

Grace *and* Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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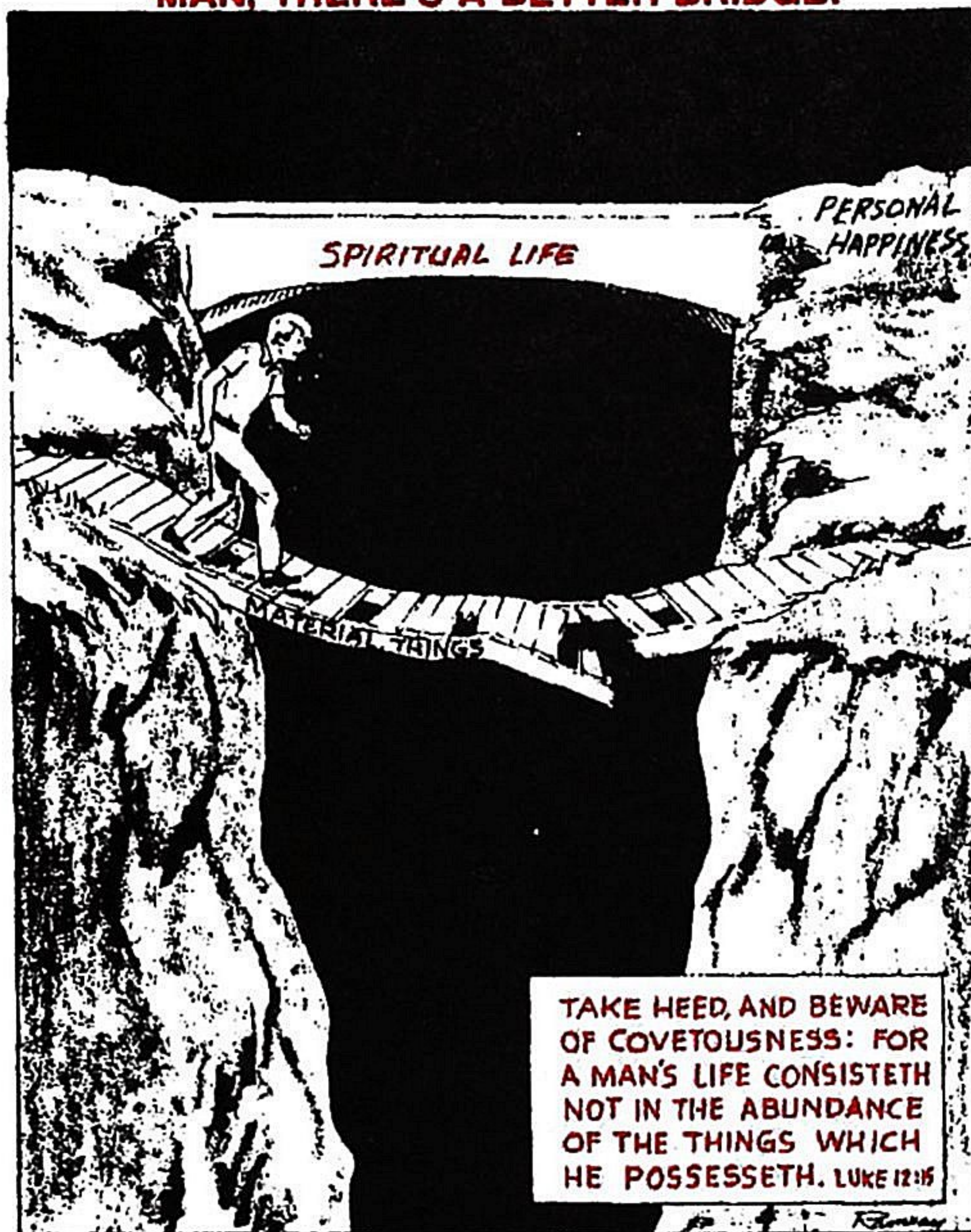


Thou hast put
GLADNESS
in my heart.
PSALM 4:7

Table Of Contents

<i>Article</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Page</i>
Definite Sign Posts of the End.....	Gene Hawkins.....	3
Grace - God's Superlative Message.....	Ethel Cooper.....	11
Kisses Of His Mouth.....	H.G. Desha Jr.....	14
The Glory Of God.....	E. Adams.....	16
Palm Trees.....	Lynn Bishop.....	20
Diamonds In The Rough.....	Mary M. Bodie.....	26

MAN, THERE'S A BETTER BRIDGE!



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Editor: Gene Hawkins



“**D**aniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:...” Dan. 2:20-21

This text is Daniel’s response after God had given him the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream image. That knowledge had revealed to him the glorious sovereignty of God in regard to the rulers of this world. These pages have long testified that every ruler among the nations is in power because God saw fit to put him there. There have been multiple cruel, ungodly, and even murderous despots who have ruled down through the ages, some of which have tried to annihilate the Jews, God’s Chosen People. Regardless of the ungodly and often despicable actions taken by some political leaders today, we must still understand that God has placed them where they are. We would note in this article that God has also established sovereign rule over *time*, as He “...changeth the times and the seasons:...” It is no accident that both rulers and time are drawn into direct focus in these last days, because there will very soon come the day when God will “set up” the antichrist to rule the world and it will be for an exact period of days.

3

Daniel undoubtedly knew when he wrote the words above that Nebuchadnezzar would be the first Gentile World Ruler, thus changing the “...*times*...” from “Jewish Times,” to the “Times of the Gentiles.” That change came in 606 B.C. and has continued throughout the ages to these last days when, once again, a transition will be forthcoming. However, this time it will be a return **from** Gentile Times **to** those governed by King Jesus, and His timeline will be according to the Jewish calendar.

We full well know that men simply do not believe the Word of God, but coming days will prove that the prophecies of Daniel, John, and other prophets in scripture will be fulfilled right down to the smallest detail. Daniel gives some very precise details and timelines in his writings, and history has proved them

to be so accurate that some have concluded that He wrote these things after the fact. Such a thing simply cannot be, for the great majority of his assertions came to pass well after the prophet was taken home to glory.

4 Daniel predicts certain events which are yet to be fulfilled, but they too will come to pass according to very exact timelines. For example, he declares emphatically that the man of sin known as the antichrist will reign exactly 3 years and six months. “And one said to the man clothed in linen,... How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen,... swear by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.” Dan. 12:6-7 The wonders of which he speaks are a reference to the judgments which will transpire in the great tribulation as described in verse 1 of this same chapter. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: ...” Revelation 11:2 describes this exact same period of devastation at the hands of the antichrist as being 42 months. “But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; **for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**” We note further that John records this same time period wherein the Jews are oppressed beyond measure by the Satanic power of antichrist as being 1260 days. “And the woman (national Israel) fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” Revelation 12:13-14 convey exactly the same message when Satan is cast out of heaven in the midst of the tribulation week. “And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

The point here is that all these times must be exactly the same, for all of them refer to the same exact period of time. The word “time” according to Strong’s Hebrew dictionary signifies “a set time; technically, a year:...” thus the phrase “...time, times,

and an half;...” which Daniel uses to describe the allotted time given to the antichrist is equivalent to 3 ½ years. That same time given to the reign of antichrist as seen above in Rev. 11:2 is said to be 42 months while the verses from Rev. 12 tell us specifically that the time wherein the Jewish remnant will be oppressed by the antichrist in “...the wilderness,...” will be exactly 1260 days.

Daniel tells us emphatically that God “...changeth the times and the seasons:...” There is no way that the Gentile Calendar today can meet the requirements outlined above. God’s time means that there will be exactly 30 days in a month, with 12 months in the year, the results of which will be 360 days in a calendar year. Under the current dominion of time wherein there are 365 plus days in a year, 3 ½ years would comprise a minimum of 1277 ½ days. There is of course also a problem with the 42 month period because 7 of those months have 31 days, while the rest have only 30 except for Feb. which boasts only 28, with one more day added every 4 years. There is nothing precise and exact about this Gentile Calendar. There is no way it can be used to determine the exact 1260 days wherein God will set up the antichrist to rule the world in the closing days of tribulation. 5

All men surely know that the accepted number of days in a year depends directly on earth’s revolution around the sun, which, as noted, takes 365 plus days at this present time. “Timeanddate.com” offers this explanation in regard to leap year, which also clearly shows the dilemma in trying to reconcile God’s Word with our current calendar.

“What Is a Leap Year? Nearly every four years is a leap year which has 366 days, as opposed to a common year, which has 365 in the Gregorian Calendar. Leap years have 366 days, not 365. Leap years are needed to keep our modern day Gregorian calendar in alignment with the Earth's revolutions around the sun. It takes the Earth approximately 365.242189 days – or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45 seconds – to circle once around the Sun. This is called a tropical year, and is measured from the March equinox. However, the Gregorian calendar has only 365 days in a year, so if we didn't add a leap day on February 29 nearly every four years, we would lose almost six hours off our calendar every year. After only 100 years, our calendar would be off by around 24 days!”

Trying to calculate the number of days in 42 months is almost impossible, since we have no idea when the tribulation

will begin. Thus, we simply do not know when a leap year might need to be inserted. However, if we assume that this time period began at a “regular time” when no leap year correction would be needed, 42 months would contain 1277 ½ days (3½ years with 365 days per year,) meaning that the rule of antichrist, which is simultaneous with Israel’s exile in the wilderness, would last 17 ½ days longer than both John and Daniel prophesied.

We can guarantee that God’s Word will be fulfilled precisely to the day, thus there is no way that the current calendar can be employed. Simply stated this means that since God is going to change “...the times,...” or years, He must of necessity find a way to “speed up” earth’s revolution around the sun by 5 plus days a year, thus reducing that time from 365 to 360 days per annum. ONLY God is capable of such a feat!

6 These Sign Posts recently quoted from an article written by Richard Gross at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. It was entitled “How the Japan Earthquake Shortened Days on Earth,” and was published By SPACE.com Staff | March 13, 2011. The context was in regard to climate change, or man-made global warming, but these comments are especially interesting in accordance with our current subject of time. “The massive earthquake that struck northeast Japan Friday (March 11) has shortened the length of Earth's day by a fraction and shifted how the planet's mass is distributed. A new analysis of the 8.9-magnitude earthquake in Japan has found that the intense temblor has accelerated Earth's spin, shortening the length of the 24-hour day by 1.8 microseconds...The initial data suggests Friday's earthquake moved Japan's main island about 8 feet, according to Kenneth Hudnut of the U.S. Geological Survey. The earthquake also shifted Earth's figure axis by about 6 1/2 inches (17 centimeters),...The Earth's figure axis is not the same as its north-south axis in space, which it spins around once every day at a speed of about 1,000 mph... The figure axis is the axis around which the Earth's mass is balanced... “This shift in the position of the figure axis will cause the Earth to wobble a bit differently as it rotates, but will not cause a shift of the Earth's axis in space – only external forces like the gravitational attraction of the sun, moon, and planets can do that,” Gross said.”

The essence of this article is that earth’s mass may be shifted by an earthquake to cause a shorter 24 hour day and alter its position to the sun, thus creating changes in the jet stream

related to weather problems, but these earthquakes DO NOT "... shift the earth's axis in space..." meaning that they do nothing to interfere with earth's annual trek around the sun. Mr. Gross then concludes that, "...only external forces like the gravitational attraction of the sun, moon, and planets can do that."

Thus, we too conclude that only God can alter the time it takes for the earth to complete one revolution around the sun in precisely 360 days. Jesus emphatically told us that "...there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;" Lk. 21:25 Peter also quoted from the prophet Joel on the Day of Pentecost, declaring plainly that, "I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath;...The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:" Acts 2:19-20 Mr. Gross has informed us from the scientific platform that, "...only external forces like the gravitational attraction of the sun, moon, and planets,...." can "...shift the earth's axis in space." God has a history of changing the length of a day upon this earth. He brought forth a sign of the sun going backward by ten degrees as the guarantee for a promise made to Hezekiah. "Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down." Isa. 38:8 During the days of Joshua, almost an entire day had to have been lost. "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down **about a whole day.**" Josh. 10:13 Men may not believe such accounts but God's Word is true. We know not whether He altered just the rotation of the earth on a given day on its "figure axis" or whether He did indeed "alter the earth's axis in space," meaning that He changed the number of days it would take for earth's annual revolution around the sun.

It makes no difference HOW God accomplished these feats. The fact remains that He is capable of doing precisely what He wants to do. NASA geophysicist Richard Gross has informed us that only those things under God's dominion are capable of changing earth's timeline around the sun. We know He has power

over earthquakes as has been demonstrated numerous times in scripture, but according to the article above, those miniscule time alterations would do nothing to shorten a calendar year. However, both Jesus and Joel have informed us that there will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, as well as upon the earth. Will there be some cataclysmic event in the heavens, which will alter the course of this little earth ball as it makes its annual trek around the sun or will it occur gradually over a period of time due to a series of some other more insignificant phenomena? One would think that if the earth were moved closer to the sun thereby creating a shorter path, it would take less time to complete the circuit. That would surely be one explanation for the intense heat prophesied in Rev. 16:9. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues:..."

Catastrophic signs in the moon could also create devastating tides of the oceans, thus causing horrendous and prophesied floods upon the earth. Is there the possibility that earth's course in regard to this planet could also be altered?

8 We can only wonder what the response of men will be when these drastic signs come to pass. Will they adamantly conclude that these things are just another sign of "global warming," and that if man will only take the proper scientifically prescribed steps, he can prevent such catastrophes? Eventually they will acknowledge that only God is responsible for their misery because they will blaspheme Him for it, as noted above in Rev. 16:9.

Daniel also informs us that God is Sovereign in changing "...the seasons:..." This word, which means "an appointed occasion," seems to indicate a shorter period of time wherein certain and specific characteristics are used to define it. Solomon used this same word when he wrote: "To every thing there is a season,..." Eccl. 3:1 He then proceeds to list a host of contrasting seasons common to all men upon the earth, such as "A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal;..." Eccl. 1:2-3 The end of that list is very significant and can easily be applied to the days of tribulation, as he describes "...a time of war, and a time of peace." Eccl. 1:8 It seems that Paul suggested these same two seasons when he wrote to the Thessalonians, highly

commending them for their knowledge of end time prophecy. “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.” I Thess. 5:1 He then offers this explanation for such reasoning. “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child;...” V. 2-3 Seasons of both war and peace will prevail in the tribulation period, and according to Daniel, it is God Who changes those seasons.

It is also apparent in scripture that seasons are indeed a reference to weather conditions, and once again God is responsible for those changing seasons. He long ago promised Israel that if they would keep His commandments, He would “...give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase,...” Lev. 26:4 Contrariwise, seasons of drought and hail were often signs of God’s displeasure with them. Jesus also indicated that seasons of severe weather will be prominent during the tribulation when He instructs men to flee from Jerusalem after the antichrist sets up his image in the temple. “But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:...” Matt. 24:20

9

Seasons around this entire world are extremely erratic in our day, and we are inundated almost daily by the news media and political activists with the idea that the primary culprit is global warming or climate change. We have heard in recent months and years of temperatures throughout numerous countries being “unseasonably warm or unseasonably cold.” Current weather conditions in America are extremely chaotic. Much of the North Central and Eastern part of the U.S. has been hammered in recent weeks with snow. However, that has changed almost immediately into massive amounts of rain, which then freezes into ice, in parts of the N.E. This demonstrates the fact that God can change the seasons in a heartbeat at His own discretion anytime He pleases. According to Daniel, it is God Who “...changeth...the seasons:..” regardless of man’s efforts to control them. Surely most of God’s people understand that the seasons outlined by Solomon in the above chapter of Ecclesiastes are ordained of God. He changes the seasons in individual lives, and He commands the overall authority in regard to all the seasons of this world. Wise men like unto the Thessalonians will expect that the erratic weather patterns which prevail in every nation today

will not only continue but escalate both in intensity and frequency as the days of tribulation loom nearer.

When Daniel received his revelation of God's purposes, he "...Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever:... he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might,.." Dan. 2:20-23 This prophet was apparently more thrilled with the revelation of truth than he was with the fact that the lives of he and his three companions had been spared. This is the same attitude toward truth for which God looks today. Now is not the time to wring our hands in fret and worry wondering how to handle the changing environment around us. God revealed His plans to the Thessalonian saints, and He can do exactly the same for us. Simply stated, the wisdom for our day is to be consumed with God's Word and forget about trying to prevent the horrendous things that are prophesied for this world. It is quite true that we must declare God's message of deliverance to as many as will listen, but we must also understand that this earth is slated for destruction and none can stop it. Jude gives us the following perspective as to how we must conduct ourselves at this present hour. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." V. 20-23 Ours must be exactly the same hope which Paul imparted to the Thessalonians, "... to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." I Thess. 1:10

**"And every man that hath this
hope in him purifieth himself,
even as he is pure."
I John 3:3**

GRACE - GOD'S SUPERLATIVE MESSAGE

Ethel Cooper

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:” II Cor. 6:1,3

When we go to market, we are very careful in selecting the food that we expect to eat. Well, it should be this way when selecting the kind of spiritual food that we expect to eat. My advice is that Paul's epistles are most excellent for the babe in Christ as well as for the adult. They contain the very highest kind of spiritual food. They instruct, correct, and will build up the new man if received by honest hearts.

His admonishment begins in this chapter to those who are called to be stewards of God's Word, and who will be instructing others. It is a solemn charge indeed. He said to his spiritual son Timothy --- "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" -II Timothy 4:1-3.

Paul was an example for others to follow; and so should we be also as ministers. He gives full instruction to stewards of this mystery, in I Cor. 4:1,2 - "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful," It is well understood in this chapter that such ministers will not be popular with the majority. So this part must be well understood if we follow Paul.

In verses nine to thirteen, he also points out how the old life has been crucified with Christ and must be counted dead or the sufferings will get us down. I am sure that many of us today have more of the things of this life than Paul did. He had no home of his own, nor a church building, nor much of anything else of this world's goods. But he had Christ, and that was the most important to him. Paul was no fool, by any means, neither are those that follow him. But as far as the world is concerned, he said we are counted "fools for Christ's sake."

It is not easy on the flesh to look like fools to others, when we could look like them if we so desired. But that is the way we often appear to others. But the secret of it all is that we have a peace that they know nothing of. It "passeth all understanding." Paul's trust was in God. He never told his needs to others, nor begged for help. He could shout in the difficult places --- "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19 He was so heavenly minded that the earthly comforts of this life meant very little to him. He counted "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:8 That knowledge was --- "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Phil. 3:10 Not many want to know Christ in this depth.

12 Paul never boasted about his great gifts nor his marvelous faith in Christ. As stated in Philippians 3:13,14 --- "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He had no time to look behind at all the old rubbish that so many seem to be always occupied with. He was in a race, and he knew it; so he was running to win. There is no doubt, but what he knew before his execution that he was a winner. Oh, Hallelujah! His earthly course was finished, and the crown was waiting for him, Praise the Lord! What a message! What a calling! What a Prize!

So "let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His Wife hath made herself ready." Rev.19:7 She very definitely had heard the call, and began this preparation, and is listening for the first trumpet blast. She will be caught up to meet her Bridegroom in the air, and will be forever with Him. What has been her assurance? "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation..." (the tribulation period) Rev. 3:10 Jesus is coming "...in the twinkling of an eye..." I Cor. 15:52 So we are told --- "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3:11

Jesus will know where His Bride is, so do not worry. She is as a "treasure hid in a field," or a "pearl" in the depths of the ocean, or quietly hidden in "the stairs" patiently waiting for

Him, or in "the clefts of the rock." He knows all these secret places. Sometimes we may feel so unknown to others, but the Bride will be missed when she is called Home ahead of others. She is referred to in the Song of Solomon as the Shulamite; and when she is translated, there will be this cry, "O Shulamite; return, return..." S.O.S. 6:13 But she has gone to be with her Lord forever.

"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12 So as your faith, be it unto you.

The chief purpose of Paul's message was to prepare a Bride for God's dear Son, and fortunate are those who have heard the call. His message is full of grace from the beginning to the end. We are saved by grace, kept by grace, and made ready for an out-translation, all because of His wonderful grace. How we thank God for this wonderful hope that gives daily expectation as we wait for Him.

(Reprint 1978)

Ed. Note: Sister Ethel Cooper was the former pastor of a church in Pattonsburg, Missouri. She was in a nursing home at the time this article, one of her latest at the time, was published in 1978. Her testimony at that time is marvelous.

"At almost eighty-eight, I am still warring in this good warfare. I have just been in one of the most severe battles for the past four weeks, and have some ugly scars as the result. But "if God be for us, who can be against us?" Jesus is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." God opened my heart to this truth, and by His grace I have walked in it. I became a soldier in the army of my Lord and I have wrestled against Satan ever since, who is a mighty foe; but he was conquered by my Leader on Calvary, Who arose triumphant from the tomb and is alive forevermore. I found out at the very beginning that one cannot play around with Paul's message; we either believe it or we do not. He told us it is a suffering way. We can either suffer for Christ's sake which is rewarding, or suffer for our faults. It is a separated way and I love it. I have never been tempted by the seeming success of others, which makes a great impression; but my vision of Christ has been to reign with Him on His throne. This is the high calling that I have been called to, and I must be faithful. The race is nearly over."

Kisses of His Mouth

H. G. Desha, Jr.

Wet Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for thy love is better than wine."S.O.S. 1 :2

The fair Shulamite is speaking of Solomon, king of Israel. She is occupied with his love. She is wanting his kisses. It is the beginning of their courtship, which becomes more intensified as we read the story. These two are the principal characters in the narrative. They are types of Christ and His Bride. Ever since Pentecost unto the present day, there has been a courtship between Christ and full overcomers. And happy are those saints who play and have played their part in this heavenly drama. They have "dove's eyes." V. 15 They are filled with the Holy Spirit and occupied with His love rather than with the joy which He brings. Wine is good and exhilarates; but the woman declares Solomon's love to be better than wine.

14 True affection between love and lover is expressed through caresses and kisses and endearing names, as we see in this wonderful love-song. The bride first mentions his kisses. She has experienced them and is now anxious for the bridegroom to reciprocate his love to her in this manner. She says, "Let him kiss me." She invites him. Some saints are too modest to ever invite the Lord to do the kissing. They do not come boldly to the throne of grace, but come in a timid manner. They take barely enough blessing, and no more. They are kissed in the Son of God relative to their standing only, but many do not even realize this. But the Bride company, being persistent in faith, appropriates Christ in the fullest sense. She revels in His joy and love beyond any other. She gets the kisses. The fact that to her has been granted the revelation of the mystery of the Son — His super abounding grace and the zenith heights of the glory — is positive proof that she is kissed above all others.

The kisses lavished upon her daily through the trials and difficulties which come her way are all wonderful. She has set out to win. There is some sacrificing, and the Lord is delighted with such a venture. He praises her. With the affection of a Bridegroom, He

stoops to place upon her scarlet lips the kisses which awaken her love to win Him. Her devotion to Him becomes more apparent. As Mary, she sits at His feet, and learns the secret of His love. She arises and takes the box of precious ointment and anoints His head. Mingled with tears of gratitude and thanksgiving, she bathes His feet and dries them with her hair. She acknowledges His headship. His love consumes her. Criticized? Yes. What is it? Wherefore? Her attitude provokes others. "Let her alone; you have the poor with you always. Why hinder our mutual fellowship," is the essence of the Master's speech. John 12:7,8 His gracious words fall on her ears as a kiss from His mouth. She knows her toil. Her savings (v. 5) given to Him has satisfied His loving heart. There is no regret on her part for the sacrifice and time spent. She is satisfied to know that she is pleasing in His sight.

But, then, the black morning clouds gather above the horizon. Why is the sunlight hid from view? Why comes the deep valley and tempest experience? Why the ghost of hunger and the lion's den? "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse,...from the lions' dens,..." S.O.S. 4:8 And why have others proved false to her? "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." II Cor. 11:26-27 Suddenly she awakes and realizes that these are the kisses of His mouth, sent in disguise. She finds in all the trials that His left hand was under her head and His right hand embraced her. S.O. S. 2:6. The Bride is learning. Her love for her Bridegroom grows more and more as the days go by. The time of His coming draweth near. She is wanting just one more kiss, the kiss of translation. She is longing for His coming as the end of the courtship approaches. She laughs in hope and urges His return. She says, "Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a young roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." S.O.S. 8:14 Or as John cried, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Who would refuse the kisses of the heavenly Bridegroom's mouth?

(Reprint 1931)

The Glory Of God

E. Adams

The Christian's threefold joyful ambition is to know God. He desires to rule the kingdom of his own life in keeping with the will of God, and to accomplish spiritual service for others. His highest privilege is to know the Lord. Regeneration means a revelation from the divine Spirit to the human spirit, which is awakened out of its sleep of death and endowed with a new power of perception. It means also the impartation of divine life. "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,..." was the intense longing, of Moses. Ex. 33:18 And our Lord's desire, as expressed in His High Priestly prayer, was that those who belonged to Him should see His glory. The glory of God is in His character, His Word, His works. It is His self-expression.

16 We discern God's Power and Intelligence in nature---"The heavens declare the glory of God;..." Psa. 19:1 It is well to cultivate openness of soul towards God's great picture-book of nature. The things that are seen are representations of the things not seen, as our Lord constantly pointed out. But the Word of God satisfies as the works of God never can do. In the Word we have the inspired record of what God told men about Himself. "A glory gilds the sacred page," the glory of the self-revelation of its Author. Every regenerate person sees the glory of God in the Bible, because he knows its Author.

It is chiefly in Christ, the living Word, that we see the glory of God. Through Him we know God as Father, and of Him John wrote, "We beheld' His glory ... full of grace and truth." Jn. 1:14 To the believer the Name of Jesus is a song in one word, a strain of heavenly music. Consider HIS moral glories as revealed in the Gospels. In Him, truth is mellowed by grace, and grace is strengthened by truth. In Him, we see a perfect blending of majesty and meekness, dignity and humility, holiness and compassion, righteousness and love. "Oh the love of Christ," said one. "We cannot understand it now, but what, a beautiful study it will be for eternity!" In the ages to come, we shall enjoy the boundless wealth of the loving kindness of God in Christ. Here and now, as we grow in grace, we are learning more and more of its everlasting

strength.

The Cross is the supreme achievement of the Captain of our salvation.

"Truth, wisdom, justice, power and love,
In all their glory shone,
When Jesus left the courts above,
And died to save His own."

The Cross tells us how much God cares for righteousness and what He thinks of sin. The cross is the supreme act of God's self-giving love. It tells us how much He loves His world and how much He suffers for it. The CROSS solves the stupendous problem, "How can a just God forgive sins?" Let us make the Cross central in our thinking. It is the foundation of all our hopes.

We see the glory of God in our own redemption. When Barnabas saw "the grace of God" in the disciples at Antioch, he rejoiced. Acts 11:23 The Bride of Christ is God's supreme achievement, His masterpiece. And each individual Christian is a fresh thought from God to the Church, and a living illustration of His power and love. All progress and victory in the Christian life exhibit the glory of God. They are the result of the impact of the grace of God upon human personalities. It is a great joy to see God at work in the life.

17

When Israel was being pursued by Pharaoh, and when destruction seemed inevitable, God through Moses commanded His people to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,..." Ex. 14:3 And we today behold His glory as He changes the things that oppose us and works deliverance for those who trust and obey. According to John 11:40, it is those who believe that see the glory of God; "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1 And the Lord reveals Himself especially to the obedient. Faith is a condition of His working in and through us. God is active where faith *is*. May it be our ambition to grow continually in the knowledge of God and of His Will, and to see His glory with ever increasing perception.

(Reprint 1939)

REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it:” S.O.S. 8:7

These words were spoken, in type, by the second rank of the Church after they had come out of the waters of tribulation. Rev. 7:14 The Shulamite is representative of the Bride of Christ having been carried away by Solomon “...like the chariots of Amminadib” in Ch. 6:12.

This opening text reminds of God’s universal love which may be claimed by all men and is beautifully expressed in the words of that classic old song “The Love of God.”

*“The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell.”*

18

This second woman cried out in V. 1, “O that thou wert as my brother,...” She could not claim Him as a spouse, but she could righteously seek His love as a brother. The second rank of the Church will most assuredly learn at least some of the glorious comfort and depths found in Divine Love, when they do endure those troublous waters of temptation which are yet to come on this earth. However, they will never know the intoxicating, intense, and intimate love portrayed by Solomon and the Shulamite in the 7th chapter of this book.

Jesus chastised the Church at Ephesus “...because thou hast left thy first love.” Rev. 2:4 “First love...” means “superior, superlative, chiefest, first of all.” It reflects the love shared between a husband and wife, the closest and most intimate relationship known to mankind. Paul made such love personal when he extolled Jesus, “...who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The apostle followed this same pattern of Jesus giving Himself as he described the unique love between a man and a

woman, when he exhorted: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and **gave himself** for it;” Eph. 5:25 Sacrificial love for the woman is the example set by Jesus and husbands in the natural are commanded to follow in His footsteps. This is the power of divine love, rather than duty.

Paul also prayed that these same Ephesians who left their “...first love,” would understand the fullness of it. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,... That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory,... that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And (even) to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Eph 3:14-19 Neither the Ephesians nor any of the Church have any excuse not to know the depths of Divine Love herein described.

Finally Paul, the chief apostle to the Church, sets the example for all those who would become a part of this bridal company joined in love unto Jesus. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that **love his appearing.**” II Tim. 4:8

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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PALM TREES

Lynn Bishop

Palm trees have amazing significance in the natural, along with many spiritual applications. Although there are hundreds of species of palm trees, the one referenced in the Word of God a majority of the time is specifically the date palm. The phrase 'palm tree' or 'palm trees' is mentioned a total of 33 times in Holy Writ. Numbers are always important in discerning the significance and relevance of a topic in the scriptures, and the number 33 means endurance. It is also worthy to note that Christ was alive for 33 years on the earth.

20 Naturally speaking, according to *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, palm trees can attain a height of eighty feet, but more commonly grow to a height of forty to fifty feet. The trunk is straight, tall, and unbroken, terminating in a crown of emerald green plumes that range from six to 20 feet in length. In principle of growth, the palm tree is endogenous, meaning that it grows from within. Palms begin to bear fruit after six or eight years, and they continue to be productive for a century. A palm bears its best fruit in old age.

The palm tree is a strong, resilient and fruitful tree that has perpetual greenness in its foliage. Its fiber has amazing elasticity that allows it to stand under the weight of its fruit. It may bend, but it does not break. Its fruit is the daily food of millions; its sap furnishes an agreeable wine; the fibers of the base of its fronds are woven into ropes and rigging; its tall trunk supplies a valuable timber and its fronds are manufactured into brushes, mats, bags, couches and baskets.

Palm trees reveal a wondrous bridal-type double portion in that not only are they beautiful, they are useful, just like the marvelous vessel that contributes to the usefulness of the heavenly Husband.

Although there are many ways palm trees can be examined and expounded upon in the scriptures, there are four progressive attributes of palms that pertain specifically to the maturation of the bride, the specific vessel that contributes to usefulness for her Husband: strength, growth and flourishing, fruitfulness, and full maturity.

PALM TREES AT ELIM: PORTRAY STRENGTH

Exodus 15:27 records Israel's second stop in their wilderness journey. "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters."

They had first camped at Marah, where the waters were bitter. Without Christ, there is the ultimate bitter taste of death. However, Ex. 15:25 declares that God commanded a 'tree' (type of the cross at Calvary) to be cast into the waters and they were made sweet.

The name Elim means palms, and comes from a root word that means ram, strength. We have, in type, Jesus Christ, the Ram of strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10). In our weakness we find HIS strength. Paul wrote in II Cor. 12:10 "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." We are renewed, strengthened day by day by the Holy Spirit in the inner man.

Their second encampment provided water suitable for drinking. There were 12 wells, 12 being the number of divine authority and rule. It is interesting to note that "threescore and ten," or 70, also means divine authority and rule.

The well is the precious place where we sit and contemplate the glorious riches found in the depths of God's Love in Christ Jesus for those who have chosen the high calling. Wells are deep and they hold living water which is eternally refreshing and that flows forth in abundance. We have been brought from death to life, from bitterness to sweetness in Jesus. And even more so, we have been brought to His banqueting house and His banner over us is love – not just any love, but the love of the ages, the love between a husband and a wife. Let us encamp and dwell by the 12 palms and the well of living water!

THE PALM TREE IN PSALMS 92: SHOWS FORTH GROWTH AND FLOURISHING

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Psa. 92:12 The righteous are those who are saved, and there is great encouragement in Paul's gospel in this sweet Psalm in that the two verbs in this sentence are

‘flourish’ and ‘grow.’ At first blush one might think that ‘flourish’ and ‘grow’ are the same, or at the least very similar. But they have two distinct and different meanings.

To ‘flourish’ means *to break out, burst forth, to bud, blossom or sprout*. This is a beginning of growth, with the potential yet to be realized. To complete this flourishing, one must then grow. And how precious that ‘grow’ means *to greatly increase*. This growth is likened unto a cedar in Lebanon. The cedar tree is incredibly strong, it is resistant to decay, and its scent is strong yet sweet.

Lebanon always speaks of purity and whiteness, the exact terms used to describe our Lord – and His Bride. The increase is what God gives through His work of grace, the full maturing of the Wife of the Lamb until she is “like Him” in every aspect. “Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase” (Job 8:7). This encouragement of flourishing and growth is for those who are looking for, and loving, the appearing of the Lord. We can trust that the Lord will perfect all that concerns us.

22 THE PALM TREE OF DEBORAH: FRUITFULNESS

“And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.” Jud. 4:2-3

The odds were not in the Israelites’ favor, as man would see it. But then verses 4-5 declare that, “...Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.”

The name ‘Deborah’ means “bee”. Often the first thing we think about when we think of bees is their sting. But they also make honey, which is used for medicinal purposes as well as being sweet to the taste. King David notes in Psa. 119:103 “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” We are reminded in Psa. 19:9-11 that, “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD

are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

Deborah is identified as a prophetess and the wife of Lapidoth, whose name means torch and comes from a root word meaning to shine. She was dwelling under a palm tree between Ramah (High Place) and Bethel (House Of God) in Mount Ephraim (Double Ash Heap, Doubly Fruitful). Deborah was abiding in the high place of double fruitfulness under the stately and erect palm tree. Mount Ephraim is beautiful as it reminds us of “beauty for ashes” and how there is surely a double portion of fruit in every trial.

Consider the life of Job, the tremendous trials the Lord allowed to come his way, yet at the end it was noted of Job’s precious life that “...the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before...” (his trial) and that “...the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning...” Job 42:10,12 How much more shall our lives be blessed in Christ! The temporal sufferings are not even worthy to be compared with the double portion we will receive as the Wife of the Lamb. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

23

THE PALM TREE IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON: FULL MATURITY

There is a beautifully touching reference to the Shulamite as a stately and fruitful palm tree in the S.O.S. 7:7-8. “This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.”

Chapter 7 is the chapter of perfect matrimonial bliss and this is the Beloved describing his lovely Bride in vivid and increasing detail. Her stature is likened to a palm tree. This ‘stature’ is her height, which takes into account her entire being from head to toe. The word stature comes from a root word meaning “*to rise up,*” and that is exactly what grace has done in her life: It has raised her to the full height and stature of Christ. The complete work is done. Her journey from death to life everlasting and salvation with eternal glory is complete. The work of grace has built and

fashioned her. She is tall and stately, upright and fruitful. He says that he will “go up to the palm tree.” Not only does he approach, her, now he must ascend the heights to meet her, this one who has grown up fully in grace.

It is specifically the boughs, or branches, that He takes hold of. How beautiful and reciprocal that he now takes hold of her fruitfulness. The phrase ‘take hold’ is rich in that it means “*to seize and take possession of; to join together; to fasten; to enclose; to overlay.*” The branches of the palm tree are also known as the ‘crown’ of the tree, and as His queen, she now has all the crowning of glory upon her. He takes complete possession of her in all her glory. He lays hold of the branches of the palm tree, upon all of the fruit of her life.

* * *

24

It is a reality in the life of a “high calling” Christian that we are changed from glory to glory, even unto the image of Christ Himself. An examination of the palm tree in light of the maturing process required for the Wife of the Lamb is just one of many, many ways wherein God shows us that which is necessary to marry Jesus. He woos our hearts through His Word over and over again.

Although we can never exhaust the depths of something even as simple as a study of the magnificent palm tree, we are encouraged as kings to search out a matter. God will continue to reveal the wonders of His love to us in the finest of details. He is faithful, and truly “whosoever wills to know, will know.” And someday soon, it will no longer be “...through a glass darkly...” but face to face with Jesus as one who has taken the grace to receive strength, to grow, flourish, and become fruitful and fully mature.

BENEATH HIS WINGS

Beneath His wings I am secure;
In Him I ever shall endure
He is the Rock on which I stand;
He leads me by His guiding hand.

The signs abound in earth and sky:
I know His coming draweth nigh.
Just any day I'll hear Him say,
“Arise my love and come away.”

--Beula Clark

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you:..." I John 2:27

This agrees perfectly with John 16:13 and confirms it—"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all the Truth." Some saints make these verses teach too much. They refuse to be taught by older saints, and say, "The Holy Ghost teaches me. Such members usually fall into fanaticism, and want to be the teachers. "Teachers" are important officers in the church. I Cor. 12:28,29 Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "I have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house," Acts 20:20 The verse preceding our text, proves that John meant that no unsaved person, no false teacher, could instruct them. He said, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." Some such fanatics have gone so far that they did not need the Bible any longer. Only teachable folk are capable of teaching others.

HOW HE GOT HIS PAY

25

A well-to-do deacon was one day accosted by his pastor, who said, "Poor widow Green's wood is all out. Can you not take her a cord?"

"Well," answered the deacon, "I have wood, and I have the team; but who is to pay me for it?"

The pastor, somewhat vexed, replied, "I will pay you for it on condition that, you read the first three verses of Psalm 41, before you go to bed tonight.

The deacon consented, delivered the wood, and at night opened the Word of God and read the passage: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and Thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

A few days afterward the pastor met him again.

"How much do I owe you, deacon, for that cord of wood?"

"Oh!" said the enlightened man, "do not speak of payment. I did not know those promises were in the Bible. I would not take any money for supplying the widow's wants."

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

Mary M. Bodie

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" - Malachi 3: 16,17.

We learn from this portion of Scripture that God's devoted saints are called jewels - His jewels. There are seven facts here stated of them: They speak often one to another. The Lord Himself is the subject and basis of their conversation. He hears their words. A book of remembrance is written of them. They think upon His Name. They shall be His jewels in that day of His coming. They shall be spared in that day.

26 But it is especially of these God-fearing folk as jewels, that we would interest you in this article. These shall adorn the Lord and enhance His beauty, even as natural jewels are used by their owners as adornments. Nature is full of sermons, speaking of heavenly things. Some of the choicest parables of our Lord were drawn from nature. Often the commonplace things of life abound in striking examples of this fact. Miracles are all about us if we have eyes to see. Some of the rare and choice objects of earth most desired by mankind are found in unlikely places, as, for instance, silver, gold, and precious stones.

Geologists inform us of some of these marvelous hidden things which are intensely interesting. Clay, soot, and sand, in process of time, by nature's transformation, become priceless jewels.

The CLAY so radiates the sun's rays, repelling all other light, that it is transmuted into the blazing resplendent sapphire, dazzling the beholders with its beauty. It seems almost unbelievable that it has evolved from such an ordinary element; but so it is. An estimate of the value of some of these jewels is not possible; and yet they are but common clay, glorified into sparkling beauty, adorning the wealthy of the world.

The SAND gives to men another priceless gem. By

certain processes of natural chemistry, it arranges itself into fine parallel lines that reflect the green, blue, purple, red, and yellow rays from the sun; and, lo, we have the opal. It may require years of time ere its iridescent changing lights, the very rays of the sun, are visibly enshrined in its heart; but it will develop surely, when once begun.

Then there is the SOOT, another of the ordinary, and in this case we might say the ugliest thing on earth the blackest natural substance, which in successive stages becomes the hardest and later the most brilliant of all jewels. Its inky blackness absorbs the sun's rays and reflects its gorgeous beauty in such a transforming marvelous manner that we call that glorified charcoal a diamond. Nature is the performer of these miracles which are astounding as we meditate upon them.

But we are not so intensely interested in nature's magnificent handiwork, though it is wonderful. The point to which we are leading is that if natural alchemy is such a marvelous performer, changing the basest elements of the earth into gorgeous objects of transcendent beauty, why should we marvel at the transformation of the heavenly jewels or doubt that it shall be done? If nature can perform such miracles, how much more wonderful is the work of the Divine Alchemist in the soul of man, transforming the basest metal into gold and the ugly clay and soot into glittering jewels. Through the grace of God, the vilest sinner of Adam's race, coal black in his defiled natural state, may be formed into the choicest heavenly gem. He may even become the pearl of great price which the heavenly Merchantman came to seek. 27

Every believer is a miracle of grace. Living stones become diamonds, if they let the great Lapidary have His way with them. There is nothing too wonderful to expect when He takes these ordinary objects into His hands. Magdalenes have become matchless jewels, and Sauls have become trophies of triumph. Let us notice the natural process whereby these stones are brought to the perfection of diamonds, and we may learn some spiritual secrets. There are four stages of the lapidary's work.

THE SEPARATING STAGE. The black charcoal is found in its rough and unlovely state, but the diamond merchant knows when he has a prospective jewel in his grasp. He realizes its worth,

and also is cognizant of the course necessary to pursue before it is ready for exhibition. He separates it from its surroundings for further examination; and, with others of its kind, it is brought into the jeweler's workshop. There the second stage begins.

In the spiritual sense, this first stage commences as soon as a person becomes a new creation. By that very fact, he is separated from sinners and taken out from the world, and is brought into the fellowship of the saints. He is in the Divine Alchemist's workshop. He does not look like a jewel yet; but, nevertheless, he is a diamond in the rough. No one would ever single him out from his former companions for any great visible change. But, the marvelous Searcher for jewels sees in him a future gem of glory and beauty, which He Himself shall make him by His work of refining and polishing.

28 Many associations and friends are immediately given up. A divine isolation begins. Like Enoch, he quits walking with men and walks with God. As he reads the Scriptures and communes with the Lord, a work is going on in his heart. More and more the change is apparent. Fellowship with God entails separation from everything that He abominates. It is written, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I Cor 6:17,18 When a believer yields to the separation, he is eligible for the next degree.

THE CUTTING STAGE. On the exterior of the prospective diamond, there is much excess that must be taken away. When this is done, it appears as a sacrifice of material; but it is not really so. The taking off of the unsightly outer part of the stone enhances its value. It then begins to look like a diamond. Herein is the manner of the cutting. The lapidary gets two diamonds together in the rough and embeds them in a melted alloy in separate holders. The portion to be cut off is left exposed. Then, firmly gripping the holders as handles, he rubs the diamonds the one against the other until a facet is produced. A diamond is so hard that only another diamond can cut it. But after the result is achieved, and the alloy is melted, the stone is again set in the holder for the grinding of another surface. The process is repeated many times for each

stone, until it is ready for the next stage of which the expert cutter is the judge.

In all of this procedure, we have some pregnant precious lessons for the saints. God takes us up in His hand, after we have been separated from the world, and begins His work. He spares nothing of the flesh. He strips us of all excess rubbish that is a part of us, even that wherein we trusted. In our blindness, we esteemed as precious and essential much that was unsightly and ugly, hiding the true beauty and brilliancy of His stones. Therefore, the heavenly Lapidary, the expert Workman, allows saints to cut one another. He actually uses them for this very purpose; often joining together a couple in wedlock, business, or in the assembly, that one may do the cutting on the other. The more we love, the deeper the cutting. Sometimes one takes all the rough edges off the other, rounding the diamond off smoothly, while he himself is not touched. A certain man who was persecuting, and thereby cutting his wife and hurting her deeply but, nevertheless, making her thus to shine, said, "You must hate me." She gently replied, "Oh, no! You keep me on my knees."

It seems, in some cases, a waste of much good material in the natural, but the Lord knows best. He makes no mistakes. Though we cry, "Ouch," over and over, He does not let go of us. He wants perfect jewels, and insists on the cutting, regardless of our feelings in the matter; and we must yield, if we have purposed in our hearts to be all that He has planned us to be. There must be cooperation. The Lord will give us time to count the cost. But after we have decided to let Him have His way with us, there is no going back on the agreement. He holds us to that purpose. We may wiggle and wriggle and endeavor to get loose of His grasp, but it is no use. We must surrender our will to His, and let Him decide as to the amount of cutting that is necessary. It is no use to squirm and cry and insist that we have had as much as we can stand, for He is the Judge and knows all that we can bear. He will not let the shaving exceed the necessary limit, neither will He let go of us until we are ready for the next stage. The more quickly we yield to His will in the stripping, the more of our unsightly self we let Him deliver us from, the happier we will be. He can make us humble. He will cut and trim off here and there, and it will hurt

us deeply, but when He is through, He will have the true gem in His Master-Hand; and that glittering stone will reflect His own glory, the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

30 Many times saints blame the other diamond that the Lord uses to cut them. They do not see the Workman back of the instrument for the development of His jewels. He desires the best; therefore, He puts His most painstaking work on those who have yielded for the greatest place. They suffer far more than ordinary Christians, even as the rarest stones in the natural receive the deepest cutting. The more valuable they are, the more work put upon them. When the lapidary is convinced that the stones are cut sufficiently on all the surfaces, he throws them into the fire to melt the alloy and release the diamonds. But that does not hurt the real stones in the natural, nor in the spiritual. It is written, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" - Isaiah 43:2. The Hebrew boys in the furnace of fire are an illustration of this victory. They only had their trappings of bondage burned away; they were visible as real diamonds, even as the stones in the natural. It is the fiery trial which tests the metal. That which is false and spurious is evident and is cast away. Only the real stands the fire.

Many times, the diamonds are put again into holders. Corners are found that need cutting, and the process is repeated. The grinding of the surface is nerve-racking; nevertheless, it is necessary, or the Lord would not allow it to continue. To live with other Christians in certain environments appears torture; but we get into these places and cannot release ourselves. We are cut and cut again, and we pray, "O Lord, get me out of this place. I can never have the victory until You deliver me." Often we endeavor to get out, and apparently succeed for a time; but, "he who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day." That is a worldly slogan, but it is fitting in a spiritual sense also.

Witness Jonah, though in his case it was more in his call to service, yet the principle is the same. When God begins something, He finishes it. His handiwork is perfect. Elijah, the dear faithful servant of the Lord, ran away apparently from another impending

trial; but that was not the real cause of his discouragement. He was bewildered at the turn of events. He had brought the rain, after a strenuous time of testing and prayer. In answer to his faith the heavens were opened, and he expected a revival. It was for this that he had made supplication; therefore, he was sure it was coming. For this he had suffered seven years; and now the result was disappointing. Jezebel swears to take his life. Neither she nor Ahab were repentant, and Elijah wanted to die. He felt he was through. His dream of his beloved people Israel's return to Jehovah was fading away.

What was the use of carrying on? Life was over for him. He had no spirit left. He fell under a juniper tree, and wished it was all over. But God was not through with Elijah. He had taken him up in His hands. He was one of His jewels. He was loyal and true; no counterfeit or spurious gem was he. Jehovah was the Workman, the Master. He might allow His servant to be disillusioned and discouraged here, but he would not be disappointed in eternity. He would be all that the Lord had purposed him to be --- one of the rarest and most beautiful of His jewels, adorning Him for the ages. He and all His precious stones must abide in His hand and let Him finish His work. See what He had purposed for His servant. Elijah would have missed that translation ride to glory, if the Master had let him have his own way. Throughout eternity, the saints will praise the heavenly Lapidary that he would not let them choose their own way, but that He chose for them. 31

THE RUBBING STAGE. After the lapidary has finished the cutting, the stones being in a satisfactory condition according to his mind, he begins the third step. It is the polishing stage, without which the stone would lack the luster and brilliancy which is its chief charm. The resplendent rays of light - blue, white, dazzling beams - are enhanced by this process. It would seem that the cutting would be enough to glorify that diamond, but the Workman knows His business. He desires more beauty to be seen in some jewels than in others. The filing must go on. If that stone could speak, it might object some, but the work would continue until the lapidary was fully satisfied.

In this stage, the stone is taken in one hand and the file in the other; and putting the stone close to his ear, the craftsman

scrapes the file across the cuttings which have been made. He realizes exactly how much pressure to put upon it; and, as the diamond is harder than the file, it can stand it and not break. The sound tells the story. He knows by it how near to perfection the stone is, how pure a diamond he has in his grasp. Looking at this stage from the spiritual plane, we learn precious lessons of vital import to our Christian growth, perfection, and beauty.

God will draw the file of affliction across our lives; and the sound He hears determines His further work in our lives. It declares how near we are like the Christ, the standard Gem. If our character spiritually is fully formed, the sound will declare it. If there is an "ouch" heard occasionally, a whimper of self-pity, a groan of despair, a murmur of resentment, the work is not finished. There were two pure and apparently perfect gems in the Philippi prison. With backs bleeding and feet bound in stocks, they were heard praying and praising God at midnight. The response to God's filing was the sweetest of music in His ears. They were two heavenly jewels, and the Divine Lapidary was well pleased with His work.

Paul had been called to minister to the Gentiles the Gospel of God's grace, and to appear before kings and governors of the earth. And, lo he is cast into jail in the first European city he visits. He could have reasonably said, "Perhaps God has not called me to preach. Here I am in prison, when I ought to be out preaching this marvelous message of love to thousands. What is the matter anyway? I do not understand God's ways. This is very strange." No, he did not so foolishly reason nor argue. At midnight, speaking of the darkest hour, he and Silas are found rejoicing and praising God for bleeding backs and numbed and aching limbs. They turned that jail into a glorious house of worship, and later souls were saved.

God had drawn His file over their lives, in the most strenuous way; and it proved that the gems were of the finest quality. He was listening close. His polishing must be perfect, for they were special treasures. The Apostle Paul went through more filing, more rubbing, more polishing. That was not the end. We read of the process which continued for years. I Cor. 11-12. Paul was tested in every conceivable way. He suffered famine. He

was persecuted often, from not only sinners but also from false brethren. He was beaten with stripes. Days and nights he spent in the deep, apparently forgotten of God and man. He spent years in prison in Rome. Imagine such filing to a sensitive spiritual soul like Paul's! It was anguish unspeakable, but you listen in vain for any complaint. He writes to the Philippians where he first landed in jail from his later prison in Rome, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things. I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Phil. 4:12. He had learned, being instructed by the file in the hand of the Master, to praise God in every circumstance of his life. Years of rubbing and chiseling are counted as a little moment in view of the great eternal values that are before him.

The Lord, the Master Lapidary, can find no rasping sound in that priceless jewel. From his barren lonely cell in Rome, his words are triumphant and victorious, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4 That was written at the very moment that the Workman was drawing His file across that wondrous gem in apparently a most cruel way. He executed the best and most perfect work on that stone. It was the choicest gem of this age found without a flaw. He has a permanent and precious setting for this jewel. The stone must get this setting, or its beauty and brilliancy are not seen to perfection.

THE SETTING STAGE. After the lapidary has separated the stone, put it into facets of beauty, polished and rubbed until it is dazzling and resplendent, he mounts it in a superb setting suitable for a jewel of its price and purpose. This is generally conceded to be its permanent place, though it might be and often is removed, because of circumstances or the desire of the owner. But, in the spiritual, it is not so. The setting of Jehovah's jewels is eternal. There is nevermore a change.

The Lord went to prepare abiding places for His precious stones. He has bestowed much labor upon them before they reach their eternal place. Their mounting in glory, from which not one of these precious stones will ever be removed, must be every whit in harmony with what they have become by the different processes through which they have passed. The heavenly Lapidary has

prepared rare and lovely mountings and beautiful settings, for these matchless gems which have allowed Him to work in their lives. These are not ordinary stones, but extraordinary ones.

Not every Christian can be so designated. The majority will not stand the testing, the suffering, the separation, the cutting, the rasping file, the polishing --- these are too rough, and hard for their sensitive nerves. They are too delicate for the strenuous workmanship required. They want an easy way. Hence, the heavenly Alchemist cannot transform them into the perfection that others achieve, because they refuse. These jewels will not be seen upon the crown which will adorn the head of the great Ruler of the realm of the universe - heaven and earth.

34 Remember, these jewels will reflect the beauty of Jesus. They will be lifted up to their exalted places, neither for their great doings nor for their medals for good behavior, but because they shine in brilliancy like Himself. They yielded to the great Lapidary, who knew how to work and transform living stones into glorious gems like unto the Star of the morning. This is the Sun of Righteousness, Who shall arise with healing in His wings and lighten the world dispelling the night of sorrow and gloom with His beaming rays of light. He will brighten the world. The natural sun will hide away, as it were, in His Presence. His precious jewels will all have been gathered - great and small radiant luminaries; they will glisten and gleam, adorning His Person, and will be exhibited wherever He is seen. Wondrous prospect! Wondrous privilege to let Him make them all that He has planned that they shall be in that coming Day of Glory. Words are feeble to express all that we see in the future for His jewels. It is too wonderful for us.

His grace is sufficient, no one can exhaust it;
Be strong in that grace abundant and true,
Draw largely, continually out of His fullness;
His grace shall be always sufficient for you.



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**“. . . he shall be a vessel unto
honour, . . . meet for the
master's use . . .”**

II Timothy 2:21

