

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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'Loving His Appearing'

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A
Christmas
and Message

"I am the Way,
the Truth,
and the Life."

St. John 14: 6

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Glory to
God
in the highest,
and on earth
peace,
good will
toward men.
LUKE 2:14.

To Thee, then, O Jesus, this day of Thy birth,
Be glory and honor through heaven and earth:
True Godhead Incarnate, Omnipotent Word!
Oh, hasten! Oh, hasten! to worship the Lord.

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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Rev. 6:9-10

3 **T**he above query has been forthcoming numerous times, down through the ages, as men have cried out “how long?” Such plaintive cries were uttered because they wondered aloud as to when their expectations would finally come to fruition. The time depicted here **will not come to pass** until well into the tribulation period, after the bulk of the Church is already in heaven. However, as we have emphasized in these pages in recent months, the harbingers of Jesus’ Coming, which will intensify as the Day Of Judgment arrives, are already here. Martyrdom is one of them as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:9. “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.” While Israel is the nation which is especially targeted here, present day events declare plainly that anyone associated with Christianity, or the True God of Heaven, indeed The God of Israel, will be assaulted. The recently emerged terrorist group ISIL has made no secret of the fact that those who are perceived to be Christians are especially in their cross hairs, and we have seen reports that even children have been victimized when they refused to convert to Islam. Almanar News published this record: “The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group has continued its effort to destroy the Christian faith in Iraq, as reports come out revealing the extensive killing of Christians, including crucifixions and the beheadings of children. They are systemically beheading children, and mothers, and fathers. The world hasn't seen an evil like this for a generation. There's actually a park in Mosul that they've actually beheaded children and put their heads on a stick,” Mark Arabo, national spokesman for Iraqi Christians told CNN.

In July, the ISIL captured Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, as they looted Christian homes, desecrated cemeteries, destroyed tombs of biblical prophets, ruined churches, and pulled down crosses.

Christians were told that they could escape this harassment and death by paying a fine. However, Arabo says the ISIL broke this so-called

promise.

"The letter that they sent out with those three items (convert, pay a fine or die), they did ask to pay a fine but actually after they pay a fine, they (ISIL militants) are actually taking over their wives and their daughters and making them into their wives. So really it's convert or die, face death by the sword," explained Arabo.

"They've marked the red stamp of death on Christian homes and basically saying we know who you are and if you come back, you will get killed. That's why we're saying this is a Christian holocaust within our midst and the world community cannot turn a blind eye," said Arabo. "They are absolutely killing every Christian they see. This is a genocide in every sense of the word. They want everyone to convert and they want Sharia law to be the law of the land."

We are assured by God's Word that such atrocities as these will wax worse and worse, as time goes on. The nations simply do not have an answer, nor any kind of specific strategy to combat such terrorism. Both political and religious leaders, repeatedly issue statements of condemnation against such bloodshed, but no one seems to really DO anything about it.

God did give those "souls under the altar" a definite answer to their question, "how long?," as He informed them "that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Rev. 6:11 The message here is that this slaughter will continue until God has accomplished His purposes, finally judging the antichrist, and thus putting a stop to it.

These ungodly terrorists are, in fact, lashing out against God! The good news is that The God of Heaven and Earth, will not stay silent forever.

Political leaders are very much concerned that ISIL will not remain confined to the Middle East, and sadly we see evidence of Islam invading our own country, as well as many others around the world. The disturbing part is that America, once a strong Christian Nation, is actually inviting it to happen. It is the same truth which has been in evidence throughout Scripture. Darkness will ensue when men refuse to walk in The Light. Paul declared in Eph 5:11 & 13. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." We have been appalled at the Light which has been rejected in this once enlightened nation of America, but men continue to try and literally "get rid" of God. It has come

gradually, but the fruits of their efforts are surely coming forth in a bountiful harvest. One of the latest proofs of that, in regard to the aforementioned Islam, is the report of a Muslim Celebration at The National Cathedral in Washington D.C. Bro. Franklin Graham, reportedly wrote on his Facebook page "Tomorrow, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. — one of the most prominent Episcopal churches in America — will host a Muslim prayer service to Allah.

"It's sad to see a church open its doors to the worship of anything other than the One True God of the Bible who sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth to save us from our sins.

"Jesus was clear when He said, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

This same article also presents "the other side," of this debate as the proponents of this event justify their actions.

"The Muslim prayer service, called a "Jummah" or Friday call to prayer, was hosted by Ebrahim Rasool, the South African ambassador to the U.S., who is Muslim, and the Rev. Canon Gina Campbell, **pastor of the cathedral.....** The Rev. Campbell said the cathedral was a "place of prayer for all people," adding, "Let us stretch our hearts and let us seek to deepen mercy for we worship the same God."

5

The Rev. Gary Hall, dean of the cathedral, further added in a report by the Washington Times: "If we could inspire those of us who are not extremists to find a way to be together ... we could begin to build something that will bless us, bless our children, bless all the people on the earth."

The Rev. Campbell told the Times, "We here at the cathedral have embraced a steep challenge to grow in our identity as a house for people. This prayer marks a historic moment. This prayer symbolizes a grand hope for our community. As we get to know each other, more bridges are built and there is less room for hate and prejudice to come between us."

We would very heartily support the dissension of Bro. Franklin Graham who "disagreed strongly, as did Christine Weick, 50, from Michigan, who rose in the midst of the prayer service and shouted, "Jesus Christ died on that cross. He is the reason we are to worship only Him. Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior...."

The opinions of these supporters sounds very much like the atmosphere which prevailed at the Tower of Babel. "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Gen.11:4 Then, as now, men are more concerned with their own efforts rather than the desires of God. "Let us build **US** a city,....let us make **US a name** lest we be scattered...."

The Rev. Campbell declared that "we worship the same

God.” That is an absolute falsehood for Allah is not God. The God of Israel, The God of Heaven and Earth, has gone to great lengths to separate Himself and declare that He is the ONE and Only True God. The ten judgments which fell on Egypt were directed specifically against the gods of Egypt. When Israel marched triumphantly into Canaan they were instructed “...to destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:...” Num. 33:52 This was in reference to the gods of the Amorites and all the other idolatrous inhabitants of that land.

God also made Himself exclusively known as the “the LORD” (Jehovah), using the prophet Elijah to emphatically declare it. God made it very clearly evident that Baal could, in no wise, be confused with Himself, and we might add, He will one day demonstrate this same glorious distinction through the two witnesses. Rev. 11:3-6 Presently, Jesus, Whom Islam soundly rejects, is most assuredly God’s Witness of Himself, as was emphatically declared above by Franklin Graham and Christine Weick. Scripture also bears witness: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the *only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

6

No matter how much we may disagree with the religious ungodliness and denial of the truth and light of God’s Word, scripture is very plain in declaring that such darkness, and the moral decay which results from it, will continue until God is forced to bring His judgment upon a world that has rejected Him.

Those souls under the altar were rewarded with God’s answer to their question, “how long?” and, as noted above, others have asked that same question in regard to exactly the same time period.

Isaiah’s inquiry came after he had seen “...the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” Isa. 6:1 The prophet himself becomes figurative of the entire nation of Israel which will be purified and ready to minister the Word of God, as Isaiah was cleansed with a “live coal,” from “off the altar.” Isa. 6:6 After that, he received his “commission” to preach God’s message to a rather rebellious people. V. 9-10 Then comes the question “.....Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed

men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.” Isa 6:11-12 Isaiah’s question seems to be “how long shall I preach?” The local fulfillment of this prophecy came to pass with the Babylonish captivity, but the real restoration, announced in V.13 declaring that there will be a remnant, “that is....in it (the land) shall be a tenth, and it shall return,so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof,” will only be fulfilled after Christ literally takes His place “...sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”

The cities being “wasted without inhabitant,” which must come to pass before Jesus becomes King of kings, and Israel is restored, is already clearly manifest during these last days. Jesus prophesied of the coming desolation which will descend upon Jerusalem, and that destruction has already begun. Much political trouble has besieged this city over the past few years, but the recent attack on the synagogue there seems to put an exclamation point on the fact that this is an Islamic attack aimed at The Very God Of Israel.

7 The Washington Post ran this headline: **“Fear of deadly ‘religious war’ between Jews and Muslims raised after synagogue attack.”** The story that follows asserts that this is indeed a religious war between Jews and Muslims. “Israelis and Palestinians expressed fear Wednesday that their decades-old conflict was moving beyond the traditional nationalist struggle between two peoples fighting for their homelands and spiraling into a raw and far-reaching religious confrontation between Jews and Muslims.

The threat — perhaps more accurately the dread — of an incipient but deadly “religious war” was expressed by Muslim clerics, Christian leaders and Jewish Israelis one day after a pair of Palestinian assailants, wielding meat cleavers and a gun, killed five Israelis, including a prominent American Israeli rabbi, in a Jerusalem synagogue.”

This article further reveals that the major problem is over a religious site. “For weeks, Jerusalem has been a center of clashes, the protests and deadly attacks that began over one of the city’s major flash points: a contested religious site known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as the Temple Mount.

Jewish activists have been pressing the Israeli government to insist that Jews be allowed to pray on the raised esplanade, which also harbors the al-Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam.”

There will undoubtedly be many more confrontations in

this city, both for religious and political reasons, before Jerusalem finally succumbs to its wholesale evacuation after the antichrist sets up his image in the temple. Until then, we too cry out as did Isaiah “LORD how long?”

Finally Daniel records one who wanted to know “How long?” Dan. 12:6 This is in reference to the “vision concerning the daily sacrifice,” a specific event associated with the days in which we live. The answer is that from the time the daily sacrifice is taken away until the time that the temple is cleansed or restored will be 2300 days. Dan. 8:14 Some have tried to say that the prophecy was only for the time then present when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the land and, according to history, desecrated the temple by offering a sow upon the altar. Although we know that the temple order was resumed, as demonstrated in the time of Jesus, there is absolutely no record in scripture or history which records the prophesied 2300 days. Not only so but Daniel is specifically told “...Understand, O son of man: for at **the time of the end shall be the vision.**” V. 17

Scripture is quite plain that the daily sacrifice will be taken 8 away 30 days before the tribulation begins. Many have longed to see evidence that such blood sacrifices have been restored, but to date, nothing concrete has emerged. We do know that such an order must at some point be restored, if it is to be taken away, but the question would be “how long,” or when?

Many of us continue to cry out, consciously or unconsciously, “Lord how long,” until Jesus comes again? We have seen over and over again that the signs marking that Glorious Advent are all around us, and increasing by the day. We are often hard pressed in writing this feature because the rapid fire events of our day are actually “old news,” by the time this paper is distributed.

We have been much encouraged, over the years by Paul’s words to the Thessalonians. “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, ...But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, ...Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;For they that sleep sleep in the night;But let us, who are of

the day, be sober, putting on the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.." I Thess. 5:1-10

The apostle tells us here that we surely do know the "times and the seasons," or that we are acutely aware of the signs announcing the soon return of Jesus. We are also informed that, though all these "things" or signs of Matt. 24 shall be fulfilled "...of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matt. 24:36 Paul likewise agrees, saying that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." We would ask the question: if Jesus is truly coming as a thief, would He announce that entrance with such a visible, and pin point, sign as the taking away of the daily sacrifice? It is for this reason that we are convinced Jesus will probably come for the full overcoming band known as the "bride of Christ," before such a momentous event takes place. Thus our hearts rejoice, for even when we see various prophecies being fulfilled before our very eyes, we full well know that He could arrive at any moment and snatch us away to glory. We can see that some of them such as the daily sacrifice and the era of "peace and safety," may not arrive until AFTER we are in glory.

So it is that we will continue to watch for any indication of any religious freedoms being allowed the Jews, which just might be a precursor to their ability to resume their full religious economy of offering blood sacrifices. However, our hearts must be consumed with walking in the light He has given, refusing to be lulled to sleep by the darkness, and the very passive, lukewarm, Laodicean attitude, which is sweeping across this entire globe. Our eyes must be trained intently on the heavens as we earnestly believe the promise that He will take us out of this world before the day of "wrath," or tribulation of which Paul speaks here. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. 10:37

**“LOOKING UNTO JESUS THE AUTHOR
AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH;.....”**

Heb. 12:2

CHRISTMAS DREAMS

Jack W. Bannister

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" - Matthew 1: 18- 20.

No story is so tender and precious as the one relating the birth of the Son of God into this world. In the first two chapters of this book of Matthew, we discover five dreams that have an important bearing on the welfare and future of Jesus. There is a fulfilling of a particular Scripture connected with each dream, which lends divine import to the place they occupy in these verses.

FIRST - THE DREAM OF FAITH

Joseph was a man of faith. He loved God and His Word. His will was to be in conformity to God's revealed will. We can imagine his surprise and shock to find the love of his life to be in such a condition. This was the one he had hoped to spend the rest of his days loving and cherishing - and worshiping the Lord together. Now that dream seemed to be shattered. Of course, the natural impulse would be to cancel all the wedding arrangements. After mature deliberation, he had decided to do exactly that. Yet, his love for Mary never lost its lustre. He did not want to expose her to public humiliation.

But, while Joseph was pondering these things, God revealed to him the purpose of it all - Holy Ghost conception! This was no ordinary dream. This was a vision in sleep, that came directly from the angel of God. Think of the lifted burden, the relieved heart of this man; to know that, after all, his choice of love was and had always been true. Such joy was welling up in his soul that he, no doubt, shed tears of rapturous relief at the message.

There is a good lesson here; that is, that things are not always as bad as they, may seem to be. No doubt, Satan tried to defeat Joseph by his thoughts; but God would not allow him to

be defeated. God knew the man He had chosen to rear His Holy Son. He was putting the Baby Jesus in Joseph's care, and He knew Joseph would not fail Him.

The Scripture that is fulfilled in this dream is Isaiah 1: 14 - "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son ... " Behold! In the book of Isaiah, when that word occurs, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances; in this case, it is "God with us" in the Person of Jesus! What a dream! There has been none like it before or since. "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 1:23. The present tenses of the Hebrew words vividly convey the future event in its certainty, as if it were already accomplished. This is the first Old Testament prophecy to find fulfillment in the New Testament; and it appropriately refers directly to the Son of God. So Joseph obeyed the message of the dream.

SECOND - DREAM OF FOREWARNING

11

"And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way" - Matthew 2: 12.

The word "warned" means "to give response to one who asks or consults." They had sought counsel of God, and He gave them the answer in the dream. They were truly wise men. They were not fooled by the hypocrisy of Herod. The Lord had revealed to them that the star was Christ's star, and that the young Child in the house with Mary was truly God and Man; so it is not so far-fetched for God to speak to them in this manner. We read of them in the Bible, only in this one place; but what a part they played in God's program. Jerusalem heard about the birth of the Shepherd of Israel, because of their arrival (verses three and six).

The Scripture fulfilled in connection with this dream is found in verse eighteen, and is taken from Jeremiah 31: 15.

THIRD - DREAM OF FLIGHT

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him" - Matthew 2: 13.

Think of that! Could not He who created the world, He who sets up kings and upsets them - could He not with one blast of His breath obliterate this puny man Herod? Yes, He could; but that was not God's purpose concerning His Son. Jesus was to take no exceptional place in this world from the common lot of men. He took the lowest place - the place of a Servant - and in this His humiliation was complete. How manifest was God's care of His Son, yet there was no display of His power.

Think of the long trip across the Sinai desert. The heat would be almost unbearable. The trip was long and arduous. Joseph had no shiny limousine to convey his family across the rocky barren wilderness. There were no motels in which to stay when they were exhausted from the journey. And, of course, there were the wild beasts of the desert to contend with. But, God had spoken, and the word was "flee"; and Joseph fled in obedience to the voice of the angel.

This trip to Egypt is a direct fulfillment of Hosea 11: 1 - "... and called My Son out of Egypt." We would not think at first sight that it was speaking of Christ - only Israel. Though Israel was the national son, yet Christ was the greater Son in God's view. God goes to great lengths to fulfill His Word; on this we can rest assured.

12

FOURTH- DREAM OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young Child's life. And he arose, and took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel" - Matthew 2: 19-21.

This dream is closely connected with the preceding one, as it tells of the return trip of the holy family. We are not told how long they stayed in Egypt, but we know that God had not been idle while they were away. He had eliminated all those who sought to slay His Son. What care and love.

FIFTH - DREAM OF FULFILLMENT

"But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city

called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" Matthew 2:22,23.

Joseph still had concern about the enemies of the Child Jesus, and did not have faith to go back to his former home. All his former life is now past - his friends, the place where he grew up to manhood, his place of employment; these are all past. When Jesus came into Joseph's life, all things were changed. That is not strange to those who have accepted Jesus into their hearts; for "all things are become new" in Christ. His going to Nazareth is a direct fulfillment of Scripture, namely Isaiah 11: 1 - "And there shall come forth a twig out of the stock (stem) of Jesse, and a shoot (Nazareth) out of his roots shall bear fruit" - W.E. Vine. Jesus spent His youth there. He waited God's time to bring Him forth and reveal Him as the Messiah of Israel. This is also a hint of the waiting of Christ now, for God to give Him the word to come and take out of Egypt (the world) His sons that are awaiting the Voice from Heaven. And this, friends, is not a dream but a glorious reality!

13

TWO MINISTERING TREES

Little Christ Child, I have found Thee
In a manger's sturdy arms.
The first resting place man gave Thee
Shielding Thee from earth's alarms.
By a saw and plane and hammer
Some fair tree Thy manger made.
Glad to be a tree no longer
But a crib where Thou art laid.
Little Christ Child grown to manhood,
I have found Thee with us yet.
Now another tree upholds Thee
While you pay sin's awful debt.
Thy last resting place man gave Thee
Was a tree with wide embrace.
From a crib to cross and glory,
Love covers now the human race.

John Wright Follette

The End of the Conduit

“Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.” Isa. 7:3

These words were spoken to Isaiah, telling him to go with his son to a certain place, defined accurately for us. It was given to him in a time of trouble for Judah—two armies were on the way to war against Judah. The King, Ahaz, was dreadfully disturbed, so the Lord sends Isaiah to meet him, taking his son to the above spot. There is no doubt that there is deep significance in the fact of that certain place. It was a sign, as we are distinctly told. Shear-jashub means "a remnant shall return." The distinction of the meeting place has two parts—first, to the end of the conduit of the upper pool; second, to the highway of the fuller's field. Here we have a geographical position changed into a Messianic prophecy.

Notice, Isaiah is to go to the very end of the conduit of the upper pool where it pours its life-giving waters into Jerusalem, bringing them down from the upper pool to quench the thirst of the needy. The conduit simply means a pipe which conducted the water from the pool to Jerusalem. The "end" is the only place where we may drink from a pipe. The word for "pool" is "berekah" and is familiar to many as meaning blessing. But notice it is the "upper" pool that is mentioned, which is interpreted by many as the "Most High." Therefore, the meaning here would be that the end of the conduit was the only place we could get the blessing of the Most High God.

We know well that Christ alone is the channel, or conduit, whereby the blessing of God can come upon poor sinful man. And the end is the place where He died and was raised from the dead—He is the End of the Conduit of the Upper Pool. Calvary has made the way for those blessings from the upper pool. the only way. We take our stand there in trouble, expectant that the Most High will pour out His blessings. Then there is added "to the highway of the fuller's field," which we must consider. The highway speaks of a path clearly defined by being a higher part of the surrounding land, in order that folk may walk without soiling their feet. It led upward; thus, if the conduit marked the way of getting the waters of salvation from above, the highway emphasizes the clean, holy path of the one who drinks of these waters. Proverbs gives us the truth of this. "The highway of the righteous is to depart from evil." It is the way of holiness—Isaiah 35:8. It is "the highway of the fuller's field," or the field of him who makes soiled garments clean. These garments spiritually refer to our habits which are changed as we drink of the waters from the upper pool. Our feet are to walk on the clean highway. Thus, here we have sovereign grace linked with practical responsibility, as we continually note in the Apostle Paul's writings. The provisional, or God's, side comes first—then man's part. The life received leads upward to the path of practical holiness.

Author Unknown

J-E-S-U-S

Paul Smith

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matt. 1:21

The Name JESUS is a Name of destiny. This Name signified God's purpose in sending His Son to the earth. He came to be the Saviour of all mankind; and, thru faith in this Name, all men may be saved. During His sojourn on the earth, Jesus was a Name associated with shame. The religious world despised that Name. It was a Name of mockery. Little did the people of the world realize what importance would be placed on that Name JESUS. It is no less true today. Men will speak the Name "God," and acknowledge that there is an eternal Being, but they despise the Name of Jesus. His Name is used as a by-word. But this Name has eternal significance; and there will come a day when all men must acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

15 In Phil. 2:9-11 we have a picture of Christ's exaltation. In the previous verses we have a view of His deep humiliation. He is seen as becoming a man of no reputation. He was further humiliated to the place of servitude. His humiliation even took Him to death, even the shameful death of the cross. People laughed at this man as He hung upon the cross. There was nothing about His appearance then, to indicate that He would one day be the Sovereign of the universe. The world little realized the importance of that day. Neither do they recognize its significance today. But the time will come when God will make good, His words to His Son. He has taken this Name, which was so despised, and placed it above every other name in the universe. Shortly every knee in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, will bow at the mention of that Name. Every tongue shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

During the Church Age too, this Name is of utmost importance. After His resurrection and ascension, His disciples were given the authority to use that Name as a pledge of God's power. There is power in that Name, when used in faith. Throughout the book of Acts we note the apostles' frequent use of the Name of Jesus in healing the sick, casting out demons,

and raising the dead. The early believers were threatened against preaching in that Name; but Peter boldly declared to the authorities, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

What made this Name so different from other names? Why is the Name of Jesus so powerful? The answer to these questions is -because the Name of Jesus stands for authority. Before Jesus went to the cross, He spoke these wonderful words to His disciples: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it." Here is the key to unlock heaven's door to man. This doesn't mean that we can use this Name as some sort of mystical magic. We must speak this Name in faith, or it means nothing. Asking in the Name of Jesus means that we can believe for no more than what God has said that Jesus will BE to us, and DO for us. The purpose of our asking is that the Father may be glorified in the Son. In Acts 3, when the lame man was healed, Peter said that God has "glorified His Son Jesus." This Name stands for authority as Head of the Church. All church activities are to be done in that Name. We honour God the Father and glorify His Son Jesus when we, thru the power of the Spirit, lay hold of the spiritual provisions in the Scriptures. The Triune God is honoured when we give Jesus the place that is due Him. 16

At this season of the year Jesus is pictured as a little Babe in a manger. This little Baby was God's answer to Satan's plan to rob God of His glory, and wreck humanity. The angels' words sound out as clear and true today as they did when spoken almost two thousand years ago. Satan cannot abide in the same place where Jesus dwells. At the sound of that beautiful Name, the devil and his forces must retreat. It is true, it is the sweetest Name we know, and it is also the most powerful Name. It stands for the work of redemption. It is a pledge that God will fulfill His Word to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All God's purposes concerning mankind depend on this Man Jesus. He was a little Baby without a cradle. He was a Boy without a normal home life. He was a Man without a great following. And He died alone. But God has seen to it that He is exalted. And there will come a day when the whole

universe will bow to Him. How good it is to bow our knees today, and raise our voices in praise to Him. The Father will not tire of hearing that Name spoken in love and faith. We are also speaking that Name in hope saying, as the Apostle John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."



GIVE AS HE GAVE

Give as the morning that flows out of heaven, give as the waves when their channel is riven, give as the free air and sunshine are given, lavishly, utterly, carelessly given. Not the waste drops of thy cup overflowing, not the faint sparks of thy hearth ever glowing, not the pale bud from June's roses glowing. Give as He gave who gave you to live.

Pour out thy life like the rush of a river, wasting its waters forever and ever, through the burnt sands that reward not the river, silent or songful thou nearest the sea. Scatter thy life as the summer shower's pouring. What if no bird through the pearl-rain is soaring? What if no blossom looks upward adoring? Look to the Life that was lavished for thee!

Give though thy heart may be wasted and weary, laid on the altar all ashen and dreary, though from its pulses a faint miserere beats to thy soul the sad passage of fate; bind it with cords of unshrinking devotion; smile at the song of its restless emotion; 'tis the stern hymn of eternity's ocean; hear, and in silence thy future await.

So the wild wind strews its perfumed caresses, evil and thankless the desert it blesses, bitter the wave that its soft pinion presses; never it ceaseth to whisper and sing. What if the hard heart give thorns for thy roses? What if on rocks thy tired bosom reposes? Sweetest is music with minor-keyed closes. Fairest the vines that on ruin will cling.

Almost the day of thy giving is over. Ere from the grass dies the bee-haunted clover, thou wilt have vanished from friend and from lover. What shall thy longing avail in the grave? Give as the heart gives whose fetters are breaking, life, love, and hope, all thy dreams, and thy waking. Soon, Heaven's river, thy soul fever slaking, thou shalt know God and the gift that He gave.

Rose-Terry Cooke

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

. . . *From the Editor*

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Lk. 2:13

This had to have been a spectacular sight as God chose to make the first announcement of the Savior to shepherds, rather than to elite royalty couched in the palaces of gold. Thus the very Creator of the Universe, was born in a common stable, amidst surroundings so very familiar, and comfortable, to these lowly shepherds.

There is a definite order to the message conveyed to them by this magnificent heavenly choir. First, the birth of this “Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,” was for the purpose of bringing “Glory to God in the highest,” a tribute to He Whose dwelling is in the heights of the heavens. Secondly such an advent would provide peace on earth, and third, “good will toward men” was now possible.

Jesus accomplished many things when He ventured into this world, but He came primarily to **glorify His Father**. He would provide all the intricate benefits of redemption for this poor needy creature whom He had created, but the overall objective of The Faithful Son was to glorify and please God, as John records “I do always those things that please him.” John 8:29

“**Peace on earth,**” is next, and though the provision has been made, this world as a whole, in no wise, reaps the benefits of it. Men of our day are constantly talking peace, but it remains acutely elusive because they refuse the very Prince of Peace Who Alone ensures it. The good news is that the invitation for such peace remains readily available to all men, who would accept this Glorious “Saviour,” and it is actually two-fold. We obtain peace **WITH** God the moment we receive Jesus and become **CHILDREN OF GOD**, rather than enemies. Sadly, there are many Christians who limit themselves only to this experience. However, we can also pursue the peace **OF** God as Paul instructed the Philippians.

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:7 This is the very peace that will sustain us, even in the tremendously chaotic circumstances with which we are almost constantly surrounded in this present world, and all such benefit is “through Jesus Christ.”

The third blessing in this order is “**good will to men.**” The word means “satisfaction, delight, or kindness,” all attributes that can never be displayed by natural man, but are inherent to the life of Christ implanted in us by virtue of the new birth. Scripture is very plain that we can never impart unto others what we do not possess ourselves. Thus, we can only have “good will to men,” to the degree that we have appropriated those glorious new creation traits from Christ. He provides satisfaction, delight and kindness unto us in actual experience and we, in turn are able to show the same glorious favor unto those around us.

19 We must follow the same path as these exemplary shepherds, when the “the angels were gone away from them into heaven,” and they said “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste,....” Time is also of the essence for us to come into the Presence of that “which The Lord has made known unto us.” After that, these changed humble shepherds “made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.” Lk. 2:15-17 Not only so, but “...the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.” V. 20 Glorifying Him must also become the first priority of our lives!

GH

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*President's Day Weekend Convention @ Living Waters Tabernacle
February 13-15, 2015 Denver, Colorado*

Come join like-minded saints for a time of fellowship and encouragement in the things of eternity during this annual gathering. Sermons, studies, and plenty of food will be provided throughout the weekend. You won't want to miss it - you'll be refreshed in the Lord!

THREE LOVERS OF CHRIST'S APPEARING

Mary M. Bodie

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night..... Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” I Thessalonians 5:1,2 & Luke 21:36.

At the time of the first advent of Christ, there were a number of Israel who were in expectation of His appearing and His Kingdom. They were divinely illuminated. The soon coming of Christ had been revealed to them. It is true that they were in the minority, as compared to the whole nation. The latter were either in entire unbelief as to His advent, or held the fact in a formal, intellectual way. It had no bearing whatever upon their life in its practical, everyday outworking. But there were some others that were of a different class. They really believed in the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. God always had a remnant who were waiting for the Kinsman-Redeemer and were overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil in consequence. The time of the Lord's advent was no exception to this rule. There were a faithful few waiting for Him. 20

Three of these unusual characters of that period stand out of the picture in a most emphatic manner. We are assured that these three personages wonderfully characterize the full over comers of the present time, who will see Him first when He appears. They feature them in a threefold aspect. Let us look at these three in detail.

FIRST IS SIMEON. "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple" - Luke 2:25-27.

SIMEON means "hearing," which is the emphatic point with which to commence. He heard

the voice of God. He was in communication with heaven. We can be nothing to God and get nowhere in the spiritual sense, until our ears are opened to hear the Lord. We must be awakened by the Spirit and receive a new life which is alive unto God. SIMEON heard God speak and thus he became a "just" man - (referring to his standing before God). And he was a "devout" man (as to his state). He showed before men that he was a righteous man before God. His friends and neighbors knew that he was different from others. He was exemplary in his everyday life: a man that was upright, downright, inright, outright, and all right; and they respected him, even if they did not heed everything that he said. They might even think he was too religious, but they could find no fault with his dealings with his fellowmen. He would rather take evil, be misunderstood, misjudged, and defrauded, than wrong any one.

21 And he was waiting, really waiting and watching and longing, for "the Consolation of Israel," the Messiah, the Comforter of His people. The Holy Ghost was upon him. How often we read of the Holy Ghost in relation to him. It is surely significant, especially as regards the typical aspect. The antitype of Simeon must be filled with the Holy Spirit, is the lesson that is most emphatic. Not only must these later Simeons be just and devout; but the Holy Ghost must be on them and in them. Simeon received a revelation by the Spirit "that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." And so must these overcoming, just, and devout saints at the end of the age. Is that not wonderful? They will have the assurance that they will see Christ and not death; for that is the force of the language, when seen in connection with latter day saints.

They will meet Christ first and so escape the appointment with death - Hebrews 9:27. That is the only possible way to evade that rendezvous. Simeon did not escape it; for it was not the time. But he saw the Messiah before he died, even as the Lord promised; and he was comforted and encouraged by the fulfillment of the Word of the Lord. And we would emphasize this point. The revelation that was given by the Spirit of God came to pass. It did

not fail. And neither will the revelation which has been given to us, that we shall not see death; but we shall see the Christ instead. What a hope! What a glorious hope is set before the Church today. Some may look in the face of Christ their Friend and Consoler, instead of in the face of death their enemy and tyrant. Simeon could not expect this great climax of his faith, but overcoming saints today may. The promise is that we shall not all sleep; but some shall remain alive unto the coming of the Lord, and be changed and caught up to meet Him in the air. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord," the inspired writer adds.

Simeon, we repeat, was a man full of the Holy Ghost. He came by the Spirit into the temple, at the very time that the parents brought in the Child Jesus. He was there at the very moment that the desire of his heart was to be fulfilled. His dream had come true. He looked into the face of His Messiah for whom he had waited and watched. It was too good to be true. And the marvel is that his faith was not daunted by the fact that the Messiah was a little Babe. No! He was full of faith. He knew he held in his possession God's salvation. He did not see the apparent weakness of the Savior, but the Almightyness of God. He was beside himself with delight, as he took the Infant in his arms. Oh, the wonder of it, the Christ has come! He is looking into His face. Then notice what happens. He prophesies, saying: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word: for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and The Glory of Thy people Israel" - Luke 2:29-32. And that was not all. He also prophesied of the rejection of Christ and His death and resurrection in his words to Mary, as to the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and the "Sign which shall be spoken against" - referring to Jesus. Mary's suffering was also touched upon in the following words, "(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Simeon's faith must be manifested in these last day antitypes. They too must look away from

handicaps, weaknesses, and limitations. They must look to the Almighty God and His power, to fulfill His own Word. He is not weak. He is not limited in any measure. God's salvation was wrapped up in a Babe, but it has been worked out. He was the Son of God. He died in weakness depending upon God to raise Him up by His power, and He was not disappointed; and we will not be either, if our sufficiency is of Him. God is our salvation. And we prophesy of Him and His power and ability to accomplish that which He has ordained shall be done. Nothing can hinder God doing for us what He has promised, except our unbelief. Some saints of this glorious privileged Grace Age, are going to be taken to heaven without dying. God has said it and He shall do it. Helplessness won't hinder Him. It will give Him the opportunity. The little ones, those who believe Him, whose sufficiency and strength He is, those who have no might, but depend upon Him in everything, they will be the ones who will go at the first trumpet blast. They are looking to God to take them up. They are prophesying of His purposes. All these characteristics that we have noted and emphasized in Simeon, must be found in them. Are we one of these lovers of Christ's appearing, for whom there is laid up a crown? II Timothy 4:8.. Let us ask ourselves that question.

SECOND IS ANNA. "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" - Luke 2:36-38.

ANNA, meaning "gracious," the daughter of Phanuel, "the face of God," was one of the tribe of Aser, the "happy" one; hence, no marvel she was also in expectation of the coming of Messiah. The one who is viewing the face of God, is always that one who has tasted that He is good, and has thereby

become gracious. Anna is a beautiful character. She was a widow wholly given up to the worship and service of God. She was always found in the temple, praying for others, while she was denying herself. Hers was the contemplative, beautiful life that adorns the Truth. She was a PROPHETESS. God honored her faith and fragrant life, and gave her words of wisdom and truth. She witnessed of the coming of the Messiah to all those in Jerusalem that looked for redemption in Israel. She kept the spiritual fire burning in the hearts of the people with her fiery testimony concerning the advent of Christ, even if she could not keep the literal fire burning in the temple. (The latter was the priest's work).

But we are impressed with the fact that she was a prophetess, the only one that is so styled at that time. This is a marvelous item - a woman, the only link with God in the sense of being His mouthpiece before Jesus came. It is said that God had been silent to them during those four hundred years between Malachi and Matthew; but here we read that there was a prophet even before John the Baptist. This is a new thought. She was a link with God in that dark night of Israel's sorrow; for already the shadow of their coming rejection was hanging over them. They were under the rule of Rome. The Gentiles had the dominion which would have been lifted, if they had believed and received the Messiah when He appeared.

Anna, like Simeon, acknowledged Christ in the Babe that was brought into the temple to be circumcised in weakness and humiliation. She too had a revelation of His identity, though the nation did not know Him. Was God partial? No! She was walking with Him beforehand. She was heeding His Word. She was seeing the face of God continually, and testifying by life and lip of Him. This is the one that not only believed He was coming, but got a revelation of Him when He came. Blessed faith! Blessed knowledge! Real faith and testimony go hand in hand. If we know some things are about to come to pass, we must tell about them.

We must witness. Faith is not silent. Faith is active, alert, and aggressive. And such testimony as

Anna's is rewarded. Anna strikingly portrays another class in the end time, who will prophesy of the second advent of Christ. They will witness of Him in no uncertain terms. He will be the theme of their conversation, for His coming will be real to them. They will be on fire, for God and the Truth made living by the power of the Holy Spirit, will make an impression upon cold indifferent hearts. Their testimony will be effectual upon all those that hear; for their manner will be "gracious." It will spring from communion with God. "The face of God" will be turned toward them, and they will shine because of its effulgence. We cannot continue in the Presence of God, without bearing about the evidence; as witness the glory of Moses' face when he came down from the mount.

25 We are impressed with the fact of Anna's great age - fourscore and four - and that her "natural force was not abated nor her eye dim," as was written of another, but could well apply to her. She had a great measure of resurrection life in her body, living a life of sacrifice and service at the age of eighty-four; when most folks, if they are still living, are resting in the shade of the sycamore tree, inane and inactive. Anna's record speaks volumes to the opened heart. There are some gracious ones now who will live out, not only their allotted time of seventy years, but fourteen more. They will have the witness (two) that they are full-grown or perfect (seven), in the sense of having attained to that for which they have been apprehended. Their strong, vigorous life will be a sign of the supernatural power which will be their sufficiency.

THIRD IS JOSEPH. "And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just:...he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the Kingdom of God" - Luke 23:50,51.

JOSEPH, meaning "adding," speaks of the development of faith. He represents a class of people in the end, who will add to their character. He was a good and a just man. That is because he was just, referring to his righteous character and his standing

before God; he was good, referring to his life before men. All the goodness of God's saints in any dispensation is the result of their righteous character. A just life will of necessity result in goodness. Joseph was not only negatively so. He was found doing good deeds. He was a counsellor among the Jews, and had influence. He begged the body of Jesus after His death, and had the inexpressible honor of laying it away in a new tomb "wherein never man before was laid." God used him for this wonderful service because he was ready. He had been waiting for the Kingdom of God, hence, recognized the King when He came. He did not stumble over the cross, as so many of the nation did; but saw it must come before the crown. He was enlightened by the Spirit, even as Simeon and Anna. His heart was prepared for the Lord. He was walking in all the light that was given to him.

But the force of the language concerning him is that he "waited for the Kingdom of God." Waiting signifies "to expect earnestly," to "look forward to, with joy." Joseph's waiting was not an impractical theory; but a living, pulsating, energizing hope, that took precedence of everything in his life.

It swayed his every action. His daily life was lived in view of the coming of the Kingdom. He was changed by the hope. He waited earnestly for the heavenly Ruler and Kingdom; and while waiting he was adding to his faith, virtue, knowledge; temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. II Peter 1:5-7. His was a progressive life.

Joseph was a rich man as we read (Matthew 27:57), and he was of ARIMATHAEA, meaning "exalted"; but these natural things, which were gain to him, did not hinder his faith. Like another high one, Paul, he counted them all dung in comparison with the privilege of being associated with Christ - Philippians 3:8. He had his own sepulchre, a new tomb, hewn out of a great rock; and he had the honor of giving it to lay away the body of Christ. He is a type of a company of people at the end, no doubt Jews, who will be of his same spirit. They will be waiting with longing desire for the Kingdom of God. There may be some among them, rich in material wealth and high in reputation, but they will yield absolutely to

the sway of Christ the King, and be ready for Him when He comes to set up His Kingdom on the earth.

Striking Types Of Overcomers

27 But there is another application of these three striking characters - Simeon, Anna, and Joseph -who were realistic and forceful in their faith, testimony, and service, at the first advent of Christ. They also portray the characteristics which must and will be found in the full overcomers at the second advent. HEARING (Simeon), is the first requisite. It gives birth to faith as the Scripture proclaims. "FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD" - Romans 10:17. These hearing folks make their calling and election sure - not only hearing the Voice of the Lord, but obeying His commands. The Holy Ghost is upon them, filling them to the uttermost, and moving them more and more in the good works ordained for them. The purposes of God are revealed to them as they walk in the light, and they prophesy of the speedy coming of the Lord. Christ and the marvels of redemption occupy them continually. The sovereignty of God, and the provision of His grace, are sources of delight to them. They realize profoundly that what He proposes to do, He will perform. They believe that His Word will come to pass regardless of the means used, the weaknesses of the instrument, or the hindering circumstances in evidence. God fills their vision, and they go on from strength to strength. They are just and devout. Then the gracious characteristics of ANNA are fully in evidence. Strength of purpose, vigor of spiritual life, knowing no defeat even in old age, are manifest in them. They witness continually by word and deed, that they have a source of life that is eternal. Their life is one of prayer and self-denial. They speak of the coming of Jesus to all those who are looking for redemption in the Church; that is, to believers. They are earnestly longing for the Lord to come and take them to be with Him.

Then JOSEPH gives us the added thought, even as his name implies, of the developed, all-round Christian character. These overcomers, who are figured by those holy saints of the first advent,

are continually adding to their faith. They are going on to victory every day in the week, and every week in the month, and every month in the year. They are determined to win the race and finish their course with joy. They are looking for a Kingdom, a throne, and a crown; and they will not be disappointed. The purpose of their heart is that no man shall take their crown, even as Jesus exhorts in His letter to the church of Philadelphia - Revelation 3:11. They are perfected in the sense of having but one aim, one ambition - to fully qualify for the out-translation, which is about due, and meet those of the same rank, the out-resurrection from among the dead. They hope for this consummation, and are lovers of Christ's appearing. To sum up the three, they would read thus: The hearing one, becomes the doing one; and then the going on is in evidence, going up to meet the Lord in the air. They are waiting, longing, and expecting the Lord Jesus Christ at any moment.

28

The Royal Birth

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

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

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

Mary M. Bodie

THE FORGOTTEN MAN OF CHRISTMAS

(Joseph the husband of Mary)

J - Just man

O- Obedient

S - Steady, stable, sound

E - Energetic

P – Purposeful

H – Happy

Faithful - to Mary, to the Child.

Obedient - outstanding characteristic.

Realistic - gave heed to angel's warnings; not a reactionary.

Godly - religious - "had performed all."

Open-minded - angel's message convinced him.

Teachable - "and they understood not."

Thoughtful - no jumping to conclusions;
displayed a spirit of deliberation.

Energetic - traveled at angel's command; some people today cannot travel even to church.

Noble - high excellence or worth; illustrious, magnanimous, generous; one of God's noblemen, by birth and action.

Spurgeon said: "It takes more grace than I can tell,
To play the second fiddle well."

Albert J. Woehr, Jr.

WHAT MAKES CHRISTMAS

IT WAS not the angel's singing
Gave the Christmas thought.

Not the precious gold and incense
By the Wise Men brought;

Not the shining star that led them
On their unknown way;

'Twas the Christ within the manger
Made the Christmas Day.

So 'tis not the tree and presents
Make our Christmas Day,

'Tis not what we get that counts.
But-what we give away

ISAIAH 26

Gene Hawkins

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.” V. 1

“In that day,” is a phrase used repeatedly throughout this book, and it is a reference to a time yet future, that is, “the Day Of The Lord.” Here in our text, it is prophetic of the time when Israel will be in their own land, having experienced God’s salvation. Jerusalem will indeed be a “strong city,” and the very center of Jesus’ Kingdom on earth.

This chapter corresponds with Ezekiel, who likewise tells of Israel’s glorious path to restoration. The vision of the “dry bones,” which Ezekiel saw in chapter 37, tells the miraculous story of how God will completely revive a nation that is dead. Some current leaders in Israel, at this present time, have referred to the resurgence of this nation in our day as the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy, but that most assuredly cannot be the case. The revival of which Ezekiel speaks is a spiritual one, rather than one engineered by the efforts of men. Note this glorious account from Ezekiel. “Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, **an exceeding great army**. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these **bones are the whole house of Israel**: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, **And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live**, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD. Ezek. 37:9-14 Only God Himself, will raise up such an army,

and it will be in the spiritual sense, after this nation has fallen on their knees to accept their Messiah. Ezekiel is very emphatic that these “bones are the whole house of Israel:” and not just a reference to a fallen army. Thus, the entire nation will then be able to claim the testimony recorded in V. 2 of our current chapter. “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” The greater part of Israel’s history records a people who have been steeped in rebellion and unbelief, but they are here called “a righteous nation which keepeth truth,..” and they will finally enter into the place which God intended from the beginning.

Despite this fantastic beginning, the rest of this chapter still sends forth a hint of the great difficulty facing this very select people, “in that day,” for it is the tribulation that will bring forth their full repentance and the aforementioned acceptance of their Messiah. They will discover that “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” V. 3 This is a verse claimed by many, in deep trial and misery down through the ages, but it will have special meaning to a people which will be trodden under of the enemy before they fully realize that glorious end announced by V. 1 They will indeed learn by experience to “Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:” V. 4 This is the “everlasting strength,” exhibited by His raising up the “dry bones,” of Ezek. 37. Israel must come to the point wherein they will trust God’s Power and Might, rather than that of themselves or the nations. They will then witness His Power over many of these same nations as indicated in V. 5

“For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.” This is the same lofty city of Ch. 25, which represents the very seat of Gentile World powers that has long oppressed this nation. The antichrist will be in control at this time and the result will be total annihilation.

“The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.” V. 6 This verse seems to indicate the personal victory that Israel will enjoy over those who have

oppressed them. It follows the same pattern of true humility which we enjoy at this present time. The “feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy,” speak of those who acknowledge their own weakness and limitations, and exercise the power of the cross in treading down the enemy today. Our own feet are surely “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;....” (Eph. 6:15) as we too march against the principalities and powers today.

“The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.” V. 7 This path is, once again, the new testimony and experience of Israel, for they have found the path of uprightness which only comes through The Just One. He is also the One who “dost weigh the path of the just,” and this same theme continues with V. 8. “Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.” Such an attitude has been a long time coming, but this new, and revived, nation which will ultimately be “born in one day,” will finally boast such a testimony. The path through which they have arrived at this glorious conclusion is described in the next verse. 32

“With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” V. 9 It is the “soul,” the inner man who is touched with this desire, meaning that Israel’s transformation is more than an emotional whim. The “spirit within me,” also testifies this same deep seated change which has taken place in this nation causing them to “seek thee early.” Such a response will be the result of the tremendous difficulty that will fall upon all the inhabitants of the earth as His judgments are poured out. Those same inhabitants, both among Israel and the nations, will learn first-hand exactly what His righteousness really means.

“Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.” V. 10 This verse is also still predicated on that which will prevail “in that day,” of V. 1, which sets the tone for this entire chapter. Israel will be restored because they have bowed to the path of repentance, but such is

not the case for the wicked. This verse reminds of the distinction made in Rev. 22:11 after God's tremendous acts of judgment have been poured out upon the entire world. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Men will make their own decisions and though "favour be shewed to the wicked, ye will he not learn righteousness." Grace is abundantly available, even to the wicked at that time, but all will not take advantage of it. Though God will deal justly, they will still not behold His Majesty. The promised millennium of peace is at hand, but judgment is still prominent for those who continue to resist the glorious Majesty of God, described in V. 11. "LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." Israel is still the subject for these nations and according to this text they are still blinded as to God's intents and purposes for this Chosen People. However, there will come the day when they are seemingly forced to "...see and be ashamed for their envy at the people," (Israel) and "the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." Though "favour" had been offered them, they have chosen to continue in their ungodly quest of envy and strife to destroy God's people and fires of destruction still await them.

The story for Israel will be delightfully different, for "LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." V. 12 This is the part of "that day," when real peace is yet to come for this nation, for we read that "thou **wilt** ordain peace for us:" meaning that it is yet future even at this time. This is, however, a statement of faith on the part of Israel, for though they have been changed, and the dry bones graphically described by Ezekiel have been revived, their full deliverance has not actually come to pass. Isaiah also emphasizes the fact that this people now knows that the reason for their great difficulty is because "...thou hast wrought all our works in us." They are very much aware of the fact that God had to bring these horrific judgments upon them in order to perform His transformation in them. They now know that He used the very nations in whom they

had trusted, to punish them because they had not acknowledged His dominion over them. “O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.” V. 13 They have now become acutely aware of the fact that they must bow down in reverence only to Him, rather than seeking other “lovers,” as they had done in time past.

“They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.” V. 14 This great voice of victory continues, announcing the demise of those nations which had formerly had such dominion over them. It is a pattern manifest throughout the scriptures as God has used such rebels to bring tremendous hardship and great oppression on Israel, but then He has punished those same nations for being so callous and vindictive in carrying out His decree. These oppressors undoubtedly portray those known as “goat nations,” who will eventually be completely annihilated, for He hath “...made all their memory to perish.” It will be exactly like unto the pattern which God established at the Red Sea when “....Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.” Ex. 14:30

34

The Chastening Rod

When youthful days were bright and fair
Without a trouble or a care
I failed to put my trust in God,
Until He sent the chastening rod.

I struggled on through weary years
With many conflicts, many tears.
In anguish I cried out to God.
Why press so hard the chastening rod?

There was a lesson I must learn---
Something I did not discern.
With trembling heart I prayed to God,
Help me to bear the chastening rod.

Then He in mercy drew so near,
While perfect love cast out all fear.
And with my confidence in God,
I ceased to tear the chastening rod.

And when in glory I shall stand
Amid the happy angel band.
And face to face I meet with God,
I'll thank Him for the chastening rod.

Cora J. Fritz



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and your treasure through the coming year is our prayer