

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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'Loving his Appearing'

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The steps of a
good man are
ordered by the
Lord: and he
delighteth in
his way.
PSALM 37:23.

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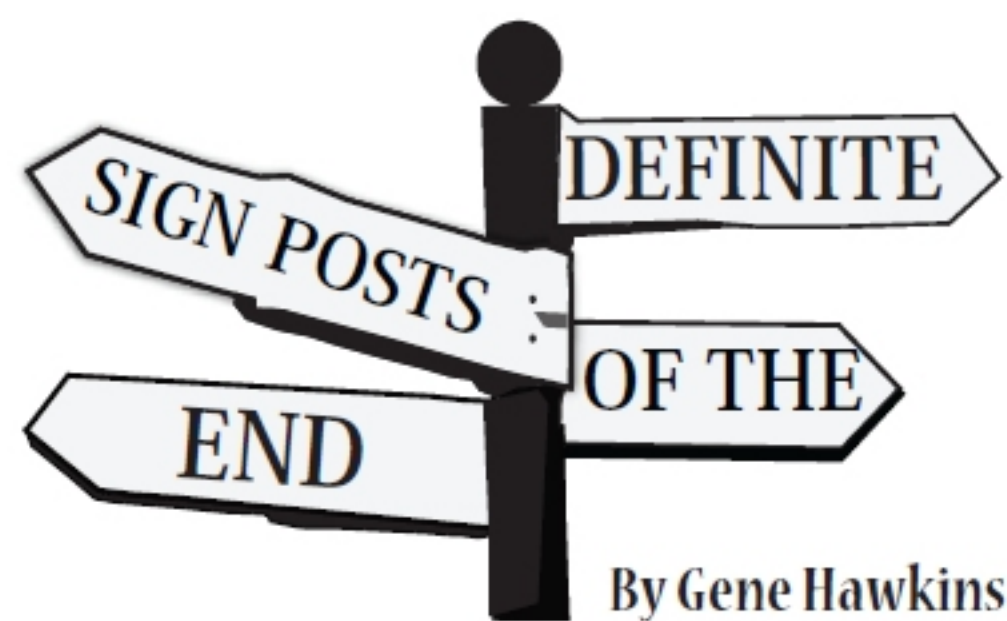
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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.” Dan. 11:36

“And there shall be great earthquakes, and in divers places famines and pestilences; and there shall be terrors and great signs from heaven.” Luke 21:11

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;” II Thess. 2:3

“But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith,...” I Tim. 4:1

3 **A**ll these citations give us a very clear outline of the atmosphere which shall prevail in these last days. Daniel clearly prophesies of the coming antichrist who, “... shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: **for that that is determined shall be done.**”

The recent celebration following the climate change summit in Paris in Nov. 2015, was almost laughable in view of the above scriptures. Jesus plainly stated that these last days would bring earthquakes, famines, and pestilences, accompanied by signs from heaven. Climate change proponents attribute all of these devastating disasters, many of which are produced by tsumamis, hurricanes, and other “acts of God,” to rising global temperatures. It seems to make no difference that some scientists, who do not subscribe to man-made global warming, have produced evidence that the same patterns of rising temperatures on earth have also been found on Mars and Pluto where, man and his carbon footprint have never been.

There were 195 nations represented at that summit and the conclusions indicated by the comments of some, seem to reveal that man truly believes he can actually stop “... that that is determined...” during the days of “indignation,” or tribulation. The New York times published these quotes. “This is truly a

historic moment,' the United Nations secretary general, Ban Kimoon, said in an interview. 'For the first time, we have a truly universal agreement on climate change, one of the most crucial problems on earth.' President Obama, who regards tackling climate change as a central element of his legacy, spoke of the deal in a televised address from the White House. 'This agreement sends a powerful signal that the world is fully committed to a lowcarbon future' he said. 'We've shown that the world has both the will and the ability to take on this challenge.' Scientists and leaders said the talks here represented the world's last, best hope of striking a deal that would begin to avert the most devastating effects of a warming planet."

Scripture concludes that, regardless of man's best efforts to thwart the coming disasters upon this earth, "... that that is determined..." will most assuredly come to pass. God's Word is very clear that men will be scorched "... with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of **God who hath the power over these plagues;** and they repented not to give him glory." Rev. 16:9

The falling away of the Church is also a part of "... that that is determined..." God certainly did not ordain that "... some shall depart from the faith,..." but He most assuredly knew that it would happen. There are many, across the globe, preaching a message calling for men to repent and fall on their faces so that God will restore their nation, but the above texts from II Thess. 2 and I Tim. 4 plainly declare otherwise. We say unequivocally that **THE CHURCH IS IN DEEP TROUBLE.** That fact is evidenced here in our own land of America. Pres. Obama recently signed into law, by executive order, a decree that targets the Church. Though many lobbied against it at the recent prayer breakfast in Washington, the law was passed and can only be reversed by an act of Congress, which is not likely to happen. The President also explained that "if the Church's financial house is in order; they have nothing to worry about. There are two things shown by this decree that fulfill the above prophecy "... that that is determined shall be done." The first prompts the question, "does the Church have this discipline coming?" Many godly ministers have, for years, warned the Church against becoming like unto the world. She has adopted the marketing methods of corporate America to gain members and prestige. She has adopted so-called Christian Rock music to attract young people

4

because that ungodly rock beat worked so well tapping into fleshly youthful zeal, and attracting tremendously large crowds. Many Christians today see nothing wrong with abortion or the gay life style, stating that “Someone else’s sexual preference is of no consequence to my own life.” Others see absolutely nothing wrong with recreational drugs and social drinking, asserting that “Christians can have fun and not be prudish or narrow minded.” The great majority of the Church has also failed miserably in their charge to “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, (profit or gain) but of a ready mind;” I Pet. 5:2 Thus much of the modern Church is literally starved and anemic because some have been more interested in their own personal gain rather than feeding the flock with deep spiritual meat. The modern prosperity message, preached by many, publishes a message that appeals to the world to get as rich as you can, as quickly as you can. We wonder when Christians lost the message: “Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to **keep oneself unspotted from the world.**” Jas. 1:27 So is God saying by this decree: “Church, you have made every effort to be like the world. Therefore, I will stay My Hand, and allow you to endure the same consequences as those who are not separated unto Me.”

Some might think that such a statement is rather stringent and harsh, even unscriptural, in light of God’s many promises of protection, especially in regard to those who are maintaining a life of separation unto God. However, be it ever remembered that there were a host of righteous individuals such as Daniel, Shadrach, Mechech, Abednego, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Ezra, who had to endure the rigorous consequences of the captivity despite the fact that they were innocent victims. Daniel basically concluded: “We deserved everything that came our way.” Dan. 9:4-20 Nehemiah also later warned those whom he saw violating God’s decrees when he was in charge of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem after the captivity was over: “Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil **upon us, and upon this city?** yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.” Neh. 13:18 The message is clear. The righteous also suffer when wrath is poured out upon the disobedient.

The aforementioned law targeting the Church reveals

stringent requirements by the IRS, demanding a strict accounting of all tax exempt monies. We do not know if all those who are preaching the modern prosperity message are in compliance with IRS regulations or not, but we do know that many of them have used themselves as an example of success. Their message is that “if you will simply exercise your faith in God, you can achieve the same prosperity that I enjoy.” Paul, however, makes this proclamation: “And... **though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**” Financial prosperity simply does not mean that a person is spiritual, as is the inference of the prosperity message.

We are writing this segment of the Sign Posts as a warning to pastors and Church leaders in regard to Church Tax Law. Pastors are not permitted to simply take as much as they want from the collection plate. One pastor indicated that since he was the one responsible for bringing in the money, he could also take as much as he pleased, despite the fact that some of his advisors warned him against such a practice. We do not know what kind of message this man preached, but we do know his Church was on the brink of bankruptcy and that he went to prison for violation of IRS requirements.

The IRS requires that pastors who file their taxes using a W-2 form, be put on a set salary which cannot be set either by the pastor or by the Church. A pastor’s salary must be established by a third party, and approved by a resolution of the Church trustees. We have for years believed God to meet the financial needs of the Church as well as our own personal needs, and God has fought our battle beautifully, often supplying money “out of the clear blue, from very unexpected sources.” The pastor only took what was needed to meet his own requirement and thus, some weeks may have received a rather large check, while other weeks, little or nothing. That practice is known to the IRS as a “personal benefit transaction,” and is as illegal as it can be.

It is also illegal to issue a check to any individual, regardless of the need, without having a W-9 form on file which requires the recipient of the check to surrender their Social Security number. After that, even though we gave the money as a “gift” with no strings attached, we were in complete violation of the IRS code because we failed to issue a Form 1099 at the end of the year whereby the recipient would be

responsible to pay the taxes on the “gift” they had received.

Many across the land try desperately to follow James exhortation to be doers of the Word and give to those in need. Jas. 5:15-16 That can and must still be done, but a “benevolence” form should be completed and a personal check is highly discouraged. Checks to providers; of food, medical needs, or housing costs may be written without requesting a W-9 or issuing a 1099, but a benevolence form must be completed, and the check must be given to the provider, rather than the individual in need. The Church must also be able to produce all receipts if the IRS should ask for them. That is actually a requirement for every check written. I was also explicitly advised that a Church can, in no wise, pay the high deductible required by the new “Affordable Health Care Act, on behalf of an individual.” That is highly illegal and the Church would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for it.

Form 941 is another mandatory form. It must be filed quarterly, listing the wages and compensation of all Church employees.

7 There must also be a strict accounting of tithes and offerings. A simple ledger may be sufficient for our own records, but the IRS demands some form of tangible proof, such as a photo copy of all checks, with terms like “tithe, gift, donation, or contribution,” on the memo line, to ensure that no one is receiving a tax exemption for some goods or services from the Church that would be subject to tax. Any cash offerings must be recorded as an envelope from anonymous donors. Not only so, but a copy of the deposit slip, along with the receipt from the bank after the deposit is made must be kept on file, and all amounts on record must match to the penny.

Though we personally do not believe that the scripture advocates “fundraising,” the funds collected from such events as ice cream socials, box suppers, bazaars, garage sales, or special meals where voluntary “love offerings” are received, must be reported to the IRS as income, which is taxable. The IRS calls the practice of claiming a tax deduction, when one receives something in return; “money laundering.”

Most Churches across America also follow Paul’s admonition to “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” I Tim. 5:17 It is quite clear that this ruling “elder” is actually the pastor, as indicated by V. 18. “For the scripture

saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.” Such honor for “the ox” is often demonstrated by an offering given during “Pastor Appreciation Month.” This is once again a tremendous demonstration of love which has been hijacked by the IRS. The gift may still be given, but since it was solicited by the Church, it must also be converted to a check and presented to the pastor as a “bonus” which is taxable and must be accompanied by Form 1099, so the pastor can then pay the tax on it. It makes no difference whether or not the givers have claimed a deduction for their gift of love. The pastor must still pay the tax.

We are also told that this new law is much like “Obamacare,” containing many things that will remain hidden until they are violated, and “ignorance is no excuse” for failure to comply with all these restrictions, most of which simply involve the filing of certain forms. We can speak firsthand in regard to the stringent demands and consequences in regard to filing the right form, at the right time, in the right way. Grace and Glory lost their tax exempt status in 2010 because the IRS 8 deemed that the required form 990 had the wrong signature on it. When I asked what signature was there, I was very curtly told: “I cannot give you that information.” We were then advised to “just wait while we do an investigation, and perhaps you will not need to file a new application for reinstatement.” We waited 90 days and then were told emphatically and unequivocally that once an exemption is revoked, there is absolutely no alternative but to re-apply. This was during the IRS scandal wherein many conservative groups were targeted, and Grace and Glory was caught in the same web. Our “wait,” was simply a delay tactic to get past the election. Once that was done we had to re-apply, which required a substantial fee, and again after 90 days our exemption was restored. We learned first-hand that the demand for filing forms with the IRS is not just an idle request.

God has used Gentile political powers since 606 BC to bring about His purposes, and again we wonder if He has ordained the current law for the reasons listed above. Candidate Obama promised to “redistribute the wealth and level the playing field for everyone,” and this new Church Tax Law is certainly one of the ways in which he has fulfilled that campaign promise. Thus, the Church is now on exactly the same ground

as all the rest of corporate America. The penalty for failure to file certain forms was, for the Church, \$50. Now the penalty for such an infraction is \$50,000, the same as it is for the largest corporation in the land. There are also severe penalties, which include imprisonment for certain infractions, and the IRS will enforce them to the fullest extent of the law. The IRS seems to assume that all tax exempt monies actually belong to the government, and they will control them as much as possible.

The second way in which this new law is a fulfillment of "... that that is determined..." is easily summed up in one word: control. This same key element is also readily manifest in all the restrictions associated with global warming. Daniel declares plainly that the coming antichrist "... shall do according to his will; ... and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished:..." This new law is simply a very small precursor which demonstrates the power and government control that the antichrist will eventually wield through economic pressure, the end of which will ultimately be "... that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name." Rev 13:17 This world is speeding toward one world government, and no democratic endeavor will stop it. Thus, we are already witnessing extensive government control throughout the entire world, which is in fact, conditioning the citizens of every land in preparation for the mandates that will be implemented by the man of sin.

We fully expect to be gone before this false king comes to power because Jesus promised the Philadelphia Church that, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10 The bulk of the aforementioned Church cannot claim that promise, due to the conditions listed above. Most truly separated believers cannot believe that we are still here, but indeed we are.

These current IRS demands simply cause us to wonder if we are quickly coming to the place where we must, like Peter and the early apostles, say "... We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29 It is also rather intriguing that when Jesus commissioned the disciples to minister in Matt. 10, He sent them "... forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." V. 16 Part of His instruction included their

handling of money and personal needs. V. 9,10 We too must believe God to prove ourselves wise in these matters regarding money.

At this present time, we must comply with the laws of the land in regard to money, as outlined in Rom. 13. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers...” V. 1 However, there may come a day when we cannot conscientiously obey government decrees when they violate the Word of God. Scripture quite plainly teaches that there is always a consequence for rebelling against authority. Standing for truth is not rebellion, but failure to comply with governmental demands will produce adverse consequences as demonstrated by Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego when they were cast into the burning fiery furnace because they refused to bow down to the king’s image. These same three had earlier appealed to authority and received permission to eat vegetables rather than the king’s meat, because such a diet violated their own conscience. They had, at this time, however, reached a place of no appeal. We simply do not know whether God will spare those of the Philadelphia assembly from some of the effects of the burning fiery furnace or not. Revelation 7 is quite clear that the “...great multitude, which no man could number...” that is the majority of the Church, will endure the severe fires of tribulation, but we are not told how long the bridal company will continue in this time known as “... the beginning of sorrows,” or how intense those sorrows may become. Matt. 24:8 We can, however, rest assured that the Fourth Man will appear to us as He did to those of Daniel’s time, when we take a stand for truth.

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We must also cling to the promises:

***For yet a little while, and he
that shall come will come, and will
not tarry. Heb. 10:37***

***Behold, I come quickly: hold
that fast which thou hast, that no
man take thy crown. Rev. 3:11***

JESUS WITH ALL GRACE

Ray Quintana

“*And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand. And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.*” *I Sam. 27:1-2*

The record here shows that David had aligned himself one more time with the Philistines. He had been chased by Saul and hunted like a partridge, which had plunged him into despair.

Saul had made promises to him, but David never trusted his superior. It is rather apparent at this particular time that he had succumbed to the pressure. We dare not criticize David too much, for we too can be subject to such pressures. This is not to justify or excuse, David's decision to join the Philistines, but we can most assuredly learn from his mistake, and profit from the end result. We, like David, may make some gross errors in our lives, wherein we do not always believe God to the fullest extent, but David's example shows that we cannot simply give up and say; "I have marred my record, might as well forget it." This is neither God's way nor David's way.

Pressures may indeed be brought upon us out of the will of God, even as seen in the above text. However, David eventually left his decisions to the Lord, and as a result God blessed him, and delivered him. Even though we get ourselves into major trouble at times, yet God is still faithful to deliver. Men may cast us down and condemn us, and though our mistakes are not summarily excused, yet God still delivers.

David was still the chosen king, despite his lapse of faith, for God's purpose was to bring him into that place. We too may be comforted and encouraged as we remind ourselves and meditate on the words of the apostle Paul. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Phil. 1:6 God is doing a good work in us and, given the opportunity, He will finish what He

has started. One major thought in God's heart and mind is His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus we too are in His mind for "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3:3 Not only so, but we are also uppermost in Jesus mind. "... I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." John 17:9 We lose our identity in Christ, but His thought is constantly for me!

Psalm 139 is one of the most notable hymns in scripture and was penned by this same man who unadvisedly joined the Philistines. The brightness of this Psalm is like a sapphire stone, or crystal. It flames out with great flashes of light and turns night into day within the heart of the believer. It is like a Pharos or a lighthouse, which is often considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This holy Psalm casts a clear light even to the uttermost parts of the sea, and warns us against unbelief, which will make shipwreck of the soul. David declares plainly; "O LORD, thou hast searched me,..." V. 1 That search surely continues in our day and since God cannot forget that which He has once known; and there was never a time in which we were unknown to God; so there never will be a moment in which we shall be beyond His observation. 12

David makes this so personal. He does not say, "O God, thou knowest all things;" but, "thou hast known **me**." We must lay hold of this glorious truth for ourselves! How wonderful the contrast between the observer and the observed! Jesus and me! This most intimate connection exists, and therein lies our hope. Let us sit still a while and try to realize the two poles of this statement, the Lord and the poor puny man; Ray. You can put your own name there as well, for this is when Jesus comes forth with all of His grace. Not one thing is left out for you. He sees much to admire and wonder at, in you. Do we truly realize that?

"Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off." V. 2 I am observed when I quietly sit down, and when I rise up. God notes my most common and casual acts, along with my most needful and necessary movements. Thou knowest my inward thoughts. Whether I sink in lowly self-rejection, or if I ascend to the highest

heights, He knows all about me. I am seen of God. This is a fact to be remembered. Every moment, whether sitting down to consider, or rising up to act, we are still seen, known, and read by our Lord. If we focus on “self,” we will be defeated where we stand. But focus on this; “Thou compassest my path and my lying down...” V. 3 Jesus surrounds me even as the air continually surrounds all creatures that live. I am shut up within His wall, a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ; a prisoner of the love of God. I am encircled within the bounds of His knowledge. “I am a garden enclosed a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” S.O.S. 4:12 This is where He comes in with all of His grace to surround me. I may leave His path, and focus on my woes, but He will never leave mine. I may sleep and forget Him, but He never slumbers, nor falls into forgetfulness concerning me. God is familiar with all I do; nothing is concealed from Him, or surprising, or misunderstood by Him. This should fill us with courage, so that we fear not; and fill us with delight, in order that we do not mourn because of our mistakes. “For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.” V. 4 The unformed word, which lies within the tongue, is like a seed in the soil waiting to spring forth. Speech, with which too many conceal their thoughts, is itself transparent before the Lord. “Thou hast beset me behind and before, ...” V. 5 as though we were caught, or overwhelmed by the army of the Lord. We are surrounded by the Lord. He has set us where we are, and beset us or surrounded us. Behind us there is God, and before us there is God. Our heavenly Father has placed His arms around us, and caressed us with His Hand. He is very near, and we are wholly in His power. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. I cannot grasp it. The theme overwhelms me. I am amazed and astounded by it. How can it be? This is David’s thought here. V. 6

“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!” V. 17 This is the believer’s treasure and pleasure that God should think upon us in such a manner as this. How dear to me is your unending attention, dear Lord Jesus. What joy, worth worlds that the Lord should think upon me who am poor and needy. This is a joy which fills our whole nature to think upon God; His love for us, and His

thoughts for me. How great is the sum of them! V. 17 Can you wrap your mind around that? God thought upon us from eternity past, and He continues to think upon us every moment, and will think of us when time shall be no more! “If I should count the thoughts of God toward me, they are more in number than the sands of the sea.” V. 18 This figure shows the thoughts of God to be altogether innumerable; for nothing can surpass in number the grains of the sand of sea and ocean. The task of counting God’s thoughts of love would be a never ending one. This Majestic God thinks upon us infinitely with no limit to the might of divine love. God is ever with me, and I am ever with Him.

David further declared, “Search me, O God, and know my heart...” V. 23 He invites the fullest investigation, the innermost search. God knew everything about him; his thought even afar off, but yet he asks God to investigate fully. We too must desire such searching. “Try me, and know my thoughts and let me be examined.” Read not alone the desires of my heart, but the fugitive thoughts of my head.

The lowly shepherd boy was the forgotten son of Jesse. God had told Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, and he “... made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep...” I Sam. 16:10-11 David may have been dismissed by men, but God had surely not lost track of him. Think of that! He had experienced the grace of God, and would be His king. External appearance and credentials, so valued by men, mean nothing to The Great Architect. Likewise, we must ignore the opinions of men, as to our own credentials, and simply follow the example of Jesus, who was also forgotten of men but chosen of God. He came without the might, force, or pomp of the world and yet He will be God’s King. He was the forgotten Son Who hung on the cross in my place for my sin! What grace displayed for me!

We too are anointed, and yet weak. Every believer is a potential king, provisionally anointed in the covenant of election before the world was. When Jesus Christ was set up

from everlasting, His people were set up in Him. When He was proclaimed King, and His Father promised glorious honors to Him as the result of what He did on the cross, every believer was given the opportunity to constitute a royal priesthood in the Person of Christ. Every child of God was actually anointed when Jesus Christ ascended up on high and led captivity captive. Jesus took His seat at the right hand of the Father, and now all His elect in Him may lay claim to their thrones. "For He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. 1:3 This glorious provision is for all the body of Christ, but our own personal anointing comes in that hour when, being called by divine grace and washed from sin, we begin to reign over sin, self, the world, death and hell, by virtue of our union with Christ. Every believer is a king today! It may be that we do not wear the crown, and live beneath our dignity; yet we are a king by divine right. We are of a divine race. We sprang from the loins of the King of kings, for "... when he shall appear, we shall be like him;..." (I John 3:2) and we shall reign with Him forever and ever!

15 Maybe we are groaning, often crying out, "I am weak;" for weakness and divine anointing stand together! God's children are often very weak in faith. We may sometimes stagger at the promises through unbelief. We always have the seal of God on us, but we cannot always set the seal to God's promises. There are times when the strength of the flesh through sin has overcome the powers of the soul. Then the devil is there to stir us in unbelief. There are times when we can get no further than to cry, "I would, but I cannot believe; I do not doubt His love, but it is a grave question with me, whether I am one of His people at all." Is that where you are at today? Christians have ebbs of faith as well as floods; they have winters as well as summers; they have times of drought and years of famine. Sometimes they are diminished, and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. The eyes of their faith grow dim and the light of God's countenance seems to withdraw from them. It becomes woeful, and they sigh and cry, and groan, and scarcely can call their lives their own. Think not that your name is cut out of the register because of the weakness of your faith; for there are many in heaven whose names on earth were Little-Faith, and Ready-to-Halt, and Despondency, and Much-Afraid! You may

be an anointed king, and yet exceedingly weak in your faith.

The devil knows when faith is strong, grace is strong. When faith is weak, all things decline. It may be today that your hope has become very dim; you are in bondage through fear of some sort. You have forgotten that you are in Christ, and now you're hindered from looking for His soon appearing. Your hope declines, and all your comfort dies. All this is possible, despite the fact that you may be an anointed king. When you cannot read your title, the inheritance is just as sure; when you cannot feel your union with Christ, your Anchor holds! Remember your soul is in His hands, and you shall never perish, and neither shall any pluck you from Him.

Faith is the channel of salvation. We believe by faith, but grace is the fountain and source even of faith itself. Faith is the work of God's grace in us. Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation; and faith, is an important part of the machinery which grace employs. We are saved "through faith," but salvation is "by grace." Faith occupies the position of a channel or conduit pipe, such as that through which water flows, to produce a fruitful crop. Grace is the fountain and the stream to produce much fruit; faith is the aqueduct or channel along which the flood of mercy and grace flows down to refresh the thirsty sons of men. The devil tries to break the aqueduct or channel; but how? Unbelief! Unbelief is not faith and it will hinder the flow of grace. If the devil can defeat you with unbelief, God's grace is hindered in its flow and he is well aware of this. By faith all things become possible to us; yet the power is not in the faith, but in the God upon whom faith relies. We do not stand on our own strength and power. Grace is the most powerful engine, and faith is the chain by which the soul is attached to the great motive of God's power of Divine Grace. But then the weakness of your faith will not destroy you. The Lord's salvation can come to us though we have faith as a grain of mustard seed. The power lies in the grace of God, and not in our faith.

In the natural, great messages can be sent along slender wires, and the peace-giving witness of the Holy Spirit can reach the heart by means of thread-like faith which seems almost unable to sustain its own weight. So faith sees nothing but Jesus, and the grace of God revealed in Him. What is faith? It is made up of three

things; knowledge, belief, and trust. Knowledge comes first. Faith cometh by hearing; we must first hear, in order that we may know what we are to believe in. A measure of knowledge is essential to faith; we must know Isa 55:3! “Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;...” The next ingredient of faith is we must believe that these things are true. The soul believes that God is, and that He hears the cries of sincere hearts; and that the gospel is from God. The third ingredient of faith is trust. Cast yourself upon Jesus; rest in Him; commit yourself to Him, the Rock of Ages. Faith is not a blind thing; for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith trusts, and stakes its destiny upon the truth of the revelation of grace. Preaching of the cross is preaching divine grace; because it is the cross that provided everything we will ever need to reign with Christ. Christ is God’s righteousness and God’s wisdom; indeed, God’s grace for man.

17 Jesus has graciously inclined towards us, and is willing to bend His wisdom to serve the end of our sanctification. “Lord, lead me in the way everlasting! Oh God give me a heart for this, oh Lord hear my cry! By your wisdom, by your Word, by your grace, and by your Spirit, lead me evermore. I invite you Lord, come in, with all of your grace.”

Once it was the blessing
Now it is the Lord:
Once it was the feeling,
Now it is His Word.
Once His gifts I wanted,
Now the Giver own:
Once I sought for healing
Now Himself alone.

Jesus often had a great multitude when He began to teach; but little by little they left Him because of His truths. Therefore, do not feel discouraged if you can empty your church house rather than fill it, because you are preaching the Truth.

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” I John 1:3

The writer of this text surely knew whereof he spoke, for it was John who demonstrated the depths of love and fellowship with Jesus by resting on His breast at the last supper. Now he imparts these principles of fellowship unto us. Verse 1 indicates that we have heard Him, and seen Him, declaring that first we hear Him and then see Him. Next we have “looked” more intimately upon Him and then experience an even closer touch as “... our hands have handled...” Him. John also indicates that once we have “... seen and heard...” Him, or experienced Him for ourselves, we can then declare Him, “... unto you...” and the result is common fellowship for all. Christ Himself is the basis of that fellowship and verse 4 declares the result: “...that your joy may be full.”

18

The glorious scene after the resurrection at the Sea of Tiberias, also presents that glorious path to fellowship with Jesus. The disciples had decided to return to fishing as an occupation and, though they did not recognize Him at the time, “... Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?...” John 21:5 Their answer was no, and we too must realize that we have absolutely nothing in ourselves to bring unto Him. It was John, “... that disciple whom Jesus loved...” (V. 7) who first recognized Him, and this entourage, possessed with a miraculous draught of fishes which they caught after following Jesus’ direction, came to land.

“As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.” Note that the fish was not a part of the great draught, because they were already prepared along with the bread, prepared specifically by Jesus Who then “... saith unto them, Come and dine....” He

extends that same invitation unto us as He also prepares His Own special morsels for our specific need. We are invited to glorious fellowship with Him and, like the disciples, we need not ask "... Who art thou?..." for we too KNOW "... it was the Lord." V. 12 Is it not glorious to contemplate that this same marvelous fact will also prevail when those who love Jesus preeminently see Him face to face? We may today, however, know the joy of His personal touch as "Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise." V. 13 Next comes the same order that John declared earlier. "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? Feed my lambs." V. 15 Deep fellowship with The Master must give way to the ministry of proclaiming that same message unto others. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us:..." We cannot give what we do not have, but once we have experienced the glorious mysteries and revelations of Jesus for ourselves, they do belong to us and we may then freely impart them to others, "...that ye also may have fellowship with us:... that your joy may be full."

GH



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HEAVENLY MANNA

Hattie Webb

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.... And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.” Ex 16:4,15-17

John 6 teaches that, the manna which sustained the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness, is a type of the true bread from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” John 6:32-35

20

First — They were to gather the manna every morning. Since we learned from the Scripture in John that this manna is a type of Christ, we conclude that it is wise for the child of God to feed on Christ each day. You may say, "How can we do this?" Answer, by reading the Word of God. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The Word is made living to us when we appropriate it by faith. We are strengthened by reading and believing what is written in the Bible, the Word of God. Each day is a new beginning. Just as we eat natural food in order to strengthen our physical bodies, so we should take in spiritual food in order to fortify us for the battles of the day against the devil.

Second — They were to gather early before the sun grew hot and melted the manna. Our minds are clear in the early morning and our bodies are refreshed. We owe our very best to our Savior, the Lord Jesus

Christ, so it is good to seek Him early. Then, whatever may come our way during the day will not stumble us, but we will be able to overcome and hold the victory. We will be able to withstand all of the fiery darts that are hurled against us. The children of God have a real warfare against the "principalities and powers of the air and spiritual wickedness in high places." The only way we are able to cope with the devil is by hurling the promises of the Word of God at him. They will quench all of his fiery darts.

21 Third — They could not lay aside manna for any day, except the Sabbath. Also we find in the Levitical offerings that they were not to let any of the offerings remain over until the next day. There is a secret in this for us. If we would permit Christ to live in us in mighty power and His anointing to be continually upon our lives, we must gather anew each day. We must seek His face in the study of the Word, in meditation and in prayer. A Christian who prays much never becomes cold and indifferent toward the Lord. Not only do we profit by it, as individuals, but others will see the shine in our faces and feel the fragrance of the personal presence of Christ in our lives.

Fourth — The entire nation of Israel subsisted on the manna for forty years. This pictures to us the power of Christ to sustain to the uttermost. Forty is the number of testing, and God proved His power sufficient to keep His people. We read in the Psalms that there was not one sickly, or weak among them. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This is what Jesus said.

Fifth — The manna was a miraculous gift from God and not a product of nature. His Word spoke the manna into existence and it had power to sustain an entire nation. So Christ, of whom the manna was a type, was not a product of nature, but a virgin-born Son, the gift of God to a suffering, sorrowing, and dying world. He partook of flesh and blood, yet He was the Holy Son of God. He became Man that He might enter into our lives and know the feeling of our infirmities and be touched by all of our weaknesses and needs. How he loves us and longs to heal every wound. He invites all of His children to "Come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Sixth — It is estimated that 300 tons of manna fell each day over a period of 40 years. How abundant is God's provision for His people. Never once did He fail to provide bread for their need. Each

day they were dependent upon Him for a new supply of manna and He met their faith. He will do as much for us today, both naturally and spiritually.

Seventh —They were to gather every man according to his eating. To me, this is the most wonderful of all. We can take all that we desire of Christ. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." There is an unlimited supply and we never can exhaust the riches in God's word. The deeper revelation we receive, the richer God is and the richer we become. Our experience may be like that of which we read in Ezekiel 47. The prophet had a vision. In the vision we read that the water first came to his ankles (a hint of our walk being cleansed) then he went out a little further and the water came to his knees (he realized the privilege and power of prayer); he went still further and the water came to his loins (he was strengthened so he could serve others), and finally there was a river that could not be passed over, waters to swim in. The more we see of God's plan of salvation, the more we realize that the riches of God are unfathomable, a river that cannot be passed over. We may daily, experimentally, be filled with His fullness, yet catch a glimpse of unbounded riches beyond. We exclaim with the apostle Paul: "O the depths, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Glory fills our souls, as we catch a vision of the place we have in Jesus Christ. The great climax is that we can be "filled with all the fullness of God." It is possible for God's people to grow up in Christ Jesus in all things. God grant that every one of us may lay hold of Christ for his highest degree of Christian perfection. 22

Finally, in closing, note again, John 6:35. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The Lord has promised rest and food and satisfaction to all that come to Him. If you are sad, disappointed, discouraged, poor and needy, come to Jesus. Accept Him as your Savior. He will abundantly pardon all of your sins and satisfy your heart to the uttermost. Praise His worthy name!

(Reprint 1942)

* Faith either removes mountains,
or tunnels through them.

* A dew drop does the will of God as
much as a thunder storm.

LIFE AND DEATH

H. G. Desha, Jr

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.” Luke 16:19-21.

Jesus said, “**There was** a certain rich man,” and **there was** a certain beggar.” If He said that, it is certainly so. We have to admit it to be true; for our Lord spake nothing but the truth. Many say that the 19th to the 31st verses of Luke 16 is only a parable, in order to refute the truth of the eternal punishment of the wicked. They admit that eternal life for the believer is true, but as to eternal punishment, they are not willing to bow to a “**thus saith the Lord.**”

23

In the first three verses, we have a type of present day conditions religiously. Lazarus, in his impotency before the rich, is an expression of the sinner before the self-righteous; for the sinner receives no help from them. Yet, we cannot solely limit these two characters to present day conditions in a religious sense; for they were also applicable to that age in which our Lord lived. The independence of the rich man expresses the self-righteous condition of Israel as a nation, which typifies Christendom today. Israel went about to establish their own righteousness. By doing so, they submitted not unto the righteousness of God, because they sought it not by faith. They failed to accept Christ. Therefore they had nothing to give the people in the way of spiritual benefits. No food came from their table --- the law --- not even so much as crumbs of truth. Even a little, as the beggar desired, would not give life. And such is Christendom today. How sad!

The sinner, the sick, and the helpless, are at her door, but receive no deliverance from their bondage. Truly God's wrath must be poured out upon her. He has given her ample time to repent of her doings; but she does not repent. Rev. 2:21 Therefore, the Lord is necessitated to use another class of people to minister to the “Lazarus” crowd, “helped of God,” as the name signifies.

In the eyes of the self-righteous, these helpers are classed as four legged animals, “**dogs.**”

The Jews called the Gentiles “dogs.” They are those who admit their weakness, feeling their need of another, even Christ. By faith, they take hold of their rights in Him. Being partakers of His divine nature, they impart the like grace to others. They lick the sores of the wounded in offering salvation and healing to the people. Yea, like the good Samaritan, they bind up their wounds, pouring oil and wine therein. They bring them to God's Inn to enjoy the care and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

“And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in His bosom.”

The Lord does not want us to receive the impression from the above that all beggars will be saved and all the rich be lost. If such were the case, nearly everybody would turn out to be beggars, even the rich; for the majority nowadays would be saved without turning to the Lord. But the fact that Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom shows that he was a believer. He had faith, else how could he have entered that place of rest? But the rich man went to the opposite place, hell to await his eternal punishment; not because he was rich, but because he was void of faith. He failed to hear and heed the word of God. That is, he did not take it in with the heart. The rich man wanted Abraham to send a man to warn his five brethren. Abraham said unto him, **“*They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.*** And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, **“*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*”**

These three final verses *prove* that Israel as a nation had a chance to believe. Had they believed Moses and the prophets, they would have accepted Christ when He came. They would not hear that Christ rose from the dead, and they would not be persuaded. Jesus said to them, **“*If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sin,*”** And verse 26 shows that it is an

eternal death. Abraham said, "*Between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed.*" Neither can pass to the other. How foolish to say that one can serve his sentence out in hell and finally enjoy the bliss of heaven. Oh, the delusions that Satan has put over the people. Yes, the same spirit of unbelief that gripped Israel has pervaded Christendom. Christ is looked upon as an ordinary man with sin in His members. False teachers hoot at His resurrection and say, "Just live a moral life, etc." What punishment can they receive other than eternal when such an attitude is held toward the Holy Son of God "**There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**" Prov. 16:26 Truly, the self-righteous, who have never been born again, are in that way, the way of death. Christ is Life. "*He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" John 3:36. No scripture even intimates that that wrath will ever be lifted.

OTHERS

Lord help me to live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for "Others."

Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true.
And know that all I do for You
Must needs be done for "Others."

Let self be crucified and slain
And buried deep; and all in vain
May efforts be to rise again
Unless to live for "Others."

"Others," Lord yes, "Others!"
Let this my motto be
Help me to live for others
That I may live for Thee.

Selected.

TOGETHER

John F. Ney

The word 'together' is ringing loudly in my heart. Together, not apart, under, or over, but together. More than one united means together.

Man may unequally yoke things together; but God does not. Whatever God joins together becomes one. In Acts 2:47 we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Lord added them by imparting His divine nature to them; they were "*born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." The very same nature is in the added ones as in the One that added them.

"But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, *hath quickened us together with Christ* (by grace are ye saved;) *and hath raised us up together*, and made us *sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:4-6. Oh, what a union in these verses, three togethers quickened, raised, and seated. Provisionally all believers, the whole new man was quickened when Christ was quickened in the grave, raised when He was raised and seated in the heavenlies when He ascended and sat down in heaven. The main purpose for Christ dying and being buried and raised again was that He might not be alone, but have a bride that could not be separated from Him — "What God has *joined together*, let not man put asunder."

We then as *workers together with Him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. What an employment! Workers together with Christ. Christ said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"—John 17:4. Oh that saints would sit down and learn what work Christ has finished before they begin to work. The great majority of God's people are trying to finish the work that Christ has already finished. Satan could not stop Christ from finishing His work; so he is endeavoring to stop God's people from finding their work by not seeing the finished work of Calvary. Men are always wanting to work for God; but how few are really *working together with God* and finishing the work that He has for

them to do.

Let us look at the *fellowship* and *oneness* of these *workers together with Christ* and one another, by reading of these scriptures— "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he *worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do*" 1 Cor. 16:10. "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my *partner* and *fellowhelper* concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the *messengers of the churches* and the glory of Christ"--2 Cor. 9:23. "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my *brother* and *companion in labor* and *fellowsoldier*, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants." Phil. 2:25 "Aristarchus my *fellowprisoner* saluteth you and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas,... and Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my *fellow-workers* unto the kingdom of God, which have been a *comfort unto me*" —Col. 4:10,11. "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a *beloved brother* and a *faithful minister* and *fellowservant* in the Lord" Col. 4:7. "And sent Timotheus, our *brother* and *minister of God* and our *fellowlaborer* in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and to comfort you concerning your *faith.*" II Thess. 3:2. And Paul writes unto Philemon our dearly beloved and *fellowlaborer* concerning Onesimus to *receive him as himself*, and if he owes him anything to charge it up to him. And the women that were laboring together with Paul and those that were laboring together in prayer, etc., were to be received.

Though God gave the Apostle Paul the message for the Church and others received it thru him, he never took the place as being over them, but as *laborers together with them*. Oh the sweet, precious, loving message of grace, if really believed from the heart, has the same effect on laborers today.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up together* with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be *with the Lord*"-I Thess. 4:17. A people that are quickened together, raised together, seated together and are laboring together with the Lord, of course will also be *translated together with the Lord*. Someone said in irony; "Only Brother Copley and Sister Bodie will go up in the first rank, they may take Brother Ney along as their helper. " No, it is the *together people* that will

be caught up *together*. The people that *are one with Christ*. If brother Ney is only Brother Copley's printer, or employee, and not a *worker together with God*, he will *not be together* when the trumpet sounds. If we are not together now, how can we be together then?' These together people are together though they are miles apart. You cannot separate them. This was a glorious reality to the apostles. It is wonderful to be joined together, to be neither under, nor over one another, *but together*. Do you see what it means to have the Apostle Paul acknowledge one as a laborer together with him and the Lord? Supposing Timothy or one of the other workers out of Paul's presence had preached law and grace mixed or the letter of the gospel of grace only, but denied the practical walk that it produces. He would had written directly to the other workers, "Demos hath forsaken me." II Tim. 4:10.

Even Christ wants a people that are not under Him, but perfectly in union with Him. He wants a bride to share and reign jointly with Him, one that is filled with all the fulness of God. Think of it! Christ wants her to be *together with Him* for all eternity. He is yearning to be together forever and forever with *His* own, who are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. If there is any dancing going on at the wedding in the air, these together people will not dance before the Lord, but they will dance together with the Lord. He will embrace all as one in His Arms.

28

FORGIVE AND FORGET

*Oh, forgive and forget! for this life is too fleeting
To waste it in brooding o'er wrongs we have met;
It is better, far better, to smother our anger,
To teach the proud heart to forgive and forget.*

*Then forgive and forget! if the friends you love fondly,
Prove themselves false and unworthy of trust,
Deal with them kindly, for they are but mortals,
Erring like us, for we are but dust.*

*Deal with them tenderly, pity their weakness.
We know every heart hath its evil and good;
One Father in heaven we have, hence we are brothers:
Then let us forgive and forget as we should.*

ISAIAH 40

Gene Hawkins

This chapter of Isaiah corresponds with Matthew, and the transition recorded here, between The Old Testament and The New, is both simple and profound. According to dates published by Schofield, the prophecy of Malachi ended around 397 B.C. Matthew's record begins about 4 B.C. Most scholars agree that God was silent for a period of 400 years between Malachi and Matthew. We have seen that the previous chapter of Isaiah corresponded with Malachi, wherein is found the promise; "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; ...and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts,... But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked;... in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts." Mal 4:1-3

29 This is a glorious promise of blessing given to Israel as a nation, whereby their enemies shall be destroyed in the fire of tribulation, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;..." All these provisions will be fully realized in the Millennium, but a most glorious local fulfillment is found in Matthew, which announces the ministry of John The Baptist. "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist:... And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 11:11-15

Isaiah 40 is indeed a sequel to Isaiah 39 just as Matthew provides the sequel to Malachi. Isaiah 39 proclaims severe devastation for Israel, even as does Malachi, but both also announce blessing on the horizon, as noted above. Isaiah 40 begins with "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." V. 1 This comfort begins with the ministry of John The Baptist

who is the forerunner of the "...Sun of righteousness..." Who shall "arise with healing in his wings;..." John the Baptist is also said to be "...Elias which was for to come." Malachi 4:5-6 clearly promises "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." That great and dreadful day of the LORD will not be fulfilled in its entirety until the Great Tribulation unfolds, but this is most assuredly a description of the chaos and turmoil which prevailed both prior to, and during, the arrival of John the Baptist.

Our present chapter in Isaiah actually prophesies the message and ministry of this man, as we read, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." V. 2 John likewise proclaimed the "sin problem," and its accompanying judgment, with these words. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Matt. 3:7 However, the Baptist also announced that deliverance would be forthcoming for all who would receive it, "...saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:2 He then launched into the reason for such forgiveness as he declared "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:" Matt. 3:10-11 This is the fulfillment of the present text from Isaiah. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." V. 3 It was John who came both preaching and crying in the wilderness, as he prepared the way for Jesus to enter into His earthly ministry. It was to be easily accessible as "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made

low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

V. 4-5 The completion of this prophecy reaches far beyond the ministry of John The Baptist, but it speaks loudly of the fact that Jesus would lay the foundation for such all-inclusive victory with His work of redemption at Calvary. Every valley of those who are oppressed, namely Israel, will be exalted right along with their Messiah. Every mountain or large imposing kingdom shall be reduced to nothingness and the hills or any lesser kingdom shall be made low. The crooked ways of sin and unrighteousness shall be made straight, even through the blood of Jesus, and the rough ways, that is, the ways of bondage to flesh, to sin, and Satan, would be made plain or free, all because God’s glorious plan of redemption would be implemented. It is then that His glory shall be shown forth, and “all flesh shall see it,” meaning that men must acknowledge God’s glorious work of redemption. Why? Because “the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

John’s message is further outlined, for “The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. V. 6-7 Did not John announce this same depravity of the flesh when he cried out, “...O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” Paul likewise proclaimed this same message as he denounced all efforts of the flesh, proclaiming that “the spirit” must blow upon such manifestations, even in our own lives. “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Rom. 8:11-13

The summation of John’s assertion is found in these words. “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” V. 8 Both he and the apostle Paul

agree that the flesh will not prevail, but God's Word will stand forever. It is this premise which announces, and guarantees, the future of Israel. "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" V. 9

Events at this present time would seem to contradict even the possibility of Israel ever enjoying the benefits of this verse. The current unrest in the Middle East, wherein so many of Israel's enemies are gathering strength against her, seems to completely ignore this direct prophecy of God's Chosen People. The good news is that God's Word will prevail and Jerusalem will one day, after the devastation of the tribulation is past, enjoy the "high mountain" of superiority over all the rest of these nations round about them. "Behold your God!" will be the message to the entire nation, as they will finally realize that God Alone has performed the mighty fulfillment of this prophecy. This verse is simply an extended record of the blessings outlined in verse 1-5.

32

However, the remaining portion of this chapter reflects a mixture of both judgment and blessing. Judgment is most assuredly one of the most prominent characteristics put forth in the book of Matthew. The message of John the Baptist is much harsher in this gospel than the other Gospel Records. The term "weeping and gnashing of teeth," a reference to the most severe judgment in scripture, is found five times in the Word of God, and four of them occur in Matthew. "Outer darkness" is another term used to portray the severest of judgments for rebellion. It is found three times in the book of Matthew, and all three are coupled with "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew likewise is the only gospel record to announce the death of the traitor: Judas. Thus, the entire book of Matthew portrays the message of judgment found in Isaiah 40, even as we read, "Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." V. 10 Even the term "reward," is mentioned in the context of judgment. Judgment is also meant by "his work," even as Isaiah says in Ch. 28:21, calling it "...his strange work;..."

These verses also seem to indicate the over-all pattern that will be displayed in the final days of the Church Age which transition into the Millennium. Severe judgment is poured forth in verse 10, but we immediately read that “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” V. 11 These are glorious blessings, which we experience now, but they are primarily a reference to the glorious “kingdom blessings,” which Israel, as a nation, will enjoy when they finally surrender completely unto Him. The tenderness expressed in these words is beautiful, as He shall not only “feed his flock,” but “...he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

33 “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” V. 11 Note that here again, we are confronted with a rather poetic declaration of judgment. The “waters in the hollow of his hand,...” are waters of judgment, which are “measured,” meaning that God has absolute control over them. He knows exactly how much devastation to pour out both on Israel and the Nations. The “span” literally means a “spreading of the fingers,” and these are the fingers of God, illustrating just how effortless, and Majestic, it is for Him to accomplish His task. He also “weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance,” once again so very poetically describing His evaluation of both great and small nations. We then hear the question “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?” V. 13,14 The question is undoubtedly directed toward the nations, who seem to have all the answers for this world, but it is God Who will determine the consequences for their rebellion. He is the one who will “weigh,” them and then mete out retribution accordingly. The answer to the questions above are apparently answered with; “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and

are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles (a habitable spot; dry land, a coast, an island: -- country) as a very little thing.” V. 15 The nations are as nothing to Him and yet they would be the ones who would instruct Him? They will eventually, and most assuredly, learn that “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.” Psa. 2:4-5

Lebanon is next “singled out,” because she represents the idolatry which prevails in the nations. Israel also seems to be included in this indictment, as suggested later in this chapter by V. 27, and “all nations” in the following text. “And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.” V. 16-19 Scripture is very clear that Israel has been guilty of these things, but here it is quite evident that God includes all nations in such idolatry, and the next few statements indicate that they are without excuse. “He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.” V. 20 Can it be that one is so “impoverished,” that he can in no wise afford an oblation unto God, but he can search out an “enduring tree,” that will not rot, and then hire a cunning workman to create an idol for him? God made provision for “poverty,” by declaring that if a man could not bring even two birds, then “...the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour...” would be sufficient. Lev. 5:11

(To Be Continued In The March Issue)

George Washington said, “The propitious smile of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right; which heaven itself has ordained,” and we add, “forgetting God,” which is of vastly more importance.



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shall come in like a
flood, the Spirit of
the Lord shall lift
up a standard
against him.

ISAIAH 59:19.