

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole counsel of GOD.

Volume 108

December 2018

Number 12



Babe Of Bethlehem

Mary M. Bodie

'Tis Christmas once again, my Friends,
The year has rolled around,
Reminding us of royal Babe,
Who once on earth was found.

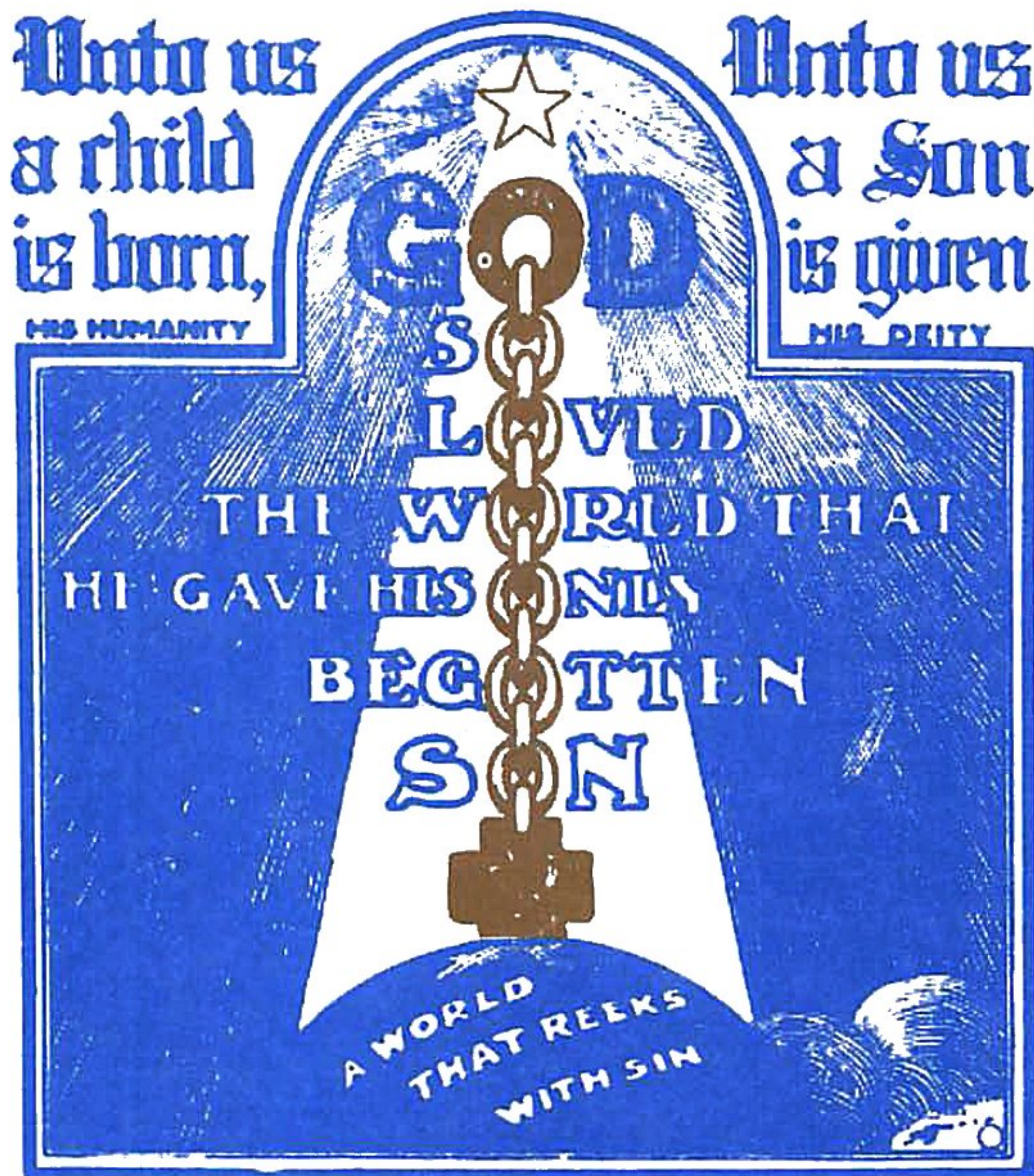
A manger was His cradle here
A stable His first home.
O mystery great that He came down
A stranger here to roam.

And now He's gone to heaven again,
Back to His throne above.
He was rejected here on earth.
Men did not know His love.

And yet today, He's counted great
By all the world's famed men,
Who vie in form to honor Him---
The Babe of Bethlehem

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THE UNBREAKABLE CHAIN

"Grace & Glory" (USPS # 224-300 ISSN # 279-6996) is published monthly by Grace & Glory Gospel Society, 13011 Grandview Rd. P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Missouri 64030.

PERIODICALS postage is paid at Grandview, Missouri.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to "Grace & Glory" P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Missouri 64030.

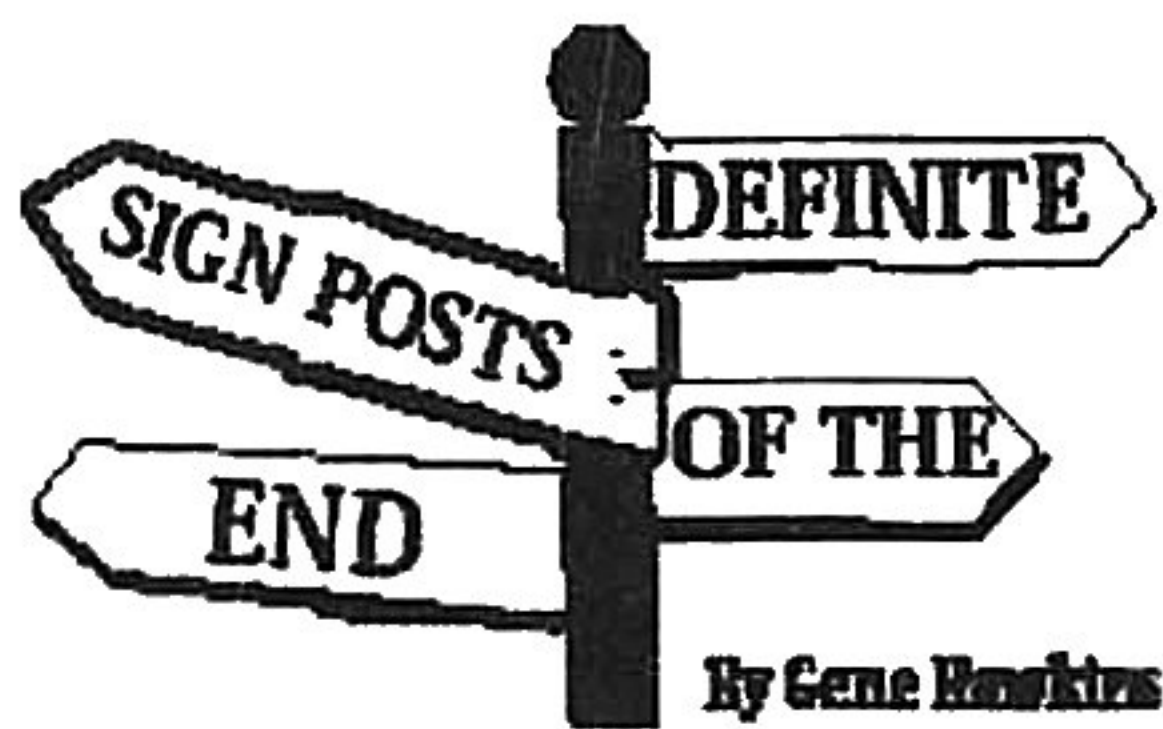
Telephone: 816-618-3306. E-mail gjhawk1@msn.com Print Shop # 816-322-2257

Web site: www.gracegod.org. Bible lessons and audio sermons are downloadable.

GRACE & GLORY is published for the purpose of proclaiming God's Holy Word. We believe that the Scriptures are inspired of God and were given to His holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21)

GRACE & GLORY has had continuous publication without subscription price since 1910. We are able to continue this ministry by your kind financial support.

Editor: Gene Hawkins



“**B**ut 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.” I Thess. 5:1-2

The above text is very familiar to many who have read the “Sign Posts” over the years, for it has appeared in this feature numerous times, and though Jesus has not come, the truth of it is still emblazoned on the hearts and minds of those who are in fact obsessed with looking earnestly upward for Jesus’ soon return. We surely do rejoice for those today who, like the Thessalonians, recognize “...the times and seasons...” displayed in our midst at this present time. That term was used quite erroneously back in the 80’s by some so-called computer experts, who tried to use the definitions of the words to justify their claim that the exact time wherein Jesus would appear could be predicted. They completely ignored Jesus’ command to simply “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” Matt. 25:13 They also completely ignored Paul’s assertion in the above text which they violated, “...that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” He would not come as a thief if such a date could accurately be predicted. Their dates came and went, but Jesus did not!

However, the “...times and seasons...” are still with those who will bother to find out what they are. Vine’s Greek Dictionary says that “Broadly speaking ‘*chronos*’ (times) expresses the duration of a period. ‘*Kairos*’ (seasons) stresses it as marked by certain features.” Daniel used the term “time” to indicate a period of one year when he defined the allotted time of the antichrist as being “...a time and times and the dividing of time.” This is interpreted to mean that he will reign exactly three and one half years or 1260 days. Dan. 7:25 Solomon seems to agree with Vine’s interpretation of “seasons” as he describes some very specific conditions which will prevail in our lives, and there are no less than 28 of them listed in Ecc. 3:1-8. His summation is

found in v. 17. "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work."

4 Paul is also very specific as he portrays details in regard to the various seasons or eras of time which prevail even now in the day when Jesus will return. The first listed here is "...that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Jesus explains the night as having four distinct watches which will transpire during the tribulation period. "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at **even**, or at **midnight**, or at **the cockcrowing**, or in **the morning**:" Mk. 13:35 Mark 13 is comparable to Matt. 24. Both of them present an overview of those things which will, without fail, come to pass upon this earth during the coming days of tribulation, and in the above quotation, Jesus once again emphatically reiterates that "...ye know not when the master...cometh..." He then lists four distinct possibilities of such a return, and the truth of the matter is that He will make an appearance in every one of them. The first watch is "...even..." signifying His first appearance **AFTER** the night time of tribulation has begun. This will mark that period when "...a great multitude, which no man could number,... stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" Rev. 7:9 One of the elders then indentifies them as being, "...they which **came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14 This company without number comprises the second rank of the Church and there is no indication as to how much of that tribulation period they will endure. According to Jesus instruction in Mark, their primary occupation must simply be to Watch!

The time of the second watch is clearly defined for, "...at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Matt. 25:6 We then read that, "...while they (the five foolish virgins) went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready (the wise virgins who had oil) went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Matt. 25:10 Those same wise virgins who had oil in their vessels are seen in Rev. 7 as the 144,000 who were sealed with the oil of the Holy Ghost. "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all

the tribes of the children of Israel.” Rev 7:4 This group is not seen again until “midnight” when we read of the man-child being caught up to heaven. They are further identified as the same 144,000 in Rev. 14:1. “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.” We must conclude that the man-child and the 144,000 are exactly the same company for there is no record of anyone arriving in heaven between Rev. 7 & 14 outside of this same man-child. The birth of this company happened on earth for the woman in the wilderness, Israel, “...brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” Rev. 12:5 Some have taught that this man-child is Christ, but that cannot be, since Jesus can in no wise be counted a child. Furthermore, He has already ascended into heaven after the resurrection, and is even now sitting at the right and of God. Col. 3:1 He will soon be crowned king of Kings and Lord of lords, and this company, associated directly with Him, will indeed rule from heaven with Him as they “...rule all nations with a rod of iron...”

5

The third watch in Mark is defined as “...the cockcrowing...” and it speaks of the very earliest return of the faithful remnant here upon the earth. It will be this group which will form the nucleus of repentant national Israel. These correspond with the 5 foolish virgins who found their oil too late to be received into the marriage supper, but contrary to popular belief, they were not cast into hell. They are still classified as virgins, and never in scripture is a sinner defined as such. These 5 foolish virgins are among the company of Israel left on earth after the man-child is transported to glory. Then the awful reign of the antichrist will ensue and this remnant will endure the horrible time of Jacob's trouble. Since they are filled with the Holy Ghost, they will be a part of that company whom Jesus described in Matt. 24:13. “But he that shall endure unto the end, (of that horrific time) the same shall be saved.” These are among those who will go all the way through the tribulation period and lead the way in setting the stage for the final night watch which is “...the morning...” This would be the time when Jesus will appear to all the world for, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, (because the night is past) and they also which pierced him: (Israel as a

nation) and all kindreds of the earth (even the nations) shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” Rev. 1:7 This marks the dawn of the Millennium wherein Jesus will have put down all rule and authority and will reign as God Almighty for 1000 years.

Be it ever remembered that the night of tribulation has not actually started yet, but we are most assuredly witnessing the deep sunset of this Church Age. Jesus clearly made this promise to the Philadelphia Church: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Rev 3:10 The innumerable company appeared in heaven before the throne directly because they “...came out of great tribulation...” The saints here in Philadelphia are kept “...from (or out of...)” this same “...hour of temptation...” meaning that the Bride of Christ will be taken out of this world **BEFORE** the first night watch or “...even...” ever begins! This is the time for which we are waiting and thus are encouraged to fully know the characteristics of these “...times and seasons...”

6 The term night most assuredly does carry the connotation of tremendous pain and suffering and it also indicates a time wherein real darkness will be predominant. There are perhaps a number of reasons that darkness is even now coming upon this little earth ball. One of them is that God has chosen to remove some of His lighthouses to glory. The sad fact is that they are not being replaced, and thus light is diminished. Many have endured the loss of virtual icons in the faith over the past few years because they have gone home to be with The Lord. Many of us have attended funerals where children and grandchildren have lauded such loved ones to the skies, but there has been no indication that they would take up the banner and set forth the light of God’s Word as their forbearers had done. Attendance in churches which have had the reputation of at least standing for the basic fundamental doctrines of the faith is, for the most part dwindling and many of those congregations are predominantly elderly. It is so very grievous that the so-called “younger generation” can by no means be classified as a generation of light. We have often said, “if you feel like the world is getting darker, it is not your imagination.” It seems that we can surely identify with those dwelling in Egypt just prior to Israel’s glorious deliverance at the Red Sea. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine

hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness **which may be felt.**" Ex. 10:21

Lesser light is due to the condition listed above, but the sad fact is that men en masse are turning a blind eye to the Light of God's Word. Some Churches would rather imitate the ways of the world in an effort to appeal to the fleshly desires and energies of young people. The rules of society are adopted rather than the righteous standards of God's Word. According to many religious circles, God's rigorous rules must be changed to fit the conditions of modern times. Men seem to be divided into two major categories today, liberal and conservative, and this divide is seen not only in every corner of the world but also in every walk of life, religiously, politically and socially. God's description for this condition is found in Matt. 7:13-14 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The word strait means "narrow (from obstacles standing close about):" which Vine's Dictionary then explains is "because it runs counter to natural inclinations." The terms "wide and broad" indicate that which is "spacious, through the idea of empty expanse." The interpretation is simple. The strait and narrow way is one of control and discipline, contrary to natural inclination and thinking. It also indicates an acute awareness of obstacles which could be hazardous to the journey. On the other hand, the wide and broad way is one where "anything goes." It is empty of any real direction so just let your imagination and desires run wild. This is the path which the world has chosen today and ours is a day when any kind of restraint to any kind of lifestyle or desire is prohibited, and that especially applies to the restraints imposed by the Light of God's Word. Thus the darkness of our day intensifies.

The recent shooting at the Jewish Synagogue in Pittsburg, Penn., which is simply another manifestation of the darkness descending upon our world, prompted this headline from Haaretz.com. **"Israel's chief rabbi refuses to call Pittsburgh massacre site a synagogue because it is non-orthodox."** This article goes on to explain how "Rabbi David Lau said that 'any murder of any Jew in any part of the world for being Jewish is unforgivable.' But rather than acknowledge that the crime had

been carried out in a synagogue, he referred to the location as “a place with a profound Jewish flavor.” Such rhetoric reminds us of Jesus’ message to the Pharisees. “But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Lk. 11:42 The Pharisees’ extreme lifestyle of so-called discipline is legendary, but they could not be described as those who would follow the strait and narrow path of Light described above, the reason being that they denied The Light of the Lord Jesus Christ as they indeed overlooked God’s path of “...judgment and the love of God:...” It is common knowledge that Orthodox Jewry long ago banned Messianic Jews from its ranks but we could find no evidence that the “Tree of Life Synagogue” in Pittsburgh proclaims the teachings of Christ. It is therefore unclear as to why Rabbi Lau discriminated against them after this horrible tragedy. His statement surely does not measure up to the standards of light advocating “...judgment and the love of God:...” toward his own people. Contrariwise, it is very apparent that this ungodly shooter made no distinction of Jews as he shouted “all Jews must die,” just before he began his rampage.

Human life has come to mean nothing in the modern world, and that in itself is most assuredly an element of the darkness due to the lack of God’s Word across the entire globe. A Saudi Journalist was brutally murdered in Turkey but men seem to be more concerned about the political implications of it rather than the loss of a life. Though we constantly hear the refrain; “we must get to the bottom of this,” it seems quite evident that several countries are more interested in inflicting political pressure and embarrassment on one another than they are in bringing justice to the hit squad responsible for this atrocity, and trying to ensure that such things are not repeated.

It is also quite revealing that no time was lost in trying to connect Pres. Trump to the shooting in Pittsburgh as some accused him of being anti-Semitic. This is despite the fact that he is the first American President who had the boldness to move the American Embassy to Jerusalem. His daughter and son-in-law are also identified as Jewish, and the shooter not only hated Jews, but hated Pres. Trump directly because of his support for Israel. Truth in our day is irrelevant, as men simply proceed in

their quest to gain or maintain power, and thus the darkness will continue to mount.

The California wildfires are also taking center stage in news cycles across the country and here too we witness man's disregard of God's Word. The President was soundly criticized for suggesting that poor forest land management was at least in part responsible for these fires. Later, the officials of that department along with the governor of Calif. acknowledged that such mismanagement does most assuredly exist. Environmentalist regulations that restricted logging are now scheduled to be repealed, for it was these regulations which prevented the removal of dead trees from the forest. That timber then became literal tinder in fueling these massive fires now sweeping across the state. Power companies whose electrical lines had long been suspected of causing these fires have also admitted that their equipment had not been maintained to the degree that it should have been. We can only wonder why men will not claim the responsibilities that belong to them and let God take care of His business, for despite all of these facts, many environmentalists still insist that man-made "global warming or climate change" is the primary culprit in these fires. 9 They also continue making loud demands for drastic measures to be taken in order to ensure that global temperatures are reduced. Such folk do not seem to realize that these proposals are a direct denial of God's Word and once again demonstrate the darkness prevailing across this world due to the lack of God's Light.

Men would attribute to man those things which only God is able to do. The psalmist clearly wrote that "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom **ruleth over all.**" Psa. 103:19 It is God Who ruleth in the heavens, not man. Global environmentalists blame "climate change" for the erratic weather being displayed throughout the world today, wherein we have record high temperatures in one part of the country and record low readings in another. Snow, rain, hail, hurricane and tornadic winds, producing destructive mud slides, avalanches, earthquakes, drought, fires and famine along with massive loss of life and property, have become almost a constant in these last days. Once again, so much of this destruction is blamed on the efforts of men, but the scriptures have prophesied that all this devastation would come to pass, and there is evidence throughout the Word of God that He has

brought forth such events down through the ages. It was God Who produced the flood of Noah's day, and it was He Who rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. Deborah sang mightily after Israel's great victory over Canaan: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Jg. 5:20 The realm of the heavens belongs to God and the "...signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;..." (Lk. 21:25) which result in devastation on this earth are a message from Him. When men try to attribute His works to man, they are indeed treading on very dangerous ground. It is much akin to Israel's declaration after Aaron "created" the golden calf, and they boldly announced that, "...These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Ex. 32:4 God is insulted when men claim that they are able to do the works which only He can accomplish and one day He will unequivocally show them, for when the heat is really increased in the tribulation, it will be they who will finally be forced to acknowledge that He alone 'brought the heat.' "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, **which hath power over these plagues:** and they repented not to give him glory." Much of today's society has replaced God's Word with all sorts of their own made-made ideas which they worship as idols and thus continue to promote this current atmosphere of darkness.

Paul further encouraged the Thessalonian believers by insisting that you "...brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." I Thess. 5:4-6 We too must claim that place of separation, and though we live in a day of pressing darkness, we need not be a part of it. We do not, and must not, conform to the idolatrous thinking of this world. We cannot adopt the standards of men rather than the requirements of God's Word if we would walk righteously in this present world. It is imperative that we grow up as sons of light and conduct our lives accordingly. There must be no reason "...that that day should overtake you as a thief." He will only come as a thief to those who refuse to walk in the light!

Jesus' Two Appearings

Orville A. Freestone, Sr.

"FOR the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (age, Gr.) looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. 2:11-14

Here in our text we note **two appearings** of our Lord because of God's unmerited favor bestowed upon lost, sinful humanity. The one appearing is past; the other is yet future. If we will consider conditions that obtained at Jesus' first appearing we will get a picture also of what may be expected at His later appearing for the former typifies the latter in many aspects. The glory of God as seen in Christ at His first coming was veiled and hidden from unregenerate men but when He comes again, "without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:29), all must bow to Him and confess His right to reign. His glory will be unveiled and terrible to behold.

The first appearing was announced to shepherds in the fields by an angelic messenger. "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." Luke 2:13. While a few were looking for Him, God worked so suddenly that even they were in some instances a bit startled! But they were witnesses.

"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.**" Lk. 2:25 Simeon means **hearing**, and as we wait on the Lord He will cause the ears of our understanding to be opened to the Truth for, "**Faith** cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. While he waited "the Holy

Ghost was upon him." Saints who are looking for the Lord to appear and wait on Him will be instructed through the Word to receive the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. Having received Him they are thereby endued with power to "walk in the Spirit" and continuing therein, they are in a position to receive as did Simeon, a revelation concerning Jesus' coming.

"And it was revealed unto him that **he should not see death** before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple:..." Vs. 26,27 Simeon walked in the Spirit and was guided by the Holy Ghost and was thus enabled to keep an appointment that God made for him. There are saints today who were figured by Simeon who are being guided by the Holy Spirit so as to keep an appointment with Jesus in the air and **these saints will never die**. Unlike Simeon, they are changed ere that meeting arrives, and translated that they should not see
12 death as was Enoch. Heb. 11:5

It was revealed to Simeon that Christ would be rejected and needs must come again as witness his words in verse 34. "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign that shall be spoken against." **The fall** speaks of Jesus' betrayal and rejection and the **rising again of many** speaks of Christ's coming in power to judge the nations and deliver His oppressed people, Israel, from the Great Tribulation spoken of as Jacob's trouble. Nevertheless, even Mary (Jesus' Mother) must endure sorrow, said Simeon, because Jesus' death was inevitable if the thoughts of many hearts were to be bared. V. 35

Now we note another character chosen of the Lord to be a witness that Jesus as a babe was the SON of GOD. "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 a husband seven years

from her virginity; and she was a widow of about four score 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 **spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption** in Jerusalem." Lk. 2:36-38

Anna means **gracious**; **Phanuel** signifies **fear of God**; **Aser** means **happy**. Anna figures saints today who fear' the Lord and looking unto Him are being transformed into His likeness. They partake of His gracious Spirit and of course are happy. Anna's husband was dead and **she was a long time a widow**. This speaks to us of the saints of God who were cut off from their former Head, Adam, because by faith we were separated from the old creation and the world at Calvary. Gal. 6:14. Her widowhood figures the saints of this age espoused to Christ and joined by faith but waiting for that faith to become a reality when we shall join Him in the air.

She **departed not from the temple**, the place of worship. It is precious to see saints always rejoicing in Christ, full of worship and love for Him. Those of this character know no defeat but are determined to know and do the will of God through prayer and the Word. Such folk are not so plentiful but can be found today. They are given to self-denial and bearing burdens of prayer and intercession continually that others may be benefited thereby. Anna also walked in the Spirit and was guided at the exact time of God's appointment to behold the Babe Jesus. Her heart was filled with thanksgiving as she recognized the Christ by revelation. Only the Spirit could make her to know that this cuddly infant was any different from other Jewish babies. When Jesus comes the second time the faithful saints will be walking in the Spirit and their joy will know no bounds as they look upon His beauty and glory Hallelujah! Again we note all those at Jerusalem heard concerning Israel's redemption. Shall not we wait the revelation of our Saviour? Indeed!

Another "who **waited** for the kingdom of God" was Joseph of Arimathaea. He was a counselor (member of the Sanhedrin or ruler of the Jews. This Joseph was wealthy, "and he was a good man, and just." Lk. 23:50 John tells us that he was a believer "but secretly for fear of the Jews." Some folks are convinced in their hearts but will not openly express their convictions because of the persecutions which they know will follow. Evidently Joseph was a man of this sort. But there comes a time when it is necessary for us to declare ourselves. Mark wrote (ch.15:43) that Joseph **came boldly** to Pilate begging for the body of our Lord. Though he may have been backward and shy in testimony previously, Joseph had suddenly become bold in the crisis time. As a result he had a privilege and honor given to no other, that of providing the place of burial for Jesus.

14 **Joseph** signifies **adding to**. He figures saints who not only wait on the Lord to come and set up His Kingdom but seize the opportunities at hand to add honor and distinction to themselves now. They devour the Word and "**grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord.**" No man takes their crown or reward for they follow the admonition in II Pet. 1:5-7, "Giving all diligence, **add to your faith virtue (power endued by the Holy Spirit), and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.**" Verse 8 tells us that these possessions make us fruitful or make us to increase in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. One cannot subtract and add at the same time, so keep adding and no man can take away your crown. Rev. 3:11 And Jesus said, "Behold I come quickly (suddenly); and My reward is with me to give every man according as His work shall be!" Rev. 22:12

(Reprint 1946)

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head,
The stars in the bright sky looked
down where He lay-

The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle were lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes,
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

How congregational singing, as we know it in our Sunday schools and churches today, came about is a very interesting story. Until a little more than 400 years ago common people did not sing at all in church. The music was produced only by priests or by specially selected choirs. Then, too, the whole service, songs and all, was in Latin, which most people did not understand.

15

With the Protestant Reformation in Europe came a number of hymns in everyday language of the people for use in their worship. But there was need of a gifted leader like Martin Luther to give the great impulse and expression to congregational singing. Luther, who became a renown leader of Reformation, was a poor miner's son and was born in Eisleben, Germany, at the foot of Hartz Mountains, in 1483. He was divinely talented in music, and could play the flute and lute in addition to being an excellent singer.

As a boy, while a student at Franciscan Monastery school, Luther often used his beautiful voice to sing at the windows of wealthy citizens for alms to be given to the poor. At Christmas time, he and his companions often went wandering through the neighboring villages singing the carols of the infant Jesus. To Luther, music was a

“gift and grace of God;” it could drive out the devil and make men forget all wrath.”

We are not surprised, then, that later in life Luther became intensely interested in encouraging congregational singing. “I wish,” he said, “to compose sacred hymns, so that the word of God may dwell among the people also by means of songs.” The people should have hymns, as well as the Bible in their own language, so that they could “read God’s word and speak to Him in their songs.” The Protestant Church services were no longer to be in Latin, but in the common language of the people.

The first Protestant hymnal was published in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1542. It contained only eight hymns, four of them written by Luther himself. This little book “flew all over Europe,” in answer to deep felt want. The new Hymns, **16** with the magnificent music to which they were set, were eagerly learned by the people. We hear the musicians playing them on blow-horns from the church steeples, and of crowds singing them in the market places.

Luther’s poetic gifts being once unfolded, he composed many more hymns, winning the name of “the Nightingale of Wittenberg.” Within twenty years after his first hymnal was issued, at least 117 collections of hymns by Luther and his associates had been printed. Protestant Germany became a veritable “sea of song.” In this way the great Reformer has come to be known as the father of congregational singing, which under his leadership rapidly grew in popularity. Some men said he did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translating and his preaching of the Bible.

Not often is there a genius like Luther’s, to compose both the music and words for his

inspiring hymns. His famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," written about 1529, is said to be one of the most splendid hymn-tunes he ever composed. This ancient hymn was inspired by the 46th Psalm. There were many dark days in Luther's life, when he found help by looking to God as his fortress and strength. Others found comfort in it too. This hymn has been "like a flame and a cloud to the people through the years since Luther wrote it." Everyone in Protestant Germany sang it, children at their play, women at their work, and soldiers on the battlefield. It has been called the National Hymn of Germany, the "Marseillaise of the Reformation." The first line, "A mighty fortress is our God" is found inscribed in German on Luther's monument in the famous old town of Wittenberg.

Luther loved to appeal to children also. He chose happy tunes and fitted charming words to them. One of the best is entitled, "Give Heed, My Heart, Lift Up Thine Eyes." The little cradle song "Away In A Manger," which has been the delight of children all over the world, is thought to have been written for his small son Hans (John), for a Christmas Eve festival, perhaps in 1530. Doesn't it give a sweet picture of the baby Jesus in the manger? The last stanza is a prayer which we all like to learn and say together:

Be with me, Lord Jesus;
I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever,
and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children
in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven
to live with Thee there.

-From "Stories of Hymns We Love"
(Reprint Bonds of Peace 1946)

REFLECTIONS

...From the Editor

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Rom. 8:32

God gave us His absolute best when He sent His Only Begotten Son into this world to be born of a woman and become a Man. James also tell us that, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,...” Jas. 1:17 We are those lights of whom God is our Father, and it is imperative for us to realize that The Gift which God gave in Christ Jesus, is absolutely fraught with gifts beyond measure, even as Paul loudly proclaims in the above text: “...how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Let us, however, consider some specific gifts.

18 The moment we believe we are “in Christ” and are thus entitled to all He has provided for us through redemption. It is also noteworthy to understand that we now become a gift unto others. Paul describes this scenario as being part of a body, thus “...as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ,... Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, (service) let us wait on our ministering:...” Rom. 12:4-7 Seven separate gifts are listed here which portray the perfection or completion of that one body. The differing gifts make one member to differ from another, but God did not just give His gifts for personal satisfaction. He rather bestowed them in order that each member might render a very special benefit to the rest of the Body of Christ.

God has likewise poured out the Holy Ghost as a gift, for “...we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” I Cor. 2:12 The Holy Spirit has been given to us as a gift, but He also brings with Him the glorious gift of being able to understand great mysteries because God “.... hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all

things, yea, the deep things of God.” I Cor. 2:10 Note here that the Holy Ghost is not searching these things as though He is not aware of the boundless treasure provided by redemption. He is rather searching for those things which apply to my life at any given time of need!

Next, God “...hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;” II Cor. 5:18 However, the first part of this verse declares a specific order for such a gift because “...all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,...” God must first reconcile us to Himself, and that too is His gift. That Gift once again is Jesus, for “...God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” I John 5:11 Oh Glorious Wonder of God! Eternal life is not simply a “thing” or an endless number of days, but Eternal Life is a Person, even “... Jesus, Christ the righteous;” I John 2:1

David sets forth a beautiful example of how we too must receive all God’s gifts. He was a man who insisted that he would build God a house. However, God responded with an emphatic “NO!” declaring instead that God would build David an house, wherein he would have an heir on the throne of David forever. What was David’s response to such a gift? “And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and **do as thou hast said.**” II Sam. 7:25 David was undoubtedly disappointed that he could not accomplish his own plan, but he did not let foolish pride interfere with his receiving God’s most gracious gift.

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ANNOUNCEMENT:

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The Glory Of The Lord

Paul N. Smith

" **A**nd there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Lk. 2:8-11

20 The announcement of the birth of the Savior was attended not only by the angels of Heaven, but by the glory of the Lord. In the years of the Old Testament, God appeared at different times and in various manners to His people. When Moses received his commission to return to Egypt, the glory of the Lord appeared in the burning bush. In the mountain of Sinai where he received the law, Moses was surrounded by the glory of the Lord. At the completion of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and later the temple in Solomon's time, the glory of the Lord abode over the Holy of Holies.

The cloud of glory, the pillar of fire, the burning bush, all were signs that God's Presence was with His people. He abode in the tabernacle and temple, because there was where the symbolic articles and offerings were located. These all pointed to the reality of redemption - Calvary and the glory which is to follow.

The "Shekinah" glory is God's Presence with men. He appeared only to His chosen ones, previous to that mystical night over nineteen hundred years ago. Then, all at once, the glorious announcement came that God had visited mankind. He did not appear in the clouds of heaven, nor in a pillar of fire. God appeared in the form of a little Baby, born in a stable and laid in a manger. What a mystery! Here was the Shekinah glory, but the brilliance of His Presence was veiled in human flesh. No wonder that Heaven was so ecstatic over the birth of the Savior! No wonder that the shepherds were magnetically drawn to that humble stable! No wonder that wise men of the East would travel so far and so

faithfully to see the Child who was born King of the Jews!

God's glory had not been seen for many years. The hope of His glory ever shining upon Israel was remote. But, glory to God. **not only did the glory of God appear to Israel - He came to bless all mankind.** That is why the angels could say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." All men did not see the glory of God through the veil of flesh. There were some, who had a revelation that truly this was the Son of God. When John the Baptist saw Jesus walking one day, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" - John 1:29. John the son of Zebedee, who wrote the record of Jesus, testified, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" - John 1:14,18.

God with man! This is what Jesus accomplished when He came to earth and became the Lamb of God. He brought God's glory with Him, and manifested also His grace and Truth. He made it possible for God to tabernacle with men. Since His death and resurrection, He has made it possible for God to dwell IN men. Another **mystery! We, who accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, are tabernacles in which God dwells.** His glory also abides upon our frail tabernacles. Jesus bridged the great gap that separated God and man. He brought God down to man, and raised man to His own level.

This is our wonderful privilege. We are the temples of God. In this season, we can realize that we are really blessed. What greater Gift can be received than Christ? What greater blessing can we have than to know that Christ is in us? The greater blessing is yet future for us, when even our bodies will experience the "Shekinah" glory of God. **Surely His glory will fill our tabernacles, and we will rejoice with the angels of Heaven.**

(Reprint 1969)

They Were Steadfast

Albert J. Woehr, Jr.

“And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together,... And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press,... When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Mk. 2:1-5

This is a remarkable story... Let us learn the lessons which it teaches. The news of the Lord's presence in that house spread throughout the city. You know how quickly things spread. Tell a person at one end of the town and soon everybody is in possession of the news. By that time Jesus was a well-known person. People everywhere had heard of the One who was going about healing the sick and performing miracles. Undoubtedly many who were suffering from diseases who heard of Christ wanted to see Him, wanted to get close to Him, wanted the help that He was giving to others. My how they flocked to that house. Loved ones brought their sick friends. In a short time a large crowd had assembled. Jesus began to talk to them.

I wonder how quickly a crowd would gather at the corner here if it were noised about that Lindbergh was going to give an airplane demonstration. The streets would be crowded for squares, blocking traffic. Some would come for this or that, airplane fans to learn something, other fans for an autograph, or something. That is how it was then in Capernaum. Jesus began to teach the people and heal the sick.

When the word reached a certain sick man's friends, they decided to take their friend who was sick of the palsy to Jesus. If He healed others, He would heal their friend too. How could they bring him? Only one way: pick up his bed and carry him. No sooner said than done. By dint of much pushing and striving and help from many, they pushed their way to the house where Jesus was teaching people. But try as they would, they could not budge the crowd around the door. What were they to do? Was their labor to be in vain? Were they to take their friend back home again, worse now than before? For

the jostling and pushing had done their sick friend no good.

Shaking with the palsy, bewildered by the crowd, discouraged, spirit drooping, as he saw his friends try in vain to get through the press near the door, the sick groaned in despair. I can see the poor fellow hopeless, helpless, sick so long, weary, ready to die, discouraged and miserable. His friends scanned the house bewildered for a moment; then one climbed on the roof top. Another followed. Then they carefully raised the bed and got it on the roof. A hole soon broke in the roof large enough to let the bed through, the friends gradually letting it down until it was before the Lord. Jesus.

I can imagine I see that scene just now. Jesus teaching the people, busy about His Father's business, concerned with the people about Him, bits of roof falling around Him. He noticed the attention of the people drawn toward the ceiling (many of the homes like that one, were one story affairs with thatched roofs), seeing suddenly a bed let down at His feet. Jesus looked up. When He saw (not the sick man) but THEIR FAITH (of the friends), He said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Some religious people were gathered there (scribes), who reasoned amongst themselves and mumbled, accusing the Lord of blasphemy.

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Then Jesus said, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or Arise and take up thy bed and walk?... Then were they all amazed and said, We never saw it on this fashion." V. 8-12

Beloved, when Jesus steps in and does something for you, people say, "We never saw it on this fashion." No, they could not believe it possible. Now, the lesson before us is very important. That healing was not just an adventure story, but it was given for our learning. We make requests because we are in need of something. The sick man was in need of healing; He needed health. If you have a financial request, it is because you are lacking something financial. If it is for healing, it is because you are lacking perfect health, and so on. Every need is a lack of something. That is why we come to the Lord, that our need may be supplied, that we may

lack no longer.

Now, if our request is on a bed, we must have it brought to the Lord. How? Carry it there! The palsied man had four friends, one at each corner of the bed. Let us say that our four good friends, who are to bear our request to the Lord, are faith, hope, love and steadfastness. These are essential for answers to prayer. They must be in perfect harmony-faith, hope, love and steadfastness; for perfect results!

First, Faith; For without faith, sayeth the Word, it is impossible to please God. If we pray without faith, it is sin. And sin hinders the answer to prayer, yea, it even hinders the hearing of the prayer; for if I regard iniquity (or sin) in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Those men had faith in Jesus. They believed He could heal their friend. Why did they believe this? Because they had heard what He had done for others. That is how we get faith; for "**faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.**"

24

Second, Hope has come to our heart through the gateway of faith. Once we were without hope, but now since we have been made nigh by the blood of Christ, we have hope; and what a glorious one it is. Faith and hope come together. They are like twins, one born after the other, but neither one without the other. Those men had hope. They hoped, if they could get to Jesus, that He would heal their friend. We are like that. The Word tells us something; we believe it, have faith in it, and then hope for the result. In other words, hope is good accompanied by expectation. As they brought their friend they expected to have Jesus heal him. We pray and expect Jesus to answer. We wait, or hope for the answer.

Third, Love. Those men loved their friend. No sacrifice, or hardship was too great. It was for this reason they brought him to Jesus. They wanted him healed. And so their love moved them

onward. Love is life. I have always maintained this. God is love. Love is God's life. When we love we are moved. It is love that puts life into our faith and hope. The Word says, "Faith, hope, love;" but the greatest of these is love. Yes, you may have faith and hope; but without love you are as nothing, only a tinkling cymbal, a sounding brass. In fact, if a man hath not love, he knoweth not God.

Fourth, Steadfastness. You have often heard people say that they have faith, have hope and love the Lord, and their actions prove this to be true; and yet they receive no results. Why? Well, let us find the answer in our lesson. No doubt those men loved their friend. Their actions prove this to be true. Love is always manifested by action, because true love is alive, and anything alive moves. They carried him, pressed through the crowd: desiring to have him healed. They had faith that the Lord was able to heal their friend; otherwise they never would have started to carry the bed towards Jesus. They had hope that if they could but get their friend to Christ, all would be well. 25

But with all this, suppose after getting near the door, they had given up and said, "No use, we cannot get through that door. We know Jesus can heal our friend, if we can get him to Jesus, but we have tried and tried, and we are unsuccessful." But instead they ignored the circumstances, conditions and the great obstacles and climbed up on the roof. What was that? Not only faith and hope, but steadfastness. Yes indeed, beloved, they were steadfast (or persistent).

If we can ignore the conditions and the greatness of the obstacles by looking unto Jesus and His power, it will help us over the difficulties. You say you are weak? Amen. I hope you believe that; for if you do, then stop leaning on a weak person (yourself) and lean on the Strong One, Jesus Christ. Yes, we need faith,

hope and love to bear our requests to the Lord; but we need steadfastness also. We need to be "steadfast, immovable in the faith." Not tossed about with every wind of doctrine but steadfast. So we receive results from the Lord. Faith, hope and love; the greatest of these is love, but love needs to be steadfast for effective results.

Pay no attention to the people with their reasoning, their schemes, their fault finding. Keep your eyes upon Jesus. When God gives you the result, they will all be amazed" and say, "We never saw it on this fashion." Have faith, hope, love and steadfastness. Are you steadfast?

Wondrous Gift!

Peace! Peace! The angels sang.
Good will to man! the heavens rang.
This the chorus at His birth—
Christ the King has come to earth.
Unto us a CHILD is given:
God's own Son is born from heaven.

Peace! Peace! The joyful strain,
Naught of sorrow, sin nor pain.
Good will to man, they only tell,
As their voices rise and swell.
Heaven's Joy has come to earth,
Born a Babe of lowly birth.

Peace! Peace! The story This—
Angels sang of Grace and Bliss;
For on Mary's gentle breast,
Lay the GIFT of endless Rest,
And in Christ "The Lord from heaven,"
God's Eternal Peace is given.

Mary M. Bodie

CHAPTER SIXTY FIVE ~ JUDE

“I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, ... A people that provoketh me to anger ... Which remain among the graves,... Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou....” V. 2-5

Isaiah begins this chapter with reference to the tremendous unbelief and wickedness displayed by Israel prior to their glorious restoration, thus corresponding with Jude who follows the same pattern. “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.”

Jude 5 Jude also lists a number of other examples showing forth rebellion both in heaven and earth. These include “... the angels which kept not their first estate,... Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh,... these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion,... these speak evil of those things which they know not:... brute beasts, ... Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” V. 6-11

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Jude then announces the great victories which will be brought forth by Jesus’ glorious second coming. “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time,... But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith,... Keep yourselves in the love of God,... And of some have compassion,... Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless... To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” V. 17-25

Isaiah sixty five likewise closes with the great promise of copious blessing for Israel. “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:... be ye glad and rejoice for ever ... I will rejoice in Jerusalem, ... There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days:... they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.... my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.... The wolf and the lamb shall

feed together,... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,..." V. 17-25

Great blessing is most assuredly coming for Israel, but the first two verses of this chapter reveal God's plans during this present Church Age. "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;" V. 1,2

28 The Apostle Paul quotes these same verses in Romans 10, declaring that verse one would be addressed to the Gentiles, while verse two clearly refers to Israel. "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. **But to Israel** he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:20-21 These Gentiles are clearly designated as "... them that sought me not ... them that asked not after me..." along with Isaiah's declaration that that God spoke to "...a nation that was not called by my name,..." Contrariwise, the apostle specifically identifies Israel as "... a disobedient and gainsaying people." Scripture is quite clear that God has suspended His dealings with Israel in order to make known His Presence among the Gentiles for "... God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Acts 15:14

Paul also informs us that God is literally using the Gentiles as His instrument to turn His Own People unto Himself. "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." He will take out of the Gentiles a people for His Name, but at the same time He will also take the aforementioned measures to correct the tremendous history of rebellion in Israel, described by the following verses.

"A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;" V. 3 Scripture is very plain that Israel was guilty of very blatant idolatry, even from a time shortly after they took up residence in the land of Canaan. Elijah held out his hands, as it were, pleading with the people to turn from their wicked ways of bowing down to Baal, as he called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, demonstrating God's tremendous power

right before their eyes. There was never a wholesale cessation of idolatry in Israel and Isaiah's further assessment is that they are among those "Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;" V. 4 God's estimation of them is that they are occupied with death rather than the Life, which would be found only in Christ. Not only so, but the very thing that would be abhorred under the law, such as eating "...swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things,..." seems to have become a way of life with them. God further accuses them of undoubtedly isolating themselves both from others, and from Himself. "Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." V.5 Though God held out His Hands to them, they did push him away, and Jesus constantly upbraided them for their "... holier than thou..." attitude toward their own countrymen. Such traits of rebellion are repulsive to God's sensitive "... nose..." and it will result in "... a fire that burneth all the day."

"Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom," V. 6 This is God's promise to bring judgment upon Israel for the aforementioned rebellion and unbelief, even as depicted in Jude. It has indeed been "written before me,..." that is, recorded in Scripture down through the ages. The full recompense, due to their gross conduct, will be inflicted during the great tribulation for: "Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom." V. 7 God will be severe and meticulous in this judgment but mercy will prevail as indicated by V. 8 "Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all." This is a clear indication that the restoration of this nation will be just as real as their judgment, and it is even at the door, just waiting for the revelation of Jesus!

"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." All God's blessings are supplied through this Glorious Seed, which is Jesus! Both Israel,

that is the ten tribes, and Judah, the two tribes, shall be gathered together in one, which will be known as "... mine elect..." They will truly be united once again, as one nation, and the day will come when all their rebellious acts, and wicked idolatrous ways shall be replaced by this tremendous Life, which the Church has experienced throughout this age. When that happens, then all these blessings shall flow uninhibited, literally saturating this chosen people with His Goodness, both naturally and spiritually. "And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me." V. 10 Sharon was a place, tremendously desired in Israel. The Shulamite described herself as the "rose of Sharon," (S.O.S. 2:1) emphasizing her own new found image which is quite a contrast to being "black but comely." S.O.S. 1:5 Sharon is also associated with Lebanon, which means "white" signifying purity, even the purity of Christ's righteousness, which by this time this entire nation will have embraced. Sharon shall be a "... fold of flocks..." a direct contrast to the "... valley of Achor..." which bears the connotation of judgment. Israel will finally discover that place of genuine rest, strictly because "... my people have sought me." Once again, however, the pattern is repeated. Blessing is on the horizon, but rebellion must still be addressed for "... ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number." V. 11 The "troop," for which a table is prepared must undoubtedly refer to a troop of idolaters for whom they would "... furnish the drink offering..." They have also truly forgotten the very holiness for which His mountain, Jerusalem, stands. This is truly manifest in present - day Jerusalem, for there is no semblance of spirituality found there. "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not." V. 12 The truth of these words has been fulfilled numerous times throughout Israel's history, such as that which is recounted by Ezra after the 70 year captivity. "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with

their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;" Ezra 9:10-13

This same repentant attitude will also be present in Israel after the "... sword... and ... slaughter..." of the tribulation has come to pass. There will be a winnowing at that time, wherein God will separate the false from the true. "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:" V. 13-15 The distinction here is between "... my servants..." and those simply identified as "ye." The latter undoubtedly refer to the nations, but the term must also refer to those, even in Israel, who have not found the path through The Messiah, that they might be called His "... mine elect,..." or "... my chosen:..." Severe judgment shall fall upon them as they are indeed cursed before Him.

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There will be a different story written for his chosen servants, as noted by the following: "That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes." V. 16 This is glorious reward of true repentance before God reflecting the heart of one who "... shall bless himself in the God of truth." No longer is this one "...which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;" V. 2 This one is said to "... in the earth..." indicating one who will indeed be an "earth dweller," rather than being transported to heaven. His will also be a spectacular life due to God's full plan of redemption, much of which will be implemented during the Millennium as outlined below.

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” V. 17 The fullness of this promise will not actually come to pass until after the thousand year reign of Christ is over, but there must of necessity be somewhat of a re-creation of the earth due to the tremendous devastation wrought by the great tribulation. Thus, “... be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” V. 18 Life for this entire earth planet will center around Jerusalem, and the land of Israel, after Jesus sets up His Kingdom here on earth. What a contrast it will be to the great upheaval that is clearly manifest in the holy city today, as men clamor to claim their own piece of it. It will be recognized, in that day, as belonging to The Lord and God says, “... I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” V. 19 The horrendous days which inflicted such weeping and crying during the time of Jacob’s trouble will be no more. They will be replaced by the glorious joy of millennial blessings and “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” V. 20 This is a record of life in the millennium. No “Christian” will die during this time. Scripture plainly teaches two resurrections. The first is that of Christ and all believers who will be glorified with Him. The second is the resurrection of the wicked, and they occur one thousand years apart. Rev. 20:4-6 explain it thus: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Every believer will be raised at the beginning of this utopian period, for “...they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” However, “... the rest

of the dead..." can only refer to the wicked, and they will not be raised again until after the thousand years is over. We know from the remainder of Rev. 20 that they are raised up to appear before the "great white throne," where they shall be judged according to their wicked works before being cast into the lake of fire.

The text here in Isaiah gives reference to those who are alive upon this earth after the tribulation has ended. Satan will be bound that thousand years, and men will be free to make their own decisions without any outside influence. Thus, it will be very easy to be a "hypocrite," and many will not accept Jesus and be born again. Isaiah declares in the verse before us that "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days:..." meaning that there is a change coming for him at the age of 100. The rest of this text explains that "... the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." Anyone under a hundred years old will be considered an infant or child and will be counted as innocent like unto a babe who is not held accountable for his sin. However, at the age of 100, things change dramatically. This "child" is now considered "dead" in trespasses and sins, because he does not have life in Jesus and when he sins outwardly as "... the sinner being an hundred years old..." he shall be judged accordingly and "... shall be accursed," meaning that he is cut off immediately. Ananias, and Sapphira are a prime example of such millennial judgment. They lied about the land they had sold and died immediately because of it, for those first seven years of the Church Age were just a foretaste of the coming Kingdom known as the Millennium.

Judgment will be swift to the transgressor during this glorious time of peace and prosperity, and that is exactly why wickedness will not be allowed to flourish. Instead, "... they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." V. 22-24 All the abuse inflicted by the nations round about them up to, and including the tribulation, will be a thing of the past. Israel, at this time then present, will

be head of the nations. They truly will be "... my people... mine elect... the seed of the blessed of the LORD,..." and God will make it known universally that He will defend His Own.

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." V. 24 This verse has been true throughout the ages and many have claimed it, but the exact context of it is a direct reference to life for Israel during the Millennium. Isaiah has been very clear that all nations of the earth will be subdued before this Chosen People, and God will answer their cry speedily should any resistance arise from these national powers.

34 Finally, Isaiah closes this beautiful discourse exactly as did Jude, with reference to the "... majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 1:25 This ending verse reveals the fact that all creation will bow to Jesus, and even the animal kingdom will be at rest here upon this earth ball during His glorious millennial reign. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." V. 25 There must be a change in the very bodies of the animals in order to change their diets, but so it will be, and predators will be predators no more. The curse will be lifted from this earth, with one exception. The serpent will still eat dust, symbolic of the fact that Jesus won the victory over him at Calvary. He still must eat dust, and will not inflict harm upon any. This kingdom of total peace will surely reflect the superior majesty and dominion of Jesus for 1,000 years.

"Unto Us A Child Is Born"

Unless you become as children"
And love Me as they do,
You cannot enter My Kingdom,
For the door is closed to you . . .
For Faith is the key to heaven
And only God's children hold
The key that opens the gateway
To that beautiful City of Gold . . .
For only a child yet unblemished
By the doctrines and theories of man
Is content to Trust and Love Jesus
Without understanding His Plan.

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When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."



Luke 2:15 NIV

