reports warning that, were Israel to launch such a strike on Iran's nuclear facility, it would trigger great retaliation from that nation against both Israel and the U.S. For this reason, we have seen, and heard, various calls to stock pile emergency food and water supplies. Some of these projected scenarios seem to be clear references to Rev. 6:5,6 after Jesus opens the third seal of judgment. "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of

balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” This portion surely announces shortages, of both food and water, and perhaps even rationing, during this period of time. We have no doubt, but that the multiplied warnings seen at this present time, will indeed come to pass. The encouraging part for God’s people is timing. The judgments described here in Rev. 6 will not take place until after Jesus takes His throne. That glorious event has not happened yet, but the stage is being set, and thus this world is beginning to experience the forerunners of judgment, at this present hour. Jesus described them as the “beginning of sorrows,” and the simultaneous, and multiple tragedies, **seen even in the same news streams today**, are clear indications that these times have already begun. Erratic weather patterns, producing flooding in one area, and severe drought and fires in another, combine to severely complicate sources of food and water, which will ultimately produce the horrendous effects described by this sixth chapter of Revelation.

Now is not a time to panic. It is most assuredly a time to examine our own hearts and determine whether or not we are truly looking for Jesus to come. Men must be honest with themselves as to whether or not they truly believe what the scriptures proclaim. Paul boldly admonished: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Heb 10:35-37 The reward, for one select group of people, is not simply “getting to heaven,” but rather being taken out of the world **before** the judgments of the tribulation even begin, as was promised to the Church at Philadelphia. Rev. 3:10 We simply do not know the day of Jesus’ coronation in glory, but we do know we have the opportunity to be there. We also know that once He is crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords, all the nations of this earth will be ruling in usurpation, and thus the judgments of the tribulation will begin, for they will refuse to bow in obedience to His Authority. The next verse from this quotation in Hebrews declares: “Now the just shall live by faith:....,” and the little word “now” means right now. Rather than allowing fear to control us, and trying to decide how to cope with all these projected “shortages,” which will inevitably come, let us exercise our faith that “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of

temptations,...” II Pet. 2:9 Let us not only realize, but anticipate, that His deliverance this time, refers to our departure from this world. Our hope is to be taken out of this present darkness and be translated right into the throne room of glory! Hallulujah!

WATCHING, WAITING, LISTENING

Hark we hear our Savior whisper
Soon for you my Bride I come,
And our hearts send back an echo,
Hasten with a gladsome song;
We are waiting, watching, listening,
Watching gladly till He come,
Listening for His gentle summons,
Weary children, “Welcome Home”.

In yon bright and heavenly city,
No more sorrow, no more pain,
Only just a little moment,
`Till our Bridegroom comes again
Shouting “Amen, Lord come quickly”,
We are longing for that day,
When thy saints shall rise to meet thee,
Clothed Immortal, caught away.

Listen to the wondrous singing,
As we gather round His throne,
Unto Him who washed and loved us,
And has sealed us for His own,
Holy, Holy, Holy, HOLY
How the ransomed saints will sing,
Glory, Wisdom, Praise and Honor,
Unto Christ our glorious King.

We are waiting, we are watching,
We are listening for His voice ;
Soon we’ll see our Savior coming,
And the saints will all rejoice.
For we’ll hear the trumpet sounding,
Then to heaven we shall go
There to reign with Christ, our Bridegroom,
Robed in garments white as snow.

A Great Love Story

A. S. Copley

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life”

John 3:16

I want to speak to you of a love story. Only two things are predicated of God, Love and Light. God is Love, and God is Light. God loved the world. To me that is wonderful! It seemed that God loved the old creation, and loved it so much that He sent His Son to die in man's stead. He put it to death, then brought in a new creation by the resurrection of Christ. That infinite, holy, righteous, perfect God loved humanity so much that He gave His only Son for them. The only Son that He had, whom He loved. He gave Him to die a death of shame and of pain, a death of rejection and separation. Let us consider seven facts about this love story. We have noted the first one already, that God loved the world.

10

Second, Note that Jesus loved a family. "**Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus**"—John 11:5. He was well acquainted with that family. He visited it frequently and had a particular family affection for those three. See how thoroughly human Jesus was as to His manhood. He had human feelings, a human heart, and He found a warmth of fellowship in that home that He did not find elsewhere. He captured the natural and supernaturalized it. He takes possession of what we are in the natural, works in it, molds it and fills it with Himself and makes it a new creation like Himself.

Third, Disciple love. "Now before the feast of the passover, then Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"—John 13:1. This expresses a present fact and a future fact. That night when Jesus uttered these words and gave these chapters (13 to 17) in John, He indicated His perpetual love for His own. He intimates this prophetic word, that He will love us to the end. In fact He expressed this in another place where He said, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age."

Fourth, Reciprocal love. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will

manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep any words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him"—John 14:21-23. Here is reciprocal love. We **prove** our love by keeping God's Word. You may know whether you love the Lord or not. You may learn how to know whether you love Him, or not. I may not know whether you love Him, or not; but you may know it. These are not the ten commandments; but the commandments of Jesus under grace. It is fifty-fifty. God loved us and served us, and now we love Him. We love His Son because He died for us. The Father loves us because of His Son. Then because we love the Son, He manifests Himself to us. It is an inter-related fellowship. The Father and the Son pledge themselves to come and make their abode with us, which they did by sending the Holy Spirit. He brings the Trinity into our lives. How solemn it is that God deposits His love in sinful flesh.

11

How marvelous that the Holy Spirit and the Father and Son deign to take up their abode in this clay. We walk around in the earth carrying God in us. God is living in us. God is walking up and down, to and fro, riding hither and thither in this tenement of clay that has been bruised, ruined and wrecked by sin—a marvelous mystery. It ought to be easy for us to reciprocate God's love; and it is when we are born again and His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. You can provoke God's love by believing His Word. Paul tells us to provoke one another by our good works; but here we learn that we can provoke God's love by believing Him, by taking His Word in our hearts and heeding His voice. God's love is also declared in Rom. 8:32—"He, that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely (without a cause in us) give us all things?"

Five, Measured love. In the fifteenth chapter of John we have measured love. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love"—John 15:9. The Son did not come behind the love of His Father for us. My, we are fervently loved; are we not? If the Father has loved us with all His heart and Jesus loves us with all His heart even as the Father loves Him, that is supremely wonderful. That is more than measured love. It is unmeasured love with which God loved us. He loved His Son so dearly. How could He let Him come down to earth to

die? Well, He was just thinking about it 4,000 years before He sent Him. He loved Him so deeply, that though He had planned to send Him; yet He waited 4,000 years after the creation of Adam and Eve before He sent His Son to take on human form and die for lost humanity. Paul expresses Christ's love for sinners thus, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye thru His poverty might become rich" —.2 Cor. 8:9. Jesus so loved us, loved the world that He was willing to be poverty stricken, stripped of all His honor, glory, dignity and power in order that we might be rich in faith, rich in grace, rich in good works, rich in the knowledge of His Word. That we may be thus enriched, may be hard to comprehend; but all things are possible with God. All things are possible to Him that believeth. We can abide in His love, even as He abode *in* His Father's love. We are depending on the Holy Spirit for everything, for every act of ours toward God and our fellowmen. We cannot do any- thing apart from Him, or bear any fruit. This 16th chapter is the fruit chapter. If we can abide in Him a little; then we can abide in Him totally, entirely, whole heartedly and thoroughly, warmly and fervently with all the heart and soul, even as the Son abode in the Father. Now we know what commandments He was talking about before, "that ye love one another." Four times in this book, we read that we should love one another. Christ's love in us is spontaneous.

12

Here the Lord admonished the saints to love one another, as if there might be occasions when the spontaneity would be absent. We are a dual nature. This heavenly love is a deposit in a tenement of clay that has been bruised with sin. Sometimes we are to show our love to unlovely individuals; but we - say, "I do not feel like it." Well, then we have to put our feeling aside. This is what I am reminded of, that when we act upon the Word of the Lord and show our love, it is not long until we actually love the unloveable with pity or compassion. We will be doing the thing we did not want to do, because the new life gets, the ascendancy over the old self life feelings: for we are moving in the will of God. Yes, we feel like we do not want to speak to certain people; we feel cold and distant; but if we get a little closer and begin to talk, maybe we will want to put our arms around them, because it is the nature of divine love to pour itself out even on the unlovely.

Six, Deposited love. "And I have declared unto them thy

name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may *be* in them, and I in them.” John 17:26. Now here is a marvel. The word love does not occur in this prayer, chapter until this last verse; and yet it, throbs with love from the beginning to the end. It is a Wonderful prayer which Jesus offered to the Father for **His disciples**, interceding in their behalf, making provision for their welfare, after He should be gone; yet He does not mention, the word love except in this verse. He prays that they might be one with the, Father, and with one another. Finally, He ends His petition by saying, **the love of the Father for Himself**, might be deposited in them. No wonder Paul prayed that the Philippian saints might "increase and abound in love more and more." We get more of the love of God in us, by taking more of Christ. "We increase with the increase of God." As Christ increases in us, our hearts are filled more and more with the love of God, love to Him, and to one another. This is the route if you purpose to be a Philadelphia saint. Special promises are made to Philadelphia saints as overcomers. How marvelous, that God's love is deposited in us. This is a sublime truth. It makes me weep in my heart to think that God puts His infinite love in us, and we may enjoy "**Christ in us, the hope of glory.**" God dwelling in us, filling our bodies and minds with His love so that we will reciprocate His love, this is glorious. Then we in turn show our love by reading His Word and yielding to its power. Preachers who do not teach this love, do not love God with a whole heart. They hold back the deepest truth, because the crowd means more to them than the truth and love of God. Christ loved His Father to the extent that He would do His Father's will no matter what He required. What saith the Father? was His entire concern. "I can of myself do nothing; but as the Father giveth me, so I speak." That is the love He wants from us, that we will not question His will.

Seven, Tested love. “When they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.” John 21:15 That was tested love. Divine love is expressed in our Lord's, first two questions to Peter; but every time, he responds in words of human affection. Jesus gave the Apostle the opportunity of taking the place of loving his Master supremely, with divinely inwrought love. He wanted more than a friendly affection; but the deposited love, for which Jesus

had prayed some days before, was not yet in Peter's heart. He did not have sufficient revelation of grace to lay hold upon it. He could not give Christ the response for which He longed. Hence His third question was, "Peter, hast thou a friendly affection for me?"

Let us learn the mystery of the Gospel and take Christ to live and love in us, so that our hearts will respond with perfect divine love to Him. This is the love of the bride for the Bridegroom. "Christ in us the hope of glory," means Christ's love in us to glorify Him to the uttermost, to love Him as He loves us and to desire Him above every object, possession, or love. The ultimate object of God's great love for mankind was this, that a company of saved ones should be so imbued with His love as to be found fitted for the bridehood of the Lamb. The Father purposed and planned that His dearly beloved Son should have a bride worthy of Himself. Therefore some saints are apparently not as useful as some others. They do not get as much accomplished; do not work mighty miracles, or achieve phenomenal success outwardly. The Father has a special favor toward them, because they have put in their bid for the highest and best.

14

They are not content with simply a friendly affection for the Lord. They love Him ardently, worship Him fervently and serve Him faithfully. The Father watches over them as "the apple of His eye." He has them in training for a throne. Their tests and trials are strange and peculiar; often difficult to understand. They are shut up absolutely to "the Father of mercies and the God of all grace," without permission, and finally with no desire to lean on the arm of flesh. Like Caleb, they "wholly follow the Lord."

~~~~~

### **Today**

Go work today in the vineyard.  
The night comes on apace.  
When men cannot work for Jesus,  
Here, there, nor other place.  
Go work today are Jesus' words.  
The field is white and great.  
The Master comes on schedule time.  
His train will not be late.  
Go work today and you'll be glad.  
Your heart within will leap.  
The Master comes with His reward,  
And as you sow, you'll reap.

Anon

## How Great Thou Art !

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all, the worlds thy hands have made.

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed!

When through the wood and forest glades I wander

And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,

When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur

And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze,

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,

Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in –

That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,

He bled and died to take away my sin!

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,

And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart:

Then I shall bow in humble adoration,

And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

Refrain:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee;

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

## *How Great Thou Art!*

English Words by Stuart K. Hine 1899-

Music Arrangement by Stuart K. Hine and Manna Music of Swedish Folk Melody

*Meter-11* 10. 11 10 with Refrain

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.” Psalm 145:3

This is a fine twentieth century hymn of praise that has become a favorite with God's people during the last three decades. Its popularity is due in large part to its wide use by favorite gospel singers, notably George Beverly Shea. Although introduced to American audiences when Mr. James Caldwell sang "How Great Thou Art" at Stony Brook Bible Conference on Long Island in 1951, it was not until Cliff Barrows and Bev Shea of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Team used it during the famed London Crusade in Harringay Arena that "How Great Thou Art" started become universally well-known. The original Swedish text was a poem entitled "O Store Gud," written by a Swedish Pastor, the Reverend Carl Boberg, in 1886. In addition to being one of the leading evangelical preachers of his day, Boberg was also the successful editor of the periodical *Sanningsvitnet*. His inspiration for this text is said to have come from a visit to a beautiful country estate on the Southeast coast of Sweden. He was suddenly caught in a midday thunderstorm with awe-inspiring moments of flashing violence, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm, sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted the Pastor to fall to his knees in humble adoration of his Mighty God. He penned his exaltation in a nine-stanza poem beginning with the Swedish words "O Store Gud, nar jag den varld beskader."

16

Several years later Boberg was attending a meeting in the Province of Varmland and was surprised to hear the congregation sing his poem to the tune of an old Swedish melody.

The subsequent history of this hymn is most interesting. It is thought that soon after Boberg's version, the text was translated into German by Manfred von Glenn and entitled "Wie gross bist Du." Later in 1925 the Reverend E. Gustav Johnson of North Park College, Chicago, Illinois, made the first literal English translation from the Swedish text. This translation is quite different from the text that we know today but may still found in some hymnals. Johnson's literal translation of the Swedish a is entitled "O Mighty God, When I Behold the Wonder." In 1927 I. Prokhanoff came upon the German version and translated it into the Russian language.

In 1933 the Reverend S. K. Hine and his wife, English missionaries, were ministering to the people of the Ukraine. It was there they learned the Russian translation of "O Store Gud" from a congregation of Ukrainians. They remember singing it as a duet in dark, unevangelized places and the telling effect it had on the unsaved. The thought of writing original



English lyrics to this song did not then occur to them—that was to await their crossing into Sub-Carpathian Russia, where the mountain scenery was to play its part. The thoughts of the first three verses in English were born, line upon line, amid unforgettable experiences in the Carpathian mountains. (The fourth verse was written later in England.) Thus, inspired partially by the Russian words, partially by the awesome wonder at the sight of “all the works thy hand bath made,” the thoughts of the first two verses sprang into life in English. As Reverend Hine and his wife continued their evangelizing in the Carpathian mountains and distribution of gospels in village after village, verse three came into being. When war broke out in 1939, it was necessary for Reverend Hine and his wife to return to Britain; now armed with these three verses, the writer continued his gospel campaigns during the "Blitz years." The fourth verse did not come until after the war. The tune for this hymn is an arrangement made of an old Swedish folk melody. It is typically characteristic of many other hymn tunes, i.e., "Day by Day" with its lilting, warm, singable simplicity. With his original English lyrics and his arrangement of the Swedish folk melody, Mr. Stuart K. Hine published what we know today as the hymn "How Great Thou Art." Assignments of copyrights and publication rights to an American publishing firm in 1954 helped spread the popularity of this hymn. In April of 1974 the *Christian Herald* magazine, in a poll presented to its readers, named "How Great Thou Art" the No. 1 hymn in America.

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\* If at first you don't succeed, try reading the instructions. "Take hold of instruction, let her not go: keep her, for she is thy life" (Proverbs 4:13)

\* When God measures a man, He puts the tape around the heart instead of the head.

\* Your companions are like the buttons on an elevator. They will either take you up or they will take you down.

# REFLECTIONS

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Prov. 4:7

**W**e have reached the time of year when there seems to be an obsession with learning. Daniel informs us that the overall day in which we live is “the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Dan. 12:4 It is also quite evident that the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which God placed in the midst of Eden, is still with us today, and Paul warned that “...in the last days.... men shall be....learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” II Tim. 3:1-7 Solomon likewise chimes in with the fact that great knowledge does not always hold the key to men’s problems. “For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” Eccl. 1:18 He did conclude, with all his “experiments,” that “.....wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.” Eccl. 2:13

Wisdom is still “the principal thing,” meaning that it is “the beginning, the first, the first fruit, the captain, the head.” All these meanings gloriously apply to Christ Who is “....made unto us wisdom,....” I Cor. 1:30 Solomon likewise “personifies” wisdom in Proverbs 8. “I wisdom dwell with prudence, .... Counsel is mine, ....I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign,.....I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me..... Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.....I lead in the way of righteousness,..... The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was..... When he prepared the heavens, I was there:.....when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, .... Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways..... For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.” V. 12 -35 All the characteristics of wisdom found in this portion contain a specific reference to Christ. Thus, that Glorious Name could be inserted, every time the word wisdom is

used. He is the “principal thing,” Who must occupy the “chief” place in our lives. Men today clamor after much “knowledge,” which is not only unprofitable, but also detrimental, to the spiritual understanding, or “skillful perception,” found only in Christ. Paul warned: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Col. 2:8 The word philosophy is “sophistry” or “plausible, but misleading, deceptive, statements,” and much learning of our day would surely fit into that category. Many religions make a practice of trying to “dress up” the old nature, as they concentrate only on outward appearance, rather than the heart, wherein only God can work. Others are persuaded that education will pull men out of the mire of sin, ungodliness, poverty, and depravity, rather than following Jesus Wisdom “...Ye must be born again.” John 3:7

Both Solomon and Paul instruct us in avoiding this deception. “The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. (Christ) And further, by these, (words of the wise) my son, be admonished:...” Eccl. 12:11,12 “Study to shew thyself approved unto **God**, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” II Tim. 2:15

GH

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Classes will convene at Grace and Glory Bible College Sept. 16, 2012. There is no tuition, as we follow the premise of Jesus, “...freely ye have received, freely give.” Matt. 10:8

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# Jabez

Sharon Townsend

“*And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.” I Chron. 4:9,10*

I have enjoyed reading “The Prayer of Jabez,” by Bruce Wilkinson, for a number of years, but the principle found in “Ruth 2:15,16 is so very true: “: “.....Boaz commanded his young men saying, Let her (Ruth) glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also of the handfuls of purpose for her and leave them, that she may glean them...” As we go over wonderful lessons given by others, there will be nuggets of truth, kernels of corn left over for us to glean, that were meant just for us. With that thought in mind, let us look deeper into Jabez and his request. 20

Jabez means “causes pain,” a name that defined his past, present and future. It was not a good name, but I dare say he probably lived to it. He may have been a source of pain not only to others but to himself as well. Have you ever felt like Jabez? That your past, present and future were unprofitable? Or maybe it was the other way around. Perhaps you have a very good “name” or come from a very good family boasting a good name and feel you fall far short of what is expected of you?

Whatever the case may be, God considered him “more honorable than his brethren.” I asked the Lord, “What made him more honorable?” I believe the answer can be found in Who he called upon. He did not call on the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He could have, but didn't. Instead he called on the God of Israel. Why? Genesis 32 records the story of a man, called Jacob, wrestling with God. His name means “supplanter,” and he would not let go of the Lord until he had been blessed. The Lord asked Jacob his name and then changed it to Israel informing him that “...as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed.” When Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, he was crying out to the One who can, and

was, willing to change names and futures and give blessings. Is that not wonderful! We too can cry out to the God of Israel. We too need not settle for less than what our Lord has for us.

Let us consider several points of this prayer. First, it begins with “Oh, that thou wouldest bless me, indeed.” “Oh” is such a little word, yet it speaks of deep heart longings. Sometimes, when I am in fellowship with my Lord, I’ll start my prayers off the same way --- “Oh....” I believe I understand his heart at this time. He asked that God would bless him abundantly. I was impressed with the fact that he did not limit God as to how much, what way, or from whom, his blessings might flow. Sometimes, we do not always recognize blessings in the making. Joseph and his brethren are powerful examples of this truth. Though he is a beautiful type of Christ, we must remember that he was once a teenage boy who was not always considerate of his brothers’ feelings. After all, he was the favorite and surely that must have hurt them. Neither can their attitudes of wanting him dead, be condoned, yet God, in His wonderful workings in all of their lives, brought them to places of blessings.

21

Joseph was blessed when God ordained that he should be second only to Pharaoh. Notice his tender heart and actions toward his brothers in Gen. 50:21 after he had been exalted to such a place. “Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. “ He who at one time may not have been as kind as he could have been, is now wanting to care for and nourish the very ones who once desired his death. Not only so, but his desire reached down even to their children. Oh how blessed he was in many ways, and a blessing to others.

The brothers were blessed also. How? They too, were in the place meant for them, a place of submission to Joseph. They had carried the guilt of their actions for years. What a heavy weight it must have been. (Gen 42:21) Oh, the weight that must have been lifted when Joseph spoke kindly to them, and that is good instruction for us as well. When we are in submission to Christ and to the Christ life in us, we are indeed blessed. Israel also, will one day follow the same pattern of these brothers, for they too, submit wholly to Christ.

God was not only working in Joseph, but also in the lives of these brothers. For example there came a time when Judah would have

given up his life for that of Joseph's full brother; Benjamin. Gen. 44.

Secondly, "...enlarge my coast..." - Coast means "border" or "territory". It is not stated what territory Jabez had, but whatever it was, he wanted God to enlarge it, and whatever God gives us, is meant for His glory. Thus, Jabez petitioned Him to "take what you have given me, and enlarge it for your glory." It makes no difference what territory he has given you or anyone else, but it is ok to ask him to increase it. I went to youth camp in Colorado this year and thoroughly enjoyed it, observing the young people there, thinking that possibly the only "territory" many possessed, were their bodies and their lives. If that is all we possess, we too can ask the Lord to increase it for his glory.

Let us emphasize here, that our reasoning minds would have us think that God can only enlarge our coast when everything in our "territory" is in perfect, working order. That is, my feet must be walking perfectly before the Lord, along with my family, my wife, my husband, or my children, before I have boldness to ask, because that is when God will work.

22

The truth is, we don't have to wait to. Rather, when things are not so perfect, is the time to have our territory enlarged for His glory. Note two examples, the first of which is found in Isai. 54. There are deeper truths here, the principal of the barren woman applies beautifully. Verse 1 loudly proclaims, "Sing, O barren". The next verse exhorts "enlarge the place of thy tent.....lengthen thy cords...." Did she wait until she was fruitful to enlarge her tent? No, she began walking in an enlarged tent while yet barren. The second example can be seen with the poor saints of Macedonia. They wanted their territory expanded in regards to giving. They wanted to share in the ministry to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Did they wait until their finances were in perfect order to give? No! They gave themselves, first to the Lord, and then began giving to others, out of their enlarged coast while still poor. The Lord surely saw that there would always be sufficient funds for their expanded territory even as we read in II Cor. 8:1-5 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive

the gift....” And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” Phil. 4:19 likewise records the promise: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”.

Third, “..and that thy hand might be with me ...” - The hand of God speaks to us of the power of God, reminding us of the Holy Spirit. When we ask God to enlarge our territory and he begins to show us just how great a territory he can give us, it can be somewhat overwhelming. The Philippian “race course runners” also tell us of saints who want their “territory” enlarged, for they want all that God has for them. Chapter 2, depicts seven downward steps of our Lord followed by seven steps of His exaltation. There is coming a time when all creation, including Satan, will have to bow the knee to Jesus. It is amazing that there will be a group of people, his bride, who will share in that exaltation. Talk about an expanded territory! Just one small glimpse of this takes your breath away. This is when one really sees the importance of the Hand of God, the power of the Holy Spirit in these lives.

23

This takes us to the fourth and final part of Jabez’ prayer, that we would especially emphasize. “Keep me from evil that it may not grieve me” - Satan would like to come against us in many ways but I wondered if there might be a particular “evil,” with which Jabez was concerned. So I asked the Lord, and my attention was drawn to the last few words of his request - “...that it may not grieve me...” One of the meanings for the word “grieve” is “pain.” Is that not what Jabez means, “causing pain”? Satan will always want to remind us of who we “were” and not of who we “are.” Why? Because if we always see ourselves as we were and not as we are, we will not be able to walk in the land given us. This is illustrated by the 12 spies in Numbers 13. They were sent out to view the land given to Israel by God, Who had called them and considered them “His host.” Ex. 12:41 This means they were God's army, organized for war. But how did these 10 spies see themselves? According to Numbers 13:33 “.....we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” This is what they once were in Egypt, something to be stepped on. Now they are God's army but they did not see themselves as such. They did not believe what God said. So they could not enjoy walking in territory that was theirs.

Joshua and Caleb, the other 2 spies, saw themselves

as they really were – Gods army. Notice the words of faith in Numbers 13:30 “...Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” These mighty men further concluded “ “...for they (the inhabitants) are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us; fear them not.” Num. 14:9 Did not Joshua and Caleb see themselves as who they “are,” and not who they “were?” They took their place as God’s army, not grasshopper, and only these two, of that generation lived to enjoy their inheritance.

It is true that Jabez was once a source of pain, and unprofitable, but not now. Rather he IS the abundantly blessed of God with an enlarged coast, well able to walk in it, because the hand of God is with him. Can you see why Satan would like to keep him in the realm of what he once was?

What does this have to do with us? The fact is: because we are a new creation, and in Christ Jesus; because we possess the life of Christ in these bodies, we have blessings and territory beyond our wildest imaginations. Do you think Satan wants us to walk in our land, to enjoy our blessings? No. One of the ways he employs against us is to have our eyes on who we once were in that first Adam, rather than who we are in Christ Jesus. Because of our new birth, who and what, we once were, is NOT who we are now. We are now a new creation. Paul says it thus: “I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20 We can now walk in a path fitting for **who we are**, so let us start **seeing ourselves** as we really “are”. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus.” God is our Father. The power of the Holy Ghost is here for us. We are well able to possess all the territory God has given us because He is for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, put one foot in front of the other, and take our land.



*Woman was made from the rib of man.  
She was not created from His head---to top Him.  
Nor from His feet---to be stepped on.  
She was made from His side---to be equal to Him,  
From beneath His arm---to be protected by Him.  
Near His heart---to be loved by Him.*

Anon



# THOMAS, CALLED DIDYMUS

When most of us hear the name Thomas, the only thing we remember is “doubting Thomas.” However there is much more about this man for us to understand.

Thomas was one of the twelve, however there is no record of his being called, even as it is with all believers, before we accept the Lord and our name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Our past has passed away and we become a part of the body. There is no record of who we are or who we were.

Furthermore, John eleven informs us that Jesus had been called to heal Lazarus, and the Pharisees have made it known that they want to kill Him. “Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.” V. 16 Thomas was so completely DEDICATED to the Lord, that he was willing to lose his life for Jesus. What about us?

Jesus declared in John 14, 3-5, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” This tells us that Thomas was DIRECTIONLESS. Has the Lord called you to follow him into the kingdom work or ministry? He'll give direction.

Next we come to the text from whence Thomas receives his reputation as a doubter. “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” John 20:24,25 This, however, not the end of the story; for in verses 26 & 27 Jesus appeared again and said to Thomas, “.....be not faithless, but believing.” Our wavering disciple then “..... answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.” V. 28 Now, Thomas has become DOUBTLESS. We too are called to believe God's Word, which is without question 100% accurate 100% of the time.

Thomas was also present, along with six other disciples in chapter 21, when Jesus showed Himself at The Sea of Tiberias,

and “Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him. Who are thou? Knowing that it was the Lord.” We too have been invited to “come and dine.” Will we answer that call and DINE with Him as a guest, or at His right hand as part of the Bride.

We must be dedicated, with direction, without doubting, fully doubtless and, as the bride, who has made herself ready for the most glorious dining ever to be offered.

Ron Holdgrafer

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### *ODE TO HANDEL*

Awake, ye lofty trumpet sounds,  
Arise, ye dead men’s bones.  
Awake, ye saints below the ground,  
For Christ is come to take you home.

26

Sing, ye heavens loud and clear,  
Ye mountains, hills, bow down.  
Ye meadows the time of spring is here,  
Put on your wedding gown.

Ye wiser saints who’ve waited long  
Anticipating this blessed hour.  
Sing, oh sing, the marriage song,  
And hail His mighty power.

For this, the moment I’ve waited for,  
At last, at last, is come.  
Christ has opened up the door,  
Ten thousands is the sum.

Joe Coover

# ISAIAH

*Gene Hawkins*

## Introduction

*Isaiah has often been called the “Miniature Bible,” and rightfully so, for there are 66 books of the Bible, and 66 chapters in the book of Isaiah. Each of those chapters corresponds, exactly and consecutively, with the books of the Bible.*

*Isaiah is divided into two great divisions. Chapters 1 - 39 correspond with the Old Testament, Chapters 40 - 66 with the New. Thus, the first chapter of Isaiah coincides with the book of Genesis. Chapter two correlates with Exodus, while Matthew is found in chapter 40, where the ministry of John The Baptist is announced, and the last chapter, 66, depicts the final book: Revelation. [Ed. Note. A complete outline of Isaiah may be found in “Isaiah The Miniature Bible,” available from “the corn crib.”*

27

## Chapter 1

The Vision of Isaiah

*“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” V. 1*

**T**his entire prophecy is called a vision, simply meaning a conveyance of truth. Habakkuk uses the same terminology referring to the truth of Jesus second coming. “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, . . . . though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Hab. 2:3 There is no doubt that Isaiah, like Daniel, and John, saw visions containing “moving pictures,” which were also written down, but the overall book of Isaiah is recorded as a written vision of words. The major burden of that vision concerns “...Judah and Jerusalem...” and thus we are confronted with the fact that Isaiah, like Daniel, was very much interested in his own people; the Jews. Daniel wrote extensively about the four world empires of Gentile Times, but his heart was centered on the outcome for The Jews. Likewise, the object and burden of Isaiah’s prophecy centers around Jerusalem, wherein is the center of world events in this present day.

Isaiah is a “pre-exile” prophet, his tenure covering a span of four kings, “. . . .Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah . . .,” ---- all of Judah. After the reign of Solomon, God divided the twelve tribes of Israel. Judah and Benjamin were given to Solomon’s son,

Rehoboam, and are known as Judah. The remaining ten tribes were committed to the hand of Jereboam and were called Israel. Out of all the kings who reigned over Israel, there was not one righteous. Judah could boast only 7, and thus it is no mystery as to why Israel, an idolatrous company from the beginning, was sold into captivity quite a number of years before Judah was deported to Babylon.

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me.” V. 2 Isaiah begins his prophecy using the exact same pattern found in Genesis when “God created the heavens and the earth.” Gen. 1:1 It is as though Isaiah calls the creation of the heavens and earth as proof that “the Lord has spoken,” and indeed that is the case. Isaiah’s message continues with the same message, also found in Genesis, for just as the man whom God created rebelled against Him, so verses 2-15 of this chapter record the rebellion of Israel. The remainder of this chapter, however, gives rise to hope, which is anchored by v. 18. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.” Genesis 3:15, & 21 convey that same glorious truth. “And I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman, between thy seed (Satan’s seed) and her seed,” which indeed is Christ. “He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.....Unto Adam also and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothe them.” This is the first message of redemption recorded in scripture, and God Himself preached it, as He shed the blood of the animals and then, with those skins, clothed Adam and Eve. We never again read that Adam complained of being naked, because the covering, which God provided, is symbolic of the righteousness of Christ with which we too are clothed after the blood has been shed. Thus it seems very clear that this beginning chapter of Isaiah beautifully parallels the beginnings recorded in Genesis.

Isaiah enlarges on the fallen condition of Israel beginning in V. 3 God created Adam sinless, rather than holy, and indeed he fell. Likewise, Isaiah declares that Israel also has succumbed to this same fallen nature. “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people doth not consider.” Though Israel is owned by God, yet they refuse to acknowledge Him and it seems they do not have a clue as to

where the bountiful crib of His Word is found. They are further indicted with “Ah, sinful nation. A people laden with iniquity.” V. 4 This is a picture of fallen man, even as in the book of Genesis after the fall. But here, Israel is further seen as “a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers;” and the word “seed,” is absolutely correct, for it bespeaks the fact that man is sinful by nature. We have seen it repeatedly, as innocent babies are born into the world. Parents, and grandparents, think there is no way that they can ever make a mistake, but they are plagued with this seed of a sinful nature. Thus Isaiah continues his assault in verse four announcing that these people are “laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters. They have forsaken the Lord, they provoke the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward.” All of these are sins against God. There is much sin against humanity, which men define as sins, but God is concerned with the attitude, and the sin against Him, as this onslaught continues. “Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.” V. 5 The essence here is, “Why should I punish you anymore. The problem cannot be corrected for the whole nature of man is corrupt.” Notice further: “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.” V. 6 This report of man is all inclusive revealing that there is nothing good in the old creation. “.....There is none righteous, no, not one:” cried Paul. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” Rom. 3:10,11 There is an idea today that there is some good in everyone; no there isn’t! According to these verses, and others like unto them, man is totally corrupt and for this reason God took the entire Adamic creation, down into death with His son, Jesus Christ. Three days later, He brought up a new and holy seed, a new creation, with Jesus as the Head. This verse continues to exploit the depravity of the flesh, from God’s view, asserting that “there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” No one, not even God, could repair and bring any form of goodness out of this old Adamic nature, and the effects of such bruises and sores now spread to the land; “Your country is desolate;.....” V. 7 When men are consumed with sin, and simply surrender to unrighteousness, the land becomes desolate. We have seen it around the world,

and are currently witnessing it in our own nation. Sadly the rest of this verse will be replayed shortly for the entire world. “..... your cities are burned with fire; your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.” Israel could identify with all these things, at the time then present, because all of these conditions were coming to pass during the era of the kings. Spiritual declension was rampant in those days, and God’s Patience was being tested to the limit. Israel had already gone into captivity, and very soon Judah would begin to feel the stifling power of Nebuchadnezzar’s iron hand.

“And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard,....” The daughter of Zion is simply Jerusalem, and in his own poetic way, Isaiah portrays her as a “cottage” or a small shack in the midst of what should have been a very fruitful and a productive vineyard, but indeed it wasn’t. It was rather “As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers;” which ultimately became “As a besieged city.” Jerusalem is nothing like what God intended it to be, and she remains in that state to this very day, surely experiencing the trouble of a “besieged city.” Hope and grace reign eternal, however for though this nation is reduced to shambles, there will always be a remnant wherewith God will begin again. “Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been as unto Gomorrah.” Those two exemplary cities were completely annihilated, but that is not God’s purpose for Israel. Scripture affirms repeatedly that, no matter how spiritually bankrupt this people have been, God has always had a spiritual remnant. Tribulation will come with all its horror and devastation, but still God will preserve His faithful remnant through which He will begin anew with Israel as a new creation and head of the nations. This verse further tells us that if there had not been a remnant, Israel would have been destroyed, meaning that those, who are truly spiritual, hold back the powers of darkness, and the wrath of God.

“Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom;....” V. 10 The prophet does not here speak of the literal Sodom and Gomorrah. He is rather speaking to Jerusalem, **comparing** it, to these two infamous cities. Why? Because, they display the same exact characteristics which invoked God’s wrath in the first place. The answer for them is to “... give ear unto the law of our God.....” The only escape is to heed the law of God, which is not a reference

to the ten commandments, but rather to all of God's Word.

These people of Jerusalem are now chided with their woeful practice of worship. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me?" V. 11 They were, at that time, offering the sacrifices and offerings, which God had ordained, but these had long since ceased to mean anything to The Lord. They had been reduced to only form or ritual, portraying the same religiousness of our day. Thus God declares emphatically "...I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats." The reason God rejected such sacrifices is that His Offering is left out of it. All those levitical offerings were designed to portray Christ and His redemption, and God did not see a reference to Him as they offered these sacrifices. Therefore "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." V. 12-15 New moons, sabbaths, solemn meetings, and the like, had become nothing more than repetitive rituals, and are said to be "trouble" or burdensome, therefore, according to verse 13, He ordered them stopped. He also declared that He would not hear them when they lifted their hands in prayer. Paul cites the reason for God's response in II Timothy 3:5. "They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."

This presents a very bleak picture, but just as Genesis abounds in hope through the redemption in Christ Jesus, Isaiah also holds out God's invitation to Israel. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;" V. 16. This is an exhortation to "wash" in the laver of God's Word (Tit. 3:5) which will not only cleanse, but also empower them to turn away from the evil practices described heretofore. They are further instructed to "Learn to do well;..." meaning that walking in righteousness is a learned process and, again, comes through the glorious knowledge of God's Word. They are next encouraged to "... seek judgment,..."

This word does not carry the meaning of “pouring out judgment,” but rather means a decision, and the inference here, is to seek God’s decision for their lives which will then lead them to “.... relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” V. 17 This latter plea would take their eyes off themselves, long enough to consider how they might be a benefit to others, who are in such dire straits, and then we read the basis for their entire hope. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” V. 18

God’s reasoning both for the nation of Israel, and for all mankind, centers around Calvary. The cleansing of V. 16, along with these sins washed white as snow, is made possible only by the blood of The Lamb. God tells them that they must reason as He does in order to obtain such glorious benefits, even as Adam and Eve experienced in Genesis 3. Such reasoning is rewarded in Verse 19: “If you be willing and obedient you shall eat the good of the land.” This has always been true for the nation of Israel, but it is especially applicable to the end time, after the tribulation period, when Israel has willingly accepted Christ. They will become that obedient new creation and will finally have full access and liberty to “eat the good of the land.”

“But if you refuse and rebel you shall be devoured with the sword:...” V. 20 That has happened over and over again, down through the history of Israel, and it is still very much a reality. The tribulation will bear witness to the fact that those who continue in their path of rebellion will surely be devoured by the sword, and the remainder of this verse tells us why. “....The mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” God says “My word will be fulfilled,” and we know of a surety that He never sends forth an idle message.

The next question is a painful one; asking “How is the faithful city become a harlot?” V. 21 The faithful city is none other than the city of Jerusalem, and it is the center of attention among the nations at this present time. Even their strongest ally, the U.S. seems willing to side with other nations against them. President Obama’s recent address, to the United Nations, condemned Israel for building “illegal settlements.” These are settlements in their own land, and yet they are deemed illegal. Israel has surrendered much land over the years, but it has been quite evident for some time, that Jerusalem itself would one day become the focus of attention, and our current verse is the reason.

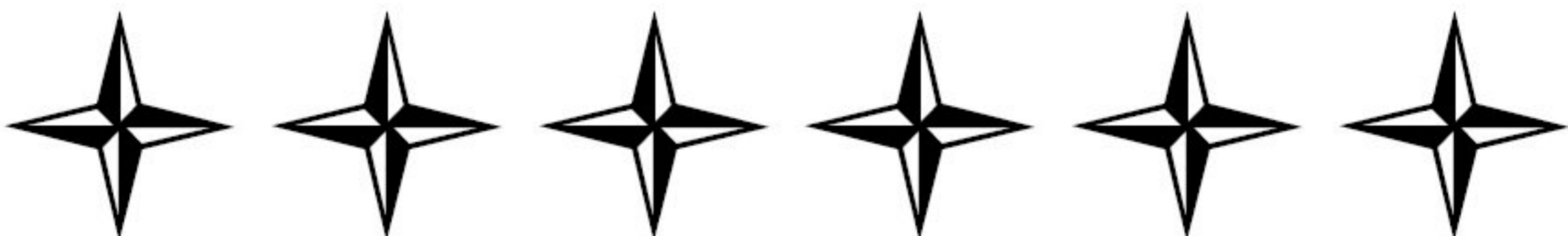


She has forsaken the Lord and become a harlot. He is no longer their Head. They have proven not to be a faithful wife. Hosea was instructed to marry a harlot as an object lesson demonstrating what Israel, as a nation, had done to God. They have played the harlot in trusting other lovers, rather than God. This verse concludes contrasting the fact that "... it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. It was full of judgment. In other words, it was full of doing that which was right. It was full of right decisions; and walking in the ways of the Lord. Righteousness filled its walls, for it displayed the righteousness of Christ, but.....now, even in our day, murderers dwell within and "Thy silver has become dross...." Silver in Scripture is symbolic of redemption. The teaching introduced there, and implemented by the cross, has faded away because they have rejected God's way of redemption in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, "Thy wine mixed with water." The wine is symbolic of the Holy Ghost, but He is, in no wise, leading the nation of Israel today. National Israel is not subject to Him and is thus in a very devastated state of apostasy today, for "Thy princes are rebellious." These princes are their leaders, both political and religious, and they are said to be, "companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." V. 23 They are accused of loving gifts, or taking bribes seeking their own reward, while at the same time, ignoring the plight of the needy.

It is good to have read the last chapter concerning Israel, for we know that their end shall be blessing, even as is described in these next verses. "Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:" V. 24 The enemies here seem to be the nations, which God will judge in order to deliver Israel. That vengeance will be poured out in the seven year tribulation, culminating with the Battle of Armageddon. However, this portion concludes with God directing His undivided attention to Israel. "And I will turn my hand upon **thee**, and purely purge away **thy** dross, and take away all **thy** tin: And I will restore **thy** judges as at the first, and **thy** counsellors as at the beginning: afterward **thou** shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city." V. 25-26 Israel will be restored but they must first be "purged," of such impurities as recorded earlier. After that, true

spiritual judges, and counselors will be appointed and Jerusalem shall once again be called THE city of righteousness. Not only so, but “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, (again God’s decision concerning her) and her converts with righteousness.” V. 27 By the time this takes place, “her converts,” will be among the nations, in fulfillment of the great commission for Israel, found in Matt. 27:19 “Go ye therefore, and teach all **nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” This glorious advantage for Israel is followed by the promise of “...the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.” Such judgment will know no difference between Jew and Gentile. Unbelief has always had its consequence, and the next verse adds further fuel to the fires of judgment. “For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,...” V. 29 “They” is undoubtedly a reference to the nations who, like Israel, trusted in the “oaks” of strength offered by the best efforts of men. These failed Israel and these nations will likewise be ashamed, or disappointed. The message continues as “.... ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.” V. 30 These have made their fleshly choices and they have come to naught. The beautiful gardens they sought have eluded them and the strength represented by the oaks, has simply faded away. Such hope for “...the strong shall be as tow, (the refuse of flax) and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.” This simply means that those who trust in strength shall find their end in the fires of judgment.

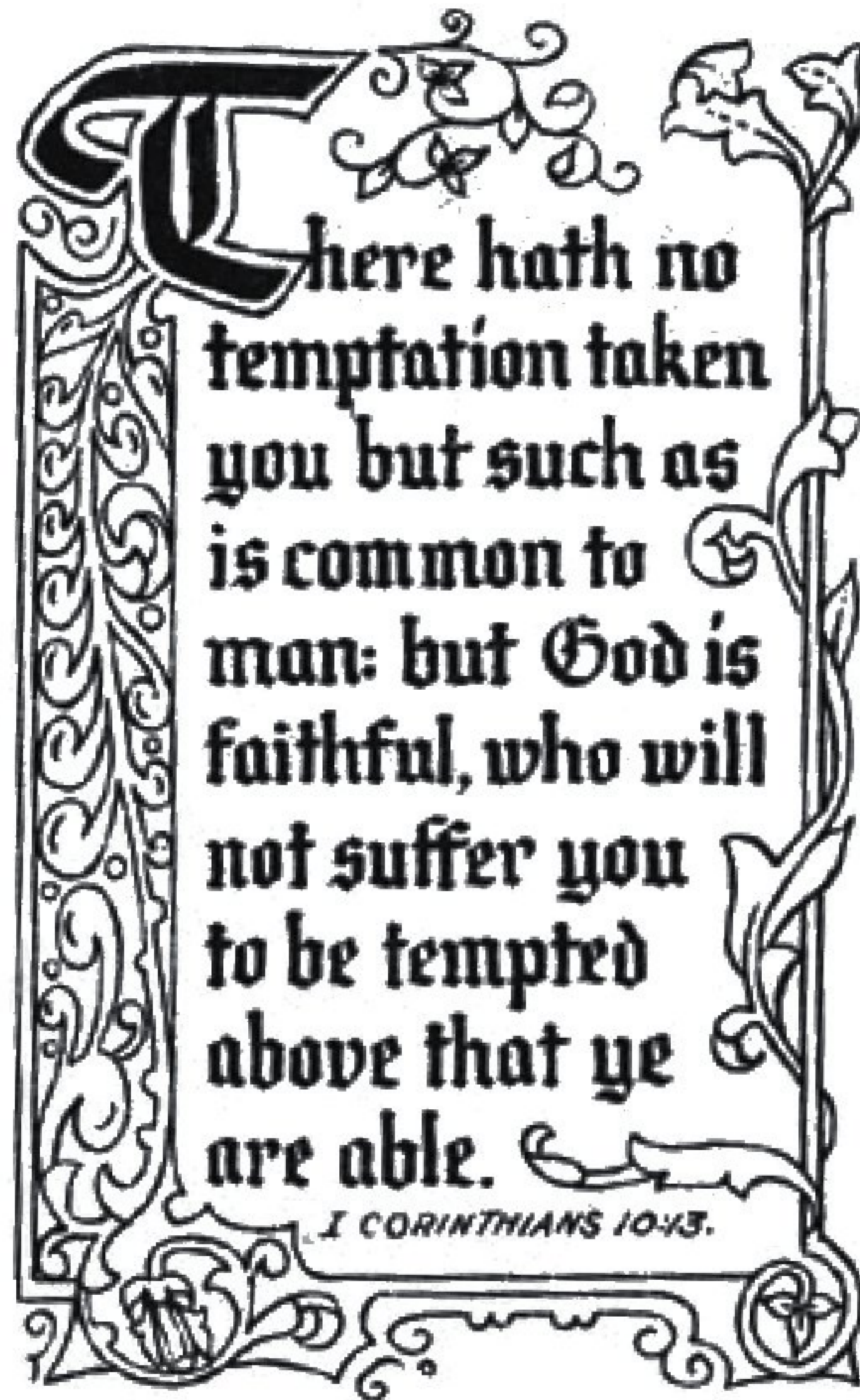
*(To Be Continued)*



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 Destiny of the Wicked  
 Diamonds in the Rough  
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 Earnest but Wrong  
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 Extra! Extra!  
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 Fear of the Lord  
 First Day of the Week  
 Five Much Mores  
 Five Consequences

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 Glossolalia  
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